



**Area Advisory Committee Three Walking Tour  
Monday, June 16, 2014, 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.  
Ingleside at King Farm  
701 King Farm Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850**

**Attendees:**

**Members**

Marcia Bond	Christopher Maravilla
Gerald Calderone	Timothy McDonald
Kevin Johnson	Arlene Robinson
Alan Kaplan	Fred Samadani
Marilyn Leist	Gail Sherman
Martin Mankowski	Mel Willis

**Apologies**

Tracee Strum-Gilliam

**Staff**

<b>Project Manager</b> - Rick Kiegel	<b>Traffic Engineer</b> - Kevin Permisohn
<b>Segment Engineer</b> - Allison Berkheimer	<b>Public Involvement Task Lead</b> - Crystal Saunders
<b>Station Architect</b> - Kyle Kramer	<b>Logistics Staff</b> - Jordan Vann
<b>Public Involvement</b> - Kyle Nembhard	City of Rockville - Emad Elshafei
	City of Rockville - Craig Simoneau

**Elected Officials**

Bridget Newton - Mayor, City of Rockville

**Public**

Mark Gregg - The Penrose Group	Mark Scoffield - Ingleside at King Farm
Olav Kellevoll - The Penrose Group	

**Introduction/Welcome**

Rick Kiegel welcomed all of the participants to the AAC Three walking tour meeting and thanked the Ingleside staff for their hospitality. He then explained the purpose, walking route, and CCT team expectations during the walking tour. AAC members were also encouraged to wear safety vests. Rick welcomed representatives from the City of Rockville - Mayor Newton, Craig Simoneau, and Emad Elshafei.

Rick shared three points with the group:

- The goal is for this AAC to be successful and to find a way to work together where everyone is respectful of each other and all opinions can be heard. These meetings were designed to spur two-way communication in an effort to make informed decisions on portions of the project. As such, Rick will attend all of the future AAC Three meetings in order to help facilitate the discussions.
- The CCT will operate no faster than the posted speed limit of the adjacent roadway - specifically along King Farm Boulevard, the bus will operate no faster than 25 mph.
- The CCT will cross MD 355 at-grade.

Allison Berkheimer, Segment Engineer explained the three handouts distributed to the attendees:

- CCT Alignment Typical Section along King Farm Boulevard features.
- Typical Section comparison of the King Farm Plan, Adjacent Transit Lanes, and Center Transitway.
- CCT Typical Section Comparison of Options 1 and 2 along King Farm Boulevard.

Allison noted the team expanded on the characteristics handout from the last AAC meeting by more thoroughly describing the differences between the two options along the median of King Farm Boulevard in response to comments discussed at the last AAC Three meeting. Allison noted that advantages and disadvantages were not used since they are opinion based and an advantage to one member could be a disadvantage to another. Kevin Permisohn, Traffic Manager explained that the team created a scale dimension of both median options in front of Ingleside for a better understanding.

**Q:** Is there an option to keep the median as is?

**A:** The project team noted that there is not an option to keep the median as is. The entire alignment is to be a dedicated transitway from Metropolitan Grove to Shady Grove.

**Q:** Can the CCT project “live” with what was originally planned during the development of the King Farm Community?

**A:** King Farm Boulevard was not built as designed in the King Farm Plan. Therefore, the King Farm Plan typical section cannot be implemented as conceived. The project team cited that the current median is 52 foot wide while the King Farm Plan shows a 56 foot wide median.

**AAC Comment** - It was noted that emergency vehicles and access to the pools located on both sides of King Farm Boulevard utilize Reserve Champion Drive and concern was expressed about closing the King Farm median at Reserve Champion Drive. The AAC member stated that vehicles do not use King Farm Boulevard directly unless they are coming from the north. Reserve Champion Drive best accommodates emergency vehicles.

**Q:** Would barriers be used to close the median?

**A:** Rick explained that the median would be closed by extending the landscaped median, curbs, and transitway across the intersection.

**Q:** Please explain the reason MTA wants to close intersections.

**A:** Rick explained that all intersections remaining open would require signals to protect the turning movements that would conflict with the CCT. Rick also noted that Elmcroft Boulevard is too close to MD 355 to remain open and if Grand Champion Drive and other intersections remain open, they too would require signals which would be too closely spaced as well. Traffic engineering guidelines encourage a “coordinated signal system” which enhances the progression of vehicles along King Farm Boulevard and minimize both vehicle delay and bus delay through the corridor as the distance between signals should be kept close to ¼ mile based on industry standards. Providing a signal at each intersection that currently has a median opening along King Farm Boulevard would lead to signals spaced less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile apart. Signals this closely spaced would not allow for well-timed vehicle progression along the corridor, and could lead to passenger vehicles and CCT buses being stopped almost every block at a signal.

**Q:** Are there alternatives to closing the median?

**A:** The project team noted that there are currently ten median crossings along King Farm Boulevard. All of the median crossings would not be closed and traffic signals would be installed or modified at all intersections to remain open. Also, mid-block, unsignalized, pedestrian crossings have been proposed in response to public comment at some of the intersections that would receive median closures.

**Q:** A study of intersections was previously conducted - has MTA reviewed this study?

**A:** Rick pointed out that the previous study was performed before King Farm was built out and that traffic volumes and allowed movements were based on what could occur with the development of King Farm. However, based on current volumes and roadway geometry, the projections used in the original study are not as accurate as actual conditions currently observed. The CCT project benefits from current traffic counts to incorporate into the models. Kevin assured the group that the project team will perform additional observations based on the concerns/comments raised and will use those observations to validate and refine the traffic analysis being performed for the project.

**Q:** Why is MTA not required to do a traffic study but developers are required to perform a traffic study?

**A:** Craig referred to the City of Rockville Ordinance explaining that governmental agencies are exempt from certain specific items that developer’s are responsible for submitting. However, the CCT project team has developed extensive traffic models, similar to those in a developer’s traffic study, and considers all applicable standards and acceptable traffic ‘metrics or thresholds’ when using the models for making project decisions. The project team has and will continue to coordinate with the City of Rockville regarding results of the traffic analysis that is being performed.

**AAC Comment:** I am concerned about the current traffic condition as well as the effect the proposed closures will have by pushing traffic onto Redland Boulevard.

**AAC Comment:** I want to understand how other roads will be affected by the closing of intersections.

**Q:** What is the effect of running in mixed traffic?

**A:** Kevin explained that running in mixed use traffic does not provide as reliable of a service as running on a dedicated transitway and could cause longer travel times for both the bus and motorists. Running in mixed use traffic also introduces additional conflict areas that would be avoided on a dedicated transitway.

**Q:** Does the MTA model include the new development at MD 355?

**A:** Rick explained that the model is based on zoning and current conditions.

**AAC Comment:** Please preserve on-street parking areas identified in the King Farm Development plan.

**A:** Craig noted that parking can change in the public ROW shown in the plan and that public ROW cannot be used to satisfy private parking requirements. While the city recognized parking and median crossing concerns, they stated that they will continue to work together with the community and the MTA on these concerns.

**Q:** Is MTA looking for an answer today on the options - center vs. side-running? Another member asked why is MTA in a rush for a decision when funding is not in place?

**A:** The project team is looking for as much feedback as possible today so that a decision can be made and the design can advance. Rick explained that the project is in the planning stage and the state cannot acquire ROW until there is funding in place. He also noted that no projects in the planning stage are funded for construction. He stated that a decision needs to be made to keep the project on schedule as dictated by senior management at MTA.

**AAC Comment:** Until there is a consensus systematically, no decisions should be made.

**AAC Comment:** The cost of dividing a community must be weighed against the cost of the project.

## **Ingleside Median**

The group travelled to the King Farm Boulevard median outside of the Ingleside facility as it visually demonstrated both of the options under consideration.

Allison explained the center running option to the group.

**AAC Comment:** I am concerned about older pedestrians being able to cross the median transitway in enough time to avoid oncoming vehicles.

**Q:** By selecting one option over the other, is that making the crossing for cars safer than for pedestrians?

**A:** Rick noted that the proposed crosswalks would be signed. Kevin added that mid block pedestrian crossings have been added in response to concerns heard during the AAC discussions.

As well, the pedestrian crossings at the full intersections will be protected with traffic signals and will include countdown pedestrian signals and accessible pedestrian push buttons.

**AAC Comment:** There was concern about 2035 headways and safe crossing of pedestrians. Also, would the buses have to stop for pedestrians?

Rick noted that following state law, buses would have to stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks.

Kevin mentioned that the 2035 headways during the peak period are projected to be 3.5 minutes which means a bus will pass about every 1.75 minutes (105 seconds). In the non peak periods the headways will be between 6 and 10 minutes. In the opening year, 2021, it is projected that the headways will be closer to 10 minutes during the peak period, which means a bus will pass every 5 minutes. This should provide ample time for a pedestrian to cross the transitway. Based on the volumes on King Farm Boulevard, a bus would pass significantly less frequently than vehicles do, thus crossing the road should be no more difficult than it is under current conditions.

**Q:** Is the project considering Green Track?

**A:** Rick explained that Green Track can only be used on fixed guideway systems. Rick noted that the current trees in the median would have to be replaced with smaller trees. He also noted the benefit of BRT is the absence of catenary poles (as found in LRT) that allows for new trees to be planted adjacent to the transitway.

Allison explained the side running option to the group.

Rick explained how the transitway narrows at stations to 12 feet wide. He also noted that the station designs will be consistent at all locations - similar to Metro stations.

In terms of bicycle access, Rick explained that the City of Rockville will stripe King Farm Boulevard with sharrows indicating shared use between bicycles and vehicles.

One member pointed out the light traffic on King Farm Boulevard that was observed at the time during rush hour and questioned the need for additional lanes for buses rather than operating in mixed traffic.

### **King Farm Boulevard and Gaither Road**

**AAC comment:** If the median is closed at Reserve Champion Drive, it is not safe to make a u-turn at the intersection of Gaither Road to head east.

Kevin explained that the current signal phasing at the intersection is called a 'split phase.' This means all movements along westbound King Farm Boulevard are protected and will not conflict with any other approach movements. Therefore, a safe u-turn movement is currently provided and this condition will not change.

After further discussions with committee members while watching traffic at this intersection, it was conveyed by the committee that the actual issue that they have been referring to are the concurrent left turn movements from Gaither Road to King Farm Boulevard in both directions.

Kevin explained that this is an existing issue that will not be affected by the CCT project and that the community should voice their concerns to the City of Rockville.

### **King Farm Boulevard and Reserve Champion Drive**

Rick stated that Reserve Champion Drive does not provide access to Safeway. He also asked the group if a left turn could be made on Redland Road and the group confirmed that it can.

Rick then explained to the group that if Reserve Champion Drive is closed, the next cross street east of Reserve Champion Drive, Crestfield Drive, would remain open along with the crosswalks. Opening Crestfield Drive is in response to prior comments that were received from the community and will provide access to the shopping center from westbound King Farm Boulevard.

**Q:** Can you study the possibility of leaving both crossings open?

**A:** Rick explained that traffic signals would be needed at each intersection if both crossings remained open.

### **King Farm Boulevard and East Gaither station**

The group progressed down to the proposed location of East Gaither station in front of the King Farm Village Center.

Kyle Kramer, Station Architect explained the proposed layout of the station at this location. Kyle described the location of the station platform, the adjacent transitway, and the curb median location between adjacent traffic lanes. He also outlined that pedestrians will enter the station using signalized crosswalks located at existing intersections. From the entrance, patrons will use ramps to transition up to the platforms located 14” above the roadway to allow for level boarding onto the transit vehicles. Lastly Kyle pointed out that the platforms will have ticketing machines, benches, canopies, and additional station amenities for station users.

**Q:** Please clarify the transitway and platform heights.

**A:** Rick explained that the platforms would be 14” higher than the roadway to facilitate easier movement from the vehicle to the station. Additionally, the transitway roadway would be the same height as the adjacent King Farm Boulevard roadway.

**Q:** Is there a need for East Gaither Station when no one in King Farm is going to use it?

**Q:** Who and how many people would use the station?

**A:** Rick explained that until the Governor, Secretary of Transportation or MTA Administrator gives the direction otherwise, the project will be moving forward with planning a station at East Gaither. He suggested that passengers would use the station to access county’s focused future development areas.

Craig explained that if there is a group consensus on removing the East Gaither station from the project, then the community should say so and have it be part of the public record.

**Q:** One member asked about the length of the station.

**A:** Rick explained that the station would be 150 ft in length.

One member noted that she preferred the buses in the middle – option 1.

**Q:** Can the selection of an option be made at the next meeting?

**A:** Rick noted that the last meeting was supposed to be the decision-making meeting but was delayed until after the walking tour. The next meeting is at the end of August.

Some members explained to Rick that it was their intention to show the team where they had concerns along the transitway. One member noted an upcoming board meeting in which it was their intention to discuss the CCT.

Rick asked the group to email Tracee Strum-Gilliam and Crystal Saunders and provide feedback on the median typical section that you prefer by Friday, June 27<sup>th</sup>.

Craig encouraged the AAC to pick the option they personally liked best and be “selfish.” He also confirmed that no other CCT AAC had this option of selecting middle vs. a side running alignment.

The group dispersed at 6 PM.

###