



Bus Rapid Transit / Rockville Town Center Study

DRAFT Community Outreach Plan for Mayor and Council Review

Background:

Montgomery County and the Maryland Department of Transportation are conducting corridor studies along MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and Veirs Mill Road to determine how Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) could be incorporated into those roadways as a travel option to deal with congestion. BRT typically involves specialized vehicles providing frequent service traveling in lanes separated from cars and with off-board fare collection for passengers, so it operates much like a light rail system.

With the help of a consulting team, the City of Rockville recently conducted a design study to determine how the BRT improvements could best serve Rockville within the Town Center area where those two BRT routes would come together. The City is now beginning to actively engage the community for feedback regarding the ideas from our design study to assist the Mayor and Council to understand which ones the community supports.

Community Outreach Plan and Engagement Strategies:

The purpose of this outreach plan is to describe the ways in which the Mayor and Council will hear from the community regarding this BRT Town Center study. The goal is to help the Mayor and Council understand the community's desires in order to help in making recommendations to the State and the County regarding Rockville's preferences for the Town Center area. The following strategies are proposed as part of this outreach plan:

- I. Engage neighborhood and civic associations, particularly those around the Town Center area (such as the Americana, East Rockville, Lincoln Park, West End, etc.)**

Staff is in the process of contacting neighborhood and civic/citizen associations about scheduling presentations during their regular monthly meetings. They will be encouraged to provide feedback and also to attend the community BRT forum that will be held in March 2016.

II. Engage business associations and commercial/office building owners

The Chamber of Commerce, REDI, Federal Realty (as a major property owner and manager in Town Center) and other commercial and office buildings owners will be engaged and briefed on the study, and encouraged to provide feedback and to attend the community forum in March.

III. Engage the Traffic and Transportation Commission and Planning Commission

Given their core areas of responsibility for the City, these two commissions will be updated regarding the study, and encouraged to provide their feedback and recommendations. An initial presentation has already been provided to the Traffic and Transportation in October. The final report and an overview will be provided to them as well as to the Planning Commission.

IV. Conduct a “Community Conversation on BRT in Rockville”

In March 2016, a communitywide forum will be held to educate the Rockville community about the county’s plan for BRT, what it means in Rockville, provide details about the BRT Town Center study results, and solicit feedback on the alternatives from that study. While this will be a city-sponsored forum, we will also coordinate with the County and State for their involvement.

Anyone can attend, but particular effort will be made to encourage attendance from the following: Traffic and Transportation Commission, Planning Commission, Rockville residents serving on the BRT advisory committees, Montgomery College, FRIT, Town Center stakeholders, and homeowner and civic/citizen association representatives.

V. Disseminate information through Rockville Reports, the City’s website and social media outlets, Channel 11, along with displays at City Hall where the public can review the concepts and provide feedback

This will involve getting the word out through the many channels used by the City. Poster size displays are being generated that will be displayed in City Hall, allowing visitors to view and understand the concepts that were prepared, and provide feedback and observations.

Timeline:

- December 14, 2015 – deliver the final BRT Town Center Integration Study along with the draft Community Outreach Plan to the Mayor and Council; seeking feedback and direction on the outreach approach
- January through March 2016 – engage stakeholders, residents, businesses and property owners through neighborhood association meetings, Chamber and REDI meetings, and others
- January/February 2016 – provide an overview of the study to Planning Commission, and update Traffic and Transportation Commission (initial update provided in Oct. 2015)
- February 2016 – work session and discussion with the Mayor and Council regarding the study, the status of outreach being conducted, and further details regarding the March communitywide forum
- March 2016 – *Community Conversation on BRT in Rockville* forum will be conducted. Anticipated to run about 2 ½ hours, and date TBD, but could it be on Saturday March 5, 12 or 19 in the morning or in the evening during the week. Location could be in VisArts if off-site is desired, or in the Council Chambers if necessary to televise and re-broadcast.
- March 2016 – discussion with Planning Commission (March 23) and Traffic and Transportation Commission (March 29) for feedback and recommendations
- April 2016 – Mayor and Council discussion of feedback received, and prepare a recommendation to transmit to the State and County with Rockville’s suggestions for BRT within the Town Center area

Staff is also preparing to conduct additional outreach efforts for feedback regarding possible station locations along the rest of MD 355 and Veirs Mill Road (outside of the Town Center study area). Focused sessions will be held with residents and stakeholders along those respective corridors. That feedback will be brought forward to the Mayor and Council as well.

Contact:

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