



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB
Item No. 12
2-19-04

February 13, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeffrey Zyontz, ^{JK}Chief
Countywide Planning Division

John Carter, Chief
Community Planning Division

Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief ^{RCH}
Transportation Planning

FROM: Alex Hekimian: 301-495-4525, for the Park and Planning Department ^{AH}

SUBJECT: Bi-County Transitway Purpose and Need

RECOMMENDATION

Endorse staff's revised version of the Bi-County Transitway Purpose and Need document and transmit comments to the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA).

The MTA recently sent us a draft Bi-County Transitway Purpose and Need document for our agency's comments. Our Transportation Planning and Community Planning staffs have had an opportunity to review it and suggest revisions, which are incorporated into the revised draft that is attached. Staff recommends that the Planning Board endorse the revised draft and transmit it to MTA with any Board comments for MTA's use.

The Purpose and Need document is important because it sets the framework for evaluating future transit alternatives. Of particular note for the Board are the goals and objectives shown in Table 1 on page 2 of the Purpose and Need document. From them, more specific measures of effectiveness will be created and applied.

Staff notes that MTA's draft was generally adequate, but needed more emphasis on enhancing communities and ensuring that the project is eligible for future funding. Staff's suggested changes are already incorporated in Table 1 as well as in the body of the draft report. Although the document contains a lot of redundant paragraphs and could have been more concise, staff did not attempt to make major editorial changes to the format of the draft.

Between the time MTA completes the Purpose and Need document and Fall 2004, it will narrow down the range of transit alternatives that will be carried forward into the evaluation process through the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Testing (ARDS) process. Subsequently, MTA will fully analyze those alternatives and produce an Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement and select a Preferred Alternative by Spring 2006. After that step, MTA expects to complete Preliminary Engineering and the Final Environmental Impact Statement by Spring 2007.

MTA has conducted some community outreach in the early stages of the study. In September 2003, it held a series of four Scoping Meetings in Takoma Park, Bethesda, Silver Spring, and College Park to explain the study, show some possible alignments, and obtain feedback from the public. In October and November 2003, MTA met with the City of Takoma Park, City of New Carrollton, and University of Maryland to discuss the study and to receive comments on preferred alignments and transit mode options through their areas.

In Fall 2004, MTA will have a preliminary proposal on ARDS and will solicit comments, including holding several public meetings. In advance of the preliminary ARDS, our staff will make a recommendation to the Planning Board on the alternative alignments and modes that staff would like to see carried forward to detailed study. At that time, we will invite MTA to meet with the Board.

AH:kcw
Attachments