

Scope of Work

# master plan of highways bus rapid transit amendment

September 2011



Montgomery County Planning Department  
M-NCPPC  
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**abstract**

This report provides the scope of work for Countywide Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Master Plan Amendment to the 1955 Master Plan of Highways.

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Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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# master plan of highways bus rapid transit amendment



prepared by

The Montgomery County Planning Department

September 2011

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## Introduction

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This report provides the scope of work for amending the Master Plan of Highways to facilitate the development of a countywide bus rapid transit (BRT) system. It includes the purpose of the plan, a description of the work elements, and the schedule.

### Context

The first Master Plan of Highways for Montgomery County (MPOH) was approved and adopted in 1931, shortly after the creation of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in 1927. The last comprehensive update to the Master Plan of Highways was approved and adopted in 1955. The 1955 Plan covered Montgomery County's portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District as it existed at the time—roughly the area east of Georgia Avenue, east and south of the City of Rockville, and the southeast portion of Potomac—comprising only about one third of the County's area.

A draft Master Plan of Highways for the entire area of both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties was proposed in 1967 but the process was never completed. Master plans and sector plans that have been approved and adopted since 1955 have amended the Master Plan of Highways, as have the many limited functional Master Plan of Highways Amendments. Maps of the Master Plan of Highways for the whole County were published in 1986, 1992, and 2005 as reference documents derived from all these plans and amendments, rather than as standalone approved and adopted plans.

Transitways were added to the Master Plan of Highways beginning in 1986 with the inclusion of the Georgetown Branch Transitway, now a segment of the Purple Line. Other master-planned transitways include the Corridor Cities Transitway, North Bethesda Transitway, and the Georgia Avenue Busway. Plans developed by the Maryland Department of Transportation for the Corridor Cities Transitway and the Purple Line also define station locations and the incorporation of pedestrian/bicycle facilities. In addition, the recently constructed and planned interchanges on US29 north of New Hampshire Avenue were designed to accommodate a median transitway.

In August 2011, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) completed the Countywide Bus Rapid Transit Study. This study determined that a network of 16 BRT corridors totaling 150 miles was feasible.



In August 2011, the MCDOT's Countywide BRT Study found that "a system of BRT routes could operate effectively within the county." This MPOH amendment will further refine the proposed 150-mile system, connecting it to County land use plans. For more information, visit <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/content/dot/MCBRTexecutivesummary110426.pdf>

## **purpose**

The purpose of the BRT network is to provide improved accessibility and mobility to serve the development envisioned in the County's adopted land use plans. This amendment will recommend specific alignments and station locations, providing policy guidance to existing and future master plans, sector plans, station area plans, and other plans, as well as property owners, as to the location, function, and general operational characteristics of the BRT network. This amendment is a functional plan amendment and will not include any changes to land use plans or zoning.

## **geography**

The 16 corridors identified in the Countywide Bus Rapid Transit Study will serve as the starting point for the BRT Amendment (see Map 1). Refinements could include modifications or additions to the 16 proposed corridors.

## **goals**

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The BRT Amendment has the following goals:

- Meet the County's long-term transportation objectives as defined in the General Plan:
  - Develop an interconnected transportation system that provides choices in the modes and routes of travel.
  - Provide appropriate access to, around, and within communities by using a full range of travelways.
  - Improve the efficiency of the existing and planned transportation system by managing its supply and demand.
  - Provide a transit system in appropriate areas of the County that is a viable alternative to single-occupant travel.
- Make BRT a preferred mode of choice by creating a network that increases reliability, minimizes delay, and compares favorably to driving times during peak periods.
- Determine right-of-way requirements to accommodate a high-quality BRT system.
- Meet current and projected transit demand based on forecasted growth.

## **recommendations**

Items to be addressed in the Amendment include:

- Determine which corridors recommended by the Countywide BRT Study should be included in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways.
- Refine the corridors and station locations recommended by the Countywide BRT Study.
- Develop typical sections that illustrate how the proposed transitway and stations are accommodated in the corridors, and determine the preferred and minimum rights-of-way.
- Identify where additional right-of-way or repurposing of travel lanes is required for the bus rapid transit corridors and stations.
  - Recommend an approach to network phasing.
  - Locate major bicycle and pedestrian access points and establish guidelines for access by station type.
  - Establish Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Areas around all BRT stations.
  - Display all BRT corridors, BRT stations, and other master planned transit centers on the map and create standardized transitway map symbols to be used for both the Master Plan of Highways and new master and sector plans.
  - Change the Plan's title to the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways.



## issues

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This Amendment will address the following issues.

- Additional right-of-way beyond that recommended in current master plans may be required in many areas to implement a high-quality BRT system:
  - implementation of dedicated bus lanes or guideways may require additional right-of-way for long lengths in some corridors
  - implementation of stations, queue jumps, and intersection improvements may require additional right-of-way in localized segments.
- In some corridor segments, where acquisition of additional right-of-way is not feasible or where passenger volumes warrant, the number of existing travel lanes may need to be reduced to accommodate a BRT facility that serves more users.
- BRT station locations will need to balance efficiency of the BRT system, its relationship to other land uses, and impacts on roadway operations.
- A successful BRT system will require safe and easy pedestrian and bicycle access to and from stations. Most of the BRT corridors are State highways; the designation of Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Areas along these corridors will require concurrence from the Maryland State Highway Administration.

## approach

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The Planning Department is contracting a consultant to provide technical assistance on the master plan amendment. We will produce a:

- Countywide BRT Purpose and Need Report as part of the Task Two work effort, which will lay the groundwork for more detailed technical analysis by:
  - establishing key concepts (terminology, etc.) as they relate to specific corridors
  - considering recommendations and concerns expressed by stakeholders, including the County Executive's Transit Task Force
  - reconciling, where possible, competing visions for the same corridor(s)
  - identifying coordination issues with other related efforts, plans, or programs.
- Recommendations Report that will identify where additional right-of-way will be required in each corridor. This is the report that will most directly inform the development of the Master Plan of Highways BRT Amendment.
- Draft Technical Appendix of more detailed information about the technical analysis used to reach the specific recommendations.

Staff will lead the development of the Public Hearing Draft Plan and the Planning Board Draft Plan in part by utilizing these products from the consulting effort.

## outreach

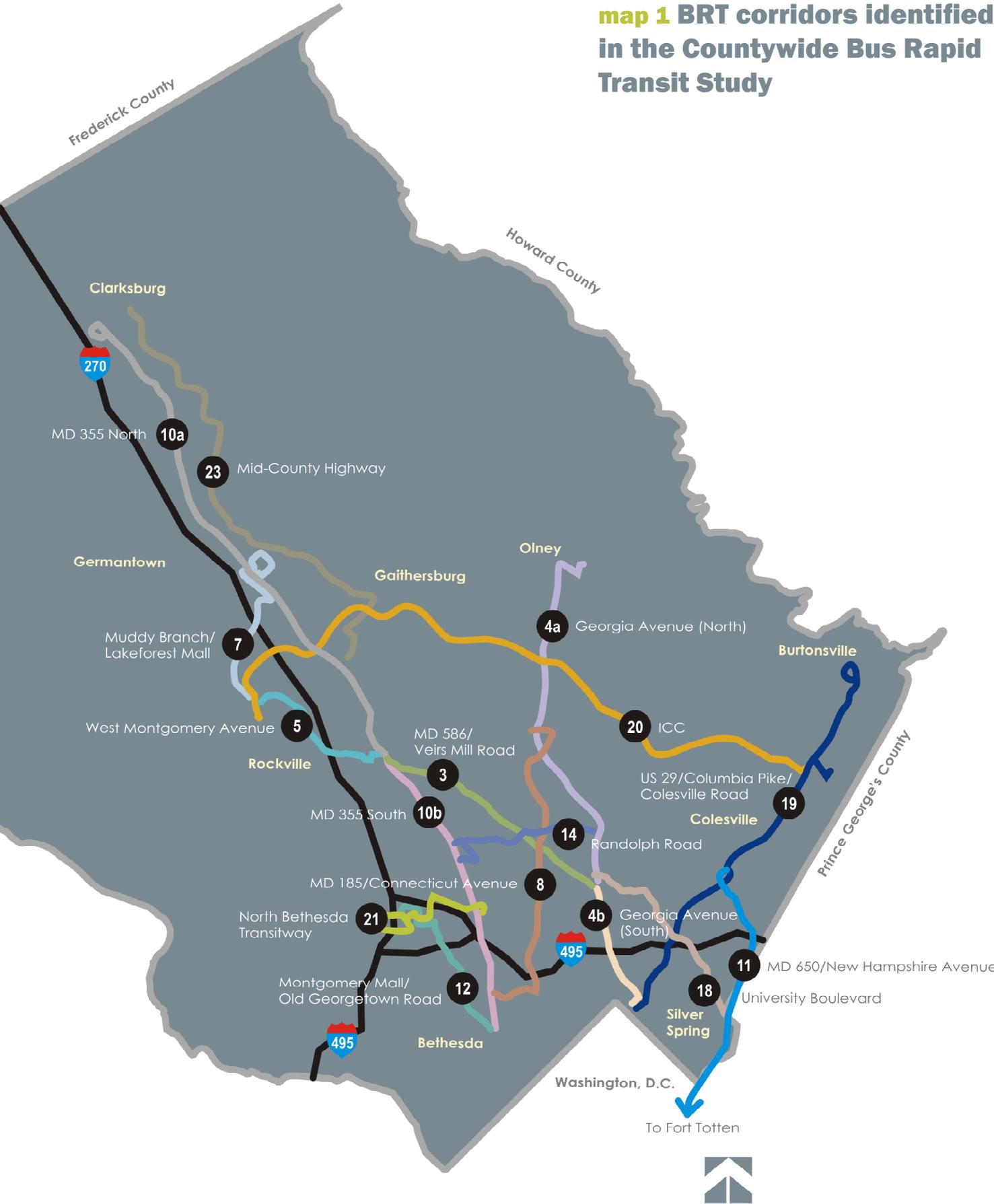
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The outreach effort will include the following components.

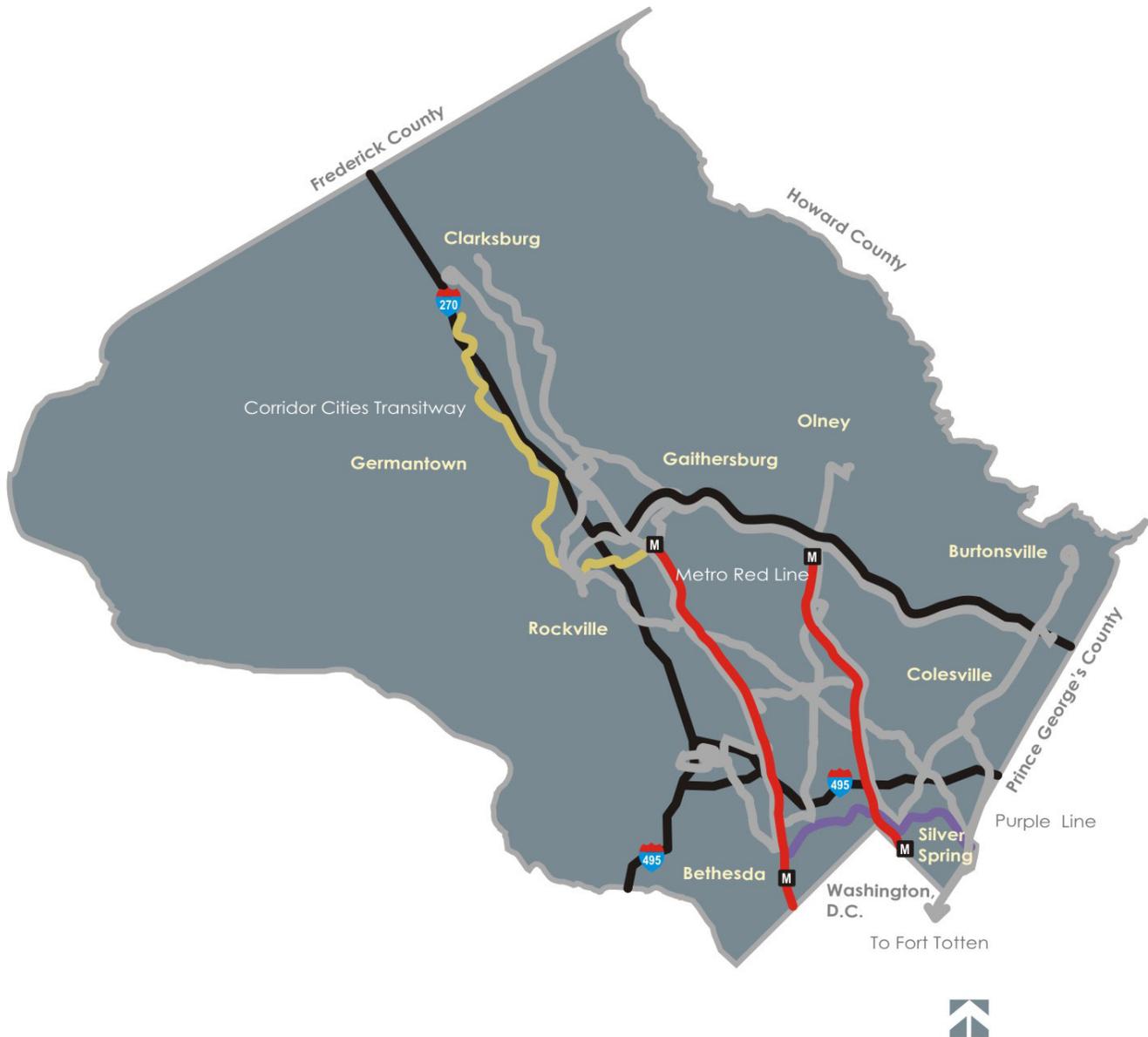
- Project website: A website will be established during the first phase of the project. As the information becomes available, this website will include depictions of areas where additional right-of-way is likely to be needed for BRT.
- Formation of a technical working group: Because of the technical nature of this planning effort, a group of representatives from state and local agencies will serve on a Technical Working Group (TWG) that will meet regularly. The following agencies will be encouraged to participate: Department of Parks, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT),



**map 1 BRT corridors identified in the Countywide Bus Rapid Transit Study**



## map 2 relationship of proposed BRT system to transit facilities



Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), City of Rockville, City of Gaithersburg, City of Takoma Park, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), and PEPCO. Representatives from Frederick, Howard, and Prince George's Counties will also be invited to attend the TWG meetings.

- Public meetings: Meetings will be conducted at the Montgomery Regional Office and possibly at regional service centers to present the draft recommendations to the public and solicit their feedback. Additional meetings could be conducted for specific corridors.

- Planning Board public hearing: The public will have the opportunity to provide testimony on the Public Hearing Draft Plan and to submit comments for a period after the public hearing.
- Stakeholder outreach: Periodic briefings will be provided to the Transit Task Force; Executive Staff; County Council; MDOT; WMATA; cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Takoma Park; and others as appropriate.

The Transit Task Force is a public/private advisory group appointed by the County Executive and charged with making a comprehensive rapid transit system a reality. They will look at implementation and financing issues. For more information, visit <http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/Apps/cex/transit/workplan.asp>

## project schedule

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The Planning Board Draft Plan is to be adopted by the Planning Board by the end of July 2012. This timeline may extend if directed by the County Council to study in detail corridors recommended by the Transit Task Force.

The master plan amendment will be divided into four tasks:

### **task 1: planning board scope of work**

The Planning Board will review a Scope of Work.

Completion: September 22, 2011

### **task 2: develop master plan amendment purpose and need report**

Establish a Countywide BRT Master Plan Technical Working Group

Planning staff will form a technical working group with staff from applicable agencies.

Completion: September 2011

Define ultimate BRT corridor functions

For each corridor, the primary function of logical operating segments will be identified. This will be accomplished by evaluating existing and future adjacent land use, trip patterns, peak period travel characteristics, etc. Once these descriptors are summarized, the type of facility and other typical supporting infrastructure will be identified.

The product of this task will be a matrix that will be used to inform technical review and discussions related to the ultimate configuration of the corridor.

Completion: September 2011

Define transit station typology

The primary function of stations will be identified, such as: commuter intercept/end of line, neighborhood, CDB core, or activity center. This general function and setting of stations will help identify expected right-of-way needs for intermodal transfer operations such as bus bays and parking.

Completion: October 2011

Identify potential additions or changes to the Countywide BRT Study network

Changes to the BRT network could include pursuing recommendations from the Transit Task Force, reconciling conflicts between the White Flint Sector Plan and the City of Rockville's

draft plan for Rockville Pike between the Beltway and Rockville Town Center, and modifying alignments to complement the Corridor Cities Transitway and the Purple Line, among others.

Completion: October 2011

Develop draft Countywide BRT Purpose and Need Report

The consultant will develop a draft Countywide BRT Purpose and Need Report.

Conduct stakeholder Interviews

The consultant and Planning staff will conduct interviews with the chair of the Transit Task Force; Executive Staff; County Council members; Maryland Department of Transportation; WMATA; and the cities of Rockville, Gaithersburg, and Takoma Park to solicit feedback on the draft Countywide BRT Purpose and Need Report.

Completion: November 2011

Develop final Countywide BRT Purpose and Need Report

The consultant will use input from the stakeholder interviews to finalize the report.

Completion: November 2011

Product: Final Countywide BRT Purpose and Need Report by Consultant

### **task 3: planning board and county council direction on initial issues**

Planning Board Direction

The Planning Board will review the Countywide BRT Purpose and Need Report.

Completion: December 2011

County Council Direction

The County Council is expected to provide direction to the Planning Board on all elements of the Countywide BRT Purpose and Need report.

Completion: January 2012

Product: Presentation to County Council by Planning Staff

### **task 4: establish draft recommendations**

Develop Draft BRT Plan Recommendations

Specific recommendations will be developed for alignments, stations or stops, typical sections, modifications to intersections, allocating space where the preferred typical section is unlikely to be realized, bike/pedestrian access, and phasing. The minimum amount of right-of-way required to accommodate these elements will be included. This information will clearly communicate needed changes in the amount of right-of-way required and where the requirement for additional right-of-way may impact private property, dwelling units, commercial buildings, other structures, or natural and community resources.

Completion: March/April 2012

Product: Draft BRT Plan Recommendations by Consultant

Develop Public Hearing Draft Plan

Completion: May 2012

Product: Public Hearing Draft Plan by Planning Staff

Develop Public Hearing Draft Appendix

The consultant will develop a technical appendix to the Public Hearing Draft Plan.

Completion: May 2012

Product: Public Hearing Appendix by Consultant

Planning Board public hearing

Staff will schedule and advertise the public hearing and distribute the Plan. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing and receive testimony on the draft plan.

Completion: June 2012

### **task 5: develop planning board draft plan**

Conduct Planning Board worksessions

Staff will prepare the issues gathered during the public comment period for the Planning Board worksessions.

Completion: July 2012

Develop Planning Board Draft of Master Plan of Highways BRT Amendment

Staff will prepare the Planning Board Draft Plan and seek Planning Board approval to transmit it to the County Council and Executive.

Completion: September 2012

Product: Planning Board Draft Plan by Planning Staff, submitted to the County Executive and County Council

### **task 6: outreach**

Initial Outreach

Staff will conduct a public meeting to provide an overview of the Countywide Bus Rapid Transit study and to discuss the approach to the functional plan.

Completion: October 2011

Meetings with Technical Working Group

Staff will conduct meetings with technical working group comprised of agency representatives.

Completion: April 2012

Public Meetings

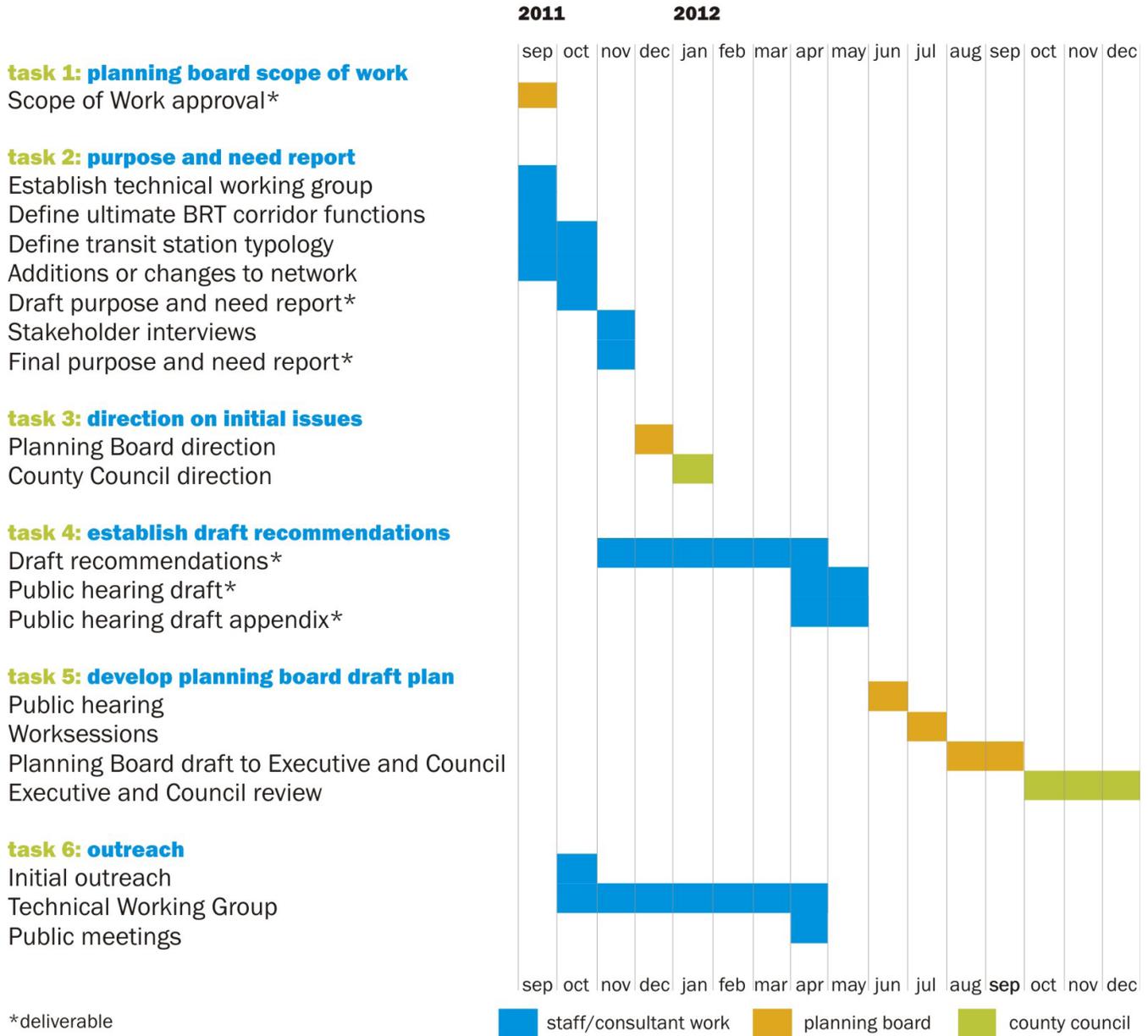
Planning staff will conduct public meetings at the Montgomery Regional Office and possibly at regional services centers to review the draft BRT Plan recommendations and solicit feedback from the community. This exercise will also include specific meetings to address individual corridors in some instances.

Completion: April 2012

### **resources**

The Planning Department's approved FY12 budget allocates 1.9 work years to the Master Plan of Highways BRT Amendment.

# BRT amendment proposed schedule



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