



Area Advisory Committee Three Meeting #7 Summary
Monday, March 30, 2015, 6:30 pm
Ingleside at King Farm
701 King Farm Blvd
Rockville, MD 20850

Members

Marcia Bond	Timothy McDonald
Kevin Johnson	Arlene Robinson
Alan Kaplan	Fred Samadani
Marilyn Leist	Mel Willis

Apologies

Gerald Calderone	C. Scott Maravilla
Martin Mankowski	Gail Sherman

Staff

Facilitator – Traceé Strum-Gilliam	City of Rockville – Katie Mencarini
Station Architect – John Bull, Todd Connelly, Kyle Kramer	Montgomery County DOT – Joana Conklin
Traffic Engineer – Kevin Permisohn	WMATA - Robin McElhenny- Smith
Environmental Task Lead – Eric Almquist	M-NCPPC -Nkosi Yearwood
Segment Engineer – Allison Berkheimer	Project Staff – Kyle Nembhard
Public Involvement Task Lead – Crystal Saunders	Logistics Staff – Lineta Duren

General Public

Steve Kronheim

Handouts:

Meeting packets included: Meeting Agenda, Meeting #5 Summary, Environmental Planning presentation, and Stations Architecture Boards.

Introductions and Overview:

Facilitator **Traceé Strum-Gilliam** welcomed the group to the seventh AAC Three meeting. She also acknowledged the difficulties in keeping up with the meeting topics as a result of inclement weather and re-scheduled meetings. Traceé noted the room change and said that staff was waiting at the entrance of the other room to direct members to the new meeting location.

Traceé provided an overview of the agenda as well as expectations for the evening's meeting. Traceé explained the purpose of this meeting is to discuss both the environmental process as well as the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) process. She noted that some questions that were asked in previous meetings will be addressed by Eric's presentation.

Traceé then asked the members to introduce themselves for the benefit of some new members – she also requested that the visitors to introduce themselves.

Environmental Planning

Eric Almquist, Environmental Lead, introduced himself and encouraged the group to ask questions as they come up during his presentation. He assured the group that he will do his best to address comments and questions people have.

The group was shown a copy of the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) document which was recently submitted to FTA for review. Eric stated that there are 28 resources evaluated in the environmental document. He then explained the definition of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the requirements that the CCT project has to follow so that it can be in compliance with the federal law. Eric then mentioned that the CCT project is completing the EA along with a Section 4(f) document. Eric estimated that May will be the target timeframe for the release of the environmental document to the public.

Eric discussed in more detail how the Section 4(f) document involves studying the project's effects on historic properties and parklands and how it satisfies a separate law. He also explained that the document covers Phase I of the project and identified FTA as the lead federal agency.

Eric began to walk through the various sections of the Environmental Assessment document including:

- **Purpose and Need** - basis in which the alternatives are developed.
- **Alternatives Considered** - traces the decision making process over the life of the project.
- **Environmental Resources and Consequences** - documents the details on the effect of the CCT project on various environmental features. This is considered "the meat of the document."
- **Public Involvement** - outlines all of the public outreach efforts conducted with communities along the project corridor.
- **Alternatives Evaluated** compares the alternatives and impacts associated with each. The No-build alternative acts as the basis for evaluating the build alternative. Eric also explained the assumptions associated with the build alternative.
- **Socioeconomic Resources** demonstrate how community concerns were handled. Eric explained that the document identifies direct and indirect effects as well as community resources and land use designations and the CCT's effect on these resources.

Eric discussed visual impacts and how the EA accounts for them.

Eric described the Environmental Justice section and how it describes the locations of low-income and minority communities and assesses the potential for direct adverse effects. He also noted that providing mobility for the citizens would be counted as a positive affect for these communities.

Eric walked through the evaluation of historic architecture in the project area including archeological studies. He also noted that four properties are on the register of historic properties including: NIST, B&O Railroad, England Crown Farm and Belward Farm.

Eric described the evaluation of direct impacts on natural resources as the analysis of affects to: trees, wetlands, streams and flood plains. He noted that this analysis allows the project team to determine how to address these impacts.

Eric said the project team has identified two displacements as a result of the CCT project. He explained that indirect effects include scenarios such as the project's affect on businesses. He further noted that one business will be affected.

Eric also noted that two parkland areas along Great Seneca Highway would be impacted by a partial or sliver taking of property. Additionally, he discussed that according to Section 106 regulations; the project has to consider Belward Farm as a historic resource that would be adversely impacted by the project as the property will be bisected by the CCT.

A discussion regarding tree replacement was initiated by a member. Eric explained that a 1-to-1 replacement of trees is not guaranteed, especially for large trees. He also noted that in some cases, a number of smaller trees may replace one large tree. The Maryland Forest Conservation Guide was used as a reference for the project team, when dealing with tree replacements. It was also noted that the project team has to comply with three different jurisdictions including the State of Maryland and the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg. Collectively, the group wanted to verify if the tree replacement policy would apply to King Farm Boulevard. Eric noted that the project team would attempt to replace each tree where it is removed or as close to the original site as possible.

Eric began to discuss how noise is analyzed and the effects on the nearby communities. He noted that the sound impacts are mainly found along the Muddy Branch Road and Great Seneca Highway corridors. He described the differences between ground-borne and air borne noise and vibration as well as explained how noise impacts are determined based on existing noise and how the addition of the CCT would fit into that context. For example, if the existing environment is quieter, the sensitivity of that site is greater versus an area that sees regular noise activity. Finally, Eric noted that this level of analysis helps determine how to mitigate noise impacts.

The group inquired about how construction impacts are accounted for with regards to noise and vibration. Eric cited adhering to local area sound ordinances as well as how the timing of construction impacts noise. Another factor is where the noise and vibration would be contained.

The point of assessing buildings before and/or after construction and the affect of construction on those buildings was also raised. Eric explained how early vibration analysis would inform whether or not buildings would have to be assessed. Traceé also iterated that no vibration impacts were identified on the project.

There was skepticism about the methodology of the noise and vibration analysis and Eric used an arbitrary example to answer the member's question. He reiterated that the impact is based on the existing noise levels which influence the threshold. Another member added and clarified that the

sound measurement is not additive. Traceé explained further that the areas with the moderate impacts included additional components such as roadway traffic and geometry, proximity of the transitway and vehicles using the transitway. There was an additional question about the type of buses being used for the transitway and whether or not they would be similar to the Ride On buses in service today. Diesel electric hybrid buses are proposed to be used along the transitway.

The timeframe in which noise measurements were taken was inquired about. Eric explained that the measurements are typically taken during a normal day and how they prefer not to be out on the loudest day as it would actually imply that there is less of an impact on the community as opposed to the quietest day which would suggest a much larger impact on the project. He also explained that a 24 hour measurement is taken and averaged out. Eric then discussed that the threshold is set by the surrounding environment and varies from different locations explaining that there is a different criteria (the relationship between a measure of exposure – sound or vibration level - and its corresponding effect) for each threshold.

The group was interested in the decibel readings along King Farm Boulevard. As such, Eric referenced the noise impact summary in the EA showing the results of the analysis. It was suggested that a spike in noise could be read near the station. The concern is that the windows in the homes facing King Farm Boulevard are not sound proof. Eric then clarified the readings are based on outdoor readings as opposed to indoor readings. He also noted that the model accounts for the station, speed, headways and span of service when assessing noise impacts.

Eric discussed air quality and how it is assessed as it relates to the CCT and operations. He stated that buses do better than single occupant vehicles when it comes to air quality and as such, there would be no negative impacts anticipated because of the CCT. Eric noted the same would be done for energy.

In response to a question about air quality and short-term effects, Eric explained how an opening year of service is determined in addition to a full year build out. It was also asked if overhead catenary was considered and Eric noted that it was not considered in this study.

Eric mentioned that indirect and cumulative effects look at long term effects on the economy, in consideration with other elements.

Eric wrapped up the environmental discussion by explaining the next steps in the project - providing comments on the EA by attending the hearing, submitting written comments or providing testimony. He also noted that a comment summary will be prepared as a result of the public comment period.

Traceé reiterated the responsibility of the group members to encourage their community members to participate in the public hearing and comment period.

A member asked how an archeology study was conducted. Eric explained that a literature review is conducted from historical documents and then shovel test pits are conducted to search for artifacts. He then stated that areas that have been disturbed are less likely to be investigated. Also, if the site is in a wetland, the possibility of habitat is limited. Eric encouraged the members to review the two archeological investigation reports that are located on the CCT website. Finally, Eric explained that mapping is not made readily available to avoid scavengers from attempting to dig and encroach upon the sites to “steal” artifacts.

It was asked the likelihood that the CCT team will receive FTA comments by April. The team noted that it is not the MTA’s position to hold meetings over the summer – meetings are not typically held later than the second week in June. **Joana Conklin**, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, also expressed concern of holding a public hearing over the summer. Finally, each day of delay in comments from FTA increases the likelihood of a schedule slip and subsequently a September meeting.

In response to a question about FTA’s authority in approving the advancement of the project, Eric explained that FTA determines if a project meets the requirements of NEPA but ultimately it is the MTA and the State of Maryland that makes the decision on whether or not to advance a project. Eric also mentioned that the public comment period is the aspect that members of the public have most influence on. Eric did identify areas that FTA does have authority over the project by explaining how FTA has given permission to MTA to evaluate two alternatives including the No-build and the build alternatives.

Station Design:

Kyle Kramer, Stations Architect Lead, recapped the previous AAC meeting 5 where stations were presented and how the team addressed comments that were received by AAC Three as well as the other two AACs. Kyle asked the members to consider that the goal of the architecture team is to develop a concept that represents the premium service the CCT provides. Key to the design process is interaction with stakeholders, the project engineering team, and the community participants.

Kyle reviewed the helix concept and informed the members that the team is advancing forward with that station design. He explained that the helix option was a bit more dynamic and flexible and better suited to meet some of the polar opinions of the communities including the ability for the station to stand out or blend in. Kyle also described how the canopy for the helix will not extend over the transitway as extending it would require the height to increase and provide less coverage for passengers. In response to a question about drainage associated with the canopy, Kyle explained that gutters are located along the canopy edge, and drain into the columns.

Kyle noted that there was no vote or consensus on which concept was selected. However, he explained that some elements from the framework concept that received positive comments from AAC members were incorporated into the revised helix concept that was presented. He also

explained that safety was a consideration for the design and noted that previous comments suggested that the framework option was better for safety due to the barrier and perimeter walls. Landscaping and green through the station was another component that was favored in the framework concept.

Traceé wanted to make sure that the group understood why the helix concept was selected over the framework concept. She reiterated that some of the elements that were included in the framework concept could be included in the helix option. She also explained how the intent was to create something visual and unique. Finally, Traceé emphasized how the group's comments were incorporated into the selected, revised helix design.

It was noted by a member that the East Gaither station area is unique due to the presence of the condominium on the north side of King Farm Boulevard versus the commercial area to the south. A member asked if up lighting from the station would be an issue. Kyle noted that lighting would be focused on the platform. There was concern for spill-over lighting into nearby homes but Kyle noted that the team had just started working on lighting and didn't have much detail at present. It was also noted that the interiors of the condominiums to the north are configured so that the living space is on the second floor of each unit not the lower floor.

Kyle discussed the different variations of the CCT stations along the 9-mile corridor. He started by explaining how the DANAC station is the only location where the CCT is served by a side – platform station. Kyle also pointed out that the Kentlands station is the largest station in the CCT due to its aerial nature. He explained that additional features were incorporated to accommodate the different station types as well as to give them a sense of presence.

Kyle took some time to talk about the Metropolitan Grove station elements. He noted that a large portion of the ridership is coming from the Watkins Mill development and how 40 to 50 percent of riders will be entering to the north of the station location. Kyle also discussed the addition of a pedestrian bridge to carry passengers over the CSX tracks and connect the Watkins Mill development with the CCT and MARC trains. He explained that the bridge was added to address safety concerns as well as CSX's requirements for station improvements at or near its facilities.

It was asked if UV protection was incorporated into the station panels. Kyle explained that the intention for the station is that it will have some sort of sun protection. However the drawing is attempting to emphasize the pattern of the helix. The extent of shading provided by the station canopies is currently being developed.

There were questions raised about green roof and heating elements associated with the platform shelters. It was noted that the O&M site has the potential to include a green roof but the stations do not. There was also concern about the reflection of sunlight into multi-story homes as a result of the glass canopy.

The team explained that the size of the platform shelters is not determined by station ridership. Rather they will be one size for each of the stations with the exception of the USG and Traville Gateway Drive stations. It was noted that these two stations would be shorter to accommodate one bus and served by buses every 15 minutes.

A concern about splash from vehicles hitting puddles at stations was raised. It was suggested that the design team incorporate the prevention of puddle formation at the stations. The design team noted that the busway would be designed to prevent puddles at the station. Additionally it was recommended that the CCT team consider climate change. In response, Traceé explained how the project is considering 100 year floodplains.

The difference in the length of the platforms was inquired about. Kyle noted that the two sidewalk stations are 70' long and the remaining stations are 150' at this time. It was suggested that smaller size stations be considered for King Farm Boulevard in order to maintain more green area in the median. Additionally, it was asked what scenarios would warrant more than one bus to be docked at a station and the likelihood of that occurring. Traceé cited CCT project manager, **Rick Kiegel's**, earlier comments about it being easier to build the full station now than trying to retrofit later. She also noted that the stations are built for the 2035 projections.

General Discussion/Closing:

Traceé noted that even though the next meeting is the last meeting for the foreseeable future, AAC Three would likely reconvene at a later phase in the project as needed. She asked the members to be prepared as the team may reach out to them again as the project advances.

Traceé turned the floor over to **Crystal Saunders**, Public Involvement Lead, to follow-up with the group about outstanding items from Chris Bell's presentation. Crystal addressed the questions about the East Gaither Station and she explained that there were a projected 47 passengers boarding the CCT at East Gaither in the AM Peak for 2020. It was suggested by a member that the East Gaither station size is exaggerated.

There was a question about a comparison to the King Farm shuttle ridership and Crystal noted that there was a general number used but no solid numbers were provided. Traceé noted that Chris mentioned that the King Farm Shuttle was in the model but he did not have the exact numbers. It was recommended that the next meeting include a discussion of comparable King Farm ridership. It was also requested that the on/off data be compared and presented to the AAC. It was observed that the West Gaither station numbers are higher than expected as it was observed that the 2020 projection shows 502 passengers boarding and alighting at this station.

Traceé reiterated Chris Bell's request for the King Farm shuttle numbers. Traceé then explained how on/off include people throughout the system and not just riders who live within the King

Farm area. Finally, Traceé identified the Irvington Commercial center development plans as a contributing factor to the high ridership at West Gaither.

It was noted that the King Farm shuttle system is well organized with bus plans. One member stated that the shuttle drops people off and picks people up at the door. It was also suggested that no one will pay to take the CCT when they have the option to use the King Farm shuttle. Another member noted that the King Farm shuttle service stops at 7:30pm, does not run on the weekends and does not provide the level of service that the CCT service is proposing.

It was observed that most people living in and around King Farm work downtown. Another member observed that the 2020 numbers are “ambitious”. **Joana Conklin**, Montgomery County Department of Transportation suggested that 2035 numbers should be presented in addition to the 2020 projections.

It was asked if the same model was used for Inter-County Connector (ICC). Traceé explained that the current model includes ICC but noted that ICC used a different year. It was suggested that a credibility check be run on the model and determine if the ICC lived up to the expectation. Traceé noted that ICC has not reached its build year (2030/2035) and so such a check would not be able to be done until then. Traceé also encouraged the group to look forward and try not to think of what currently exists. Traceé reiterated that the MWCOG model which is approved by FTA was used for this analysis as well as inputs from the county. She also noted that the outputs are not based on what the project team would particularly do.

There was a discussion of interpretation of the origin and destination of CCT users as it related to King Farm. It was also noted that passengers will be originating and destined to places outside of King Farm. It was stated that there is little room left to develop King Farm and build out the rest of the area will not increase the ridership from the King Farm community. There was a general agreement about the ridership pattern for West Gaither but still no consensus on the East Gaither Station.

A member asked if more development at Shady Grove can be expected and **Robin McElhenny-Smith** confirmed that there are plans for development at the Shady Grove station. A member also asked if development plans could be discussed in the next meeting during the Shady Grove Metro presentation. There were questions about joint development considerations on the west side of the station. Robin noted that there is no timeframe for development but many things are being taken into account, including the CCT. It was acknowledged by AAC members that additional development was proposed along Crabbs Branch Way and it was noted by Traceé that the model used by the team incorporates this information.

In response to a question raised at the previous AAC Three meeting regarding the status of the project, Traceé noted that all major transit projects are being reviewed by Governor Larry Hogan. She noted that the likelihood of this project getting stopped is lower due to its relatively

lower cost and fewer impacts. The team hopes to know by July 1, 2015 where the project stands with the Governor. Traceé reminded everyone that the project is not currently funded for construction.

Next Meeting

Traceé noted the group's preference for early June for the next meeting. The meeting will include a presentation from Robin McElhenny-Smith regarding the Shady Grove Metro Station as well as additional discussion about travel forecasting and the ridership projections as it relates to King Farm.

Traceé also noted that the team will follow up with questions on funding, cost and construction as well as the Governor's review of the CCT. **Allison Berkheimer**, Segment Engineer added that the team will hope to have coordination with fire and rescue, typical sections, etc. by the next meeting as well.

She assured the group that the team is listening and extended the team's availability via email, phone call or conference call for any additional follow-ups.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

###