Topics Tonight

• Managed Lanes
• Project Update
• Key Transportation Elements of a Sector Plan
• Vision Zero
• What We Heard & What We Observed
• Preliminary Recommendations
• Next Steps & Important Dates
Timeline Thus Far

- Plan Kick-off  
  October 2017

- Existing Conditions  
  December 2017

- Toolbox and Approach  
  June 2018
Technical Update (Tonight)

Preliminary Rec’s Public Meeting
Dec 4

Preliminary Rec’s Board Meeting
Dec 6

Working Draft
Spring 2019

Timeline Update: Today
2.3 Transportation

Downtown Bethesda is well connected to the surrounding region by a vibrant transportation network incorporating three major highways: Old Georgetown Road (MD 187), Wisconsin Avenue (MD 105) and East-West Highway (MD 410). The community is near the Capital Beltway (Interstate-495) and Metrorail Red Line.

In addition to these roadway and commuter rail systems, the proposed Purple Line light rail and proposed I-355 South Bus Rapid Transit Corridor are anticipated to be implemented during the horizon year (2040) of this planning document. A grid of local streets completes the transportation network by promoting safe and efficient travel throughout the community for pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists.

In order to enhance the existing transportation network, this Plan recommends “complete streets” improvements to the roadway network that increase the connectivity, safety and quality for all modes of transportation. Complete streets design principles refer to roadway treatments intended to accommodate multiple modes of transportation, including pedestrian, bicycle, vehicular and transit, within the same right-of-way. Due to the transit-oriented nature of Downtown Bethesda, future transportation improvements within the Center Plan area are expected to be focused on minimizing the impact on existing transportation networks while integrating new transit-oriented development.

[Diagram showing transportation network and proposed improvements]
4.6 Capital Improvements Program and New Financing Mechanisms

The following infrastructure projects will enable Downtown Bethesda to evolve into a mixed-use, transit-oriented community and should be funded through the County Capital Improvements Program. Some projects may be completed using the Amenity Fund and with private sector participation.

4.6.2 New Financing Mechanisms

One of the four overarching goals of the Sector Plan is to increase parks and open space in Bethesda. The Sector Plan identifies several projects in the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to achieve this goal, but the capacity of the current CIP to fund these projects is limited and the cost of acquiring and developing new parks in a developed area will be significant. This Plan recommends the exploration of new financing mechanisms that could help pay for new parks. This includes the park impact payment recommended for the Overlay zone, as well as other potential alternative financing mechanisms (such as a special taxing district) that could provide a more stable source of funding not linked to new development and therefore available in the near term.
Vision Zero

How is Safety Created? | Decreasing Crash Frequency | Decreasing Crash Severity
What is Vision Zero?

• In the United States, it is a response to the approximately 40,000 traffic fatalities annually.

• In Montgomery County, an annual average of 30 fatalities and 340 severe injuries between 2012-2016.
TRADITIONAL APPROACH

Traffic deaths are INEVITABLE
PERFECT human behavior
Prevent COLLISIONS
INDIVIDUAL responsibility
Saving lives is EXPENSIVE

VS

VISION ZERO

Traffic deaths are PREVENTABLE
Integrate HUMAN FAILING in approach
Prevent FATAL AND SEVERE CRASHES
SYSTEMS approach
Saving lives is NOT EXPENSIVE
How is Safety Created?

1. Decrease the frequency of crashes
2. Decrease the severity of crashes
Decreasing Crash Frequency

- Reduce Conflicts
- Designate space for different users
- Provide predictability where users interact

www.montgomeryplanning.org/visionzero
Decreasing Crash Frequency

- Increase the ability to yield

Driver Field of Vision at Various Speeds

40 MPH
30 MPH
20 MPH
15 MPH

Image Credit: Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Decreasing Crash Severity

Hit by a vehicle traveling at 20 MPH
9 out of 10 pedestrians survive.

Hit by a vehicle traveling at 30 MPH
5 out of 10 pedestrians survive.

Hit by a vehicle traveling at 40 MPH
only 1 out of 10 pedestrians survives.

Image Credit: World Resources Institute
How do Corridors Cause Unsafe Behavior?
Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan Transportation Goals
Sector Plan
Transportation Goals

1. Eliminate all traffic-related deaths and severe injuries (aligned with County Council Vision Zero Initiative)
2. Improve the comfort, safety and overall traveling experience for non-motorized transportation modes (walking, biking, transit)
3. Reduce single-occupancy car travel within and through the corridor
4. Improve the efficiency of travel for all modes
What We Heard & What We Observed

Walking & Transit | Bicycling | Driving
What We’ve Heard and What We’ve Observed

- Support MDSHA **Alternative 5B**
- **Difficult** to walk along Georgia Avenue
- **Scary** to cross Georgia Avenue
- Why isn’t there **dedicated space** for **bicyclists**?
- **Spillback** traffic on Georgia Avenue, especially **northbound** in the **evening**
- **Unsafe** Beltway interchange; limited space for merging
- Concern about **high speed traffic** on **neighborhood streets**
- **Lack** of a street **grid**
- **Speeding** vehicles in Forest Glen
"Pedestrians have been struck and multiple car crashes have occurred here. During rush hour, southbound ambulances going to Holy Cross take left turns here and northbound cars need to take U turns here. Pedestrians going to bus stops and General Getty Park especially need a signal here. Tilton Drive is midway between the signals at Forest Glen Road and August Drive and will serve residents on the east and west sides of Georgia Avenue."
- We need a traffic signal here

6/4/18 7:03 pm \ anonymous
"The chicken must go"
- Huge Chicken

6/5/18 11:05 pm \ anonymous
"Add a time restriction to the "No Right Turn on Red" signs at the intersection of Spring St and 2nd Ave. In off peak hours, it should
MD SHA Alternative 5B
Key Elements of MDSHA Alt 5B

- **Remove Reversible Lane**
- **Install landscaped median** between Beltway and 16th Street
- Cross section: 4 lanes southbound, 3 lanes northbound on Georgia Avenue
- Install a **two-way bikeway on the west side** of Georgia Avenue
- Upgrade **sidewalks with buffers and a consistent walkway of 5 feet wide on both sides** of Georgia Avenue
- Install a **traffic signal** at Flora Lane
- **Restore left turns at Seminary Road** during peak travel hours
- **Remove 16th Street southbound slip lane**
- Re-route 16th S to 16th Street N (add two lanes)
Walking Along Georgia Ave
Crossing Georgia Ave

Safe crossing for pedestrians

6/6/18 8:54 am \ anonymous
"With the metro entrance only on the west side of Georgia Ave, this makes for a very unsafe pedestrian crossing for residents, hospital workers and patients crossing to/from the east side"

6/6/18 11:59 am \ james owens
"When turning right from Forest Glen Road pedestrians who want to cross Georgia Ave are hard to see because the crosswalk is displaced from the corner."

Your message

- #FixIt
- #Lovelt
- #NeedIt
Pedestrian Crossing Experience Today

3,000+ ft
15 min walk (end to end)
Potential Crossing Improvements

- 860 ft, 3 min walk
- 840 ft, 3 min walk
- 1,300 ft, 5 min walk
900 ft 4 min walk

1,100 ft 4 min walk
1,300 ft walk
3 min walk
700 ft walk
5 min walk
Montgomery Hills? #Lovelt, #FixIt, #NeedIt Tell Us More!

6/4/18 7:04 pm \ peter gray
"Protected bike lanes on Georgia Avenue"
Georgia Avenue Short Term

120' width (12' room) - Silver Spring, United States - A few seconds ago
Unsafe Beltway Interchange

Get rid of this ramp

6/12/18 10:48 am \ gary h.

“This ramp is the generator of traffic jams for as long as I have lived here. The crossing/merging traffic between NB Georgia Ave. to WB beltway and EB Beltway to NB Georgia IS A HORRIBLE MESS and I think is the primary cause of backups on NB Georgia. I think it would be better to get rid of the ramp, and send all WB traffic off the beltway at exit 31B and let the NB traffic turn left at the bottom of the ramp. Sync the left turners from beltway to Georgia. Maybe the 31B...
Potential Interchange Improvements

Option 1: Beltway Ramp Reconfiguration | Option 2: Diverging Diamond Interchange
How the MD 97 Interchange Operates Today
Potential Reconfiguration

Potential new pedestrian/bicycle crossing
# Beltway Ramp Reconfiguration

## Benefits
- Improves Safety
- Eliminates weaving
- May reduce northbound backups
- Relatively inexpensive
- Comparatively easier to implement
- Could fit within existing MDSHA ROW
- Right turn on Inner Loop Off Ramp will be free flow
- Pedestrian Bridge unaffected

## Considerations
- Will likely reduce congestion northbound on Georgia Ave
- Induced travel demand may undermine potential congestion reduction
- Pedestrian signals will be needed on the east side to cross ramps, or a new bridge should be considered
I 495 East (Inner Loop) to MD 97 North Bound and I 495 West (Outer Loop)
I 495 West (Outer Loop) to MD 97 South Bound and I 495 East (Inner Loop)
I 495 East to North and South MD 97

Free right turn
Bicycle and Pedestrian Beltway Crossing

Potential replacement bridge segment

Existing Pedestrian Bridge

Potential new pedestrian/bicycle crossing
Diverging Diamond Interchange

Benefits
• Improves Safety
• Eliminates weaving
• Improves Reliability
• Could fit within existing MDSHA ROW
• Pedestrian bridge remains with modifications
• Reduces congestion

Considerations
• Major design change
• Very Expensive
• Induced travel demand may undermine potential congestion reduction
• Pedestrian signals will be needed on the east side to cross ramps, or a new bridge should be considered
Montgomery Hills: Street Grid
"We are cut off from our children's school (Woodlin), which is actually on our street, but interrupted by the Georgia Ave/16th St intersection(s). We currently have to walk an additional 8 blocks round trip (2 blocks up Georgia and 2 blocks back down, each way) in order to access a (very dangerous) crosswalk. All this to walk our kids their school that is, in reality, just 5 blocks away. Our block alone has 3-4 families faced with this."
Vehicles Speeding in Forest Glen

“Traffic on the relatively uncongested stretch of Georgia Ave between Plyers Mill and August Drive is tempted to speed”
Addressing Vehicle Speeds
Confirming BRT Recommendations

Station Locations

Wheaton Metro Station
MD 97 and Dexter Avenue
Forest Glen Metro Station
MD 97 and Seminary Road
MD 97 and Cameron Street
Silver Spring Transit Center
MD 97 and East West Highway
MD 97 and Eastern Avenue/Burli
Recommendations Summary

• Improve the walking experience
  • Buffered sidewalks
  • Street trees
  • Underground utilities

• Improve crossings for all modes
  • Study new traffic controls at intersections
  • Forest Glen Passageway

• Provide a designated space for bicyclists
• Explore reconfigurations for the Beltway interchange to improve vehicle safety
• Explore reconfigurations for the Beltway to improve traffic flow on Georgia Ave
• With redevelopment, build a new street grid on the west side to improve mobility for all in Montgomery Hills
• Confirm CTC Master Plan (2013) Recommendations for BRT along Georgia Ave
• Reduce vehicle speeds
  • Enforcement
  • Traffic-calming road design
Next Steps

Follow up
Follow up on questions and feedback from tonight

Prepare
Prepare for December 4, 2018 public meeting with the whole team

Deliver
Deliver preliminary recommendations to the Planning Board December 6, 2018

Present
Present Working Draft Plan to the Public and the Board Early Spring 2019
Tuesday December 4, 2018
Present ALL Preliminary Recommendations to the Public

Thursday December 6
Present ALL Preliminary Recommendations to the Planning Board