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**Mr. Rick Kiegel, PE  
Project Manager  
Corridor Cities Transitway  
Maryland Transit Administration  
Office of Planning  
6 St. Paul Street, Suite 902  
Baltimore, MD 21202**

**Re: ADDENDUM TO OCT. 3, 2014 COMMENTS ON CCT**

Dear Mr. Kiegel:

The first point of this Addendum is to demonstrate why the alignment of the CCT lanes with the median strip of Muddy Branch Road is contradictory to the goal of developing bus rapid transit, and why such alignment must therefore be abandoned.

Under the Muddy Branch Road alignment, the CCT lanes will have to cross over existing lanes of automobile traffic at two locations on Muddy Branch Road. One of these is at the intersection of Muddy Branch Road and Great Seneca Highway, where the CCT bus traveling eastbound on Great Seneca Highway and headed toward Shady Grove Metro will turn right to go south in the median strip of Muddy Branch Road. This bus must cross the southbound automobile lanes of Muddy Branch Road, either within the existing intersection or slightly south of it.

This intersection already has long traffic delays. But the delays will become much worse once the CCT is added. Consider the CCT bus described in the previous paragraph, stopped for the light at the intersection. There are now four signal sequences: north-south, consisting first of signals for left turners, then of signals for thru traffic, then east-west, consisting of signals for left turners, then for thru traffic. It should be clear that the driver of the described CCT bus cannot proceed during any one of these signals because of automobile traffic. So a fifth signal is required, during which only CCT buses can proceed. This additional signal will slow down all of the traffic through the intersection, making the intersection a much worse bottleneck than it is already.

But there are two other factors which will further impede the CCT bus. One of these might be called “quasi-outlaws.” This would include pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobile drivers turning right, many of whom enter the intersection and proceed through it if no one is in their way, irrespective of the signal sequence. Believe me, I speak from experience. The reason the quasi-outlaws behave in this manner is obvious: the massive and very frustrating delays encountered at this intersection. And since these delays will be greatly increased by the installation of CCT, one must assume that this behavior by the quasi-outlaws will not only continue, but will intensify, thereby creating a further obstacle to impede the passage of CCT buses as well as other traffic.

The other factor which will greatly impede the passage of the CCT bus, whose driver wants to turn from Great Seneca Highway onto the Muddy Branch Road median strip, is the fact that many times there will be two CCT buses waiting at the intersection, one heading toward Shady Grove Metro, the other heading away from Shady Grove Metro. Again, this is because the intersection is such a great bottleneck. The two CCT buses clearly cannot make their respective turns simultaneously because of the very great danger they will collide and/or they will sideswipe each other and because they will block each other’s vision. Therefore, one driver must remain stationary while the other completes his turn and passes the stationary bus, and only then can the stationary bus proceed. And this time lost by the stationary bus will very significantly increase the time it takes both buses to clear the intersection.

Combining the delay factors for the CCT bus driver wanting to turn south onto the Muddy Branch Road median strip, he will have to wait for the automobile signal sequence to complete, then he will have to wait for the CCT only light to turn green, then he will have to look for quasi-outlaws that may get in the way, then he will have to check for an oncoming CCT bus in the neighboring lane and work out a procedure with the driver of that bus as to who will wait for whom, then he will have to beep his horn three times (or so we are told), and only then can he begin to move his slow and heavy bus into the tight turn to go south. The delays are all but prohibitive.

To further complicate the delays, this same CCT driver will encounter a repeat of the same delay factors, although perhaps less severe, as he arrives at the second intersection to the south on Muddy Branch Road and attempts to turn left onto a roadway yet to be built, thereby again necessitating him to cross over a heavily traveled lane of Muddy Branch Road.

The cumulative delays completely contradict the concept of bus rapid transit. CCT with the Muddy Branch alignment is not rapid transit – rather, it is “slow boat to China.” If a more rapid alternative could be found it would clearly be preferable. Fortunately, as demonstrated at the Sept. 30 meeting, such alternative does exist, and so the CCT must now be realigned to the much faster route.

The second point of this Addendum is how severely CCT with Muddy Ranch Road alignment will increase the already high traffic noise impact upon Vistas at Washingtonian Woods. My unit, fortunately, has some degree of insulation from noise generated by traffic both on Great Seneca Highway (there is a city park and a row of townhomes in between), and on Muddy Branch Road (there are two condominium buildings in between). I happen to be very much an

outdoors person, spending an average of more than an hour per day out on my porch. It's precious time. Almost every day the noise from local buses, trucks, emergency vehicles and other heavy equipment, as well as from motor cycles, is heard. During rush hour the noise is pretty much continuous. Vehicle horns, however, are almost never heard.

I would describe the volume of the noise as well above threshold, but less than conversational tone. You can easily hear the birds sing above the traffic noise. But you have to learn to mentally phase out the traffic noise in order to enjoy the outdoor experience.

How will CCT with the Muddy Branch Road alignment affect this noise level?

First, there will be an extra two heavy vehicles every ten minutes (which probably is not major), increasing at some future point to two extra vehicles every three minutes (which is fairly major).

Second, the addition of CCT to the existing traffic pattern will make the system much more of a stop and go system. Oh, the system now has stop and go, but this will become much more pronounced as CCT is added and as new traffic lights are installed. And noise will increase because the buses and other heavy vehicles make their most prominent noise as they are pulling away from the stop and accelerating; when they are coasting along at highway speed they are not so noisy. So the added stop and go aspect will intensify the overall noise level dramatically.

Third, the noise from beeping horns will just simply go through the ceiling. From my deck I will clearly hear the CCT beeping at the Great Seneca Highway intersection with Muddy Branch Road (three beeps from each CCT bus) and at the second intersection south on Muddy branch Road (three more beeps) and if the bus has to stop at the intermediate intersection on Muddy Branch Road, which will often happen, then I will hear this also (three more beeps). That is at least six and probably nine beeps per bus in ten minutes, and there are two buses every ten minutes, so a total of twelve, but likely often eighteen, beeps every ten minutes. It will increase to that many beeps every three minutes when the CCT schedule speeds up. The impact will be dreadful because the beep sound is a very distractive, interrupting sound designed to get people's attention, and very difficult to phase out.

To impose such a severe increase in noise impact on people living in an already hectic neighborhood when (a) those people derive no benefit from CCT, and (b) a fully viable alternative exists, is unconscionable. The CCT Muddy Branch Road alignment must be abandoned. Alternatively we demand that sound barriers be installed on the entire perimeter of Vistas at Washingtonian Woods which is directly exposed to CCT noise.

The third point of this Addendum is how badly CCT with the Muddy Branch Road alignment will worsen the already very heavy traffic congestion for our community. Let us suppose a person living in Vistas at Washingtonian Woods wishes to drive to Shady Grove Metro and take the subway into Washington. I am retired, but I make this trip at least two or three times per week. And I always try very hard not to make the trip or the return trip during rush hour because the

streets then are so thoroughly congested that it is maddening in the extreme to have to drive at such times.

Oh, I know, bus service exists from Vistas to Shady Grove, but I think most of my neighbors would agree with me that it is so inconvenient that they would rather drive.

So the route you would drive would be that you would be heading east on the north arm of Midsummer Drive; you would turn left (to the north) on Muddy Branch Road; you would turn right (to the east) on Great Seneca Highway; you would turn left (to the north) on Sam Eig Highway. The latter turn, of course, is a disaster for which, fortunately, a fix is in the works.

Let's take these segments in turn. The north arm of Midsummer Drive will currently have no congestion about half the time and one or two car congestion about half the time. The reason it is so free is because the exit onto Muddy Branch Road may be described as medium with respect to congestion. There is a stop sign but no traffic light. So one comes to the intersection, surveys traffic, and makes a decision how soon it will be safe to proceed.

When CCT is installed in the Muddy Branch Road median strip, the exit onto Muddy Branch Road will become much more problematic, resulting in much greater backup on Midsummer Drive, or in other words much greater congestion. Some of the times when this exit will be attempted, probably less than one in four, the light will be green and the entire backup of cars on Midsummer will be able to proceed through the intersection on one light. Usually that will not be the case. Usually there will be part or all of the north-south automobile light to wait for, then all of the CCT light to wait for, then the driver must look out for quasi-outlaws, and then wait for the cars in front of him to pull out, and only then can the driver proceed. This much delayed exit time, combined with the added delay of having to drive over the CCT lanes, which will be a rough obstacle to traffic, will result in much greater back up on Midsummer Drive, or much greater congestion.

On the next segment of roadway, meaning from the entry onto Muddy Branch Road north bound until the right turn at the intersection with Great Seneca Highway, there will be a significant increase in congestion, although the fuller view of the increased congestion can better be seen by looking at the full length of CCT on Muddy Branch rather than just the northern segment. There are two causes for the increased congestion. The first is the addition of the CCT traffic light at the intersection with Great Seneca Highway. For north bound thru traffic, this would increase the wait time for traffic lights by nearly 100%, thereby greatly increasing congestion. But since we stipulated we were turning right onto Great Seneca Highway, I think our increase in delay and congestion at this intersection would be nominal.

The second cause of increased congestion, viewed over the entire length of CCT on Muddy Branch, is the addition of traffic lights, one for automobiles and one for CCT, at two intersections on Muddy Branch Road which are now free flowing. Traffic can now flow the entire length of Muddy Branch Road between Great Seneca Highway and Darnestown Road (Highway 28) at full highway speed most of the time. The addition of these traffic lights will reduce the average transit time on this full length segment of Muddy Branch Road by at least 50 to 75%. The impact will be dreadful. This is congestion at its worst.

I will not speculate on any increase in congestion on the next segment of roadway, meaning from entry onto Great Seneca Highway east bound to the left turn onto Sam Eig Highway. There certainly will be a significant increase in congestion on this segment of roadway, but I believe that in view of the unknown impact of expected changes in the highway, any attempt to quantify the increase in congestion would be sheer speculation.

To sum up the increase in congestion as a result of the alignment of CCT with Muddy Branch Road, it is extreme. To impose this very great burden of CCT on a highway system that is already overloaded, when viable alternatives are available, and when our community derives no benefit whatsoever, is unthinkable.

The fourth point of this Addendum is to correct inaccuracies in the presentation by MTA at the Sept. 30 meeting. The first such inaccuracy was when they said CCT could not be aligned with the median strip of Great Seneca Highway because there are rainwater drainage facilities there which would have to be revised. That's interesting, because there are also rainwater drainage facilities in the median strip of Muddy Branch Road where MTA is proposing to place CCT. Does this mean that maybe CCT can go on the median strip of Great Seneca Highway after all, or does it mean we might have to ditch the Muddy Branch Road alignment? One or the other seems in order.

A more complex issue surrounds MTA's stated reason for rejecting the north side of Great Seneca Highway as a place for CCT: there is a nice hiker biker trail on that side. This statement is true as far as it goes, but it doesn't go as far as MTA would have you believe. The broad swath on the north side of Great Seneca, which is much broader than the swath on the south side, results from the fact that the north side swath was once railroad right of way which was abandoned by the railroad and turned into what is now recognized as a Rails to Trails hiker biker trail. It is heavily utilized. I hike it or bike it many times a year, as I have done for thirteen years, and I like it a lot. But that's not the end of the story. The truth of the matter is that we are slowly but surely losing this once beautiful trail as developers and government units make more and more inroads on and across the trail, diminishing the trail's usefulness. Another such inroad is under process of development right now as a major construction project is taking shape approximately opposite the entrance to Lakelands, and this project has been messy to say the least. And there will doubtless be several more of these inroads until all of the available land in the area is developed. It's sad but true. For CCT plans, the consequences are clear: we could easily take the swath of land on the north side for the CCT lanes, abandon the hiker biker trail there, and build a new hiker biker trail on the swath of land on the south side of Great Seneca Highway. This would result in destroying less private property of people living in the area who will derive no benefit from CCT.

Finally, with all of the disadvantages that would result from the Muddy Branch Road alignment of the CCT, one is forced to ask what advantages there might be. None is apparent. It does not have proximity to any employment center or business center. It is not a direct route. At crucial points it is not a dedicated expressway. MTA needs to abandon this unsuitable alignment.

If MTA persists in its policy of failing and refusing to address the very valid concerns expressed by the people who live in the area and who are negatively impacted by the planned expressway,

it should be clear that this will only add fuel to the fire for the lawsuits which will inevitably follow, will result in very long delays as the courts consider the important issues which the government planners failed and refused to consider, and will result in shortening and simplifying the currently circuitous and grotesque plan for CCT, if not abandoning it altogether.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. A detailed response by MTA in the near future would be much appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Glenn E. Nelson