

I-270/US 15 MULTI-MODAL STUDY STATUS REPORT

Highway and Transit Projects Likely to Proceed Independently

Since the mid-1990s, the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and MTA have been working in partnership to assess a series of multi-modal improvements in Montgomery and Frederick Counties as part of the I-20/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study. After more than a decade working together on a single multi-modal project, the highway and transit elements of the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study will advance in separate, but coordinated, tracks.

Together, SHA and MTA identified and analyzed a wide range of highway and transit improvements designed to reduce congestion, increase mobility, and improve safety conditions within the I-270/US 15 corridor in Montgomery and Frederick Counties. SHA and MTA examined several alternative combinations of highway and transit service improvements for cost effectiveness, transportation-system performance, and potential environmental and community effects. These alternatives included a no-build, or "do-nothing," alternative; transportation system management alternatives (to maximize benefits of the existing system without a major investment); and several build alternatives, including the addition of general-purpose and/or managed lanes combined with express premium bus services, light rail transit (LRT), or bus rapid transit (BRT) along the corridor. These "combined" highway and transit alternatives developed in the Multi-Modal Study promote interconnectivity between I-270, the CCT, MARC Commuter Rail, and the Metrorail Red Line.

SHA and MTA published the results of these analyses in several environmental documents developed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. The first of these documents was a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) published in May 2002; the second was an Alternatives Analysis/Environmental Assessment (AA/EA) published in May 2009.

The decision to proceed on independent, but coordinated, study tracks reflects the complexity of developing a multi-modal study with other federal and state agencies while also addressing distinct community and environmental needs and effects. MTA still must determine the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the CCT:

- A preferred transit mode (LRT or BRT)
- Any changes in alignment
- The location of an operations and maintenance facility

The LPA must be selected before MTA can request entry into the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts process, which is required for transit projects seeking federal funding. New Starts projects must undergo specialized performance analysis and meet requirements for estimating costs, ridership, and other benefits of a proposed transit project in order to receive federal transit funding. The highway portion of the project follows a different process and would not be directly affected by the FTA required analysis. The SHA is currently conducting a more thorough comparison of the alternatives considered as well as analyzing the effectiveness of other managed lane strategies in the corridor, such as high occupancy/toll (HOT) lanes.



CCT Featured in Spring 2009 I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study Public Hearings

Approximately 430 people attended public hearings for the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study on June 16 and 18, 2009, in Montgomery and Frederick Counties. Representatives and staff of MTA and SHA provided information about the study development process and received comments about proposed highway and transit project improvements, including the introduction of express toll lanes (ETLs) as a new highway alternative. ETLs were studied in conjunction with bus rapid transit or light rail as transit-service alternatives on the Corridor Cities Transitway Master Plan alignment. Project information, including a video, maps, and other corridor displays, was available for review.

Representatives of SHA, MTA, Montgomery County, Frederick County, and the planning team discussed issues, took comments, and answered

questions. Approximately 60 attendees offered public and private testimony, which will be included in the I-270/US 15 public record. Public hearing participants identified a number of major issues, including project costs, local community impacts, and CCT ridership estimates. Look for a summary of comments on our project website at mta.maryland.gov/cct.



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STAY INVOLVED

The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and the State Highway Administration (SHA) value active and involved public participation in their project development processes. If your community group or organization would like a briefing on the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) Project, please contact the project's public involvement specialist, Traceé Strum-Gilliam at 410-454-9761 or strum@pbworld.com.

For more information on the CCT, go to mta.maryland.gov/cct. For information on the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study, go to i270multimodalstudy.com.

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The Maryland Relay Service can assist teletype users at 711.

La Administración de Tránsito de Maryland está contemplando varias alternativas para tratar la congestión del tráfico y la seguridad a lo largo del corredor CCT entre la Estación de Shady Grove Metrorail en el Condado de Montgomery y el norte de COMSAT. Averigüe más acerca de las alternativas y como pudieran afectar a su comunidad y su viaje de ida y vuelta asistiendo a una de las próximas audiencias públicas. Para más información detallada acerca de las alternativas en consideración, por favor, visite el sitio web en mta.maryland.gov/cct. Envíe sus comentarios por correo electrónico a rkiegel@mta.maryland.gov.

CCT MOVING FORWARD/ ESTIMATED SCHEDULE

- Supplemental EA published – Summer/Fall 2010
- Supplemental EA public comment period – Summer/Fall 2010
- Supplemental EA Public Hearing – Fall 2010
- Selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative – Winter 2010/11

Beverly K. Swaim-Staley
Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation



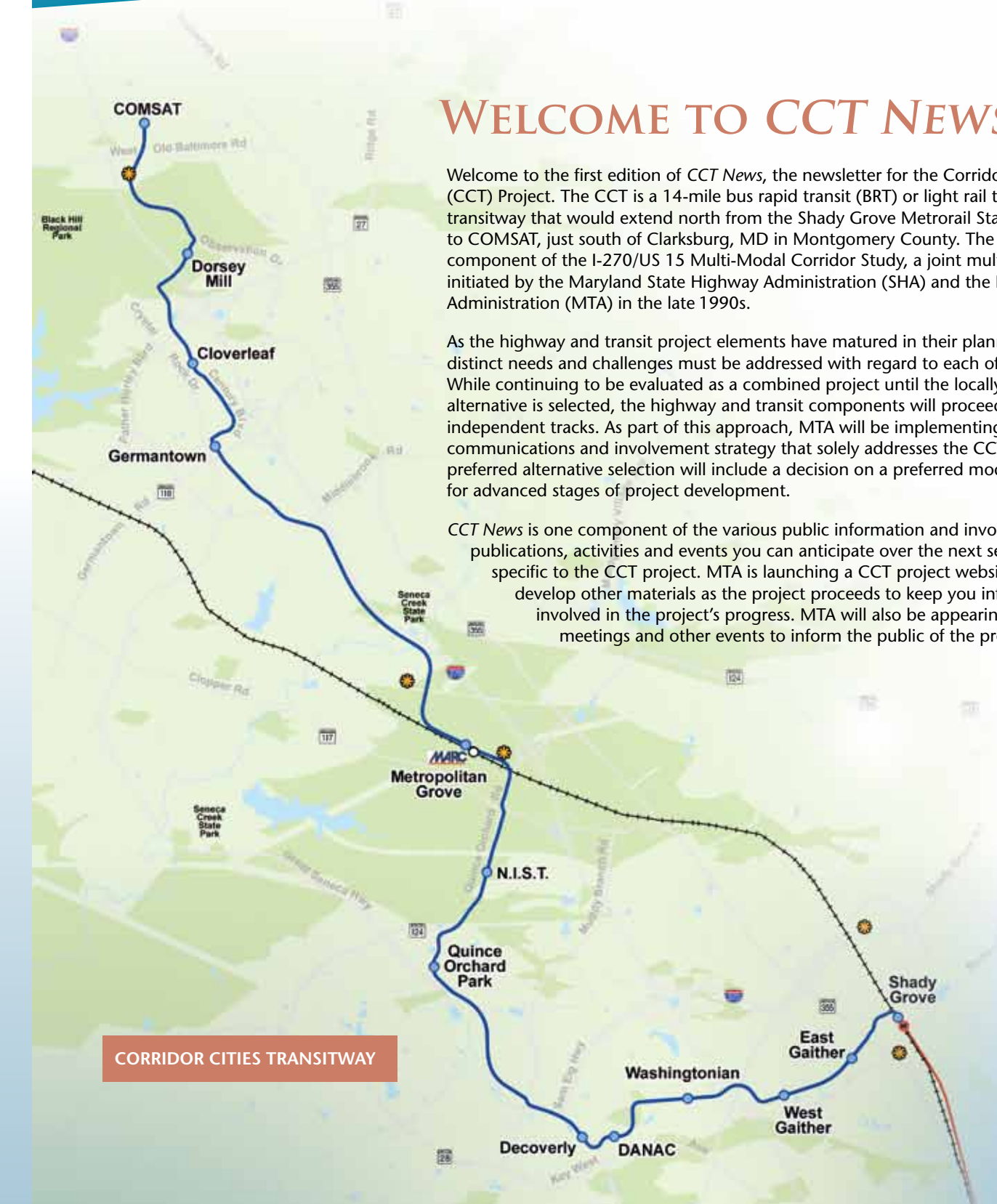
Ralign T. Wells
Administrator
Maryland Transit Administration



mta.maryland.gov/cct



CCT NEWS



WELCOME TO CCT NEWS!

Welcome to the first edition of *CCT News*, the newsletter for the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) Project. The CCT is a 14-mile bus rapid transit (BRT) or light rail transit (LRT) transitway that would extend north from the Shady Grove Metrorail Station in Rockville to COMSAT, just south of Clarksburg, MD in Montgomery County. The CCT is the transit component of the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study, a joint multi-modal study initiated by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) in the late 1990s.

As the highway and transit project elements have matured in their planning and design, distinct needs and challenges must be addressed with regard to each of these elements. While continuing to be evaluated as a combined project until the locally preferred alternative is selected, the highway and transit components will proceed on somewhat independent tracks. As part of this approach, MTA will be implementing a public communications and involvement strategy that solely addresses the CCT. The CCT locally preferred alternative selection will include a decision on a preferred mode and alignment for advanced stages of project development.

CCT News is one component of the various public information and involvement publications, activities and events you can anticipate over the next several years specific to the CCT project. MTA is launching a CCT project website and will develop other materials as the project proceeds to keep you informed and involved in the project's progress. MTA will also be appearing at community meetings and other events to inform the public of the project.

CORRIDOR CITIES TRANSITWAY

MTA COMPLETES FEASIBILITY STUDY ON MODIFIED CCT ALIGNMENT

The Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) alignment from Shady Grove to COMSAT has been virtually unchanged since it was first identified in the 1980s by Montgomery County and studied by the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) in the 1990s. However, Montgomery County is changing and the CCT alignment may need to change to address transportation needs and growth.

At the request of the Montgomery County Council and the City of Gaithersburg, MTA conducted a feasibility study of transitway alignment modifications proposed to more directly serve plans for new development and redevelopment within the CCT study area. This includes modified alignments in three areas:

- A modified alignment traversing Crown Farm through the heart of a new transit-oriented mixed-use development with a station in the center of the new development;
- A new route proposed to serve the expanded Life Sciences Center (LSC) located near the intersection of Great Seneca Highway and Key West Avenue; and

- An alignment shift that puts the transitway on the west side of Great Seneca Highway to directly serve a Kentlands shopping center proposed for redevelopment into a mixed-use transit-supportive destination.

As part of this effort, MTA looked into the effects of these new alignments on a variety of transit performance criteria including ridership, costs and cost-effectiveness. It also did a fatal flaw analysis of the impacts of the alignments on environmental and community resources.

The results of the feasibility study (see table below) demonstrated to the MTA that the modified alignments are feasible, i.e., can be engineered and constructed generally without major additional impacts to surrounding communities and environmental resources with the exception of historic resources. Avoidance alternatives will be analyzed for them in subsequent environmental studies. Additionally, analysis of the transit system performance shows that the CCT would benefit from higher ridership and improved cost-effectiveness (a

The detailed findings of this study were documented in the *Analysis of Alignment Alternatives Serving Crown Farm, Life Sciences Center and Kentlands* report on November 5, 2009 which can be found on the CCT project website at mta.maryland.gov/cct. It can also be found on the I-270/US15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study website, i270multimodalstudy.com.

In order for MTA to seriously consider these new options as a potentially preferred alternative for development, MTA must fully define and document the potential impacts of the proposed alignments to the full range of resources in the natural and community environment. Specifically, the MTA will prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (EA) report for the segment of the CCT corridor where these alternative alignments have been proposed in accordance with NEPA. Additionally, MTA is completing a Section 4(f) analysis that analyzes the potential effects of the project to areas that have been identified as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and proposed alternatives to avoid or minimize effects to these places, which include the Crown Farm and Belward

CCT Alternatives	Transit Mode	Capital Costs (2007 dollars in millions)	New Transit Trips (new system riders - thousands)	Daily Boardings (thousands)	Cost-Effectiveness*
AA/EA – Original Master Plan Alignment	LRT	\$875.65	8.8	24-30	\$24 - \$30
	BRT	\$461.24	9.4	21-26	\$11 - \$13
Modified Alignment Serving Crown Farm and LSC	LRT	\$972.63	11.4 – 14.2	34-43	\$16 - \$20
	BRT	\$505.15	12.0 – 15.1	30-37	\$7 - \$9
Modified Alignment Serving Crown Farm, LSC and Kentlands	LRT	\$999.01	11.2 – 14.0	34-42	\$17 - \$21
	BRT	\$532.63	11.9 – 14.9	29-37	\$8 - \$10

* Cost-effectiveness (CE) is a measure defined by the Federal Transit Administration that analyzes the cost of a project against the travel time benefits it extends to users of the entire transit system network in the study area. The lower the number, the higher the cost-effectiveness. For example, a CE of \$20 means it costs \$20 for each hour of travel time that is saved by transit system users.

comparison of a project's capital and operating costs to its anticipated benefits to transit system users, over the previously studied alternative). Few additional environmental or community impacts are anticipated by the modified alignments.

Farm properties. This Supplemental EA and Section 4(f) document will complement the range of environmental documents prepared on the CCT to date, including the 2002 *Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)* and the recently completed May 2009 *Alternatives Analysis/Environmental Assessment (AA/EA)* document.

MODIFIED CCT ALIGNMENT AND ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

Three new destinations are to be served with a modified alignment that includes a combination of one to three alignment shifts to the existing Master Plan alternative. These possible alignment shifts occur to serve the Crown Farm development, the LSC, and the Kentlands Market Square shopping center located adjacent to the Kentlands community, targeted for redevelopment into a transit-oriented mixed-use development.

Each destination is served with alignments that spur from the original Master Plan alignment. The alignment will generally run as a dedicated surface transitway adjacent to existing roadways. The new alignment modifications are described and shown on the map to the right. Detailed descriptions may be found in the November 4, 2009 document, *Corridor Cities Transitway: Analysis of Alignment Alternatives Serving Crown Farm, Life Sciences Center and Kentlands*, found on the CCT project website at mta.maryland.gov/cct or the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study website at i270multimodalstudy.com.

Beginning at the east end of the alignment, the modified alignment through Crown Farm will run:

- Within the median of Fields Road, with a station in the heart of a new transit-oriented development on an extended Decoverly Drive;
- Either rejoins the original Master Plan alignment along Decoverly Drive or continues south on Diamondback Drive.

The alignment through the LSC, a major development and redevelopment project of a biotech based mixed-use "science city," would extend south across Key West Avenue. Three stations will serve the LSC. The alignment to serve the LSC turns off of the Master Plan alignment at Diamondback Drive. The CCT will run:

- Along Diamondback Drive to the relocated DANAC station and will cross Key West Avenue, which becomes Broschart Road. The LSC Central station location will be somewhere in the vicinity of Broschart Road and Blackwell Road.

- Turn right (west) towards Great Seneca Highway or continue south prior to turning right onto Medical Center Drive.

- After crossing Great Seneca Highway, the alignment turns into a currently wooded area between the planned extension of Blackwell Road and Medical Center Drive or along Medical Center Drive.

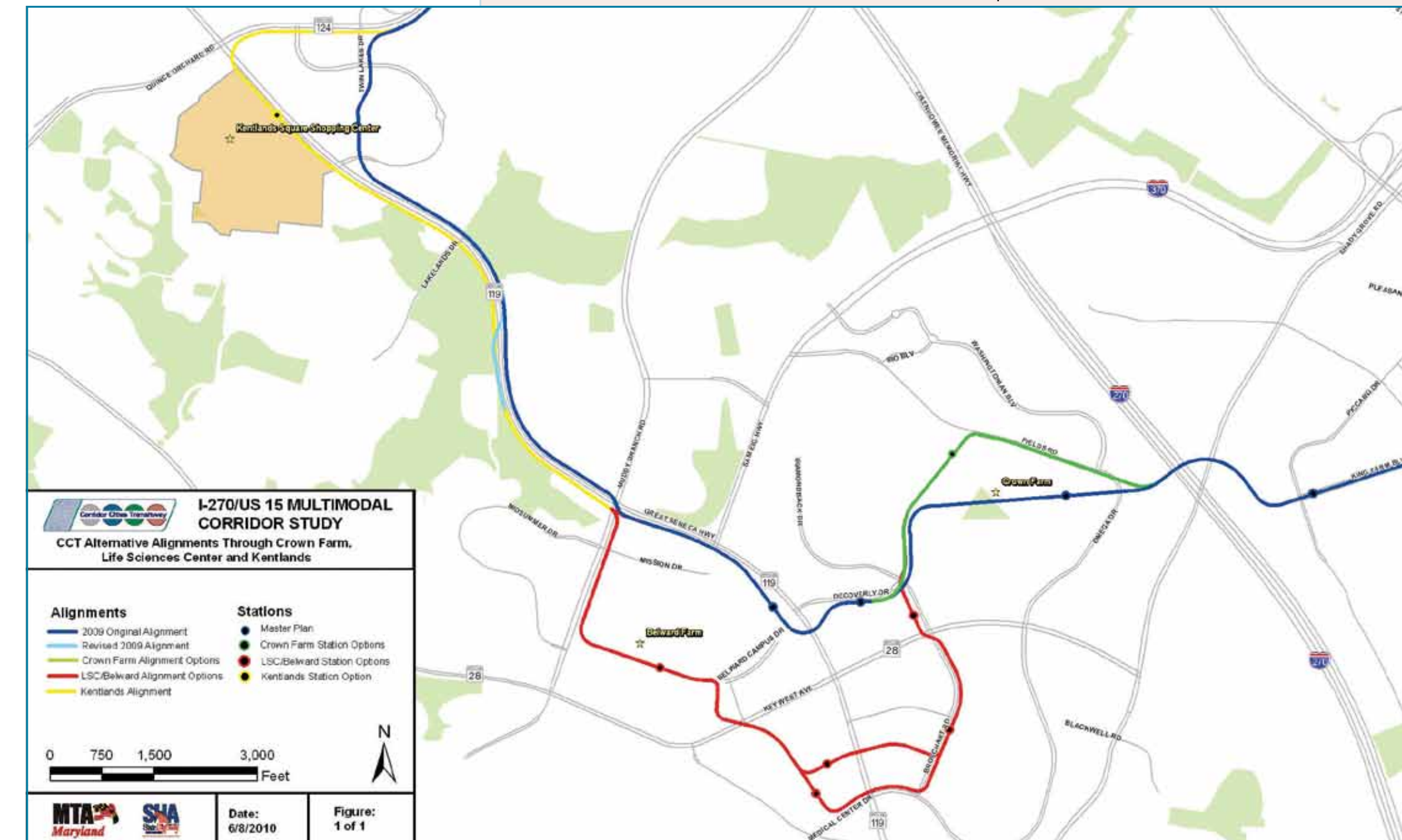
- The alignment immediately turns north into the existing Montgomery County Public Safety Training Academy. A new LSC West station will be located in this vicinity. The alignment then crosses Key West Avenue.

- After crossing Key West Avenue, the alignment will traverse the Belward Property towards Muddy Branch Road. The LSC Belward station will be located somewhere in this segment.

The alignment serving the Kentlands deviates from the Master Plan alignment at the intersection of Great Seneca Highway and Muddy Branch Road. The CCT will run:

- Along the west side of Great Seneca Highway, with a bridge over Great

Seneca Highway at Quince Orchard Road. The alignment would continue along the south side of Quince Orchard Road where it would rejoin the Master Plan alignment at Twin Lakes Drive.



WHAT IS A "LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE?"

The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) is the physical design concept and scope for a major transit investment being proposed by the State for funding by the FTA. For the CCT, the LPA will be a definition of the choice of a specific transit mode (either BRT or LRT) and the location and description of the transitway alignment. Additionally, the LPA will define general station locations, the location and quantity of parking, and general operating characteristics of the transit system including hours of operation, frequency of service, how many vehicles will operate, etc.

The decision of an LPA will be made upon completing the Supplemental EA and holding public hearings on the findings of that document. It will involve a review of the findings compiled to date and included in the 2002 DEIS, the 2009 AA/EA, and the 2010 Supplemental EA. All comments received on the project from its inception are also considered. The LPA

will become the basis of an application to the FTA for entry into the "New Starts" transit program, which provides federal funding and oversight of transit major capital investment projects such as this one.

Among the criteria that will influence the decision on an LPA are the following:

- Project ridership and cost-effectiveness
- Environmental impacts
- Local government preferences and priorities
- Community support for the project
- Community preferences regarding mode and alignment alternatives
- Cost – both of constructing the transitway as well as of operations and maintenance