

CORRIDOR FORWARD: THE I-270 TRANSIT PLAN

WORK SESSION 1

Description

Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan offers a re-focused vision for the I-270 corridor. It proposes a transit network, which includes both a near-term network of dedicated bus lanes and an ambitious long-term recommendation for an extension of Metrorail's Red Line. The near-term network of dedicated bus lanes, known as the Corridor Connectors, builds on existing master-planned projects, including the MD 355 and Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit projects, to create a transit network that serves over 40 communities and employment centers along the corridor.

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SUMMARY

Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan contains an examination of and recommendations for a transit network to serve the I-270 corridor, and it includes both a near-term network of dedicated bus lanes and an ambitious long-term recommendation for an extension of Metrorail's Red Line. The near-term network of dedicated bus lanes builds on existing master planned projects, including the MD 355 and Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) projects to create a transit network that serves communities and employment centers along the I-270 corridor. The Public Hearing Draft Plan includes additional recommendations to support the proposed transit network as well as strengthen regional connectivity. Corridor Forward re-envisioned the master planned Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) as a network of more buildable dedicated bus lanes, known as the Corridor Connectors, which connect I-270 corridor communities to the county's existing and planned rapid transit network.

This Functional Master Plan is an amendment to the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* and the 2018 *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*. It also amends *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*, as amended, as well as several master and sector plans within the midcounty and upcounty communities.

The Working Draft of Corridor Forward: The I-270 Transit Plan was presented to the Planning Board on November 4, 2021. The Planning Board authorized staff to prepare the Public Hearing Draft and a public hearing was held on December 9, 2021 in the auditorium of the Planning Department at 2425 Reddie Drive in Wheaton, MD. During the public hearing, the Planning Board received public testimony on the Public Hearing Draft. A summary of the public testimony is attached to this memorandum.

During the first work session, staff will primarily discuss the following items with the Planning Board, based on the public testimony received to date:

- An overview of and rationale for the Plan's proposed network and supporting recommendations.
- The role of enhanced MARC Rail as a supporting recommendation.
- Recommended revisions for Planning Board consideration based on public testimony, including:
 - Support for transit service improvements, specifically the Great Seneca Transit Network and bus service in the I-270 managed lanes.
 - Revisions to the Roadway and Transitway Recommendations Table (Table 11, pages 38-40) to reflect the Complete Streets Design Guide.

- Modifications to recommendations to enhance transit’s competitiveness (Table 15, page 45).
- Additional maps and revisions to existing maps to 1) reflect other ongoing projects (e.g., North Bethesda Transitway) and 2) compare the proposed network to the master planned Corridor Cities Transitway alignment.
- Revisions to Plan text and tables based on public testimony received, including an overview of different transit modes and their characteristics and clarification of jurisdictions’ planning authority in the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg.
- Potential revisions to address comments from transportation agency stakeholders, including but not limited to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MD SHA).

Additional topics may be discussed relevant to feedback from jurisdiction and agency stakeholders, as appropriate.

SCHEDULE

Key milestones in the Corridor Forward process include the following:

- October 7, 2021 Preliminary Recommendations presented to the Planning Board
- November 4, 2021 Working Draft presented to the Planning Board
- December 9, 2021 Planning Board Public Hearing
- December 16, 2021 Planning Board Work Session # 1
- December 23, 2021 Planning Board Work Session #2

Staff anticipates reviewing all substantive edits with the Planning Board during the second work session on December 23 and requesting that the Planning Board vote to transmit the Planning Board Draft to the County Council.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Summary of Public Comments

Attachment 2: Public Comments Received