



Section 200 Focus Group Meeting #2 Minutes

MEETING DATE May 24, 2006
 TIME: 6:30 pm
 PLACE: HEAT Center, Aberdeen

Attendees:

NAME	TELEPHONE	EMAIL	AFFILIATION
Ragina Averella	410-616-1900	raverella@aaamidatlantic.com	AAA Mid-Atlantic
Meghan McDonough (for Phyllis Grover)	410-272-1600	pgrover@aberdeen-md.org	Aberdeen Dept. of Planning & Community Development
John Mettee III	410-838-7900	jvm@fredward.com	Army Alliance
Emery Hine	410-887-3554	ehine@co.ba.md.us	Baltimore County Dept. of Public Works
Gene Bandy	410-732-9573	gbandy@balto metro.org	Baltimore Metropolitan Council
Pat Barth	410-679-5478	barthponyfarm@aol.com	District A Advisory Committee
Alex Rawls (for Janet Gleisner)	410-638-3230	jgleisner@co.ha.md.us	Harford Cty. Dept. of Planning and Zoning
Jeff Stratmeyer			Harford County Dept. of Public Works
Tom Schaech	410-638-4700	tgschaech@co.ha.md.us	Harford Cty. Volunteer Fire & EMS Association
Sgt. Joe Van Seeters	410-692-7872	vanseetersj@harfordsheriff.org	Harford Cty. Sheriff's Office
Ron Sollod	410-679-0589	Ronspi44@aol.com	Joppa/Magnolia Fire Station
Judy Rose	410-676-9318	Joppajudy@msn.com	Little Gunpowder Improvement Association
Vern Bingham	410-272-1119	vern.bingham@hmshost.com	Maryland House Welcome Center
Tom Walsh (for Anne Ferro)	410-644-4600	aferro@mmtanet.com	Maryland Motor Truck Association
Lieutenant Ulysses Perry	410-537-1156	uperry@mdsp.org	Maryland State Police
Aaron Moszer	410-297-9292	aaron@ripkenbaseball.com	Ripken Stadium/Aberdeen Iron Birds
Chris Henn	410-676-8456	momhen@comcast.net	Riverside Community Association
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
Mike Rothenheber	410-329-3100	MRothenheber@jmt.com	Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson
Linda Moreland	302-366-0227	moreland@remline.com	Remline Corp
Mark Parker	410-235-3450	mparker@wrallp.com	Whitman, Requardt and Associates



Welcome and Introductions

Melissa Williams opened the meeting with introductions and a review of the night's agenda.

BRAC – Transportation Impacts

Paul Oberle from the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) provided a briefing on BRAC and how it will affect transportation projects in Maryland. He explained that Aberdeen is one of four installations in MD that are getting additional personnel. It is expected that BRAC will provide 40,000-60,000 additional jobs through 2011 statewide. The Aberdeen Proving Ground is expected to have an additional 5,000 military and 7,500 civilian jobs. Eventually that could increase to as much as 20,000 jobs.

Mr. Oberle told the group there are several transportation projects underway in the area. With regard to I-95, Section 100 is now in construction, Section 200 project planning is underway, and other segments are being planned. The state is fairly well poised for BRAC with the program that is already in place.

There are other projects waiting to be advanced into the development pipeline such as improvements to the MARC station in Edgewood. Jeff Stratmeyer, Harford County Dept. of Public Works agreed that the Edgewood Station is a Harford County priority. Alex Rawls, Harford County Dept. of Planning and Zoning, stated that they have not received notification from the county executive that this is the County's top priority.

Questions & Answers

- Tom Schaech, Harford County Volunteer Fire & EMS Association, asked about a proposal the BRAC commission has for a new I-95 interchange at MD 715. Mr. Oberle said that he is aware of it. The County has not listed this as a priority. Therefore, coordination with MdTA, the owner of I-95, has not been initiated.
- John Mettee, Army Alliance, said the county had initiated a study through the Army Alliance for a flyover at MD 22. Mr. Oberle hadn't heard of that study, but explained what needs to happen for transportation projects to get funded. The counties dictate their priorities to the state and local projects follow the dictates of the local jurisdictions. All correspond with the secretary of transportation to let him know what they want.

Mr. Mettee also told the group that there are plans at Maryland Ave. for a new development. Mr. Oberle said that as different land use and needs become apparent they will be able to respond appropriately and focus energies where they are needed.

- Judy Rose, Little Gunpowder Improvement Association, stated that congestion issues stem from the White Marsh area and that there are usually no problems in the Section 200 area except at MD 24. That is where the bottleneck occurs. She explained that if the state



proceeds with the project on MD 24 it should alleviate the problem. She questioned whether additional lanes on I-95 will help. She asked if there will be a way State Police can reroute for accidents diversion?

Mr. Oberle agreed that it is certainly a challenge and one that will be closely looked at. The capacity constraints are there and we will have to deal with them. Managed lanes, where you pay for the privilege of moving easier, will help the situation. ETLs are being considered for several major roadway improvements in Maryland.. It will cost more to drive if you want to gain the economy of time. Mr. Oberle said that we also need to take a look at the transit system, both MARC and buses.

- Ron Sollod, Joppa/Magnolia Fire Station, asked what impacts widening I-95 and redoing interchanges on Section 100 would have on commuters and emergency services. He stated that closing one lane to add another would cause a lot of problems. How will it be less of an impact than the congestion that already exists?

Melissa Williams, Planning Manager for the Maryland Transportation Authority, said existing lanes will be maintained during peak hours. Some breakout projects have begun and the mainline will begin in the fall for Section 100. Mr. Sollod said even working at night there are a lot of trucks and traffic still backs it up. It will be difficult getting emergency services where they are needed.

Ms. Williams said that the Authority has coordinated with emergency service providers from the beginning of the planning process. There are strategies in place to inform emergency services and the public about lane closures and modifications to lanes. Signage will be put up when changes are coming, and there will also be TV and radio spots, newsletters, and press releases. A big part of the project is reaching out the community so they know what to expect.

Traffic Modeling Overview

Matt Wolniak, Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson, gave an overview of the traffic modeling being done for Section 200. The team has gathered existing traffic data – average daily traffic , number of trucks, highest traffic hours, etc. The highest traffic counts are south of MD 152 with over 165,000 vehicles per day. The lowest are north of MD 22 with just under 90,000 vehicles per day. MD 24 is the highest volume crossroad with 70,000 vehicles per day between interchange ramps and MD 924.

The worst traffic is mainly in the morning and evening peak hours. One of the unique features is that I-95 north of MD 24 has the highest volume of traffic on the weekends –10 to 45% higher than the commuting pattern. Capacity improvements will need to take this into account.

The project team is looking at traffic growth through the year 2030. This is done by using the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) traffic model. Each county provides projections on number of houses, population and number of people that will be employed in the year 2030 to



the BMC. This is input into a model that looks at everything – where people work and live, schools, shopping. Through the modeling process we can determine how much traffic would be anticipated in the future. If something new is being planned or improvements are being built, the model will adjust travel patterns to take these into account.

Traffic is expected to grow from south of MD 152 to approximately 230,000 vehicles per day and to 130,000 vehicles per day on the northern end. The duration of the peak weekday period is also expected to increase. Weekend traffic is anticipated to increase throughout Section 200.

The project team analyzes the base alternatives – for example no build, general purpose lanes and managed lanes to see how well they will work. South of MD 152 will be similar to the conditions today south of MD 43. People will take alternate routes or change travel times if I-95 remains the same number of lanes.

The BMC is doing a study to look at BRAC from a transportation standpoint in Cecil, Harford and Baltimore Counties. Where are jobs? Where are houses? The project team will incorporate that information in the development of the alternatives and evaluate how they can accommodate for BRAC growth.

Public Workshop

Ms. Williams announced that there will be a Section 200 Public Workshop On June 22 at the Old Post Road Elementary School in Abingdon from 5-8 pm. Newsletters announcing the project and the workshop have been sent out to over 16,000 area residents. At the workshop, people will be able to review the I-95 master plan, Section 200 study limits, project purpose and need, what traffic looks like now and in the future, types of transit in the corridor, land use, project schedule and steps forward. We will also have the alternate and interchange options, as well as displays of environmental and archeological issues, and brief summaries of related projects in the study area. There will be no formal presentation. The focus group was asked to invite people to the workshop who live in the area or drive I-95.

Overview of Preliminary Alternates

Mark Parker presented a snapshot of the alternates development and interchange options. The project team looked at traffic and did preliminary engineering to determine what is feasible and practical to be considered for this project. What has been developed is a range of practical alternates. At this point, traffic engineers will look at how signals work, level of service, etc. for each alternative. This will eventually lead to a preferred alternate. Ms. Williams explained that at this point everything is on the table. The focus group will help the project team evaluate the benefits and disbenefits of the alternates.

Mr. Parker introduced the three concepts from the I-95 Master Plan – no build, general purpose lanes, and managed lanes. The Section 200 project begins at New Forge Road and extends to



Maxa Road, a total of 16 miles. There are currently four lanes in each direction from New Forge Road to MD 24 where it then drops to three lanes.

Our starting point is always no build and then we add on from there. No build means no widening or additions to capacity. There will be safety upgrades, bridge deck replacements, as well as roadway resurfacing and other system preservation initiatives.

General purpose lanes means adding lanes that are opened to everybody. Two additional lanes would be added in each direction from New Forge to MD 152. This will mean 6 lanes in each direction. There would be a total of 5 lanes in each direction from MD 152 to MD 543 and four lanes from MD 543 to MD 22.

Questions & Answers

- John Mettee asked if the existing interchanges can handle the extra lanes. Mr. Parker explained that the proposed widening would take place in the median at some locations and to the outside at other locations based on the roadway geometry throughout the corridor. Modifications to the interchanges would be needed in order to accommodate widening of mainline I-95.
- Ron Sollod asked about emergency services and where they will be able to turn around to get to emergencies. Ms. Williams said that as part of the Section 200 planning process the study team would be working with the police and emergency services providers to reassess the existing turnarounds to see if they are in appropriate locations or if they need to be relocated.
- Lieutenant Ulysses Perry, Maryland State Police, said it is necessary to have a place to land a helicopter. Ms. Williams explained that they will coordinate with emergency services providers and police to get their input early in the project.

Mr. Parker then introduced managed or express toll lanes (ETLs). ETLs are lanes that motorists must pay to use. The ETLs would be constructed in the middle of the roadway with adjacent free general purpose lanes. There will be defined locations where you can enter and exit the ETLs. There will be a barrier separating the ETLs from the general purpose lanes and from opposing traffic. At this point it is anticipated that the ETLs would extend from southern study limit to MD 543. From MD 543 to the north, four general purpose lanes are proposed to the study limit. The exact terminus of ETLs is still being studied. A separate study will decide exactly where to terminate the ETLs.

- Aaron Moszer, Ripken Stadium/Aberdeen Iron Birds, asked if Section 100 will have ETLs. Mr. Parker said yes, if the ETLs are not extended from 100, we would have to transition from ETLs to general purpose lanes.

Mr. Moszer asked from a traffic standpoint what is the benefit over HOV lanes? Mr. Wolniak explained that HOV lanes are for carpoolers only where ETLs can be used by



any E-ZPass customer, irregardless of the number of people in the vehicle. From a transit standpoint, transit buses, emergency response providers and the police will be able to use the ETLs.

Mr. Parker explained that express toll lanes are paid for with E-ZPass. It will be variable pricing, which will either go up or down depending on the use and the level of congestion.

- Ms. Rose said rather than stop at exit 80 why don't they go up to MD 22 because people will exit there for Aberdeen Proving Ground and Ripken Stadium. Mr. Parker said that the I-95 Master Plan preliminarily determined MD 543 to be the northern terminus of the ETLs, however, the MdTA is currently undertaking a study to further evaluate the northern terminus point for the ETLs.
- Tom Walsh, Maryland Motor Truck Association, asked if there is concern about traffic weaving across lanes to get into and out of the ETLs. Mr. Wolniak said no, because the ETLs would be barrier separated from the general purpose lanes with access provided directly to the ETLs.
- Gene Bandy, Baltimore Metropolitan Council, asked what would happen in Section 300. Will the managed lanes be there as well? Mr. Parker said that the study is being done to look at whether ETLs need to be extended north of MD 543. Mr. Bandy asked when that study will be done. Ms. Williams said it would be very soon because the information is needed for the Section 200 Project Planning Study.
- Chris Henn, Riverside Community Association, said with BRAC coming into Aberdeen, it may be a good idea to extend the ETLs further north.
- Mr. Sollod asked how all of this will affect traffic on Rt. 40. If there is a tie up on I-95, traffic diverts to Rt. 40. How will agencies, law enforce enforcement and emergency service handle traffic on Rt. 40? Mr. Parker said that incident management now just shuts down the roadway and people divert to alternate routes. We will be evaluating emergency response providers and police access as part of the Section 200 Project planning study.
- Mr. Walsk asked if other states that have ETL use them for emergencies. If there is gridlock, can traffic be moved over to the managed lanes? Mr. Parker explained that incident management will be addressed as part of Section 200 Project Planning.
- Lt. Perry asked if the width of the shoulders has been determined. He also asked about snow removal and where the snow will be put. Mr. Parker replied that preliminary sections have been developed.

Interchange Options

Mr. Parker then explained each of the interchange options.



Questions & Answers

- Mr. Sollod ask if the Joppa/Magnolia Station helipad would have to be removed under Option 2 for MD 152. Mr. Parker said that it would be impacted.
- Mr. Mattee asked if the park & ride at MD 152 would stay or be removed entirely. Mr. Parker said that it will be relocated. Ms. Williams explained that there are planned improvements to this park & ride even though it may change in a few years. It is used so much that it needs to be expanded.

Mr. Park gave a brief explanation of the MD 24 Phase 1 improvements, explaining that Phase 2 will be incorporated into the Section 200 project. We expect the ramps to stay, but the bridge will have to be rebuilt. The goal is to provide separation between those that want to get off on MD 24 and those who want to access 924.

- Mr. Sollod asked for a copy of the MD 24 Phase 1 drawing. He also asked if there was another road into the shopping center off of the ramp. Mr. Parker said it is not incorporated into any of the plans. He said the ramp will go a long way to relieving congestion. Ms. Williams said that she would e-mail the map to Mr. Sollod.
- Jeff Stratmeyer, Harford County Dept. of Public Works ask about ETL Option 5 for MD 543. He was concerned about the left turn onto Rt. 7 backing up to the right turn on I-95. He said the ramp is being pushed further away and traffic will queue past that. Mr. Parker said that was a concern for the project team as well. What is preventing it from shifting further up is the 108" water transmission line. We are trying not to put a ramp on top of that. On the other side is the short distance from the on ramp to I-95 northbound. There is a very short weave there.

Mr. Stratmeyer asked that the team look at Old Creswell Road where it ties into Rt. 7 as an access point. Currently there is a hotel being built there.

Maryland House

Mr. Parker told the group about the MdTA reconstruction of the Maryland House. The Section 200 project will be doing the ramps for this project. The schedule of these two projects will be coordinated.

- Ms. Rose asked about a commuter parking lot at Exit 85. There are a lot of people that will want to use one at that location. That is why so many go to MD 152. Ms. Williams said the team is looking at the park and ride lots along I-95 in the area to see what is needed.

The meeting ended at 9:00 PM.



Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held in the Fall at the HEAT Center in Aberdeen, Room 201. Focus Group members will be notified in advance of the meeting date.