



MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item #
2/14/08

February 6, 2008

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief, *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Khalid Afzal, Team Leader, Georgia Avenue Corridor (301.495.4650)
Community-Based Planning Division *KA*

Eric Duneman, Student Intern *ED*
Community-Based Planning Division

SUBJECT: Discussion: Georgia Avenue Concept Study

The purpose of this report is to provide the opportunity for the Planning Board to review and comment on the purpose and scope of the Georgia Avenue Concept Study. Staff will make a full presentation at the Planning Board meeting on Thursday, February 14. The presentation will discuss the scope of the study, work that has been completed, remaining tasks, and the time frame for the study. The project team includes the following staff:

Khalid Afzal (project manager)	Community-Based Planning
John Marcolin	Community-Based Planning
Marion Clark	Environment, Countywide Planning
David Paine	Transportation, Countywide Planning
Tom Autrey	Transportation, Countywide Planning
Krishna Akundi	Research and Technology
Sandra Youla	Historic Preservation
Brooke Farquhar	Department of Parks
Eric Duneman	Student Intern, University of Maryland, Community-Based Planning

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to develop a planning and urban design framework to guide future regulatory planning and master planning, especially for the Sector Plan for the Wheaton CBD and the Glenmont Sector Plan.

Study Area

The study area includes the entire length of Georgia Avenue between the District of Columbia and Howard County (see map attached). The major focus of the study is the area between the Beltway and Norbeck Road since most of the issues lie in this area. Although the focus of the study is on the road right-of-way and the properties located along the right-of-way, the analysis and information needed to analyze the issues is based on a broader area comprising the traffic zones contiguous to the road right-of-way.

Existing Conditions

The approximately 18-mile length of Georgia Avenue through Montgomery County serves two major functions: a transportation corridor, and a housing resource. As a transportation corridor, it connects the communities in the north of the County and those along its path in Montgomery County, to the Beltway, the employment centers in the area and I-95 to the east, and the numerous communities along the roadway. As a housing resource, it is a place of affordable housing for people living in communities along the corridor. It carries some of the highest levels of traffic for a road of similar size, but it is also where numerous community facilities such as schools, parks, recreation centers, hospitals, libraries, churches and day care centers are located.

Historically, Georgia Avenue is one of the oldest north-south roads that connect the District of Columbia to the suburban and rural communities to the north of the District. The rich history of the region is preserved in many historic structures and places along this corridor. Today, it continues to serve as the spine of the residential wedge between I-270 to the west and I-95 to the east. The eastern leg of the Metro Red Line extends along Georgia Avenue, and ends at Glenmont.

Major Issues

The study has identified three major issue groups:

- Pedestrian Accessibility.
- Traffic Volume and Congestion.
- Environmental Impacts.

Pedestrian accessibility along the corridor--walking along Georgia Avenue, and crossing Georgia Avenue--to access various community facilities and services is the single largest issue that impacts the quality of life of communities along the roadway. This issue is further exacerbated by the high volume of traffic on Georgia Avenue. Growth in the region and its associated traffic in the past have necessitated the roadway to be widened to the current six through lanes in the down-county area adding to the issue of pedestrian access to parks, schools, libraries, and other facilities along the roadway. The suburban pattern of the past growth along the corridor has resulted in increasingly severe environmental impacts especially as it relates to stormwater management and the health of the subwatersheds in the corridor.

Opportunities and Resources to Address the Issues

The study has identified the following resources and opportunities to address the three major sets of issues. These elements will be analyzed in more detail in the next phase of the study.

A. Pedestrian Accessibility:

1. Capital Improvement Projects (Forest Glen pedestrian tunnel, equestrian crossing at Rachel Carson Park, Evans Local Park reconstruction, potential mid-block pedestrian crossings with signals).
2. County and the State sidewalk improvement programs.
3. Potential private property developments (Good Counsel High School site, BB&T Bank, Wheaton Baptist Church, changes in existing Special Exceptions).
4. Policy Area Mobility Review (PAMR) mitigation of new development projects in the corridor.
5. Traffic calming measures in all future projects and changes.
6. New tools and resources (new Road Code, better design standards and techniques, greater awareness of pedestrian issues).

B. Traffic Volume and Congestion:

1. Capital Improvement Projects (Norbeck and Glenmont grade separations, Georgia Avenue Busway, Brookeville Bypass).
2. Better alignment of land use and transportation infrastructure (new growth at Metro stations, jobs and housing balance).
3. Changes in technology (telecommuting) and employment patterns (live near your work programs, flexible hours, limited or no free parking, higher gasoline prices).
4. Better transit operations.
5. Transit oriented developments and walkable communities.

C. Environmental Impacts:

1. Capital Improvement Projects.
2. Better controls and regulations (new Road Code, proposed Energy and Environment Functional Plan, green building technologies).
3. Better transit facilities and operations to reduce automobile travel.
4. Transit oriented developments and walkable communities.

Community Outreach and Schedule

Two community forums on the study have been completed, and they have contributed to the formulation of issues to be addressed. Staff is planning to hold one or two more community forums to receive community input before the conclusion of the study. The remaining schedule of the study follows:

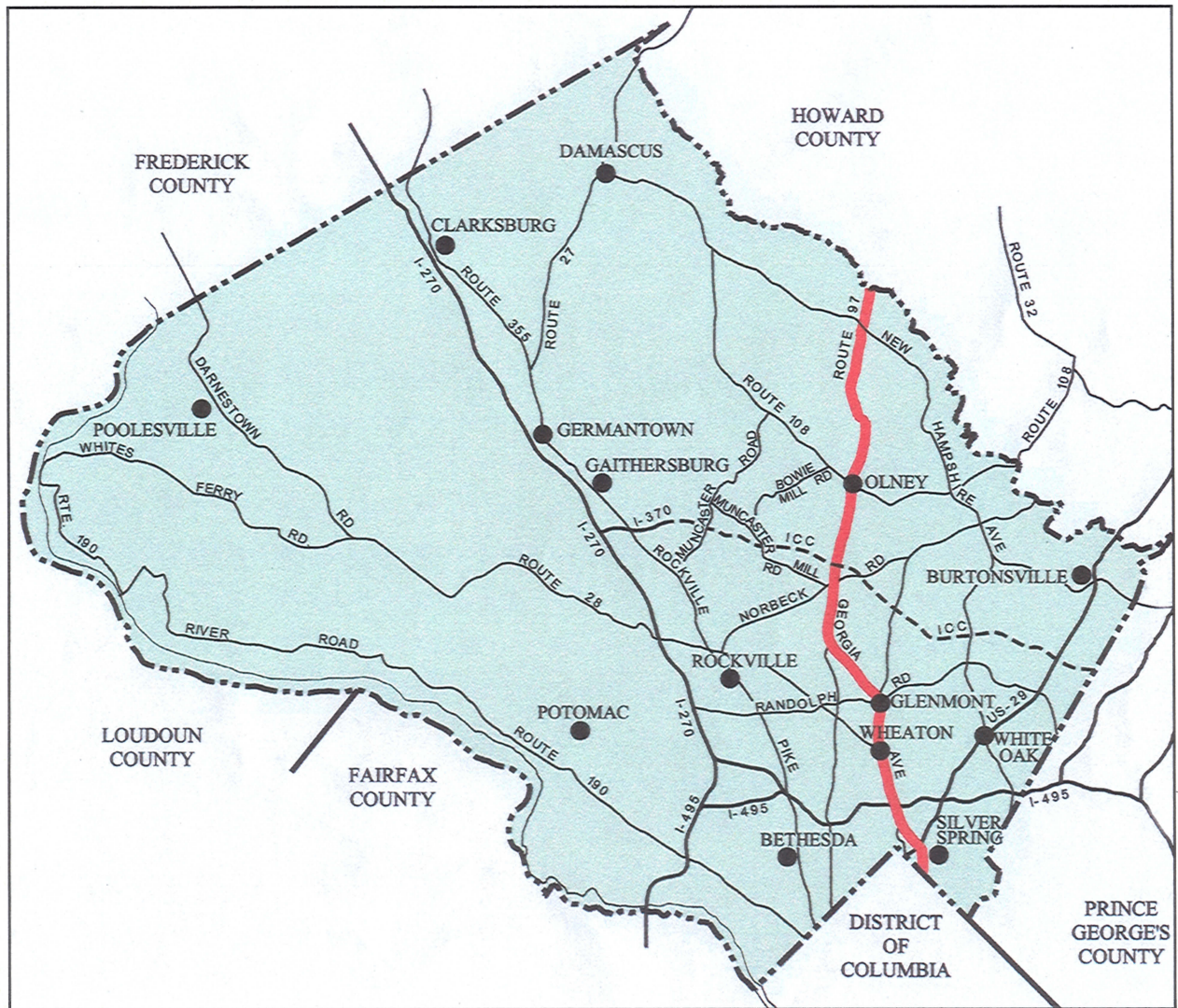
- Further analysis of specific issues: February/March 2008
- Develop recommendations: April 2008
- Community Forum: May 2008
- Planning Board Roundtable: May 2008
- Presentation to the Planning Board: June 2008
- Transmit to the County Council: July 2008

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Attachments:

1. Regional Context of Georgia Avenue
2. Study Area

Regional Context of Georgia Avenue



ATTACHMENT 2

Study Area

