

CORRIDOR FORWARD

I-270 Transit Plan

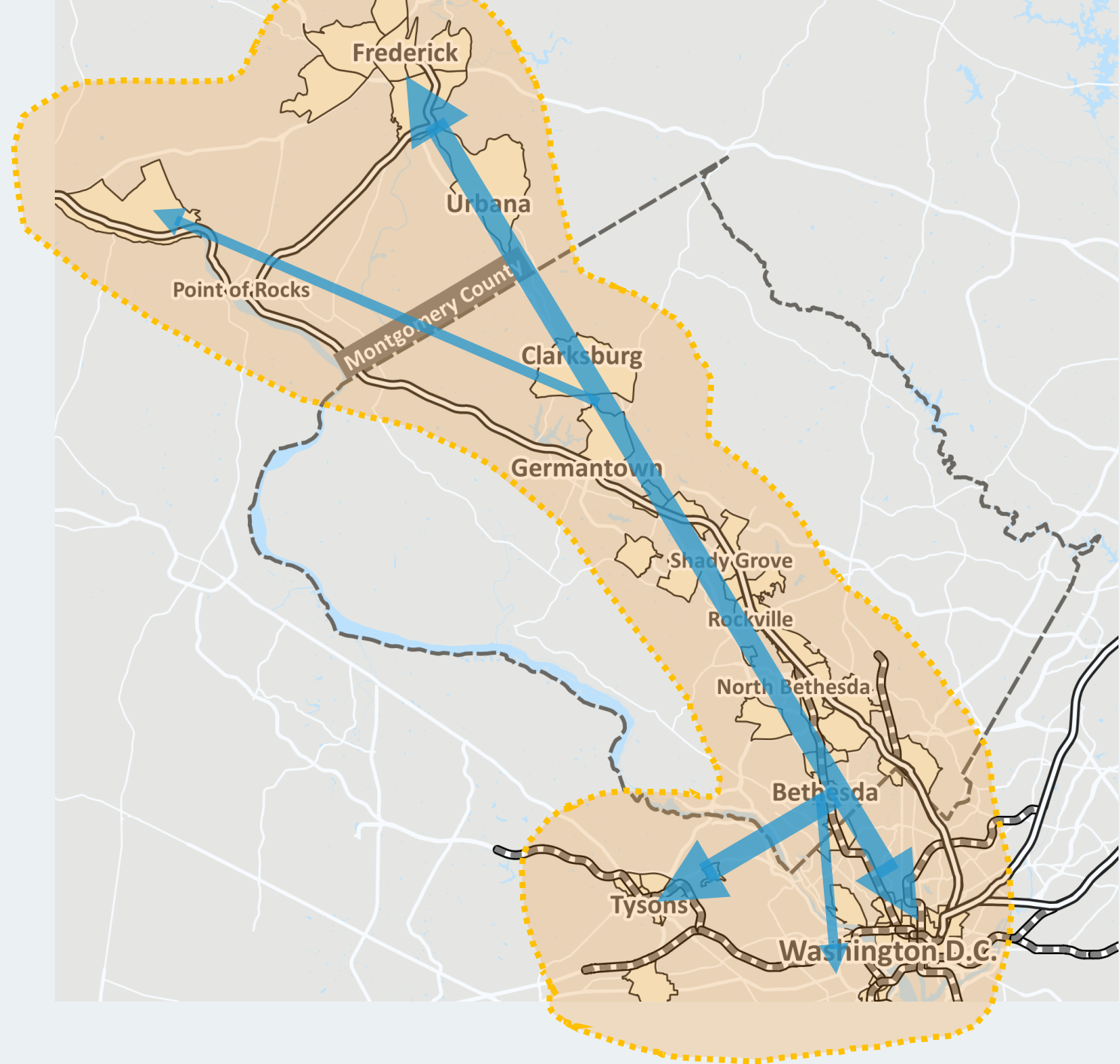
October 7, 2021

Montgomery Planning



Plan Overview

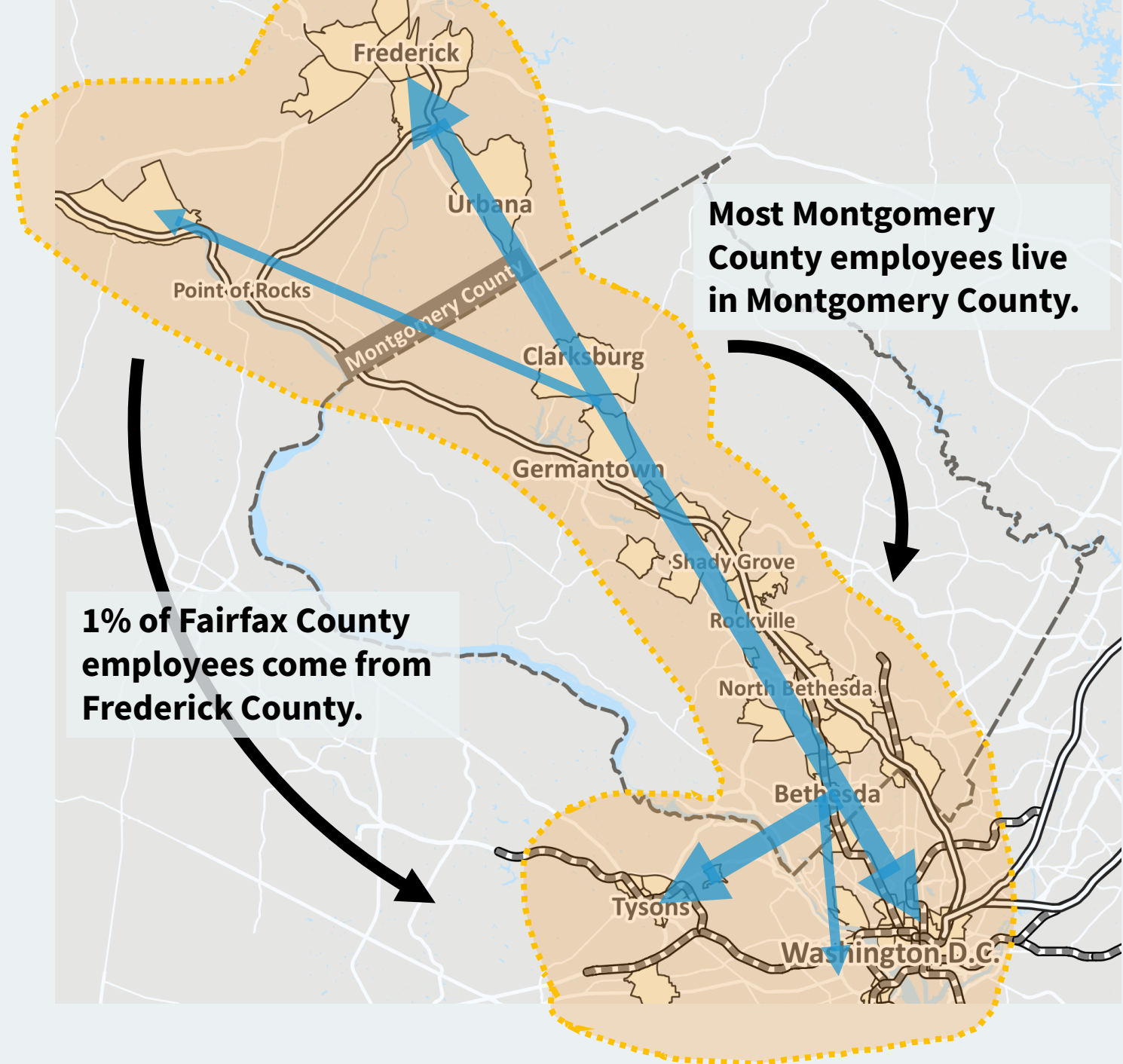
- **Council Direction:** “Analyze transit options serving communities along the I-270 Corridor between Frederick and Tysons”
- **Challenge:** Large menu of existing options, each serving different purposes and geographies:
 - existing master-planned options
 - existing options in the public sphere
 - new options under-development
- **Purpose:** Inventory, evaluate, and prioritize best package of options to inform future funding opportunities



Narrowed Focus

While the study area stretches from Frederick to Tysons, few commuters make the 40-mile trip across the entire corridor.

Most commute trips are shorter, such as from Germantown to Bethesda, or Clarksburg to Rockville.



Progress to Date

- **Inventoried transit options** that could serve the I-270 corridor
- **Completed a pre-screening analysis**, which evaluated the inventoried transit options and advanced six options for detailed analysis
- **Analyzed the six transit options**, evaluating strategic merits, economic and financial outlook, and potential implementation challenges
- **Evaluated multiple transit networks**, including combinations of the six transit options

Where We're Going

- **Incorporate Planning Board feedback** on preliminary recommendations
- **Meet with community members and stakeholders** to share the recommendations
- **Develop an implementation plan** outlining the steps to realize the proposed transit network and supporting recommendations
- **Complete the working draft** building the narrative and argument for the Plan's recommendations

Master Plan to Implementation

County Functional
Plan or Master
Plan

Major: Inclusion in
Constrained Long-
Range Plan,
State/Local
Transportation
Improvement
Program

Minor: Inclusion in
County Capital
Improvement
Program

Major: National
Environmental
Protection Act
Process

Minor: Facility
Planning

Design and
Engineering

Construction

Corridor Forward

Completed by Others



MDOT

MTA
Maryland

M
metro

Corridor Forward Recommendations Summary

The Proposed Transit Network (# 1)

- Represents the foundational recommendation for Corridor Forward
- Builds upon transit projects currently advancing in Montgomery County
- Includes near-term and long-term transit infrastructure and investments

Support the Proposed Transit Network (# 2-9)

- Enhances the transit network presented in Recommendation 1
- Converts general-purpose travel lanes to dedicated transit lanes
- Supports incremental implementation of transit projects
- Enhances bicycle, pedestrian, and micromobility access to stations

Strengthen Regional Transit Connections (# 10-14)

- Improves transit connections to other jurisdictions
- Focuses on the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia, and Frederick County

The Proposed Transit Network

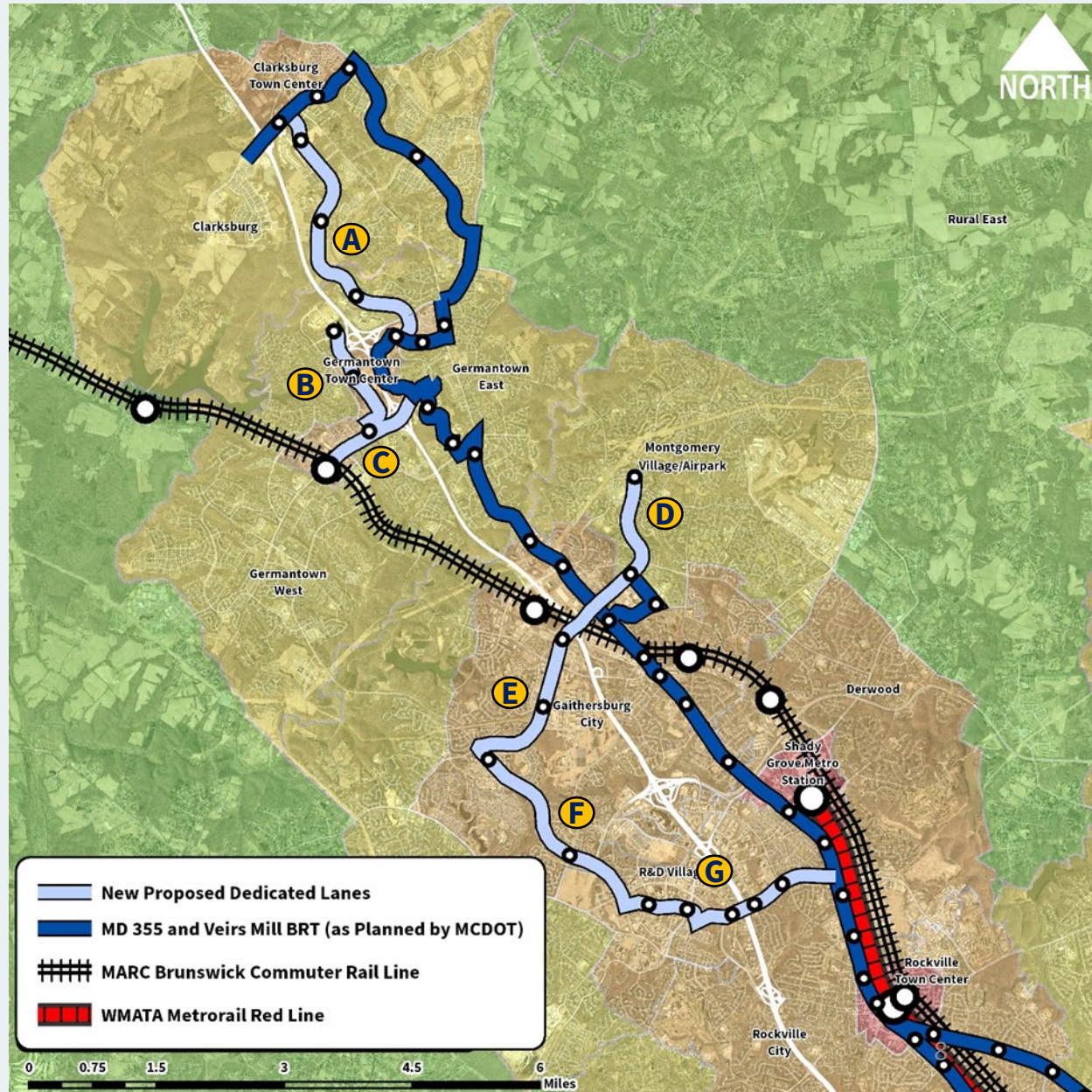
Near-Term: Dedicated Bus Lanes

Already Planned

MD 355 and Veirs Mill Road BRT Alignments

Recommended

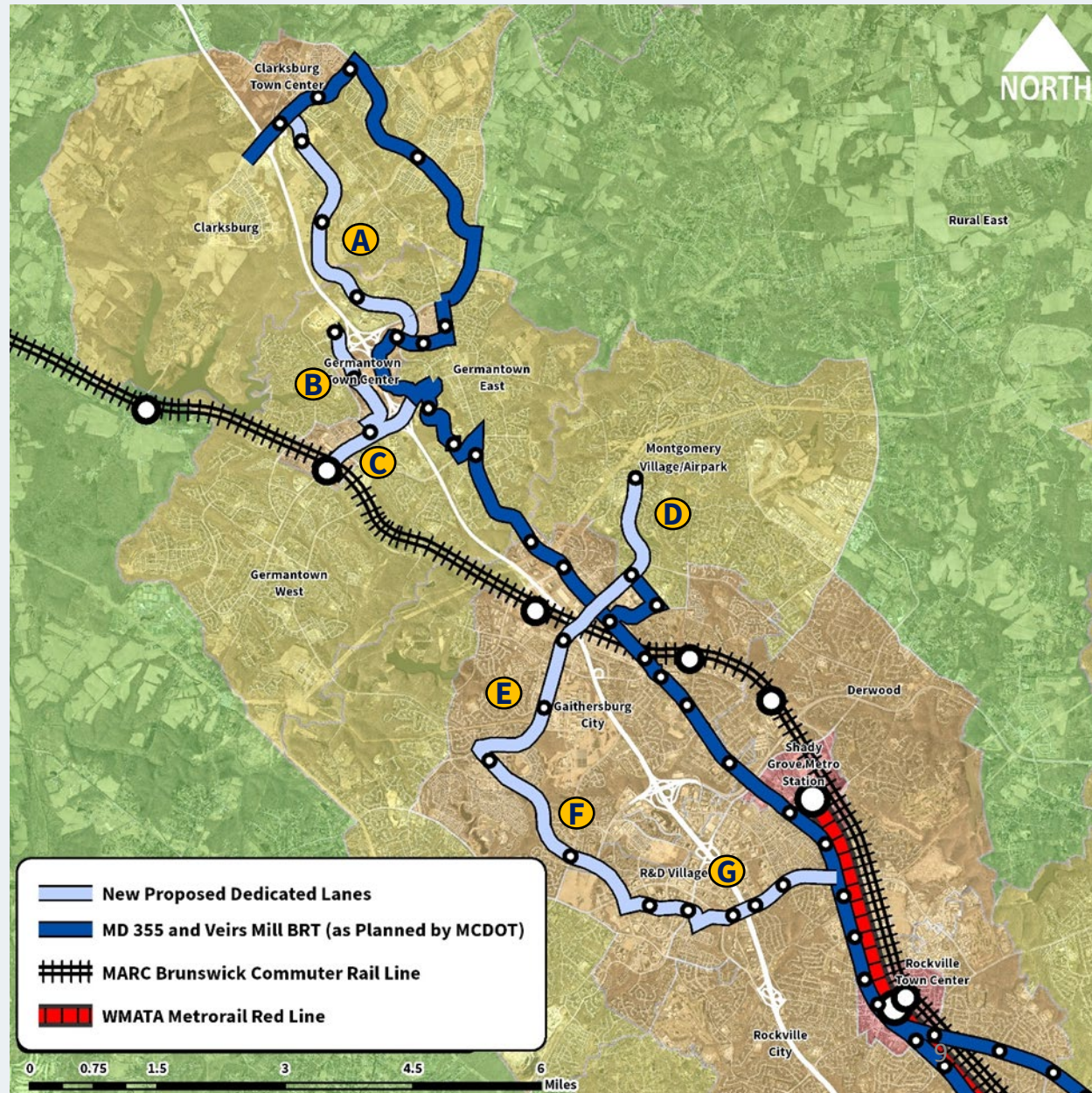
- A. Observation Drive (CCT alignment)
- B. Century Boulevard (CCT alignment)
- C. MD 118 (Germantown MARC to Observation Drive)
- D. MD 124 East (Montgomery Village to MD 355)
- E. MD 124 West (MD 355 to Great Seneca Highway)
- F. Great Seneca Highway (MD 124 to Blackwell Road)
- G. Gude Drive, Fallsgrove Drive, Blackwell Road



The Proposed Transit Network

Near-Term: Dedicated Bus Lanes

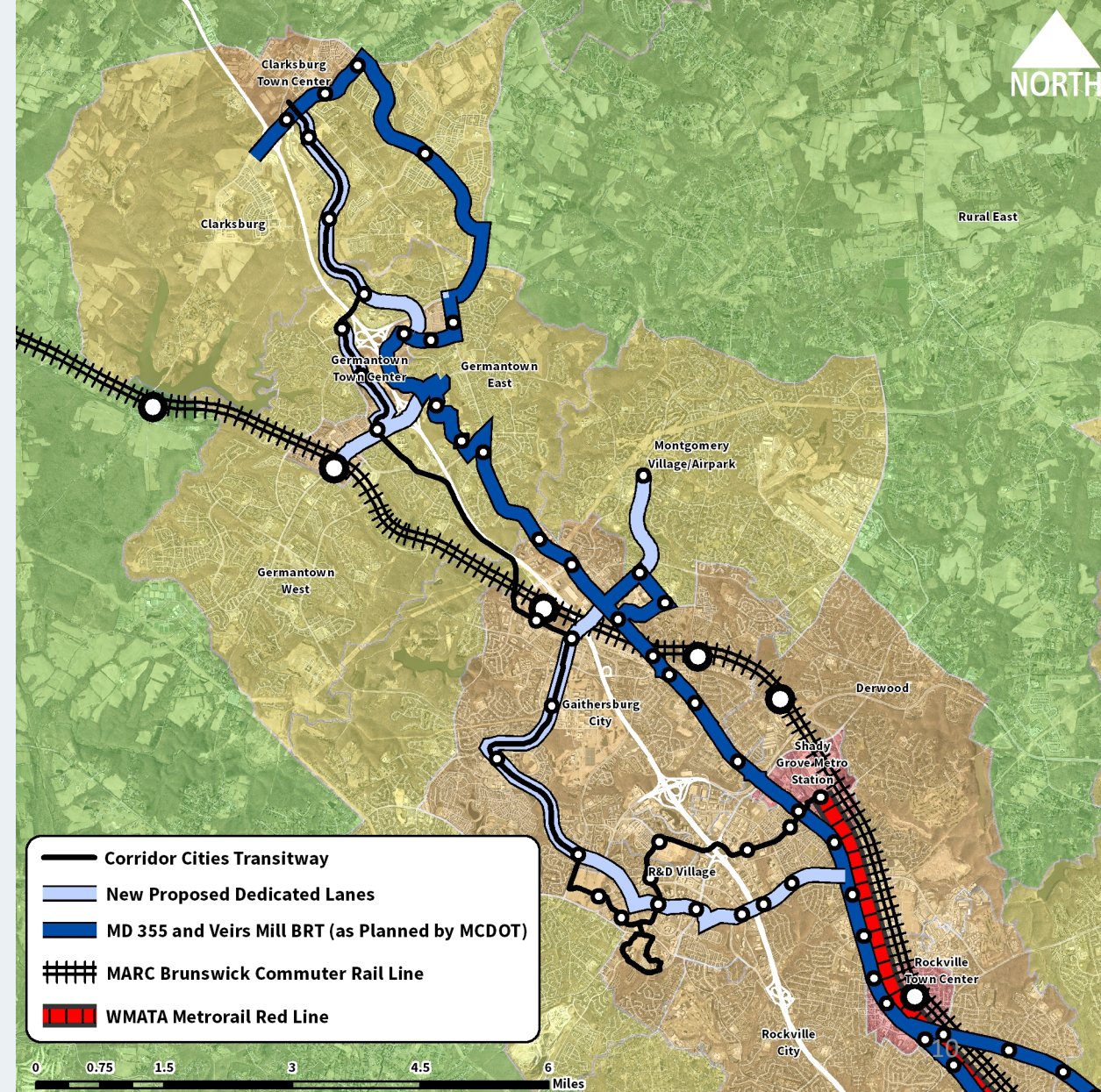
- **Maximize the value of infrastructure currently advancing**, including MD 355 BRT and Veirs Mill Road BRT
- **Allow for numerous service patterns** rather than focusing on a single service pattern
- **Support equity** by connecting Equity Focus Areas to transit and employment centers
- **Provide connections to the Red Line**, either at Shady Grove, Rockville, or stops proposed in the long-term recommendation
- **Promote cost-efficiency** by refining the master planned CCT alignment



The Proposed Transit Network

Comparison to the CCT

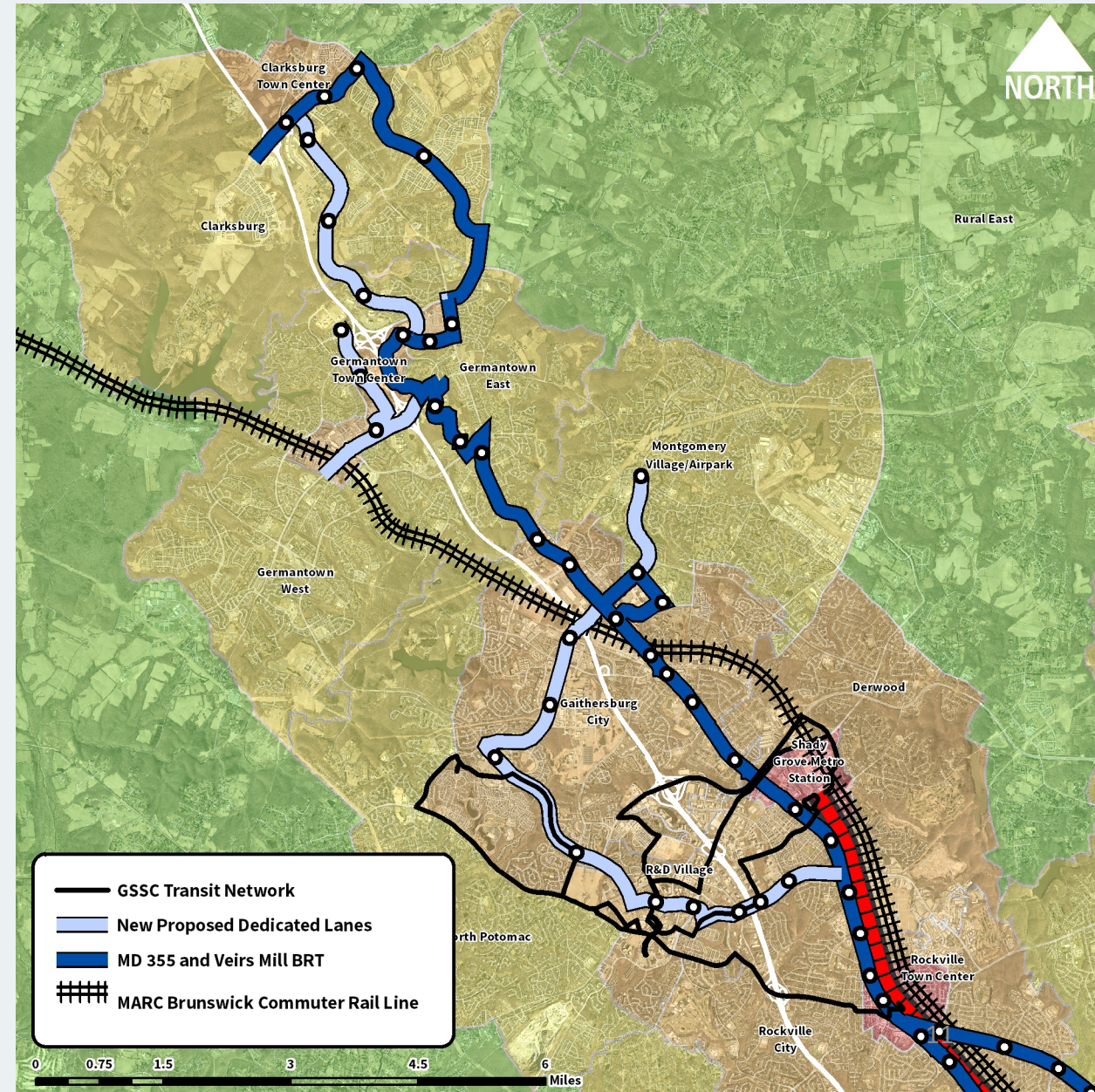
- Leverages previous study and design for the CCT
- Retains the majority of stations & connections
- Eliminates both high-cost grade crossings of I-270
- Removes segment with no planned stops



The Proposed Transit Network

Connections to GSSC Network

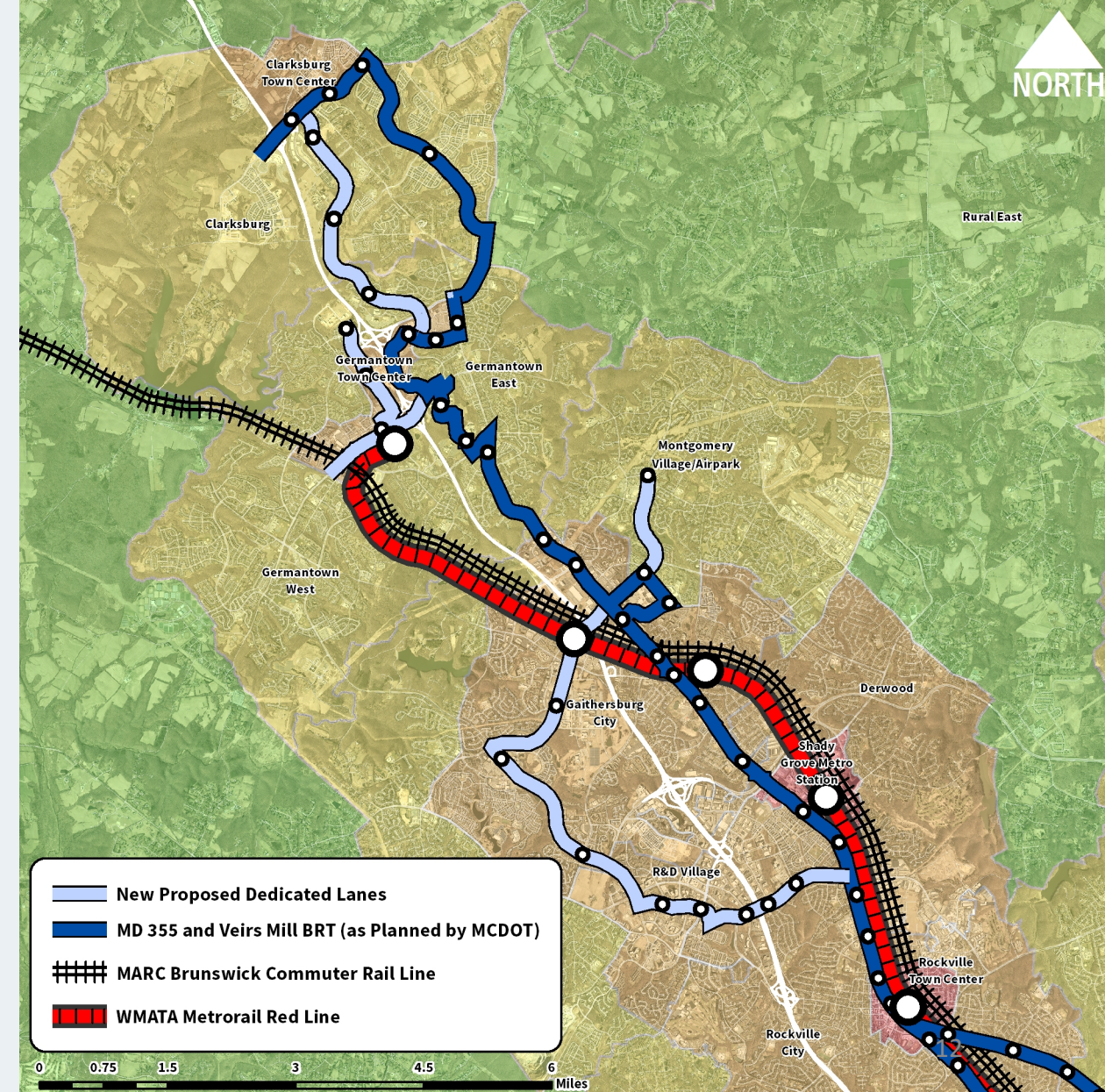
- Provides connections between Shady Grove and the LSC
- Creates a transit hub at Universities of Shady Grove
- Serves stations no longer served by the proposed transit network



The Proposed Transit Network

Long-Term Vision: Red Line Extension

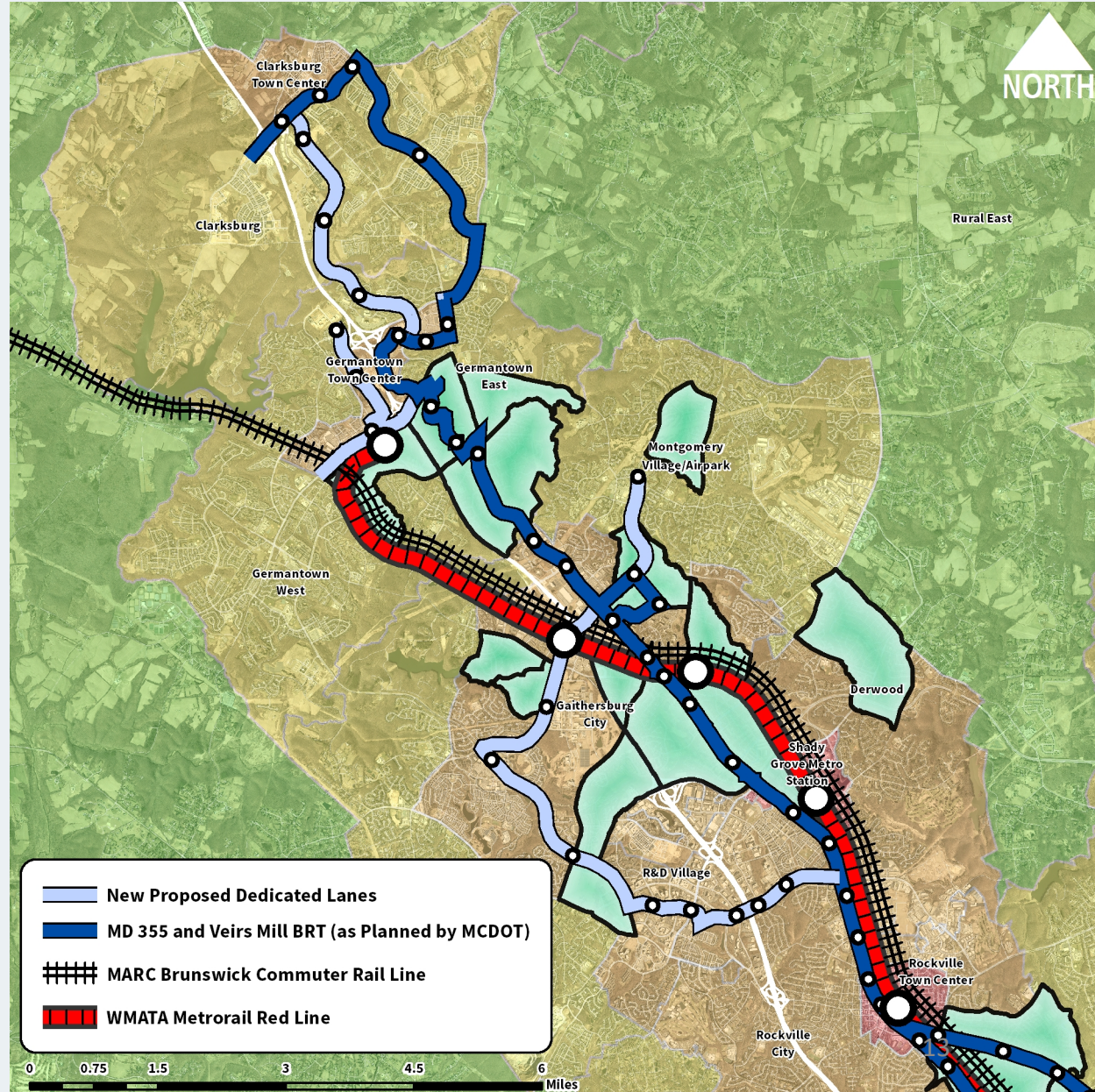
- **Best option to reduce vehicle miles traveled** the technical analysis found that this connection reduces daily VMT by 157,000 miles
- **Best option to reduce transit travel times** transit travel time from Germantown and Gaithersburg to Bethesda would be reduced by 13 and 9 minutes, respectively
- **Best return on investment** highest benefit-to-cost ratio of options studied
- **Implementation challenges** capital costs, ROW acquisition, cooperation with CSX and WMATA



The Proposed Transit Network

Equity Benefits

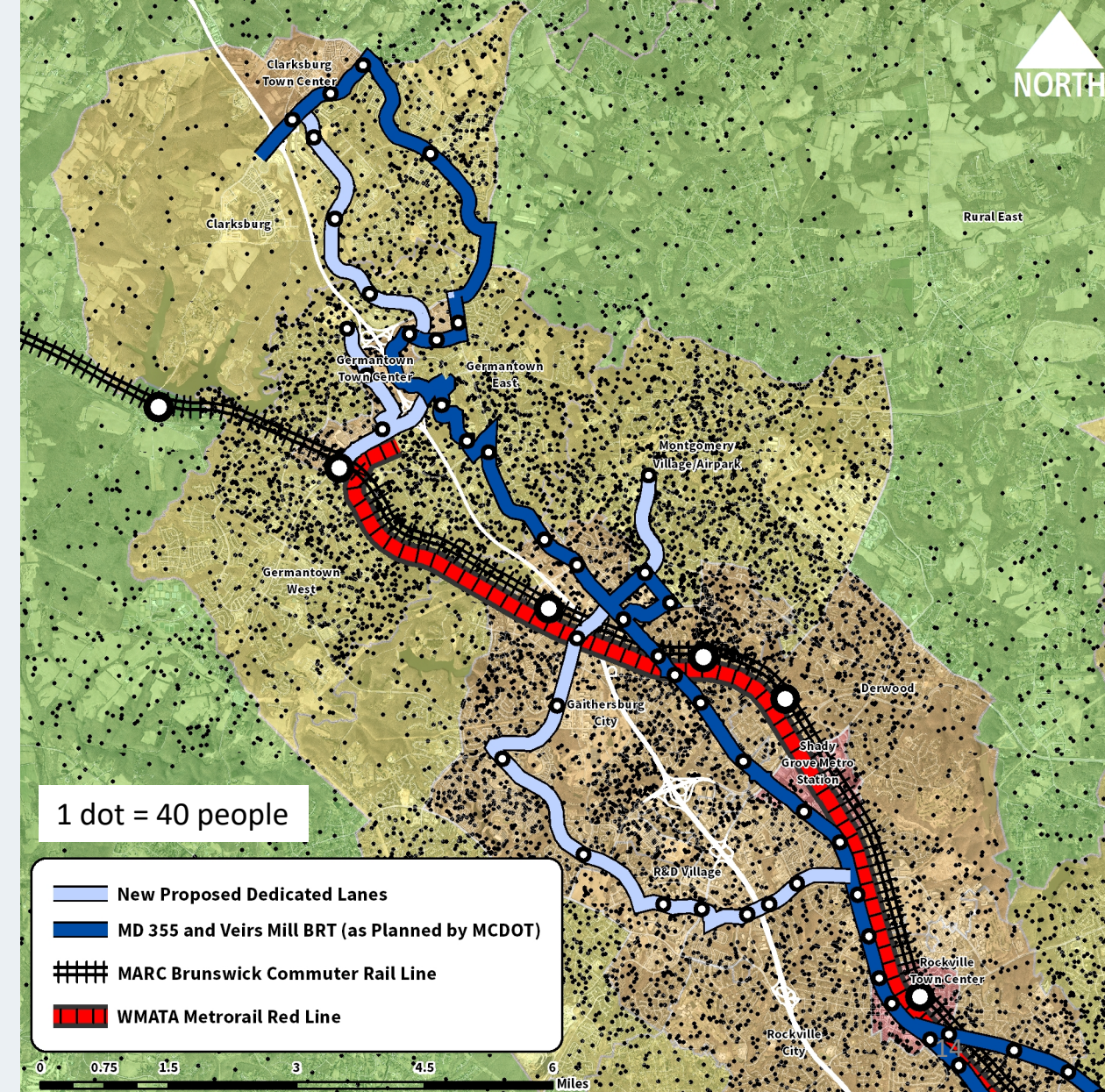
- Dedicated bus lanes link Equity Focus Areas (EFAs) to high-quality transit
- Red Line Extension provides new direct access to DC for EFAs, resulting in large gains in job access
- VMT impacts greatest in EFAs



The Proposed Transit Network

Alignment with Land Use

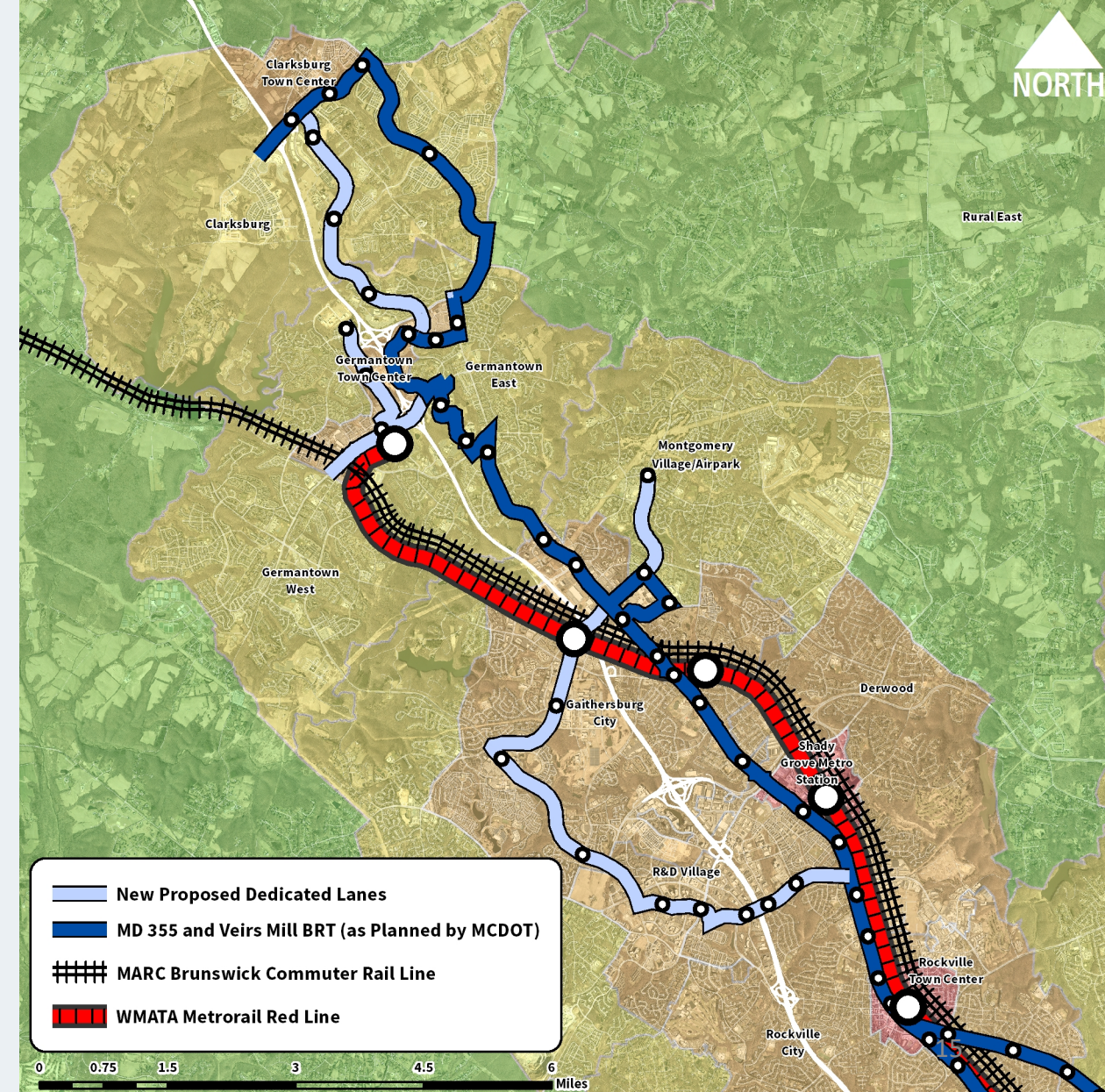
- Enhances service to Germantown, a growing hub on the I-270 corridor
- Enhances service to Montgomery Village, which a large population reliant on transit
- Maintains CCT-proposed service of the Life Sciences Center



The Proposed Transit Network

Near Term Plan:
Dedicated Bus Lanes

Long-Term Vision:
Red Line Extension



Supporting Recommendations

Support the Proposed Transit Network

2. Convert existing general-purpose travel lanes to dedicated transit lanes on targeted streets, including—but not limited to—the streets detailed in the right-of-way table.

- A. Convert existing auto travel lanes to dedicated transit lanes to advance the recommended transit network.
- B. Modify congestion standards to include a BRT station designation.
- C. Explore other locations in the corridor where local bus service can be enhanced through express bus lanes, queue jumps, and other facilities.

Support the Proposed Transit Network

3. Limit the addition of travel lanes, as shown in the right-of-way table or figure (to be provided in the Working Draft). Use the remaining space in the master planned right-of-way for transit, walking, bicycling, and other micromobility modes.

- A. Within the corridor, eliminate capital improvement projects that support the addition of new travel lanes and turn lanes.
- B. Create a “Future I-270 Corridor Network” capital improvement project to absorb fee-in-lieu as development mitigation pursuant to the county’s Growth and Infrastructure Policy.

Support the Proposed Transit Network

4. Maximize the travel potential of dedicated bus lanes.

- A. Develop policy guidelines on the use of dedicated bus lanes to allow local bus, shuttles, etc. in appropriate contexts.

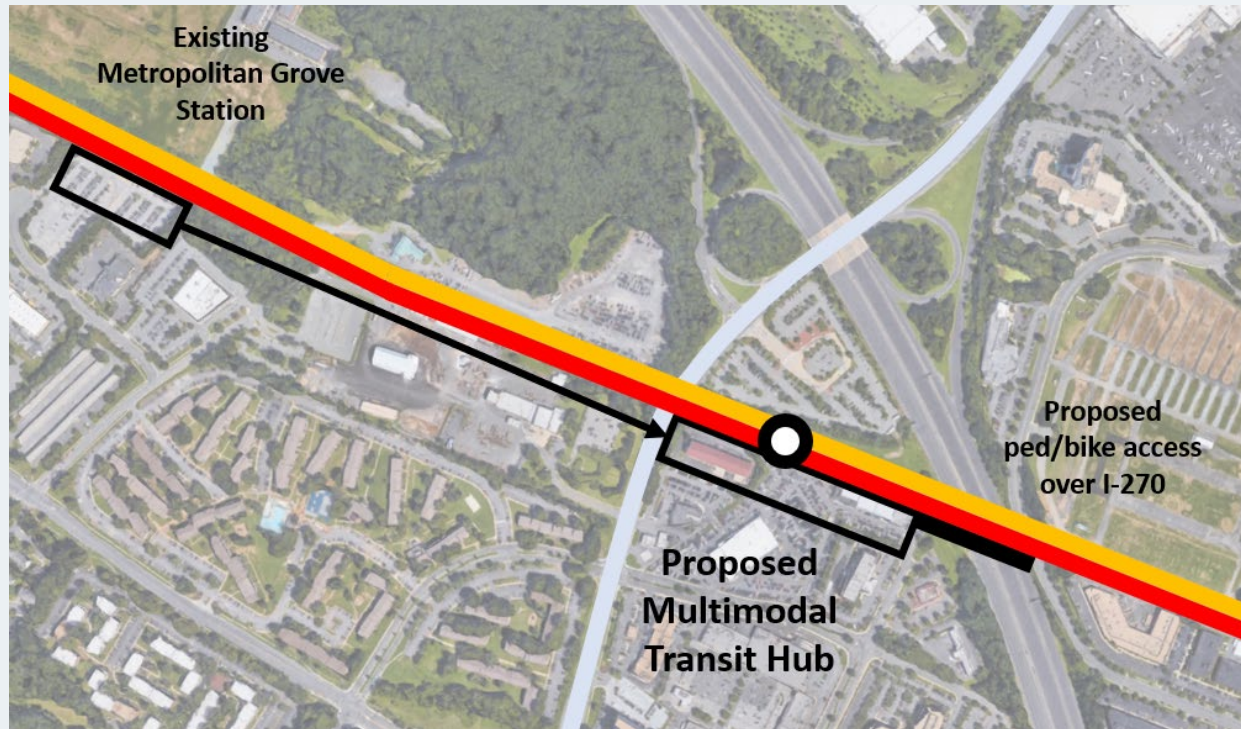
5. Support the incremental implementation of dedicated bus lanes rather than wait to realize an entire transitway facility if that facility proves immediately challenging to implement.

- A. When feasible, break infrastructure components of larger transit projects into smaller, more easily implemented components.

Support the Proposed Transit Network

6. Develop a new multimodal transit hub near the intersection of MD 124 and the CSX tracks.

- A. Relocate the existing Metropolitan Grove MARC Station, in coordination with MARC and WMATA, to integrate services at the planned MD-124/Fairgrounds transit hub.
- B. Provide direct pedestrian, bicycle, and micromobility access to the new transit hub from both the east and west side of I-270 via a new grade-separated connection.



Support the Proposed Transit Network

7. Ensure safe and efficient access to planned transit stops for pedestrians, bicyclists, and other micromobility modes.

- A. Create new BiPPAs and red MSPAs to support new transit services.
- B. Provide buffered sidewalks, protected crossings, bicycle facilities, and lighting to serve new stops and stations.
- C. Include bicycle and scooter parking in the design of new stops and stations.
- D. Ensure access to master planned transit stops is ADA accessible.
- E. Develop countywide pedestrian and bicycle delay standards to limit crossing delay.

Support the Proposed Transit Network

8. Update relevant land use plans and guidelines to support master planned transit facilities.

- A. Update master plans and sector plans in support of incentivizing compact, transit-oriented development patterns.
- B. Appropriately zone transit operations and maintenance facilities and integrate locations into applicable plan's land use.
- C. Create affordable housing and preserve small businesses where new transit may increase rents.
- D. Update the Complete Streets Design Guidelines, adding a “transit street” typology addressing transit-specific design elements.

Support the Proposed Transit Network

9. Support the North Bethesda Transitway as master planned; where necessary, repurpose automobile travel lanes with dedicated transit lanes in order to advance the Plan's vision.

- A. Maintain the recommendation from the 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Plan for the North Bethesda Transitway, retaining the alignment that terminates at White Flint Metro Station.
- B. Where right of way acquisition proves challenging, repurpose automobile travel lanes to improve the ease of the project's implementation.

Strengthen Regional Transit Connections

10. Obtain right-of-way, through dedication or acquisition, to support the long-term potential of the MTA MARC Rail Brunswick Line.

- A. Continue to advance the long-term potential of the Brunswick Line by obtaining 25-foot wide land dedications adjacent to the northbound tracks of the Brunswick Line right-of-way along the segments identified in the MARC Cornerstone Plan.

Strengthen Regional Transit Connections

11. Promote strategic and equitable MARC Rail access by supporting new stations and—when necessary— accepting constraints imposed by the line’s owner and operator, currently CSX Corporation.

- A. Support the 2010 White Flint Sector Plan recommendation to construct an additional MARC-Station within the vicinity of White Flint.
- B. If CSX maintains no station can be added without removing an existing station, develop a strategy to eliminate service at underutilized stations to advance new stations with greater network value.
- C. If Red Line stations are constructed at locations with existing MARC service, amend existing plans to remove the recommendation for a MARC Station at Shady Grove.

Strengthen Regional Transit Connections

12. Design and construct the American Legion Bridge to support rail transit.

- A. Advocate for an American Legion Bridge design that can structurally accommodate the rail transit needs of the future.

13. Study extensions of the Purple Line, accounting for costs and benefits, to understand if and where extension(s) of the county's light rail service may be warranted.

- A. Add an initial study to the Planning Department's work program to evaluate a potential Purple Line extension west of Bethesda.
- B. Coordinate with jurisdictions, if warranted following the initial study, to scope further technical feasibility analyses.

Strengthen Regional Transit Connections

14. Explore a direct transit connection between the recommended WMATA Red Line Terminus and Frederick County.

- A. Support others' efforts by recommending alignments and stations for any portion of a direct service that falls within Montgomery County.
- B. Participate as a cooperative stakeholder in others' study and design efforts.

A rail connection to Frederick was not included in the recommended transit network for two reasons:

- **Costs exceeded the anticipated benefits.** The benefit-to-cost ratio for the rail connection was low - a return of \$0.32 for every \$1.00 spent.
- **Frederick would gain more than Montgomery County.** Roughly 67% of VMT reductions and 55% of new transit trips would occur outside of Montgomery County.

Corridor Forward Outreach To-Date

- Nearly 60 stakeholder meetings
- 2 virtual community presentations
- Corridor Forward webpage and e-Letter
- Transit Values Questionnaire
- Educational video series and infographic
- Interactive web map of I-270 commute patterns
- Bilingual RideOn bus advertisement
- Mailers to 4,000 Equity Focus Area addresses
- Transit stories social media campaign
- Outreach to transit riders on RideOn Route 101



Corridor Forward Outreach

Stakeholders Include:

- Municipalities and Jurisdictions
- Action Committee for Transit
- Coalition for Smarter Growth
- Community Action Boards
- Gaithersburg-Germantown Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Washington Partnership
- GSSC Implementation Advisory Committee
- High Road Foundation
- Housing Opportunities Commission
- Maryland Building Industry Association
- Maryland Department of Transportation
- Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
- Montgomery County Department of Transportation
- Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation
- Commercial Real Estate Development Association (NAIOP)
- Northern Virginia Transportation Commission
- Transportation Management Districts
- Universities at Shady Grove
- Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board
- WMATA

Corridor Forward Upcoming Outreach

- Interactive story map of Corridor Forward recommendations
- October 20th virtual community presentation
- Additional stakeholder meetings and coordination

Recap

Staff requests feedback on the preliminary recommendations to inform the development of the working draft.

- The Proposed Transit Network (# 1)
- Support the Proposed Transit Network (# 2-9)
- Strengthen Regional Transit Connections (# 10-14)

Recommendations Summary

- 1. The Recommended Network**
- 2. Repurpose Capacity**
- 3. Restrict Right-Of-Way Expansion for Cars**
- 4. Maximize Dedicated Transit Lanes' Potential**
- 5. Support Incremental Implementation**
- 6. Develop a New Mid-County Transit Hub**
- 7. Promote Safe & Efficient Station Access**
- 8. Update Plans & Guidelines**
- 9. Realize the North Bethesda Transitway**
- 10. Secure Additional Brunswick Line Right-of-Way**
- 11. Promote Strategic & Equitable MARC Access**
- 12. Support Transit on the American Legion Bridge**
- 13. Study Potential Purple Line Extensions**
- 14. Improve Frederick's Access to the Region**

Contact Information

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Reference Links

- [Corridor Forward Interactive Recommendations Map](#)
- [Transitway Preservation Map](#)
- [I-270 Commute Patterns Web Map](#)
- [Corridor Forward Website](#)