

CORRIDOR CITIES TRANSITWAY (CCT), TRANSIT OR TROJAN HORSE?

The CCT is not a bad idea in itself but it will serve as the trigger for massive amounts of development that will require six- and eight-lane highways and twelve- to sixteen-lane multilevel highway interchanges on Great Seneca Highway near Belward Farm.

When each segment of the CCT is built, the master plan's staging requirements will allow large amounts of development to occur. The CCT will carry only 12% to 15% of the additional people so the above-mentioned highways and interchanges will be required to carry the additional traffic from the remaining 85% of the newcomers.

The County officials assure us the infrastructure will be built to carry the expected 50,000 additional people, but that is little comfort when the infrastructure will wreck the area. Where in Montgomery County or in Maryland will you find twelve- and sixteen-lane multilevel highway interchanges adjacent to established residential neighborhoods??? The interchange at Great Seneca and Sam Eig will be three levels with sixteen lanes according to a drawing from the Planning Department. The other interchanges along Great Seneca and the remainder of the CCT route will be at least twelve lanes.

And the bad news doesn't stop there. Once all the development and the "road improvements" have been built at a cost of up to \$2 billion, the traffic on Great Seneca and surrounding roads is expected to move at an average of 9 to 11 mph. This means that hundreds of cars will be idling, polluting the air and water. There will be pressure to widen the surrounding roads...Muddy Branch, Darnestown Road, Dufief Mill and Travillah. There is already talk of an additional bridge across the Potomac and the pressure on the Ag Reserve will increase. Alarmist or realist? I don't know.

The meeting on December 15th will be the last time the residents can express their concerns before the state decides the mode (light rail, bus rapid transit, bus) and alignment. If the alignment crosses Belward Farm, as requested by Johns Hopkins, the historic character of the farm will be compromised and the residents of Mission Hill and Washingtonian Woods will have a CCT crossing at the intersection of Mission Drive and Midsummer Drive...along with the possibility of railroad gates, bridges, a train horn and lots of mess and inconvenience. There are other alignments that would be just as effective and would avoid these problems.

The County officials will probably be at the hearing, singing the praises of the CCT as a way to attract jobs. The commercial vacancy rate in the county is about 25% and there is more than ample approved space for the construction of commercial development if it were in demand. The CCT will have no effect on either. Additionally, the CCT will be of little use to most of the area's residents because the parking at the CCT stations will be minimal.

So, why is it so important that the CCT is built? Johns Hopkins Real Estate owns Belward Farm, which we know is another story, and they cannot get approval to build a commercial complex for 15,000 - 20,000 people on Belward Farm unless the CCT is built.

So, as I said, the CCT is not a bad thing in itself but it is being used to enable the developers to create a monster development. Opposing transit is not politically correct but, in this case, what is the alternative?

CONTACT INFO:

Governor Martin O'Malley <http://www.governor.maryland.gov/mail/>
Transportation Secretary Beverly Swaim-Staley - secretary@mdot.state.md.us
Rick Kiegel, rkiegel@mtamaryland.com

Donna Baron
Coordinator
The Gaithersburg - North Potomac - Rockville Coalition
www.scale-it-back.com