

# Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan

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## Abstract

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan contains the text and supporting maps for a comprehensive amendment to portions of the approved and adopted *1989 Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton*, as amended; *1996 Forest Glen Sector Plan*, as amended; and *2000 North and West Silver Spring Master*, as amended. It also amends *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*, as amended; the *2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*; the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*, as amended; and the *2018 Bicycle Master Plan*.

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area extends along the Georgia Avenue corridor from the edge of downtown Silver Spring at Spring Street to Dennis Avenue just south of downtown Wheaton. This plan focuses on strategic redevelopment opportunities, improved connectivity and enhanced safety for all users. Recommendations are provided for land use, zoning, transportation, parks, trails and open space, the environment and historic resources.

Master and sector plans convey land use policy for defined geographic areas and should be interpreted together with relevant countywide functional plans and county laws and regulations. Plans provide comprehensive recommendations for the use of public and private land and should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions. Public and private land use decisions that promote plan goals are essential to fulfilling a plan's vision.

Master and sector plans look ahead 20 years from the date of adoption, although they are intended to be revised every 10 to 15 years. Moreover, after a plan is adopted, circumstances will change, and the specifics of a plan may become less relevant over time. Plans do not specify all development possibilities. They often include illustrative sketches intended to convey a sense of desirable future character rather than detailed recommendations for a design.

### Sources of Copies

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission 8787 Georgia Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20910 Online at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/area-1/forest-glen-montgomery-hills-sector-plan/>

### The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting and amending or extending *The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*. The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by those county governments. The Planning Boards are responsible for implementation of local plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations and the administration of the bi-county park system.

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## Executive Summary

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan provides an opportunity to reassess and enhance the character of the plan area, leverage public investment and analyze alternative redevelopment and connectivity solutions. It is a timely analysis in that two related, important initiatives are underway: the MD97 study initiated by Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) feasibility analysis of the Forest Glen Metro Station.

The plan explores new, creative approaches to longstanding congestion and other land use and design-related issues within the corridor. Most importantly, Vision Zero policy to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries is part of plan through measures to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and accessibility, while balancing vehicular mobility along the Georgia Avenue corridor.

Utilizing the themes of *Reconnect*, *Reinvest*, *Reimagine*, the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hill Sector Plan offers recommendations that encourage equitable, attractive development, provide for housing choices at all levels and improve connectivity, ecological functions and open space. Internal research and information obtained during the extensive community engagement process guided the creation of this three-pronged approach and the resulting sector plan.

### A. Plan Themes

The larger plan goals and supporting recommendations were organized as follows to support these themes:

#### *Reconnect – Restoring healthy relationships*

- Introduce measures, such as Vision Zero, to improve safety for all individuals who use Georgia Avenue, -including drivers, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Balance regional traffic demands and proposed infrastructure improvements with the need to prioritize multi-modal options, such as public transit, walking and bicycling.
- Improve the wellness of the community by reducing health-related impacts associated with poor pedestrian facilities, vehicular conflicts and emissions.
- Encourage efficient and affordable alternatives to single-occupancy vehicular travel and meet the needs of the those with limited mobility options.
- Prioritize infrastructure investments that create access to opportunity.

#### *Reinvest – Increasing the value (monetary and societal) of community places for an enhanced experience*

- Create built environments that improve quality of life through public amenities, improved mobility, improved air and water quality, and safe, attractive and accessible public spaces.
- Encourage equitable development that preserves and strengthens the community, celebrates community history and builds on existing assets, including commercial and institutional uses.
- Encourage quality design that incorporates neighborhood compatibility and sustainable development practices.

#### *Reimagine – Thinking about familiar places with new ideas*

- Provide healthy, safe and affordable housing choices for people of all income levels, household sizes and stages of life.
- Create solutions for improved ecological health and the elimination of disproportionate environmental burdens.
- Remedy past environmental impacts and protect against future ecological degradation.

- Enhance the public realm by providing green infrastructure (safe, accessible parks, stormwater systems and usable open space) that meet the needs of all users.
- Limit displacement by encouraging equitable transit-oriented development and infrastructure that provide for access and opportunity.

## B. Recommendations

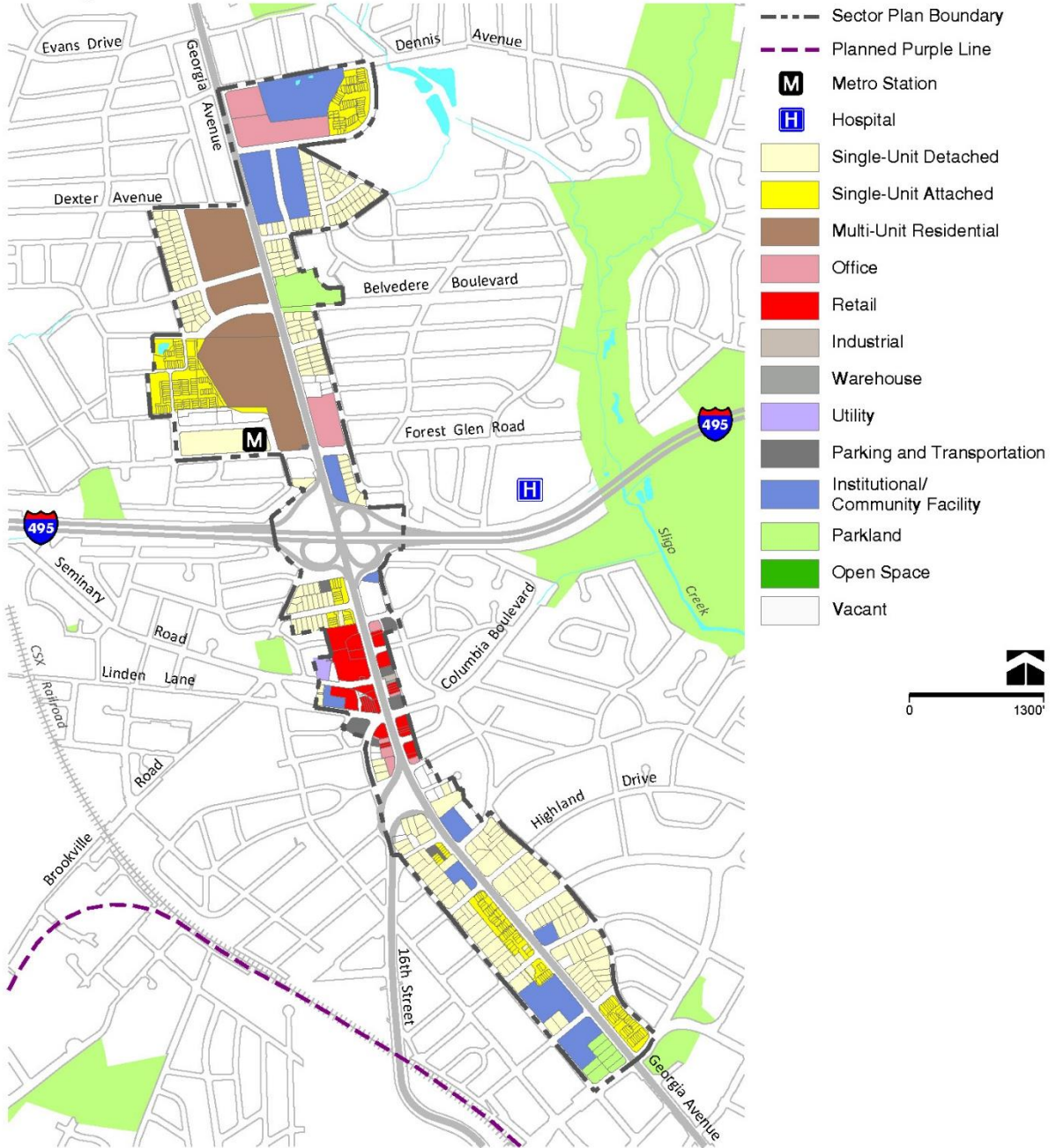
### 1. Summary

Summary of Plan Recommendations			
	Description	Short Term	Category
	Balance mixed-use development through the application of the CR Zones.	Short Term	Zoning
	Recommend the technical-driven rezoning of sites with R-60 special exceptions or structures exceeding the development standards of the current zone.	Short term	Zoning
	Recommend that all RT zoned properties be rezoned to one of the TMD (Townhome Mid-density) or THD (Tonwhome High-density) zones.	Short Term	Zoning
	Note the location of the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Cemetery listed in the Planning Board's Adopted Cemetery Inventory and incorporate protective measures into the redevelopment of the site.	Short Term	Historic Preservation
	Evaluate the Woodside Locational Atlas District for designation in the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i> .	Short Term	Historic Preservation
	Evaluate Grace Episcopal Church and Cemetery located in the Woodside Locational Atlas District and listed on the Planning Board's Adopted Cemetery Inventory for designation in the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i> .	Short Term	Historic Preservation
	Increase the number of community gathering places and incorporate placemaking efforts that reflect community diversity and encourage interaction	Short Term	Urban Design
	Establish appropriate transitions where necessary to limit impact on abutting/confronting uses	Short Term	Urban Design
	Redevelop large commercial sites and parking lots as pedestrian oriented environments with walkable blocks, attractive public spaces, pedestrian paths, street level retail, and storm water management treatments.	Short Term	Urban Design
	Encourage and accommodate opportunities for creative placemaking to activate public spaces and foster community togetherness.	Short Term	Urban design
	Collaborate with nonprofit, county and private organizations to expand and enhance affordable housing opportunities accessible by mass transit.	Short Term	Housing
	Preserve existing, market-rate affordable housing, where possible.	Short Term	Housing
	Recommend reconfiguration of the southwest I495 interchange loop off-ramp	Short Term	Transportation
	Support the Interim Term – MDOT SHA Preferred Alternative Configuration of Georgia Avenue	Short Term	Transportation
	Improve traffic safety for all modes	Short Term	Transportation
	Support the construction of a new grade separated passageway at the Forest Glen Metro Station	Short Term	Transportation
	Increase the Average Vehicle Delay Standard	Short Term	Transportation
	Address Intersection Capacity Deficits	Short Term	Transportation

Consider consolidating bus stops along Georgia Avenue and introducing a micro-transit service zone	Short Term	Transportation
Support the recommendations of the approved and adopted Bicycle Master Plan	Short Term	Transportation
Establish a BiPPA plan for the plan area	Short Term	Transportation
Improve open space and park opportunities by improving existing parkland and incorporating publicly accessible open space into new development	Short Term	Parks
Improve stormwater management	Short Term	Environment
Reintroduce green cover via increased tree canopy and vegetation	Short Term	Environment
Improve air quality by increasing carbon sequestration capacity	Short Term	Environment
Increase ecological biodiversity	Short Term	Environment
Maximize the opportunity for integrated public services and facilities where possible, especially at/near public transit facilities	Short Term	Community Facilities
Support aging in place and provide for child care services at/near major activity centers	Short Term	Civic
Support strategies to improve the public realm and storefronts, strengthen businesses and undertake marketing and promotion efforts within the plan area.	Short Term	Economic Development
Recommend the nomination of the Montgomery Hills District for a Main Street Program	Short Term	Economic Development/Historic Preservation
Recommend that the Montgomery Hills District be designated as a qualified recipient of Small Business Impact Assistance Funds	Short Term	Economic Development
Provide technical assistance and funding for resources that will encourage the retention of neighborhood services and local retail.	Short Term	Economic Development
Consider the following individual sites for designation in the <i>Master Plan for Historic Preservation</i> : Montgomery Hill Shopping Center, Exceptional Fabricare, Calvary Lutheran Evangelical Church, and Americana Finnmark.	Long Term	Historic Preservation
Accommodate future growth by providing opportunities for a limited amount of sustainable development near the Forest Glen Metro Station and planned BRT station in the Montgomery Hills District	Long Term	Land Use
Support maximum densities at/near major activity centers, such as the Forest Glen Metro Station, and the proposed Georgia Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Stop.	Long Term	Zoning
Design buildings and landscape elements to frame a vibrant public realm of walkable and active streets, and public spaces throughout the area, particularly along Georgia Avenue	Long Term	Urban Design
Prioritize MPDUs as a top public benefit point in locations near transit or other activity centers.	Long Term	Housing
further evaluate the Diverging Diamond Interchange	Long Term	Transportation
Reconfigure Georgia Avenue as a main street corridor (boulevard) with landscaping and improved pedestrian and cycling facilities	Long Term	Transportation
Apply the PLoC to improve pedestrian and bicycle facilities and crossing capability to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflict	Long Term	Transportation
Retrofit and improve existing infrastructure including existing signalized intersections to meet current best practices for safe and comfortable multi-modal travel	Long Term	Transportation
Install a two-way separated bikeway on west side of Georgia Avenue (shared use path)	Long Term	Transportation
Modify or reconstruct the existing pedestrian bridge as a part of any redesign or reconfiguration of the beltway interchange	Long Term	Transportation
Create new Civic Gathering Spaces including a new Gateway Urban Recreational Park and an Urban Ecology Center	Long Term	Parks
Address the need for new or expanded county services, facilities or operations resulting from population growth or proposed new development	Long Term	Community Facilities

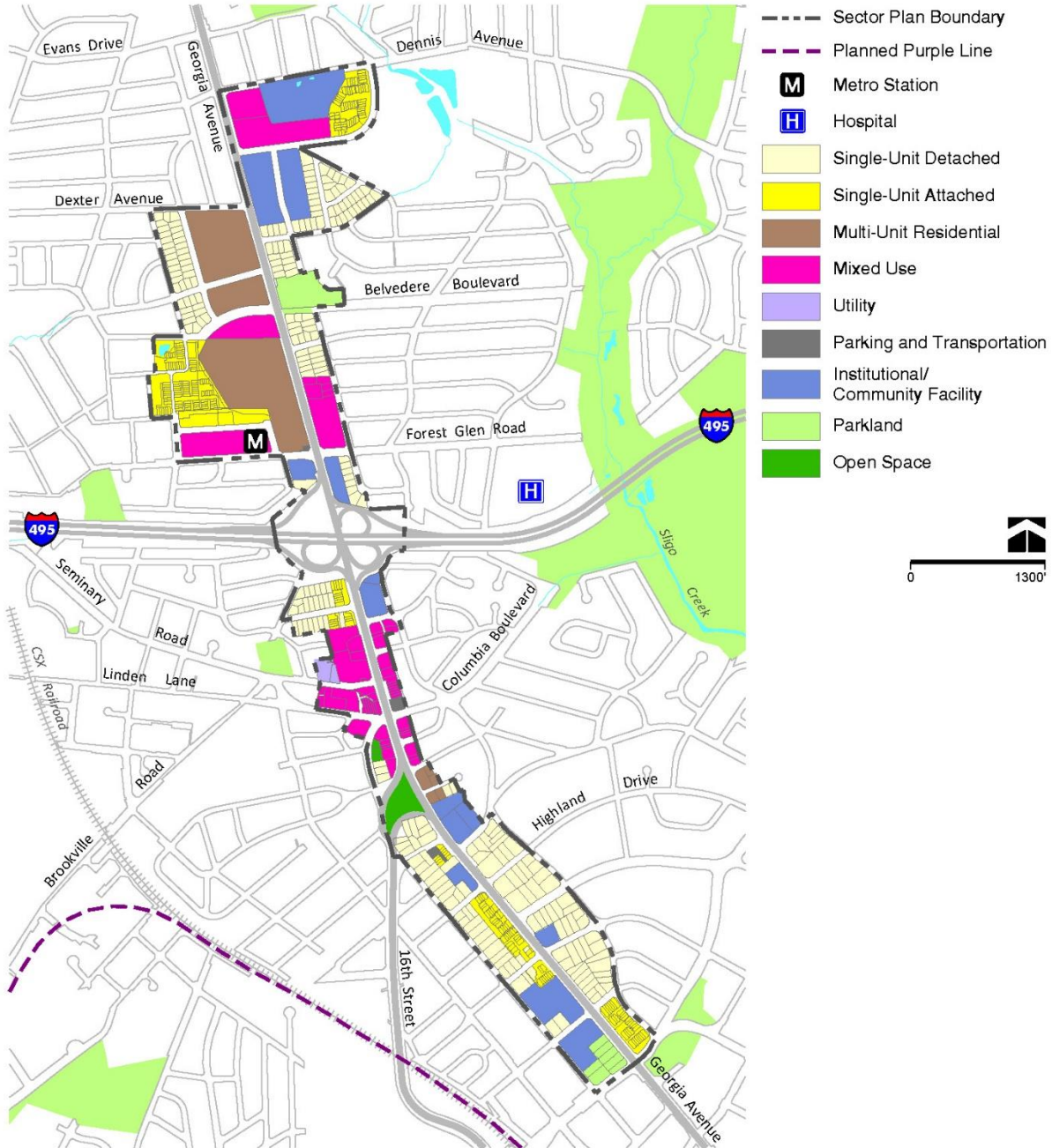
## 2. Land Use and Zoning (Existing and Recommended)

### Existing Land Use

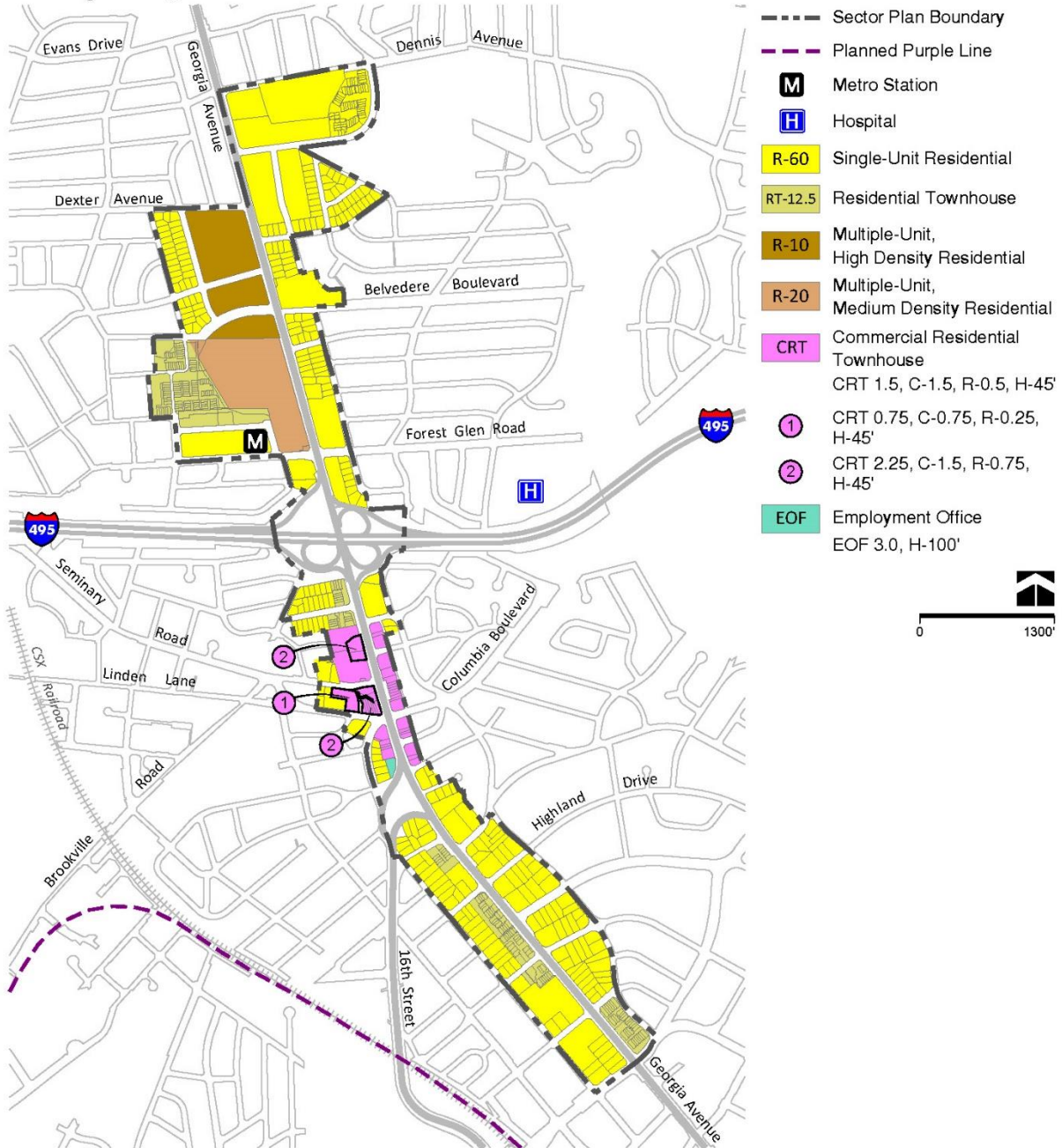




## Recommended Land Use

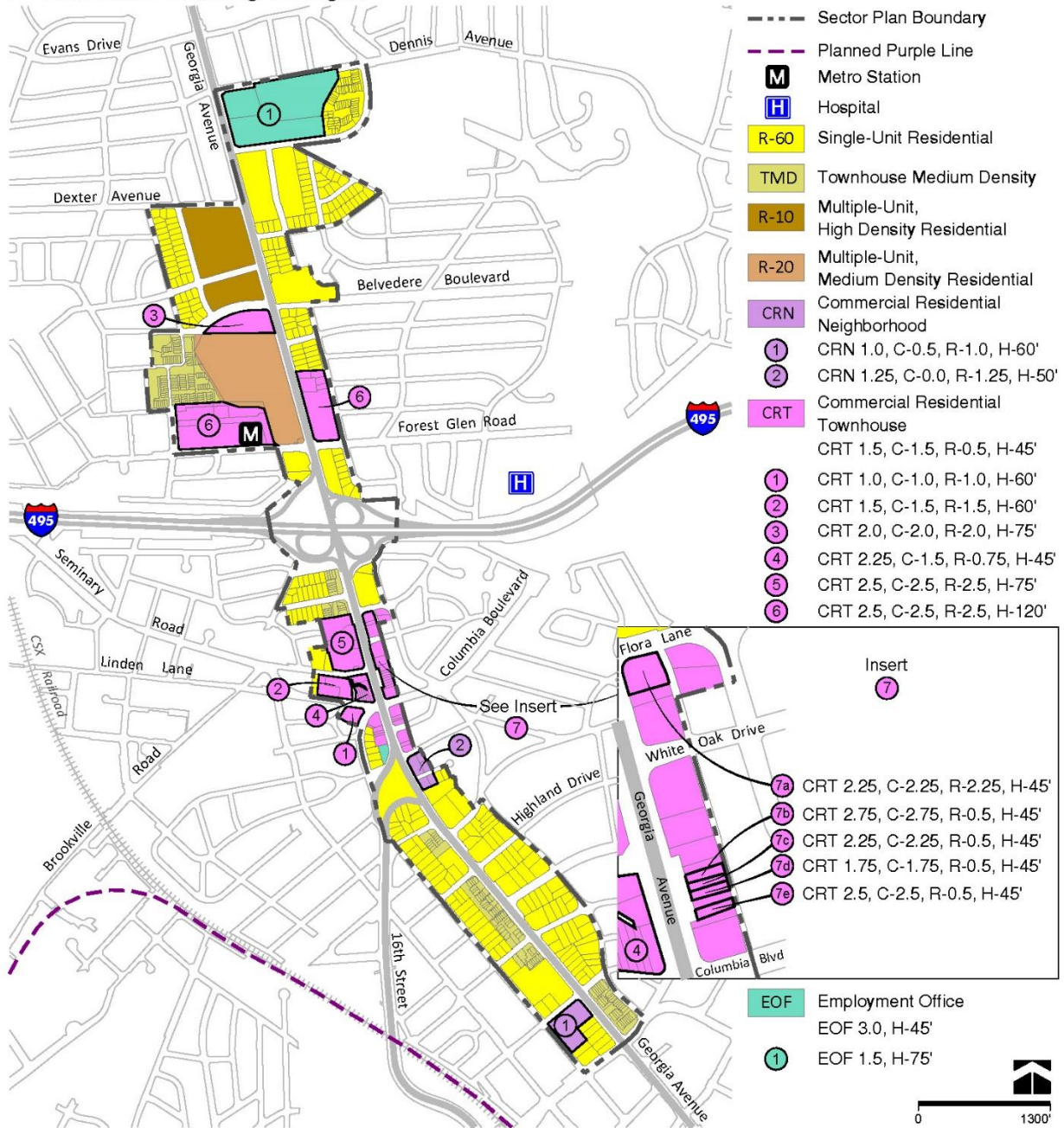


## Existing Zoning





## Recommended Zoning Changes



## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Plan Vision

The vision of the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan is to leverage existing and future infrastructure improvements within the plan area facilitate the creation of a safe, interconnected Georgia Avenue. This improved corridor will provide upgraded community amenities, allow for strategic, well-located, equitable development, create an attractive pedestrian environment and preserve existing retail and commercial districts.

Additionally, this comprehensive sector plan seeks to ensure that these improvements, along with the other recommended land use, zoning, urban design, transportation, historic preservation and parks and open space recommendations, will improve the overall quality of life within the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills area.

This vision also carries forward unrealized goals from the following Master Plans: North/West Silver Spring Master Plan, Forest Glen Sector Plan and Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington/Wheaton.

### 1.2 Context

The 230-acre Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area stretches approximately two miles along the Georgia Avenue corridor and lies between the 2012 Wheaton Central Business District and the 2000 Vicinity Sector Plan Silver Spring Central Business District Sector Plan. The plan boundary is centered on Georgia Avenue with Dennis Avenue and Spring Street setting the northern and southern limits, respectively. Composed predominantly of single-unit detached homes with commercial nodes at intersections along Georgia Avenue, the plan area is bifurcated by two heavily traveled, major thoroughfares, Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Interstate 495, also known as the Capital Beltway. Residential uses along the corridor include townhomes, garden apartments and condominiums. Few transitional areas are located between the active commercial corridor, institutional uses and adjoining, well-established single-unit residential neighborhoods.

Although well-established, the plan area presents significant physical challenges that need to be addressed, including the following:

- Historical development patterns inhibiting connectivity and physical integration.
- Physical barriers created by Georgia Avenue and I-495.
- Poor or missing storm water management systems.
- Heavy pass-through traffic.
- Unattractive and inhospitable streetscapes.
- Influx of transitional commercial uses.

Additional challenges are noted in the challenges and opportunities are noted within Section 1.5 Challenges and Opportunities.

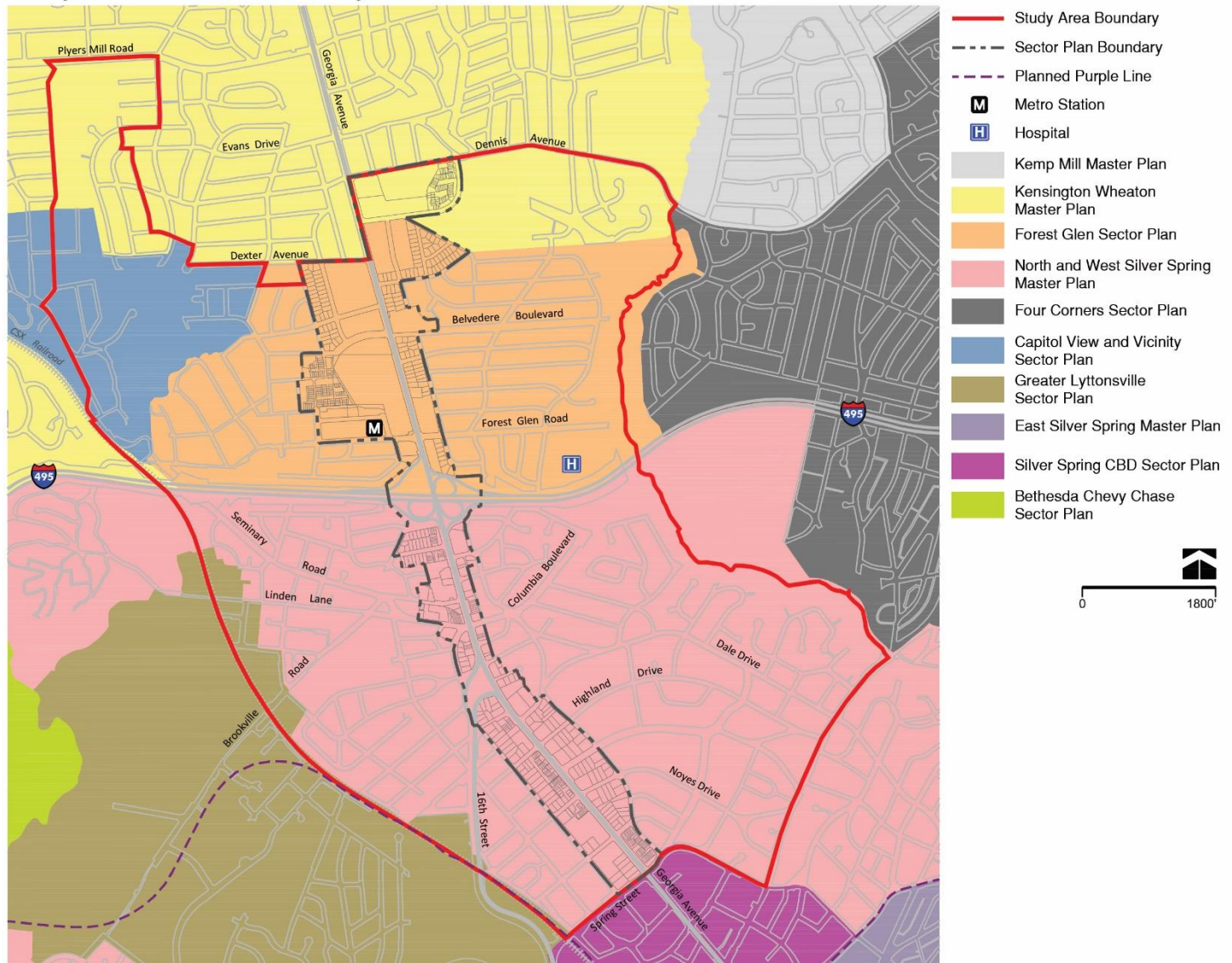
Georgia Avenue serves as the primary north-south connection for most of the down-county area, so the plan addresses its importance within the context of the larger transportation grid and the needs of other stakeholders, many of whom are located outside the sector plan boundary.

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Study Area is home to a diverse population representing all ages, household types and income levels. This diversity is reflected in the institutional (particularly places of worship) and commercial uses located along the corridor. Area retail is located primarily within the

Montgomery Hills Commercial District and comprises small, locally owned businesses, which supplement larger commercial uses located within the nearby Silver Spring and Wheaton Central Business Districts. There are also service-oriented businesses that reflect the current auto-centric nature of Georgia Avenue and the proximity to the Capital Beltway.

The area's largest employer is the Holy Cross Hospital, located just outside the sector plan boundary, it serves as the central component of the area's existing medical -office node. Neighborhood amenities include an expansive park system and transit amenities, such as the Forest Glen Metro Station and a planned bus rapid transit (BRT) line.

### Study Area / Plan Area Overlay





### 1.3 Plan Purpose

Previous planning efforts include the Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton, the Forest Glen Sector Plan and the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan. The recommendations in these plans promote the protection and preservation of the low-density residential communities, provide for appropriate transitions between commercial and residential areas, envision Georgia Avenue as an urban boulevard or green corridor and call for the revitalization of commercial and non-residential nodes.

These plans also recommend the following infrastructure improvements. These recommendations can be leveraged to provide opportunities for limited redevelopment near existing and future transit to enhance existing neighborhood centers, heighten neighborhood identity and promote walkability.

- A comprehensive study and redesign of the segment of Georgia Avenue between Forest Glen Road and 16th Street in response to the Approved and Adopted North and West Silver Spring Master Plan concept. The *MD 97 Georgia Avenue Montgomery Hills Study* aims to incorporate public feedback along with a conceptual cost-engineering analysis of the preferred design alternative.
- The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) is evaluating the feasibility of redeveloping the 8-acre surface parking lot at the Forest Glen Metro Station. The study goals are to:
  - Maximize ridership potential.
  - Explore potential for higher density; mixed-use development.
  - Provide for and maximize improved pedestrian connectivity to the station.
- A grade-separated interchange at the Forest Glen Metro Station was proposed in the 1996 Approved and Adopted Forest Glen Sector Plan. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) initiated the *Forest Glen Passageway (P501911)* project to determine the alignment and type of facility for improving pedestrian safety and access to the station. This project is needed to improve the mobility, and safety for all facility users within the project area by reducing existing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles. A passageway under Georgia Avenue connecting the northwest corner to the southeast corner was the preferred alignment. A ramp connection and elevators would bring the passageway to grade on the northeast corner of the intersection. Associated sidewalk improvements would also be made to Forest Glen Road to complete the walking connection on the north side of the road to Holy Cross Hospital, which is the plan area's largest employer.
- The Georgia Avenue South Bus Rapid Transit was proposed in the 2013 approved and adopted, Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan. The plan calls for the following:
  - Corridor recommendations, from north to south: mixed traffic transitway along Georgia Avenue from Veirs Mill Road to 16th Street and dedicated lanes along Georgia Avenue from 16th Street to Colesville Road
  - station locations at Forest Glen Metro Station, and MD 97 and Seminary Road.

This service would supplement the Metrorail Red Line and master-planned Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT).

The plan will provide recommendations that respond to these and other proposed and/or planned improvements.

## 1.4 Community Engagement



Like much of Montgomery County, the plan area is home to established civic associations representing the varied neighborhoods of Forest Glen, Montgomery Hills and Woodside. By engaging them and other stakeholders as community experts in the planning process, staff crafted recommendations that support equitable, long-term solutions, incorporate community values and culture, and create opportunity for change that meets the present and future needs of the community.

The engagement process utilized low-tech and hi-tech engagement tools. These outreach methods included paper flyers and reference materials, both electronic and postal mailings to announce public meetings and one-on-one sessions with community stakeholders. Additionally, posters and other signage that incorporated text messaging and short message tools, such as text back numbers were placed at the Forest Glen Metro Station and select bus stations along the corridor. These measures allowed for diverse participation in the planning process.

The interactive Montgomery County (MC) React Map ([mcatlas.org/forestglen](http://mcatlas.org/forestglen)) mapping tool allowed stakeholders to use cell phones and mobile devices to make comments and suggestions about the positive changes they would like to see happen in their community. It proved the most successful of all the engagement tools and provided immediate feedback to planners. The user-friendly map combined virtual engagement and community-building efforts by allowing residents to visualize data and communicate among themselves and with the planning team. Through the digital tool, more than 300 comments and images were generated and woven into the recommendations for this sector plan.

Additional accommodations, such as live-streamed public meetings, a plan website and listserv, were also utilized to provide real time information and reference materials for those who were unable to attend planning meetings and forums. Stakeholders were also invited to participate in one-on-one interviews that were videotaped and screened during Montgomery County Planning Board sessions and on the plan social media pages. Interpretation services for American Sign Language and foreign languages were made available upon request. The interactive map, signage and printed materials were also translated or made available for translation.

## 1.5 Challenges and Opportunities

The following list of challenges and opportunities reflect stakeholder comments along with staff's observations and analysis of the existing conditions within the plan area.

### *Challenges*

- Growing traffic volumes between 75,000 to 93,000 ADT in 2040 under the No-Build Alternative
- Displacement of businesses with SHA acquisitions, loss of affordable commercial space
- Loss of parking spaces due to SHA improvements
- High opportunity costs of demolishing leased retail/office space constrain the financial feasibility of redevelopment and property owners' interest
- Small parcels with limited depth constrain redevelopment opportunities
- Negative aspects of living along a high-volume thoroughfare may moderate new residential development

- Constraints on Holy Cross Hospital development at Forest Glen and its expansion in Germantown could shift energy away from the area
- Shift away from small private medical practices may dampen demand for medical office space
- Aging buildings inhibit businesses' ability to compete
- Some existing owners' reinvestment impeded by rents and market demand limits
- Increasing competition from e-commerce may further reduce demand for bricks and mortar retail space
- High cost of ownership housing
- Regulatory restrictions impede creation of new, infill housing types, such as Accessory Dwelling Units
- Modest supply of missing middle housing limits opportunities for new homeowners
- Construction period disruptions from SHA improvements

### *Opportunities*

- SHA rebuilding of Georgia Avenue
- Beautification, conflict reduction, better accommodations for pedestrian and bicycles, restoring left turns
- Available redevelopment sites created by SHA acquisitions
- Metro station area development / 9801 Georgia Avenue – Forest Glen Medical Center, and potential site at 9513-9525 Georgia Avenue
- Aging population (750 PMA households with householders aged 75 or older) and Holy Cross Hospital's presence could support new senior housing
- Market support for small neighborhood or commercial uses (i.e. a new restaurant and small pharmacy or wellness retail operation)
- Better marketing and promotion could encourage more local spending by nearby residents
- Façade improvements would allow some local retailers to attract more customers
- Potential for a small co-working office hub
- Purple Line could attract more residents to the market areas
- Some residential infill and redevelopment opportunities in adjoining neighborhoods, including newer housing types such as Accessory Dwelling Units or "Missing Middle" housing
- Additional affordable housing units to accommodate residents across a broader range of incomes
- Residential redevelopment potential for older garden apartments
- Ride-sharing (e.g., Uber, Lyft) and autonomous vehicles could reduce parking demand in the long term
- Designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* offers historic preservation tax credits for applicable restoration projects.

These comments were further refined into themes and goals of the draft sector plan.

## 1.6 Plan Goals

This sector plan's recommendations are based on the themes of Reconnect, Reinvest and Reimagine, crafted after combining stakeholder input with creative planning and land use practices and the planning framework

established by the county's General Plan. These themes are also informed by the previous plan efforts and studies for the Georgia Avenue corridor.

*A. Reconnect – Restoring healthy relationships*

- Introduce measures, such as Vision Zero, to improve safety for all individuals who use Georgia Avenue, including drivers, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Balance regional traffic demands and proposed infrastructure improvements with the need to prioritize multi-modal options, such as public transit, walking and bicycling.
- Improve the wellness of the community by reducing health-related impacts associated with poor pedestrian facilities, vehicular conflicts and emissions.
- Encourage efficient and affordable alternatives to single-occupancy vehicular travel and meet the needs of those with limited mobility options.
- Prioritize infrastructure investments that create access to opportunity.

*B. Reimagine – Thinking about familiar places with new ideas*

- Provide healthy, safe and affordable housing choices for people of all income levels, household sizes and stages of life.
- Create solutions for improved ecological health and the elimination of disproportionate environmental burdens.
- Remedy past environmental impacts and protect against future ecological degradation.
- Enhance the public realm by providing green infrastructure (safe, accessible parks, stormwater systems and usable open space) that meet the needs of all users.
- Limit displacement by encouraging equitable transit-oriented development and infrastructure that provide access and opportunity.

*C. Reinvest – Increasing the value (monetary and societal) of community places for an enhanced experience*

- Create built environments that improve quality of life through public amenities, improved mobility, improved air and water quality, and safe, attractive and accessible public spaces.
- Encourage equitable development that preserves and strengthens the community and builds on existing assets, including retail and institutional uses.
- Encourage quality design that incorporates neighborhood compatibility and sustainable development practices.

## Chapter 2: Plan Elements

### 2.1 Reconnect – Restoring Healthy Relationships

The character of the plan area is defined by Georgia Avenue which is both the spine of the community and a major regional connection between the District of Columbia, northern Montgomery County and other parts of the region. It provides for a variety of transportation needs, including functioning as a neighborhood main street with direct access to residential, institutional and commercial properties; a major regional commuter route; and an access point for the I-495 Capital Beltway.

These varying functions contribute to the estimated average daily traffic volume of 75,000 cars per day, making Georgia Avenue in Montgomery Hills the fourth most congested roadway in Montgomery County. This traffic, combined with the current design and function of the Georgia Avenue, create a significant

physical barrier for all transportation modes and reduces safety for its users due to longer blocks, limited connectivity, wider driving lanes and poor pedestrian and cycling facilities. In response to these safety concerns, this plan applies Montgomery County's Vision Zero Initiative (2016) priorities, with a goal of eliminating all traffic-related deaths and severe injuries by 2030.

The plan incorporates these priorities along with a variety of recommended land use changes, infrastructure improvements and county capital improvement projects, to improve the safety and comfort for all transportation modes.

### 2.1.1 Transportation

The transportation recommendations focus on Vision Zero strategies, which are intended to decrease the frequency and severity of crashes. These strategies include:

- Reducing vehicular speeds.
- Eliminating conflict points between users (i.e. car-to-car, car-to-pedestrian, pedestrian-to-bicycle, etc.).
- Providing designated spaces for each mode of transportation.

Separating users through the provision of designated spaces, such as buffered sidewalks, bicycle lanes and shared use paths, contributes to the comfort and safety of pedestrian and bicyclist travel. The plan also recommends urban design, land use and environmental strategies that address the character and physical nature of the corridor. While these changes will not significantly reduce congestion, they can encourage improved safety, character and function of the corridor and the surrounding communities.

### 2.1.2 Street Network

#### A. *Traffic Safety*

Although the posted speed limit on Georgia Avenue is 35 miles per hour, the driving speeds vary depending on time of day and congestion levels. The traffic patterns often result in unpredictable traffic patterns and behaviors that create unsafe walking, biking and driving conditions. These conditions are hazardous for all road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists. Additional concerns include travel speeds on the parallel and intersecting local roadways in the area.

Adjacent local roads have also become substitutes for the corridor during peak periods and these informal bypasses are often travelled at higher speeds, as they offer lower levels of congestion compared to Georgia Avenue. This trend of using the local neighborhood roads as an alternative to Georgia Avenue poses its own hazard and could continue or worsen over time due to the expected growth in regional traffic volumes.

The following strategies are recommended to address and improve traffic safety for all modes:

- Consolidate driveways along Georgia Avenue.
- Reduce target speeds on all roads.
- Identify local road segments for future traffic calming studies.
- Study strategic speed enforcement further.



### 1. Consolidate Driveways

The limited grid system in the plan area has resulted in development patterns where most structures and establishments are directly accessed from Georgia Avenue. These patterns are especially prevalent in the Montgomery Hills Commercial District, which has a high number of auto-centric uses with many with multiple driveways and access points. These driveways interrupt pedestrian and bicycle travel and introduce numerous and sometimes unexpected vehicle turns into and out of through-traffic and present the potential for conflicts across all travel modes. Redevelopment opportunities along Georgia Avenue should consolidate or eliminate driveways to reduce conflicts among travel modes. A list of driveways to be considered for consolidation with redevelopment is included in the technical appendix. New driveways should be considered only in conjunction with the removal or reduction of existing driveways.

### 2. Target Speeds

The posted speed limit on Georgia Avenue is 35 miles per hour. To improve safety for all transportation users and be consistent with the recently adopted master and sector plans in the area, this plan recommends reducing the target speed on Georgia Avenue to 30 miles per hour. Consistent with the county's Urban Road Code, other roadways within the plan area should have a target speed of 25 miles per hour.

### 3. Traffic Calming Studies

This plan recommends Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) initiate operational traffic studies of key parallel side streets to consider traffic calming treatments. These studies should capture and analyze current traffic speeds and identify strategies that align with the county's Vision Zero Initiative and the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan. Speed reduction strategies identified should reflect the current best practices and should not decrease access for bicyclists and pedestrians. While maintaining access and connectivity in the road network is important, excessive vehicle speeds on the side streets are detrimental to safety and the residential character of the neighborhoods surrounding the Georgia Avenue corridor.

### 4. Further Study for Speed Enforcement

Reducing the traveling speed of vehicles is a key component to ensuring safety for all modes of travel. Since 2013, the Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) has successfully deployed several speed enforcement cameras as part of its Safe Speed campaign. Cameras were installed on Georgia Avenue in both directions within the Woodside Park District. Speed cameras are effective at slowing vehicular speed, because the technology is automatic, unbiased and consistent. This plan recommends MCPD evaluate the following roadway segments for temporary and/or permanent speed camera installation.

### Recommended Traffic Calming Studies



## B. Urban Road Code Boundary

The purpose of the Urban Road Code, included in Chapter 49 of the Montgomery County Code, is to apply a context-sensitive design standard that recognizes the needs and safety considerations when high volumes of motorists, transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians are negotiating limited space within the public right-of-way. The code permits narrower lane widths to reduce vehicular speed and tighter curb radii to control vehicular turning maneuvers and prioritizes safety over traffic volume.

The application of context-sensitive design is important as Georgia Avenue comprise a mix of uses, including residential, office, retail, schools and places of worship. The transit stops and stations throughout the corridor attract higher volumes of pedestrians and bicyclists when compared to the suburban policy areas, such as North Bethesda or Greater Kensington/Wheaton.

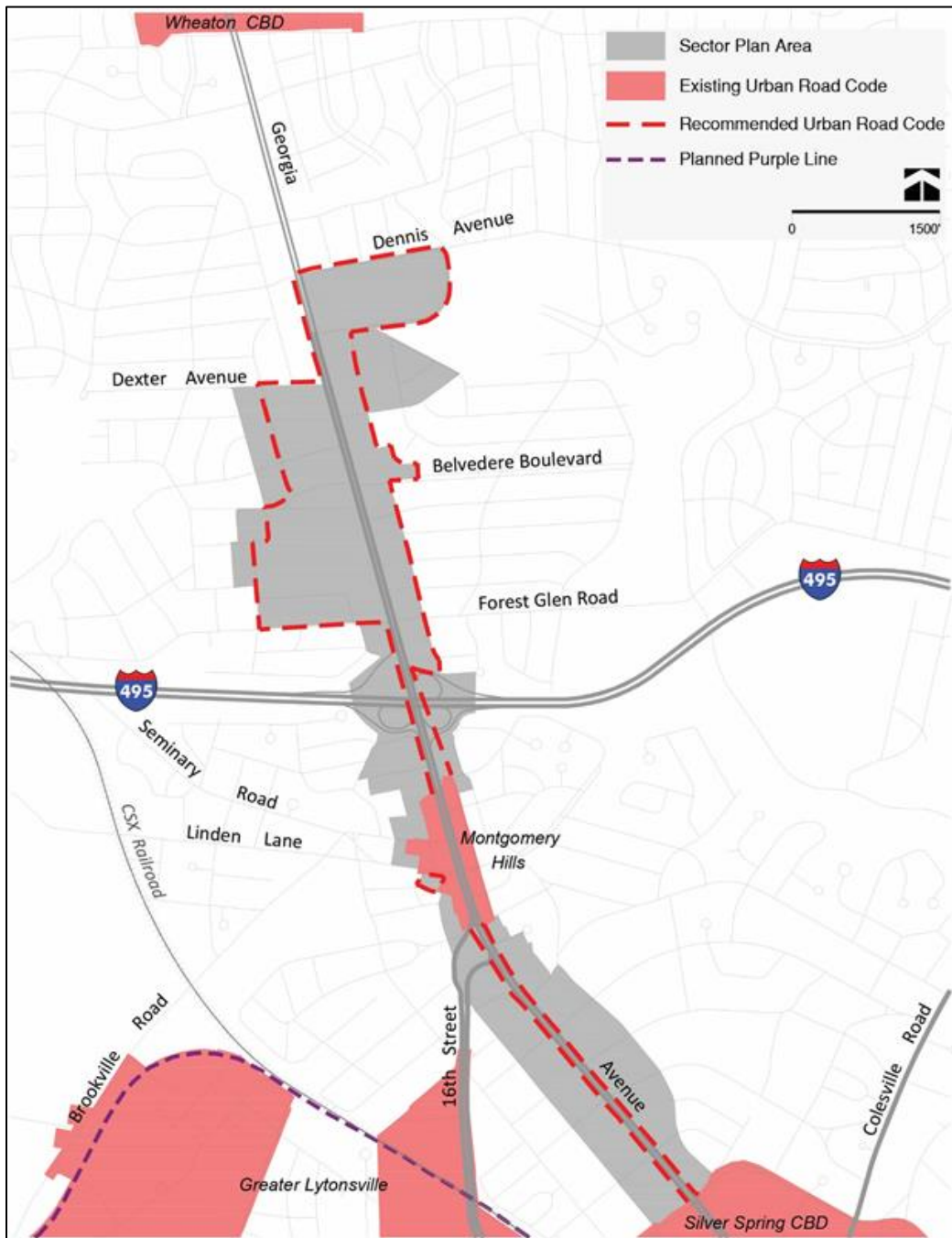
Presently, the Urban Road Code boundary is limited to streets within the Montgomery Hills District currently designated as Urban Roads; Flora Lane to the north and Luzerne Avenue to the south. Even though the Georgia Avenue corridor between the two central business districts reflects higher densities and traffic volumes than is typical of a traditional suburban corridor, the remaining segments of Georgia Avenue are classified as suburban.

The plan recommends the expansion of the Urban Road Code boundary to the entire segment of Georgia Avenue within the plan area to:

- Allow more appropriate roadway and intersection design standards to reduce target speeds.
  - Improve the walking and biking experience through intersections.
  - Provide a consistent street cross section throughout the corridor.

The recommended boundary expansion is Dennis Avenue to the north, Spring Street to the south and one block east and west of Georgia Avenue within the north-south extent of the road.

### Urban Road Code



#### C. *Traffic Congestion and the Capital Beltway Interchange*

During the evening peak travel period, the single biggest contributor to traffic congestion along the Georgia Avenue corridor is the I-495 Capital Beltway interchange. This location features four northbound travel lanes. The two rightmost lanes experience the most congestion as they serve as on-ramps for both directions on the Beltway.

Travel demand for these two rightmost lanes leads to excessive numbers of vehicles that extend back as far as Highland Drive during the evening peak hour (more than 3,000 linear feet south of the Beltway). They cause significant travel delay for vehicles travelling straight through Georgia Avenue. The queues of vehicles

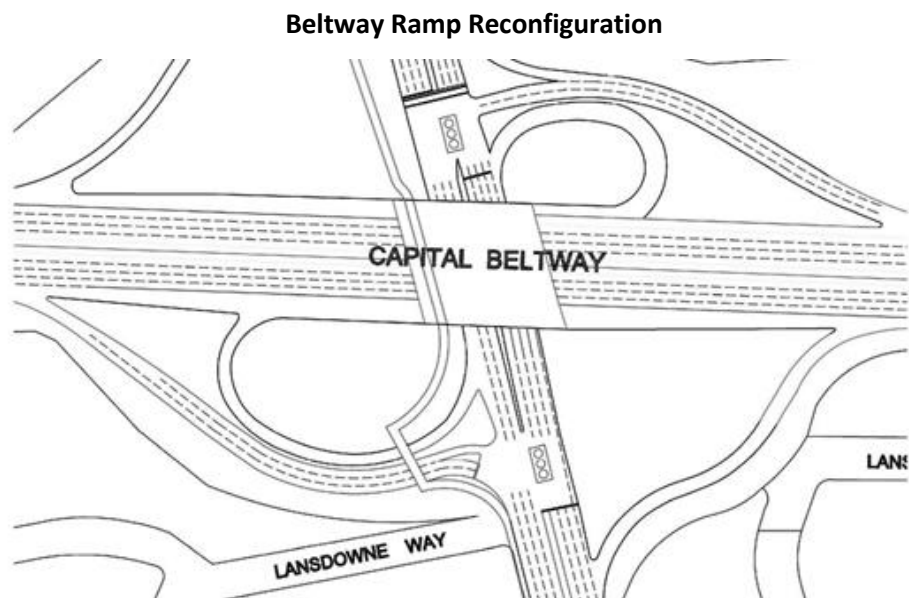
waiting to get onto the Beltway often are so long during rush hour that they block, local street intersections along Georgia Avenue, resulting in side street delays.

In addition to the congestion described above, the cloverleaf design of the interchange negatively impacts traffic safety, as the short distances between the I-495 North on and off ramps force difficult and unsafe merge maneuvers.

The plan recommends evaluation of two Beltway interchange design alternatives to improve safety and traffic flow:

#### 1. Short-term Design Alternative: Beltway Ramp Reconfiguration

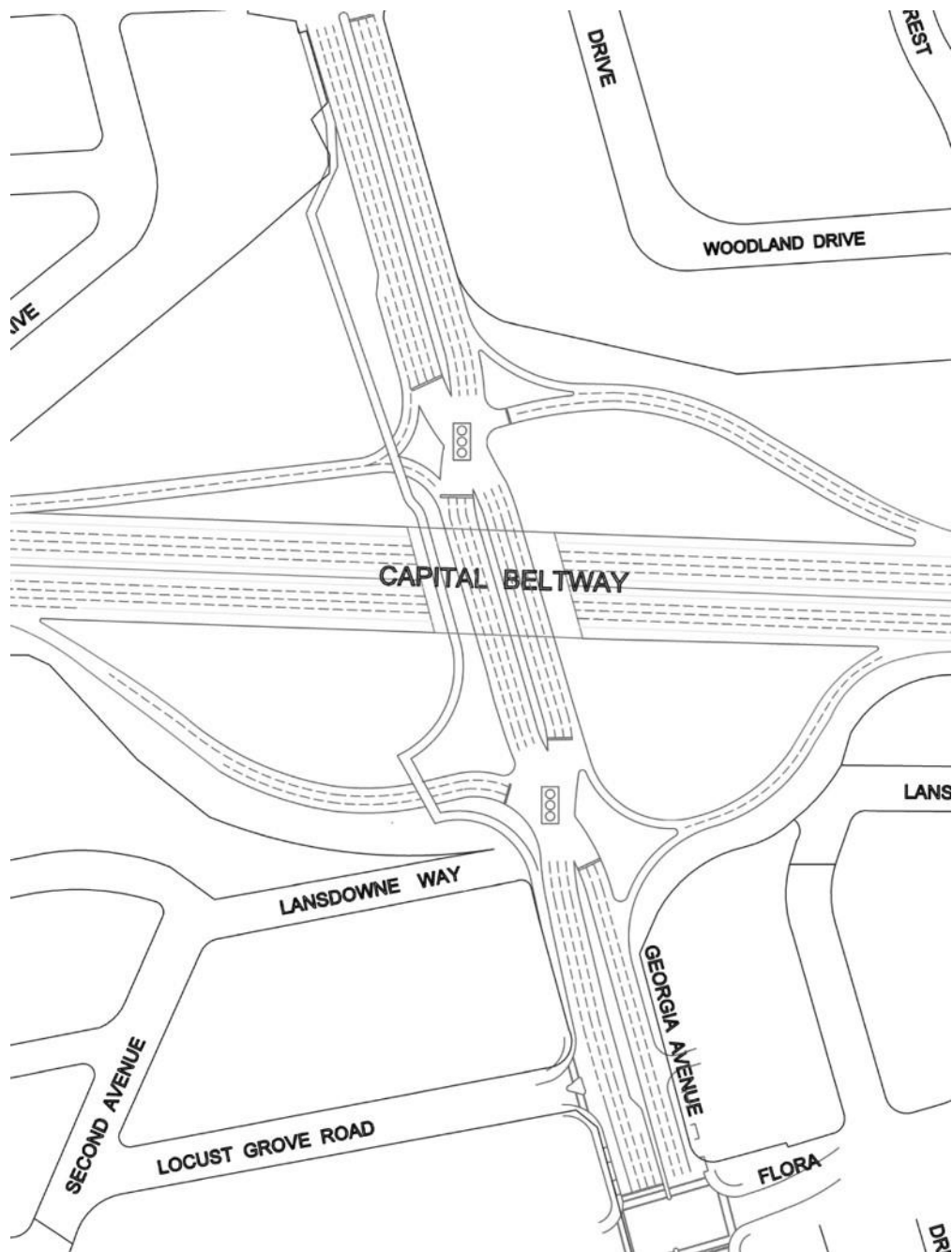
Removing the existing southeast cloverleaf (Beltway inner loop off-ramp to northbound Georgia Avenue) will eliminate the weaving that occurs between motorists merging onto the outer-loop (westbound) ramp and those motorists exiting the inner loop of the Beltway headed northbound on Georgia Avenue. This change will improve safety on Georgia Avenue as vehicles approach and pass beneath the Beltway underpass. Those motorists exiting the inner-loop and heading northbound on Georgia Avenue would share an expanded inner-loop off-ramp where southbound Georgia Avenue traffic is routed today. This reconfiguration is expected to improve safety and could potentially improve traffic flow on Georgia Avenue northbound as merging would no longer be necessary. Improvements for pedestrians and cyclists should also be considered.



#### 2. Long-term Design Alternative: Diverging Diamond Interchange

A diverging diamond interchange (DDI) is an interchange design in which traffic from the lower classified street crosses over to the opposite side of the road to make a free left turn onto the freeway. Installation of this treatment would result in a complete overhaul of the access to the Beltway and would replace all existing cloverleaf on- and off-ramps. The DDI would be installed beneath the Beltway overpass.

### Diverging Diamond Interchange



Recognizing that transportation planning and design is a rapidly evolving field, it may be determined that, after additional study, a different design treatment or solution could be effective.

Staff continues to coordinate with MDOT SHA staff working on related projects such as the I-495 I-270 Managed Lanes Study. As of this draft of the sector plan the two design alternatives of the Beltway Interchange do not conflict with the proposed changes of the Beltway ramps included as part of the seven alternatives retained for detailed study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.



#### D. *Montgomery Hills Main Street Concept*

This plan modifies the 2000 North and West Silver Spring Master Plan, which included recommendations and language referencing a comprehensive study and redesign of Georgia Avenue (Forest Glen Road to 16th Street). This MD 97 Georgia Avenue Montgomery Hills Study aims to incorporate public feedback along with a conceptual cost-engineering analysis of the preferred design alternative. While this plan confirms the design elements of the MDOT SHA project in the interim term, it builds on this initial design with recommendations for more robust land use, infrastructure and design interventions.

##### 1. *Short (Interim) Term MDOT SHA Preferred Alternative*

The road segment design elements listed below are what have been confirmed by MDOT SHA staff as of March 19, 2019. This section will be updated when the final project is revealed to the public.

The road segment design elements listed below are what have been confirmed by MDOT SHA staff as of March 19, 2019.

- Maintain the master-planned 120-foot of right-of-way on Georgia Avenue.
- Narrow interior travel lanes to 10-feet wide maximum; 11-feet maximum for curb lanes.
- Remove the reversible lane configuration.
- On the west side of Georgia Avenue, install an 8-foot side walk, an 8-foot two-way separated bike lane and a two-foot buffer from traffic.
- On the west side of Georgia Avenue, install a 12-foot shared use path and a six-foot buffer from traffic.
- On the east side of Georgia Avenue, install an 8-foot sidewalk.
- Remove the southbound slip lane of 16th Street and realign southbound 16th Street with present alignment of northbound 16th Street.

Staff is working with MDOT SHA on the final design of the MD 97 Montgomery Hills Planning Project. This section will be updated when the final project is revealed to the public.

##### 2. *Medium Term Alternative*

To further improve the comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists traveling along the west side of Georgia Avenue, the sector plan recommends key changes to the short-term cross section in the medium-term. The changes will affect the space that provides a buffer between the traffic and the back of the pedestrian facility. They include

- Replacing the flex post in-street buffer with a concrete raised curb
- Installing a 6' minimum planting strip to provide a buffer between motorists on Georgia Avenue and pedestrians and bicyclists
- Replacing the two-way separated bike lane and sidewalk with a shared use path that is a minimum 12 ft wide.

This cross section is not expected to increase the total width of the recommended right-of-way, or curb-to-curb dimension.

##### 3. *Long Term Vision*

This section of Georgia Avenue currently acts as the neighborhood retail center and in the longer term, with substantial investment could become a fully realized neighborhood main street characterized by improved multi-modal connectivity, a vision that furthers previous plan goals of a walkable and bikeable transportation

network. To advance the long-term vision for corridor, the plan recommends designating this segment of Georgia Avenue as a main street corridor with key design elements, including the following:

- Designated spaces for all travel modes.
- Designated space for high-end bus rapid transit station furniture.
- Aesthetically pleasing buffers between motorized and non-motorized traffic with street trees and understory vegetation.
- Along the west side of Georgia Avenue install a concrete grade-separated buffer between the two-way separated bike lane and vehicular traffic.
- Along the east side of Georgia Avenue, install a 5-foot minimum-width buffer (ideally with street trees) and at least a 5-foot sidewalk.
- Pedestrian-scale lighting.
- Relatively short blocks to improve navigation throughout the corridor; these blocks are created by spacing crossings ideally no more than 300 to 500 feet apart to facilitate safe crossings for all modes, especially pedestrians and bicyclists.
- A street grid with north/south and east/west options that improves both local and regional travel through the corridor.

#### 4. Main Street Grid

Providing more frequent crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists on Georgia Avenue would improve the walking environment, allow for better connectivity and increase safety for all as they travel through and across the corridor. The plan recommends changes in land use and zoning which could allow for a more connected street network on the west side of Georgia Avenue. These new streets are recommended to intersect with Georgia Avenue and should be evaluated for new protected pedestrian crossings.

The plan recommends the following a new grid of business district roadways, Montgomery Hills Connectors (B-2, B-3, and B-4) with redevelopment of the Seminary Shopping Plaza. Specific recommendations to



achieve the long-term vision are detailed in the appendix.



#### *E. Roadways*

Poor north-south connectivity between Sligo Creek and Rock Creek creates a dependency on Georgia Avenue for both regional and local trips. The plan recommends improving the connectivity within the local street networks to increase local circulation throughout the corridor.

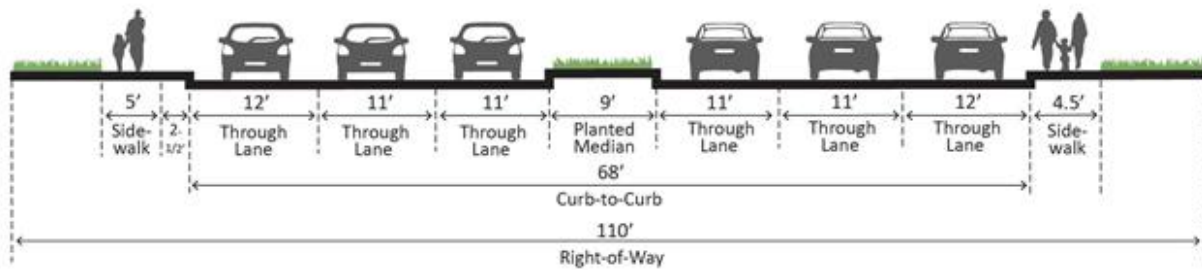
##### *1. Woodland Drive Extended (B-1)*

This plan recommends extending the existing terminus of Woodland Drive (60-foot right-of-way) north to connect to Dennis Avenue to improve connectivity for all users. A paved pedestrian and bicyclist connection to Medical Park Drive exists today. This plan envisions this connection improved for vehicle travel and ultimately connected to Dennis Avenue. This recommendation would only be fully realized with the redevelopment of the medical office use located at the southeastern corner of Dennis and Georgia Avenues.

The road design should include buffered sidewalks on both sides. The design of the pedestrian facility should reflect the current best practices for widths and composition with low stress bicycle facilities. The intersection should be evaluated for appropriate traffic controls. Pedestrian crossing facilities, such as high-visibility crosswalks, should also be included in the intersection design. This recommendation advances the Glenmont to Silver Spring Breezeway recommendation made in the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan.

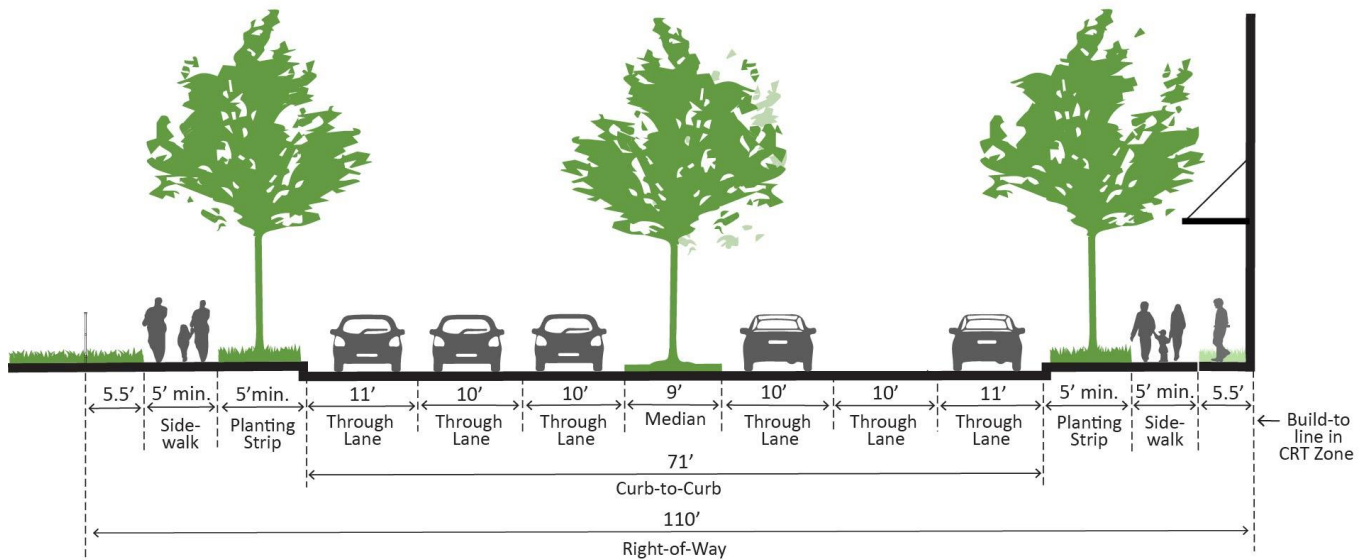
### Georgia Avenue

Existing Section, Dennis Avenue to I-495 Existing



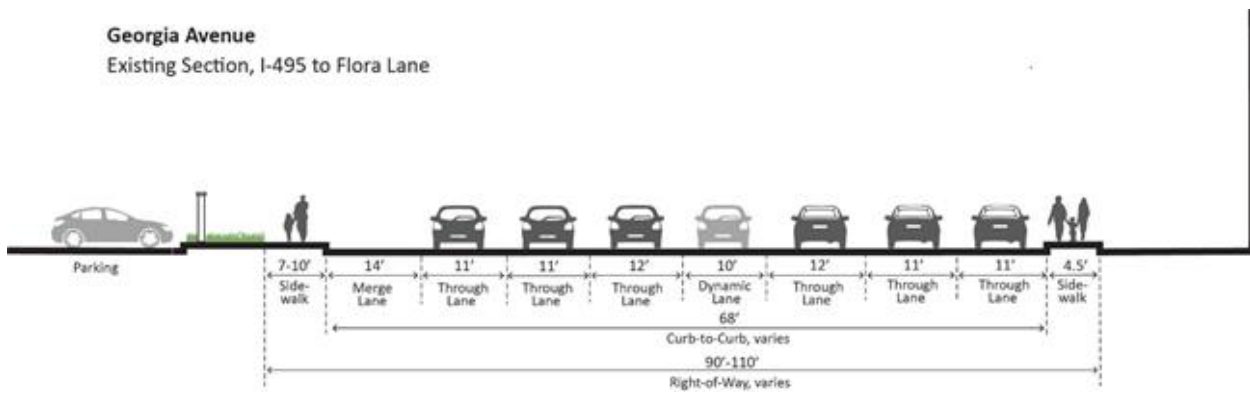
### Georgia Avenue

Proposed Section, Dennis Ave to I-495 -Recommended



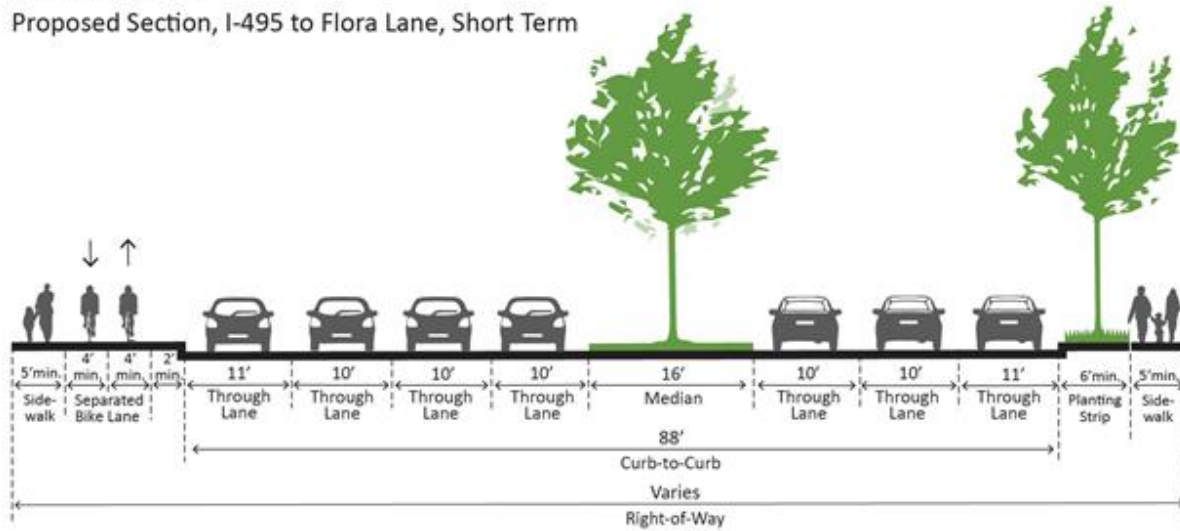
### Georgia Avenue

Existing Section, I-495 to Flora Lane



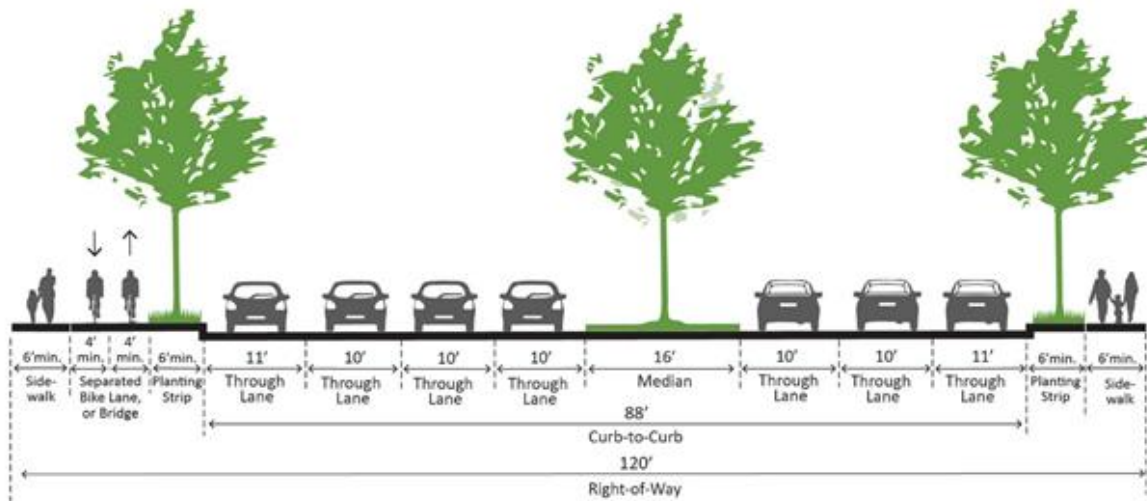
### Georgia Avenue

Proposed Section, I-495 to Flora Lane, Short Term



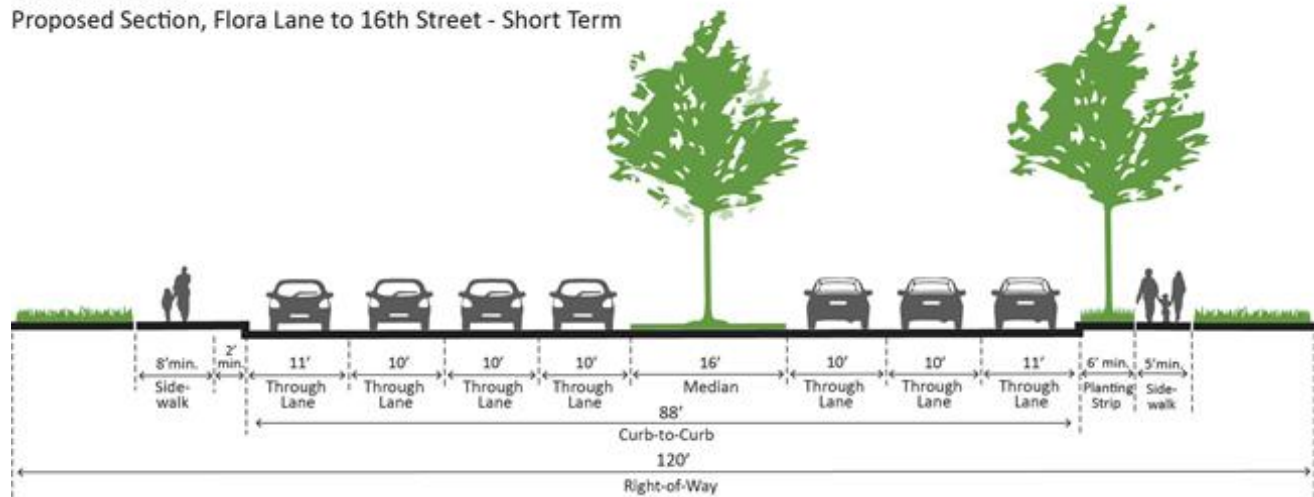
### Georgia Avenue

Proposed Section, I-495 to Flora Lane - Long Term



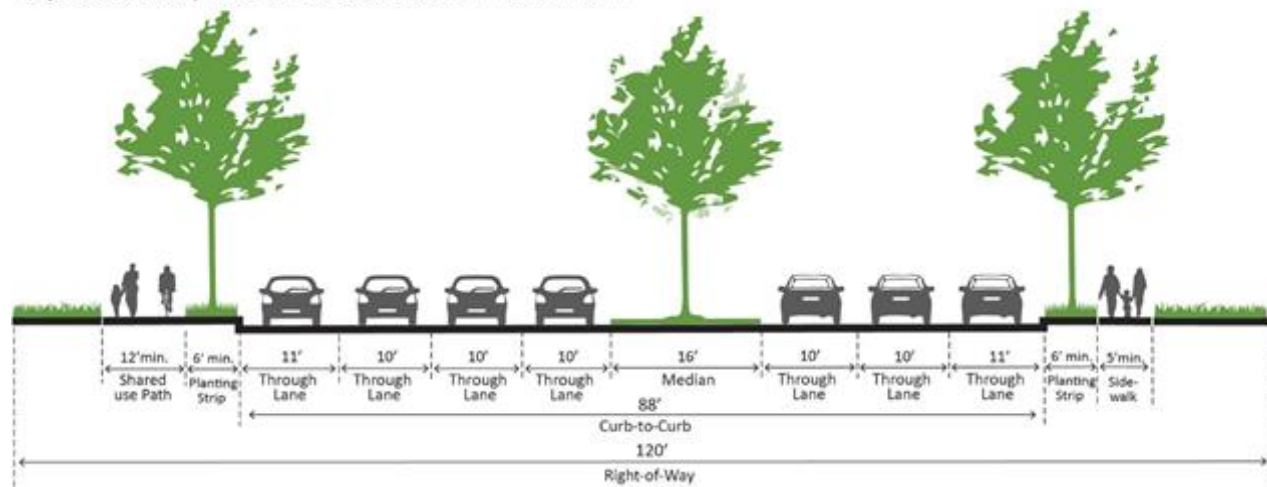
### Georgia Avenue

Proposed Section, Flora Lane to 16th Street - Short Term



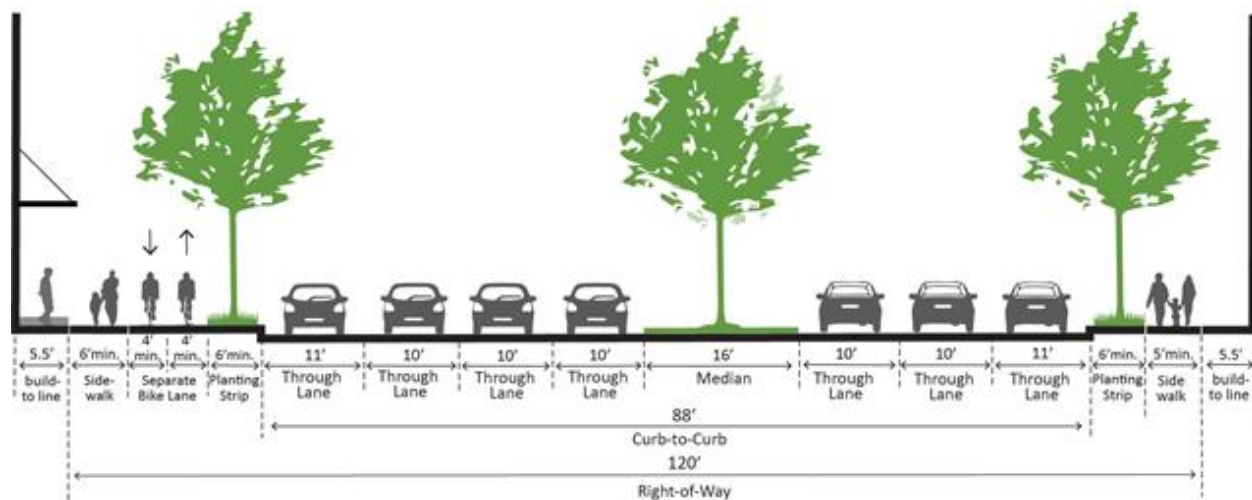
### Georgia Avenue

Proposed Section, Flora Lane to 16th Street - Medium Term



### Georgia Avenue

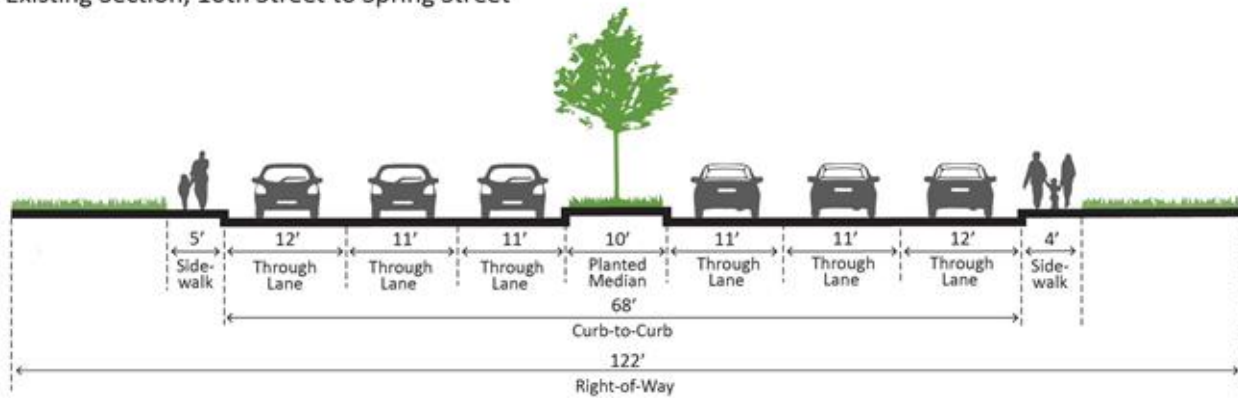
Proposed Section, Flora Lane to 16th Street - Long Term





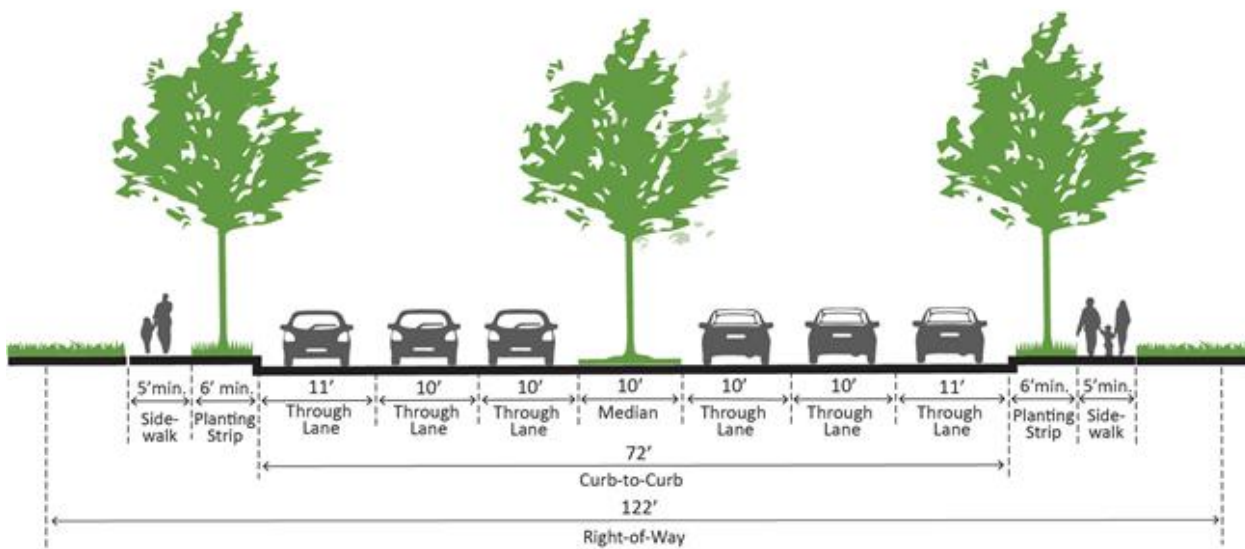
### Georgia Avenue

Existing Section, 16th Street to Spring Street



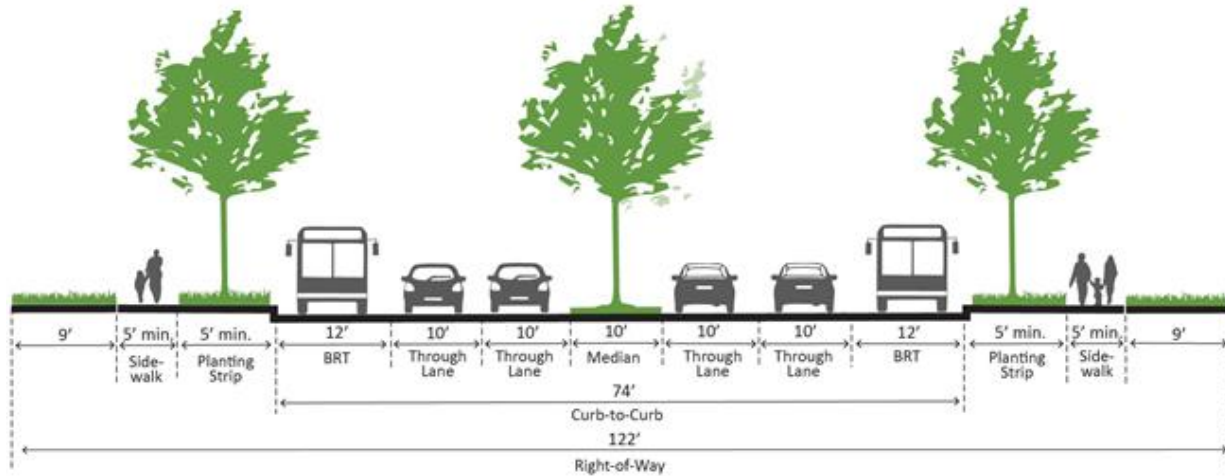
### Georgia Avenue

Proposed Section, 16th St. to Spring St. - Short Term



### Georgia Avenue

Proposed Section, 16th St. to Spring St. - Long Term



#### F. *Recommended Abandonments*

The plan supports abandoning two unbuilt rights-of-way on the property owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) at the Forest Glen Metrorail Station: Kimball Place and Coleridge Road. The roads were initially platted to serve single-unit detached lots that existed prior to the development of the Metro facilities. The roads are not needed for vehicular access to the property. Redevelopment of the WMATA property should ensure safe and adequate connectivity for all modes to and within the property.

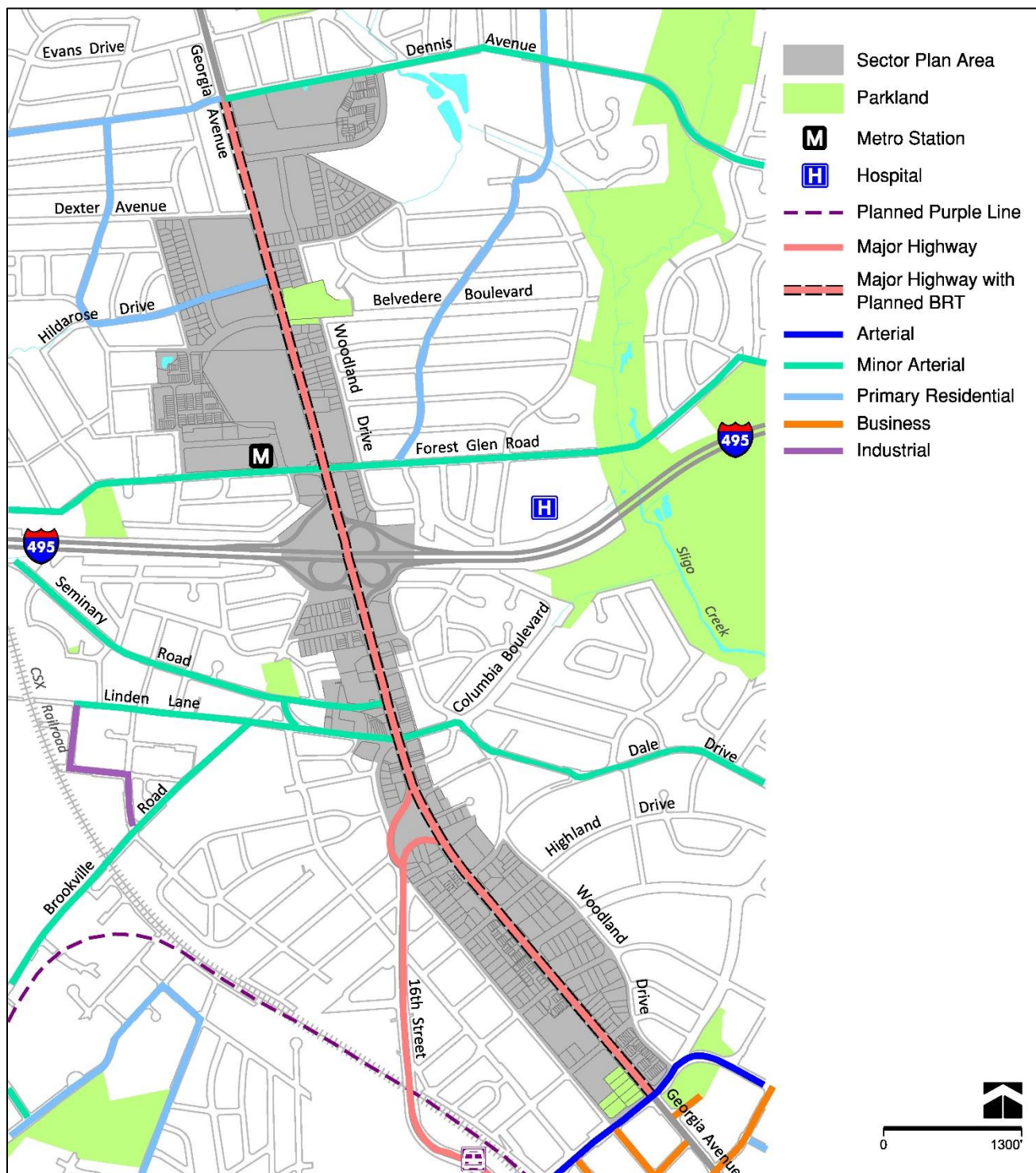
**Roadway Classifications Table**

Designation	Roadway	Limits	Functional Classification	Minimum ROW	Lanes
<b>Major Highway</b>					
M-8	Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Dennis Avenue to Capital Beltway (I-495)	Major Highway	110'	6 lanes, divided
M-8	Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Capital Beltway (I-495) to 16 <sup>th</sup> Street (MD 390)	Major Highway	120'	7 lanes, divided (3 southbound 4 northbound)
M-8	Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	16 <sup>th</sup> Street (MD 390) to Spring Street	Major Highway	122'	6 lanes, divided
M-9	16th Street (MD 390)	630' south of Lyttonsville Road to Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Major Highway	120'	6 lanes divided
<b>Major Arterial</b>					
A-30	Seminary Road	Second Avenue to Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Arterial	80'	2 lanes
A-31	Seminary Place	Georgia Avenue (MD 97) to Seminary Road/ Second Avenue	Arterial	80'	2 lanes plus turn lanes
A-57	Forest Glen Road	Sligo Creek Parkway to Woodland Drive	Arterial	80'	2 lanes
A-57	Forest Glen Road	Woodland Drive to Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Arterial	80'	4 lanes
A-57	Forest Glen Road (MD 192)	Georgia Avenue (MD 97) to Belvedere Place	Arterial	80'	4 lanes
A-263	Spring Street	Fairview Road to Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Arterial	80'	4 lanes, divided
A-263	Spring Street	Georgia Avenue (MD 97) to 630' west of Second Avenue	Arterial	80'	4 lanes, divided
<b>Minor Arterial</b>					
A-30	Columbia Boulevard/ Dale Drive	Georgia Avenue (MD 97) to Wayne Avenue	Minor Arterial	80'	2 lanes

A-59	Dennis Avenue	Georgia Avenue to Sligo Creek Parkway	Minor Arterial	80'	2 lanes
<b>Business District</b>					
B-1	Woodland Drive Extended	Terminus of Woodland Drive (approaching Medical Park Drive) to Dennis Avenue	Business District Street	60'	2 lanes
B-2	Montgomery Hills District Connector 2	Seminary Road to northern boundary of Seminary Place Shopping Center	Business District Street	60'	2 lanes
B-3	Montgomery Hills District Connector 3	Montgomery Hills Connector 2 to Georgia Avenue (opposite Flora Lane)	Business District Street	60'	2 lanes
B-4	Montgomery Hills District Connector 4	Montgomery Hills Connector 2 to Georgia Avenue (opposite White Oak Drive)	Business District Street	60'	2 lanes
<b>Primary</b>					
P-21	Dennis Avenue	Brunswick Avenue to Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Primary Residential	70'	2 lanes
P - 19	Hildarose Drive	Gardiner Avenue to Georgia Avenue (MD 97)	Primary Residential	70'	2 lanes

1. Georgia Avenue is recommended for a target speed of 30 miles per hour and the remaining roads in the sector plan area are recommended 25 miles per hour.

### Roadway Classifications



#### 2.1.3 Intersections and Crossings

The design and construction of the transportation network along the Georgia Avenue corridor has prioritized automobile travel. Crossing Georgia Avenue for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially at intersections lacking traffic control devices, is challenging and can create conditions that result in unsafe behavior. Within the two-mile corridor that makes up the plan area, there are seven protected crossings for bicyclists and pedestrians. The greatest distance between protected crossings is more than 3,000 feet or a 15-minute walk for a pedestrian.



At intersections, multiple turning lanes typically result in wide intersections without pedestrian refuge and inconsistent of implementation of ADA-accessible facilities. These conditions impede pedestrian and bicycle access along and across the major roadways: Georgia Avenue, Forest Glen Road and 16th Street.

Restricting left turns for vehicles on Georgia Avenue between 16th Street and Forest Glen Road during the peak periods makes it difficult to access adjacent neighborhoods. The restriction also appears to encourage both local and commuter traffic to utilize local roads as a bypass to make turns.

To improve traffic safety for all modes, this plan recommends retrofitting existing signalized intersections to meet current best practices for safe and comfortable multi-modal travel. This change can be achieved by reducing turning radii ideally to 15 feet to reduce speeds of turning vehicles. The radii can be wider if needed to accommodate fire and rescue vehicles or to address other pedestrian and bicycle safety concerns.

The plan also recommends the following safety measures:

- Install curb extensions where feasible to reduce crossing distance and pedestrian conflict exposure.
- Install high-visibility crosswalks at all legs of all signalized intersections.
- Provide ADA-accessible curb ramps on all crosswalk approaches.
- Ensure that accessible pedestrian signals (APS) and countdown pedestrian signals are present at all signalized pedestrian crossings.
- Recommend protected intersection treatments at intersections with separated bike lanes and/or shared use paths on at least one approach.
- Avoid widening the roadways at intersections to accommodate additional left-turn lanes. While increasing the number of left turn lanes can increase intersection capacity, wider pavement increases the exposure of pedestrians crossing and introduces additional potential conflicts for motorists.

This plan recommends locations for new protected crossings to provide safer crossing conditions closer together and where pedestrians and bicyclists naturally want to cross. The intention of the protected crossings is to create safer crossing conditions for all modes and to ensure stop compliance from motorists. The intersections identified for new protected crossings are included noted. They need to be studied to determine the most appropriate traffic control device. Possible treatments include a full traffic signal, a high activity walk signal (HAWK), a rectangular rapid flashing beacon (RRFB), a stop sign and other measures.

ID	Intersection	Existing Signalized Intersection	Existing Unsignalized Intersection with Crosswalk Improvements	BRT Station Location	Recommendation
1	Georgia Avenue at Dennis Avenue	X			
2	Georgia Avenue at Dexter Avenue			X	Protected crossing
3	Georgia Avenue at August Drive	X			
4	Georgia Avenue at Tilton Drive				Protected crossing

<b>5</b>	Georgia Avenue at Forest Glen Road	X		X	
<b>6</b>	Georgia Avenue at Flora Lane[1]				Protected crossing
<b>7</b>	Georgia Avenue at White Oak Drive <sup>4</sup>				Protected crossing
<b>8</b>	Georgia Avenue at Seminary Place	X		X	
<b>9</b>	Georgia Avenue at Seminary Road	X			
<b>10</b>	Georgia Avenue at 16 <sup>th</sup> Street [2]	X			
<b>11</b>	Luzerne Avenue at Georgia Avenue				Protected crossing for bicyclists and pedestrians only
<b>12</b>	Georgia Avenue at Highland Drive				Protected crossing
<b>13</b>	Georgia Avenue at Noyes Drive		X		Protected crossing
<b>14</b>	Georgia Avenue at Spring Street	X			
<b>15</b>	Elkton Avenue and Forest Glen Road				Protected crossing
<b>16</b>	Kimball Place and Darcy Forest Drive				Protected crossing
<b>17</b>	Belvedere Place and Darcy Forest Drive		X		Protected crossing
<b>18</b>	Grace Church Road and 16 <sup>th</sup> Street				Protected crossing
<b>19</b>	Any planned/future changes to the WMATA station access as part of future development of the existing surface parking lots and bus loop.				Protected crossing
<b>20</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> Street and Second Avenue	X			Improve intersection for pedestrian safety and comfort

[1] Assumes realization of either Alternative 1 or 2 of the Beltway and Interim-term recommendations for Georgia Avenue in Montgomery Hills

[2] Assumes abandonment of the 16<sup>th</sup> Street southbound slip lane and consolidation of the northbound and southbound 16<sup>th</sup> Street lanes.

To improve traffic safety for motorists, explore the implications of installing left turn bays by carving out space from the existing median on Georgia Avenue at the following locations:

- At Dexter Avenue from Georgia Avenue northbound.
- At Hildarose Drive from Georgia Avenue northbound.

### Protected Crossings



#### A. Grade-Separated Crossings

##### 1. Existing and Recommended Beltway Crossings

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan supports that vision by identifying short- and long-term strategies for improving bikeways and providing for safer and more efficient lane crossings. This plan recommends improving pedestrian and bicycle crossing conditions on the east side of the Beltway

Interchange and short- and long-term design alternatives to improving the Beltway or the interchange for crossing safety.

- Short-Term Treatment: Install pavement markings across all access ramps where non-motorized modes would cross. Install traffic controls to improve motorist stop compliance.
- Long-Term Treatment: Install a grade-separated pedestrian and bicycle crossing across the Beltway Interchange. This crossing could run along the east side of Georgia Avenue and connect to the southeast corner of Forest Glen Road and Georgia Avenue or perhaps connect to Woodland Drive on the northern side of the Beltway.

While these projects have merit as standalone capital improvement projects, it may be feasible to address the current design, look and feel of the current and recommended pedestrian and bicycle bridges if the Beltway interchange is modified by MDOT SHA as part of the I-495 or I-270 Managed Lanes project or other future Beltway improvement and maintenance projects.

## 2. Forest Glen Metro Station Access

The 1996 Forest Glen Sector Plan recommends a grade-separated crossing to reduce the conflicts and safety concerns between motorists and non-motorists at the Georgia Avenue and Forest Glen Road intersection. This intersection is especially challenging because of the heavy volumes of motorists approaching the Beltway and the high volume of pedestrians and bicyclists accessing bus stops, the Forest Glen Metrorail Station, Holy Cross Hospital and surrounding neighborhoods.

In 2013, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) initiated a project to determine the alignment and type of facility for improving pedestrian safety and access to the station. A passageway under Georgia Avenue connecting the northwest corner to the southeast corner was the preferred alignment. It would provide direct access to the Metrorail station with surface access on both ends. This plan confirms and supports the funded project and recommends detailed considerations for the final design stage. See Transportation Appendix for details.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) should explore the possibility of connecting the Montgomery Hills commercial area to the Forest Glen Metro Station in a safe, convenient and direct way. Doing so would improve access to and patronage of the commercial center in Montgomery Hills and could perhaps increase ridership (without increasing the need for additional parking) at the Forest Glen Metro Station.

One possibility for the future connection may be an escalator accessed from around the Locust Grove Road area to the station's platform underground. Any new Metro station connection not already identified in the county's capital improvements program (CIP) would need to be studied and would likely not be implemented before the horizon year of the plan.

## 3. Policy Area Roadway Network Adequacy Test

In accordance with Montgomery County's 2016 Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP), several intersections were evaluated using the highway capacity manual (HCM) methodology, which estimates the average seconds of delay per vehicle during morning and evening peak periods. As determined by the SSP, six of the seven intersections located within the plan boundaries were tested against a policy area standard of 80 seconds and the seventh was tested against a policy area standard of 120 seconds. The analysis revealed most of the intersections would approach, if not exceed, the capacity standards set forth in the 2016 SSP in the year 2040.

A select link analysis was conducted to determine the ratio of local traffic to the overall traffic volume. The conclusion of the analysis was that with the current and master-planned densities, approximately 25 percent of the traffic is local, and the balance originates outside the surrounding transportation analysis zones (TAZs). Much of this traffic is attributed to high traffic volumes that enter the local network via the Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Beltway interchange.

Given the high ratio of regional traffic, the comparatively small master-planned densities and the plan area's location between two downtowns, this plan recommends increasing the policy area standard for the seven intersections within its plan boundaries to 120 seconds. Doing so accepts the unique circumstances and provides flexibility for future development, which is the only viable means of achieving the safety and placemaking goals set forth in this plan.

This plan recommends increasing the Average Vehicle Delay Standard for the seven intersections within the plan area from 80 to 120 seconds. These intersections are located between two downtowns, and it is the only continuous north-south route between them. This segment of Georgia Avenue provides an urban functionality as it is directly accessed by high-density residential housing, office and retail uses. The intersections to which this recommendation applies are listed below:

- Dennis Avenue
- August Drive
- Forest Glen Road
- Capital Beltway off-ramp signals (north and south)
- Seminary Place
- Seminary Road
- 16th Street

This recommendation also applies to any future traffic signals that installed within the plan area boundary. Recognizing the role this segment plays within the larger transportation network, the plan recommends the development of a unified mobility program (UMP) that combines the sector plan area with downtown Silver Spring. To develop the framework for an UMP, a long-range comprehensive transportation analysis for a given area is conducted for determining the future traffic conditions and identifying facility improvements that will reduce congestion and improve traffic flow.

#### *A. MDOT SHA Traffic Relief Plan*

In 2018, the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) introduced the Maryland Traffic Relief Plan to reduce traffic congestion, increase economic development and enhance safety and return quality of life to Maryland commuters. The largest initiative of the plan was the creation of an I-495 and I-270 public-private partnership (P3) program, for initiating the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study. The purpose of the study is to develop a travel demand management solution that addresses congestion, improves trip reliability on I-495 and I-270 within the Study limits, and enhances existing and planned multimodal mobility and connectivity.

The study is undergoing the National Environmental Policy Act review process. At the time of this draft of the sector plan, seven alternatives from a range of 15 have been retained for detailed study in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and they are to be presented to the public in a series of information sessions. This sector plan is advancing at a faster rate and is expected to be adopted before the P3 program selects and finalizes engineering for one preferred design alternative, which is targeted for winter of 2020. The recommendations of this plan will need to be addressed by MDOT SHA And the P3 with any final alternative that is recommended for implementation.

#### 2.1.4 Transit Network

According to the 2015 American Commuter Survey, 34 percent of people living in the larger study area of the plan take public transportation for their commuting trips. This percentage is more than double the transit mode share for the county overall (16 percent). Transit strategies in this plan, therefore, focus on increasing pedestrian and bicycle access to transit stops and stations along Georgia Avenue.

Pedestrian and bicycle access to the Forest Glen Metro Station is a major concern. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) estimates 30 percent of those who park in the station's lot live within a walkable distance of the station (one mile or less) and more than 75 percent live within a bikeable distance (two miles or fewer).

Regional transit service along Georgia Avenue includes the Y and Q bus lines, which are among the highest ridership for WMATA service in the county. These stops are located at the corner of Forest Glen Road and Georgia Avenue.

The following section covers recommendations that apply to regional, local and micro-local service needs.

##### A. Bus Rapid Transit

The plan area makes up a relatively small segment of a larger master-planned bus rapid transit (BRT) corridor, as identified in the 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (CTC). The plan confirms the alignment and master planned right-of-way for the Georgia Avenue South Bus Rapid Transit route (Corridor 2).

The plan also confirms the future bus rapid transit (BRT) station locations at Forest Glen Road and Dexter Avenue. It recommends the Seminary Road Station be located at the near side of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Seminary Place in the northbound direction and to the far side of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Seminary Road. This plan recommends exploring the station locations at Forest Glen Road on the north side of the intersection due to space constraints and proximity to the Metrorail station.



### Bus Rapid Transit Station Corridors



#### B. Local Service

Prior to the implementation of BRT, the plan recommends upgrading existing WMATA bus line operations on Georgia Avenue (Y7, Y8). Strategies to improve the service could include increased frequency/shorter headways, high-end bus fleet (on-board Wi-Fi, USB hubs, new branding/wrapping), real-time schedule information at stations and upgraded bus shelters.

To address safety concerns of people crossing Georgia Avenue mid-block and away from protected crossings, WMATA should consider consolidating bus stops along Georgia Avenue. The stops recommended for consolidation are located within one block of an existing or master-planned protected crossing and the existing crossings should only be eliminated once the nearby protected crossings are in place.

Consolidating stops in the future could have the added benefit of reducing the number of pedestrians crossing Georgia Avenue away from protected crossings, when trying to access bus stops on the opposite side of the road more directly. With these considerations in mind, the plan recommends exploring the consolidation of the bus stops.

#### C. Local Micro-Transit Pilot

The congestion and limited protected crossing along the Beltway and Georgia Avenue create barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists trying to access important destinations. The two roadways divide the plan area



into four, somewhat isolated quadrants. Until additional protected crossings are installed across the Beltway and Georgia Avenue, local bus transit can help people safely navigate these high-volume roadways.

The plan recommends the study and implementation of “micro transit” service for the local area through Ride On buses. This service should provide an on-demand transit service, rather than a fixed route service with scheduled and predetermined stops. Patrons of the service would request a transit vehicle within the designated service zone, within designated hours. This on-demand function makes transit more convenient to the patron and more efficient for the transit service.

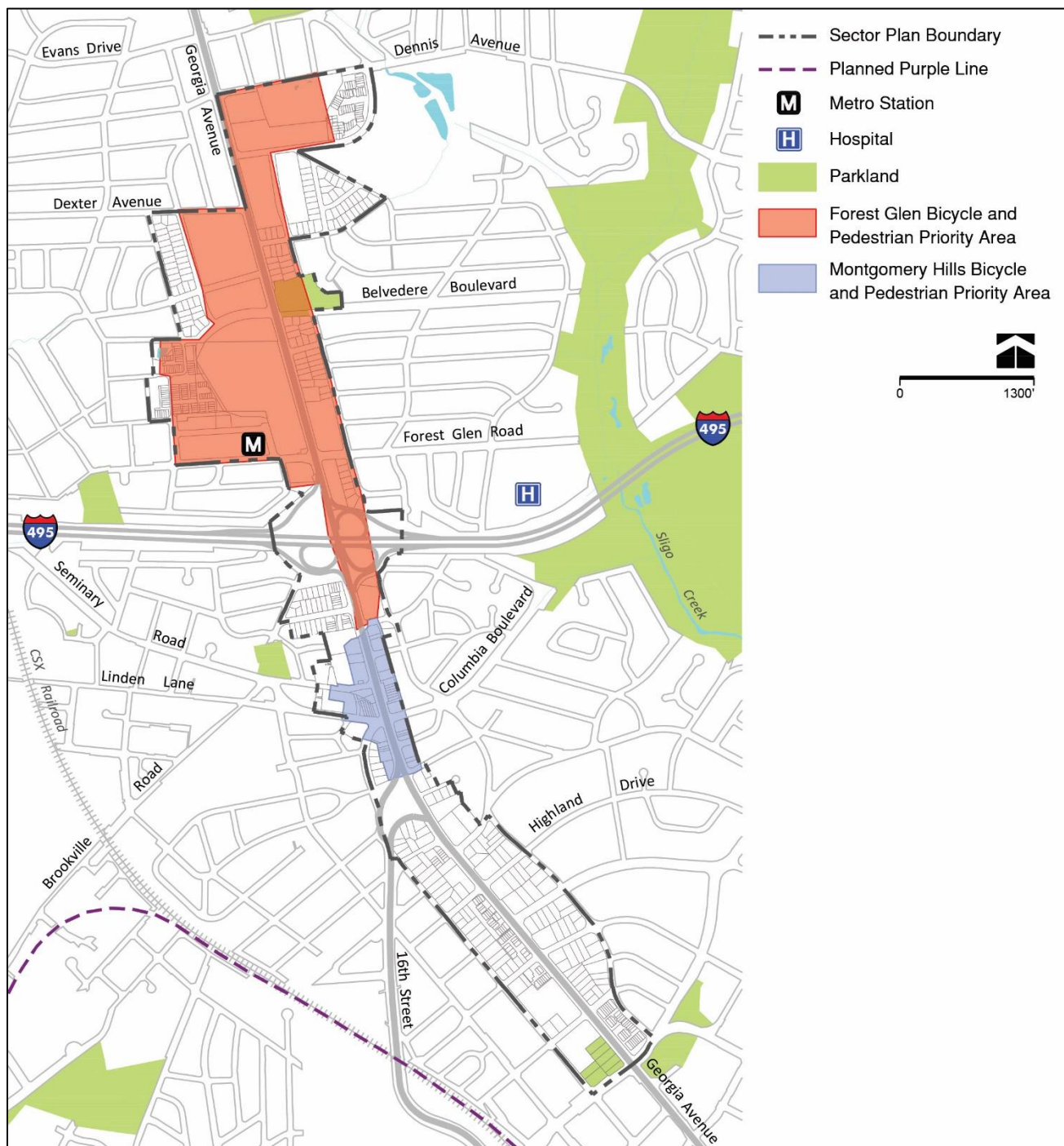
### 2.1.5 Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

#### A. Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area

The 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan established bicycle and pedestrian priority areas (BiPPAs), which are geographic areas where bicycle and pedestrian traffic enhancements are prioritized. Separate BiPPA boundaries were initially established around the Forest Glen Metro Station and the Montgomery Hills commercial areas.

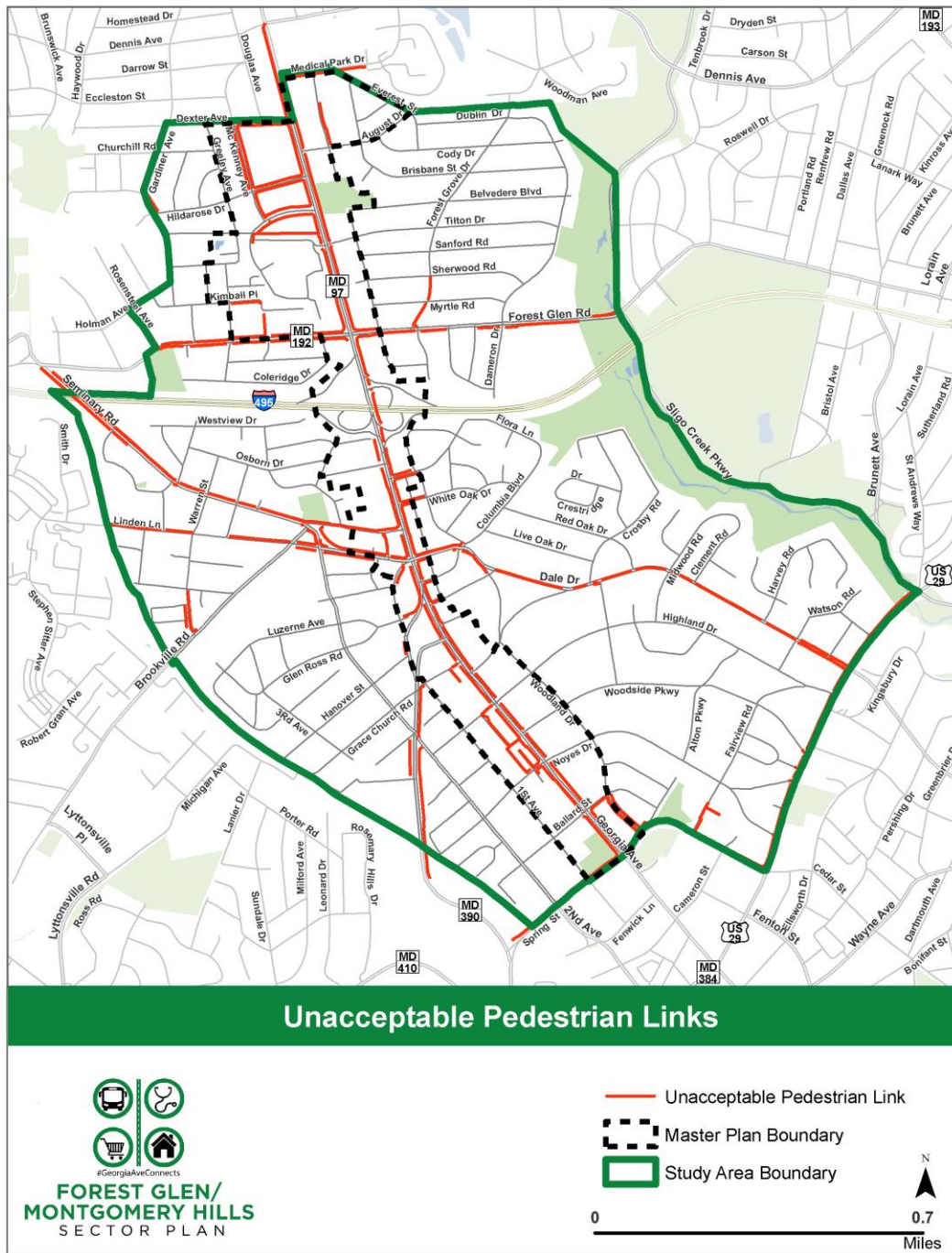
The plan recommends MCDOT initiate a joint BiPPA plan for the two BiPPAs in the plan area to identify and prioritize small but necessary pedestrian improvements. These upgrades should include retrofitting existing curb ramps to meet the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) design standards, removing obstructions in sidewalks and improving existing and master-planned protected crossings. Ideally, this effort will be launched soon after the adoption of this plan to capitalize on the momentum generated for these recommendations.

### Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area



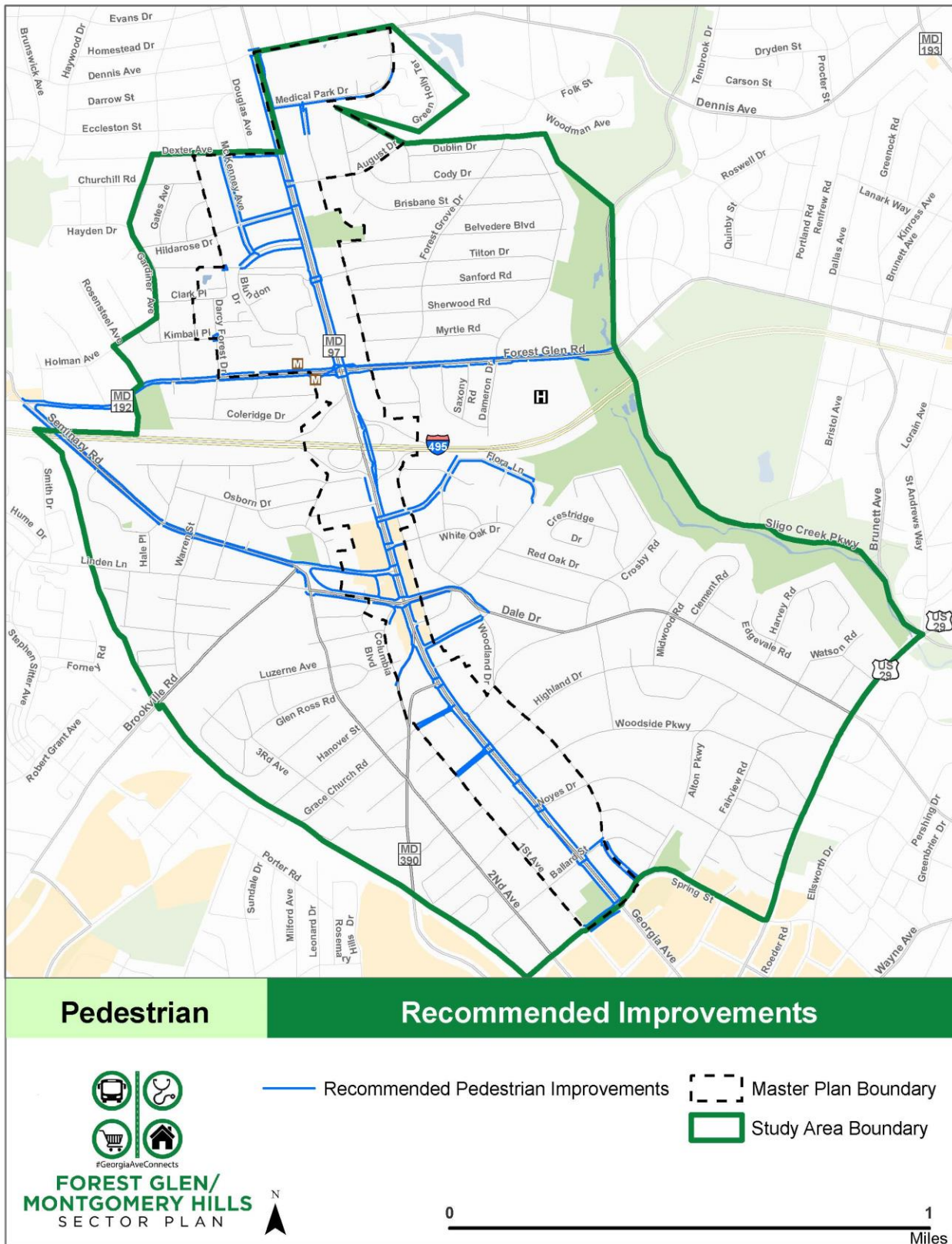
#### B. Pedestrian Pathway Improvements

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan utilized the pedestrian level of comfort (PLOC) analysis tool to identify pedestrian safety improvement projects and prioritize specific segments. The results of the PLOC highlight the places where walking conditions are determined to be unacceptable (regardless of the presence of existing sidewalks).



Unacceptable walking conditions are defined by the plan as applying the PLoC analysis tool. This method clarified specific infrastructure recommendations to improve walking comfort and prioritize those sidewalks and crossing projects that would benefit the highest number of housing units.





The PLoC methodology, high-priority projects along with a complete list of detailed pedestrian improvement recommendations are included in the Technical Appendix.

### C. New Bikeway Recommendations

The plan reconfirms the bikeways recommendations of the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan. Any section of bikeway that requires a road diet will require a more detailed interagency operational analysis before implementation.

#### 1. *Georgia Avenue West Side (SBL-1)*

Install a two-way separated bikeway on the west side of Georgia Avenue between 16th Street and Lansdowne Way. This bikeway will connect the west side of Montgomery Hills to the Forest Glen Metro Station by way of the bicycle and pedestrian bridge crossing the Beltway. The long-term recommendation is for a fully separated, two-way bikeway that is buffered from motor vehicle traffic and separated from pedestrians on the master-planned adjacent sidewalk.

#### 2. *16th Street (SBL-2)*

Install a two-way separated bikeway on the south/east side of 16th Street from Georgia Avenue to Spring Street. This recommendation confirms the bikeway facility and alignment identified first in the 2017 Greater Lyttonsville Sector Plan and confirmed in the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan. This bikeway is part of a longer route that creates a low-stress connection between the Forest Glen Metro Station and the planned Purple Line Station on 16th Street.

#### 3. *Seminary Road (BL-1)*

Establish bike lanes on both sides of Seminary Road from Georgia Avenue to Second Avenue. Should right-of-way become available, consider adding buffers to increase separation from motor vehicle traffic.

#### 4. *Columbia Boulevard (SBL -3)*

Create separated bike lanes on both sides of Columbia Boulevard from Georgia Avenue to Dale Drive. This segment connects to the larger Dale Drive bicycle and pedestrian improvement project initiated by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation in 2018. With the new facilities on Dale Drive, this bikeway will connect the neighborhoods on the west side of Georgia Avenue in the Montgomery Hills district to the neighborhood retail center.

#### 5. *Forest Glen Road (SBL-4)*

Install a side path on the south side of Forest Glen Road, from Georgia Avenue to Brunett Avenue. Forest Glen Road is the most direct route between the Forest Glen Metrorail Station and Holy Cross Hospital, one of the largest employers in the plan area. Currently, the hospital provides a bus circulator to provide safe access between the two destinations. This bikeway would complement the shuttle service, while also improving connectivity between the station and the neighborhoods on the eastern side of Georgia Avenue in the Forest Glen district. This improvement confirms the following recommendations of the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan.

- Install a side path on south side of Forest Glen Road from Georgia Avenue to Darcy Forest Drive.
- Install a side path on the north side of Forest Glen Road from Georgia Avenue to Seminary Road.

#### 6. *Dale Drive*

The plan will also incorporate an MCDOT approved Dale Drive design.

7. In the short-term, the plan calls for developing a continuous bicycle network along Georgia Avenue with neighborhood greenways on parallel streets, shared lane markings and contraflow lanes on existing service roads and integrate existing side paths and trails into the network.

### Bicycle Network





### Local Bikeway Recommendations

Roadway	Limits	Designation/Type
Dennis Avenue	Douglas Avenue to Edgewood Avenue	Sidepath (North Side)
Georgia Avenue	Pedestrian/Bicycle Bridge to 16 <sup>th</sup> Street	Two-way Separated Bike Lanes (West Side)
Forest Glen Road	Georgia Avenue to Brunette Avenue	Sidepath (South Side)
Forest Glen Road	Georgia Avenue to Darcy Forest Drive	Sidepath (Both Sides)
Forest Glen Road	Darcy Forest Drive to Seminary Road	Sidepath (North Side)
Seminary Road	Georgia Avenue to Second Avenue	Separated Bike Lanes (Both Sides)
Seminary Road	Brookville Road to I-795	Conventional Bike Lanes
Second Avenue	Seminary Road to 16 <sup>th</sup> Street	Conventional Bike Lanes
16 <sup>th</sup> Street	Georgia Avenue to Spring Street	Two-way Separated Bike Lanes (East Side)
Columbia Boulevard	Georgia Avenue to Dale Drive	Separated Bike Lanes (Both Sides)
Dale Drive	Columbia Boulevard to Colesville Road	TBD
Columbia Boulevard	Dale Drive to eastern terminus	Neighborhood Greenway
Woodland Drive	Spring Street to Dennis Avenue	Neighborhood Greenway
Lansdowne Way	Georgia Avenue to Second Avenue	Neighborhood Greenway
Second Avenue	Lansdowne Way to Riley Place	Neighborhood Greenway
Douglas Avenue	Dennis Avenue to McKenney Avenue	Neighborhood Greenway
McKinney Avenue	Douglas Avenue to Hildarose Drive	Neighborhood Greenway
Hildarose Drive	McKenney Avenue to Greeley Avenue	Neighborhood Greenway
Greeley Avenue	McKenny Avenue to Darcy Forest Drive	Neighborhood Greenway
Darcy Forest Drive	Greeley Avenue to Forest Glen Road	Neighborhood Greenway

#### Bicycle Parking

1. The Bicycle Master Plan also identified four locations in this sector plan area where short-term bicycle parking is needed. The plan confirms the recommendation for 300 long- and 100 short-term bicycle parking spaces to be provided at the Forest Glen Metrorail Station. It proposes the following to eliminate the area-wide deficit of short-term bicycle parking, particularly within the Montgomery Hills commercial district:

The sector plan recommends against providing waivers for short-term bicycle parking to private development applicants, especially at the following locations:

- Seminary Place Shopping Center (west side of Georgia Avenue between Seminary Place and Flora Lane).
- Dale Center (west side of Georgia Avenue between Seminary Road and 16th Street).
- The east side shopping center between Columbia Boulevard and White Oak Drive.
- The gas station and Woodside Deli property on the east side of Georgia Avenue between Corwin Drive and Columbia Boulevard.

#### D. Trail Connection

##### 1. Luzerne Avenue

Additionally, when the Maryland State Highway Administration (MD SHA) implements the MD 97 Georgia Avenue Montgomery Hills project, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) should study and design a protected crossing for bicyclists and pedestrians that connects *Luzerne Avenue west* to *Luzerne Avenue east* across Georgia Avenue. This protected crossing could include a pedestrian-actuated traffic signal, a high-activity crosswalk (HAWK) signal or a rapid flashing beacon.

A consideration for a full traffic signal (for bicycle and pedestrian crossing only) should be evaluated in the future as it is likely to be the most effective in stopping motorists for pedestrians and bicyclists attempting to cross Georgia Avenue at this location. Detailed design needs to address the grade change on the west side of the intersection and improving bicycle and pedestrian access to the trail crossing from the west.

This plan recommends the study be initiated after the MD SHA Georgia Avenue Montgomery Hills project is completed in closing the 16th Street southbound slip lane to motor vehicles.

#### 2.1.6 Transportation Demand Management

Transportation demand management (TDM) represents programmatic elements designed to encourage the use of travel modes other than single occupancy vehicles, including walking, bicycling, transit and telework. TDM programs are context-sensitive and designed based on the transportation infrastructure available to those living and working within a defined area.

#### 2.1.7 Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS)

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan acknowledges the countywide goal to reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips and increase mode share among transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians. A non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) goal was considered, but ultimately not recommended as part of the plan for three reasons.

First, the plan recommends a comparatively modest density increase to the plan area. Specific targets for reducing automobile travel are typically identified in long-range plans that recommend significant increases to existing densities to offset the potential traffic impacts. Applying a NADMS goal to local development within the plan area would likely have a marginal impact on traffic along the corridor.

Secondly, the plan area encompasses a relatively small area within the corridor that connects two larger policy areas. The character of the existing and forecasted future traffic patterns suggests that a NADMS target would not be effective, as most of the traffic volume consists of people passing through the area.

Finally, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation is exploring a new approach to Transportation Demand Management (NextGen TDM), which proposes dividing the county into policy areas each having context sensitive NADMS targets. Upon approval, the plan area would be included and subject to the NADMS target of that policy area.

#### 2.1.8 Parking Lot District

A parking lot district (PLD) in the plan area was created to support the retail and commercial uses in Montgomery Hills. Due to the size of the existing lots, the minimum onsite parking requirements could not be accommodated without the addition of public parking lots 12 and 48 located at Seminary Road (west side of Georgia Avenue) and Columbia Boulevard (east side of Georgia Avenue) respectively. Combined, they provide 63 spaces of metered, long-term parking spaces and 34 metered, short-term spaces.

The current boundaries of the PLD do not include Lot 12, even though the intent of the lot is to supplement parking capacity within the district. Therefore, this plan recommends MCDOT evaluate potential changes to the boundaries to include the full extent of Lot 12 along with properties comprising the Seminary Place Shopping Center, adjacent Shell gas station and Montgomery Hills Car Wash.

On-street, short-term parking is also provided along both sides of Flora Lane between Georgia Avenue and Woodland Drive, on the east side of Georgia Avenue between Columbia Boulevard and Seminary Place, on the south side of Corwin Drive between Georgia Avenue and Columbia Boulevard, and on the east side of

Columbia Boulevard between Seminary Road and Rookwood Road. On-street long-term parking is available on the north side of White Oak Drive between Georgia Avenue and Woodland Drive.

### Parking Lot District



## 2.2 Reimagine – Thinking About Familiar Places with New Ideas

Previous planning efforts have promoted urban design recommendations that enhance the pedestrian experience, protect the residential character of neighborhoods and improve the quality of building designs. While some recommendations have been fulfilled in the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills communities, others are being brought forward or refined in the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan (see summary table of recommendations). The plan provides continued support for the transformation of Georgia Avenue into a multi-modal street and redevelopment infill opportunities with appropriate transitions to the residential neighborhoods.

The plan area currently has a range of building types and heights of varying character. The area includes residential neighborhoods with pleasant, tree-lined streets as well as multi-story buildings and commercial strips with expansive parking lots along the sidewalk. Within this context, infill development, redevelopment and reinvestment should enhance the public environment and ensure compatibility with established residential neighborhoods.

### 2.2.1 Land Use and Zoning

#### A. Goals

The plan's recommendations for land use and zoning are based on the following goals:

- Create built environments that improve quality of life through public amenities, improved mobility, improved air and water quality, and safe, attractive and accessible public spaces.
- Encourage equitable development that preserves and strengthens the community and builds on existing assets, including retail and institutional uses.
- Provide healthy, safe and affordable housing choices for people of all income levels, household sizes and stages of life.

#### B. Recommendations

- Confirm the Residential-60 (R-60) zone for single-unit residential lots of existing residential uses.
- Rezone selected properties near transit and major activity centers.
- Rezone selected R-60 special exceptions of established, non-residential uses to confirm the existing uses and development standards and provide flexibility to evolve with market changes.
- Rezone all Residential Townhouse (RT) zone properties to the appropriate Townhouse Medium-density (TMD) or Townhouse High-density (THD) zones. With the adoption of the 2014 County Zoning Ordinance, RT zones are to be replaced through the master planning process.
- Ensure that infill development complements existing housing and neighborhoods.

### 2.2.2 Urban Design

The plan area has a rich identity that should be fostered in the design of new streets, open spaces and buildings to strengthen its sense of place. The area's character should be recognizable to those who live, work and visit this unique community.

#### A. Goals

- Encourage quality design that incorporates neighborhood compatibility and sustainable development practices.
- Enhance the public realm by providing green infrastructure (safe, accessible parks, stormwater systems and usable open space) that meets the needs of all users.

## B. Recommendations

- Encourage collaborations among property owners, government agencies and community members to implement low-cost and temporary installations, such as community events, food trucks, parklets and pop-up parks, on underutilized parcels, parking lots and rights-of-way.
- Integrate public art reflective of the community's identity, history and aspirations throughout the plan area.
- Provide active and human-scaled building frontage on streets, trails, midblock connections and open spaces, such as ground-floor retail/offices, patios, balconies and outdoor seating areas.
- Minimize building setbacks along primary streets and sidewalks to enhance a sense of enclosure and walkability.
- Step down building heights and create fine-grained building designs through variations in wall planes, colors, materials and textures to transition to single-unit residential areas.
- Place surface parking at the rear or interior of the lot and include active ground-floor uses in parking garages to enhance the pedestrian experience.
- Provide individual entrances to ground-floor residential units and storefronts where possible to increase activity on the street, particularly near residential neighborhoods.
- Limit shadows cast by buildings onto public spaces where possible.
- Explore façade improvements with landscaping upgrades along fronts of parking lots and enhanced wayfinding for existing retail properties in the Montgomery Hills District.
- Encourage environmentally sustainable design of new developments and retrofits to existing buildings that considers solar orientation, water and energy efficiency, energy generation, heat island reduction and stormwater management.
- Create gateways at the transit and street entrances to the sector plan area that integrate elements, such as wayfinding signage, landscape and building form, reflective of the community character.
- Underground or relocate all utilities.



### Georgia Avenue at White Oak – Long Term



#### 2.2.3 Historic Preservation

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area currently does not contain any sites or districts listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. The Woodside Locational Atlas District is listed in the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*. Historic buildings, structures, sites and landscapes stand out in the typical suburban landscape, providing a layered understanding of past settlement patterns, transportation networks, and locations of industry and commerce.

##### A. Goals

- Identify and designate historic resources and sites of historical, architectural, cultural, or archaeological value to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.
- Encourage the utilization of the historic preservation tax credit program for the restoration and preservation of county-designated historic properties. Owners of historic properties are eligible to receive a 25% tax credit for documented expenses for exterior maintenance, restoration, and preservation work.
- Preserve and enhance the quality of life and improve property values of resources in historic districts.
- Safeguard the historical and cultural heritage of the county.
- Provide a sense of place and continuity, while enhancing our communities as attractive places with deep and varied stories to tell.
- Preserve and protect cemetery and burial sites in according with Ordinances 33A-17 and 18-31.

##### B. Recommendations

- Evaluation of specific properties as identified in Chapter 3: Opportunities for potential historic designation in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.
- Incorporate protective measures in the redevelopment of properties listed on the Planning Board's Adopted Cemetery Inventory.

#### 2.2.4 Environment

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan's environmental recommendations aspire to improve human experiences and ecological well-being by introducing green cover elements into the community landscape transforming it from gray to green.

Another vital component of the plan is to reduce local energy demand and consumption by supporting the construction of energy-efficient buildings and implementing roadway improvements to reduce traffic congestion and vehicle idling. These objectives will assist Montgomery County in reaching its 2035 goal of carbon neutrality by providing cleaner and safer air to its citizens while countering climate change.

In combination, the environmental site-specific and plan recommendations work holistically to create a thriving urban ecosystem that performs valuable services. These services aim to sequester carbon, filter air and water, reduce surface temperatures, provide wildlife habitat, decrease greenhouse gases and more. They will support a more livable, resilient and sustainable community for humans and biome.

The environmental recommendations seek to realize the following plan goals:

- Create solutions to improve the ecological health and wellbeing of the community and seek to eliminate disproportionate environmental burdens
- Mitigate for past environmental impacts and protect against future ecological degradation.
- Enhance the public realm by providing green infrastructure (tree plantings, green roofs, stormwater systems and usable green open space) that meet the needs of all users.

##### A. Green Cover

Vegetation or green cover is any surface with soil and vegetation. It's important in providing ecological benefits and creating a harmonious relationship between the natural and manmade environments. However, in Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills, the green cover is only between 6 and 20 percent of the commercial areas, compared to adjacent residential areas with nearly 35 percent. The character differences between these zones is apparent.

The absence of green cover is noticeable in the commercial areas where there are highly impervious surfaces throughout, including roads, rooftops, buildings, and parking lots. These surfaces, combined with a rise in temperatures due to climate change, have chemical reactions that increase ground-level ozone levels, contributing to increased heat island effect.

The plan recommends countering these consequences with expanded green cover through planted roofs, trees, bioretention systems, planting beds, even lawns. Green cover provides valuable services to cool air and surface temperatures, sequester carbon, improve air and water quality, and reduce heat island effect and exposure to ultraviolet radiation. It has also been proven to improve quality of life by increasing psychological fitness and can directly affect the economy by improving local appeal.



#### Recommendations

- Provide a minimum of 35 percent\* green cover, which may include one or a combination of the following:
  - Green the community by installing planted roofs with extensive (2-5" soil depth), or intensive (6" or greater soil depth) to improve habitat, food, shelter and other ecological benefits on 35 percent of the total area.
  - Tree canopy cover on 35 percent of property landscapes.
  - A combination of tree canopy and intensive green roof for a total green cover of 35 percent or greater.

\*If 35% green cover is not fully achievable onsite, the balance can be met within the Sector Plan boundaries. This does not exclude compliance with other requirements.

- Prioritize street tree planting along existing and proposed streets and transportation networks to expand and connect linear green corridors.
- Provide canopy tree planting (45 feet or taller at maturity) along streets and public spaces to achieve a closed canopy cover:
  - On the east side of Georgia Avenue where planting beds are proposed, canopy trees should be planted no greater than 35 feet apart unless restricted by infrastructure needs.
  - Achieve an overall canopy cover with species diversity where no single genus comprises more than 20 percent of the total population of trees.



- Provide soil volumes for canopy trees of no less than 800-1,000 cubic feet.
- Use appropriate native plant species that will thrive in the various site conditions and micro-climates. Species should be a combination of native and locally adaptive species, lessening water demand while providing food, pollen and shelter for wildlife.
- Apply bird-safe building standards to protect local and migratory birds.
- Incorporate stratified vegetation into stormwater management facilities.
- Bury overhead wires underground to avoid conflict with street trees.
- Apply Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES\*) principles to new construction projects.

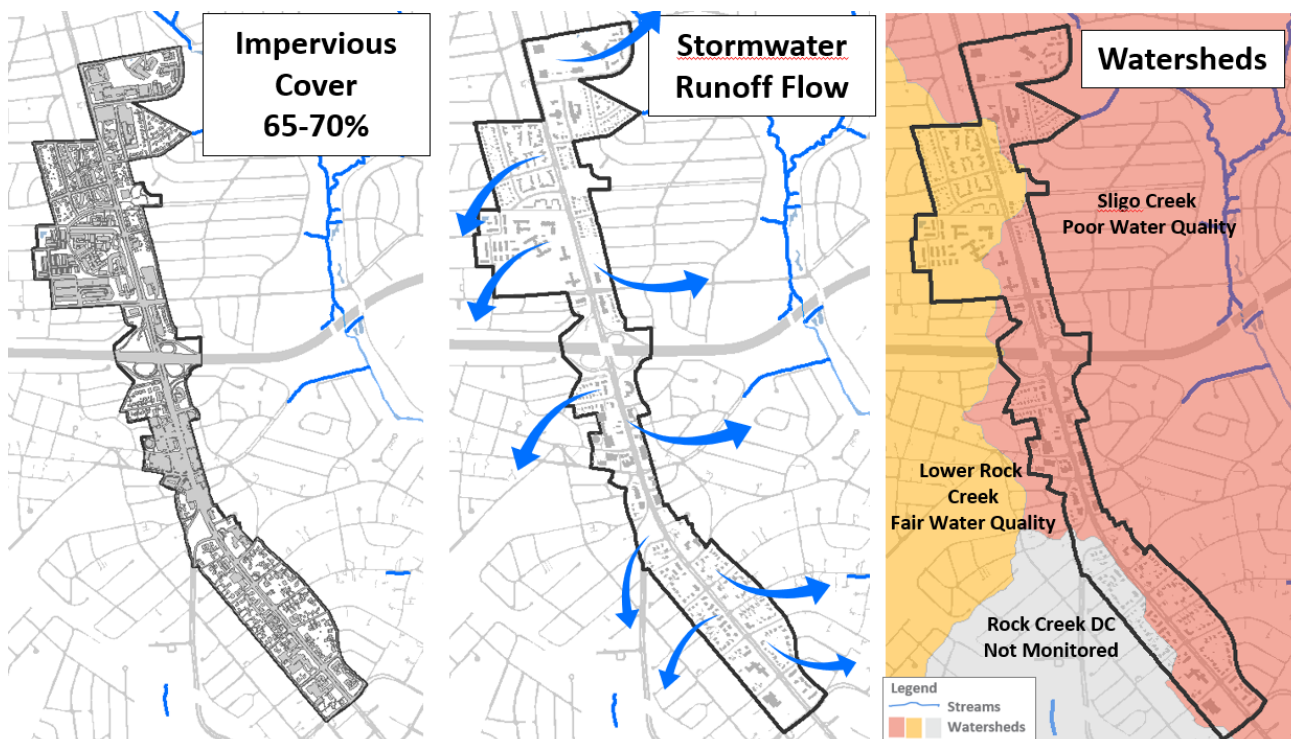


## B. Water Quality

Local stream and tributary water quality can be directly correlated to the lack of stormwater management and percentage of impervious cover within a watershed. Impervious cover is any type of human-made surface that does not absorb and filter rainwater. The percentage of imperviousness at which degradation of water quality begins varies from 8 to 10 percent of an area. The higher the impervious cover, the more stressors there are on a watershed, including increased pollutant and sediment loads, stream bank erosion, high water temperatures and decreased stream bank stability.

Within the plan area, the overall impervious cover averages from 65 to 70 percent. In the commercial zones, the cover reaches 95 percent. The water quality of the receiving streams ranges from poor to fair within the three residing watersheds: Sligo Creek, Lower Rock Creek and Rock Creek DC.

Poor water quality effects aquatic life, the species dependent on it and, ultimately, the health of the Chesapeake Bay. This plan recommends reducing impervious cover, planting green cover and managing stormwater to detain, filter and treat rainwater to improve water quality.





## Recommendations

- Meet or exceed the minimum county stormwater management treatment volumes. If full on-site treatment is infeasible, applicable waiver fees or compensatory actions should be instituted to address stormwater management in the same first order stream drainage area as the site (exact language is still being worked on by the Montgomery County Department of the Environment).
- Integrate environmental site design (ESD) into the right-of-way of all new road projects.
  - Utilize unused right-of-way areas such as cloverleafs for innovative stormwater management.
- Retrofit untreated road rights-of-way, parking lots and commercial properties with ESD stormwater management facilities as opportunities arise.
- Apply ESD to provide multiple performance area benefits for water quality, wildlife and aesthetic appeal. Some strategies may include:
  - Intensive green roof (6 inches or greater).
  - Stormwater planters.
  - Biofiltration and bioretention systems.
  - Conserve and/or reuse rainwater by:
    - Harvesting rainwater for retention, irrigation and/or gray water.
    - Minimizing irrigation needs through the planting of locally adapted, native plant species.
- Increase green cover and tree canopy to increase stormwater absorption onsite.

## C. Air Quality and Carbon Emissions

The causes of degraded air quality and carbon emissions are linked, and recommendations to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions overlap. Burning fossil fuels to power vehicles, homes and businesses releases fine airborne particulates that cause and exacerbate respiratory illnesses. Fossil fuel combustion also emits the precursors of ground-level ozone, which is created in sunlight and catalyzed by higher air temperatures. Carbon emissions implicated in climate change are released when fossil fuels are burned.

Traffic congestion and idling along Georgia Avenue contribute to vehicle emissions and can degrade ambient air quality, which would disproportionately impact bicyclists and pedestrians. The Montgomery County Planning Department hired a consultant to study air quality along the Georgia Avenue corridor from Spring Street to Forest Glen Road. The study evaluated the six pollutants that act as indicators of air quality as determined by the United States Environmental Protection Agency for regulation under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. The pollutant standards are designed to protect human health and address levels of carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), ozone (O<sub>3</sub>), particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub> and 10), sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and lead (Pb).

The study evaluated the vehicle miles travelled and their associated emissions factors in conjunction with link delays at intersections. The consultants utilized data provided by the Planning Department's transportation planners. The study can be found in the Appendix (Section X).

The assessment indicated slightly elevated levels of particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) and ground level ozone (O<sub>3</sub>). This finding is consistent with the 2011 Washington DC-MD-VA Ozone Emissions Inventory report that identified the region as a non-attainment (above standards set) area for both pollutants. Nevertheless, localized air quality can be improved for all six air pollutants if vehicle idling and emissions are reduced.

### 1. Greenhouse Gas Modeling

Montgomery County Code Chapter 18A-15 requires the Planning Board to model the carbon footprint of planning areas as part of any master or sector plan. Another law (Montgomery County Code Chapter 33A14) requires the Planning Board to estimate the carbon footprint of areas being master planned, and to make recommendations for carbon emissions reductions. Carbon footprint is calculated by estimating the greenhouse gas emissions from construction and operation of projected development.

The carbon footprint analysis is underway and will provide information on greenhouse gas emissions. The plan will evaluate this study and recommendations for reducing greenhouse gas emissions are included in this plan and woven throughout different sections, including Transportation, Air Quality and Carbon Emissions, Green Cover, Air Quality and Parks.

Improving urban air quality and reducing carbon emissions involves reducing vehicle miles traveled and delayed, reducing building energy demand and consumption, increasing clean energy generation, sequestering carbon, reducing heat island effect and filtering pollutants from the air.

Mixed-use development, improved traffic flows and enhanced alternative modes of travel will reduce per-capita carbon emissions and improve air quality. Building efficiency and orientation will lower energy demand, resulting in reduced fossil fuel consumption and emissions. Increasing green cover will sequester carbon, reduce urban heat island effect, filter pollutants and make the community more desirable.



### Recommendations

- Install cool roofs on rooftops not covered in vegetation, alternative energy generators or equipment to reflect sunlight and heat away from the structure and reduce rooftop and building temperatures.
- Implement recommendations outlined in the Green Cover and Transportation sections of this sector plan.
- Obtain public benefit points under the optional method of development in the category of energy conservation and generation.
- Orient buildings to reduce a building's heating and cooling costs.
- Use alternative energy systems to supply a portion of the building's energy demand. Some alternative energy systems may include:
  - Solar power
  - Geothermal
  - Purchase of electricity generated from renewable sources or low polluting sources.
- Maximize passive and active building orientation and design techniques for energy efficiency and conservation.
- Integrate façade systems that optimize building orientation for daylight and minimize energy use for heating, cooling and lighting.
- Consider the incorporation of sustainable design principles and sustainability initiatives, such as STAR Communities, Eco District, LEED ND and net zero construction.

### 2.2.5 Parks, Trails and Open Space

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan supports the creation of a successful community framework of well-designed, publicly accessible facilities. Quality places and spaces provide opportunities, programs and services that encourage community interaction, improved livability, recreation and placemaking. Continued investments in amenities and public infrastructure are essential for the health, social well-being, economic prosperity and maintenance of strong communities. The plan area is served by parks, trails and open spaces found in downtown Silver Spring. Many of these facilities are programmed but difficult to access due to the disconnected street grid, lack of adequate sidewalks, crossings and bikeways, and physical barriers related to high levels of congestion along major thoroughfares. These parks, trails and open spaces within the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan include the:

- Sligo Creek Stream Valley Park
- Sligo-Dennis Avenue Local Park
- Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park
- Carroll Knolls Neighborhood Park
- McKenney Hills Neighborhood Park
- Capitol View-Homewood Local Park
- Forest Glen Neighborhood Park
- Montgomery Hills Neighborhood Park
- General Getty Neighborhood Park
- Woodside Urban Park
- Fairview Urban Park.

In addition, the Sligo Creek Trail is located within the community and the Ireland Drive Trail connector to the Rock Creek Trail is relatively nearby. The Capital Crescent Trail lies to the west of the planning area.

The plan evaluates the accessibility of these parks and trails and explores options to enhance connectivity between park and trail facilities and major activity centers, including the Forest Glen Metro Station. In addition, it determines if any additional parks, open spaces or recreational facilities are necessary to address the impact of any proposed redevelopment in the area.

#### A. Policy Guidance and Hierarchy of Parks and Open Spaces

The 2017 Park, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan recommends that for each urban area, a unique open space system should be planned to serve the projected demographics of residents, workers and visitors. The urban design vision developed during the master plan or sector plan process for an area helps guide the number, pattern, location, siting and design of open spaces. The PROS Plan system can be applied to the Forest Glen and Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area to create a hierarchy of parks and open spaces suitable for a range of experiences.

The PROS Plan recommends that each area master or sector plan include a system of open spaces based on the roles and functions of each type of space. The numbers and sizes of open spaces may vary from plan to plan and should be directly proportional to the projected density. They should be adjusted to the pattern of existing open spaces and other factors, such as community-specific needs.

##### 1. Goals

- Enhance the public realm by providing green infrastructure (safe, accessible parks, storm water systems and usable open space) that meet the needs of all users.

- Create built environments that improve quality of life through public amenities, improved mobility, improved air and water quality, and safe, attractive and accessible public spaces

## 2. Recommendations

- Create a civic gathering space at or near the Forest Glen Metro Station of ½ to 1 acre to accommodate cultural programs, community events and neighborhood festivals.
- Establish a civic gathering space of ½ to 1 acre with the redevelopment of the Seminary Plaza Shopping Center. A memorial site for Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church would be appropriate for the historic resources cited in the vicinity. Ownership of the facility should be determined at the time of redevelopment.
- Transform underutilized, state-owned property at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and 16th Street into a new gateway urban recreational park. The gateway space would mark the entrance of the community and act as a multi-use area for active uses and passive uses.
- Build a new facility on county-owned property adjacent to Woodside Urban Park, if the current use is vacated and the county deems the property as excess. Montgomery Parks envisions an active urban recreation center that promotes health and wellness and encourages the pursuit of nature education and programming.
- Reimagine public spaces by promoting the inclusion of art and sensory integrated installations into parks and open spaces.
- Create and enhance trail connections to major trails and bikeways.
- Provide for safe, improved park access via improved connectivity and pedestrian and bicycle facilities.
- Set up temporary/interim open spaces to accommodate spontaneous play spaces, coffee service and informal meeting/civic gathering areas.
- Consider purchasing properties, where feasible and appropriate, that are adjacent to existing parks or meet identified active or passive recreational needs as documented in the current PROS Plan. Such acquisitions could reduce active recreation shortages, create better connections and expand urban green spaces.



## Park and Open Space Hierarchy

### Service Area – Countywide

<b>Woodside Urban Ecology Center</b>	Center and Community Gardens	Health and Human Services Center
<b>SHA ROW</b>	Urban Recreational Park	2 ¼ - 3 acres
<b>Forest Glen Metro</b>	Civic Green Urban Park	½ acre
<b>Forest Glen Medical Center</b>	Civic Green Urban Park	½ acre

### Service Area – Local Community

<b>Medical Office Park in Forest Glen</b>	Pocket Green Urban Park	¼ acre
<b>Seminary Place in Montgomery Hills</b>	Pocket Green Urban Park	¼ acre
<b>Sniders Grocery and Fire Station</b>	Pocket Green Urban Park	¼ acre
<b>Parking Lot #12</b>	Urban Recreational Parklet	Min. 1/10 acre
<b>Parking Lot at Luzerne</b>	Pocket Green Urban Park	¼ acre

## 2.3 Reinvest – Increasing the Value (monetary and societal) of Community Places for an Enhanced Experience

### 2.3.1 Housing

The plan's recommendations for new residential development are guided by the Montgomery County General Plan Refinement (1993) and the 2011 Housing Element of the General Plan, including the following:

- Concentrate new housing near public transportation and provide easy, multi-modal connections to jobs, schools, shopping, recreation and leisure activities.
- Increase infill housing opportunities in suburban office parks, shopping centers and other underused properties.
- Include housing as part of the redevelopment of older strip commercial areas and surface parking lots.

- Improve non-vehicular connectivity through the most direct pedestrian and bike routes between homes, jobs, retail, recreation, schools and public services.
- Address the need for housing for low, moderate and middle-income households, and promote specific strategies to meet that need through master and sector plan amendments.

Existing housing in the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan includes a small number of multi-unit residential buildings concentrated in Forest Glen, and townhouses and single-unit detached homes scattered throughout the corridor.

#### A. Housing Resources

Within the area are three apartment rental developments: The Fields of Silver Springs, the Belvedere and the Forest Glen Apartments, all of which are zoned R-10. There is one condominium development, the Americana Finnmark, which is zoned R-20.

All 400 rental units in the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area are more than 70 years old. Sixty-seven percent of the units are two-bedroom units. All rental units are currently market-rate affordable, meaning they are affordable to households earning incomes below 80 percent of the Washington, DC metropolitan region's area median income (AMI). At 80 percent AMI, these units would be affordable to households at or below \$88,240. The development of these units predates the county's moderately priced dwelling unit (MPDU) ordinance. While there are no MPDUs located in the existing multi-unit developments, some units are made affordable through tax credits and other public subsidies.

This plan aims to balance the preservation of existing market-rate affordable housing with the production of new housing, including MPDUs. This preservation and production strategy seeks to retain the existing zoning on most of the single-unit and multi-unit residential properties, and rezone select properties near existing transit stations.

The strategic rezoning of single-unit residential properties along the Georgia Avenue corridor provides a transition from the commercial uses to the residential neighborhood and introduces the potential for new housing typologies in the plan area. These parcels would be appropriate for multi-unit, clustered housing, such as townhouses, courtyard dwellings and smaller apartment buildings.

#### 1. Goal

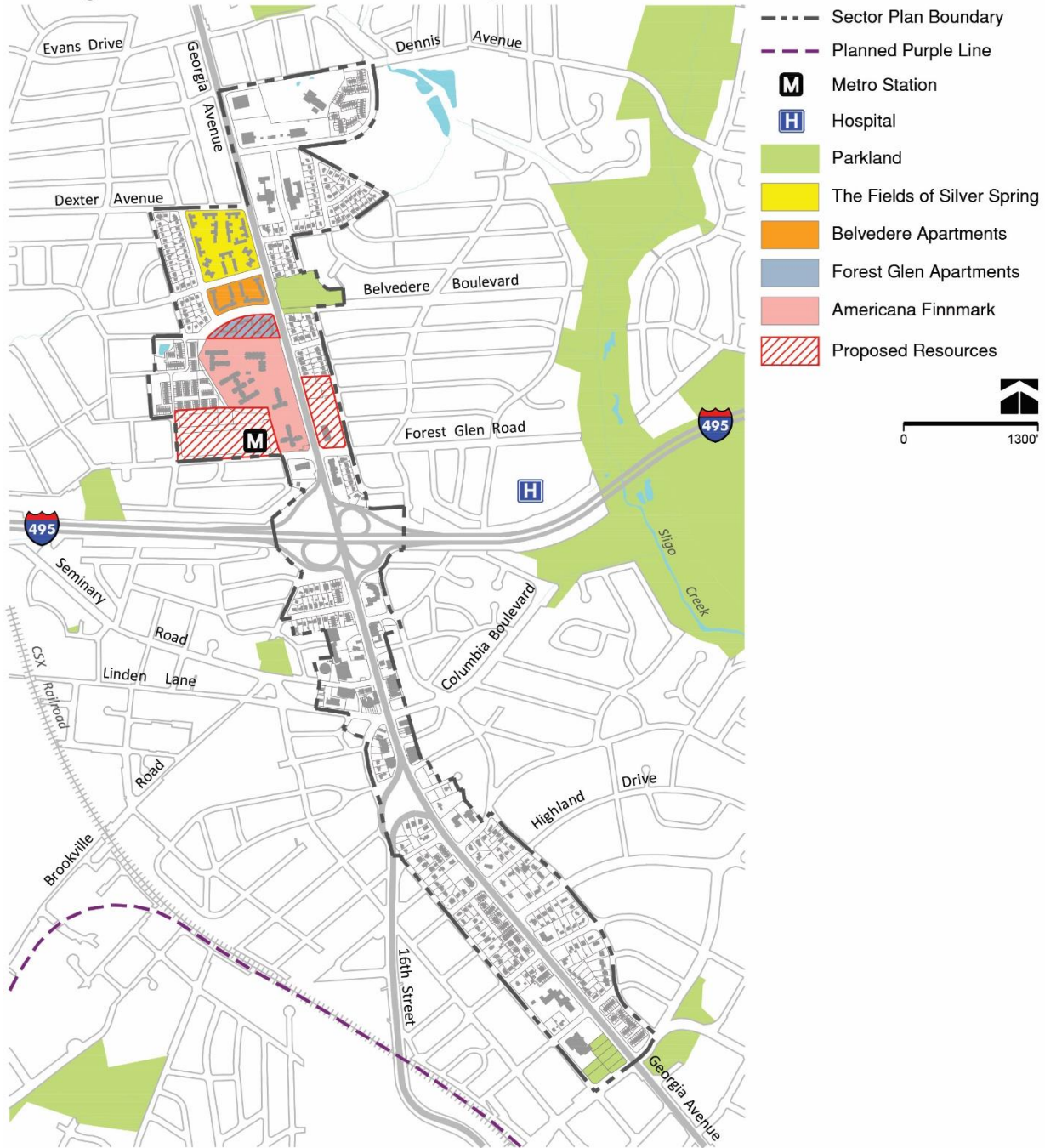
The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Plan endorses the following housing goal:

- Provide healthy, safe and affordable housing choices for people of all income levels, household sizes and stages of life.

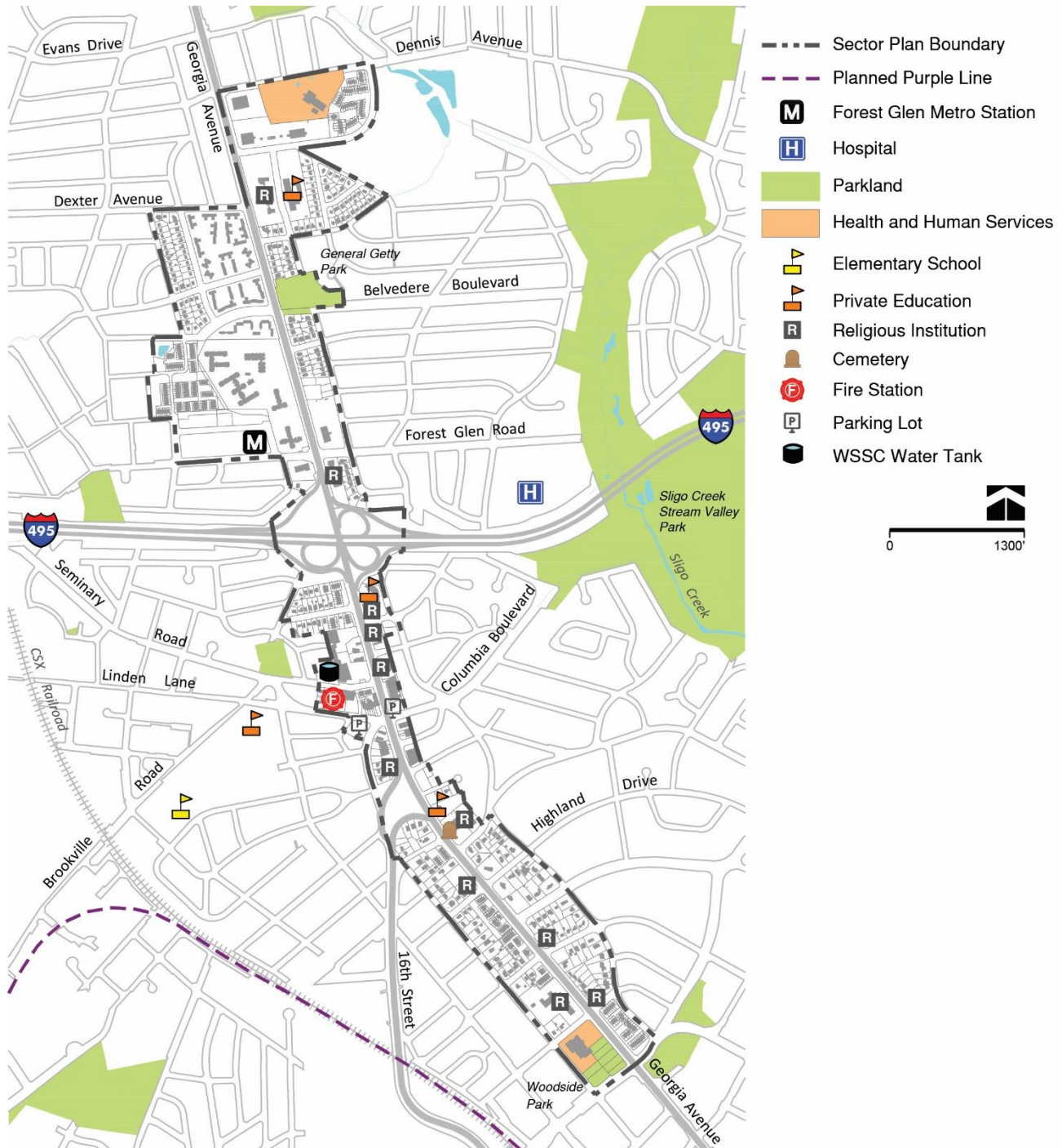
#### 2. Recommendations:

- Preserve existing, market-rate affordable housing where possible.
- Prioritize MPDUs as a top public benefit point in locations at/near transit or other activity centers.
- Preserve affordable housing using tax credits and other financing tools.
- Protect and preserve existing residential neighborhoods of detached homes in and around the sector plan area.
- Create public-private partnerships between public, private and philanthropic institutions when possible to assist in the development of affordable housing.
- Collaborate with nonprofit, county and private organizations to expand and enhance affordable housing opportunities accessible by mass transit.

## Existing / Recommended Multi-Unit Housing Resources



### Community Facilities



#### 2.3.2 Community Facilities

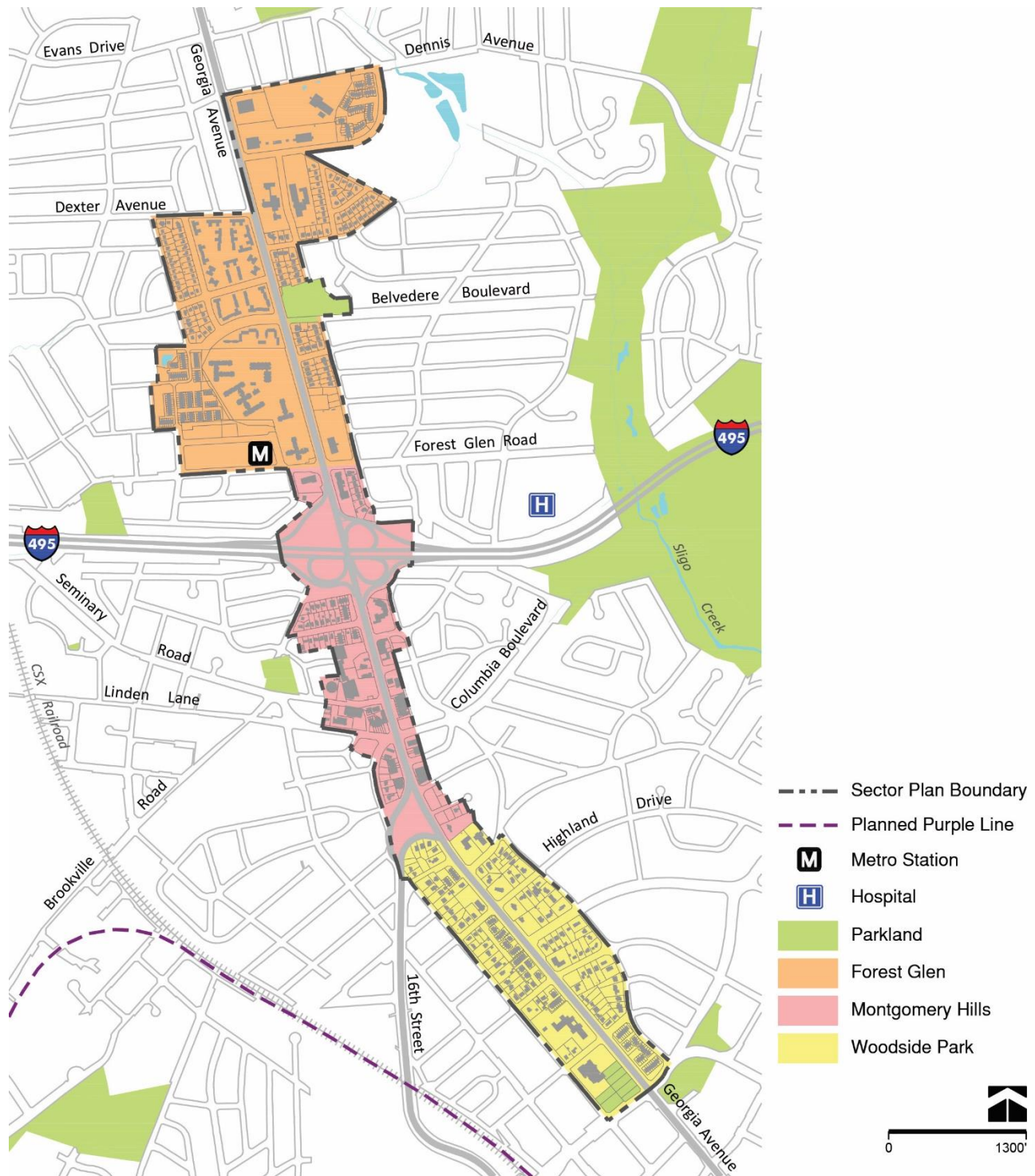
The plan area is well served by community facilities, including future facilities to be located within the Silver Spring and Wheaton Central Business Districts. Therefore, this plan offers no new community facilities recommendations.



## Chapter 3: Opportunities

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area is characterized by well-maintained residential neighborhoods with nodes of commercial, office or institutional uses, the largest node being the Montgomery Hills Commercial District located just south of the Capital Beltway along Georgia Avenue. The heavily traveled corridor functions as both a highway and a main street providing neighborhood-serving and auto-centric uses.

**Plan Neighborhoods**





The plan defines these neighborhoods primarily as:

- Forest Glen
- Montgomery Hills
- and Woodside.

#### *A. Forest Glen*

Forest Glen is generally defined by Dennis Avenue to the north, Forest Glen Road to the south, Woodland Drive to the east and Darcy Forest Drive to the west. It is the most diverse and densely populated neighborhood within the plan area. This district has the greatest variation in housing stock, including multi-unit residential buildings, that supplies a stable source of market-rate and subsidized affordable housing.

The Forest Glen District is home to General Getty Park, the Forest Glen Metro Station, medical office buildings and religious institutions. Holy Cross Hospital, the area's largest employer, lies just outside the plan boundary. The larger Wheaton Central Business District lies to the north.

The infrastructure projects proposed for the parking lot at Forest Glen Metro Station and the planned Forest Glen Passageway present an opportunity for equitable transit-oriented development and additional public amenities.

#### *B. Montgomery Hills*

Montgomery Hills is generally defined by Forest Glen Road to the north and 16th Street to the south. The extent of the east and west boundaries captures those properties that front directly onto Georgia Avenue. The district is home to several older, low density, strip-shopping centers with retail and auto-centric commercial service uses for residents and commuters. Despite being bisected by Georgia Avenue, these commercial uses function as the neighborhood shopping and business center for the surrounding communities. The Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan confirm a future BRT stop near this major activity center.

The plan seeks to bridge the east and west sides of Georgia Avenue and better integrate the district into the adjacent communities. National Historic Trust Main Street principles and other revitalization strategies could be applied to the commercial properties east of Georgia Avenue to achieve that goal. In the absence of redevelopment, the plan supports public realm improvements, including refurbished storefronts and streetscapes to strengthen existing businesses.

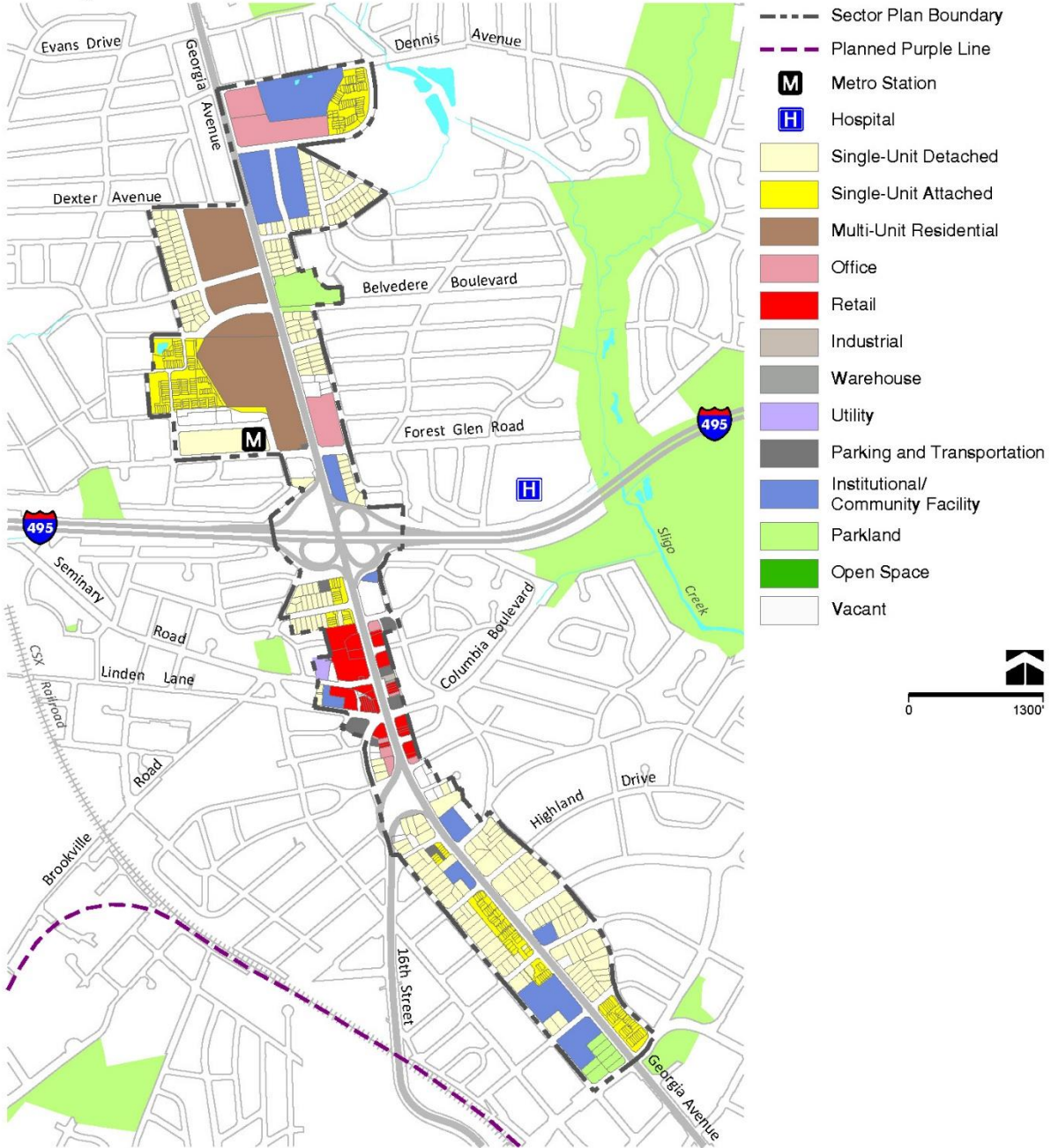
#### *C. Woodside*

Woodside is the southernmost community within the plan area and lies on the edge of the downtown Silver Spring. It is generally defined by Grace Church Road to the north, Woodland Drive to the east, 1st Avenue to the west and Spring Street to the south. The district has an established, low-density residential character but is also home to several community facilities, amenities, religious uses and the Woodside Locational Atlas Historic District. Its southern boundary lies on the edge of the Silver Spring Central Business District.

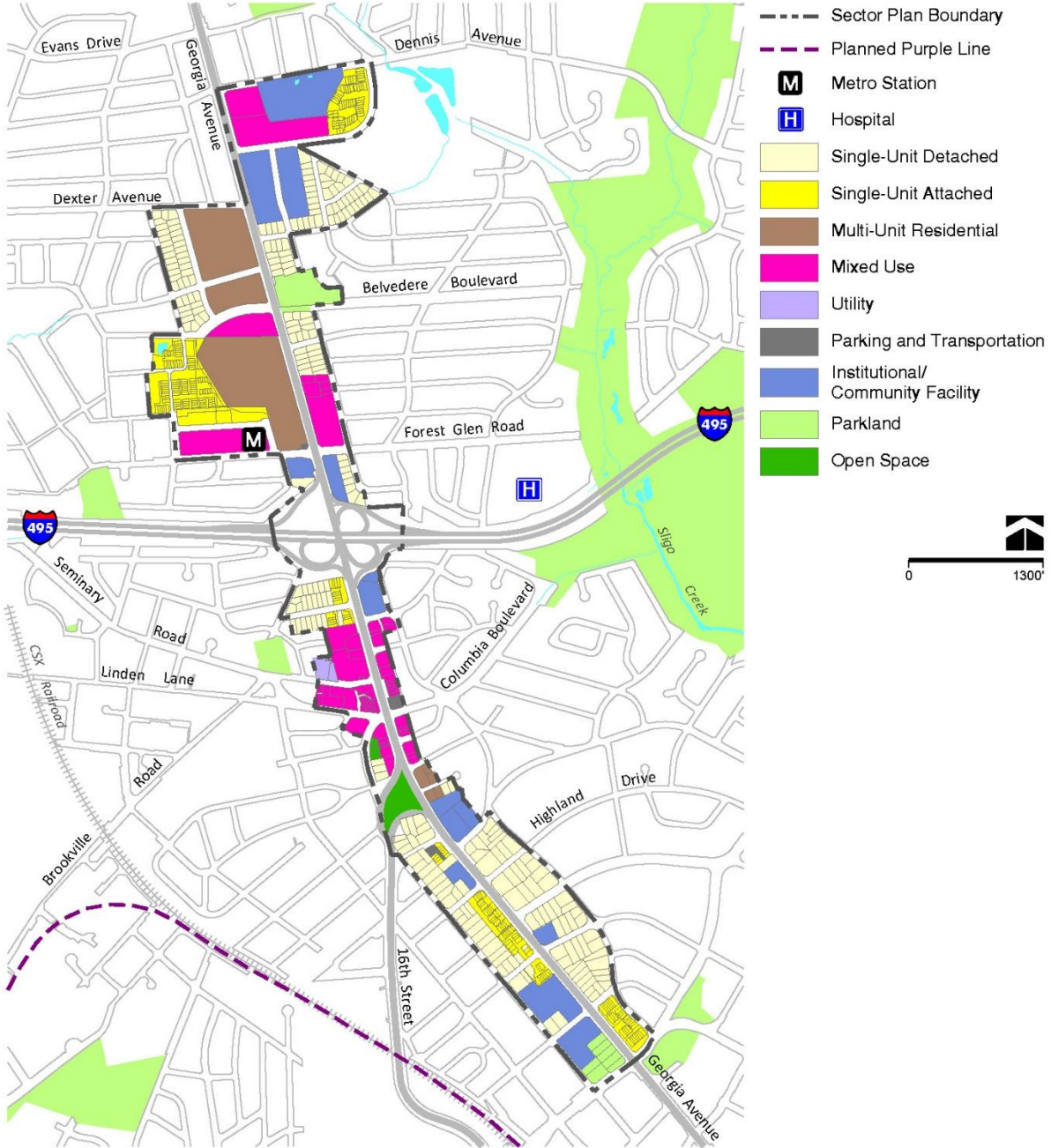
The Woodside Locational Atlas Historic District (M: 36-4) is located partially within the boundaries of the Woodside District. A portion of this historic district was found eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Maryland Historical Trust in 1994. Evaluation of this resource for listing in the Montgomery County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* was initiated several times in the 1990s. This plan recommends reinitiating the evaluation in the near term.

The evaluation of the Woodside Locational Atlas Historic District will consider the possible designation of the entire district, a portion of the district or individual resources currently located within the Locational Atlas district boundaries. One priority will be to seek additional funding for Planning Department staff to resurvey the historic resources of the area and consider alterations and demolitions that have occurred since 1992.

## Existing Land Use

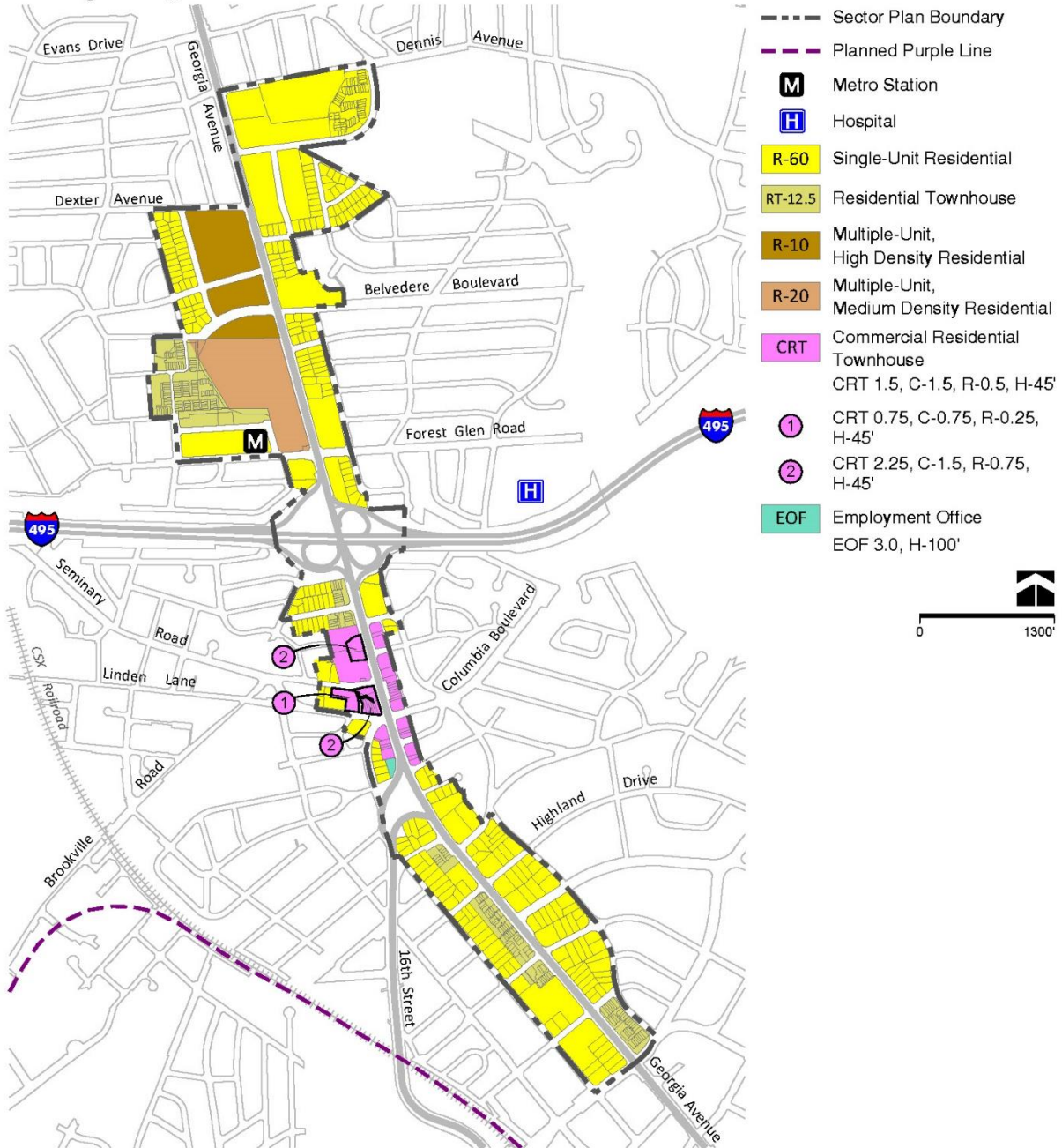


# Recommended Land Use



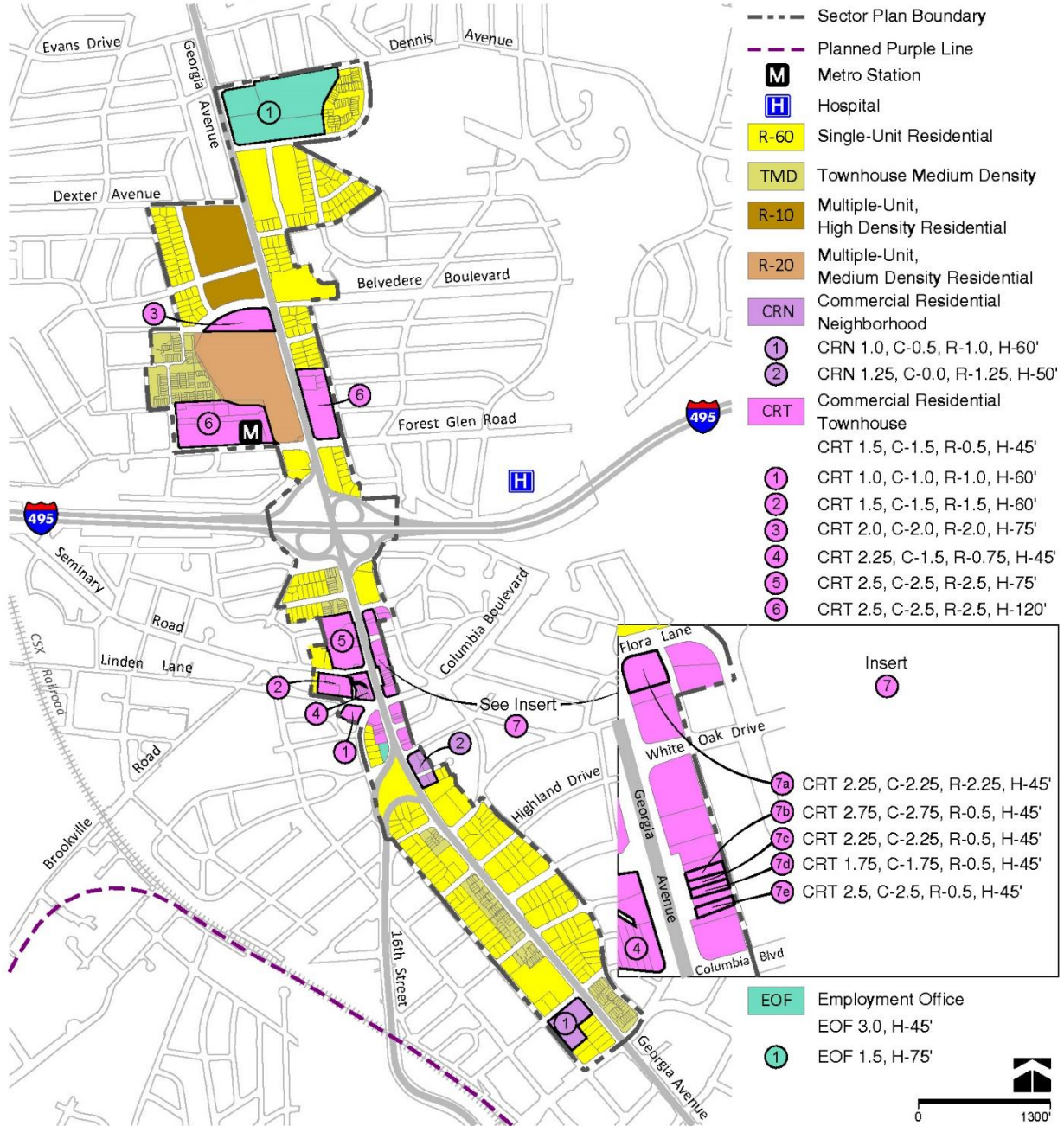


## Existing Zoning





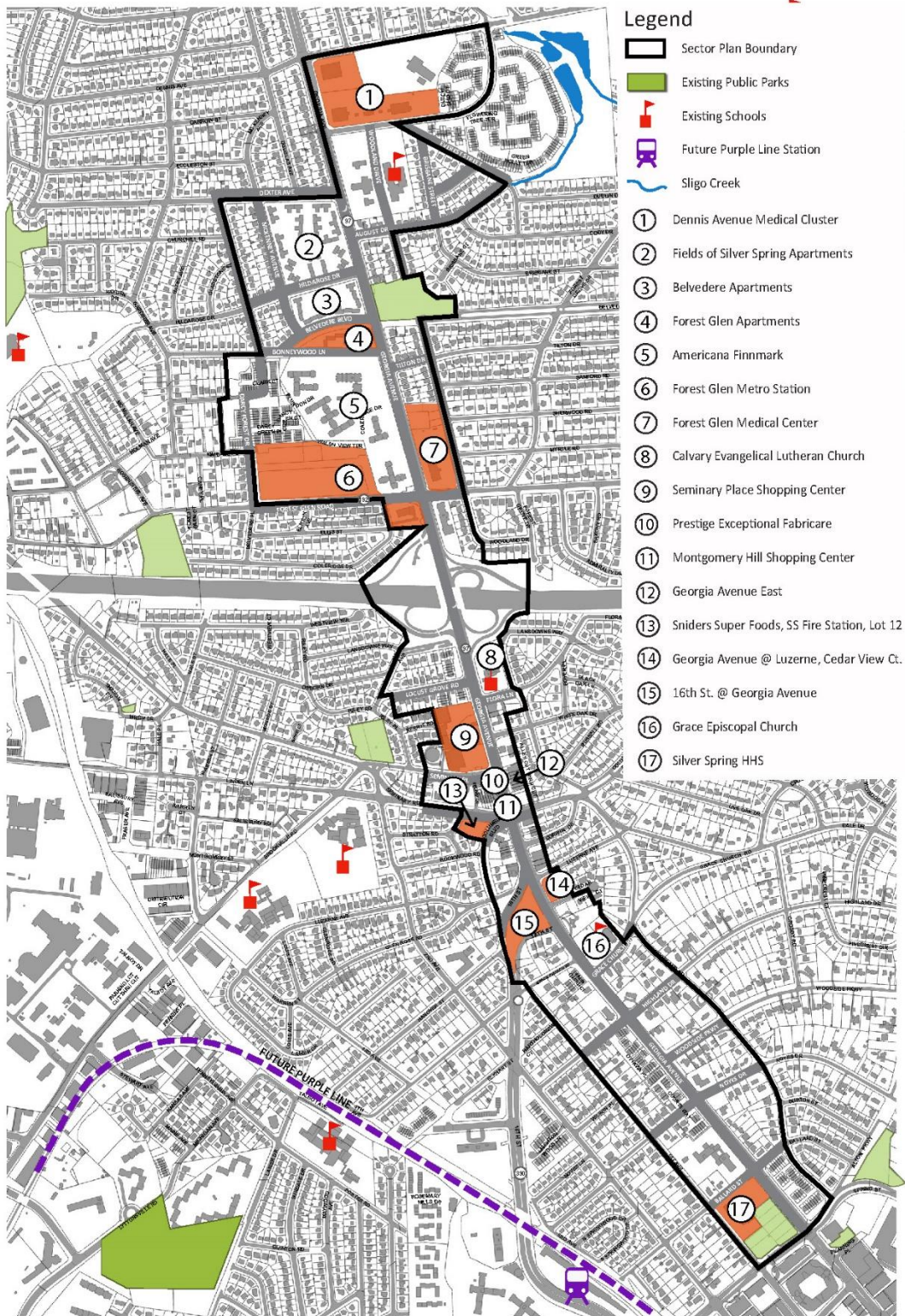
# Recommended Zoning Changes





The plan recognized the following as opportunity sites.

#### OPPORTUNITIES



April, 2019

### 3.3.1 Dennis Avenue Medical Cluster



The Burkland Medical Center, Wolf Medical Center, Doctor's Medical Park East and Montgomery County Dennis Avenue Health Center are current medical office buildings located at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Dennis Avenue. The two parcels that contain the Burkland Medical Center, Wolf Medical Center and Doctor's Medical Park East were allowed by special exception under the Residential-60 (R-60) zone. The Dennis Avenue Health Center, reconstructed in 2016, was not limited to the development standards

of its underlying R-60 zone because it is government-owned facility approved through the mandatory referral process.

Owners of the medical office buildings would like to pursue opportunities to complement their current medical operations with small retail uses, such as a coffee shop and a pharmacy. The current special exception approval process, however, precludes these options.

This plan recommends rezoning all the medical office properties Employment Office (EOF) zone to accommodate the office and employment activity, while allowing for limited residential and neighborhood commercial uses. While there are no current plans for complete redevelopment of the medical office building properties, the combined, adjacent medical office sites could create the potential for a cohesive, employment center to provide improved access and public amenities for patients and staff.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone the Burkland Medical Center (10313 Georgia Avenue) property from R-60 to EOF 1.5, H-75 to provide flexibility to accommodate market changes.
- Rezone the Wolf Medical Center (10301 Georgia Avenue) and Doctor's Medical Park East (2101 Medical Park Drive) properties from R-60 to EOF 1.5, H-75 to provide flexibility to accommodate market changes.
- Rezone the Dennis Avenue Health Center property from R-60 to EOF 1.5, H-75 to provide the opportunity for a comprehensive redevelopment with adjacent properties and accommodate future needs for other county facilities.

##### B. Environment

- Provide environmental site design features to treat storm water on site.
- Plant additional trees to shade and cool parking lots.
- Implement sustainable parking lot elements (see Appendix Section X)

##### C. Urban Design

- Create a ½-acre privately owned public space lined with ground-floor active uses.
- Transition building massing and heights to surrounding properties.
- Plant continuous linear tree panels along Medical Park Drive and Dennis Avenue.

##### D. Transportation

- Extend the bikeway from Woodland Drive through site and integrate it into the privately owned public space.



### 3.3.2 Fields of Silver Spring



The site is approximately 8.4 acres with multiple, two- to three-story apartment buildings. Walkways and surface parking areas extend throughout the property. The site is partially covered by tree canopy cover but does not provide any storm water management treatments. This multi-unit residential development was built in 1947 and currently contains 221 units. It is a low-income housing tax credit project with subsidies set to expire past the intended life of this plan. The Forest

Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan seeks to preserve the existing development, given the lack of redevelopment potential and its value as a stable housing resource near transit.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use

- Confirm the existing R-10 Zone for the Fields of Silver Spring (2103 Hildarose Drive) to preserve this existing housing resource.

##### B. Environment

- Provide environmental site design features to treat storm water on site.
- Plant additional trees to shade and cool parking lots.
- Implement sustainable parking lot elements (*see Appendix Section X*)

### 3.3.3 Belvedere Apartments (2107 Belvedere Boulevard)



The site is approximately 3.3 acres with multiple two- and three-story apartment buildings. The property maintains a significant setback from Belvedere Boulevard with stately mature trees that enhance the neighborhood setting. The trees complement Belvedere Boulevard's street trees, forming a campus-like feeling. Walkways and surface parking areas extend throughout the property without any storm water management treatment facilities.

The Belvedere is a 93-unit development built in 1947 and is a significant source of market-rate affordable housing within the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills community. These apartments are affordable for households earning less than 80 percent of the area median income (AMI), roughly \$88,000 for a household of four (2017 limits).

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan recommends preserving existing zoning, in accordance with the plan goal of balancing preservation and production of housing, as well as preserving market-rate affordable housing, where possible.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use

- Confirm the existing R-10 Zone for the Belvedere Apartments (2107 Belvedere Boulevard) to preserve an existing housing resource near transit.

### 3.3.4 Forest Glen Apartments



The approximately 2.6-acre site is currently improved by garden-style apartments built in the 1950s. It is currently zoned R-10 and has 74 dwelling units. The apartments were recently purchased by the Montgomery Housing Partnership with an original goal of rehabilitation. However, the partnership subsequently determined that rehabilitation was cost-prohibitive due to the age of the structures. The Montgomery Housing Partnership wants to construct a mixed-use, mixed-income development on this site in accordance with the affordable housing goals of this plan.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone Forest Glen Apartments (9920 Georgia Avenue) from R-10 to CRT 2.0, C 2.0, R 2.0, H-75 to encourage redevelopment of predominantly residential uses near transit.
- Prioritize affordable housing as the top public benefit point for optional method development.
- Ensure at least 50 percent of units onsite are affordable in accordance with the plan's goal of preserving and producing affordable housing.

##### B. Urban Design

- Integrate development with surrounding residential communities, transitioning building heights and character to complement existing neighborhood fabric.
- Provide generous tree panels with wide sidewalks consistent with neighborhood character.

##### C. Environment

The property maintains a significant setback from Belvedere Boulevard with stately mature trees that enhance the presence of the buildings. The plantings complement Belvedere Boulevard's street trees, fashioning a campus-like feeling.

In addition to the area wide recommendations:

- Protect or enhance existing tree buffer along Belvedere Boulevard.
- Incorporate the oldest and healthiest trees into the design of the redevelopment project.

### 3.3.5 Americana Finnmark Condominium



Real estate developer Carl M. Freeman constructed and developed Americana Finnmark between 1966 and 1968. Freeman, who founded the Maryland Suburban Home Builders Association and was recognized as one of the top 12 builders in the nation in 1964, introduced and promoted the modernist interpretation of garden apartments in the Washington, D.C. region. His "Americana" brand of apartments (at least four of these complexes were built in Montgomery County) became the prototype for

modernist garden apartments throughout the region and country.

Freeman stressed the preservation of the natural landscape, opted for separate, private entries to create the sense of individual housing in an apartment community and utilized larger expanses of glass and balconies to connect interior and exterior living spaces. He hired architects Albert G. Mumma Jr., and Bucher-Meyers & Associates to design the luxury high-rise tower and garden apartment-styled buildings of



the Americana Finnmark within a landscaped setting. Freeman converted the complex into condominiums in 1974.

1. Recommendations:

A. Land Use and Zoning

- Confirm the R-20 Zone for the Americana Finnmark Apartments (9900 Georgia Avenue) to preserve a stable housing resource near transit.

B. Historic Preservation

- Evaluate the site for potential designation in Montgomery County's *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* or addition to the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*.

C. Environment

- Supplement tree canopy gaps along Georgia Avenue, Blundon Drive, Walsh View Terrace and Forest Glen Road.
- Encourage improved storm water management.

### 3.3.6 Forest Glen Metro Station Parking Lot



This 8.7-acre site contains the existing Forest Glen Metro Station parking lot, bus loop and kiss and ride area. The site is one of the few remaining Metro station surface parking lots and bus loops to not be redeveloped. Any redevelopment should follow best practices and principles of planning and design—smart growth, excellent design, context sensitivity, sustainability and exemplary open spaces. This future project should strive to provide for equitable development that increases the supply of affordable housing and

public amenities in the county. It should have an appropriate building framework that is well integrated into the surrounding neighborhood.

1. Recommendations:

A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone the Forest Glen Metro Station parking lot from R-60 to CRT-2.5, C-2.5, R-2.5, H-120 to accommodate a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development at the transit station.
- Prioritize affordable housing and habitat preservation and restoration as the top public benefit points for optional method development. Provide a minimum of 15 percent MPDUs for the affordable housing public benefit.

B. Urban Design

- Provide open space that is visible and accessible from public rights-of-way and lined with activating ground-floor uses.
- Enhance streetscapes with shade trees and unique street furniture, including outdoor seating areas and a water feature.
- Incorporate townhouses to line or to face Forest Glen Road and preserve compatibility with detached homes on south side of Forest Glen Road.
- Mirror setbacks and open spaces of townhouse development to north of Darcy Forest Road in adjacent development fronting Darcy Forest Road.

C. Transportation

- Abandon the following unbuilt rights-of-way: Kimball Place and Coleridge Road.

- Provide safe, adequate, equitable connectivity for all users of the property.
- D. Parks and Open Space
- Create a civic gathering space at or near the Forest Glen Metro Station of ½ to 1 acre to accommodate community events and festivals.
- E. Environment
- Maintain existing tree-lined buffer along the north and northeastern property boundaries (between existing parking lots, Walsh View Terrace and Coleridge Drive).
  - Achieve a minimum of 60 percent shaded areas within the new civic green to reduce greenhouse gases and heat island effect.
  - Maintain existing trees and supplement tree canopy gaps along Darcy Forest Drive and Forest Glen Road.

### 3.3.7 Forest Glen Medical Center (9801 Georgia Avenue)



Constructed in 1967, the existing medical office building and associated parking lot are situated on roughly 3.9 acres. Approved as a special exception in this R-60 zone, the building is nearing the end of its useful life and continuing maintenance and upgrades may begin to exceed the cost of new development. On the site, a roughly 1.25-acre vegetated area currently serves as a buffer between the office building and adjacent residences.

A planned passageway under Georgia Avenue, providing a direct connection to the existing Forest Glen Metro Station, was recently funded in the capital improvements program budget by the Montgomery County Council. This underground passageway will provide a safe and convenient pedestrian connection between the neighborhoods east and west of Georgia Avenue and direct access to the Metro station entrance.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone the Forest Glen Medical Center (9801 Georgia Avenue) from R-60 to CRT-2.5, C-2.5, R-2.5, H-120 to accommodate a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development at the Metro transit station.
- Prioritize affordable housing and habitat preservation and restoration as the top public benefit point for optional method development. Provide a minimum of 15 percent MPDUs for the affordable housing public benefit.

##### B. Urban Design

- Concentrate building height and density at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Forest Glen Road with appropriate transitions to surrounding residential neighborhoods.
- Consider accommodating an entrance to the planned passageway under Georgia Avenue within the new construction near the Metro station.
- Locate public open space/plaza near the passageway entrance.
- Provide an onsite kiss and ride area from Woodland Drive for transit users.
- Maintain existing curb cuts on Georgia Avenue at the present location or farther north from the intersection.
- Provide a 25-foot setback, at a minimum, from building face to curb along Georgia Avenue and Forest Glen Road to accommodate a generous sidewalk.

### C. Environment

The property contains 1.24 acres of remnant forest on approximately a quarter of the property. The forest is dominated by native black locust trees. However, invasive species are adversely impacting the forest. This area, one of the last remaining forest settings in Forest Glen, should be restored to accommodate passive recreational features, such as benches, pathways, tables, gazebos, etc. Most of the green cover requirements could be satisfied on this portion of the site, allowing for more flexible site design on the remaining property.

In addition to the areawide minimum recommendations:

- Retain the general canopy footprint of the existing forest.
- Provide native canopy street trees along Georgia Avenue and Woodland Drive.

#### 3.3.8 Calvary Lutheran Evangelical Church



Situated on the east side of the street, the property is bounded to the north by the eastbound entrance ramp for I-495, to the south by Flora Lane, to the east by Woodland Drive and to the west by Georgia Avenue. The church complex encompasses five attached buildings constructed over the course of three building campaigns. They include the chapel and administration building, constructed in 1948; a school building, completed in 1951; and a multipurpose building and sanctuary, constructed in 1962.

The property was determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C (Architecture) by the Maryland Historical Trust in 2013. Philip Hubert Frohman, architect of the Washington National Cathedral, designed the compact church. This chapel is an excellent example of Frohman's ecclesiastical work and post-World War II suburban religious architecture. The design marries traditional building styles and materials with those of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century modern movement. It provides an intimate setting for services and is the only known example of Frohman's work in Montgomery County.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Confirm the R-60 Zone for Calvary Lutheran Evangelical Church (9545 Georgia Avenue).

##### B. Historic Preservation

- Evaluate Calvary Lutheran Evangelical Church (M: 36/37) for potential designation in the *Montgomery County Master Plan for Historic Preservation* or as an addition to the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*.

#### 3.3.9 Seminary Place Shopping Center, Shell Gas Station and Montgomery Hills Car Wash



This site comprises three parcels under different ownership and is improved by a strip shopping center, gas station and a car wash. The Seminary Place Shopping Center, largely constructed in 1966, is a major activity center within the plan area. The center comprises two separate parcels, P27 at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Seminary Place with P26 to the north abutting the townhouse development. The Shell Gas Station and Montgomery Hills Car Wash are two separate parcels with frontage on

Georgia Avenue, providing well-used, automobile services.

Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery once occupied this site on Georgia Avenue (formerly Brookville-Washington Turnpike) along with an African American community near this section of the corridor in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1825, a Methodist church likely acquired land for a church and school at the northwest corner of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Seminary Place (the present-day Seminary Place Shopping Center and parking lot for the), but it remains unknown how the church used the property.

Records indicate that an African American congregation built a new wood-frame church here in the 1870s. The church and its associated cemetery remained active for nearly a century, but the congregation sold the lot and relocated to Van Buren Street in Washington, D.C., in 1964. Documents suggest the interments from the cemetery were exhumed and moved to Maryland National Cemetery in Laurel, MD.

The entire church and cemetery site was redeveloped into the shopping center and associated parking lot, but the potential for human remains, funerary artifacts and related significant archaeological resources exists.

The combined sites provide an opportunity for a catalyst redevelopment project for the Montgomery Hills Commercial District.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone Seminary Place Shopping Center (Parcel 26) from CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT-2.5, C-2.5, R-2.5, H-75 to accommodate a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented redevelopment.
- Rezone Seminary Place Shopping Center (Parcel 27) from CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT-2.5, C-2.5, R-2.5, H-75 to accommodate a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented redevelopment with an open space memorializing the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church and cemetery.
- Rezone Shell Gas Station (9510 Georgia Avenue) from CRT-2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45 to CRT-2.5, C-2.5, R-2.5, H-75 to encourage abutting properties to be jointly redeveloped.
- Rezone Montgomery Hills Car Wash (9500 Georgia Avenue) from CRT-2.25, C-0.5, R-0.75, H-45 to CRT-2.5, C-2.5, R-2.5, H-75 to encourage abutting properties to be jointly redeveloped.

##### B. Urban Design

- Create a pedestrian connection through proposed future development to Kermit Road.
- Ensure new streets are pedestrian-friendly with street trees planted approximately 35 feet on center in generous, landscaped panels abutting ample sidewalks.
- Explore within any redevelopment the onsite commemoration of the history and heritage of the former Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church and Cemetery.

##### C. Environment

The Seminary Plaza Shopping Center is nearly 90 percent impervious cover with no storm water management treatment facilities aside from the vegetated island separating 9520 from 9510 Georgia Avenue, the Montgomery Hills Car Wash (9500 Georgia Avenue) and Shell gas station (9510 Georgia Avenue). In addition to the areawide minimum recommendations:

- Provide a linear tree panel with canopy cover trees spaced no less than 30 feet apart along Seminary Place and all new proposed roadways.
- Conduct onsite environmental assessments at the Montgomery Hills Car Wash and Shell gas station, to determine if underground and above-ground contaminants and/or tanks are present. If needed, full contaminant mitigation is required.

#### D. Parks

- Establish a civic gathering space of ½ to 1 acre with the redevelopment of the Seminary Plaza Shopping Center. A memorial site would be appropriate for the historic resources cited in the historic preservation section (F). Ownership of the facility should be considered at the time of redevelopment.

#### E. Transportation

- Redevelopment should implement the Main Street grid and provide for new grid of business streets B2, B3 and B4.
- Provide short-term bicycle parking.
- Provide for a future bus rapid transit station/stop access as a part of any redevelopment.

#### F. Historic Preservation



The graves of the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Cemetery were moved from the Seminary Plaza Shopping Center site to the Maryland National Cemetery in Laurel, MD, by Snowden Funeral Home. However, it is not known how complete the removal of graves was, or whether there may still be intact burials at this location.

As a site listed in the Montgomery County Cemetery Inventory, the property when redeveloped provides for suitable investigations of known cemetery sites for any surviving features and establishes cemetery boundaries.

If graves are found, they should either be marked and preserved in place or removed to Maryland National Cemetery around the previously moved interments. Or the graves could be moved to some other location mutually agreeable to the identified descendants, Van Buren United Methodist Church (the successor church to Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church) and the Montgomery County Planning Board.

- Delineate the location of the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Cemetery (Cemetery Inventory ID #200) listed on the Planning Board's adopted Cemetery Inventory and incorporate protective measures into the redevelopment of the Mount Zion Methodist Episcopal Church and cemetery site.
- Make historic preservation as a priority public benefit for optional method development.
- Treat the former cemetery site with sensitivity as part of future redevelopment plans. Any ground disturbance related to construction or landscaping, either located on or adjacent to the historical church and cemetery site, should be preceded by archaeological investigations to establish whether any intact or partially intact burials remain.
- Provide an open space on the portion of the historic site. The details of design, ownership and interpretation should be determined by the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission with robust community engagement.



### 3.3.10 Prestige Exceptional Fabricare



Prestige Exceptional Fabricare, constructed in 1958, is representative of Googie architecture. Googie is an exuberant, modern architectural style that reflected American futurism and optimism after World War II. In the 1950s, Americans' obsession with atomic energy, space travel, rocket ships, automobiles, plastics, television, new technology and exponential progress drove the design of Googie-styled buildings.

Architects of the movement capitalized on these popular elements, creating primarily roadside buildings, such as coffee shops, restaurants, motels, and bowling alleys with movement, dramatic acute angles, diagonals, free forming boomerang and amoeba shapes, upswept roofs, cantilevered elements, exposed steel and large expanses of glass.

The design of the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare utilizes such elements to create an icon along the busy commercial corridor of Georgia Avenue that contrast with the Tudor Revival-styled shopping centers and rows of commercial buildings on Georgia Avenue. The Prestige Cleaners is one of two remaining Googie-styled dry cleaners in Montgomery County and retains many of its original architectural features.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Confirm CRT-2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45 zone for the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare (9420 Georgia Avenue).

##### B. Historic Preservation

- Evaluate Prestige Exceptional Fabricare (M: 36/89) for potential designation in the Montgomery



County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* or as an addition to the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites*.

##### C. Urban Design

- Integrate signage, markers or public art reflective of the site's history and highlight its unusual architectural character.

### 3.3.11 Montgomery Hills Shopping Center

The Planning Board placed the Montgomery Hills Shopping Center on the *Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites* in 1989 as part of a study of 20th-century resources. In the consideration of the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan in 2000, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and staff considered the property for listing in the county's *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*, but ultimately the Planning Board decided against the HPC's recommendation to designate the shopping center.

The shopping center warrants potential reevaluation due to additional research and augmented contexts regarding the history of the Georgia Avenue corridor. The Tudor-Revival style buildings remain largely intact and retain historical importance as early examples of a pre-suburban shopping center in Montgomery County. Constructed 90 years ago, the Montgomery Hills Shopping Center is the oldest commercial assemblage and a focal point on Georgia Avenue. Historic preservation could serve as a revitalization tool for this group of properties, augmenting the Main Street Program tools, grants and other sources of revitalization funding. The designation could be reconsidered if the owners wished to take advantage of these resources.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Confirm CRT-2.25, C-1.5, R-0.75, H-45 zone for Montgomery Hills Shopping Center (1901-1921 Seminary Road, 9414-9416 Georgia Avenue).
  - Consider nominating the Montgomery Hills Commercial District for Main Street program designation.
- B. Historic Preservation
- Evaluate Montgomery Hills Shopping Center (M: 36/20) for potential designation in the Montgomery County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.
- C. Urban Design
- Integrate signage, markers or public art reflective of the site's history and highlight its unusual architectural character.

### 3.3.12 Georgia Avenue East



The four commercial blocks east of Georgia Avenue include a mix of gas stations, restaurants and other community-serving retail. The area retail is strong with storefronts at or near full occupancy and many long-time businesses. The development pattern consists of one to three-story buildings on lots of varying frontage widths and shallow depths. These patterns combined with multiple ownership complicate the opportunity for land assembly and redevelopment.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

The plan recommends rezoning of several properties that currently exceed the development standards of the underlying Commercial/Residential (CR) zone.

- Rezone 9517 Georgia Avenue from CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT-2.25, C-2.25, R-0.5, H-45 to accommodate the existing conditions.
- Rezone 9439 Georgia Avenue from CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT-2.75, C-2.75, R-0.5, H-45 to accommodate the existing conditions.
- Rezone 9431 Georgia Avenue from CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT-2.25, C-2.25, R-0.5, H-45 to accommodate the existing conditions.
- Rezone 9427 Georgia Avenue from CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT-1.75, C-1.75, R-0.5, H-45 to accommodate the existing conditions.
- Rezone 9421 Georgia Avenue from CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-45 to CRT-2.5, C-2.5, R-0.5, H-45 to accommodate the existing conditions.
- Consider nominating the Montgomery Hills Commercial District for Main Street program designation.

### 3.3.13 Snider's Super Foods, Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Station and Parking Lot 12



A. Snider's Super Foods is a popular grocery store serving the area since 1961. It is predated by the adjacent Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Station #19, which was constructed in 1959. Both serve important functions and provide services to the greater Silver Spring area.

The plan recommends an increase in density to implement the Main Street grid detailed in the Transportation chapter. By incentivizing redevelopment, the plan allows flexibility for property owners, while providing a critical

component of the envisioned street grid.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone Snider's Super Foods (1936 Seminary Lane) from CRT-0.75, C-0.75, R-0.25, H-45 to CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60 to incentivize redevelopment and provide a through street.
- Rezone Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Station #19 (1945 Seminary Lane) from R-60 to CRT-1.5, C-1.5, R-1.5, H-60 to incentivize redevelopment and provide a through street. (See illustration on page 42)
- Rezone Parking Lot 12 (Seminary Road and Columbia Boulevard) from R-60 to CRT-1.0, C-1.0, R-1.0, H-60 to accommodate redevelopment with open green space.



##### B. Urban Design

- Provide a vehicular connection between Seminary Place and Seminary Road. New and existing streets should provide generous, tree-planted panels with ample sidewalks that contribute to the

residential character to the west.

- Transition heights of new buildings to surrounding detached houses.

##### C. Environment

Snider's Super Foods and Silver Spring Volunteer Fire Station are dominated by impervious surface cover. Redevelopment of the site presents the opportunity for design that maximizes storm water management and solar orientation. In addition to the areawide minimum recommendations:

- Prioritize passive and active building orientation and design techniques to maximize energy efficiency and energy conservation.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation intends to preserve Parking Lot 12 in its inventory to accommodate future parking needs that are a result of this plan. However, if parking demand decreases, the lot could be considered for redevelopment. With redevelopment, the plan envisions an open space for community gatherings. A building with ground-floor activating uses would be appropriate in this location in combination with a usable open space. The plan supports the preservation of Parking Lot 12 with the option of redevelopment in the future.

Parking Lot 12 is predominately asphalt, except for a central island planting strip and trees along the sloped southern border. The property receives offsite storm water runoff from the north and western right-of-way of Sutton Place and Seminary Road. Storm water flows across the parking lot from the west where it collects

in the northeastern corner of the parking lot. During heavy rains, storm water flows over the eastern curb and onto the adjacent sidewalk.

1. Recommendations

- A. Environment

- Supply environmental site design (ESD) storm water treatments and other sustainable design elements through a collaboration between the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and Montgomery County Planning Department, and work with the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection.
- Plant trees where feasible to cool surface temperatures, provide shade for users, soften the landscape and reduce heat island effect.

Consider permeable paving in parking spaces. In addition to the areawide minimum recommendations:

- Retain and improve tree buffer along the southern border separating the residential properties from any redevelopment

### 3.3.14 Georgia Avenue at Luzerne Avenue and Cedar View Court



Parcel 329 is a lot fronting Georgia Avenue, just south of the commercial properties, at the intersection with Luzerne Avenue. The parcel is improved by a parking lot and abuts two vacant lots, one with frontage on Luzerne Avenue and the other with frontage on Cedar View Court. The two vacant lots are under single ownership. The plan encourages assembly of the three lots for a dense residential development.

Parcel 374 is a lot fronting Georgia Avenue at the intersection with Cedar View Court abutting the Grace Episcopal Church property. The parcel is largely vacant, improved with a small drive aisle providing access to Georgia Avenue for the adjacent Grace Episcopal Church property. The parcel also abuts a vacant residential lot with frontage on Cedar View Court.

The plan encourages assembly of these two lots for multi-unit, clustered housing, such as townhouses, courtyard dwellings and smaller apartment buildings, that can bridge low and high areas of activity. The plan discourages retail uses as these properties mark the transitional edge of the Montgomery Hills Commercial District.

1. Recommendations:

- A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone Parcel 329 (along Georgia Avenue between Luzerne Avenue and Cedar View Court) from R-60 to CRN-1.25, C-0, R-1.25, H-50 to encourage assembly and medium-density residential housing development.
- Rezone 1722 Luzerne Avenue from R-60 to CRN-1.25, C-0, R-1.25, H-50 to encourage assembly and medium-density residential housing development.
- Rezone 1611 Cedar View Court from R-60 to CRN-1.25, C-0, R-1.25, H-50 to encourage assembly and medium-density residential housing development.
- Rezone Parcel 374 (Georgia Avenue and Cedar View Court intersection) from R-60 to CRN-1.25, C-0, R-1.0, H-50 to encourage assembly and medium-density residential housing development.
- Rezone 1620 Luzerne Avenue from R-60 to CRN-1.0, C-0, R-1.0, H-50 to encourage assembly and medium-density residential housing development.

### 3.3.15 Right-of-Way at 16th Street and Georgia Avenue



The approximately 3.7-acre wooded site situated between 16th Street and Georgia Avenue is right-of-way owned by Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). It is located at the southern edge of the Montgomery Hills District and surrounded by detached houses to the south, east and west, and by low scale commercial and institutional uses to the north. With implementation of MDOT SHA's MD Georgia Avenue Montgomery Hills Study, a portion of the site may be

available for improvement.

The location at the intersection of two major roadways in the plan area allows for a gateway concept to mark the entrance to the Montgomery Hills Commercial District to the north and the Woodside District to the south. This placemaking gateway would act as a transitional element between the commercial district and residential neighborhood.

The plan supports the reuse of this right-of-way for continued public use, particularly as a park. Other uses that incorporate public open space and amenities could also be appropriate. When the area is platted, the plan recommends a detached residential zone consistent with the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Montgomery County Department of Parks envisions this property as public open space, including, but not limited to, the following amenities: a small recreational field, a public garden, a playground, a pavilion and a bike share facility. Should the entire site remain under MDOT SHA ownership, MDOT SHA should collaborate with Montgomery Parks to ensure any remnant portion from the realigned 16th Street and Georgia Avenue intersection is accessible and useful as public open space to the maximum extent possible. Connectivity to the adjacent residential community could be improved with the addition of bike paths, particularly a pedestrian/bike path connection across Georgia Avenue, unifying Luzerne Avenue west and Luzerne Avenue east.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Zone the remnant portion of the MDOT SHA property bounded by Georgia Avenue, 16th Street and Columbia Boulevard to R-60 to accommodate future development as a park or some other compatible public facility that incorporates usable open space.
- Create a new gateway urban recreational park at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and 16th Street to mark the entrance to the community and act as a multi-purpose area for active and passive uses.

##### B. Environment

The forested land is dominated by invasive species that have climbed into the tree canopy, causing early tree mortality and disease. However, this large open space provides valuable habitat that absorbs storm water runoff. As a site within the urban ring as defined by the 1993 General Plan Refinement, its need for treatment facilities should be balanced with the provision of usable space within compact communities where land is scarce. As such, a large regional storm water management pond is strongly discouraged in favor of smaller treatment facilities integrated into a design that would still allow for a green space capable of active or passive use for the nearby communities.

In addition to the areawide minimum recommendations:

- Maintain soil infiltration capacity.



- Incorporate environmental site design (ESD) treatment into the redesign.
- Retain significant and healthy specimen trees on site.

### 3.3.16 Grace Episcopal Church



The Grace Episcopal Church and Cemetery are located within the Woodside Locational Atlas Historic District and determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the Maryland Historical Trust. The congregation established the parish in 1855 and graves in the church yard date from the 1860s to 2015. The present church building is the third at this location, having been built in the 1950s. Early church members included Elizabeth Blair, daughter of Montgomery Blair whose estate became the nucleus of the Silver Spring neighborhood, and sister of Montgomery Blair, Abraham Lincoln's Postmaster General.

Grace Episcopal Cemetery (Cemetery ID #90) is located at the northeast corner of Georgia Ave and Grace Church Road. The cemetery is the oldest extant historical property within the sector plan. Significant grave markers include the 1868 monument to Confederate soldiers.

In 1874, the rector of Grace Church, who had been a chaplain in the Confederate Army, had the graves of 17 men (16 of them unknown) moved to the grounds of Grace Church cemetery. In 1896, the church reinterred the Confederate soldiers to the present-day location to accommodate the right-of-way of a planned streetcar and erected the granite obelisk over the gravesite.

This marker serves as a somber reminder of the threat posed by pro-slavery armed forces to the residents of Montgomery County and Washington, D.C., during the Civil War. The National Register nomination form describes how markers in the church yard reflect changes in cemetery designs between the mid-19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

#### 1. Recommendation:

##### A. Historic Preservation

- The cemetery has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the Maryland Historical Trust under Criterion A for its association with the defeat of Confederate forces at the Battle of Fort Stevens, but it is not presently listed on the National Register. Consideration of this site for designation in the Montgomery County *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* will be undertaken concurrently with the consideration of the Woodside Locational Atlas District.

### 3.3.17 Silver Spring Health and Human Services Center



Located in a repurposed elementary school, the center offers medical and social services assistance to county residents. There are no current plans to relocate or expand the operations. If the current use is vacated and the property deemed as excess, the plan supports redevelopment of the property as housing or a parks facility. The recommended zone would not preclude the expansion of government operations or the adjacent Woodside Park. Any redevelopment should be sensitive to the existing neighborhood character.

#### 1. Recommendations:

##### A. Land Use and Zoning

- Rezone the 2.6-acre, county-owned site, 8818 Georgia Avenue, from R-60 zone to CRN-1.0, C-0, R-1.0, H-60 to allow flexibility for future development of medium-density housing.
- Explore the creation of a new park facility, including an urban ecology center that promotes health and wellness, and encourages the active celebration of nature.

### 3.4 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan falls within the boundary of the Downcounty Consortium. Specifically, the sector plan is served by Albert Einstein High School, Sligo Middle School, Flora M. Singer Elementary School and Woodlin Elementary School.

The following table shows the most recently available actual and projected enrollment and capacity data for these schools with actual enrollment for the current school year and projected enrollment through 2024-25 (released by Montgomery County Public Schools on October 26, 2018).

School		Actual	Projections					
		'18-19	'19-20	'20-21	'21-22	'22-23	'23-24	'24-25
Albert Einstein HS	Program Capacity	1,629	1,629	1,629	1,629	1,629	1,629	1,629
	Enrollment	1,762	1,834	1,893	1,912	1,963	2,063	2,119
	Available Space	(133)	(205)	(264)	(283)	(334)	(434)	(490)
Sligo MS	Program Capacity	920	920	920	920	920	920	920
	Enrollment	657	729	699	709	801	912	965
	Available Space	263	191	221	211	119	8	(45)
Flora M. Singer ES	Program Capacity	680	680	680	680	680	680	680
	Enrollment	670	689	684	660	667	707	735
	Available Space	10	(9)	(4)	20	13	(27)	(55)
Woodlin ES	Program Capacity	489	489	489	489	635	635	635
	Enrollment	579	582	577	571	561	569	584
	Available Space	(90)	(93)	(88)	(82)	74	66	51

#### Existing and Projected School Enrollment

##### A. High School Capacity

As demonstrated in the numbers above, the home school for this area, Albert Einstein High School, is projected to be increasingly over-capacity throughout the six-year capital improvements program (CIP) period. Einstein is part of the Downcounty Consortium (DCC), which includes four other high schools: Montgomery Blair, John F. Kennedy, Northwood and Wheaton.

Students rank their school preferences in eighth grade but are guaranteed enrollment in their home school. All the DCC high schools, except for Kennedy, which has an addition scheduled to open in 2022, are projected to be over-enrolled by 2024. Einstein, Montgomery Blair and Northwood are all projected to be overcrowded for each of the next six years, by a range of 205 to 707 students.

Collectively, the DCC high schools are projected to have 12,210 high school students, with a combined capacity of 10,504 in 2024. The schools are projected to be 1,706 students over-capacity and have a combined utilization of 116.2 percent.

Individually, Albert Einstein (opened in 1962 and last renovated in 1997) is projected to be 490 students over-capacity for a utilization rate of 130.1 percent. Einstein's projected utilization for each of the last four years has been high enough to trigger a development moratorium under the adequacy thresholds established by Montgomery County's Subdivision Staging Policy. However, the County Council has approved a placeholder project for the school with each capital budget from FY16 through FY19, based on guarantees from the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) that it was pursuing a timely solution to Einstein's overcrowding.

If no solution is identified in a future CIP, it is possible the Einstein cluster's service area, including the entirety of the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area, could fall into a residential development moratorium given the projected high school utilization rate.

MCPS has planned two major capital projects that could impact future enrollment at Einstein High School and thus the cluster's moratorium status: the reopening of Woodward High School and the large capacity expansion of Northwood High School. While both projects have construction funds included in the adopted CIP, the completion dates are still to be determined. Upon completion, both projects could potentially serve to alleviate overcrowding at Einstein.

#### B. Middle School Capacity

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area is served by Sligo Middle School, which opened in 1959 and was last revitalized in 1991. MCPS projections have the school's enrollment under capacity each of the next five years and then 45 students over capacity for the 2024-25 school year.

In addition to Sligo, the Einstein cluster includes Newport Mill Middle School, which has a projected enrollment that is 168 students below its capacity. Across the DCC's nine middle schools, Sligo is one of three projected to be over capacity in the sixth year (Argyle and Loiederman Middle Schools are the two others). Collectively, the DCC middle schools are projected to be 102 students under capacity and have a 98.5 percent utilization rate in 2024-25.

#### C. Elementary School Capacity

Two elementary schools serve the sector plan area: Flora M. Singer Elementary School for the Forest Glen community located north of the beltway and Woodlin Elementary School for the Montgomery Hills community south of the beltway. Opened in 2012, Singer is the third newest school among Montgomery County's 134 public elementary schools. In contrast, Woodlin opened in 1944 (eight oldest elementary school) and has not been revitalized since 1974 (14<sup>th</sup> longest among all the elementary schools). Physically, Woodlin is one of the smaller schools in the county (ranked 110<sup>th</sup>) but is located on a relatively large 11-acre site (26<sup>th</sup> largest among the elementary schools).

Singer's utilization is projected to fluctuate over the next six years, though its projected utilization in the sixth year is 108.1 percent. Woodlin is currently overcrowded with a 118.4 percent utilization rate. The Board of Education's adopted CIP, however, includes an addition to Woodlin that would open in September 2022. Therefore, the school's projected utilization in the last year of the CIP is 92.0 percent.

The Einstein cluster includes three other elementary schools (Highland ES, Oakland Terrace ES and Rock View ES), which are collectively projected to be 93.2 percent utilized in 2024-25. Across the entire

Downcounty Consortium, there are 29 elementary schools, 16 of which, to varying degrees, are projected to have enrollments over capacity. Collectively, the consortium elementary schools are only projected to be 15 students over capacity in 2024-25.

### 3.4.1 Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan Impact

The sector plan provides for up to 2,186 new housing units. Based on 1) the zoning proposed in this public hearing draft and 2) the current rate of student generation for this area of the county,<sup>1</sup> it is estimated that these new housing units would result in approximately 372 elementary school students, 150 middle school students and 200 high school students. Build-out of the sector plan requires redevelopment of many properties and is estimated to take 20 to 30 years. Some properties identified for more housing units may not redevelop at all during the life of the plan.

Because the full impact of the plan on school enrollments will not be realized for many years, it is impossible to precisely gauge the impact on public schools. School enrollments in the area will change over the 20 to 30-year time-frame of the plan. In addition, MCPS enrollment forecasts and associated facility plans and capital projects focus on a six-year time-frame—not a 20 to 30-year period.

The planned capital projects described earlier (the addition at Woodlin Elementary School, reopening of Woodward High School and expansion of Northwood High School) can help to address current and short-term capacity needs within the Einstein cluster. Additional solutions may be required, particularly at the elementary school and high school levels, should the full vision of the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan be realized.

#### 1. Recommendations:

Typically, MCPS would explore the following range of options to serve additional students, should the need arise:

- Build an addition at the overcrowded school, if feasible based on-site constraints and optimal school size standards.
- Determine if space is available at nearby schools in the area and reassign students to a different school.
- Build an addition at a nearby school and reassign students to the school with increased capacity.
- Reopen a previously closed school located within the Einstein cluster or elsewhere within the Downcounty Consortium. There are 14 former school sites located in the Downcounty Consortium area, including several located within the Einstein cluster: Forest Grove Elementary School (leased to Holy Cross Hospital), MacDonald Knolls ES (houses county programs), Pleasant View ES (leased to a private school), Woodside ES (houses the county's Department of Health and Human Services) and Montgomery Hills Junior High School (leased to a private school).
- Construct a new school. There are currently no future school sites identified in the Einstein cluster. A site selection process would be conducted for a new school and co-location, alternative school designs and/or land purchase may be required.

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<sup>1</sup> The current student generation rates were calculated using housing and student enrollment data from fall 2016. New rates, using housing and student enrollment data from fall 2018 will be used to estimate enrollment impacts in July 2019.

- Move academic programs out of the overcrowded school to a different school.

Additionally, in January 2019, the Board of Education voted to hire a consultant to conduct an in-depth review and analysis of existing school and cluster boundaries, in part to explore options to better balance utilization across schools. The consultant's report is anticipated to be completed in spring 2020, and its findings may present additional options to be considered that may have an impact on capacity utilization within the Einstein cluster. Ultimately, any solution pursued (whether resulting from the consultant's report or from the list of typical options above) would require future Board of Education action.



## Chapter 4: Implementation

The vision of the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan will be implemented through a combination of public and private initiatives. These strategies include the redevelopment and upgrading of private properties, new public facilities made possible through federal, state and county capital improvement programs, and public/private partnership projects.

### A. Zoning

Following the sector plan's approval by the County Council and adoption by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, a sectional map amendment (SMA) will apply the plan's zoning designations to the official zoning map of Montgomery County.

### B. Commercial Residential (CR) and Employment Office (EOF) Zones

The CR and EOF zones will allow for higher density under the optional method of development along with the requirement for public amenities. These public benefits and amenities are categorized and assigned benefit points. To meet the threshold set by optional method development, projects must meet the category and point benefit requirements. The plan prioritizes the following public benefits for all optional method development projects, except where noted in the Chapter 3 site-specific recommendations:

- Major public facility, including bus rapid transit (BRT) stations and undergrounding of utilities.
- Minimum parking
- Tree canopy
- Exceptional design
- Public open space
- Energy conservation and generation

### C. Updated Road Design Standards

This plan supports the creation of a road design standard equivalent to Montgomery County's Context Sensitive Road Design Standards for Urban Roads. These standards are applied to multimodal corridors, such as the Georgia Avenue corridor in the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area. The creation of new road design standards for the county can occur through the Vision Zero Action Plan or an alternative process to update the county's road design standards to reduce speeds and lane widths, and improve infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users.

### D. Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area

The plan recommends the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) initiate a joint Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area (BiPPA) plan for the two existing BiPPAs, Forest Glen and Montgomery Hills, to identify and prioritize plans for implementing small but necessary pedestrian improvements.

These upgrades should include retrofitting existing curb ramps to meet ADA design standards, removal of obstructions in sidewalks and improvements at existing and master-planned protected crossings.

Ideally, this effort will be launched soon after the adoption of this plan to capitalize on the momentum generated for these recommendations.

### E. Capital Improvements Program

As defined by the Montgomery County Charter (Section 302), the County Executive is required to submit a comprehensive six-year program for property and program enhancements, called the capital improvements program (CIP), not later than January 15 of each even-numbered calendar year. The charter mandates that the annual capital budget for the county be consistent with the six-year program. In odd-numbered calendar years, the approved CIP, together with any amendments, continues to guide capital investments.

The CIP includes all capital projects and programs for all agencies for which the county sets tax rates or approves budgets or programs. The CIP includes the following actions:

- States the objectives of capital programs.
- Relates capital programs to the county's long-range development plans.
- Recommends capital projects and their construction schedules.
- Estimates costs, anticipated revenue sources and impacts of the capital program on county revenues and the operating budget.

Planning for capital improvements is tied to the county's continuing development and growth in population, numbers of households and businesses. Land use master plans and sector plans for the county's geographic planning areas anticipate needs for roads, schools and other facilities required by new or changing populations. The CIP table outlines the CIP projects recommended in this plan.

Table: Capital Improvements Program			
Project Name	Category	Lead Agency	Coordinating Agencies
Construct the Forest Glen Passageway.	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA
Redesign Georgia Avenue as a Main Street.	Transportation	MDOT SHA	MCDOT, M-NCPPC
Study of potential design alternatives of the Beltway Interchange at Georgia Avenue.	Transportation	MDOT SHA	MCDOT
Study and design of new protected crossings on Georgia Avenue in the Forest Glen District	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA

Study and design of new protected crossings on Georgia Avenue in the Montgomery Hills District	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA
Stud and design of new trail crossing at Luzerne Avenue and Georgia Avenue.	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA
Study and design of new protected crossings on Georgia Avenue in the Woodside District	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA
Conduct traffic calming studies along Woodland Drive, Dale Drive, Forest Glen Road, Locust Grove Road, Columbia Boulevard, Forest Glen Road, First Avenue, Second Avenue, and Seminary Road.	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA
Install new sidewalks segments as identified with the PLoC analysis	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA
Improve existing unacceptable sidewalks as identified with the PLoC analysis	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA
Dale Drive Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety project.	Transportation	MCDOT	
Study and design the recommended extension of Woodland Drive (B-1).	Transportation	MCDOT	M-NCPPC
New separated bike lanes on Georgia Avenue, Columbia	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA, M-NCPPC

Boulevard, 16 <sup>th</sup> Street and Forest Glen Road.			
New bike lanes on Seminary Road.	Transportation	MCDOT	M-NCPPC
Neighborhood Greenways on Columbia Boulevard, Woodland Drive, Lansdowne Way, Second Avenue, Douglas Avenue, McKinney Avenue, Hiladrose Drive, Greeley Avenue, Darcy Forest Drive	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA, M-NCPPC
Bikeshare stations	Transportation	MCDOT	M-NCPPC
Study the capacity of intersections along Georgia Avenue within the Montgomery Hills District and identify mitigation strategies after MDOT SHA improves the Beltway interchange with the MD 97 Montgomery Hills Project	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA, M-NCPPC
Bus Rapid Transit Study Corridor 2: Georgia Avenue South	Transportation	MCDOT	MDOT SHA, M-NCPPC
Micro-transit Pilot	Transportation	MCDOT	M-NCPPC
Improve Y and Q local bus route operations on Georgia Avenue	Transportation	WMATA	MCDOT, M-NCPPC
Urban ecology center	CIVIC	PARKS	M-NCPPC
Gateway urban recreational park	CIVIC	PARKS	M-NCPPC

## F. Small Business Support

With some notable exceptions, such as Holy Cross Hospital, nearly 90 percent of the businesses in the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan area are small and employ 25 people or less. Thus, they require targeted financial and technical assistance programs to stabilize and expand their businesses.

Montgomery County partners with several local community banks, non-profits and community development financial institutions (CDFIs) to provide a range of lending options for small businesses in the sector plan area. These banks match Montgomery County government deposits, effectively doubling the funds available for small business loans.

The county also contracts with CDFIs, such as Life Asset and Latino Economic Development Corporation, to fund microloan programs for small businesses in Montgomery County. These programs may have less stringent financial requirements than directly borrowing through the county.

Montgomery County also provides a grant to Impact Silver Spring, an organization supporting worker-owned cooperatives for residents to self-fund businesses. Access to credit and capital encourage business reinvestment, expansion and entrepreneurship opportunities so critical to maintaining an active and vibrant commercial area.

Aside from financing assistance, many small businesses also benefit from technical assistance in managing a variety of their business operations, such as bookkeeping, navigating county permits and licensing, rearranging product mix, etc.

The Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Market Analysis, commissioned by the Montgomery County Planning Department as a part of the research process for this plan, notes that while many of these businesses had a long standing and established customer base, they did not always cater to the preferences of many neighborhood residents. Identifying how these retailers could expand their products to appeal to these community groups could diversify their customer base and make their businesses more resilient.

Furthermore, the transportation recommendations in this plan and improvements planned by the Maryland State Highway Administration for Georgia Avenue may affect small businesses in Montgomery Hills and make them eligible for the Montgomery County Economic Development Corporation's (MCEDC) Small Business Impact Assistance Funds. These funds are available to businesses "adversely impacted by a redevelopment project constructed by a private entity for use in whole or in part by the county as a public facility [in a County Executive-designated area]."

Small, independent businesses within specific sales and size criteria that can demonstrate they are financially healthy can receive up to \$25,000 under this program. These funds can be used both during the redevelopment process and after its completion.

The county and its partners should preemptively provide technical assistance to small businesses within the sector plan area so that they can be eligible for the program.

Critical to the success of the retail in Montgomery Hills is a lively, engaging, visually appealing and walkable environment. Businesses and property owners may eventually opt to impose a "self-tax"



through a business improvement district or a merchant's association –setting their own objectives – as a quick and direct way to revitalize the area.

#### G. National Trust for Historic Preservation - Main Street Program

Strategies to improve the public realm and storefronts, strengthen and preserve existing businesses and undertake marketing and promotion efforts – approaches that are foundational to the Main Street® program run by a subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation – should be applied here. The following principles are the cornerstone of the Main Street approach, which creates opportunity to integrate the district into the community and advance revitalization efforts:

- **Comprehensive.** Downtown revitalization is a complex process that cannot be accomplished through a single project. For successful, long-term revitalization, a comprehensive approach must be used.
- **Incremental.** Small projects and simple activities lead to a more sophisticated understanding of the revitalization process and help to develop skills so that more complex problems can be addressed, and more ambitious projects undertaken.
- **Self-Help.** Local leaders must have the desire and will to make the project successful. The New Market Skills Center of Washington, DC provides direction, ideas and training, but continued and long-term success depends upon the involvement and commitment of the community.
- **Public-Private Partnership.** Both the public and private sectors have a vital interest in the economic health and physical viability of the Montgomery Hills Commercial District. Each sector has a role to play, and each must understand the other's strengths and limitations so that an effective partnership can be forged.
- **Identifying and Capitalizing on Existing Assets.** Business districts must capitalize on the assets that make them unique. Every district has unique qualities, like distinctive buildings and scale, that give people a sense of place. These local assets must serve as the foundation for all aspects of the revitalization program.
- **Quality.** Quality must be emphasized in every aspect of the revitalization program. This high standard applies equally to each element of the program, from storefront design to promotional campaigns to educational programs.
- **Change.** Changes in attitude and practice are necessary to improve current economic conditions. Public support for change will build as the program grows.
- **Implementation-Oriented.** Activity creates confidence in the program and even greater levels of participation. Frequent, visible changes are a reminder that the revitalization effort is underway. Small projects at the beginning pave the way for larger activities as the program matures.

Many of these principles align with the more walkable, bikeable vision set forth in the improvements for the Georgia Avenue corridor, as proposed by the Maryland State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA), that could be funded through the state.

Our recommendation is to consider nominating Montgomery Hills for Main Street program designation. Funding of a dedicated staff member to run this program may come through Montgomery County, business and property owners, grants or ideally a combination of all.

This nomination could be reinforced by the potential designation of historically significant commercial structures in Montgomery Hills to the county's Master Plan for Historic Preservation. In the absence of a Main Street designation or dedicated funding, community residents, local businesses and county representatives should work together to apply the program's principles and methods to enhance, beautify and, ultimately, reshape the commercial center.

Additionally, Montgomery Hills businesses that expect to be affected by the impending MDOT SHA Georgia Avenue improvements may be eligible for the county's Small Business Impact Assistance Grants, which can be used to fund the principles of the Main Street program and preserve the commercial corridor.