

US Route 15 Safety and Operations Study

PARTNER AGENCY MEETING

MEETING SUMMARY

Date: February 2, 2018
Time: 2:00 to 3:30 PM
Location: 355 Montevue Lane, Bourne Building, Frederick, MD 21702
Subject: Discussion of Route 15 with Maryland and Virginia Agencies

Summary prepared by: Kimley Horn
Summary prepared on: February 5, 2018

Meeting Attendees:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
John Concannon	MDOT – District 7 SHA	301-624-8102	jconcannon@sha.state.md.us
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Robert Shen	Frederick County	301-600-2928	rshen@frederickcountymd.gov
Chuck Nipe	Frederick County DPW	301-600-1689	cnipe@frederickcountymd.gov
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Mike Harris	Kimley-Horn	703-674-1318	mike.harris@kimley-horn.com
Mark Phillips	Kimley-Horn	703-870-3631	mark.phillips@kimley-horn.com

*attended by phone

Introduction

This partner agency meeting was held on Friday afternoon February 2nd, 2018, at the Frederick County Department of Public Works in Frederick, Maryland to discuss congestion, safety and operational issues and future plans for Route 15 within Loudoun County, VA and Frederick County, MD.

Virginia Discussion

Loudoun County staff presented a summary of the Congestion Report and Safety and Operational Study background, current efforts and the public, stakeholder and partner agency coordination efforts to date and planned in the future. The County will provide an electronic copy of the PowerPoint and agenda discussed during the meeting.

The discussion included a brief on Phase 1 improvements from the Congestion Study (northbound auxiliary lane) which is a restriping effort with a minimal amount of new pavement to extend the existing northbound merge lane from North King Street to Tutt Lane. VDOT noted that the improvement is expected to take weeks to implement this spring.

Maryland Discussion

Highway Infrastructure

Maryland officials provided information on the Route 15 Corridor in Maryland. Ballenger Creek Pike is the old Route 15. The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) said that right-of-way (ROW) was purchased in the late 1950s/early 1960s for existing Route 15, from the Potomac River to the merge with Route 340. At that time, Maryland acquired enough ROW for the planned “dualization” of Route 15 to a limited access four-lane highway. Maryland staff noted that the corridor would ultimately have interchanges at full build-out including at Route 464. They also stated that location of the future river crossing has the possibility of shifting due to the build out of Canal Run in Point-of Rocks.

SHA stated that although the ROW is available on Route 15, the planned widening is not currently funded nor is it in the current CIP or CLRP. Planning for the Corridor improvement is listed as the number two priority for the County in the Highway Needs Inventory. Any anticipated “dualization” would likely not occur until after the year 2040. SHA stated that the existing Point of Rocks bridge was built in the 1930’s and is in good condition, there are no plans to replace the bridge. They did note that the bridge is at or near its full capacity with peak volume. The traffic volume at the bridge more than doubled from 1996 (9,650 AADT) to 2016 (21,000 AADT). The Clay Street signal was discussed, and Maryland staff shared that there are no plans to improve to this intersection. Loudoun staff noted that some school buses cross the Point of Rocks bridge and use Clay Street as a turnaround on their bus route.

Bike Plans

Bike trails were also discussed. Loudoun County said that bike access and mobility is being considered as a part of the possible scope for the Corridor improvements. Loudoun County discussed a possible connection to the Potomac Heritage Trail. Maryland staff shared that their focus on the Potomac Heritage Trail is currently southern focused in Maryland in Prince Georges County and Charles County and they don’t have any planned bicycle facilities along Route 15. Maryland’s focus in this area of the state is on connections to the C&O Canal Towpath.

Safety

Maryland staff stated that safety is the biggest priority for their portion of Route 15. Safety improvements that have been implemented include mandatory headlight use, wide 3 stripe yellow centerline pavement markings, intersection lighting, full shoulders and improved enforcement. Maryland staff noted that

implementing roundabouts and traffic signals for cross-traffic has greatly improved existing safety conditions and were largely accepted by drivers.

Land-use and Growth

Maryland staff shared that the area between Point of Rocks and Frederick is zoned rural and is designated as Agricultural on their Comprehensive Plan. A map of the Frederick County Comprehensive Plan was provided to the Virginia staff. Frederick County will likely not experience much future land-use growth along the corridor. Point of Rocks has been fully built out and little new development is expected. It was noted that nearby Adamstown has the potential to develop approximately 2,000 more homes and the City of Frederick has ongoing development, both of which would likely utilize the Route 15 corridor.

Traffic

Maryland online VMT statistics showed an approximate increase of 2,000 vehicles per day from 2006-2016 traveling on Route 15. They noted that the Virginia traffic counts match their traffic counts. Maryland staff observed that most people who live in Frederick area are commuting to work in other areas, primarily the I-270 Corridor, DC or to Loudoun County. Maryland staff are going to see if any origin-destination data was available and provide it to the County.

Multimodal Ideas

Multimodal options were discussed. Virginia staff shared an idea stemming from the first round of public outreach about more bus transit options. Maryland staff liked the idea of bus service essentially linking MARC to Leesburg to Metrorail in Ashburn and back. Maryland staff noted the park and ride lot is 70-85% full so there is some capacity available. Also, there are locations available for buses to pick-up/drop-off passengers. It was agreed that Maryland staff would help Virginia staff investigate shared commuter parking at the MARC station at Point of Rocks for Virginia based bus service destinations. This coordination would ultimately be between Loudoun County Transit and the Maryland Transit Authority. Maryland staff said they would facilitate an introduction to MTA for Loudoun staff.

Public Meetings

The upcoming Safety and Operations Study public meetings and project schedule were discussed. Maryland staff were invited to attend. The second round of public meetings are scheduled for:

- Friday March 9th from 2:00 to 9:00 PM at Ida Lee Recreation Center, Leesburg VA 20176
- Saturday March 10th from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Lucketts Community Center, 42631 Lucketts Road, Leesburg, VA 20176

Action Items:

- Loudoun County to provide an electronic copy of the PowerPoint handout
- Maryland staff to check to see if any origin-destination information is available
- Maryland staff to provide Loudoun County staff an introduction to MTA to explore the potential bus service and shared use of the park and ride lot