



Worksession: Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan

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Description

This worksession is a follow-up to the Planning Board’s review of the Network and Methodology Report on December 15, 2011 and following sessions on January 12 and 19, 2012. The memos for these meetings and the report may be found on the following links:

http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2011/documents/20111215_NetworkMethodologyReportBRT_md_final_000.pdf ,
http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2012/documents/20120112_Roundtable_BRT.pdf, and
http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/2012/documents/20120119_WorksessionCountywideTransitCorridorsFunctionalMasterPlan.pdf.

At this worksession, we would like to confirm the guidance that the Board has given us to date, as well as to get further guidance on additional issues that are still in question. Planning Board members are requested to bring their copies of the staff memos from previous meetings for reference.

How this guidance will be used

We’re asking the Board for guidance as to how we should pursue this planning effort in the next phase, but ***the Board should understand that they and the staff will tailor recommendations based on the outcome of the analysis.***

The staff will develop recommendations based on revised ridership forecasts, impacts of draft treatments that can only be determined by more detailed study, and comments received from the public, as well as reconciling multiple goals that are competing for space in typically constrained public rights-of-way. When the Board reviews the Staff Draft of the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, they will have the opportunity to review each corridor in detail and to add or delete corridors or change the level of treatment that will be used to determine the rights-of-way to be included in the Planning Board Draft submitted to the County Council for approval.

Board guidance to date

The topics below are presented in a checklist form so that the Board may provide guidance on them individually, if they choose. The Road Code Urban Areas are shown as Attachment 1. The Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor are shown as Attachment 2.

		Agree	Disagree
Road Code Urban Areas			
	Phase 1		
	No additional ROW for runningway or intersections		
	Runningway based on take-a-lane		
	Additional ROW for stations only		
	Phase 2		
	Not needed		
Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor			
	Phase 1		
	ROW for intersections and stations as needed		
	One lane everywhere (no ridership evaluation required)		
	Two lanes for Activity Center corridors (no ridership evaluation required)		
	Two lanes on Commuter and Link corridors based on impacts and ridership		
	Exclude ICC and Midcounty Highway (express bus service preferred mode)		
	Exclude Connecticut Ave north of University Boulevard (due to private property impacts, low ridership)		
	Phase 2		
	Add second lane where not accomplished in Phase 1 based on achieving BRT supportive densities in future area plans		
Other areas			
	Phase 1		
	Two lanes for Georgia Ave and US 29		
	Treatment on other corridors based on land use		
	Exclude ICC		
	Phase 2		
	One or two lanes where not accomplished in Phase 1 based on achieving BRT supportive densities in future area plans		
Sustainable Complete Streets			
	Include sidewalks		
	Include on-road bike accommodation		
	Include median pedestrian safety refuges		
	Include landscape panels with street trees		
	Meet County and State environmental goals to extent practicable		
	Meet ADA Best Practices		

Capacity of bus lanes vs. general purpose lanes to move people

In our memo to the Board for your 1/19/12 meeting, we proposed four alternative methodologies for determining where existing lanes could be repurposed as bus lanes. It appeared that some members of the Board were ready to support using existing travel lanes as general guidance but were concerned that the application of the policy might have some unintended results. The impact of this guidance on each corridor and corridor segment will be evaluated as part of our study.

Because of the General Plan guidance that places a higher value on transit over personal vehicles in the public right-of-way, a higher value on serving land use than on meeting transportation demand, and a strong preference for limiting impacts to adjacent properties in already developed areas, **we recommend that existing travel lanes be repurposed to the extent possible within the Urban Ring and I-270 Corridor.** We recognize that we may have to add lanes in some areas where the remaining road capacity is not sufficient and/or where there are no obvious alternative routes for drivers to take. But we request that the Board concur in this general principle as we move into more detailed planning.

As part of our Staff Draft, we will present you with our recommendations along with the impacts, both in terms of right-of-way and traffic, to the best of our knowledge and the Board can revise the proposed corridors and treatment that will be forwarded to the County Council.

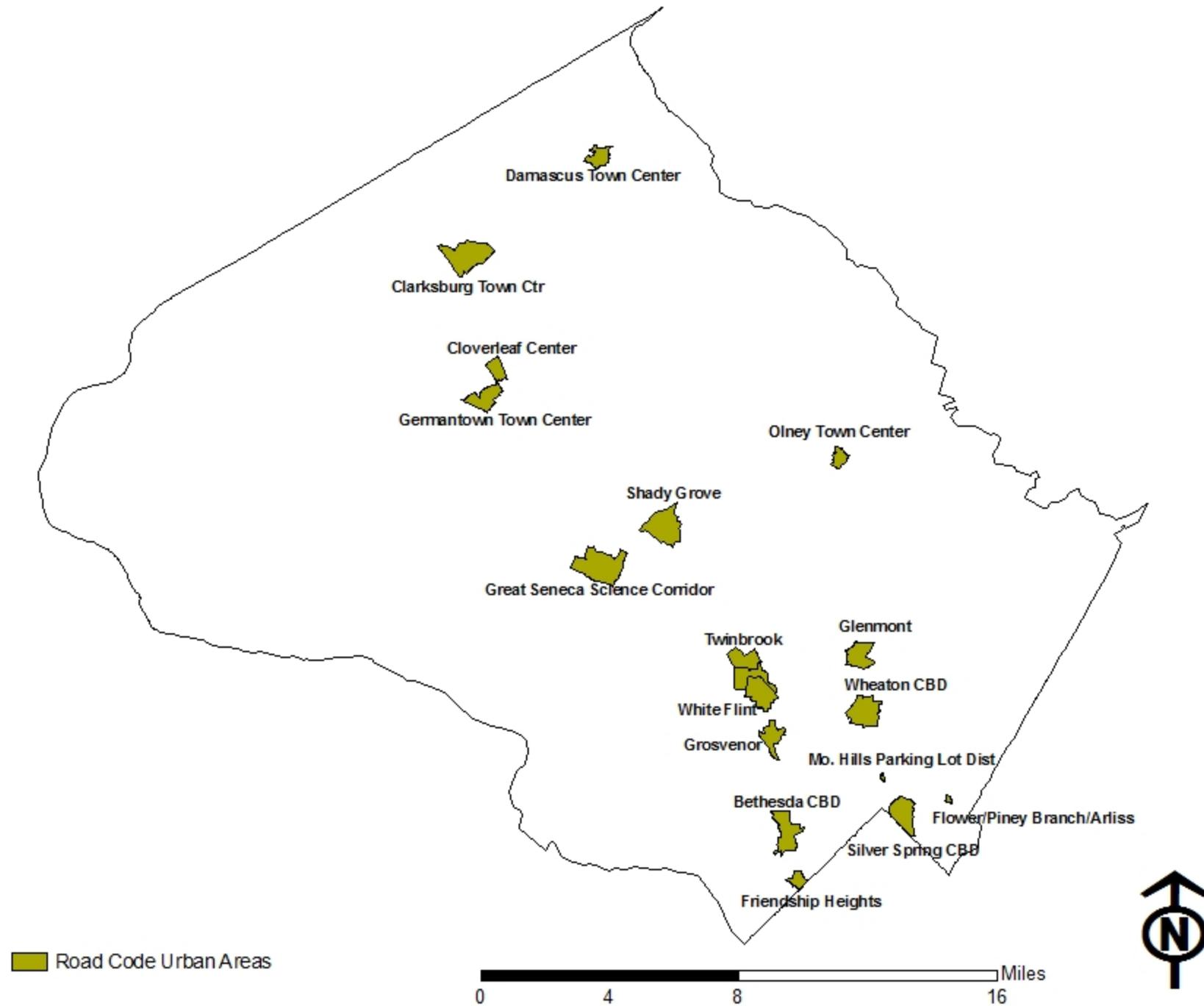
Summary

We request that the Board provide us guidance on the issues outlined above so that we may proceed on the very tight schedule of this Master Plan effort.

Next Steps

We anticipate providing the Board on February 23, 2012 our review of the Rapid Transit Task Force consultant's report on a preliminary design for an interim BRT network. We believe though that the details of this report are not essential to the Board's decision-making on how we should proceed with this Master Plan effort but the recommendations and any comments received on it will be taken into account in our analysis.

Our original schedule included a presentation of the Board's recommended draft network and methodology to the County Council in January 2012. We recommend however that we proceed with the Board's guidance directly to more detailed planning so that we can meet the Planning Board Draft delivery date of September 2012 to the County Council. We are grateful for the input we have received from individual Councilmembers which has informed our proposed methodology, and will keep them and Council staff informed of our progress.



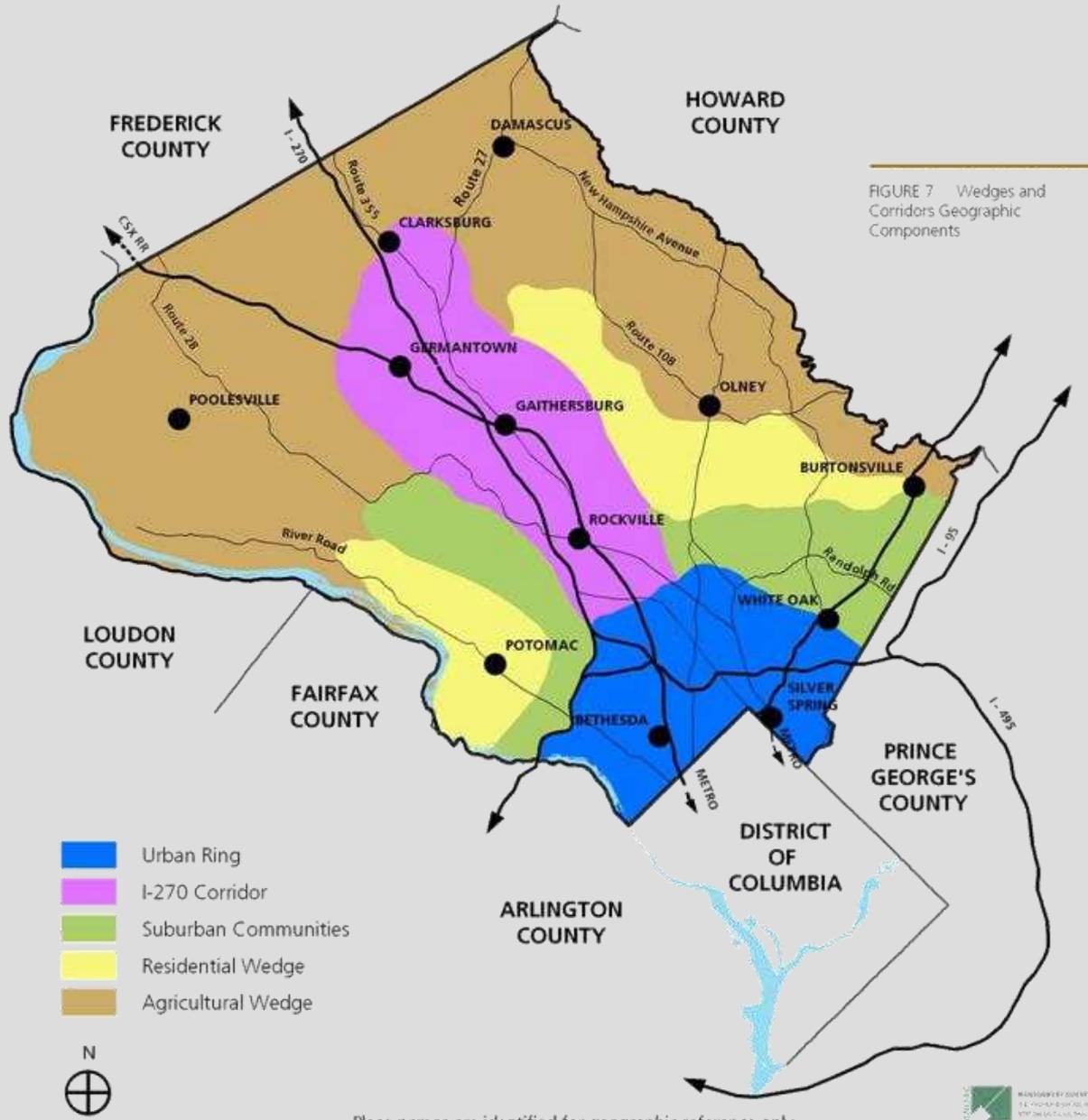


FIGURE 7 Wedges and Corridors Geographic Components

Place names are identified for geographic reference only