

# Beltway Connections

Newsletter of the Maryland Capital Beltway Corridor Transportation Study  
Winter/Spring 2001

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## NEED

The Capital Beltway provides an essential link on the national highway system and serves local, regional and interstate travel. It is also the only circumferential route in the Washington, D.C. area, connecting many radial routes. Traffic is projected to increase by approximately 50% by 2020.

## THIS NEWSLETTER....

This newsletter provides information on events that have occurred on the project since the April 2000 Public Workshops in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. For a complete overview of the study and its history, please refer to the informational brochure that was available at the public workshops or look for the project website available through the homepages of the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA), and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The specific goals and objectives of the study are as follows:

### GOAL 1: Support Regional Mobility and Address Current and Forecasted Travel Demand Through 2020

- Objective 1:* Provide acceptable levels-of-performance
- Objective 2:* Improve accessibility to existing and planned economic development areas and regional activity centers
- Objective 3:* Decrease travel time

### GOAL 2: Increase Safety and Maximize Operational Efficiencies

- Objective 1:* Increase efficient use of the transportation systems
- Objective 2:* Minimize impacts to local traffic

### GOAL 3: Develop Improvements that Make the Best Use of Resources and Minimize Environmental Impacts

- Objective 1:* Minimize negative impacts to the natural environment
- Objective 2:* Minimize negative impacts to the socio-economic environment

### GOAL 4: Develop Improvements that Preserve Capital Investments

- Objective 1:* Minimize incremental public costs while maximizing transportation capacity
- Objective 2:* Optimize operations and maintenance
- Objective 3:* Maximize future operations

The study team, which includes representatives from SHA, MTA, and WMATA, presented a range of proposed transportation alternatives at the April 2000 workshops, including both high occupancy vehicle (HOV) and transit improvements. Since the workshops, each alternative has been broken down into segments for individual study. *The study team is currently in the process of evaluating segments to determine which are best to carry forward for detailed study and will make recommendations this winter.* The recommendations will be reviewed by state and local elected/appointed officials and agencies.

## PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose and need for the study is stated as follows:

### PURPOSE

- To help improve regional mobility and address current and forecasted travel demand in the Capital Beltway corridor while supporting the area's economic growth and the environment.
- To help provide for increased safety and better travel conditions in the Capital Beltway corridor.



## ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION

Currently, there are four alternatives being considered for the Capital Beltway Corridor.

**Alternative 1:** Base Case

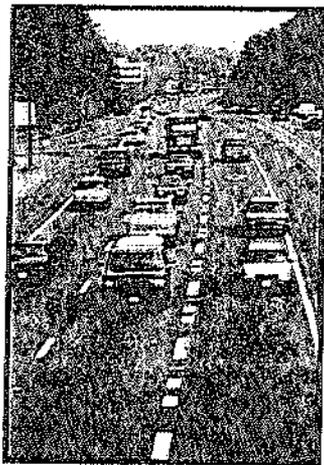
**Alternative 2:** Transportation System Management/Transportation Demand Management (TSM/TDM)

**Alternative 3:** HOV

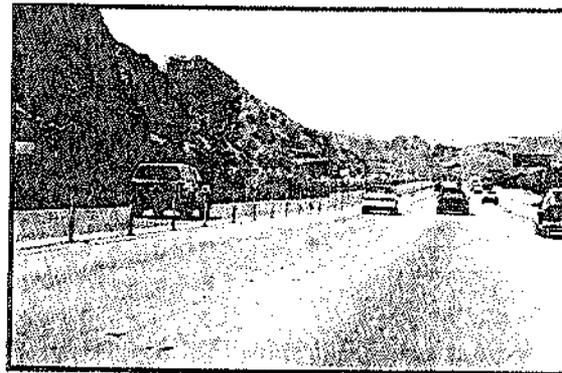
- Concurrent Flow
- Barrier Separated
- "HOT" Lane

**Alternative 4:** Transit

- Heavy Rail
- Light Rail
- Express Bus



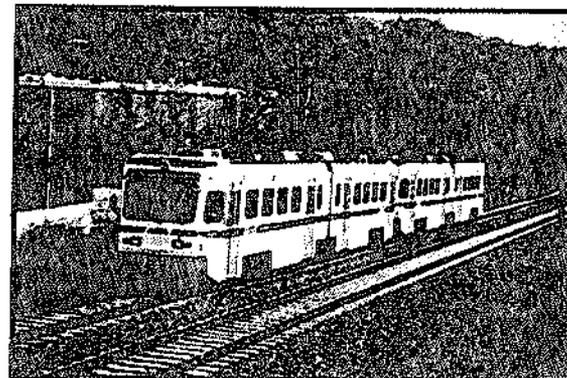
*Concurrent Flow HOV*



*Barrier Separated HOV*



*Heavy Rail*



*Light Rail*

## SEGMENT EVALUATION

Because the cost of building any of the alternatives under study will be significant, it is more practical to consider completing the improvements through a series of smaller projects. For this reason, the HOV alternative and each of the rail transit alignments have been divided into smaller segments for a comparative evaluation, which is currently underway. *The project team will make recommendations as to the most viable segments that will be carried forward for detailed study in the next phase of the study.* At this point, a choice between heavy rail and light rail is not a consideration for the selection segments. Those segments not carried forward at this time may still be considered for future study.

## HOV SEGMENTS

The HOV alternative was divided into the following segments:

- The American Legion Bridge to I-270 West Spur
- I-270 West Spur to I-270 East Spur
- I-270 East Spur to I-95
- I-95 to US 50
- US 50 to The Woodrow Wilson Bridge

## TRANSIT SEGMENTS

*It is possible that the recommendations for the transit alternative will include parts of several different segments.*

As the recommended segments move toward future implementation, they will be considered as individual projects. Because of the different obstacles that each segment might face in its development, it is possible that some segments will take longer to complete than others.

The transit alignments have been divided into the following segments, moving clockwise along the corridors (see map on page 4):

### P1

- Tysons Corner to Rock Spring Technology Park
- Rock Spring Technology Park to Greenbelt
- Greenbelt to New Carrollton
- New Carrollton to Largo
- Largo to Branch Avenue
- Branch Avenue to Alexandria

### P2

- Tysons Corner to Bethesda
- Bethesda to Silver Spring
- Silver Spring to College Park
- College Park to New Carrollton
- New Carrollton to Largo
- Largo to Branch Avenue
- Branch Avenue to Alexandria

### P3

- Tysons Corner to Rock Spring Technology Park
- Rock Spring Technology Park to Greenbelt
- Greenbelt to New Carrollton
- New Carrollton to Largo
- Largo to Branch Avenue
- Branch Avenue to Alexandria

### P4

- Tysons Corner to Bethesda
- Bethesda to Silver Spring
- Silver Spring to Greenbelt
- Greenbelt to New Carrollton
- New Carrollton to Largo
- Largo to Branch Avenue
- Branch Avenue to Alexandria

### P5

- Tysons Corner to Rock Spring Technology Park
- Rock Spring Technology Park to College Park
- College Park to New Carrollton
- New Carrollton to Largo
- Largo to Suitland
- Suitland to Alexandria

### P6

- Tysons Corner to Bethesda
- Bethesda to Silver Spring
- Silver Spring to College Park
- College Park to New Carrollton
- New Carrollton to Largo
- Largo to Suitland
- Suitland to Alexandria

## EVALUATION FACTORS AND MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS

Each of the segments for the HOV and transit alternatives are currently being evaluated based on a wide array of evaluation factors and measures of effectiveness which include:

- Accessibility
- Community Impacts
- Congestion Relief
- Consistency with Local Plans, Policies and Programs
- Cost Effectiveness
- Economic Development and Revitalization
- Improved Mobility
- Natural Environmental Impacts
- Operating Efficiencies
- Public Comment
- Ridership
- Total Cost
- Transportation Supportive Land Use

The project team will continue to coordinate all efforts with Montgomery and Prince George's counties as well as various local jurisdictions and the State of Virginia. Each of these stakeholders will be given the opportunity to provide input into the recommendations.

## NEXT STEPS

- Complete the segment evaluation and make recommendations for segments to be carried forward for detailed study. - *Winter/Spring 2001*
- Share recommendations with state, county, and local elected officials, as well as stakeholders and the general public. - *Winter/Spring 2001*
- Select segments for detailed study. - *Winter/Spring 2001*
- Perform detailed analysis of the selected segments and prepare a draft environmental impact document. - *2001/2002*
- Hold Location/Design Public Hearing. - *2002*
- Select an alternative (or combination of alternatives) and prepare a final environmental impact document. - *2002/2003*
- Receive federal Location/Design Approvals. - *2003*

## CONTACTS:

### STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Neil J. Pedersen, Deputy Administrator  
for Planning and Engineering  
State Highway Administration  
707 North Calvert Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Mrs. R. Suseela Rajan, Project Manager  
Project Planning Division  
707 North Calvert Street  
Mail Stop C-301  
Baltimore, MD 21202  
(410) 545-8514  
1-800-548-5026

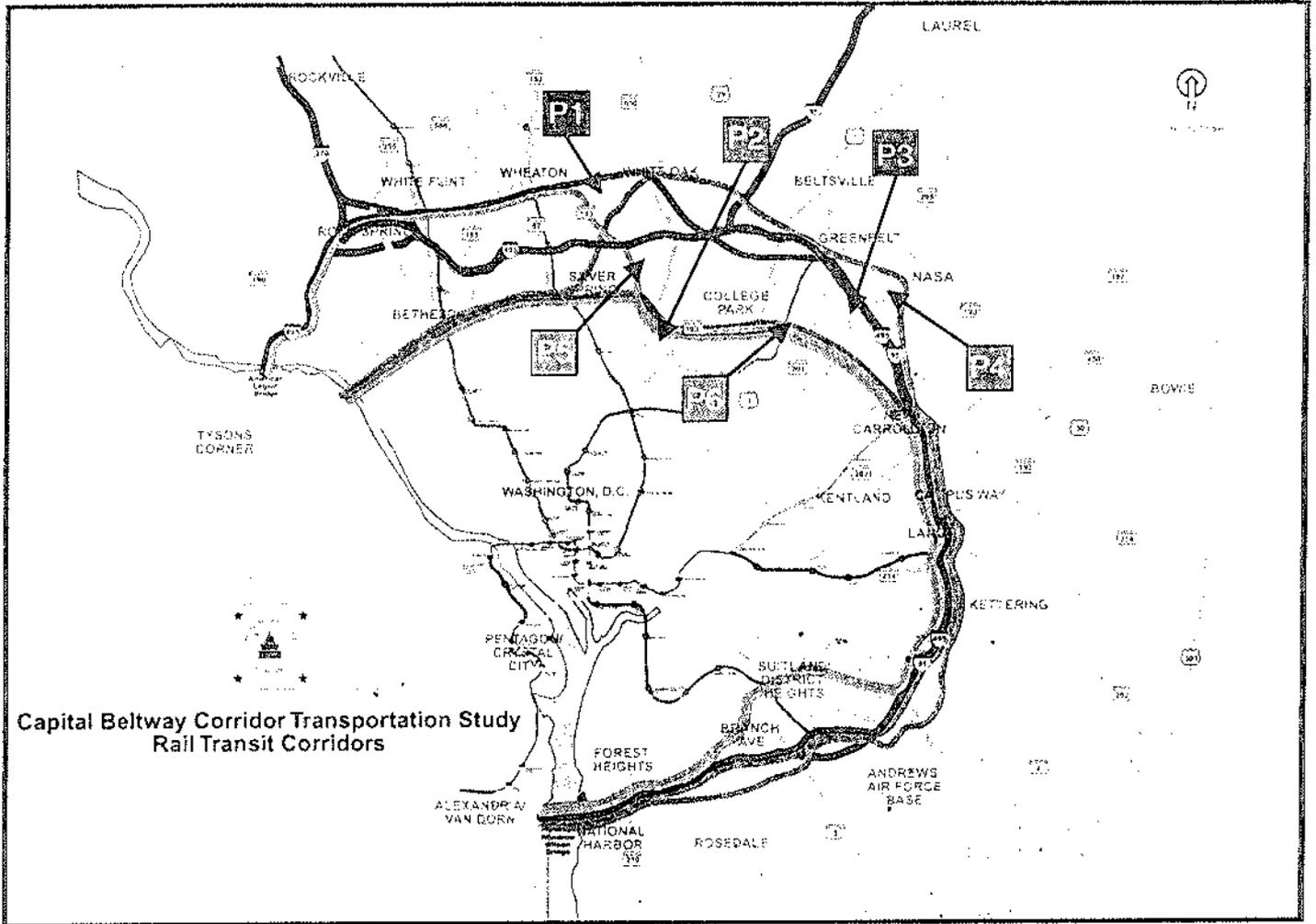
### MASS TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Henry Kay, Director  
Office of Planning and Statewide Transit  
Maryland Mass Transit Administration  
6 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202-1614

Mr. Lorenzo Bryant, Project Manager  
Project Development Division  
Maryland Mass Transit Administration  
6 St. Paul Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202-1614  
(410) 767-3754

### WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Mr. Richard Stevens, Director  
Business Planning and Development  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
600 Fifth Street, NW  
Washington D.C. 20001  
(202) 962-1257



Maryland State Highway Administration  
707 N. Calvert Street  
Baltimore, MD 21202

