

MD 355 Corridor Bus Rapid Transit Study Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) Program Plan

September 2017 Draft

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Introduction and Background

The Corridor Advisory Committees (CACs) play an important role in the public involvement process for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor studies and implementation in Montgomery County. In adopting the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, which outlines plans to implement BRT along ten different corridors, the Montgomery County Council called for the establishment of CACs by noting:

“A vital facet of facility planning is to receive input and feedback from affected property owners, civic and business groups, and transit riders and road users, including public forums and workshops, electronic newsletters, and other forms of outreach... Accordingly, a citizens’ advisory group comprised of residents, business owners and other relevant stakeholders must be created for each corridor which enters into facility planning to make recommendations to the County on the design, construction and proposed station locations for the transit corridor.”

As outlined in the Montgomery Rapid Transit System (RTS) Corridor Advisory Committees Planning Outline for Structure and Selection Procedures,¹ the CACs’ purpose is to: allow participants to discuss and provide input related to project planning, design, construction, and station locations; enhance transparency and community involvement; provide a venue for interaction and information-sharing among those directly impacted; inform the study of community impacts to encourage community-sensitive implementation and minimize negative impacts; serve as a clearinghouse for sharing timely and accurate information; and provide leadership and build consensus in the community to coalesce diverse interests.

The CACs are advisory rather than decision-making groups. Feedback received from CAC members, alongside the concerns and needs expressed by all local communities along the MD 355 corridor, are seriously considered in developing recommendations. CAC members play an important role in working with the project team to conduct outreach to engage the broader community when community updates and other events are scheduled.

Since February 2015, CACs have met regularly with the BRT project teams to review information, ask questions, and provide feedback. As of September 2017, a total of 20 meetings had been held with the MD 355 North and MD 355 South CACs,² which have been active in engaging with the County to provide input on a variety of topics.

In May 2017, MD 355 BRT project leadership, including CAC facilitation, transitioned from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)’s Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) and Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). This transition was made to ensure that the project design will be overseen by the local jurisdiction responsible for implementing the project. MCDOT, working with partner agencies, will lead the project through design, construction, and operation. Under the oversight of MCDOT, programming will continue to take place to integrate the public into the planning process in a meaningful and engaging manner.

The current phase of the project will run from approximately June 2017 through December 2018. During this period, the County will be conducting the alternatives analysis for the BRT alignment, operational, and infrastructure options for the BRT with the overarching purpose of identifying a recommended alternative.

¹ Available at: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BRT/Resources/Files/RTS%20AdvisoryCommittees-PlangDoc_Vers14_2civic.pdf

² The Rockville Metro Station divides the MD 355 BRT North and South CACs geographically.

This initial design phase will include high level analysis of the project corridor, and will *not* include extensive details regarding the final design, procurement, or project implementation.

Purpose of this CAC Program Plan

The Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the MD 355 BRT project outlines the activities that will take place to involve the public in the planning throughout this phase of the project. The public involvement goals in the PIP are to:

1. Educate the public and stakeholders regarding the project objectives, need for the project, and key BRT concepts.
2. Engage with stakeholders and the public to gather meaningful feedback that will be incorporated into the planning and engineering process.
3. Ensure public involvement activities are accessible to, and accommodate, people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, income levels, disability statuses, and levels of English proficiency.
4. Meet the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan's requirements for a robust public involvement process in advance of a public hearing on the project.

As noted in the PIP, the CACs serve an important role in achieving these goals for the MD 355 BRT study. This CAC Program Plan is a component of the PIP that provides additional detail regarding how MCDOT and the project team will engage with the CACs throughout this phase of the project and the topics MCDOT and the project team anticipate covering in meetings. If additional topics or issues arise that are appropriate to address in CAC meetings or activities, MCDOT may adjust meeting agendas or supplement them with additional topics or activities; in that sense, this Program Plan will be a living document.

CAC Engagement

There are expectations regarding CAC engagement that apply to all parties involved in CAC meetings and communications between CAC members, the project team, and MCDOT. All meeting participants are expected to adhere to ground rules. These include, but are not limited to, expectations that individuals: speak courteously, candidly, and honestly; treat others with respect and professionalism; not intentionally interrupt others while they are speaking³; refrain from disseminating false or misleading information; and encourage balanced participation in meetings by all CAC members.

Project Team Expectations

The project team will seek to keep CAC meetings to two hours in length. Facilitators will make efforts adhere to the agenda in CAC meetings. Should there be consensus that additional time is needed to discuss or answer questions on a topic or question, the facilitator will work with CAC members to identify how this might be accommodated. For example, it may be possible to revisit the topic in conversations with project team members after the meeting, or for the project team to gather additional information on the topic that will be sent to CAC members following the meeting. CAC members may contact the facilitator and/or the

³ When necessary, the facilitator may interrupt a CAC member to: keep discussions on topic; keep the meeting on schedule; or ensure all members have an opportunity to participate in discussions.

MCDOT representative following meetings with questions or feedback from their organization or community.

The project team will be responsible for documenting comments received from CAC members, as well as those from other stakeholders and members of the public. The project team will produce a detailed CAC meeting summary after each meeting, which CAC members will be given at least five business days to review prior to its posting on the MCDOT BRT website.⁴ The project team and MCDOT will strive to have the summary posted within three weeks of each meeting. The project team will videotape each meeting and post the video recording on the MCDOT BRT website within two business days after each meeting. Meeting presentation slides will be posted to the website following each meeting. Presentation slides will not be distributed to CAC members prior to meetings. At the discretion of the project team, some meeting or other informational materials may be sent to CAC members in advance of the meetings. If this occurs, CAC members should make reasonable efforts to review the materials in advance of the meeting.

The CAC meeting schedule will vary over time depending upon the specific BRT project needs, progress, and schedule. The desires of the CAC members to hold additional or fewer meetings will be taken into consideration by MCDOT in setting meeting schedules.

CAC Member Expectations

CAC members serve as advocates of the public involvement process for this project in their communities. CAC members are expected to encourage the voicing of diverse perspectives at CAC meetings as well as at community board meetings, local organization meetings, and on community listservs and social media. Many CAC members have been chosen by the communities they represent, and an important part of their responsibility is to be the liaison between the project team and their communities. CAC members are expected, when necessary, to make distinctions between their individual points of view and those of the constituents they serve or represent.

CAC members are expected to attend all meetings. If a CAC member is unable to attend a meeting of his or her own CAC, attendance at the meeting of a different CAC on the same BRT corridor during the same meeting series is permitted. Members should inform MCDOT in advance if they will be unable to attend or plan to attend the meeting of another CAC. MCDOT intends for representation on the CACs to be balanced; therefore, CAC members are limited to serve on only one CAC at any given time, each organization may only be directly represented by one CAC member per BRT corridor, and each CAC member should actively participate in only one meeting per meeting series on the BRT corridor. Members can request a substitute to serve in their place; however, individuals cannot serve as a substitute more than once in a meeting series. If a CAC member misses two or more consecutive meetings, MCDOT will reach out to the member to discuss and determine whether the member is still able to serve on the CAC.

CAC members, whenever possible, should seat themselves at the main table in the meeting room. Only CAC members (or their designated substitutes) may participate in the meeting. Other meeting attendees may be permitted, at the discretion of the facilitator, to ask questions at the end of the meeting.

⁴ See: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/brt/>

Additional Engagement Opportunities

As detailed in the PIP, CAC members will have the opportunity to request that the project team provide community updates outside of CAC meetings; these could be conducted at established community meetings or other events, and will be open to other members of the public to participate. Community updates will occur when deemed necessary and appropriate by MCDOT. They may involve discussion of an issue that is of interest to a local organization or group of residents.⁵ When information or a specific meeting is requested, the project team will need a reasonable period, as defined by MCDOT and the project team (in consultation with the requesting party), to research and prepare materials to ensure accurate and accessible materials are developed. Materials can be requested in alternative languages or ADA formats; the requesting party must provide adequate preparation time (at least seven business days advance notice).

CAC Meeting Schedule

The CAC meeting schedule (Table 1) aligns with the anticipated MD 355 BRT project schedule and overall public involvement program. At each meeting, CAC members will have an opportunity to review materials associated with the development of the project corridor including: operational planning for the BRT and local bus service along the corridor, multimodal access, the design of BRT stations, and project impacts. CAC meeting topics will be selected to fit within the project scope and will focus on the physical elements of the BRT project.

Table 1: CAC Program Schedule

Tentative Schedule	Anticipated Meeting Topics*
<i>CAC Meeting #11 – October 2017*</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Overview and Strategic Plan • Public involvement process • Defining the current project alternatives • Goals, objectives, and measures of effectiveness for evaluating alternatives
<i>CAC Meeting #12 – February 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local bus service planning • Station location criteria • Preliminary engineering
<i>CAC Meeting #13 – Summer 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MD 355 travel modeling • Stormwater management and treatment options • Bicycle and pedestrian issues and accommodations • Transit Signal Priority
<i>CAC Meeting #14 – Late 2018</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommended alternative, including the operations and service plan, and the Final Report • Outcomes from public involvement • Exchange of information between CACs • Environmental considerations • Explanation of next steps

**Note: All meeting dates/timeframes and topics are subject to adjustment due to project updates, meeting site availability, or other factors.*

⁵ See the MD 355 BRT Public Involvement Plan for additional information about Community Updates and other engagement opportunities.

CAC Meeting Format and Materials

CAC members will receive necessary meeting materials, via regular mail and/or e-mail, at least one week prior to the first scheduled CAC meeting and may receive additional materials prior to subsequent meetings. CAC members are expected to review the supportive program materials to ensure they are prepared to engage in informed discourse on the project at each meeting. Meeting presentation slides will not be distributed to CAC members prior to meetings, as the ability to update materials in the days prior to the meeting will help ensure they are based on the latest available information. Slides will be posted to the website following each meeting.

Meeting agendas will define the structure and schedule of each meeting. If activities are included on the agenda, a brief description of the activity will be provided. Informational handouts, if provided, may offer updates on project progress or other relevant information. At select times, requests may be made of CAC members to go to specific sites along the MD 355 corridor prior to the next meeting to review locations where project implementation will take place to provide a first-hand experience regarding existing conditions and to support visioning of future planning efforts. All necessary meeting materials will be available in a printed format at the meetings for distribution to members.

Meeting Objectives and Topics for the MD 355 CACs

The meeting schedule developed for each CAC meeting will be dynamic in nature, and as noted above, is subject to modification and update. The current CAC schedule (subject to meeting site availability) is proposed to cover the following subject areas and topics.

CAC #11: October 2017

Serving as the kick-off for this County-led phase of the project and the CAC Program Plan, the objectives of this meeting are to:

- Introduce (or reintroduce) MCDOT staff and project team staff
- Contextualize the current phase in the overall project process for the MD 355 BRT
- Clarify the objectives and scope of the current phase of the project
- Inform and gather feedback from members about the public involvement plan and process
- Set the stage for subsequent productive and engaging meetings
- As needed, allow CAC members to have their questions answered through conversations with the project team and MCDOT

The following activities are anticipated for this meeting:

- Introductions: The facilitator, project team members, and MCDOT staff will introduce themselves and explain their roles in the project. CAC members will introduce themselves to the project team and explain their interest in the project and the community groups, businesses or neighborhoods they represent. The facilitator will review the agenda for the meeting.
- Overview and Strategic Plan: A project team member will review the purpose and timeline for the overall MD 355 BRT project as well as the Strategic Plan for this phase of the project, which clarifies the objectives and scope. The team member will also explain the transfer of the project to MCDOT.

- Digital voting activity: The facilitator will engage CAC members in a real-time digital voting activity to help the project team understand CAC members' demographics, travel patterns, goals, and perceptions of BRT.
- Public involvement process: The facilitator will briefly engage the CAC members in reviewing the contents of the Public Involvement Plan and the CAC Program Plan, with an emphasis on the various opportunities for the project team to interact and exchange information with the public, stakeholders, and the CACs.
- Alternatives: A project team member will review the alternatives that will be evaluated in this phase of the project.
- Goals, Objectives, Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs): A project team member will discuss the goals, objectives, and MOEs that have been identified for evaluation of the alternatives and explain how and when they will be used. CAC members will have an opportunity to ask questions or provide comments regarding the goals, objectives, and MOEs.
- Next steps: The facilitator will summarize the project activities that are currently underway, identify next steps, review the draft agenda for the next meeting, provide key contact information, and remind CAC members about engagement opportunities anticipated for 2018.
- Adjourn: The project team will conclude the meeting on time, entertaining general questions if time allows. After the meeting adjourns, CAC members will be invited to speak to MCDOT staff and project team members to address any additional or specific questions.

CAC #12: February-March 2018

The objectives of this meeting are to:

- Update CAC members, and obtain feedback through interactive exercises, regarding public involvement activities, station location criteria and selection, service planning, and preliminary engineering
- Identify additional considerations, issues, or relevant stakeholders to incorporate into the process
- As needed, allow CAC members to have their questions answered through conversations with MCDOT staff and the project team

The following are anticipated agenda items and topics for activities, discussions, and reviews of materials at this meeting:

- Introductions and agenda overview
- Update on public involvement activities
- Local bus and BRT service planning
- Station location criteria and screening
- Preliminary engineering, with a focus on the geography of each CAC
- Next steps and agenda topics for the next meeting

CAC #13: Summer 2018

The objectives of this meeting are to:

- Update CAC members, and obtain feedback through interactive exercises, regarding public involvement activities, modeling, stormwater management (SWM) and treatment options, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, and Transit Signal Priority (TSP)

- Identify additional considerations, issues, or relevant stakeholders to incorporate into the process
- As needed, allow CAC members to have their questions answered through conversations with MCDOT staff and the project team

The following are anticipated agenda items and topics for activities, discussions, and reviews of materials at this meeting:

- Introductions and agenda overview
- Update on public involvement activities
- Modeling of the alternatives
- SWM and treatment options
- Bicycle and pedestrian issues and accommodations
- TSP
- Next steps and agenda topics for the next meeting

CAC #14: Late 2018

The objectives of this meeting are to:

- Review the recommended alternative with the CAC members and answer questions about the alternative and the process
- Explain and provide examples regarding how the public involvement process throughout the project influenced the recommended alternative and evaluation of the alternatives
- Foster communication between the members of different CACs to provide all CAC members with an understanding of the other CACs' activities and issues in other parts of the corridor
- Clarify the environmental documentation activities that have been completed and which environmental assessment activities will be part of the next project phase
- Explain the next steps and outlook for the project, and how the CACs will continue to remain involved
- As needed, allow CAC members to have their questions answered through conversations with MCDOT staff and the project team

The following are anticipated agenda items and topics for activities, discussions, and reviews of materials at this meeting:

- Introductions and agenda overview
- Recommended alternative
- Public involvement process and outcomes review and activity
- Engagement with other MD 355 CAC representatives
- Environmental considerations
- Next steps for the MD 355 BRT project