



Section 200 Focus Group Meeting #4 Minutes

MEETING DATE May 17, 2007
 TIME: 6:30 pm
 PLACE: HEAT Center, Aberdeen

Attendees:

NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL	AFFILIATION
Gene Bandy	410-732-9573	gbandy@baltometro.org	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Pat Barth	410-679-5478	barthponyfarm@aol.com	District A Advisory Committee
Janet Gleisner	410-638-3230	jgleisner@co.ha.md.us	Harford Cty. Dept. of Planning and Zoning
D. Sgt. George Gooding (for Lt. Reider)	410-537-1150	breider@mdsp.org	Maryland State Police
John Mettee III	410-838-7900	jvm@fredward.com	Army Alliance
Judy Rose	410-676-9318	Joppajudy@msn.com	Little Gunpowder Improvement Association
Jeff Springer		springjkl@comcast.net	Governor's Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee
Sgt. Joe Van Seeters	410-692-7872	vanseetersj@harfordsheriff.org	Harford Cty. Sheriff's Office
Melissa Williams	410-537-5651	Mwilliams9@mdta.state.md.us	Maryland Transportation Authority
Walid Saffouri		wsaffouri@mdta.state.md.us	Maryland Transportation Authority
Teri Moss	410-537-1021	tmoss@mdta.state.md.us	Maryland Transportation Authority
Steven Swarr	410-329-3100	SSwarr@jmt.com	Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
Brian Riffel	443-224-1621	briffel@wrallp.com	Whitman Requardt & Associates
Mark Roberts	443-224-1573	mroberts@wrallp.com	Whitman Requardt & Associates
Mike Rothenheber	410-329-3100	MRothenheber@jmt.com	Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
Linda Moreland	302-366-0227	moreland@remline.com	Remline Corp

Welcome and Introductions

Melissa Williams opened the meeting by playing a video that was produced for the I-95 Express Toll Lanes (Section 100). The video showed how the ETLs will work and how they will benefit motorists.

Linda Moreland reviewed the role and responsibilities of the working group.

Ms. Williams reviewed the project's purpose and need.



Schedule for Other Area Improvements

Ms. Williams brought the group up-to-date on the schedule for other improvements in the area – the MD 152 Park and Ride Expansion and the MD 24/MD 924 Interchange.

152 Park and Ride Expansion – This project calls for the expansion and resurfacing of the southern lot and resurfacing of the northern lot. The park and ride lots will not be closed during the expansion, however there will be pieces of the lots that will be closed at times. Expansion efforts have already begun. Capacity will increase from 205 spaces to 316 spaces. Construction is expected to be completed in about 4 months.

MD 24/MD 924 Interchange – The project team has received several e-mails about the schedule of this project, so Ms. Williams provided a brief explanation. The first phase of the project to help ease congestion in this area will involve the construction of MD 24 over MD 924. Notice to proceed for construction is expected on June 30. Construction should be completed in the Fall of 2009. This is phase 1 only. Phase 2 will be part of the Section 200 project.

I-95 Growth Patterns and Projections

As requested at the last Focus Group meeting, Mike Rothenheber provided information on I-95 growth patterns and projections. Users of I-95 include daily commuters, those making local trips, regional users, and truckers. Fridays have the highest traffic volumes due to commuters and weekend travelers. He explained that the project team is obligated to use the Baltimore Metropolitan Council's regional traffic model, which includes input from each of the different counties.

Mr. Rothenheber discussed the average daily traffic (ADT) volumes prior to BRAC. The data showed that the ADT numbers are going up with over a 40% increase at all locations. Other information from the BMC model that was discussed included: 45,232 jobs being brought in by BRAC with 25,312 new households.

The adopted model when Section 200 was initiated looked at the year 2030 without BRAC. At the time, the project team estimated the impact of BRAC and was actually very close. The new model from the BMC uses the year 2035 and includes BRAC. BRAC's impact shows only a 4-10 % increase in the regular daily traffic.

While BRAC has a significant influence on the Baltimore/Harford/Cecil Region, the impact will be far greater on local highways and roadways and less on I-95.

Criteria Utilized in Developing Concepts

Mr. Rothenheber explained the criteria used to develop the concepts for Section 200.

Traffic Operations and Safety – The team has developed peak hour traffic volumes for the forecasted years. Level of service (LOS) was calculated for all traffic movements including merging and diverging, weaving, signalized intersections and queueing. In addition, the team also evaluated crash information for the project area.



Bicycle/Pedestrian Operations and Safety – Brian Riffel told the group that bicycles and pedestrians are prohibited by law on I-95. The MdTA believes that access across I-95 is important and is working to ensure that bicycle and pedestrian access across I-95 at the interchanges and the overpasses meets or exceed all state and federal policies.

Mr. Riffel explained that all interchanges will have 12' travel lanes with 8' shoulders and 5' sidewalks on both sides. At the ramps coming off of I-95, the team will look closely for conflicts with bicycles. Intersections will be designed to be as compact as possible, which will help to ensure that cars and bikes can see each other better. In the instances where there are ramps with high traffic demand, the intersections may not be signalized in order to help traffic flow better. In that instance, MdTA would use a near minimum turning design which will help reduce the speed of traveling vehicles.

Mr. Riffel said the project team is also looking at overpasses on county and state roads. Proposed features to make them safer for bicycles and pedestrians include 15' shared roadway lanes and 5' sidewalks on both sides of the overpass.

At the MD 24 interchange which has high speed, high volume ramps, the team is looking at alternative concepts where bikes can get across the interchange and out of the mix of traffic. Two options are being considered – Woodsdale Road Option and Winter's Run Option.

Woodsdale Road Option – Mr. Riffel explained that this option includes a shared use path between MD 24 and Waldon Road, with a shared roadway along Waldon Road. This option requires a 14' wide pedestrian and bicycle shared use bridge over I-95 with shoulder bike lanes on Woodsdale Road.

Winter's Run Option – The I-95 bridge over Winter's Run needs to be reconstructed and lengthened to accommodate the flood plain. Therefore there is sufficient space for the addition of a shared use path along Winter's Run under I-95. Winter's Run is more scenic and safer than traveling along MD 24. This option would include a shoulder bike lane along MD 7 with a shared use path between MD 7 and Tollgate Road.

Engineering Regulations

Mr. Riffel explained that designs for Section 200 are based on AASHTO – A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets. This will insure that roadways are consistent in all areas. AASHTO provides guidance on:

- Lane and shoulder widths
- Design speeds based on facility type
- Roadway curves and grades
- Entrance, exit and weave lane lengths
- Sight distances
- Traffic control – signing, pavement markings and signals
- Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations



Resources

Mike Rothenheber spoke to the group about all the resources that will need to be looked at for impacts for each alternative. These include:

- Natural environmental
- Historic/archaeological
- Parks and cultural facilities
- Noise
- Air Properties and buildings

We have taken all of the criteria – traffic operations and safety, bicycle/pedestrian operations and safety, engineering regulations and resources – and narrowed down our options. There is no one perfect solution.

Mainline Alternates and Interchange Options

Brian Riffel introduced and explained each of the options currently being considered for Section 200:

- No-Build
- General Purpose Lanes (GPLs)
- Express Toll Lanes (ETLs)

The GPLs have different interchange options than the ETLs.

MD 152 No Build Option – Mr. Riffel pointed out the significant features of the existing interchange. The park and ride is located within the interchange. There is a water transmission line in the project area that is only 4-5 feet below the ground, which will present some challenges in relocating the pipe. There is significant development in all the interchange quadrants. Old Mountain Road crosses I-95 within the interchange and there are several intersections. There is also a fire station with helipad close by.

MD 152 GPL Option 1 – This option will involve reconstructing ramps and overpasses. For safety reasons, Old Mountain Road will become a culdesac. The new ramps will have additional lanes where they cross Old Mountain Road, therefore there will not be an intersection on the ramp. There is the potential to put the park and ride back in the same location, although nothing has been decided at this time. There will be 8' shoulders along MD 152 and across the overpass to help accommodate bicycles. There will also be improvements at MD 7 to help increase the efficiency of the intersection.

MD 152 GPL Option 4 – This is similar to Option 1, but a loop ramp has been added to accommodate higher volume and traffic movement. This will make the footprint of the interchange larger. There will also be improvements at MD 7 to help increase the efficiency of the intersection.



Questions/Concerns:

- John Mettee asked if they were to assume that improvements would be made to the park and ride. Mr. Rothenheber explained that park and ride improvements will be done. The park and ride by the ramp is not a conducive layout because it is long and narrow. MdTA owns it so it is still being looked at as an option, but the team is also looking at property along MD 152 for a park and ride. Mr. Mettee replied that he liked the ramp location because of the one access point.
- Sgt. Joe Van Seeters asked if buses could stop in the middle of the lot so people getting out of cars can get to them easier. Mr. Rothenheber said when that happens, cars will pull out in front of the buses and slow them down.
- Judy Rose expressed concern about changing the park and ride because it works fine the way it is. The interchange works fine for fire department access. She stated that if Old Mountain Road is turned into a culdesac, there will need to be another signal. This is the best park and ride along I-95. Ms. Williams explained that with this option I-95 will be wider, which will impact the park and ride and take away some of the parking spots. One way to address this is to shift the lot or put it in another location.
- Pat Barth asked if MdTA owns additional property where the loop would be located. Mr. Rothenheber replied that there would be some right of way required.

MD 152 ETL Option 1A – This option would be similar to MD 152 GPL Option 1 with the addition of median ramps to accommodate movements to and from the ETLs and an intersection between MD 152 and the median ramps. This option would result in Old Mountain Road becoming a culdesac on both sides and a relocation of the park and ride lot. There will also be improvements at MD 7 to help increase the efficiency of the intersection.

MD 152 ETL Option 4A – This option would be similar to MD 152 GPL Option 4 with the addition of median ramps to accommodate movements to and from the ETLs and an intersection between MD 152 and the median ramps. A loop ramp would be included for higher traffic flow. There will be no park and ride in the ramp area. There will also be improvements at MD 7 to help increase the efficiency of the intersection.

MD 152 ETL Option 4B – This option utilizes ETL flyover ramps over the GPLs, which then tie into the ramps from the GPLs. This is the only option with flyovers. A flyover will result in a larger footprint and will have more impacts to the community. It will only have two signals, where the others have three. The cost will also be larger because of the bridges. There will also be improvements at MD 7 to help increase the efficiency of the intersection.

Questions/Concerns:

- Gene Bandy asked if the traffic flow would move better using this option. Mr. Rothenheber replied that it would, but this option is more expensive, and has impacts to the community and environmental impacts.



- Ms. Rose asked if there was cost breakdown for each option. Mr. Rothenheber said that the team is still in the process of developing costs and expects to have numbers in the fall. Ms. Rose noted that in the MD 24 area, people are wanting mass transit and light rail. Mr. Rothenheber explained that the Maryland Transit Administration is looking at the park and rides and at Marc expansion.

MD 24 No-Build – Mr. Rothenheber explained that some of the big traffic issues at this interchange are the congestion at MD 24 and MD 924, weaving at Tollgate Road and MD 924, and the loop ramp. MD 24/MD 924 Phase 1 improvements will not be impacted by construction of either the GPL or ETL options at this interchange.

MD 24 GPL Option 2 –The highest traffic volume maneuver at this interchange is from I-95 NB to MD 24 NB or to Tollgate Road and MD 924. This option includes an unimpeded 2-lane flyover ramp connecting to MD 24 NB or MD 924.

Questions/Concerns:

- Jeff Springer asked about the additional left lane. He stated that the current traffic volume exceeds the storage by far. There are people who want to make a left turn. By adding the lane, you are decreasing the existing storage volume. Mr. Rothenheber explained that the congestion that exists today is largely due to stopping at MD 24. This option allows the signals to work better because the MD 24 through traffic will not be in the mix.
- Sgt. Van Seeters inquired whether the county has any plans to fix Tollgate Road. Mr. Rothenheber said there was nothing on the books at this time.

MD 24 ETL Option 2 – This option would be similar to MD 24 GPL Option 2 with the addition of median ramps to accommodate movements to and from the ETLs and an intersection between MD 24 and the median ramps.

Questions/Concerns:

- Mr. Bandy asked if the MD 24 bridge would be rebuilt as part of this project or as part of Phase 1. Mr. Rothenheber explained that there will be a little bridge widening on Phase 1 and barriers will be put in. The southbound bridge will not be touched. Phase 2 will replace both bridges to widen I-95.
- Ms. Rose inquired whether there would be a bike path across MD 24 because a lot of people use it to get to stores. Mr. Rothenheber replied that there will be extra wide outside lanes.

MD 543 No-Build Option – The existing interchange is a diamond configuration. The intersection of MD 543 and the I-95 NB ramps is located close to the intersection of MD 543 and MD 7. This proximity causes traffic congestion today.



MD 543 GPL Option 1 – This option will utilize a diamond configuration which will tie the ramps closer to I-95, creating more distance between MD 7 and I-95.

Questions/Concerns:

- Mr. Springer asked if there would be shoulders for bikes. Mr. Riffel explained that improvements would have full 8' shoulders on both sides.

MD 543 GPL Option 7 - The difference between this option and option 1 is that it includes a loop ramp from MD 543 north to I-95 south where the highest traffic movements occur.

Questions/Concerns:

- Sgt. Van Seeters stated that he thought this was a better option because it helps get people to I-95 a lot easier.
- Ms. Rose inquired about the park and. Mr. Riffel explained that there will be no impacts to the park and ride. The park and ride is underutilized, but MdTA will try and get it signed a little better to let people know it is there. Ms. Rose asked if the study will accommodate truck parking. Many local residents need a safe place to park their trucks. Mr. Riffel said that truck parking is part of the redesigned Maryland House and Chesapeake House project.
- Janet Gleisner asked if the team was taking into consideration an expansion of MD 7. Mr. Rothenheber said that it is not currently on the master plan so it cannot be taken into consideration.

MD 543 ETL Option 6A – This option would be similar to MD 543 ETL Option 7A with the addition of a loop ramp for traffic from I-95 NB to MD 543 NB.

MD 543 ETL Option 7A – This option would be similar to MD 543 GPL Option 7 with the addition of median ramps to accommodate movements to and from the ETLs and an intersection between MD 543 and the median ramps.

Questions/Concerns:

- Mr. Springer asked why they did not use a tighter diamond. Mr. Rothenheber explained that when the ETL come in the center, additional storage area is needed. Mr. Riffel said is it was tighter, the three signals would be too close together.
- Ms. Gleisner asked how this option will address major truck back ups and weaving from MD 7. Sgt. Van Seeters also expressed concern about the number of truck and weaving.



Mr. Rothenheber said the loop ramp would help to address that. Ms. Gleisner stated that the team needs to resolve how area roads will be improved and how it will affect the area.

Maryland House – Mr. Riffel told the group that an additional GPL lane would be added to I-95 north on MD 543 in the Maryland House. The new Maryland House would remain a left enter and exit facility.

MD 22 No-Build Option – The existing interchange will meet any future traffic projections including BRAC. The existing interchange is a partial cloverleaf design with collector-distributor roads along I-95. The interchange was constructed to allow the addition of the two remaining loop ramps to become a full cloverleaf interchange.

MD 22 GPL Option 1 – Through this interchange the additional lanes along I-95 will be accommodated within the existing median and the will fit under the MD 22 overpass. There are no improvements proposed to any of the ramps or along MD 22.

Questions/Concerns:

- Sgt. Van Seeters inquired why there wasn't a full cloverleaf. Mr. Rothenheber replied that the weave would create a lot of conflict.
- Mr. Bandy inquired if there were any ETLs for this interchange. Mr. Rothenheber said the ETLs could stop at White Marsh (Section 100) or stop at MD 543. Sgt. Van Seeters asked how that decision is made. Ms. Williams explained that it is done through the NEPA process. The team will work with the FHWA, local government and environmental agencies, to come to a consensus. Ultimately, FHWA will need to sign a piece of paper to say they are okay with it .

Bicycle/Pedestrian Concerns

Jeff Springer made a presentation highlighting the challenges that a bicyclist faces at the MD 22/I-95 interchange which is representative of most I-95 interchanges. One of the biggest problems are the loop ramps. He explained some of the ways AASHTO and FHWA are addressing bicycle/pedestrian access.

Meeting Wrap Up

Linda Moreland will be sending out minutes and copies of the PowerPoint presentation to all Focus Group members.