



# TRANSPORTATION PLAN

## A. GOALS

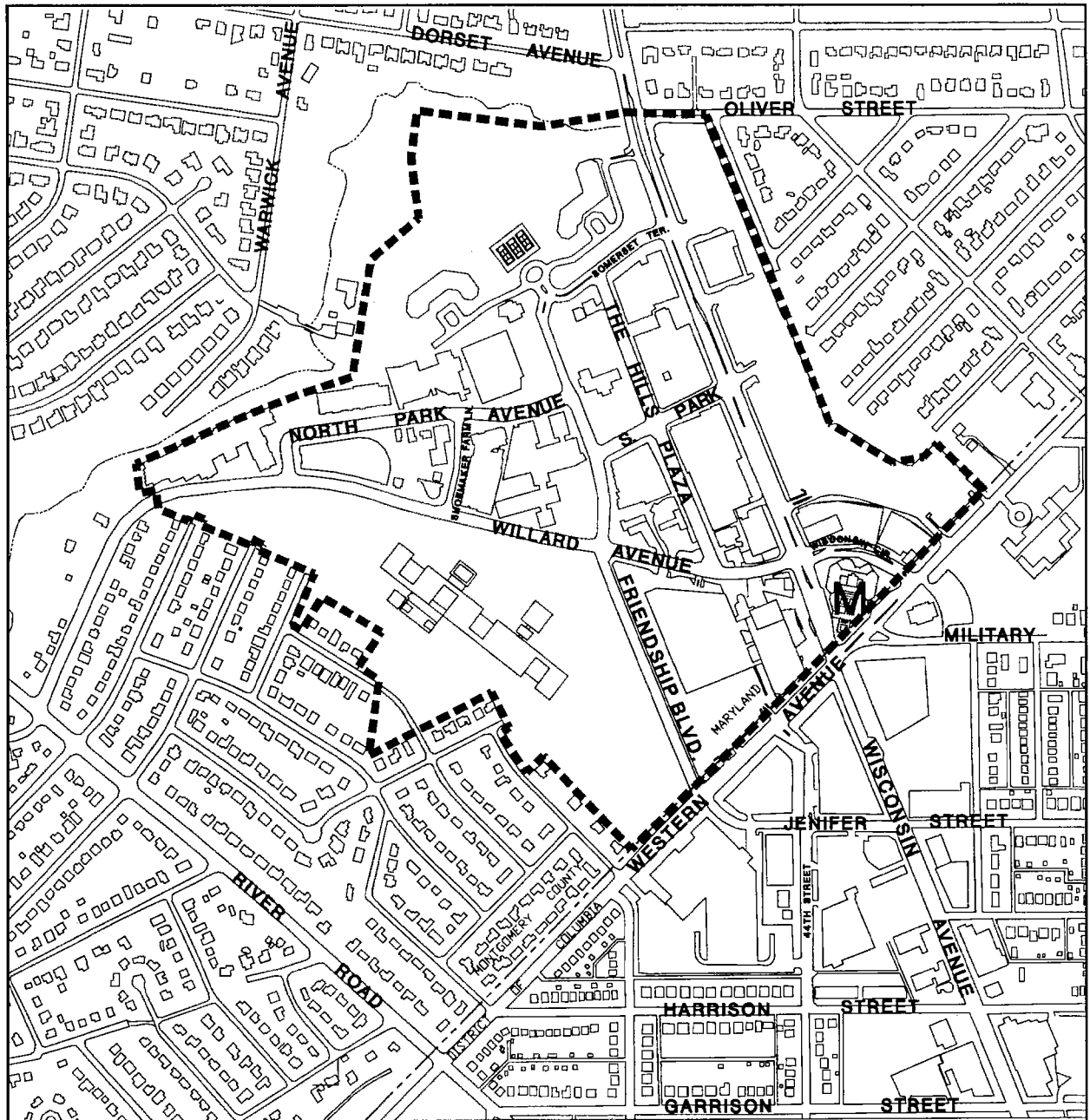
- Provide a safe and functional transportation system to serve the current and recommended land uses.
- Reduce single-occupant vehicle travel by increasing the use of transit, carpooling, and other alternatives.
- Enhance the pleasure, safety, and convenience of walking and bicycling.

Friendship Heights functions without a grid system for traffic circulation, with a high level of Metrorail ridership, and with complex transit needs and traffic movements at the Metrorail (Metro) station located on the District of Columbia boundary in the center of the central business district.

The Plan recommends the exploration of several modest changes in intersection configuration, most involving more than one jurisdiction. It recommends reviewing bus routing and circulation, and possibly changing the destination of several routes. These are multi-jurisdictional decisions also involving the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

The Plan recommends changes in access and public amenities in rights-of-way within the District of Columbia. The Plan also recommends improvements to pedestrian and bicycle safety and circulation, as well as the formation of a Transportation Management District, both of which would be most effective if they are coordinated with the District of Columbia.

Therefore, the Plan recommends forming a multi-jurisdictional task force to provide a forum for collaborative decision making on transportation issues in the Maryland and District of Columbia portions of Friendship Heights. This task force should be convened as soon as possible to address all of the issues noted above and should consist of representatives from the Montgomery County and District of Columbia Councils, Planning Departments, and Departments of Public Works; WMATA; the Maryland Department of Transportation; The Village of Friendship Heights; Chevy Chase Village; and the appropriate Advisory Neighborhood Commissions in the District of Columbia. Representatives from the private sector, including both residential and commercial interests, should also be included.



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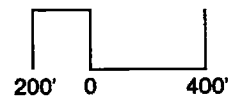
**SECTOR PLAN BOUNDARY**



**METRO STATION**



**North**



## **B. HIGHWAY SYSTEM**

Wisconsin Avenue traverses Friendship Heights. It is a six-lane, north-south, major State highway that provides good vehicular access to the local street network within the central business district (CBD), while carrying a significant volume of regional traffic through the area each day. Western Avenue, an east-west, four-lane road, forms the southern border of the CBD. Its intersection with Wisconsin Avenue, including the adjacent Friendship Heights Metro station, is the focal point of the transportation system serving this area. (See Figure 37.)

River Road, a four-lane major State highway just to the west of the Sector Plan area, passes through residential areas from beyond the Capital Beltway to near Tenley Circle in the District of Columbia, except for the Westbard retail/industrial sector. It carries significant through traffic and some local traffic to and from Friendship Heights via its intersections with Willard Avenue and Western Avenue. Willard Avenue, Friendship Boulevard, The Hills Plaza, North Park Avenue, South Park Avenue, and Wisconsin Circle provide important local access within the CBD.

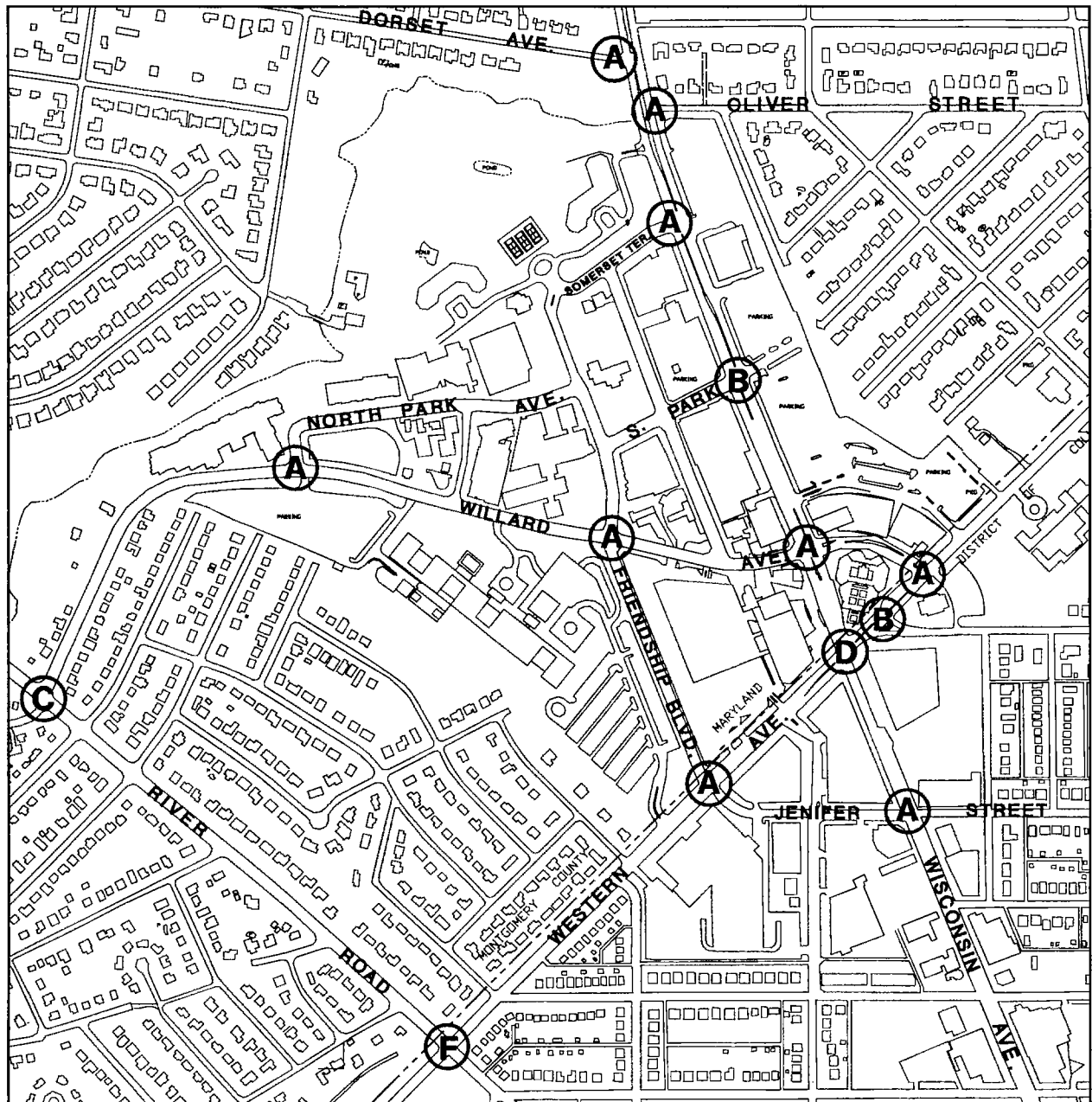
As a developed area that includes a highway network shared with the District of Columbia, Friendship Heights experiences the traffic congestion typical of an urbanized area. Vehicles passing through the Sector Plan area comprise most of the highway traffic.

The ability of a highway system to carry traffic is expressed in terms of Level of Service A - F. Figure 38 illustrates the level of service at key intersections in Friendship Heights today. Table 3 lists the existing levels of service and critical lane volumes for all the intersections evaluated in the traffic study conducted for the Plan. (Appendix C contains an explanation of the Critical Lane Method, which assigns levels of service to intersections.)

The Plan's traffic study initially analyzed and forecast the amount of traffic that would be generated by three development scenarios. The "low" scenario included the approved but unbuilt "pipeline" developments in Friendship Heights added to traffic from existing development. The study also projected the additional traffic from a "medium" and a "high" scenario of future development on the three major redevelopable parcels. The amounts of development and levels of service at key intersections for these three scenarios as well as the methodology used to develop the traffic forecasts are presented in Appendix C.

The Plan recommends an amount of development that is marginally above the medium land use scenario. The total amount of development on the three major parcels in this "recommended land use scenario" is shown in Table 1C in Chapter II, the Land Use, Zoning, and Urban Design Plan. The levels of service at key intersections for this scenario are illustrated in Figure 39. Table 4 lists the critical lane volumes and levels of service for all the intersections that were analyzed for the "recommended scenario."

The recommendations below reflect the results of the transportation analysis. The Plan recommends some lane restriping or a turn prohibition at three of the intersections that would experience the greatest congestion from the proposed new development: Wisconsin and Western Avenues, Wisconsin Avenue and River Road, and River Road and Little Falls Parkway. On Table 4, the critical lane volume figures include the level of congestion at these and two other intersections with and without the recommended improvements.

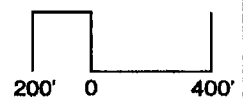


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P.M. LEVELS OF SERVICE (LOS)  
AT SPECIFIC INTERSECTIONS : EXISTING



North



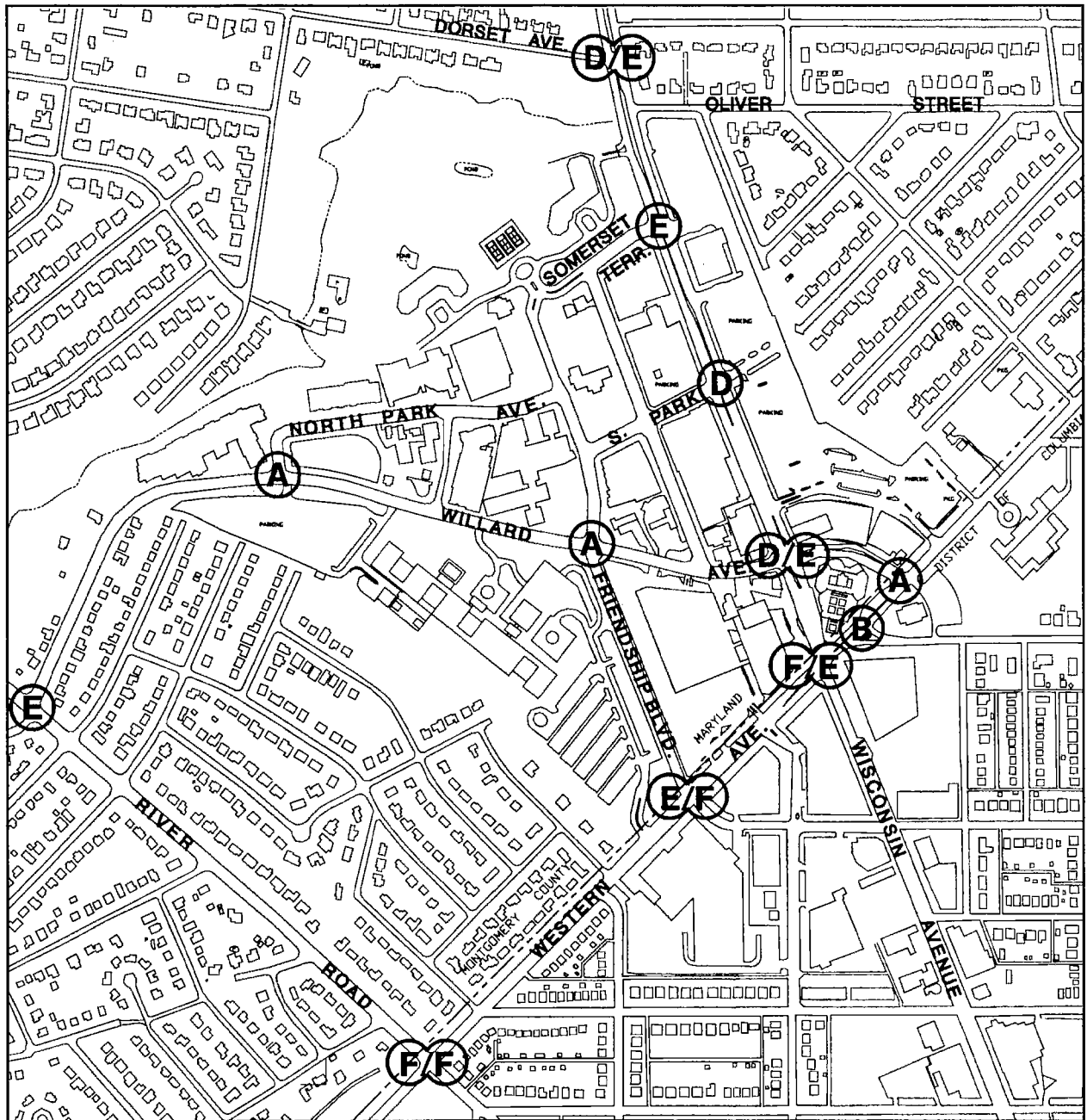
**TABLE 3**  
**FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS 1995 INTERSECTION PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

No.	N/S Street	E/W Street	Critical Lane Volume	Level of Service
1	Wisconsin Avenue	Dorset Avenue	970	A
2	Wisconsin Avenue	Somerset Terrace	913	A
3	Wisconsin Avenue	South Park Avenue	1,029	B
4	Wisconsin Avenue	Willard Avenue	869	A
5	Wisconsin Avenue	Western Avenue	1,328	D
6	Western Avenue	Oliver Street	711	A
7	Western Avenue	Cedar Parkway	1,117	B
8	Western Avenue	Chevy Chase Center Entrance	456	A
9	Western Avenue	Chevy Chase Center Exit	702	A
10	Western Avenue	Wisconsin Circle	631	A
11	Western Avenue	Military Road	1,023	B
12	Western Avenue	Friendship Boulevard	830	A
13	Western Avenue	River Road	1,674	F
14	River Road	Little Falls Parkway	1,604	E/F
15	River Road	Willard Avenue	1,189	C
16	Willard Avenue	North Park Avenue	524	A
17	Willard Avenue	Friendship Boulevard	568	A

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department, 1995

**LEVELS OF SERVICE: RECOMMENDED SCENARIO**

**FIGURE 39**



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**P.M. LEVELS OF SERVICE (LOS) AT SPECIFIC INTERSECTIONS:**

**( DOUBLE LETTERS SHOW INTERSECTION WITH AND WITHOUT  
RECOMMENDED INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS )**



North



**TABLE 4**  
**FRIENDSHIP HEIGHTS 2015 INTERSECTION PERFORMANCE**  
**SUMMARY FOR THE RECOMMENDED LAND USE SCENARIO**

No.	N/S Street	E/W Street	Critical Lane Volume	Level of Service
1	Wisconsin Avenue	Dorset Avenue	1,453	D/E
2	Wisconsin Avenue	Somerset Terrace	1,487	E
3	Wisconsin Avenue	South Park Avenue	1,371	D
4	Wisconsin Avenue	Willard Avenue	1,338/1564*	D/E
5	Wisconsin Avenue	Western Avenue	1,793/1,567*	F/E
6	Western Avenue	Oliver Street	791	A
7	Western Avenue	Cedar Parkway	1,210	C
8	Western Avenue	Chevy Chase Center Entrance	623	A
9	Western Avenue	Chevy Chase Center Exit	976	A
10	Western Avenue	Wisconsin Circle	699	A
11	Western Avenue	Military Road	1,089	B
12	Western Avenue	Friendship Boulevard	1,457/1,701*	E/F
13	Western Avenue	River Road	1,982/1,670*	F/F
14	River Road	Little Falls Parkway	2,004/1,811*	F/F
15	River Road	Willard Avenue	1,503	E
16	Willard Avenue	North Park Avenue	889	A
17	Willard Avenue	Friendship Boulevard	817	A

\* The critical lane volumes reflect the implementation of the Plan's recommended intersection improvement. The first number is the CLV without the recommended intersection improvements; the second number is the CLV with the improvements.

Source: Montgomery County Planning Department



The Plan does not recommend significant increases in highway capacity beyond the modest improvements just noted for several reasons. First, as a transit service hub, Friendship Heights will continue to benefit from the traffic mitigation resulting from the well-used Ride-On bus, Metrorail, and Metrobus services as long as the area is not developed to the point where congestion would severely hinder bus access to the Metro station. The Plan recommends measures to increase use of transit. Second, the level of traffic congestion predicted from the amount of development the Plan recommends is within accepted County standards for areas served by Metro stations. The projected congestion level does not warrant the construction of new roads or major road widening. Third, additional public right-of-way is generally unavailable and would be costly to obtain. Finally, and most importantly, implementing major highway improvements would be too disruptive to the established residential neighborhoods.

The lack of right-of-way limits what can be done to improve performance at the River Road/Western Avenue intersection, for example. This intersection, just outside the Sector Plan area in the District of Columbia, experiences significant congestion and will probably continue to do so. Adding additional turn lanes by restriping would help mitigate congestion, but widening the roadway beyond the present curb lanes to add additional capacity would have an adverse impact on several houses on the north side of Western Avenue. It is preferable for the congestion to be addressed through transportation demand management strategies identified in the Plan.

Table 5 shows the classifications for the major Friendship Heights Sector Plan area roads and the amount of right-of-way recommended for adequate lane width, sidewalks, and street amenities.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

Provide a balanced highway network that preserves the viability of Friendship Heights, accommodates regional traffic where necessary, and enhances accessibility to transit services.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Maintain the highway classification for major highways and arterials within the central business district but allow lower design speeds that are compatible with the need for local access and pedestrian-friendly design standards.**

When major highways and arterials pass through existing commercial centers served by transit, greater emphasis on pedestrian access and streetscape character is needed. The intent is not to reduce capacity but to ensure an attractive and safe pedestrian environment and more orderly access to local shopping. Design standards that encourage pedestrian activity include street trees, wider sidewalks, tighter corner turning radii, and safer pedestrian crossings than on highways outside commercial centers. These improvements will strengthen the viability of the CBD and enhance the aesthetic character of the community.

- **Monitor Friendship Boulevard intersections as redevelopment occurs.**

Redevelopment on the GEICO and Hecht's parcels will include new entrances on Friendship Boulevard between Willard Avenue and Western Avenue, which will increase and re-orient traffic on this segment. When comparing existing traffic with the projected traffic for the recommended land use scenario, the Western Avenue/Friendship Boulevard/Jenifer Street intersection showed the greatest decline in level of service—from LOS A to E. Because of this significant change,



**Table 5  
Highway and Street Classifications**

Master Plan Designation	Street Name	Limits	# of Lanes*	Right-of-Way	Responsible Agency
M-6	Wisconsin Avenue	Western Avenue to Oliver Street	6	120'	SHA
	Western Avenue	Cortland Street to Plan Area boundary	4	120'	DC Government
A-78	Willard Avenue	River Road to Friendship Boulevard	2	85'	MCDPWT
		Friendship Boulevard to The Hills Plaza	4	90'	MCDPWT
		The Hills Plaza to Wisconsin Avenue	4	90'	MCDPWT
	Wisconsin Circle	Wisconsin Avenue to Western Avenue	2	60'	MCDPWT
	Montgomery Street	Wisconsin Avenue to terminus	2	60'	Chevy Chase Land Company
	Friendship Boulevard	Western Avenue to Willard Avenue	4	80'	MCDPWT
		Willard Avenue to South Park Avenue	2	80'	FH Village
		North Park Avenue to Somerset Terrace	2	80'	FH Village
	The Hills Plaza	Willard Avenue to Somerset Terrace	2	80'	FH Village
	North Park Avenue	Friendship Boulevard to Willard Avenue	2	80'	FH Village
	South Park Avenue	Wisconsin Avenue to Friendship Boulevard	2	80'	FH Village
	Shoemaker Farm Lane	North Park Avenue to Willard Avenue	1 **	50'	FH Village
Private	Somerset Terrace	Wisconsin Avenue to Friendship Boulevard	2		Somerset House Condo Assn.

\* These are the number of planned through travel lanes for each segment, not including lanes for turning, parking, acceleration, deceleration, or other purposes auxiliary to through travel.

\*\* This is a one-way street.

The streets for which a classification is not shown are Business District Streets



consideration was given to obtaining additional right-of-way from the Hecht's site for future capacity improvements at this intersection. Possible improvements included an additional exclusive right-turn lane on westbound Western Avenue, an additional left-turn lane on eastbound Western Avenue, and an exclusive left-turn lane on northbound Jenifer Street. These improvements would have to be approved by the District of Columbia because Western Avenue is within its jurisdiction.

The projected LOS E for the Western Avenue/Friendship Boulevard/Jenifer Street intersection, without any improvements, is within acceptable County standards for intersection operations in this area. The additional turn lanes would improve the flow of traffic but are not critical to maintaining acceptable traffic operations here in the future. They would disrupt pedestrian activity and cause the removal of mature trees along Western Avenue. The Plan, therefore, does not recommend the addition of turn lanes. However, the improvements recommended at Western and Wisconsin Avenues will increase traffic congestion at Western Avenue and Friendship Boulevard to LOS F. Though the critical lane volume will still be within acceptable County standards for a Metro station policy area, traffic congestion at this intersection and on Friendship Boulevard should be closely monitored as redevelopment occurs so that changes in traffic can be evaluated and improvements made, if necessary.

- **Evaluate parking conditions along Friendship Boulevard between Willard and Western Avenues as redevelopment of the Hecht's and GEICO sites occurs.**

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Currently, Friendship Boulevard is a four-lane undivided street between Willard Avenue and Western Avenue and curbside off-peak parking is allowed. As the Hecht's and GEICO sites redevelop, it is anticipated that new opposing mid-block entrances will be added.

The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) should evaluate the off-peak parking areas on Friendship Boulevard as any future redevelopment of the two adjoining sites occurs to determine if the off-peak parking should be continued and the hours expanded, and whether parking meters should be installed as part of a transportation management district.

If any additional parking is considered, the spaces should have adequate setbacks from the intersections so that traffic is not obstructed and the intersections can operate safely. The parking situation should continue to be reviewed periodically to determine if development-generated traffic is adversely affecting the parking areas or vice versa.

- **Support the 1990 Sector Plan amendment to relocate The Hills Plaza and improve Willard Avenue to include four lanes with left-turn lanes between Friendship Boulevard and The Hills Plaza.**

Currently, Willard Avenue has four 10-foot travel lanes between Friendship Boulevard and The Hills Plaza. The Sector Plan supports the November 1990 Plan amendment recommendations for relocating The Hills Plaza and widening Willard Avenue. Willard Avenue will be widened to include four lanes plus left-turn lanes between Friendship Boulevard and The Hills Plaza, within 90 feet of dedicated right-of-way, in conjunction with the combined development of parcels 8, 9B, and 14 for the Barlow Center. In addition, staff review of the Barlow Center preliminary plan

indicated that a median, a slightly wider sidewalk, and a new traffic signal (if warranted by DPWT) at The Hills Plaza/Willard Avenue intersection should be provided. The Sector Plan also recommends a Class II or III bike lane along Willard Avenue.

- **Obtain additional right-of-way and provide a center median on Willard Avenue between Friendship Boulevard and Wisconsin Avenue as part of future redevelopment.**

The Plan recommends that as part of future redevelopment of the Hecht's site, a total of 90 feet of right-of-way should be dedicated for constructing a six-foot center median with left-turn lanes on Willard Avenue between Friendship Boulevard and the Hills Plaza. (See Figure 42, Promenade B.) This may require relocating the curb along the Hecht's frontage. In addition, a total of 90 feet of right-of-way should be provided to construct a twelve-foot center median and wider sidewalks on Willard Avenue from The Hills Plaza to Wisconsin Avenue if the properties located in the southwest corner of the Wisconsin/Willard Avenue intersection are assembled and redeveloped. This will require abandoning the old Willard Avenue right-of-way and relocating the curb. The median will improve pedestrian safety, enhance the visual environment in the Town Center with additional landscaping, and provide continuity with Wisconsin Circle. Wider sidewalks are needed to accommodate large numbers of pedestrians walking between commercial areas and to the Metro station. (See Figure 42, Promenade A.)

- **Modify the intersection of River Road and Little Falls Parkway.**

Two modifications are proposed here. One is to remove the narrow median on the southeastern leg of River Road and provide an additional through lane on River Road's northwest-bound approach (i.e., toward Westbard.) The narrow median exists only to reinforce the separation between the southeast-bound and northwest-bound flows; it is not a pedestrian refuge, and there is no crosswalk on its side of River Road. The other proposed change is to re-stripe the southwest-bound approach of Little Falls Parkway to provide two through lanes and separate left- and right-turn lanes. Neither improvement would widen the roadway beyond the present curb lines, so there would be no incursion into Little Falls Park.

- **Recommend to the District of Columbia consideration of the modification of the River Road/Western Avenue intersection.**

Both legs of Western Avenue have four lanes, with two approach lanes and two lanes with which to receive traffic. (The southwest leg has a short additional right-turn lane.) The proposed improvement would re-stripe these lanes so that there would be three approach lanes on each leg (one left lane, one through lane, one right lane), and one receiving lane on each leg. The exclusive left-turn lanes created by the re-striping would eliminate the inefficient split-signal phasing resulting from the existing shared through left-turn lanes on the Western Avenue intersection approaches. A very minor widening at the east corner of the intersection—one or two feet—may be needed to allow a wide enough berth for trucks turning left from southeast-bound River Road to northeast-bound Western Avenue.



- **Recommend to the District of Columbia consideration of the modification of the Wisconsin Avenue/Western Avenue intersection.**

Prohibit left turns from northeast-bound Western Avenue to northbound Wisconsin Avenue, and convert the left-turn lane into a through lane. This modification would involve no new construction. Left turns would be re-directed to other routes, most prominently via Friendship Boulevard and Willard Avenue. Additional public input should be solicited before implementing this measure.

- **Endorse the opening of the Somerset Terrace/Friendship Boulevard connection to improve local traffic access.**

In accord with previous written agreements between the Village of Friendship Heights and the County, the Plan recommends removing the temporary fence across Friendship Boulevard just south of its connection to Somerset Terrace to allow local residential traffic to pass through. Prior to removing the fence, DPWT should confirm that realignment has been completed in accord with the County/Village agreements and should analyze the connection to determine if additional residential neighborhood protection measures are needed to discourage non-local cut-through traffic.

- **Monitor parking on Wisconsin Avenue between Somerset Terrace and Western Avenue and consider installing "No Stopping" signs.**

Delivery trucks and other vehicles picking up or dropping off passengers currently park along the west side of Wisconsin Avenue, particularly in front of the Chevy Chase Office Building, during off-peak periods. There are "No Standing" signs posted for the peak periods of 7-9 a.m. and 4-7 p.m. The parked vehicles in the right lane reduce capacity on Wisconsin Avenue and force traffic to merge into the left lane. This is particularly disruptive if there is an accident along this segment of the street.

DPWT should evaluate Wisconsin Avenue parking within the CBD to determine if these standing areas should be eliminated by placing "No Stopping" signs along all segments of Wisconsin Avenue between Somerset Terrace and Western Avenue. For the buildings along the west side of Wisconsin Avenue, short-term parking for deliveries and drop-offs/pick-ups could be provided in the rear of the buildings, along the east side of The Hills Plaza. Hourly parking restrictions on Wisconsin Avenue and enforcement of these restrictions should be coordinated between the Maryland and District of Columbia portions of Friendship Heights.

- **Endorse measures that prevent cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods.**

The Plan endorses measures to discourage cut-through traffic in residential areas surrounding the Sector Plan area. Residential streets near congested intersections, such as the River Road/Western Avenue intersection, should be monitored periodically to see if drivers are using alternate routes to bypass the major intersections. If monitoring efforts reveal a problem, the Plan recommends using DPWT's residential neighborhood protection program, including such measures as one-way access

patterns, left-turn prohibitions, and, possibly, speed humps. In particular, DPWT should evaluate means to prohibit the potential of traffic cutting through the Village of Friendship Heights by going north on Friendship Boulevard at Willard Avenue and into the residential area on North and South Park Avenues. In addition, DPWT should evaluate the need for a traffic signal, including walk signals, at the intersection of South Park Avenue and the Hills Plaza.

## **C. TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT**

One of the objectives of the Sector Plan is to create a lively central business district (CBD) that attracts people for shopping, recreation, employment, or as a place of residence. A basic premise of transportation planning is that a given amount of development will attract a specific number of people. The number of trips made by these people remains relatively constant regardless of the manner in which the trips are made, whether on foot or bicycle, by car, or by public transportation, as long as the level of development does not change. However, the manner in which trips are made to or from the CBD has a significant impact on the transportation system. Strategies to encourage the use of public transit, carpooling, walking, and bicycling, and to discourage people from driving alone help relieve traffic congestion.

The Sector Plan proposes that new development be located close to transit facilities as an important element in reducing reliance on the automobile and encouraging transit use by workers, residents, and visitors. The Metro station is the focal point for transit services in the Sector Plan area and redevelopment in the CBD should emphasize Metro access. Adequate sidewalk widths, crosswalks, and appropriate intersection design are critical to providing an environment that encourages people to walk not only to transit but to employment and commercial areas.

Many trips will continue to be made by automobile. But the transit-oriented development this Plan recommends will help to maintain a more livable community by providing a balance between vehicular and pedestrian traffic.

The Friendship Heights CBD has good transit facilities and services, with its centrally located Metrorail station and adjacent bus terminal served by Montgomery County Ride-On and the WMATA Metrobus routes. In addition to WMATA and County transit services, the Village of Friendship Heights provides its residents free shuttle service to the Town Center.

The entire CBD is within one-half mile of the Metro station. The compact size of the CBD and the mixed-use development promote transit, which is well used. Ride-On and WMATA buses transport over 3,300 inbound passengers and over 3,500 outbound passengers to and from the area on a typical day. The Friendship Heights Metro station has over 8,500 people entering and 8,700 people exiting the station daily. (More detailed transit ridership data are included in the Appendix.)

Currently, the number of CBD employees who do not drive to work is estimated to be about 34 percent. The recommendations below are designed to increase the percentage of people who use modes other than driving alone to jobs, shopping, and recreation. The recommendations range from strategies that can be implemented immediately to longer-term strategies that are connected to the timing of new development.



### **OBJECTIVE:**

Increase the use of alternative modes to driving alone for commuting and shopping travel by expanding and improving operations of existing transit services.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Expand weekend transit service.**

There are several Ride-On routes that currently offer Saturday service between Friendship Heights and Silver Spring. Consideration should be given to extending existing service hours on these Saturday routes to serve the proposed retail and residential development in Friendship Heights. Ride-On provides weekday service on a route traveling between the residential areas west of the CBD and the Friendship Heights Metro station. Saturday service should be considered along this route to encourage use of the bus for weekend shopping. Sunday service may also be justified.

- **Conduct a study of bus operations at the Friendship Heights terminal and on surrounding streets, including Wisconsin Circle, and Western and Wisconsin Avenues.**

The Plan analysis identified the conflicting transportation uses in Wisconsin Circle including buses, parked cars, overflow taxi parking, the loading area for the grocery store, and pedestrians. The street geometry at the entrance and exit for the bus terminal and on Wisconsin Circle makes bus navigation difficult. In addition, stopped buses on the Circle, and near the Western Avenue/Wisconsin Avenue intersection can disrupt traffic operations in the area. A detailed analysis of bus operations is beyond the province of this Plan. The Plan recommends that WMATA and DPWT study the existing operations to determine if a change is warranted in the circulation plan for buses entering and exiting the terminal via Wisconsin Circle and the location of bus stops on the surrounding streets. This study should also include a re-evaluation of whether some bus routes should terminate at other Metro stations, such as Bethesda and Tenley.

The Pedestrian and Streetscape Plan at the end of this Chapter has additional recommendations about pedestrian safety at Wisconsin Circle. These would likely be tied to redevelopment of the Chevy Chase Center (Parcel 10B).

- **As the Hecht's site redevelops, duplicate some of the transit functions that currently occur on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue to improve access to transit on the west side and to encourage ridership.**

- *Remove the pick-up/drop-off area at the Wisconsin Avenue entrance to Hecht's. The Hecht's store has a pick-up/drop-off area separated from Wisconsin Avenue by a median island. This area serves Metro passengers, delivery vehicles, and Hecht's customers. Currently, vehicles entering and exiting the area impede the flow of traffic on southbound Wisconsin Avenue and hinder the operation of the Wisconsin Avenue/Western Avenue intersection. As part of the Hecht's site redevelopment, this area should be removed and, if necessary, similar access provided on the site's internal circulation system. The Plan recommends a public open space at this location with amenities that would make a more pleasant walking environment and improve pedestrian access to Metro.*

- *Provide a short-term parking area on the Hecht's site.* The internal circulation plan for the Hecht's redevelopment should provide a short-term parking area on the site close to the Metro station. This area would improve Metro access by allowing drivers to drop off and pick up passengers. It would supplement the 30 designated spaces on the Chevy Chase Land Company parking lot. Direct access to the parking area should not be from Wisconsin Avenue to avoid disrupting traffic flow on this heavily traveled road.
- *Provide a taxi stand on the Hecht's site.* There is a taxi stand along the northern side of Wisconsin Circle. This area cannot accommodate demand, and overflow parking often creates conflicts and congestion on the Circle. Locating a taxi stand on the Hecht's site would help alleviate the problem by providing additional parking on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Respond to County Council direction to conduct appropriate analysis allowing creation of a policy area in the Friendship Heights Metro station area, including the boundaries of the policy area and the timing of its creation.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- **Designate Friendship Heights a Metro Station Policy Area.**

The Plan recommends designating Friendship Heights a Metro station policy area. The County's FY 94 Annual Growth Policy (AGP) adopted a process for setting staging ceiling capacity (the amount of development that can be approved by the Planning Board) in Metro station policy areas. The general procedure is that development capacity permitted in a Metro station policy area should not cause the surrounding policy area to exceed the assigned AGP transportation standard for area-wide (policy) level of service. As part of each Metro station policy area, a transportation management organization would be established with appropriate demand management goals and programs. The intersections inside the Metro station policy area would use a standard of 1,800 Critical Lane Volume, with those outside governed by the level of service standard set in the AGP guidelines for the surrounding policy area.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Increase the use of alternative modes to driving alone for commuting and shopping travel by establishing an organization to fund and promote alternatives.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- **Form a Transportation Management District for the Friendship Heights Sector Plan area and include the District of Columbia in planning such a district.**



In order to further support the use of transit in the area and to address the Plan goal of reducing single-occupant vehicle travel, a transportation management district (TMD) should be formed in the Friendship Heights Sector Plan area. One objective of the TMD is to increase the number of employees who do not drive to work from the existing 34 percent to 39 percent.

Creation of the TMD would increase transportation choices, enhance the accessibility to the Friendship Heights Metro station, and mitigate the impact of traffic from existing and new development through the effective management of transportation assets and the provision of new transportation services.

A TMD will be most effective if it includes the District of Columbia section of Friendship Heights. The Plan recommends a high-level task force to establish a process for coordinating transportation planning and implementation in this bi-jurisdictional area. Issues include signal timing, intersection improvements along Western Avenue, parking, and transit incentives. The task force should work toward a memorandum of understanding addressing the mode of consultation and decision making, procedures for public input, and structure of a transportation management organization (TMO). However, the development proposed in this Plan should not be conditioned on the District of Columbia's approvals or actions over which the County has no control.

The Friendship Heights TMD would be administered by a citizen/business-led transportation management organization. Ideally, a bi-jurisdictional TMO would administer a Friendship Heights TMD spanning both sides of the District of Columbia/Maryland line. Revenue to finance the operations could come from an annually assessed transportation management fee, parking fees, and a Share-a-Ride district. Membership in the TMO should be mandatory for new development and voluntary for existing development, including office employers and retail merchants. All new major office projects would be required to appoint a transportation coordinator and designate preferential carpool spaces.

#### **OBJECTIVE:**

Improve access to the Metro station from the surrounding neighborhoods.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Implement a high-frequency neighborhood shuttle service connecting Chevy Chase Village and Brookdale with the Friendship Heights Metro station. This mini-shuttle would operate in the morning and evening peak periods to encourage greater use of transit by local residents.**
- **Encourage the District of Columbia government to sponsor similar feeder service from adjacent residential neighborhoods.**



- **Encourage greater use of bicycling as a means of neighborhood access to the station by designating bikeways, expanding bicycle storage at Metro, posting and/or distributing bike route maps, and other means.**  
(See Bicycle Network Plan.)
- **Provide after-dark security along current and future sidewalks and paths connecting the Metro station and surrounding residential neighborhoods to encourage walking by ensuring a safer environment.**
- **Provide supplementary services to make Friendship Heights more pedestrian-friendly, including sidewalks and pathway maintenance, graffiti removal, snow removal, and bus shelter maintenance.**

**OBJECTIVE:**

Encourage maximum use of alternatives to driving to work alone among employees in Friendship Heights.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- **Establish a “Transit Store” in a central location to dispense route and schedule information, sell fare media, and promote the use of transit in other ways.**
- **Encourage employers to offer employees a transit/vanpool allowance (e.g., the maximum that is exempt from personal income tax) and to implement “Donor Days” (employees drive four days a week and use alternative modes or telecommute on the fifth day.)**
- **Facilitate carpooling and vanpooling by providing personalized ride matching assistance and establishing an “Emergency Ride Home” program.**
- **Establish a Share-A-Ride district and require all new office development to reduce on-site parking by 30 percent.**
- **Support “Resident Only” parking programs in adjacent neighborhoods to discourage overflow parking from commercial uses.**



**OBJECTIVE:**

Monitor transportation conditions.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

- **Conduct annual vehicle counts, pedestrian counts, and commuter surveys to monitor transportation conditions.**

**D. BICYCLE NETWORK PLAN**

The Sector Plan recommends a network of bikeways to serve a variety of functions and users. A complete network will give access to Metro, encourage cycling as an alternative to driving a car to work or for local trips, and provide recreation. (See Figure 40.)

Recreational cycling has become increasingly popular in the region. The opening of the Capital Crescent Trail, in combination with the C & O Canal and Rock Creek Park trails, has extended the range of options for Bethesda-Chevy Chase residents' recreational rides.

The Plan seeks to expand the number of people in the area who use bicycles not only for recreation but also for local trips—to do errands, go to classes, or attend meetings. If safety and security can be assured on the bikeway network, cycling becomes more attractive to people of all ages. It can free parents from chauffeuring children to activities and give preteens and teenagers desired independence. Adults can combine errands with exercise and social activity. A chance to meet neighbors, to stop to talk along the path, helps build a sense of community—one of the main goals of this Plan.

The Plan also seeks to increase the number of people who use the Metro by making bicycle access more convenient. Finally, the Plan seeks to encourage bicycle commuting to jobs in Friendship Heights or to nearby schools.

There are different types of bikeways suited to different functions and locations. Three bikeway classifications are commonly used in Montgomery County: Class I bikeways are separate paths; Class II, striped bike lanes; and Class III, shared travel lanes.

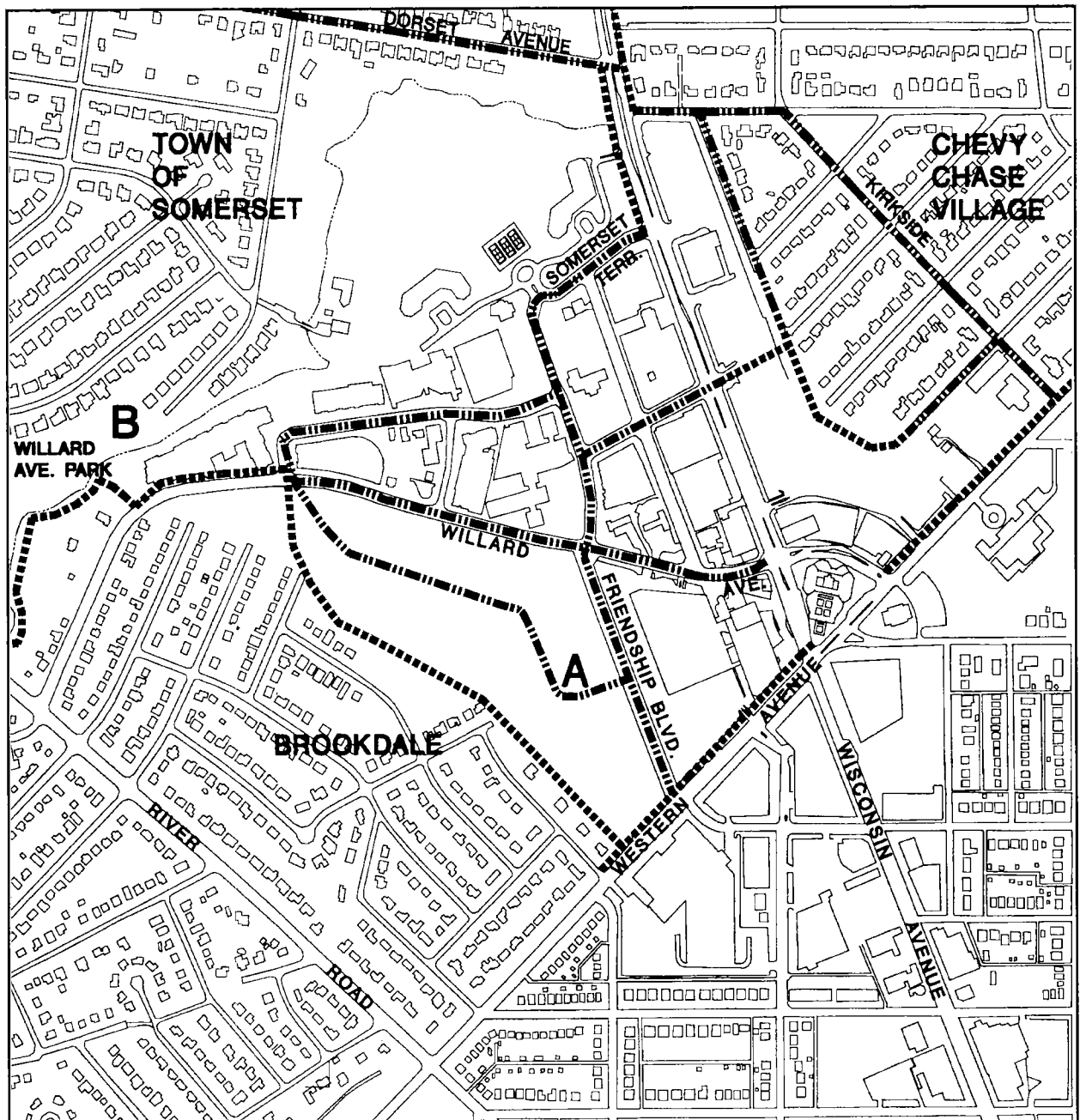
To be fully effective, the network must be connected to routes outside the Sector Plan boundaries. Achieving these links requires cooperation between jurisdictions, including the District of Columbia, the Town of Somerset, and Chevy Chase Village. The bikeway network illustrated in Figure 40 and the recommendations below provide local routes and connections with the regional bikeway system.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Provide safe and convenient bicycle access to Metro, offices, stores, and recreation within Friendship Heights and link the local bikeway network to the regional trail system.

**PROPOSED BIKEWAY NETWORK**

**FIGURE 40**

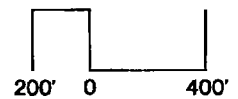


- ..... CLASS 1 (SEPARATE PATH)
- CLASS 2 / 3 (SHARED TRAVEL LANE)

NOTE A : LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED AT THE TIME OF GEICO REDEVELOPMENT.  
 NOTE B : ACHIEVE A BIKEWAY CONNECTION WITH THE TOWN OF SOMERSET.



North





## RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Provide a Class I bikeway from Western Avenue to Willard Avenue, along the greenway between the GEICO property and the Brookdale neighborhood.**

This bikeway will function primarily as a recreational path for residents in the area. It will provide access to Brookdale Park and, as discussed below, will be linked to Willard Avenue Park and the Capital Crescent Trail.

- **Designate a bikeway connection to the west of Friendship Heights via Willard Avenue Park.**

The Plan recommends that cyclists cross Willard Avenue from the GEICO site at the North Park/Willard Avenue intersection. Cyclists should be discouraged by signs or other measures from crossing at the Willard Avenue Park entrance because poor sight distance creates unsafe conditions.

The Plan recommends designating a Class I bikeway along the sidewalk on the north side of Willard Avenue from its intersection with North Park Avenue to the entrance of Willard Avenue Park. This segment is not ideal, but there are no valid alternatives. Should redevelopment occur on the north side, the additional right-of-way recommended (see Figure 42, Promenade C.) would allow a wider sidewalk to better accommodate cyclists and pedestrians.

At the Willard Avenue Park entrance, the bikeway goes through the park to River Road. The *Master Plan of Bikeways* recommends a link along the east side of River Road to connect with Little Falls Parkway and the Capital Crescent Trail. As a temporary measure, signs should alert pedestrians that they must share the sidewalk with cyclists. The Plan recommends studying a safer long-term link to the trail.

- **Achieve a bikeway system connection north of Friendship Heights through the Town of Somerset.**

As part of a continuous network, it is important to have a bicycle connection between the Town of Somerset and Friendship Heights. Such a link would allow residents of Somerset access to the Metro station, CBD shopping, and recreational facilities, including the Willard Avenue Park and the greenway. It would provide residents of Friendship Heights and the Brookdale neighborhood safe access to the Capital Crescent Trail and activities in the Bethesda CBD.

The Town of Somerset has reviewed possible path connections to Willard Avenue Park that include ways of crossing the Little Falls stream. This Plan recommends continued efforts to find a mutually satisfactory link that allows residents of both communities to cross the stream by foot or bicycle in the safest and most convenient manner possible. Factors to be taken into consideration include environmental impact, the erosive force of Little Falls, security, and feasibility. (See Chapter IV Section C.)

- **Designate a Class II or III bikeway through the redeveloped GEICO site.**

An on-street bikeway through the GEICO site would use an internal access road from Willard Avenue at its intersection with North Park Avenue to Friendship Boulevard.

- **Designate a Class II or III bikeway along Willard Avenue between North Park Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue.**
- **Provide a Class I bikeway along the north side of Western Avenue from Cortland Road to the intersection of Western Avenue with Wisconsin Avenue. Continue the Class I bikeway along the sidewalk on the north side of Western Avenue from Wisconsin Circle to Kirkside Drive.**

There are no realistic alternatives to use of the sidewalk in the eastern segment.

- **Designate a Class II or III bikeway along Friendship Boulevard between Western Avenue and Somerset Terrace. Continue the bikeway along Somerset Terrace to Wisconsin Avenue. Designate a Class I bikeway along the sidewalk on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue from Somerset Terrace to Dorset Avenue.**

This section of the bikeway network will provide a north-south connection through Friendship Heights. The use of the sidewalk in the segment between Somerset Terrace and Dorset Avenue is not ideal. It will, however, provide cyclists a link to destinations on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue via Dorset Avenue and provide a connection to the route recommended in the *Master Plan of Bikeways* on the east side of Wisconsin Avenue along the boundary of the Chevy Chase Country Club to Bethesda.

- **Designate a Class II or III bikeway in the Village of Friendship Heights that follows North Park Avenue east from its intersection with Willard Avenue and crosses Wisconsin Avenue via Friendship Boulevard and South Park Avenue.**
- **Provide a Class I bikeway along Montgomery Street and the greenway along the western boundary of Chevy Chase Village, continuing as a Class II or III bikeway on Belmont Avenue to the north and Grove Street to the east.**

A route through this buffer area was recommended in the 1974 Sector Plan and is shown on the County *Master Plan of Bikeways*. It lies entirely within the boundary and purview of Chevy Chase Village and can be implemented only if Chevy Chase Village agrees with the recommendation.



It would allow neighborhood residents of all ages to cycle to the Montgomery Avenue connection with Friendship Heights. The route would also provide a link to the Class I bike path recommended in the *Master Plan of Bikeways* for the east side of Wisconsin Avenue, along the Chevy Chase Country Club property, to Bethesda. The Plan proposes eliminating the link through the Wohlfarth property on Western Avenue, shown in the 1974 Sector Plan and the *Master Plan of Bikeways*. North-bound bicycle commuters could safely use Kirkside Drive to Grafton Street as an alternative. The Plan recommends designating those streets as Class III bikeways, in coordination with Chevy Chase Village.

- **Provide additional long-term bicycle storage at the Metro station and provide racks or lockers for short-term use in other locations throughout the CBD.**

## **E. PEDESTRIAN AND STREETScape PLAN**

Friendship Heights residents and workers need a safe and attractive pedestrian environment that will encourage use of Metro, contribute to social interaction, and provide a setting for public life. The Pedestrian and Streetscape Plan contributes to the vitality of the CBD and helps reinforce business activities. It seeks a balance between vehicular and pedestrian needs and attempts to minimize conflicts between cars and people.

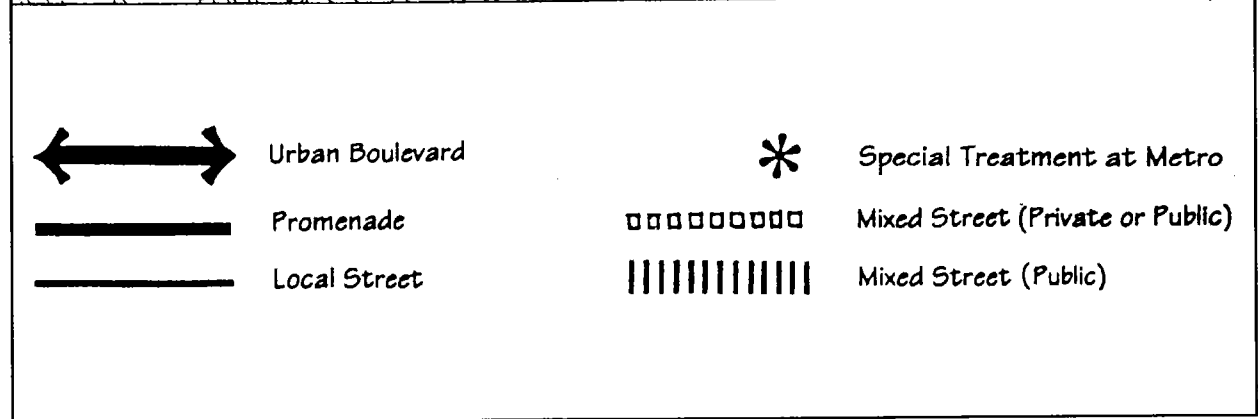
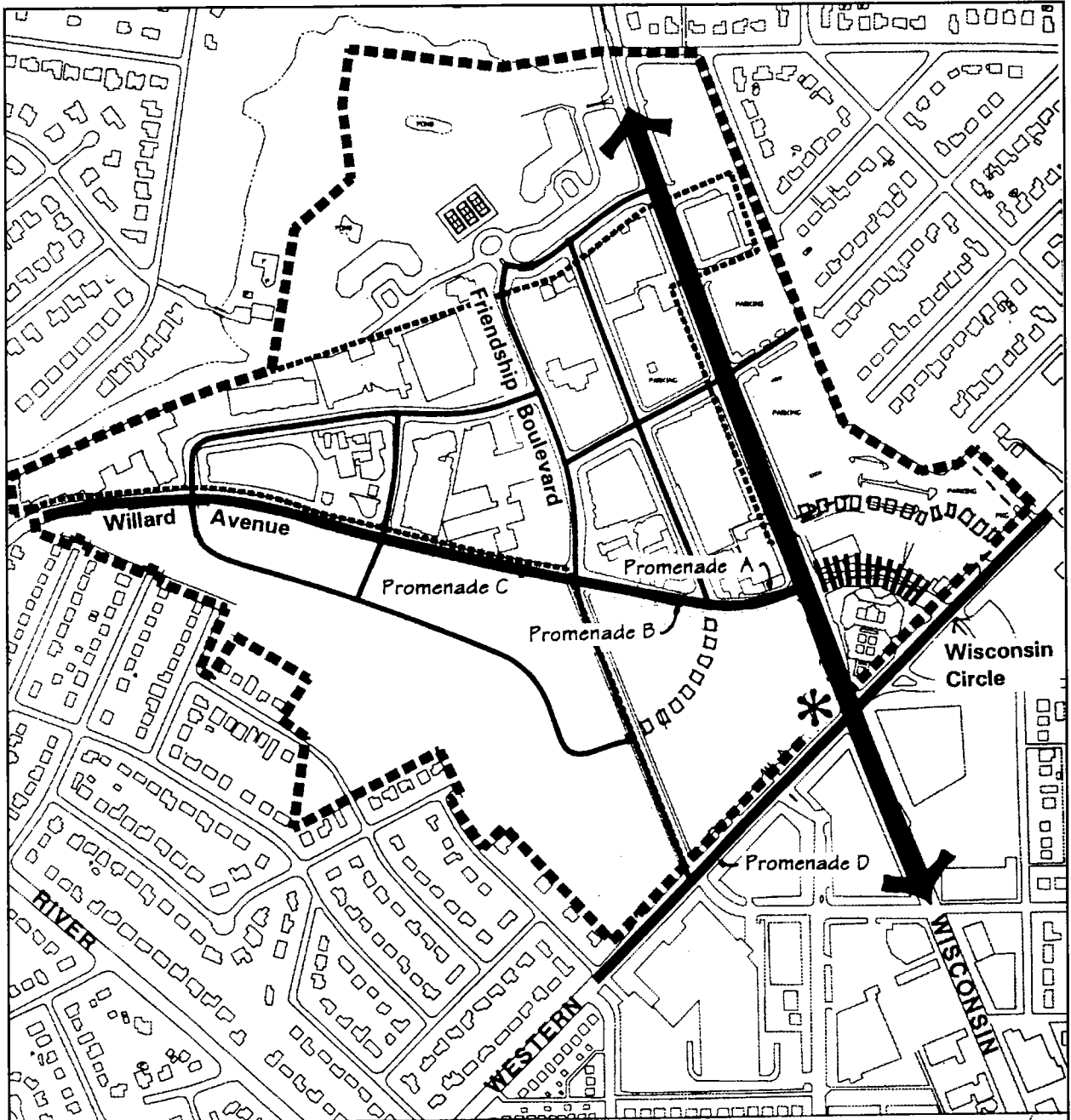
The Pedestrian and Streetscape Plan reflects the Sector Plan concept described in the initial pages of this document. Wisconsin Avenue, the major commercial street within the CBD, and streets near Metro should offer a high level of pedestrian amenities to encourage and accommodate a significant level of pedestrian activity. Streets within the Village of Friendship Heights and closer to single-family residential neighborhoods should have a more passive and park-like character than those in the commercial area. (See Figure 41. Note that the locations where the promenade sections are illustrated in Figures 42 and 43 are marked on Figure 41.)

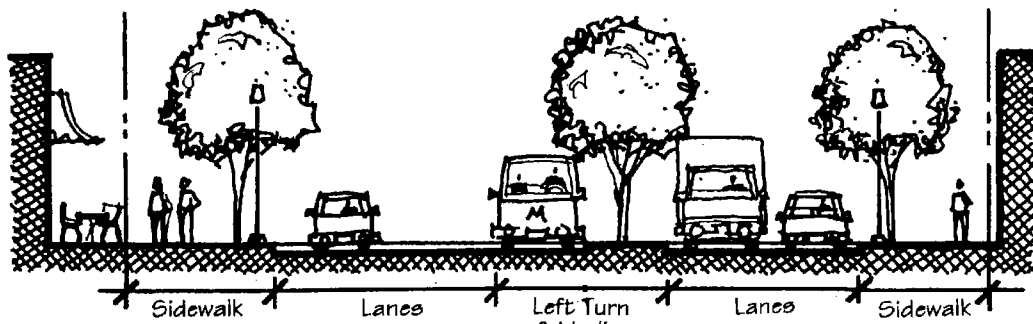
The recommendations in this section complement those in other parts of the Plan. The new street systems proposed for the GEICO and Hecht's sites will break up large tracts into short walkable blocks and add sidewalks and paths that will allow people to walk through the sites rather than around the periphery to the Town Center and Metro. Pedestrian crossings of major streets will be easier with a mid-block crossing on Friendship Boulevard, medians on Willard Avenue, and improvements on Wisconsin Circle. Pedestrian safety will be enhanced by residential development on the GEICO site and by additional security measures provided by a transportation management organization.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

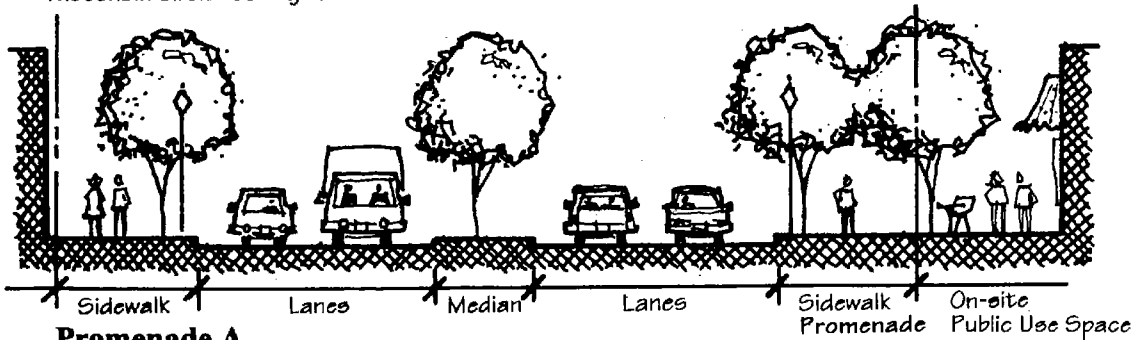
Encourage walking by creating an attractive pedestrian environment and improving pedestrian access to Metro and other parts of the community.

Strengthen community identity by developing streetscapes that distinguish the different districts in Friendship Heights.

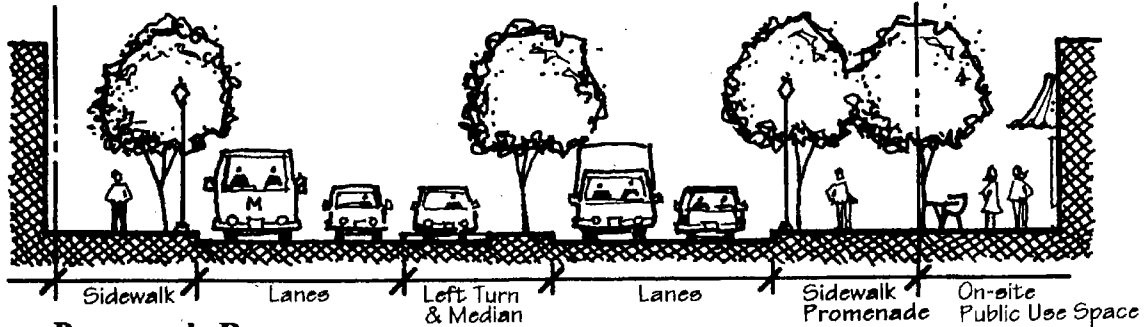




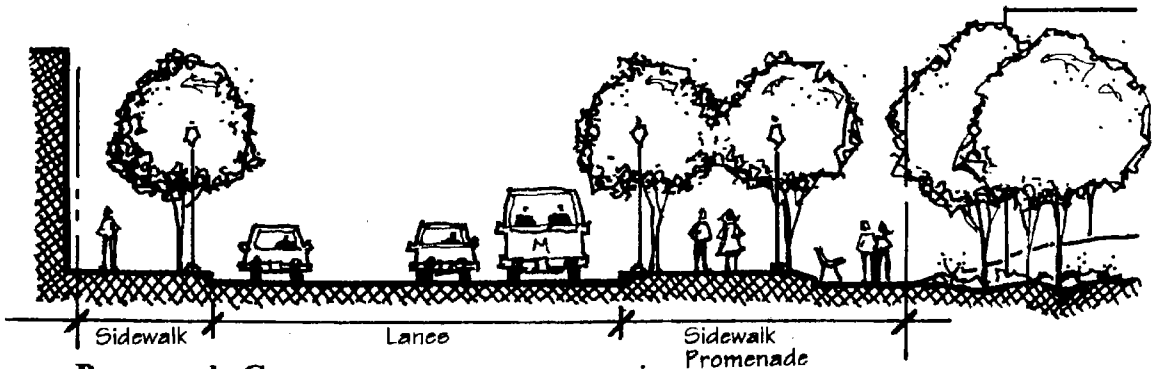
**Mixed Street**  
Wisconsin Circle looking east



**Promenade A**  
Willard Avenue looking east



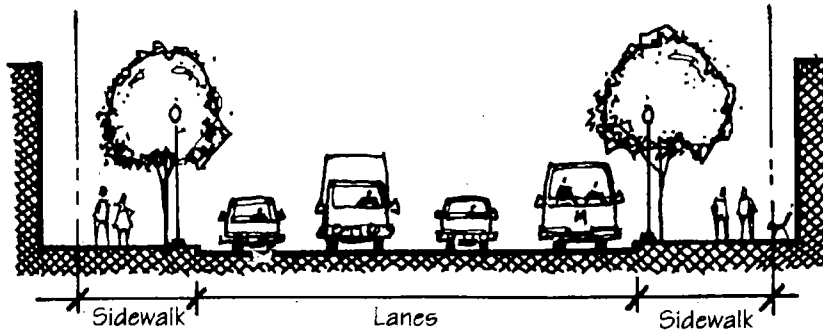
**Promenade B**  
Willard Avenue looking east



**Promenade C**  
Willard Avenue looking east

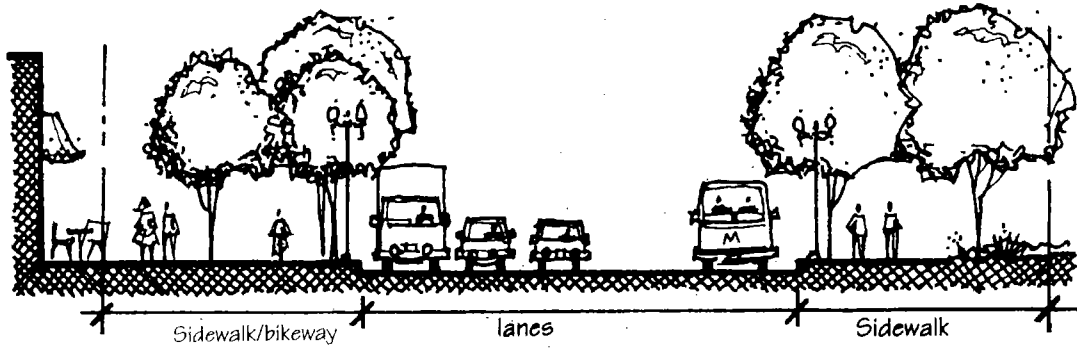
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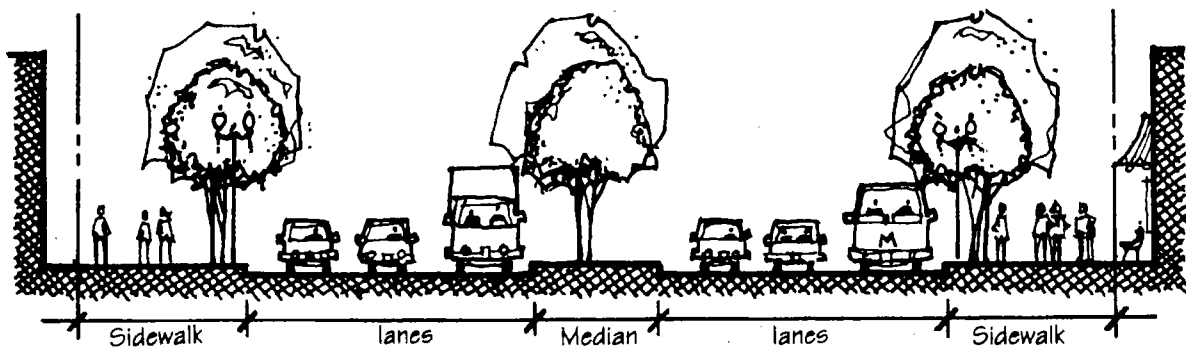
**Local Street**

Friendship Boulevard looking north



**Promenade D**

Western Avenue looking east



**Urban Boulevard**

Wisconsin Avenue looking north



Reinforce the street hierarchy by achieving a higher level of streetscape improvements along the major corridors and significant pedestrian routes.

Increase the amount of greenery by planting trees along all streets, using a variety of species throughout the area to achieve horticultural diversity. Allow off-site tree planting to fulfill forest conservation requirements of developing parcels.

Reduce visual clutter and create attractive street corridors by placing utilities underground on major streets and pedestrian routes and by upgrading existing streetscape character throughout the Sector Plan area.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Develop Wisconsin Avenue as a major Urban Boulevard which extends from the District of Columbia to Somerset Terrace.**

Establish Wisconsin Avenue as an urban boulevard by upgrading the streetscape with special paving such as brick, double-fixture Washington Globe lights, and tightly spaced shade trees at the curb and within the median. Provide a minimum of 20 feet of public sidewalk within the right-of-way to adequately accommodate pedestrian activity and streetscape. (See Figure 43 for illustration.)

DPWT and SHA should evaluate the cycle times for the traffic signals along Wisconsin Avenue to assure that enough time is included to allow elderly and disabled pedestrians to cross safely.

- **Provide special streetscape at the crossroads of Wisconsin and Western Avenues in response to pedestrian movements and the visual importance of the intersection.**

On the Hecht's side of Wisconsin Avenue, the Plan recommends eliminating the existing vehicular/pedestrian drop-off area and creating a small urban plaza which emphasizes the Metro entrance and includes the District Boundary marker. The plaza may include art work, fountains, landscaping, special lighting, seating, and other amenities. (See Figure 29.)

- **Develop Wisconsin Circle as a Mixed Street that better accommodates pedestrians and vehicles within the right-of-way. Conduct an operational analysis and, if feasible, provide a mid-block signal for pedestrian crossings.**

Establish Wisconsin Circle as a Mixed Street—one that emphasizes pedestrian circulation while allowing limited, slow vehicular traffic. A portion of Wisconsin Circle should be upgraded with special paving such as brick, Washington Globe lights, tightly spaced street trees, and seating. Provide a minimum of 20 feet of public sidewalk within the right-of-way to adequately accommodate pedestrian activity and streetscape. (See Figure 42 for illustration.)

The Friendship Heights Metro station and the retail and office uses to the north attract a large number of pedestrians. Heavy bus traffic, a taxi stand, illegally parked vehicles, numerous delivery trucks, and a fence in the median of Wisconsin Circle create barriers to pedestrian movement. If endorsed by DPWT after an operational analysis, the Plan recommends considering a mid-block

signal on Wisconsin Circle to provide a safer roadway crossing for pedestrians. The signal may be coordinated with the Wisconsin Avenue signal to prevent traffic disruption on that road. If the mid-block signal is installed, the fence currently located in the Wisconsin Circle median to discourage unsafe pedestrian crossings should be removed.

- **Develop Western Avenue as a Promenade to achieve a park-like character and provide better pedestrian access to Metro.**

Western Avenue, both east and west of Wisconsin Avenue, should have double-fixture Washington Globe lights, special paving such as brick, and a double row of tall-growing shade trees to form an allee. Provide a minimum of 30 feet of public sidewalk and bikeway area to accommodate pedestrian access, streetscape, and cyclists. (See Figure 43, Promenade D.) It should be noted that the Western Avenue right-of-way is within the District of Columbia boundary.

- **Develop Willard Avenue as a Promenade with a park-like character along the south side of the street to complement adjacent residential areas on the GEICO site and improve pedestrian access to Metro.**

Willard Avenue should have the Friendship Heights Street Lantern on both sides, special paving such as brick and tightly spaced street trees. On the south side, there should be a double row of street trees to form an allee and a minimum of 30 feet of curbside area within the public right-of-way in order to accommodate sidewalk space, trees and lighting. The allee will reinforce the park-like areas of tree conservation and reforestation. (See Figure 42, Promenade C for illustration.)

- **Develop Friendship Boulevard south of Willard Avenue as a Business District Street with a mid-block crossing to encourage pedestrian access to the Town Center.**

Single-fixture Washington Globe lights and street trees have been installed on both sides of Friendship Boulevard, and there is a brick path on the east side. The Plan supports continuing these streetscape elements in any future redevelopment. In conjunction with development on the Hecht's and GEICO sites, a mid-block crossing should be provided to encourage pedestrian access. (See Figure 43.)

- **Develop other streets within the Village of Friendship Heights in accordance with the Village streetscape plan for street lighting.**

All local streets within the Village of Friendship Heights should have street trees planted adjacent to the curb wherever possible. Special paving may be required if implemented under the optional method of development or funded by other means.

- **Develop an interconnected system of streets within the GEICO site to serve both residential and commercial uses.**

New streets on the GEICO site should be designed to discourage through traffic. Within the commercial areas, the sidewalks should be 12-15 feet in width with tightly spaced street trees and Washington Globe lights or other special lighting, if approved by DPWT. Major residential streets should have sidewalks on both sides. Streetscape elements within the residential area should be determined at site plan review.



- **Provide a high level of pedestrian amenities and attractions on streets with significant pedestrian activity to encourage walking and use of Metro.**

Provide animating retail uses, such as sidewalk cafes and vendors, for streets within the Town Center. If cafes and vendors are allowed within the public right-of-way, an unobstructed pedestrian space approximately ten feet wide should be provided. Streets that are farther from the Town Center should have a more passive, park-like character.

- **Place utilities underground on major streets to reduce visual clutter and avoid conflicts with existing and proposed street trees.**

*A Friendship Heights Streetscape Plan, a compendium document to the Sector Plan, will be prepared with detailed specifications on street lights, street trees, and paving.*