



## Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan: Working Draft

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### Staff Recommendation

Approve the Working Draft of the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan as the Public Hearing Draft and set the public hearing for May 30, 2019.

### 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 transportation concerns 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.

The Sector Plan was initiated by the Planning Department in Spring 2017 and the Scope of Work for the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan was approved by the Planning Board on November 2, 2017. As a part of the process, staff organized eight community meetings and participated in community driven public events and civic association led meetings (within and adjacent to the plan area) since plan initiation. Staff also utilized social media to increase community engagement efforts. The MCR React Map generated more than 300+ comments which were used to shape preliminary plan recommendations.

The preliminary working draft recommendations were presented to the community on December 4, 2018 and to the Planning Board on December 6, 2018. After receiving input from stakeholders and the Planning Board, Staff refined these preliminary recommendations. The recommendations, include in the attachment were presented to the community on March 18 2019 for comment and feedback.

On March 21, 2019, MDOT SHA staff presented a briefing on the status of the MD 97 Georgia Avenue Montgomery Hills project to the Planning Board. The purpose of the project is to establish a balanced approach to multimodal transportation within the MD 97 corridor, between MD 192 (Forest Glen Road) and MD 390 (16<sup>th</sup> Street), such that it improves pedestrian and bicyclists safety and accessibility while balancing vehicular mobility. The project also aims to accommodate proposed transit enhancements, improve vehicular safety and establish a sense of place within Montgomery Hills. This project directly relates to the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan, which includes the entirety of the project inside the sector plan boundary.

MDOT SHA staff indicated at the briefing that the project is continuing to be refined but the key elements of the project are not expected to change. The planning phase is expected to reach completion in the summer of 2019, which will include final Section 4(f) approval and approval from FHWA of the Categorical Exclusion. After those approvals, the project will move into the next phase which includes detailed engineering.

M-NCPPC staff continues to work with MDOT SHA to determine the recommended cross section of Georgia Avenue and between Forest Glen Road and 16<sup>th</sup> Street any associated roadway and intersection projects in both the short- and long-term to be reflected in the Sector Plan. Whereas the sector plan recommendations are envisioned for long-term implementation, the MDOT SHA's MD 97 Montgomery Hills project is envisioned for short-term implementation. Long-term recommendations will be included to leverage opportunities for further improvements with future redevelopment of the opportunity sites identified in the Sector Plan.

In early 2018, the I-495 & I-270 Managed Lanes Study was launched to improve traffic flow on the Capital Beltway. In April 2019, seven design alternatives were retained for detailed study along with projected limits of disturbance for construction and rights-of-way alignment. This revealed potential impacts on the neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the Sector Plan Boundary. Staff continues to monitor the developments and provide feedback to MDOT SHA. To date, there appears to be no conflict between the Sector Plan's recommendations with the design alternatives of the Managed Lanes Study.

Following the Public Hearing on May 30, worksessions will occur in June and July to transmit the Planning Board Draft to County Council prior to August recess.

#### **Attachment**

1. Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan Working Draft