



## Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment: Work Session No. 4: Mobility Analysis

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### SUMMARY

The fourth *Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment* work session will focus on:

1. Key Plan area transportation comments and recommendations;
2. Comments received from the public, stakeholders and the Planning Board in previous work sessions; and
3. Suggested changes for the Planning Board's consideration.

On December 5, 2019, staff presented the Plan's key preliminary transportation recommendations to the Planning Board. The Board largely supported the preliminary recommendations, including enhancements to Crabbs Branch Way, general Vision Zero safety recommendations, and the removal of the MD 355 and Gude Drive interchange from the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*. During the Board's review of the preliminary recommendations in December 2019, the Planning Board posed transportation-related questions regarding the potential for a new Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) MARC Rail station proximate to the Shady Grove Metrorail station, specific Plan area intersections, and coordination with external State agencies.

The Planning Board received additional comments from the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, City of Rockville, and Town of Washington Grove during the Public Hearing and asked additional questions during the first three work sessions about the viability and location of a MARC station as well as inquired more specifically about safety at the intersection of Crabbs Branch Way and Shady Grove Road.

This work session will focus on the questions raised by the Planning Board, comments received during the Public Hearing and potential changes to the Public Hearing Draft Plan's recommendations for the Board's consideration, in an effort to address the comments received.

## **SCHEDULE**

Staff anticipates facilitating its fifth and final work session with the Planning Board on September 24, 2020. The fifth work session will focus on sustainability, parks, open space, public facilities and Plan implementation.

## **WORK SESSION PURPOSE**

The purpose of the fourth work session is threefold:

- Initiate a dialogue on the Plan's transportation recommendations;
- Review transportation-related feedback from the Planning Board and other key stakeholders including the community, the City of Rockville, and the Town of Washington Grove; and
- Suggest updates to the Plan's transportation recommendations.

It has been several months since staff presented the Plan's preliminary transportation recommendations to the Planning Board. As such, staff will begin the work session by reacquainting the Board with the Plan's most significant transportation recommendations. Next, staff will review suggestions and feedback received to date on the transportation recommendations in the Plan's Public Hearing Draft. Finally, staff will introduce suggested changes to the Plan's recommendations for the Board's consideration to address comments received.

Staff anticipates updates to the Public Hearing Draft's mobility section. These would be dependent on guidance from the Planning Board, and in summary would include:

- Potential revisions related to MARC Rail service recommendations, particularly regarding level of specificity;
- Potential addition of a recommendation related to expansion of the Greater Shady Grove Transportation Demand Management District;
- Potential revisions related to the Plan's NADMS goals;
- Emphasizing language about restrictions related to auto capacity enhancements, in support of the Plan area's NADMS goals;
- Recommendations regarding support for micromobility services;
- Potential recommendations related to the yet-to-be realized segment of Midcounty Highway; and
- Potential additional comments and recommendations related to Oakmont Avenue.

## **SIGNIFICANT PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

This Plan amendment revisits the 2006 *Shady Grove Sector Plan* area through the lens of Vision Zero. It also brings a fresh perspective to the Plan area regarding the relevance of significant capital projects, balancing long-term vision with a pragmatic budgetary outlook.

## Vision Zero

The planning process assessed the Plan area's existing conditions in the context of Vision Zero across multiple domains, which are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Vision Zero Related Transportation Evaluation Domains

| Evaluation Medium                    | Description   | Results  |
|--------------------------------------|---|--|
| Stakeholder "Walkshop"               | Staff performed a "walkshop" (walk-audit/workshop combination) on June 3, 2019, which included 25 attendees from five different agencies with interests in the Sector Plan Area.  | The <a href="#">transportation appendix</a> includes a description of the program, routes, and walkshop findings (pg. 5). Comments informed the Plan's overarching Vision Zero recommendations and the prioritized list of Vision Zero improvements captured in Table 9 within the <a href="#">appendix</a> .  |
| Pedestrian Level of Comfort Analysis | Staff undertook a "Pedestrian Level of Comfort" (PLOC) analysis using a beta-version of the Department's PLOC tool to assess pedestrian facility gaps and deficiencies. The analysis was updated following the release of the Public Hearing Draft to be consistent with revisions to tool's methodology, which was updated through the <i>Pedestrian Master Plan's</i> planning process. | Figure 37 in the <a href="#">transportation appendix</a> depicts existing links and gaps in the Plan area. Most of the Plan area's facilities are "somewhat uncomfortable" or worse. Of the 5,015 dwellings within a 30-minute walkshed, only 748 (15%) of these of these facilities have comfortable walking connections to the Shady Grove Metrorail Station. Crossings of major highways within the Plan area function as significant barriers. These facilities have multiple lanes and turn lanes but lack comfortable pedestrian refuges. Additionally, many pedestrian facilities in the Plan area lack adequate buffers to separate pedestrians from roadway traffic. Results informed the Plan's overarching Vision Zero Plan recommendations and the prioritized list of Vision Zero improvements captured in Table 9 within the <a href="#">transportation appendix</a> . |
| Pedestrian Delay Analysis            | Staff assessed pedestrian delay, defined as the number of seconds an individual must wait on average to cross a roadway. As wait time increases, walking becomes a less desirable mode of transportation and pedestrian signal non-compliance issues increase.  | Average pedestrian delay was found to be excessive across major highways during the AM and PM morning periods. These roadways (MD 355, Redland Road, Crabbs Branch Way, and Shady Grove Road) surround the Metrorail Station, the Plan area's point of greatest pedestrian demand. The Plan recommends minimizing pedestrian delay at signalized locations along MD 355 and recommends the prohibition of two-stage crossings to avoid further degradation of the pedestrian experience. Two-stage crossings can be appropriate Vision Zero treatments at unsignalized locations, but at signalized  |

| Evaluation Medium          | Description  | Results  |
|----------------------------|--|--|
|                            |  | locations, two stage crossings generally result in signal phasing programs that force pedestrians to wait within a confined refuge, increasing pedestrian delay in a more vulnerable location and decreasing pedestrian compliance. Findings from the delay analysis can be found on page 24 of the <a href="#">transportation appendix</a> .  |
| Spot Speed Studies         | Because speed contributes to crash occurrences and is associated with higher rates of serious injuries or fatalities, staff performed thirteen-hour spot speed studies along six key locations in the Plan area.   | Staff found that along the six tested segments, 48 percent to 84 percent of drivers exceeded the posted speed limits. The Plan recommends context sensitive measures to reduce speeds along Shady Grove Road, and a new geometric alignment on Crabbs Branch Way intended to slow traffic. Table 9 of the <a href="#">transportation appendix</a> includes more specific recommendations, including the placement of speed enforcement cameras and context sensitive improvements.                           |
| Sector Plan Crash Analysis | Staff mapped the 1,347 crashes that occurred between January 2015 and March 2019 using geospatial information from the state, county, and proximate municipality police departments. Police reports were obtained for all crashes that involved non-motorists or crashes that resulted in a severe injury or a fatality. | Approximately 2.45 percent of the area's crashes resulted in a severe injury or a fatality. 3.79 percent involved a non-motorist, and six of the non-motorist crashes resulted in a severe injury or fatality. In total, three fatalities occurred in the Plan area between January 2015 and March 2019. Staff identified crash trends, and used these to inform the Plan's overarching Vision Zero recommendations and improvements recommended in Table 9 of the <a href="#">transportation appendix</a> . |

A summary of generalized safety findings follows below:

- General Pedestrian Safety:** The existing pedestrian network has only a few gaps, but these are located on high speed roadways (Redland Road and Shady Grove Road). There is a lack of separation (i.e. buffering) between the roadway and pedestrian and bicycle facilities along prominent sections of Plan area roadways, such as MD 355. Furthermore, pedestrians traversing these roadways must cross multiple travel lanes, oftentimes without appropriate median refuges. Pedestrian delay reduces the convenience of walking and likely contributes to non-compliance at signals. Addressing the Plan area's gaps, improving separation, and preventing further signal delay will improve safety in the Plan area and make walking a more desirable transportation option.

- **Crashes Involving Non-motorists:** Right-turn movements accounted for 31 percent of crashes involving non-motorists, suggesting right-turn on red restrictions could improve safety in the Plan area, particularly at the hotspots of Crabbs Branch Way & Redland Road and Shady Grove Road & Crabbs Branch Way. Consolidating or relocating commercial driveways along MD 355 may also improve safety for non-motorists. Left-turn movements accounted for 23 percent of non-motorist crashes. Hotspots included Crabbs Branch Way & Redland Road, Redland Road & Somerville Drive, MD 355 & King Farm Boulevard/King Farm Boulevard Extended, and MD 355 & Redland Road. Crash records suggest that reassessing the necessity of permissive lefts could improve safety for non-motorists at the locations listed above. While master plans do not typically address operations, the removal of targeted permissive lefts was included in one of the Plan's 15 modeling scenarios, and results are included in Table 13 (pgs. 70 and 71) of the [transportation appendix](#).
- **Severe and Fatal Crashes:** 48 percent of crashes resulting in a severe injury or fatality involved a left-turn movement. Hotspots include MD 355 & King Farm Boulevard/King Farm Boulevard Extended, Shady Grove Road & Oakmont Avenue, Shady Grove Road & Epsilon Avenue. Excessive speeds contributed to severe and fatal crashes along MD 355, Shady Grove Road, Crabbs Branch Way, and Gude Drive.

The analyses and findings above resulted in both general and location-specific safety recommendations, which are formalized as recommendations in the Plan and advisory recommendations in the Plan's [transportation appendix](#). The latter document includes both engineering improvements and operational recommendations, which typically fall within the purview of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). These are sorted into high, medium, and low priority recommendations (see Table 9, page 49).

The general, overarching Vision Zero recommendations set broad expectations for the Plan area that are consistent with the County's approach to Vision Zero. These include:

- Require a minimum of six feet of separation between the roadway and pedestrian and bicycling facilities;
- Where an adequate six-foot buffer cannot be achieved, require vertical separation to protect pedestrians, bicyclists, and micromobility users from moving traffic;
- Ensure all crossings are ADA compliant with curb ramps oriented in the direction of crossing; and
- Limit curb radii to a maximum of 25 feet within the Plan area.

Additional specific recommendations with safety value are included throughout the Public Hearing Draft of the Plan, as documented in Table 2. The list below excludes items addressed in the [transportation appendix](#) and revisions to the Plan's bicycle network.

Table 2 – Specific Safety Recommendations within the Plan

| Recommendation Type   | Recommendation  | Page        |
|---|---|-------------|
| Development-Related Impacts/ Local Area Transportation Review | Significant multimodal improvements, including transitways and Vision Zero improvements, shall be a high priority public benefit for development applications in the CR Zone.   | 104         |
|   | [Restrict] the implementation of additional travel or turn lanes until safety and person-throughput can be demonstrated.  | 134         |
| Speed Reduction   | Provide context sensitive design measures [on Shady Grove Road], such as 10-foot lane widths to support a desired target speed of 25 miles per hour within the Urban Road Code Area and 30 miles per hour (beyond the Urban Road Code Area).  | 109         |
|   | Lower the target speeds on [Shady Grove Road] to create a consistent safer speed across the corridor through engineering and enforcement.   | 109         |
|   | Convert the existing center turn lane between Indianola Drive and Redland Road into a vegetated median to slow traffic on Crabbs Branch Way]. The median should extend into or through crosswalks at existing or future crosswalk locations.  | 111         |
|   | [On Indianola Avenue] explore reducing travel lanes through curb extensions and striping, east of Crabbs Branch Way.  | 128         |
| Pedestrian Crossings  | Minimize pedestrian delay (also called “holding area wait time”) at signalized locations on MD 355 where pedestrians cross transit facilities and prohibit two-stage crossings.   | 107         |
|   | Provide pedestrian refuge divisions within the Plan area. If a dedicated BRT lane(s) is provided in a center roadway median, the design should account for ADA compliant refuges at pedestrian crossings.   | 107         |
|   | Consistent with Vision Zero Principles, if future amendments to the County’s Subdivision Staging Policy (SSP) recommend alternative or differing operational adequacy metrics than average intersection delay, remove the channelized right turns at Shady Grove Road and MD 355, as well as Gude Drive and MD 355. | 109 and 112 |
|   | In locations where sidewalks cannot be implemented on both sides of [Redland Road due to right of way constraints along the predominantly single-family detached roadway], provide adequately marked crossings with pavement markings and compliant pedestrian-crossing signage, where appropriate.                 | 128         |
|   | Provide a safe, stop controlled crossing facility with a traffic control device, such as a full traffic signal or pedestrian hybrid beacon at Miller Fall Road and the entrance to Shady Grove Middle School to provide access to the proposed sidewalk and existing bus stops.                                     | 129         |
|   | Explore opportunities to improve pedestrian crossings of Shady Grove Road at Mid County Highway, including the removal of the partial-free right turn.  | 129         |
| Existing Sidewalk Gaps  | [On Redland Road] provide a sidewalk connection between Overhill Road and Briardale Road, which is currently missing.   | 128         |

| Recommendation Type          | Recommendation   | Page |
|------------------------------|--|------|
|                              | Install sidewalks where they are missing along the northern portion of Shady Grove Road between Crabbs Branch Way and Mid County Highway.            | 128  |
|                              | Provide a sidewalk along Mid County Highway, with the first priority section to be installed between Shady Grove Middle School and Shady Grove Road. | 129  |
| Access Management            | Promote shorter block lengths and consolidate entrances along MD 355, especially in the Metro South neighborhood.                                    | 112  |
| Bike Facilities <sup>1</sup> | [Recommend] a sidepath along the northern side of Indianola Drive between MD 355 and Crabbs Branch Way.  | 128  |

The Plan recommendations support the safety of the Plan area’s most vulnerable users and align with the County’s Vision Zero Policy.

#### *2006 vs. 2020: A New Perspective on Significant Capital Projects*

The 2006 *Shady Grove Sector Plan* included a number of recommendations that would require significant capital investment, including three master-planned interchanges and support for the Corridor Cities Transitway, an infill Metro Station at Montgomery College (just south of the Plan Boundary in the City of Rockville), and an infill Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) MARC Rail station at Shady Grove.

Only one of these major capital projects—an interchange connecting I-370 with Metro Access Road and Shady Grove Road—has been realized since 2006. This interchange was constructed as a component of the State’s Intercounty Connector (the ICC, also denoted MD 200).

For the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) an Environmental Assessment (EA) and a 30 percent design was advanced for the nine-mile phase I section. While the State has maintained the facility in its 2020-2025 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP), no additional funds have been programmed, leaving the immediate future of the facility uncertain.

*Infill Metrorail Station at Montgomery College:* The other listed projects have yet to advance. The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) studied the potential for an infill Metro station proximate to Montgomery College as a component of their 2014 *Connect Greater Washington* study. The results of this scenario-planning effort suggested that roughly 2,000 daily riders would use the potential station, but that only 550 of these would be *new* Metrorail riders, and that the new service station would cannibalize ridership from the proximate Shady Grove and Rockville Metrorail Stations. Furthermore, the study found that community connectivity to a new potential station would be poor due to the surrounding suburban street layout, and that the projected future densities of two households per acre and eight jobs per acre were too low to support the investment. Despite these findings, this Plan Amendment recognizes the potential station’s importance to Montgomery College and the City of Rockville. As such, the Plan retains the long-term recommendation to encourage further reassessment (Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Public Hearing Draft, 104).

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<sup>1</sup> This category references a recommendation for a new bicycle facility not currently envisioned in the *Bicycle Master Plan*. It excludes the Plan Amendment’s revisions and confirmations of the County’s *Bicycle Master Plan*, which are discussed elsewhere.

*Infill MARC Rail Station at Shady Grove & the Corridor Cities Transitway:* The 2006 Sector Plan recommends an infill MARC Station at Shady Grove but does not detail this potential station's location nor describe how such a station could be realized. This Plan amendment retains this approach for the purpose of flexibility. Determinations regarding implementation and location would require significant negotiations between the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), Montgomery County, Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), CSX, and potentially the Northeast Maryland Waste Disposal Authority. Identification and retention of space at a specific location prior to an engineering feasibility assessment could impact the near-term land development potential of proximate properties.

It is important to note that CSX controls the Brunswick Line's right-of-way. The freight operator has an explicit policy of prohibiting the addition of new passenger service stations along the line without the closure of existing stations. State or local acquisition of the line or the realization of additional mainline track (often referred to as "third track" by the general public) would negate this issue; however, these prospective solutions are long-term and would cost at minimum \$720 million per MTA's 2019 *MARC Cornerstone Plan*, rendering the potential for a Shady Grove station a long-term recommendation as well. There are existing MARC Rail stations within the vicinity of the Plan area that likely generate less demand than what would be anticipated at Shady Grove considering its status as a major transportation node; however, staff did not undertake a formal ridership assessment or comparative analysis. This type of complex functional analysis extends beyond the typical purview of the master planning process.

The current *Corridor Forward* scenario-planning effort may examine trade-offs associated with opening new MARC rail stations. Additionally, *Corridor Forward* is anticipated to help decisionmakers determine whether investment in MARC should be a County priority relative to other options, including the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). The subject Plan amendment retains support for a locally serving rapid transit service such as the CCT, but also suggests that the existing CCT route may be revisited by *Corridor Forward*.

*MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit:* Beginning in 2015, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) advanced its study of rapid transit service along MD 355. The project developed a Purpose and Need Statement and an assessment of Conceptual Alternatives for corridor-running bus service. MCDOT initiated an Alternatives Analysis in 2018, which ran concurrently with the Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment's planning process. Both dedicated curb-running and median-running options were modeled during the master planning process as related to intersection performance. Initially, median-running options assumed two dedicated BRT lanes on MD 355; however, later scenarios were adjusted to assume one peak-hour BRT lane running through the Plan area, which was consistent with the advancement of MCDOT's alternatives analysis.

The Planning Board reviewed a Mandatory Referral for the MD 355 BRT in July 2019, recommending median-running alternative B, which provides two dedicated median lanes. Council subsequently reviewed the options but did not make a final determination on an alternative. Option "B Modified," which was not recommended by the Board, received a significant degree of interest from Council. While Option "B Modified" has not officially been selected, at the time of this writing, this option appears to be advantageous given the operational performance and reliability benefits of a median-running system at lower capital and operating costs when compared to alternative "B," which provides two dedicated lanes.



*Capital Cost Trade-Offs:* Table 3 provides planning-level capital costs for three of the four significant long-term Plan area transit investments discussed above. Beyond transit, Table 3 includes the projected planning-level cost of a single-point urban interchange (SPUI) option for MD 355 & Gude Drive, as recommended by the 2006 *Shady Grove Sector Plan*. At \$75 million, the interchange represents approximately nine percent of the capital costs of the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit Alternative “B Modified,” or approximately ten percent of the capital cost of additional mainline track and yard capacity enhancements that would need to precede the development of any new MARC Rail station proximate to Shady Grove.

Table 3 – Capital Costs for Significant Plan-Area Relevant Projects

| Project   | Capital Costs                | Source & Date   |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| MD 355 Bus Rapid Transitway – Alternative “B Modified”  | \$820 million (2019 Dollars) | Phase 2 Corridor Summary Report, October 2019                       |
| Phase 1 – Corridor Cities Transitway  | \$838 million (2019 Dollars) | Environmental Assessment (EA), August 2017                          |
| Brunswick Line Enhancements - Additional Mainline Track & Maintenance Yard Capacity Improvements <sup>2</sup> | \$720 million (2019 Dollars) | MTA MARC Rail Cornerstone Plan, November 2019                       |
| Infill Metro Station at Montgomery College  | Not Studied                  | Not Studied/Applicable  |
| MD 355 & Gude Drive Interchange<br>( <i>not recommended</i> )   | \$75 million (2019 Dollars)  | Sabra Wang & Associates Interchange Feasibility Analysis, July 2019 |

While infrastructure funding is not intrinsically a zero-sum game, this Plan recognizes the challenge of advancing multimodal projects as they often must compete with auto-oriented projects for the same funding opportunities. Because it is unrealistic to expect that each of the projects detailed in Table 3 will be realized within the lifespan of the Plan, and to further the multimodal transportation goals in Montgomery County as reinforced by the Countywide Transit Corridors Master Plan, the draft *Thrive 2050 General Plan*, and draft Complete Street Design Guidelines, staff recommends removing the lowest-priority project for the Plan area – the MD 355 & Gude Drive Interchange.

*MD 355 & Gude Drive Interchange:* Engineering consultant Sabra Wang & Associates worked with staff to assess the feasibility, costs, and benefits of a potential interchange at MD 355 and Gude Drive ([transportation appendix](#) (pg. 88)). This process documented significant property, access, and environmental impacts related to the implementation of either a single-point urban interchange (SPUI, shown in Figure 1) and Gude Drive Overpass (Figure 2), the two most viable interchange options. The Gude Drive Overpass option, which is projected to have a lower cost and fewer impacts than a single-point urban interchange, was modeled using a microsimulation tool. Microsimulation suggested that physical improvement of the intersection could result in modest benefits for some movements (particularly free flow movements on Gude Drive), but degradation to others. Upstream and downstream congestion along MD 355 prevents an isolated improvement from having any significant residual travel time benefit. In other words, queuing at intersections to the north and south of MD 355 and Gude Drive negates any supposed benefit of an interchange.

<sup>2</sup> The \$720 million cost shown includes strategic enhancements to the Brunswick Line’s storage and maintenance yards and additional main line tracks between Washington & Silver Spring, Garrett Park and Gaithersburg, and Gaithersburg & Boyds. These enhancements would allow for new limited midday service. Such enhancements would need to be made prior to the development of any additional station. As such, costs for the development of a Shady Grove MARC Rail Station are not included here; a planning-level assessment of such costs has not been undertaken by the State or County.

Figure 1 – Single Point Urban Interchange

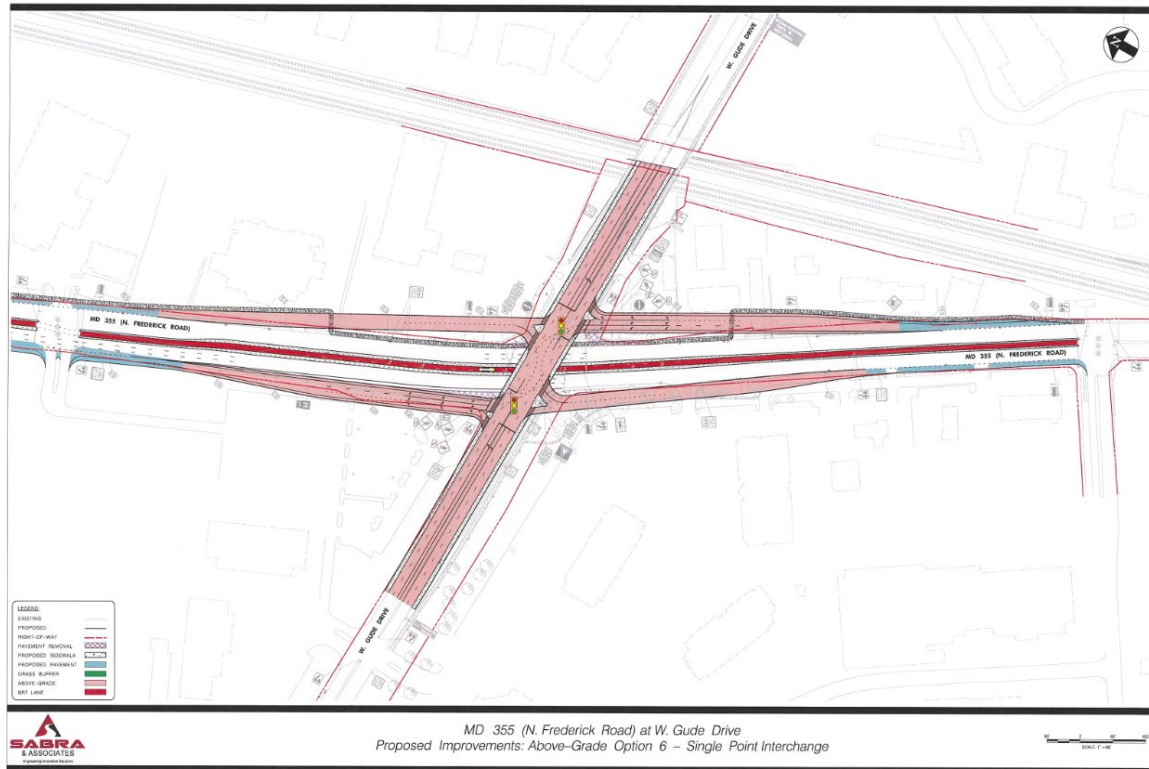
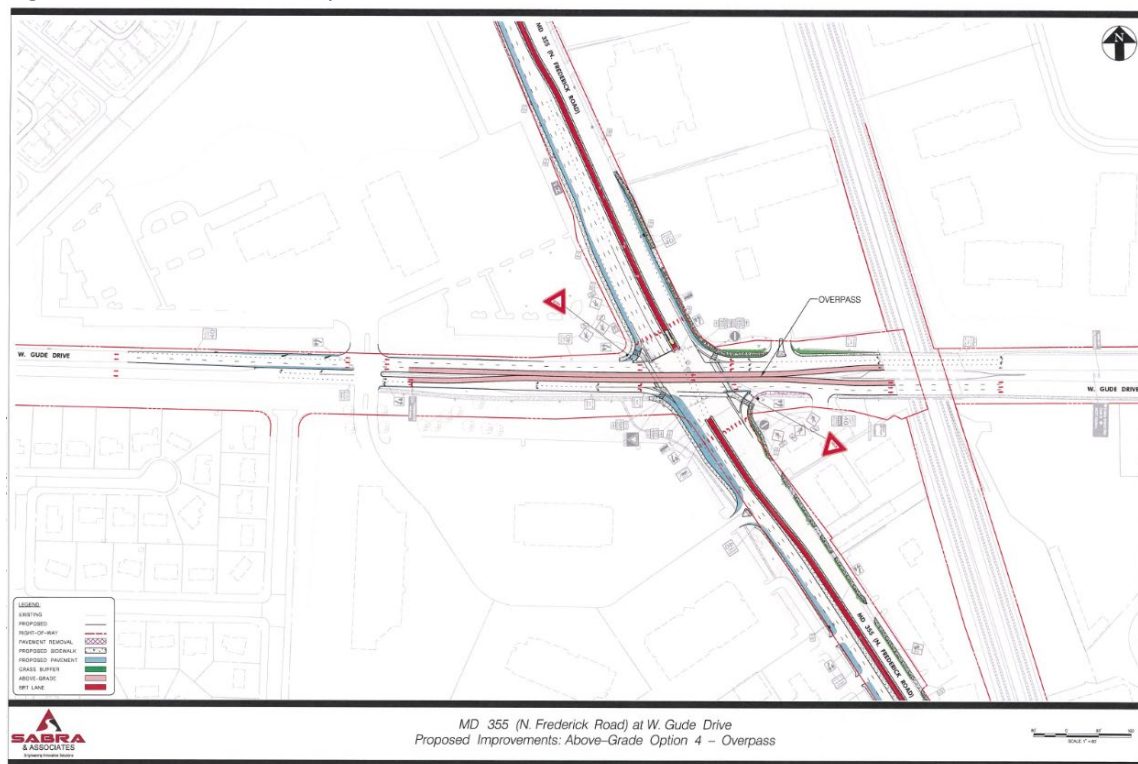


Figure 2 – Gude Drive Overpass



Both the City of Rockville and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation have commented that the State's Managed Lanes project may result in a new I-270 access point along Gude Drive, and that because of this, further evaluation of the interchange is warranted following a better understanding of the State's plans. If such an access point were to be implemented, it stands to reason that intersection volumes would increase, and that the heaviest movements would facilitate traffic from eastbound Gude Drive onto northbound MD 355 toward the Shady Grove Metrorail Station in the morning, and southbound from MD 355 back onto westbound Gude Drive in the evening. As an interchange would facilitate traffic more quickly to MD 355 in the morning, existing upstream congestion would likely be exacerbated, further reducing the benefit of any physical improvement. Department staff are working to obtain the necessary information from the State's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to better understand the order of magnitude for any potential volume increase associated with the Managed Lanes, but recommend the Board reaffirm its desire to remove the planned interchange from the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* as it is less desirable than other transit-oriented improvements.

The Plan's consultants demonstrated that more minor geometric improvements could be made to MD 355 and Gude Drive, and that these improvements would bring the intersection's average delay below the 80 seconds/vehicle standard proposed by staff. The 80 seconds/vehicle proposal aligns with the Board's thinking related to its review of the Planning Board Draft of the *2020-2024 County Growth Policy*. The *2020-2024 County Growth Policy*, which has been transmitted to Council following the Board's approval, recommends a 100 seconds/vehicle average intersection delay threshold for intersections along planned Bus Rapid Transit Corridors, including MD 355. Planning staff anticipates the 80 seconds/vehicle threshold would be superseded by any more liberal policy approved by the County Council.

*Partial Crabbs Branch Way and Metro Access Road Interchange:* Beyond the MD 355 and Gude Drive interchange, the 2006 *Shady Grove Sector Plan* recommended a partial interchange at the Crabbs Branch Way overpass of Metro Access Road. This recommendation preceded the development of the Intercounty Connector (MD 200) and its associated I-370 & Metro Access Road interchange. Based on staff's research, the 2006 partial interchange recommendation was intended to relieve capacity concerns at Crabbs Branch Way & Shady Grove Road. Under existing conditions, a partial interchange is not warranted as relief at Crabbs Branch Way & Shady Grove Road is no longer necessary.

In 2040 conditions, modeling runs suggest that the intersection delay at Crabbs Branch Way & Shady Grove Road may exceed the current 120 second policy area delay threshold in the afternoon only assuming transportation demand management goals *are not met*. If the Plan's recommended transportation demand management goals can be met, the intersection is anticipated to operate with acceptable levels of delay. We note that outyear modeling for fine-grained intersection operations is not very reliable. Because the interchange was not warranted under existing conditions and could likely be mitigated using transportation demand management in the 2040 build year, staff did not undertake a cost assessment of the interchange. Staff recommends the Board remove the previously approved partial interchange from the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* in favor of prioritizing transit-oriented improvements.

*A New Perspective on Significant Capital Improvements - Conclusions:* Staff recommends the Planning Board prioritize transit improvements rather than the previously planned interchanges, which should be removed from the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*. Maintaining the recommendations from

the 2006 Plan would not create false expectations for the community but maintain recommendations that envision long-term change. Staff additionally recommends the Planning Board continue to support proximate bus rapid transit options—including the MD 355 BRT and the CCT—which have enjoyed some degree of advancement over the past decade.

## **PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT FEEDBACK**

*Planning Board Feedback:* In previous briefings and Plan work sessions, the Board has indicated an interest in the following topics:

1. The location and land needs associated with the recommendation for a new MARC Rail station;
2. The following specific intersections:
  - a. Shady Grove Road & Crabbs Branch Way
  - b. MD 355 & Shady Grove Road
  - c. Shady Grove Road & Choke Cherry Road (outside Plan area)
3. Coordination with other Planning efforts, including Corridor Forward and the State’s Managed Lanes Study;
4. Coordination with State agencies, including the Maryland Transit Administration and the Maryland Transportation Authority.

This memo addresses issues related to MARC Rail on page 8. Staff will seek input from the Planning Board on recommendations related to specific intersection improvements and capacity, as well as other planning efforts, and is also prepared to respond to specific questions from the Board on these topics during the work session.

*Montgomery County Department of Transportation:* The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) provided several comments on the Public Hearing Draft. Minor edits to the Plan text and images will be addressed in the redlines to the Public Hearing Draft for the Planning Board’s review and concurrence. However, larger comments meriting more detailed discussion are listed below:

1. MD 355 & Gude Drive Interchange
2. Additional Mainline Needs for MARC Rail
3. Park N’ Ride Capacity
4. Bus Movements within the Metro Station Area
5. Non-Auto Driver Mode Share Goals
6. Development of a Unified Mobility Program that Supports the Plan Area’s NADMS Goals
7. Micromobility
8. Midcounty Highway

1. MD 355 & Gude Drive Interchange: Planning staff’s position on the MD 355 & Gude Drive Interchange is detailed on page 9 of this memorandum.

2. Additional Mainline Needs for MARC Rail: Comments on the potential for MARC Rail in the Plan are provided on page 8. MCDOT has encouraged staff to consider whether a recommendation for property dedications to support additional mainline track and a potential station should be directly stated. Recent Department Plans adjacent to MARC Rail have not recommended additional dedication, including the 2018 *White Flint 2 Sector Plan* and the 2020 *MARC Rail Communities Plan*. The transportation [appendix](#)

for the more recent *MARC Rail Communities Plan* suggests that mainline track improvements (often referred to as “third track”) would require 25 feet on the northern side of the line; however, the Plan does not formally recommend property dedication. The *White Flint 2 Sector Plan* discusses the potential for a new station but is deferential to the Maryland Department of Transportation’s MTA regarding implementation. The *White Flint 2 Sector Plan’s* [appendix](#) depicts an illustrative location for a White Flint MARC Station, but the Plan does not discuss property dedication or reservation of space. While staff’s current approach in the Public Hearing Draft is consistent with these efforts, we look to the Board for guidance should there be a desire to formalize recommendations related to property dedication.

3. Park N’ Ride Capacity: The Montgomery County Department of Transportation has requested the Plan discuss the WMATA Metrorail’s station’s status as a “terminal station,” particularly with respect to Park and Ride. Staff feels that the existing references in the Plan are sufficient. The [transportation appendix](#) includes details about how people access the WMATA Metrorail Station. The latest station access survey was taken in 2016, which indicated 46.3 percent of riders drove alone and presumably parked in one of the station’s 5,745 proximate parking spaces (the greatest number of spaces at a station within the WMATA Metrorail system, see Figure 13 in the [transportation appendix](#)). In fiscal year 2016, there were 11,880 average weekday station boardings (see Figure 12 in the [transportation appendix](#)). This suggests roughly 5,500 spaces are used daily, leaving approximately 245 spaces unused per day.

4. Bus Movements within the Metro Station Area: The Planning Board’s input on the *Thrive Montgomery 2050* General Plan effort suggests that plans should focus on establishing densities that can support the necessary critical mass for transit. Planned transit services such as the MD 355 Bus Rapid Transit and the Corridor Cities Transitway will improve access to the Metrorail Station from locations beyond the Plan area. The Plan supports improving rapid transit bus movements within the vicinity of the Metrorail Station. Figures 13 and 14 of the Public Hearing Draft depict illustrative street sections that accommodate dedicated bus service along streets that feed into the Metrorail Station. These sections are illustrative as service concepts have yet to be formalized; however, the sections attempt to balance existing streetscape features such as mature trees and grade constraints with the potential of uninhibited bus movements.

5. Non-Auto Driver Mode Share Goals: The Montgomery County Department of Transportation’s Commuter Services Division provided comments on the Plan’s Non-Auto Driver Mode Share (NADMS) Goals. The Public Hearing Draft recommends:

- Support for a 50 percent NADMS goal for residents living in the Metro Station Policy Area (MSPA) for all home-based work trips (commute trips);
- Support a 35 percent NADMS goal for residents living in the portions of the Sector Plan beyond the Metro Station Policy Area for all home-based work trips (commute trips); and
- Increase the existing NADMS goal for employees commuting into the Plan area who reside elsewhere from 12.5 percent to 25 percent.

The Commuter Services Division has requested that the goals be reduced to 45 percent, 30 percent, and 20 percent respectively, noting that the goals are too ambitious given the current level of transit service available to the Plan area. We recommend retaining the respective 50 percent and 35 percent goals for MSPA residents and Sector Plan area residents living beyond the MSPA but seek guidance from the Board regarding a goal for employees commuting into the Plan area.



A 50 percent blended goal was recently approved for the 2018 *Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro Area Minor Master Plan*, which is a similar size to the MSPA and has similar facilities (a WMATA Metrorail Redline, proximate local and express bus service, and *future* planned rapid transitway facilities). Furthermore, the travel demand production matrix located on page 69 of the [transportation appendix](#) suggest that today, 36.9 percent of home-based work trips originating in the MSPA are transit trips. The Department's 2040 build year assumes Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP) rapid transit services—as is generally accepted by the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments—and results in a 43.4 percent transit mode share. This means that, beyond the implementation of the Corridor Cities Transitway and MD 355 rapid transit service, additional interventions must account for 6.6 percent of the desired mode shift. Staff note that such interventions will in part be required through mandated project-based Transportation Demand Management Plans per NextGen TDM legislation as codified in Chapter 42A section 26.

The travel demand production matrix suggests that transit mode share for residents within the Sector Plan boundary but beyond the MSPA is anticipated to be 27.3 percent, resulting in a 7.7 percent gap between what is anticipated for 2040 and the Plan's recommended goal. Staff agree with the Commuter Services Division that a 35 percent goal is aspirational. We are aware that the Greater Shady Grove Transportation Demand Management (TDM) District does not encompass the entire Sector Plan Boundary. As such, staff suggests the Board consider an additional recommendation to extend the boundaries of the existing TDM District. We also note that Department modeling tools do not account for telework, which staff anticipates will increase in future years.

The 2006 *Shady Grove Sector Plan* recommends a 12.5 percent NADMS goal for office commuters working within the Plan area. The travel demand model attraction matrix located on page 69 of the [transportation appendix](#) suggests that 14 percent of Sector Plan area workers (in both the MSPA and larger area) will arrive by transit, resulting in an 11 percent gap that would need to be achieved through interventions. The Division of Commuter Services suggests that the goal may be too high, particularly because no high-quality transit is envisioned to serve the area from points east. Staff looks to the Board for guidance on the request to reduce this specific goal.

Interventions are necessary to reduce the gaps between anticipated mode and desired transit mode share. Foremost, staff suggests the Board strengthen the Plan's recommendations regarding the restriction of roadway capacity improvements (pg. 134), to include the language below.

*This plan recommends restrictions on the implementation of additional travel or turn lanes until safety, person-throughput, and progress toward the Sector Plan's NADMS goals can be demonstrated.*

The rationale for this suggestion is based on the logic that improvements in roadway capacity increase the convenience of driving and consequently reduce the competitiveness of alternate modes. Vehicle capacity enhancements effectively work against the Department of Transportation's effort to achieve a given NADMS goal.

6. Development of a Unified Mobility Program that Supports the Plan's NADMS Goals: Staff received comments from MCDOT related to the exploration of a Unified Mobility Program (UMP) as an implementation tool. This tool would be used to support the Plan's Non-Auto Driver Mode Share Goals. Staff notes that the restriction of vehicular capacity enhancements are best served to support transit's competitiveness with automobile travel. Staff is open to exploring how an UMP can support Plan goals but would not recommend the Board support an UMP that includes vehicular capacity enhancements.

Instead, staff recommends enhancements that support transit mobility and safety within the Plan area, including the Plan's recommended vision for Crabbs Branch Way, improvements listed in Table 9 of the [transportation appendix](#), and enhancements for future BRT services.

7. Micromobility: The Montgomery County Department of Transportation requested the Plan more directly feature micromobility. Staff appreciates this suggestion and will integrate micromobility references into the Plan's narrative and transportation recommendations. Also, staff recommends including the following recommendation into the Bicycle and Pedestrian Network section:

*Support micromobility in Plan area through the provision of planned bicycle facilities and dedicated space for accessible, weather-protected storage in new developments.*

8: Midcounty Highway: Finally, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation inquired about the status of Midcounty Highway between Shady Grove Road and the Intercounty Connector (MD 200). The master-planned segment traverses an environmentally sensitive area, and an interchange connecting to the Intercounty Connector (MD 200) was not constructed with the construction of the highway. Beyond environmental degradation, this connection would have significant costs. While the challenges associated with implementing this segment are discussed in the draft Plan, direct recommendations for this master-planned segment are excluded. County Council Resolution No. 18-957 (2017) directed staff to exclude this segment from master plan travel demand modeling, and as such, staff adhered to this direction for the Plan amendment. Because the segment has mobility implications for points north far beyond the Sector Plan area, staff believes that this Plan amendment is not the appropriate forum to develop recommendations that impact countywide mobility. Should the Planning Board or County Council feel the need to more formally affirm or deprogram the segment, staff recommends Council position this as a focus point in the next update of the County's *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*. This process would involve a broader public outreach effort that reaches beyond the confines of the Sector Plan area.

*City of Rockville:* Transportation-related comments from the City of Rockville include comments on the MD 355 & Gude Drive interchange, a recommendation for a grade-separated pedestrian/bicycle crossing over MD 355 at King Farm Boulevard, and a proposed technical correction regarding the County's policy area standard.

1. MD 355 & Gude Drive Interchange: Staff's position and recommendation for the MD 355 and Gude Drive intersection is detailed on page 9 of this memorandum. Correspondence from the City of Rockville's Planning Chair states that increasing the delay threshold will "permit more development, while lessening the likelihood that a significant investment will take place to address the problem." Staff agrees that significant investment to improve person-throughput capacity in the Plan area is warranted but believes that—based on our detailed interchange feasibility, impact, and benefit analysis—an interchange is not the best significant investment for Shady Grove or the larger community. We appreciate Rockville's commendation of the Plan's transit-oriented recommendations, including support for the MD 355 BRT, the CCT, improved MARC Service, and the exploration of an infill WMATA Metrorail Station at Montgomery College.

2. Grade Separated Crossing Over MD 355 at King Farm Boulevard: Staff does not recommend a grade-separated crossing over MD 355 at King Farm Boulevard and instead favors Vision Zero-oriented safety improvements, such as the removal of permissive lefts, the minimization of pedestrian delay, the provision of medians, etc. These improvements are more cost-effective and align with the urban

environment envisioned for the Plan area. Grade separated crossings require significant ramping, and for some users, are less desirable than facilities without significant slope change.

3: Technical Correction Regarding Policy Area Standard: Finally, staff believes that the proposed technical correction is not necessary and results from confusion related to nomenclature. The County's 2016 Subdivision Staging Policy defines "Rockville City" as an orange policy area, and the County's accepted Local Area Transportation Review (LATR) sets the policy area's acceptable threshold of average intersection delay at 63 seconds per vehicle. The City of Rockville (that is, the municipality) employs a different measure of effectiveness for intersection performance. The County and the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg share a memorandum of understanding regarding the traffic assessment for development projects, in which the accepted method of assessment is to be determined by the approving jurisdiction. No such agreement exists for master plans, which assess long-term traffic impacts.

*Town of Washington Grove:* Transportation-related comments from the Town of Washington Grove focus on the Town's bicycle connections to the Plan area and Oakmont Avenue. In regard to the former, the Plan recommends an off-street trail along Piedmont Crossing Local Park, beginning at Brown Street and terminating at Amity Drive (pg. 131). This recommendation is consistent with the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*. The Town requests that the Plan generalize language in Table 3 for the western termini of the connection to read "Washington Grove" rather than "Brown Street" because the Town is currently working with MCDOT on the Amity Drive connector project. This project, which is a facility plan, is examining multimodal options to improve connectivity to the Metro Station. The Town, as well as residents in the Town, additionally recommends that Table 4 be updated with similar generalized language. While staff generally supports the request, the *Bicycle Master Plan* identifies specific network segments, and as such, the Town's requested format is atypical.

The Town contends that pedestrian safety along Oakmont Avenue has been largely ignored in the draft Plan Amendment. Staff agrees that the segment presents a very poor and unsafe pedestrian experience for users. The segment within the Plan area includes a significant number of sidewalk gaps. In some locations where sidewalks are present, they abut the roadway and lack separation from traffic. In locations where sidewalks abruptly terminate, crossings are not marked. Conditions are far from ideal.

Oakmont Avenue is currently classified as an 80-foot arterial by the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*. Today, the right-of-way width for the segment falling within the Plan area ranges between 25 feet and 80 feet. Generally, narrower sections prevail. The Plan did not recommend rezoning as the existing industrial uses are operating successfully. As there is no incentive to redevelop, it is unlikely that the recommended right-of-way width could be achieved in the life of the plan without property takings. A continuous sidewalk on one side of the street cannot be achieved today without property taking and utility line relocations, which would be an expensive capital project. Existing lane widths are approximately 13 feet. While two feet from each lane could be repurposed per the County's draft *Complete Streets Design Guidelines*, consistent with the Industrial Road typology, existing storm drain and swale channel infrastructure would need to be relocated and reconstructed. These constraints led staff to remove the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan bicycle facility recommendation from the roadway as it did not seem realistically achievable. A parallel connection to the Town of Washington Grove could provide an achievable alternative.



Staff also recommended the road be reclassified from an 80-foot arterial to a 60-foot industrial roadway to better align with existing conditions given the lack of prospect for redevelopment. Despite this change, staff notes that the 70-foot standard for a two-lane minor arterial (there is no existing two-lane 80-foot arterial standard) and the 60-foot industrial roadway standard are largely consistent. The 70-foot standard increases the adequate 8.5-foot separation between the sidewalk and the roadway to be 13.5 feet (see Figures 3 and 4 below). Other than buffering, the widths for each element of the two different standards are the same, and both include sidewalk facilities.

Unfortunately, without a mechanism to obtain right-of-way or relocate existing structures and utilities, discussions regarding classification are largely academic. As such, staff recommends the Board consider the addition of the following recommendation: *Encourage coordination between existing property owners, the County, and the Town of Washington Grove to improve pedestrian safety along Oakmont Avenue, including the provision of a continuous sidewalk on at least one side of the roadway.*

Figure 3 – Two-Lane Industrial Street Standard MC-2006.01

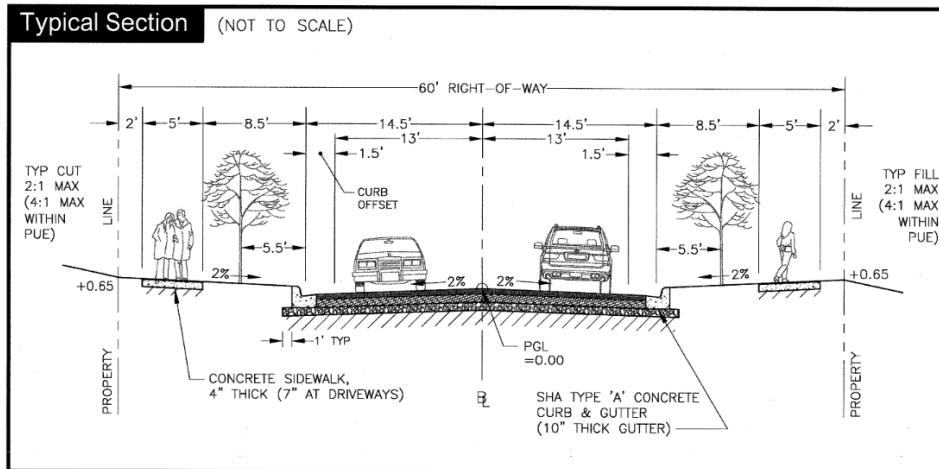
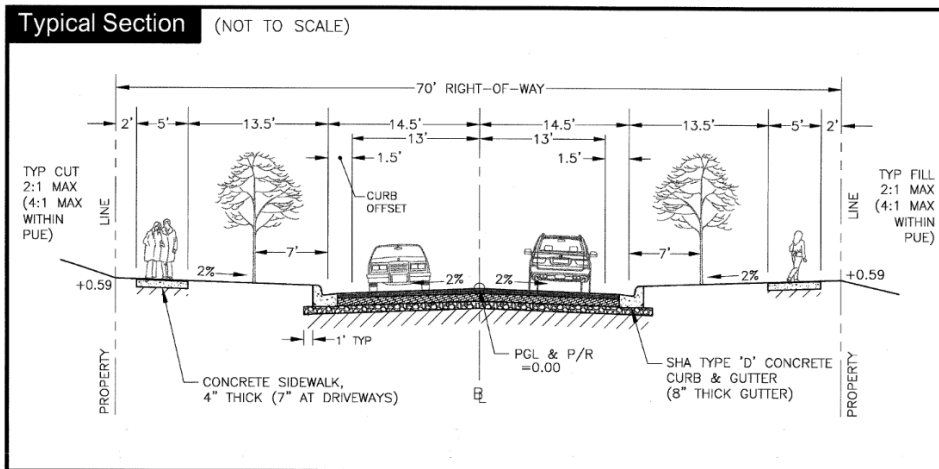


Figure 4 – Two-Lane Suburban Minor Arterial Street Standard MC-2004.25



## PROPOSED PLAN REVISIONS

Staff anticipates updates to the Public Hearing Draft's mobility section based on the comments detailed above. These would be dependent on guidance from the Planning Board, and in summary would include:

- Potential revisions related to MARC Rail service recommendations, particularly regarding level of specificity;
- Potential addition of a recommendation related to expansion of the Greater Shady Grove Transportation Demand Management District;
- Potential revisions related to the Plan's NADMS goals;
- Emphasizing language about restrictions related to auto capacity enhancements, in support of the Plan area's NADMS goals;
- Recommendations regarding support for micromobility services;
- Potential recommendations related to the yet-to-be realized segment of Midcounty Highway; and
- Potential additional comments and recommendations related to Oakmont Avenue.

Staff anticipates additional edits and minor language clarifications based on comments received. These would include amendments to illustrative sections to align the graphics with the Plan's overarching Vision Zero recommendations and the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan's* recommended facilities, as consistent with the Montgomery Planning and MCDOT's joint Draft *Complete Streets Design Guide*. Additional textual elements will be added to the sections to clarify constraints related to existing conditions (e.g. mature trees, property dedications required within other jurisdictions, etc.).

## CONCLUSION

Staff will revise the Public Hearing Draft based on the Board's guidance, and integrate these revisions in the Planning Board Draft, for the Board's review following the final work session.

## ATTACHMENTS:


1. MCDOT Public Hearing comments
2. City of Rockville Planning Commission Public Hearing comments
3. Town of Washington Grove Public Hearing comments

# ATTACHMENT 1

## MEMORANDUM

May 29, 2020

**TO:** Greg Ossont, Deputy Director  
Department of General Services

**FROM:** Christopher Conklin, P.E., Director  
Department of Transportation 

**SUBJECT:** Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment  
MCDOT Public Hearing Draft Comments

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Spring 2020 Public Hearing Draft of the Shady Grove Minor Master Plan Amendment. Our most important points excerpted from our attached detailed comments are included below, with superscript numbers used to reference the comment numbers in the attachment.

- 1) **Transportation Analysis:** A transportation analysis is needed to identify infrastructure needs and impacts. It should consider the effects of the I-270 Traffic Relief Plan, particularly noting the impacts of interchanges along I-270 with I-370 / Metro Access Road, Shady Grove Road, and Gude Drive.<sup>151, 158</sup> It should also account for the removal of the partial interchange between Crabbs Branch Way and the Metro Access Road, noting the effects of traffic through the residential community.<sup>153</sup>

It should include an intersection analysis, noting that in an earlier draft there were three intersections identified as not meeting LATR standards but discussion on these appears to have been omitted.<sup>152</sup>

The analysis should consider the volume of buses, with the plan making clear that they must have priority pathing and movements in accessing the Metro station. In the Metro North area, in particular, attention must be paid to the periodic surge outflows from the parking garages in the PM as to ensure that they are capable of clearing without stacking outflow traffic.<sup>123</sup>

- 2) **NADMS:** Assuming full plan implementation: what baseline NADMS is expected to be achieved? What new services are needed to achieve the target NADMS? These new services should be identified as future capital needs.<sup>139</sup> It may be necessary to consider refining or even reducing the NADMS goals if the plan cannot identify means of achieving them, which will affect the Transportation Analysis.<sup>145, 146, 147</sup> Discussion on an UMP is notably absent, and identified transportation projects should be included within it.<sup>160</sup>

The Plan needs greater information on existing transit services. We suggest using the TPAR Transit Test to provide a snapshot of average frequencies, coverage areas, and operating spans to help guide where additional transit improvements may be targeted.<sup>59</sup> The Plan also needs to discuss the MARC Third Tracking and establish necessary right-of-way<sup>66</sup>, particularly given some instances where recommendations might potentially run counter to third tracking efforts.<sup>26</sup>

- 3) **Park & Ride Facilities:** Provide greater narrative speaking toward the role of Shady Grove as a terminal station, and a comparison of Existing versus Proposed Park & Ride capabilities at the site.<sup>25</sup> The elimination of large volumes of parking capacity could have a significant effect on transit utilization by residents located in Upcounty, Frederick County, and further areas. Is it proposed that this parking be replaced with structured parking incorporated in new development? It should be noted that parking capacity at Shady Grove Station is an important tool for meeting mode share goals in other policy areas like Rockville, Twinbrook, White Flint, Grosvenor, Bethesda and Friendship Heights. We do not support reductions in Metro Station parking and believe the plan should explore future expansion of parking at this location. The goal of other transit strategies of like the MD 355 BRT and the Corridor Cities Transitway is to increase overall transit capacity and countywide transit mode share, not to replace park & ride Metro trips. Is the vision that parking will not be replaced, and if so: what are the effects of reducing vehicular access to a major terminal station?<sup>60</sup>
- 4) **Cross-Sections:** Include cross-sections for existing conditions<sup>79</sup>, and when referencing modified cross-section standards: include narrative toward how these cross-sections are to be modified.<sup>100</sup> A number of streets are assigned less right-of-way than their respective standards call for, and detail needs to be provided as to what features are suggested to be eliminated from the designs.<sup>102, 103, 104, 107, 108</sup>
- 5) **Next-Gen TDM:** Update the Plan to reflect current Code/NextGen TDM provisions. Currently it references Traffic Mitigation Agreements (TMAs) which are no longer in use for new development projects. TMAs are now under Code "TDM Plans for New Development Projects" - Section 42A-26. These are required throughout the Greater Shady Grove Transportation Management District, not just within the Metro Station Policy Area as the Plan indicates.<sup>143</sup>

- 6) **TDM & Urban Districts:** The current boundaries of the Greater Shady Grove TMD do not encompass the entire Sector Plan area. Areas outside the TMD will have no mechanism for achieving the TDM measures, NADMS goals and other actions.<sup>144</sup> In describing the for a potential future Urban District it should be acknowledged that funding and participation in these districts is typically reliant on property owners agreeing to contribute additional funds for support, through special taxes or fees. Simply partnering with the adjacent municipalities is not in itself likely to result in adequate support. A funding mechanism that is equitable, broadly applied and accepted by the majority of those expected to contribute and to benefit would be necessary.<sup>159</sup>
- 7) **Protected Intersections:** Revise the requirement for Protected Intersections at every intersection along every bikeway to be more specific about its application. It is not practicable to construct Protected Intersections along sidepaths, bikeable shoulders, neighborhood connectors, etc. Nor it is likely preferable for bicyclists to have to slow and divert through Protected Intersections even at very minor uncontrolled side-streets.<sup>128</sup>

Should you have any questions regarding our comments on the plan, please feel free to contact me or Mr. Andrew Bossi, Senior Engineer, at [andrew.bossi@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:andrew.bossi@montgomerycountymd.gov).

CC:AB

Attachment: Detailed Comments Spreadsheet

cc: Gary Erenrich, MCDOT  
Andrew Bossi, MCDOT  
Kara Olsen Salazar, DGS  
Kandese Holford, SHA

## ATTACHMENT 2



111 Maryland Avenue | Rockville, Maryland 20850-2364 | 240-314-5000  
[www.rockvillemd.gov](http://www.rockvillemd.gov)

May 28, 2020

Casey Anderson, Chair  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Ave, Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Anderson and Planning Board Members;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Amendment (Plan). We would especially like to thank Mr. Nkosi Yearwood for his outreach and for providing a very informative presentation on the Plan at our May 13, 2020 meeting.

The Rockville Planning Commission would like to provide the following testimony on the draft plan, for your consideration.

We commend the draft Plan's various strategies for transit, environmental sustainability, economic development, opportunities for the creation of new jobs and housing, including affordable housing, in the area near the Shady Grove Metro Station. We also strongly support the Plan's recommendation for a new recreation center and new public parks and trails in the Plan area and recommend that appropriate bikeway and pedestrian connections are provided to Rockville's trails and parks.

We commend the recommended transit-related improvements, especially the following:

- The future bus rapid transit (BRT) along Frederick Road (MD 355) and the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT).
- An additional MARC station at the Shady Grove Metro Station and the recommendation for the expansion of MARC services for off-peak, evening and weekend hours.
- Exploring the feasibility of an infill Metro Station in proximity to the Montgomery College Rockville campus with related improvements to provide access from

both sides of the planned station, especially to the underserved transit riders from the areas east of the tracks.

We are concerned, however, with the potential impacts on the existing road infrastructure, environment, schools, and other public facilities that may result by lifting the staging requirements and relaxing other standards. Overall, the Planning Commission recommends that any negative impacts on Rockville (and the rest of the surrounding area) with respect to traffic, schools, the environment and other infrastructure and facilities be considered and aggressively addressed as part of the plan, and when implementing the plan.

One of our biggest concerns is the treatment of the intersection of E./W. Gude Drive and MD-355. The draft Plan recommends removing the previously planned grade-separated interchange as a staging requirement to permit new development and also recommends increasing the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) standard of delay from 63 seconds to 80 seconds. This important intersection is very problematic, with significant congestion already experienced on a regular basis. The impact of both of these recommended changes would be to permit more development, while lessening the likelihood that a significant investment will take place to address the problem. We strongly encourage capacity improvements at that intersection while also maintaining the existing HCM congestion standard of 63 seconds of delay, in order to avoid further deterioration in the level of service at this location.

Rockville's Planning Commission also strongly urges that the Planning Board consider the following recommendations:

- Any new location of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Bus Depot must not be in close proximity to residential areas in Rockville due to the negative impacts of traffic, noise and fumes, including at very early hours in the morning.
- Prior to permitting additional residential development, Montgomery County and MCPS need to identify an elementary school site and plan for associated funding, as long as the relevant clusters remain, and are projected to remain, overcrowded.
- Montgomery County Planning and the County government should conduct meaningful analyses of the negative impacts of increased development on the environment and watersheds, report the results of the analysis to the public, and take relevant measures to mitigate adverse impacts.
- Please include a provision calling for a grade-separated pedestrian and bike crossing for the signalized intersection of MD 355 with King Farm Boulevard. Additional potential development in the Shady Grove area will only add to the demand for crossing that very busy road.

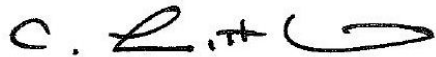
Furthermore, Rockville's Planning Commission recommends that the Planning Board:

- Consider other innovative non-residential uses for the plan area, which could provide transit-accessible regional amenities. Examples could include a transit-accessible multi-purpose event center, a concert venue, an arena, or any other such uses that have the potential to transform the area into a highly desirable destination.
- Take into consideration how trends may change as a result of COVID-19, including how it may affect mixed-use development, and re-evaluate post-pandemic conditions while planning for the future in that area.

We also suggest a technical correction: on page 132 of the draft Plan, it is incorrectly stated that "The City of Rockville's HCM standard is 63 seconds." The City does not have such a standard. The only standard that we have is a volume-to-capacity ratio of 0.99, which is not based on the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) but instead is calculated using the Critical Lane Volume procedure.

Thank you again for the opportunity to review the plan and provide feedback. The area near the Shady Grove Metro Station and the intersection of MD 355 and Shady Grove Road is extremely important to Montgomery County and the affected municipalities. We look forward to seeking ways to coordinate our planning and implementation efforts in the future.

Sincerely,



Charles Littlefield, Chair  
City of Rockville Planning Commission

cc: City of Rockville Planning Commission  
Ricky Barker, Director of Planning and Development Services  
R. James Wasilak, Staff Liaison to the Planning Commission, Zoning Manager  
David B. Levy, Assistant Director, PDS  
Famaraz Mokhtari, Senior Transportation Planner, Public Works  
Manisha Tewari, Principal Planner



# ATTACHMENT 3

Page 1



The Town of Washington Grove  
P. O. Box 216  
300 Grove Avenue  
Washington Grove, MD 20880

voice: 301-926-22566  
email: washgrove@comcast.net

Montgomery County Planning Board  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Ave.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

May 13, 2020

Chairman Anderson and Board members,

As the Mayor of Washington Grove and an original participant in the creation of the 2006 Shady Grove Master Plan, and also as a member of the Shady Grove Master Plan Advisory Committee since then, I'm writing to urge the Board to consider the following recommended inclusions in this Amendment to the Shady Grove Master Plan:

## Bikeway Connection to Washington Grove

### *Recommended changes/clarifications:*

- In Table 3 (p131) modify the description of the proposed project "Piedmont Crossing Local Park Trail" to read "From: ~~Brown St.~~ Washington Grove To: Crabbs Branch Rd/Amity Drive Ext.
- In Table 4 (p131) for the Project "Oakmont Street" modify the Status description to read, "Focus on Safer Parallel Connection at ~~Brown Street~~ to Washington Grove"

The creation of a safe and direct bikeway/multiuser pathway connection to the Shady Grove Metro will realize a significant goal of the Washington Grove Master Plan. Montgomery County has funded Planning and then constructing the pathway has been funded by Montgomery County, and the MCDOT "Washington Grove Connector – Crabbs Branch Extension" study currently in progress is evaluating a number of roughly parallel alternative routes from Crabbs Branch, any of which achieve the desired connection to Washington Grove. *A specific route for construction will not be chosen until this study is completed and the Town of Washington Grove and County agree on how to proceed.*

In previous plans we viewed naming “Brown Street” as shorthand for Washington Grove. This Amendment should recognize the current study goals of MCDOT study and accurately describe the connection as being to Washington Grove.

Oakmont Street Pedestrian Safety.

*Add a Plan Recommendation:*

- That explicitly recognizes the extreme safety hazard to pedestrians using Oakmont Avenue.
- Acknowledges that Oakmont is deficient in safety features of roads through comparable industrial zones, and
- Recommends significant sidewalk installations and other safety improvements.

Unaccountably, the safety of pedestrians using Oakmont Avenue has been virtually ignored in this Amendment. As light industrial use along Oakmont Avenue increased over the last decades bringing increased truck and vehicle traffic, and increased employment, little attention has been paid to pedestrian access to businesses or through traffic. The area has been re-classified moderate industrial. Though road improvements were made about 3 years ago, attention to pedestrian safety was given short shrift. It is irresponsible not to plan to rectify this immediately, let alone in the period of this master Plan.

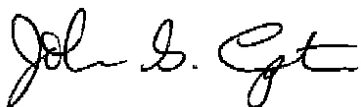
School and Jeremiah Park Amenities **Required** for Development of Shady Grove Station/Jeremiah Park (the east side of Crabbs Branch Rd).

*Add to the Plan Amendment:*

- Make a very clear Statement that continued failure to relocate the MCPS buses has consequences for the Master Plan goals and proposals.
- Acknowledge that if the MCPS property isn't yet available, not providing most of the recommended amenities shouldn't be contemplated.
- Therefore address what changes should be made to development in the Shady Grove Station/Jeremiah Park sector to a) reduce the need for the proposed amenities, and/or b) relocate these amenities within any development proposal.

I won't belabor this point, but merely remind the Board that the residential component of the Metro are development was predicated as a transit-oriented neighborhood that included necessary public amenities to support the density of and attractiveness of living there. Failure to provide the proposed spectrum of amenities should not be allowed. Relocation of the MCPS buses is necessary for the area, and promises to benefit MCPS and the County as well.

-----  
Thank you for entertaining these recommendations in the context of Washington Grove and of a viable Metro-centered residential community.



John G. Compton  
Mayor, Washington Grove  
[johncompton@me.com](mailto:johncompton@me.com)  
240-432-5700