



Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study



Maren Hill, Senior Planner, Area 2 Division, Maren.Hill@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-650-5613



Nancy Sturgeon, Master Planner Supervisor, Master Plan Team, Area 2 Division,
Nancy.Sturgeon@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-1308



Carrie Sanders, Chief, Area 2 Division, Carrie.Sanders@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4653

Completed: 11/7/19

Description

Staff will present the draft of the Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study. The Planning Board will receive comments on the study from the public.

Staff Recommendation

Planning Board discussion, guidance to staff, and approval to submit to the County Council for a briefing.

Summary

The *Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study* provides potential strategies to transform Aspen Hill into a multimodal community where residents and visitors can reach their homes and destinations safely and comfortably. The study identifies a broad range of solutions rooted in the Vision Zero approach—from specific intersection improvements to area-wide policies and strategies—that comprehensively addresses traffic safety in Aspen Hill. Individual traffic safety recommendations are prioritized based on existing safety risks and potential impacts, supported by data collected for the study or from county databases.

The study is informed by a vigorous community engagement process, work sessions with the community advisory group, consultation with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Maryland State Highway Administration and Montgomery County Police Department, and speed and crash data. Montgomery Planning used this input to develop a toolkit of safety improvements to address the issues contributing to the frequency and severity of collisions in Aspen Hill.

The toolkit in the study provides information about each safety tool: where it should be employed, where it should be prioritized, considerations for installation, design best practices, how the tool affects equity and accessibility, links to additional resources, and its safety benefits.

Safety Toolkit strategies:

- Install speed cameras to enforce speed limits and reduce fatal crashes.
- Provide high visibility crosswalks on all approaches at traffic-controlled intersections.
- Install intersection lighting to enhance visibility at crosswalks.
- Employ right turn on red restrictions.
- Implement left turn protection measures.
- Remove channelized right-turn lanes throughout the study area.
- Provide fixed-time signals at all signalized intersections so that pedestrians do not have to activate a pushbutton to cross the street.
- Install leading pedestrian intervals at traffic signals that allow pedestrians to start crossing before turning vehicles.
- Develop a targeted bilingual education campaign to increase safety compliance and shift driver attitudes and behaviors.
- Install pedestrian median refuges at major intersections.
- Examine any compatibility issues between bike facilities and accessibility needs.
- Install tactile pavement to notify transit riders with low or no vision that they have reached a bus stop.
- Ensure all sidepaths and sidewalks are unobstructed; clear of signage, fire hydrants, utility poles, and trash cans.
- Relocate school bus stops from high-volume, high-speed roads to adjacent residential streets or off-street locations with protected waiting spaces, such as at shopping centers, civic buildings or religious institutions.
- Improve crossing for the eastern side of Georgia Avenue between the Matthew Henson Trail and Hewitt Avenue.
- Narrow interior travel lanes to 10 feet and curb lanes to 11 feet on Georgia Avenue and Connecticut Avenue.
- Reconfigure or remove channelized right turn lanes to improve safety at Georgia Avenue and Connecticut Avenue.
- Install high-visibility treatments and signage on Aspen Hill Road.
- Install traffic controls at the median opening of the Home Depot entrance on Georgia Avenue.
- Study traffic control options for median openings on Georgia Avenue at Wendy Lane and at Ralph Road.
- Install permanent buffers along the sidewalk by moving the curb on Georgia Avenue and Connecticut Avenue to separate fast moving vehicles from people who walk and people who are waiting at bus stops.
- Install curb extensions at intersections on high-volume residential streets.
- Reduce speed limits along busy corridors such as Connecticut Avenue, Bel Pre Road, Aspen Hill Road and Grand Pre Road.

Staff will brief the County Council on the study once it has been approved by the Planning Board. The toolkit of strategies for improving safety and access is an important step toward addressing Aspen Hill's hazardous and outdated infrastructure, which prioritizes vehicle throughput over community connectivity. Successfully implementing Vision Zero in Aspen Hill will require proactive coordination with both county and state agencies, especially on heavily traveled state-owned highways, such as Connecticut Avenue and Georgia Avenue. Leveraging Aspen Hill's designation as a Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area and an Equity Emphasis Area, as well as a part of the county's High Injury Network, may provide opportunities to fund infrastructure improvements in the community. With limited redevelopment opportunities in the area, the county's Capital Improvements Program (CIP) may be the primary funding mechanisms for implementing the study's strategies.

Attachment: Draft Aspen Hill Vision Zero Study