



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MEMORANDUM

April 20, 2009

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Glen Kreger, Acting Chief *GK*
Vision/Community Based Planning Division

Dan Hardy, Chief *DKH*
Move/Transportation Planning Division

FROM: Tom Autrey (301-495-4533), Supervisor, *DKH for*
Move/Transportation Planning Division

SUBJECT: I-270 / U.S. 15 / Corridor Cities Transitway Multi-Modal Corridor Study

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Discussion item only. This will be a project update by the Maryland Department of Transportation staff.

OVERVIEW

This agenda item is intended to provide the Planning Board with a summary of the I-270 / U.S. 15 / Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) Multi-Modal Corridor Study in advance of the scheduled release of the Alternatives Analysis / Environmental Assessment (AA/EA) later this spring.

THE PLANNING BOARD'S ROLE

The upcoming tentative milestone dates associated with this study and a related but separate analysis of an alternative alignment for the CCT in the Life Sciences area includes the following:

- May 2009 – AA /EA made available by Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
- Late May or Early June 2009 – Public Hearings Held On Study Findings
- Mid or Late July 2009 – Planned 60-Day Public Comment Period Ends

- Late Summer or Early Fall 2009 – Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) Completes Analysis of Alternative CCT Alignment in Life Sciences area.
- Fall 2009 – Locally Preferred Alternative For CCT Selected By State After Local Input

The staff is proposing a process for identifying County recommendations on the Locally Preferred Alternative for this study that is similar to that used in the review of the Purple Line Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) during the past several months.

Once the report is available in May, the staff will produce a staff memorandum with recommendations for the Planning Board to consider. It is the staff's intent to present the recommendations to the Planning Board prior to the close of the 60-day comment period (currently estimated to be in mid or late July). The recommendations would then be forwarded to the County Council Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy, and Environment Committee.

The staff analysis will address both the highway and transit components of the study. The recommendation related to the highway component may include a recommendation on a Locally Preferred Alternative. The staff feels at this point that any recommendation on a Locally Preferred Alternative for the CCT will be deferred until the review of the alternative alignment in the Life Sciences Center area is completed (see following paragraph). Any recommendations on the highway component would be used to inform our master plan work in the I-270 corridor.

In late summer or early fall, the MTA is scheduled to release its finding on the proposed alternative alignment for the CCT in the Life Sciences area. We will then prepare a brief review of that issue and present a recommendation to the Planning Board for consideration. The Planning Board recommendations on the alternative alignment for the CCT would be used to inform County Council work and deliberations on the Gaithersburg West Master Plan as well as the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative for the CCT by the state.

TODAY'S PRESENTATION

The scope of this study is large and that is the primary reason for this briefing in advance of the report release. The original DEIS was published in 2002. While public hearings were held, there was no decision on a preferred alternative. As previously noted, the study included both a highway component (e.g., additional lanes on I-270) and a transit component (the CCT). In 2003 MDOT made a decision to examine the concept of Express Toll Lanes (ETL's) as a new highway component and that decision required an update of the environmental document. It is the update (i.e., the AA/EA) that will be released this spring that is the focus of the today's briefing.

MDOT representatives expected to be present at the briefing include:

State Highway Administration

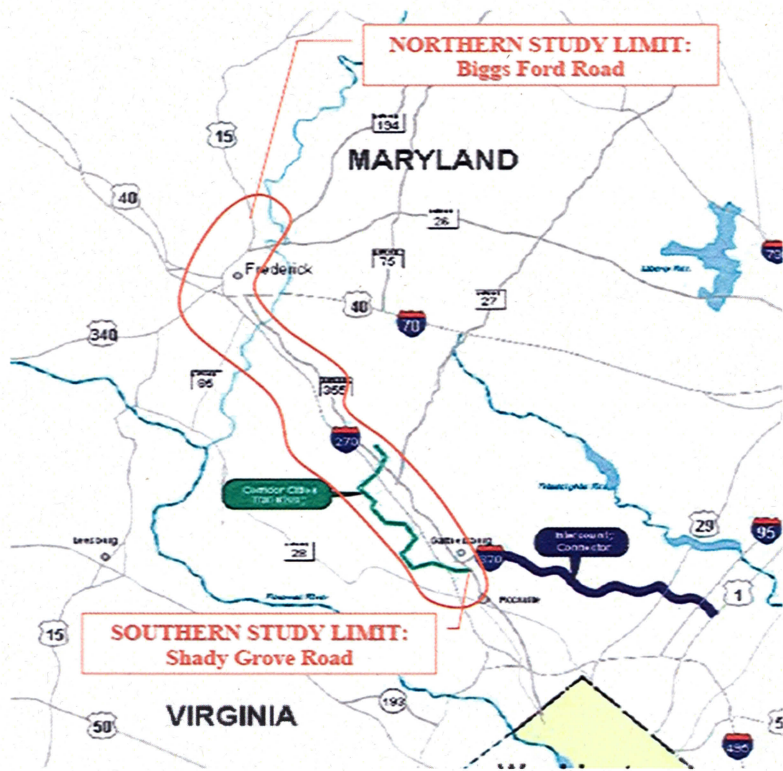
Greg Slater
Russ Anderson
Brian Horn (Consultant)

Mass Transit Administration

Diane Ratcliff
Rick Kiegel (Consultant)
Jennifer Weeks (Consultant)

THE STUDY AREA

The study area extends from I-370 and the Shady Grove Metrorail Station to the intersection of U.S. 15 and Biggs Ford Road in Frederick County. A map of the study area taken from a recent MDOT staff presentation is presented below:



THE ALTERNATIVES

There are a total of 13 different alternatives under consideration in the two studies (the 2002 study and the soon to be released AA/EA). The alternatives vary depending upon the highway configuration (number and type of lanes) and the transit alternative (Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail). The MDOT presentation will include more detail on the alternatives – including typical sections for each alternative. The project web site is also a good place to review the alternatives

under consideration and find additional information on the project in advance of the presentation. The web site can be found at:

<http://www.i270multimodalstudy.com/about-the-project>

A summary table of the alternatives follows with the “build alternatives” shaded in green. The alternatives that are described as “enhanced” involve alternatives that assume a number of lanes that exceeds that in current adopted master plans. The interchange at I-370 is the southernmost point of the highway improvements.

| | DEIS (2002) | | | AA/EA (2009) | | Notes On Montgomery County Segment |
|---|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|--|
| | Light Rail | Bus Rapid Transit | Premium Bus | Light Rail | Bus Rapid Transit | |
| Highway | | | | | | |
| No Build (Alt. 1) | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Improved Bus Service & Other Low Capital Intensive Improvements |
| Transportation System Management (TSM) (Alt. 2) | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Add HOV Lane Both Directions & SB Local Lanes |
| Master Plan HOV | Alt. 3A | Alt. 3B | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Add General Purpose Lane Both Directions & SB Local Lanes |
| Master Plan General Purpose Lane | Alt. 4A | Alt. 4B | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Add Both HOV Lane and General Purpose Lane in Each Direction – Along With SB Local Lanes |
| Enhanced Master Plan HOV & General Purpose Lane | Alt. 5A | Alt. 5B | Alt. 5C | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Two ETL Lanes In Each Direction & Four General Purpose Lanes In Each Direction |
| Enhanced Master Plan with One ETL | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Alt. 6A | Alt. 6B | Two ETL Lanes In Each Direction & Four General Purpose Lanes In Each Direction |
| Enhanced Master Plan with Two ETL | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Not Applicable | Alt. 7A | Alt. 7B | Two ETL Lanes In Each Direction & Four General Purpose Lanes In Each Direction |