

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

CCT won't be the solution to commuting woes

As the proposed routes for the CCT become clear, a few uncomfortable and unfortunate truths are becoming obvious.

First, the CCT will not significantly reduce traffic on I-270. With a projected transit time of roughly an hour between Clarksburg and the Shady Grove Metro stop, it's hard to imagine why drivers would exit I-270 to ride the CCT. The same Clarksburg-to-Shady Grove trip is less than a ten minute drive.

Commuters shouldn't expect any significant improvements on I-270 when the CCT opens.

Second, for most commuters, the CCT will not be a time-saving option for getting to Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia via the Metro.

If you live close to the CCT in the northern portion of the CCT route (e.g. Germantown or Clarksburg), taking the CCT is going to add significantly to your transit time relative to the time it takes to drive (even at rush hour). If you live in the southern portion of the route, it's generally a wash. Remember that the CCT has multiple stops in every mile of the southern portion of the route. Metro riders bound for DC and Northern Virginia should expect no help from the CCT.

Third, the CCT is not about the I-270 corridor, it's about developing (the planned) Science City. Projected CCT transit times have gotten progressively longer as planners have continuously added new stops in the Kentlands area to accommodate the planned Science City development. It's these new stops that have dragged down transit times

and essentially rendered the CCT useless to most potential commuters in the northern portion of the route.

The sacrifice of Germantown and Clarksburg riders for Science City and Kentlands riders defines the proposed CCT routes. Ten of the eighteen proposed CCT stops are actually south of the Shady Grove Metro and within about two miles of the Metro stop.

It's hard to imagine why a Germantown or Clarksburg commuter would ride the CCT, other than to travel to Science City.

Science City would be better served by a separate east-west transitway built specifically to serve Science City. Planners then would be free to add more Science City stops and better tailor the Science City transportation system to the needs of the evolving development without dragging down the north-south transit times of Germantown and Clarksburg commuters trying to get to the Shady Grove metro station.

The current CCT should be re-designed as (roughly) an "L" shaped system with a northern leg extending to Clarksburg, and a western leg extending to Science City. The Shady Grove metro station would form the pivotal center point of "L" and serve both the north and the west legs equally.

It's time to re-think the CCT. By trying to combine an east-west Science City transportation system with a north-south I-270 corridor congestion reliever, the current CCT manages to do both poorly.

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