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

MCPB
Item No.
Date: 7-11-2019

Briefing on the Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study

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Completed: 7-3-2019

Description
Briefing on the Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study.

Staff Recommendation
Discuss the study and provide guidance to staff.

Summary
Staff will provide the Planning Board with a briefing on the status of the Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study. The briefing will include an update on research conducted by staff, engagement activities, coordination with agency partners, and ongoing work with the community advisory group. Staff will also present some of the potential safety improvements for the area that will be included in the study.

In the coming months, staff will prepare a written draft of the study that will be discussed and reviewed with the community advisory group over the summer, and then presented to the Planning Board in the fall.

Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study

The Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study area includes the commercial developments near Georgia Avenue, Connecticut Avenue and Aspen Hill Road, as shown below. It also includes the area south of Bel Pre Road, between Georgia Avenue and Connecticut Avenue and the area south of Aspen Hill Road, between Georgia Avenue and Parkland Drive, north of Matthew Henson State Park.

Study Vision and Potential Improvements

Staff has worked with community members to develop a simple vision for the Aspen Hill area:
A community where residents and visitors can travel to their homes and destinations safely and comfortably.

Since the launch of the study in summer 2018, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and the Maryland State Highway Administration have implemented several safety measures. While these safety improvements are encouraging, we are still far from our vision of a safe, accessible, and comfortable Aspen Hill.

Through community engagement, data collection, analysis, and research, staff has developed a menu of potential improvements to address design issues contributing to the frequency and severity of the crashes in the Aspen Hill area. These improvements are divided into study-wide, short-term, and long-term improvements.

The study-wide improvements are upgrades that should be implemented throughout the study area, where feasible, not just at a single intersection or road segment. They address common problems found throughout the Aspen Hill area.

Short-term improvements may be installed with limited cost or disruption and should be installed as soon as possible. Long-term improvements require more resources and time to implement.

Study-wide Improvements:

- At signalized intersections, remove permissive left turns and replace with protected left turns.
- Install pedestrian-scale intersection lighting for all intersections to enhance visibility of pedestrians/bicyclists in crosswalks.
- Prohibit right turns on red lights.
- Provide automatic pedestrian signals instead of push-button, pedestrian-activated signals.
- Provide marked, high visibility crosswalks on all approaches of a signalized intersection.
- Remove channelized right turn lanes.
- Relocate utility poles and fire hydrants to maintain the full width of all shared use paths and sidewalks.
- Install speed cameras to assist with speed enforcement.
- Install tactile pavement to mark bus stops for people with low or no vision.
- Relocate school bus stops from major highways to residential streets or to shopping centers, civic buildings, or religious institutions along major arterials.

Short-term Improvements:

- Add reflective material or paint to the rain garden/bioswale on Aspen Hill Road in front of the Aspen Hill Library.
- Reduce target speed on Connecticut Avenue between Independence Street and Bel Pre Road to 35 miles per hour.
- Reduce target speed on Aspen Hill Road from Georgia Avenue to Veirs Mill Road to 25 miles per hour.
- Produce a status report for the designated Aspen Hill Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area (BiPPA). Consider expanding the BiPPA boundaries to include Harmony Hills Elementary School and Aspen Hill Library.
- Add high visibility ladder style crosswalks to high crash intersections in the study area

- Complete the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*'s recommendation for the eastern side of Georgia Avenue between the Matthew Henson Trail and Hewitt Avenue.
- Paint lines that guide drivers to proper queuing locations at the intersection of Ralph Road and Georgia Avenue.
- Paint lines that guide drivers to proper queuing locations at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and the drive aisle access to the Home Depot.
- Install a raised divider to separate the southbound Georgia Avenue channelized right turn lanes onto southbound Connecticut Avenue from the Georgia Avenue through lanes.
- Install a neighborhood greenway connecting Aspen Hill to Glenmont per the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* recommendations.
- Develop a commuter services bilingual bus shelter education campaign.
- Narrow interior travel lanes to 10-feet wide maximum; 11-feet wide maximum for curb lanes on Georgia Avenue and install a temporary buffer along the sidewalk.
- Narrow interior travel lanes to 10-feet wide maximum; 11-feet wide maximum for curb lanes on Connecticut Avenue and install a temporary buffer along the sidewalk.

Long-term Improvements:

- Reconfigure the intersection of Georgia Avenue and the drive aisle access to the Home Depot and add a traffic signal to improve safety.
- Install bulb-outs at intersections along Parkland Drive between Veirs Mill Road (MD586) and Aspen Hill Road.
- Conduct a study examining the closing of the median break at Ralph Road and Georgia Avenue.
- Signalize the intersection of Wendy Lane and Georgia Avenue.
- Reconfigure the southbound Georgia Avenue channelized right turn lanes onto southbound Connecticut Avenue; reduce turning radii, examine sidewalks and bus stop placements.
- Adjust pedestrian signal timing to the standard pedestrian walk time of three feet per second.
- Install a permanent buffer along the sidewalk on Georgia Avenue to separate fast moving vehicles from people who walk and people who are waiting at bus stops by moving the curb.
- Install a permanent buffer along the sidewalk on Connecticut Avenue to separate fast moving vehicles from people who walk and people who are waiting at bus stops by moving the curb.
- With safety improvements, include new trees in buffered areas that separate fast moving vehicles from people who walk, people who bike, and people who are waiting at bus stops.
- Support the recommendations of the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*.