

Update on the CCT/Master Plan Debacle

If you were able to attend the meeting about the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) last night (December 15, 2010) you probably noticed three things:

1. The simulations of the CCT alignments looked oddly benign.
2. The residents of King Farm were there in full force.
3. There were three possible alignments that would avoid Belward Farm.

The simulations of the CCT alignments did not include wider roads or highway interchanges because the CCT does not require them. However, **the staging requirements for the Gaithersburg West (Great Seneca Science Corridor) master plan predicate massive amounts of density on the construction of the CCT even though the County execs are fully aware that it will carry only a fraction of the additional people.** Implementation of the master plan will result in up to 50,000 additional people in the Shady Grove/Belward Farm area but the CCT will carry only 12% to 15% of them. The remaining 40,000 people will require six- and eight-lane highways with twelve- to sixteen-lane highway interchanges along Great Seneca. The County and the developers intentionally set it up this way. They are banking on support for transit to allow them to overdevelop our area.

The CCT simulations did not mention the horns or whistles that will blow at each intersection along the CCT route.

Also missing from the CCT simulations were the tracks and railroad gates that will be built across the entrances to the neighborhoods along the alignment including Washingtonian Woods, Mission Hills, Lakelands and Kentlands as well as Crown Farm and the Rio.

King Farm will have the whole package running through the middle of their community, within 20 feet of some of the condos...tracks, railroad gates, blocked streets and horns or whistles.

The over-flow crowd included 50 to 100 residents from King Farm who oppose the CCT alignment through their community. The residents gave very cogent and convincing testimony and they presented the state with a petition with 1000 names from residents requesting a change in the alignment avoiding their walkable community.

One resident said she has visited many cities with bus rapid transit or light rail but the transits did not run through or adjacent to suburban residential neighborhoods. They operated in urban, commercial or industrial areas which would mitigate some of the above issues.

Some of the CCT alignment charts showed three possible alignments that would avoid crossing Belward Farm and the Washingtonian Woods/Mission Hills intersection. That was a positive note.

There were two residents who testified in favor of the CCT but I'm wondering if they have thought about the trip down Great Seneca as the CCT is built, then the road is widened to six-lanes and then the twelve-lane interchange is built at Muddy Branch and the sixteen-lane three-level interchange is built at Sam Eig. Are they lost in the fantasy of hopping on the rail to go to their every destination or are they dealing with the reality of the impending debacle?

The CCT should not be funded until a comprehensive, accurate traffic analysis is completed and Montgomery County develops a rational approach to additional development that will protect existing neighborhoods and historic properties.

There is still time to write to the state officials to express your opinions.

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