



## Access Management Study – Proposed Scope of Work

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Brief the Planning Board on the Scope of Work for the Access Management Study.

### Staff Summary and Recommendation

The Countywide Planning and Policy Division is initiating an Access Management Study for the FY22 work program. The purpose of this Study is to identify regional and national best practices and policy options to improve how road/highway access is managed on county streets. A primary focus of this effort will be an emphasis on ways to improve access consolidation effectiveness from both a Vision Zero and Complete Streets context. Vehicle conflicts have a direct relationship with road safety. The more conflicts, the less safe a road segment or intersection is likely to be. The study will include technical assistance from a transportation consultant, Mead & Hunt, and monthly coordination meetings of a Technical Working Group, composed of county and state government specialists involved in access management policy and development review.

**Staff requests feedback from the Planning Board on the attached proposed scope of work.**

### Attachment

Proposed Scope of Work – Access Management Study

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Study is to examine existing access management practices in Montgomery County on a multi-agency level and to develop recommendations to improve existing access practices and to incorporate new access management strategies that are consistent with Vision Zero, a Complete Streets framework, and a desire to enable decision-making with a multimodal perspective. This will require a review of existing county code governing access, including the zoning code (Chapter 59), the road code (Chapter 49), and the subdivision of land code (Chapter 50) and the development of recommended changes to county code to implement study recommendations. In addition, there are access-related policies now being used by various agencies, including Montgomery Planning, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and the Department of Permitting Service (DPS). Ensuring that all county access management decisions are coordinated and consistent based on unified access management policies is one secondary aim of this study.

## BACKGROUND AND ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

There is a proven relationship between access and road safety. Historically, this is how the functional roadway classification system was developed in the first place, recognizing that roads have varying need for access versus mobility. **Access is defined as the ability along a particular road to enter and exit the road, either at intersections or at driveways.** A freeway is a road with extremely limited access, while a residential street has little to no access restrictions. **Mobility is defined as how far you can travel in a given amount of time.** Mobility is increased when access is limited. The classic example of this is the graphic below from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways Technical Update. As mobility needs increase, access is, by design, managed to reduce interruptions to through travel. One of the primary reasons why this relationship exists is to ensure that road safety can be managed for all road/street types.



**Figure 1: Access – Mobility Curve**

In road safety research, it is well known that the greater the frequency of driveways and intersections along a particular road, the greater the number of crashes that can be expected. It is at driveways and intersections where conflict points occur, and this includes conflicts between vehicles (versus vehicle), and conflicts between vehicles and other modes, including bicyclists and pedestrians. So, there is a

Vision Zero need to have a well-designed access management strategy and policies to manage road access effectively. Through previous research efforts presented to the Planning Board in June 2021, it is clear that many access management strategies now in use within this county and across the US were developed with the goals of improving road safety and maintaining the safe access/mobility functions on our roadway networks.

Issues to be addressed in this study include:

- Developing a more visible and coordinated access management policy that has cross-agency support from planning through construction,
- Examining the relationship between access and road safety and developing policy solutions that are supportive of the overall Vision Zero Action Plan,
- Managing conflicts between all modes at intersections and at driveways more effectively,
- Providing road safety rationales to restrict road access where practicable,
- Ensuring that long-range concepts from Thrive 2050 that address access issues, such as alleys, completing the street grid and road diets on six-lane highways are considered, and
- Ensuring that access management policies consider and address equity issues.

As part of the Vision Zero work effort, Montgomery County has developed extremely useful and powerful analytical road safety tools to support the goal of reaching zero serious injuries and deaths due to road crashes by 2030. County government is now reviewing a 2030 Vision Zero Action Plan which includes a Corridor Access Management (Item S-5) work program and the Planning Department has an active role in future Vision Zero planning (item C), which is where this current study supports the Vision Zero Action Plan.

Montgomery Planning has worked diligently on supportive Vision Zero efforts as part of the overall County Vision Zero Action Plan, and the Montgomery County Interactive Crash Map, the Vision Zero Community Toolkit, and the ongoing Predictive Safety Analysis study are three recent examples of this investment to Vision Zero. Access Management is another area where the Planning Department has prioritized a Vision-Zero related study.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

This study is highly technical and will require coordination and buy-in from several public agencies, including Montgomery Planning, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services, and the State Highway Administration. A technical working group with representatives from these agencies will be formed and will meet monthly throughout the study.

Over the course of the study, we will engage with:

- A. Public Agencies – It is also expected that smaller meetings may be needed with specific departments or divisions within the above agencies. For example, within Montgomery Planning, it will be critical to ensure that access management is relevant and effective across all three Area team divisions. These meetings will be used to hear issues, but also to vet draft recommendations.
  - Montgomery County Planning Department (Montgomery Planning)
  - Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

- Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (MCDPS) – including Fire & Rescue
  - Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MD SHA)
- B. County Advocacy/Coordination Committees – As the project advances, limited outreach will occur with specialized interest groups, key advocacy organizations and coordination committees within the county. This could include outreach to elicit strengths, weaknesses, and suggested policy changes to existing access management measures or presentation of draft recommendations., including:
- Commission on People with Disabilities (CPWD - HHS)
  - Commission on Aging (CoA - HHS)
  - Montgomery County Road Code Committee
  - Maryland Building Industry Association
  - Pedestrian, Bicycle and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee
  - Montgomery County Bicycle Action Group

## EQUITY

In 2019, Montgomery County passed a Racial Equity Bill cementing the county’s commitment to racial equity and social justice. The Bill requires the Planning Board to consider racial equity and social justice impacts when preparing a master or sector plan. The Planning Department continues to build on previous efforts that focused on racial equity. This is reflected in the mission statement of the General Plan. Equity is about giving all people just and fair inclusion into a society where all can participate and prosper. The goal of equity is to create conditions that allow all to reach their full potential. This does not mean that all people need the same resources; it is about meeting people where they are and removing barriers so that success is possible.

In coordination with the Planning Department’s Equity Peer Review group, the Access Management Study team will strive to implement and promote an equitable process that assesses the racial equity and social justice impacts of current access management conditions as well as potential alternative best practices and policies. One equity issue is that access improvements are often related to development. Development projects are not likely to be as concentrated in equity focus areas, so this places increased importance that CIP projects include access management measures as part of project design within equity focus areas.

It is the intent within this study to evaluate access management impacts within an equity lens. The focus of this study on multimodal transportation and Vision Zero as a priority will certainly help in that regard, as this study may help to identify strategies that place a heavier emphasis on non-vehicular needs when making road/highway access decisions.

## TASK EFFORTS AND SCHEDULE

The Access Management Study will be divided into five tasks.

### Task1: Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement

This study will be conducted with close coordination with relevant public agencies responsible for managing roadway access. Monthly progress meetings will be held with representatives from Montgomery Planning, MCDOT, and DPS. Representatives from MDOT SHA will be included in these meetings at critical review milestones. As draft recommendations and findings are developed, additional

outreach will occur with county advocacy/coordination committees to present findings and discuss concerns. The project team will work closely with equity personnel active in Montgomery Planning and county government to ensure that equity implications are considered for key findings and recommendations. Public comments will be sought at the presentation of draft materials to the Planning Board, including the Task 3 through 5 work efforts.

#### Task 2: Planning Board Scope of Work

Staff will present the project scope, goals, objectives, task efforts, and schedule to the Planning Board and Board comments will be incorporated into a Final Scope of Work.

The study goal is to develop a comprehensive strategy to implement access management systematically for all county roads (for new development, redevelopment and for transportation CIP projects) across all county executive branch agencies and Montgomery Planning.

The first objective is to develop front-facing policy guidance to explain how access onto county roads is managed. Given the bifurcated/shared responsibilities of county agencies to enforce current guidelines, it is critical that all access decisions have the same consistent approach.

The second objective is to focus on innovative Vision Zero and Complete Streets design techniques in the development of this new access management strategy. Access management has traditionally been a car-centric technique, so placing priority on conflicts between motorized vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians will require consideration of new techniques.

The third objective is to evaluate how access management decisions are made under current county guidelines and regulations and assess how more desirable outcomes can be achieved with modifications, guidance or clarification.

A consultant team will be assisting the project team in evaluating existing county access management practices, researching best practices, and making preliminary recommendations. The consultant will provide one presentation to the Planning Board to present their draft findings. Planning Board comments will be incorporated into a Final Consultant Technical Report. The consultant team, led by Mead & Hunt, will be assisted by the Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) at the University of South Florida (who are national access management experts) and supplemented with peer review services from access management specialists from the firms Century Engineering and Diversified Property Services. A copy of the consultant scope of work is provided as Attachment A.

#### Task 3: Review of Existing Access Management Practices

The project team will review existing access management practices within Montgomery County and seek input through the Stakeholder Outreach and Engagement process on the strengths and weaknesses inherent in existing regulations and guidelines. The consultant will help in this process, particularly in identifying recommended changes to existing practices.

#### Task 4: Best Practices in Access Management Evaluation

With the assistance from the consultant, the project team will review and identify access management strategies from other public agencies within the US and the region, that could be applicable within Montgomery County. Strategies that consider Vision Zero and Complete Streets elements will be prioritized during this task. Areas of focus expected to be addressed during this task include:

- Zoning (parcel-based) standards,
- Driveway spacing standards,
- Corridor-based standards and need for Corridor Access Management Plans,
- Role of master plans in identifying access management priorities,
- Vision Zero implications,
- Multimodal/Complete Streets Integration, and
- Equity considerations.

#### Task 5: Draft and Final Study Report

The work developed in previous tasks will be summarized into a study report in Task 5. The project team will also explore the effects of each key finding and recommendation developed with regard to agency responsibilities, coordination, and changes required to county code. The project team will develop a draft Access Management Study report. This document will be posted online for public review and the Planning Board will get an opportunity to hear public comments on the draft Access Management Study report. Work sessions will then be held with the Planning Board to receive Planning Board feedback.

- Staff will present the final report of the Access Management Study to the Planning Board for their final review and comment.
- Staff will incorporate Planning Board and public comments into final Study document.

## SCHEDULE

The project is scheduled for FY22, with a October 2021 start and a June 2022 completion.

Task 1 will occur continuously throughout the project, starting in October 2021.

Task 2 will occur in October 2021.

Task 3 will commence in October 2021 and extend through November 2021.

Task 4 will start December 2021 and extend through February 2022.

Task 5 will occur in March through June 2022.



## ACCESS MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT ASSISTANCE

M-NCPPC – Montgomery County  
Planning Department

RFP No. P41-124

May 7, 2021

**Technical Proposal**



with peer review support from Century Engineering, Inc. and Diversified Property Services



May 7, 2021

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
ATTN: Richard Colbert, Procurement Officer  
6701 Kenilworth Avenue  
Riverdale, MD 20737

**Reference:** Access Management Consulting Services

Dear Mr. Colbert and Members of the Selection Committee

Mead & Hunt is pleased to submit a proposal in response to the subject solicitation. Founded in 1900, Mead & Hunt is a full-service Design and Engineering company, with approximately 900 employees in 40 offices nationwide. Our local office in Columbia, Maryland specializes in multimodal transportation policy and planning, traffic operations and engineering and other disciplines relevant to this RFP.

We have reviewed your Request for Proposals and herein present our experience and technical expertise that we are confident will meet the Commission's needs for this important and beneficial project. We appreciate the opportunity to submit our qualifications for your consideration and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,  
Mead & Hunt, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Silberman".

Paul Silberman, PE, PTOE  
Phone: 410-370-8955 | Email: paul.silberman@meadhunt.com  
Practice Lead – Transportation Planning



## PROJECT UNDERSTANDING & APPROACH

Montgomery County has long been at the forefront of public agencies responsible for integration of transportation and land use planning. This project, a collaboration of the M-NCPPC and the Departments of Transportation and Permitting Services, is **yet another forward leaning approach to advance the principles of the Vision Zero Action Plan and the County's Complete Streets policy.** (It should also be noted that improved access management will also help to advance the county's bus rapid transit vision by reducing conflict points and allowing for the smoother flow of traffic.) For new development and redevelopment, County agencies desire to reconcile, consolidate and update site plan and local area transportation review practices and processes with a goal of strategically and comprehensively managing access to county (and state) roads and providing consistent, pragmatic guidance to developers.

Although indicated in the scope of work that this study applies only to county roadways, the literature is clear that the most effective processes and practices for access management are the product of local and state agencies working together. The combined power of the county in regulating land use and site planning and the state's authority to regulate access to its roadways can yield transformative outcomes if there is a sufficient framework and alignment of principles for coordination. This project will lay the groundwork for such a strategy by documenting existing policies and processes, identifying internal stakeholder issues and concerns, sharing leading practices from around the nation, and investigating innovative practices through a hands-on approach with county staff.

Mead & Hunt has assembled a team of national experts and regional practitioners to provide the consultant services described in the RFP. In fact, our project partner, Kristine Williams of the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida, literally "**wrote the book**" on **access management** which is referred to in the very first sentence of the RFP's project purpose and goals. Her expertise along with Mead & Hunt's on-the-ground knowledge of Montgomery County's transportation system provides a best-in-class team to achieve M-NCPPC's goals.



### Peer Review Panel

An important part of our approach to this project, is use of a Peer Review Panel to review and comment on access management from their vantage point. The Peer Review Panel includes the former Access Management Coordinator for the State of Delaware; the former Director of the MDOT SHA Office of Real Estate; two former municipal Chief Engineers (Laurel and Frederick); and a former SHA Assistant District Engineer for Traffic.

We anticipate that the panel will meet twice over the course of the project.

## TASK 1: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In coordination with the M-NCPPC project manager, Mead & Hunt will conduct a kick-off meeting with partner agencies during which we will refine the scope and schedule, identify all relevant stakeholders and key personnel for each agency, confirm source documents (county code, regulations, manuals, etc.) and other matters necessary to ensure that the project starts off on sound footing. We request that M-NCPPC provide a debrief on our proposal so that we can understand its strengths and weaknesses and make sure that we fill in any gaps identified during the proposal review process.

Mead & Hunt will also prepare for and lead (with the M-NCPPC project manager) bi-weekly status meetings. At the kick-off meeting we will determine the specific nature of these meetings and who should attend in order to make the best use of everyone's time and talents.

Mead & Hunt will be available for a reasonable number of additional meetings, consultations, etc. as necessary to advance the project.

### **Task 1 Deliverables:**

Mead & Hunt will:

- provide an agenda and "read ahead" materials at least three days prior to the kick-off and each project meeting.
- Prepare and distribute meeting notes within 48 hours of each project meeting.

## TASK 2: ACCESS MANAGEMENT STATE OF PRACTICE

Mead & Hunt understands Task 2 to have two elements: 1) to develop a thorough understanding of the existing codes, regulations, manuals, and processes (both formal and "in practice"); and 2) to further develop work to date by M-NCPPC staff on best practices for access management which may have relevance to Montgomery County.

### ***Assessment of Current Local Practices***

To carry out the "existing conditions" element of Task 2, Mead & Hunt will begin by assembling and review all existing codes, regulations, manuals and guidance documents from planning and regulating agencies. Like most consultants, Mead & Hunt staff is already familiar with these documents and we will review again with an eye toward nuances important to the topic of access management. This knowledge base will be useful in conducting the following work:

- review or develop process maps which explain the steps in development review, the parties involved, and when access management decisions tend to be made (or recommended to Planning Board or agency leadership for approval)

- interview staff from M-NCPPC, DOT, DPS, MDOT SHA at multiple levels within each agency (technical reviewers, development navigators, area managers, agency leaders, etc.) to develop a practical understanding of what is and isn't working in access management and to identify issues for further review and development.
- interview external parties such as developers, developers' engineers, and community leaders who have been specifically active in the review of development projects in the past two years to gain their views and insights on the topics above. We will also assess external parties understanding of Vision Zero and the Complete Streets policy and how it may (or may not) represent a departure from past practices in development review.
- identify four to six development projects in the last two years which had challenging access management issues and where decisions may have been in controversy among various parties. (These projects may be used as part of case studies developed in Task 4)

### **State of the Practice**

Kristine Williams of the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida<sup>1</sup> will prepare an initial briefing for the M-NCPPC based on her work, including NCHRP Synthesis 549: *Incorporating Roadway Access Management into Local Ordinances*. Topics addressed would include:

- Elements of effective local access management programs, including success factors and common issues or impediments to implementing access management.
- The different aspects of local government planning and regulatory practice when access management arises as a consideration and the types of tools and processes used that include access management.
- How access management strategies vary by area type or land use context and modal priorities.
- Strategies to facilitate coordination between state and local agencies in state highway access management; and
- Trends in contemporary planning that are influencing the practice of access management, including the relationship between access management, complete streets, vision zero, and multimodal integration.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> References to the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida are for context only. For purpose of administrative timeliness, Ms. Williams may perform this work as KMW Associates LLC which also qualifies as a MFD under Commission regulations.

<sup>2</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2020. NCHRP Synthesis 549: *Incorporating Roadway Access Management into Local Ordinances*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/25750>

Recognizing that Montgomery County has a variety of development environments (urban redevelopment, suburban growth, rural preservation), we will be sure to include policies and practices that reflect the multitude of conditions that may be affected by any policy changes; and we will bring a specific focus on documented practices and policies that emphasize safety and multimodal integration of the road network.

With both the existing conditions and state of the practice findings in hand, Mead & Hunt and the M-NCPPC project manager will convene the project team to develop consensus on next steps for the project.

### **Task 2 Deliverables:**

Mead & Hunt will:

- Prepare a thorough memo summarizing existing conditions (including views from stakeholders) and research findings.
- Provide a slide deck that distills key points of the memo and identifies areas for further analysis and exploration.



*This fencing of this gated entrance along Snouffer School Road is located too close to the roadway as it does not allow for the stacking of at least two vehicles outside of the public right of way.*

### TASK 3: RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE EXISTING POLICIES

Using the work of Task 2 and the project team's consensus on next steps, the Mead & Hunt team will return to the county code, regulations, manuals and process maps to identify proactive changes to increase safety and support roadway users on all modes of transportation through better access management. We will compare the leading and innovative practices from other jurisdictions to current policies and practices, as well as identify program gaps, duplication and opportunities for coordination. Specific activities and focus areas for Task 3 will evolve based on input from the project team; however, the following activities may be warranted:

- Prepare a crosswalk of existing codes, policies and manuals (CP&M) to ensure consistency among them, including incorporation of and references to the Complete Streets and Vision Zero policies
- Develop access management typologies by contextual setting (urban, suburban, rural; new development/redevelopment; etc.)
- Recommend updates to the site plan review process to reflect early coordination and issue resolution between staff and applicants, as well as among agencies
- Prepare an outline for an intergovernmental agreement that would consolidate or coordinate decision-making among municipal, county and state agencies
- Identify procedures for the scoping of capital projects of roadways (resurfacing, rehabilitation or reconstruction) to include access management improvements

Although the Request for Proposals is focused on policies and processes affecting county-owned roads, it should not be discounted that:

- more than 60% of severe and fatal collisions affecting vehicle occupants occurred on MDOT SHA or municipally owned roadways.<sup>3</sup> In addition, driveways on major roadways increase the exposure of pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles to traffic conflicts and crashes. The literature is uniform and emphatic that intergovernmental coordination is essential to access management given the separation of authority between state and local governments over site access issues.<sup>4</sup>
- approximately 18% of all severe injury and fatal collisions affecting pedestrians occur in parking areas.<sup>5</sup> We will look closely at access management policies and their relationship to internal circulation and parking design.
- site access can be managed by the permitting authority even after an access permit has been issued, provided that certain stipulations are made clear when the permit is issued. It may be helpful to prepare a primer for front-line traffic engineering and planning staff on the regulatory and legal parameters which must be satisfied without running afoul of private property rights.

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<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County Vision Zero Supporting Data Analysis, November 2017, Page 6

<sup>4</sup> NCHRP Synthesis 549, Page 1

<sup>5</sup> Vision Zero Supporting Data Analysis, Page 6



#### TASK 4: IDENTIFICATION OF VISION ZERO & COMPLETE STREETS STRATEGIES

The identification of Vision Zero and Complete Streets strategies that relate to access management may best occur by applying the lessons learned in tasks 1 – 3 and sketch planning strategies to real life situations. As such, we propose to prepare three local case studies representing diverse contexts in the county. This approach will help technical staff to develop access management strategies that support Vision Zero and Complete Streets objectives with the consultant team; then use the case studies to help policymakers (Planning Board, County Council, agency leadership) to understand the practical implications of access management policy changes and the potential benefits of these changes to safety, livability, mobility and the economy.

For example, **Snouffer School Road from Woodfield Road to Flower Hill Way** (shown below) has 16 uncontrolled access points – both driveways and side streets, mostly on the east side of the roadway and a two-way left turn lane. Despite being in the top 10 priority Vision Zero corridors among County-maintained roadways with nine persons injured or killed between 2012 - 2016<sup>6</sup> there do not appear to have been any access improvements when the roadway was rehabilitated in 2019 – 2020. If and as properties along Snouffer School Road are redeveloped – or if the County wishes to take proactive measures – county staff would have a good understanding of tools that can be applied during the site planning process. Potential changes to roadway design will also be explored to support access management, as well as complete streets and vision zero objectives.



<sup>6</sup> Vision Zero Supporting Data Analysis, 2017, Page 4

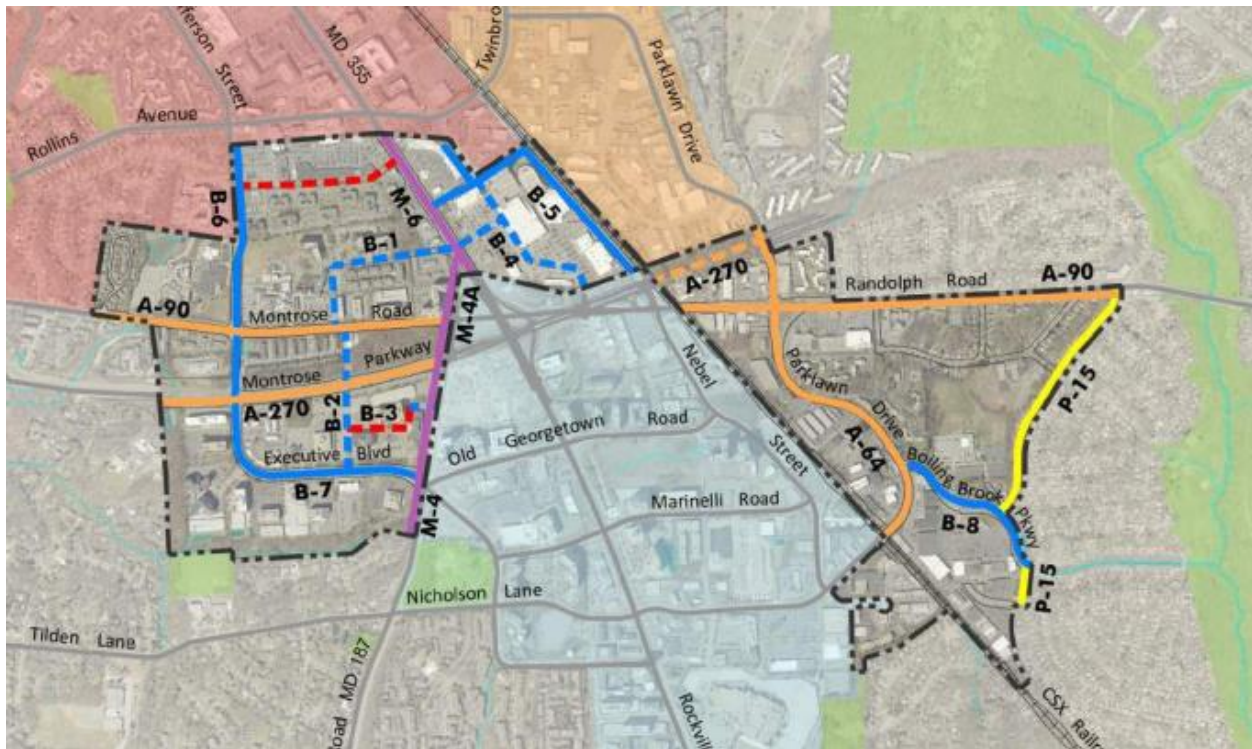
*Snouffer School Road between Woodfield Road and Flower Hill Way has sixteen access points in less than 3/4 mile.*

If public health conditions permit, we propose to conduct these case studies as tabletop exercises with a range of subject matter experts from county agencies. We foresee a half-day session with three groups of five to seven technical staff each supported by Mead & Hunt staff and the peer review panel. A write-up of the case studies would follow the tabletop exercises.

#### **Task 4 Deliverables:**

Mead & Hunt will:

- Manage a half-day work session to review three diverse situations where improved access management policies and practices could advance the Vision Zero plan and Complete Streets policies.
- Prepare a two-page summary of each case study, including the relative benefits of the improved access design to safety, livability, mobility and the economy.



*Mead & Hunt worked with MDOT Office of Planning, M-NCPPC and other stakeholders to develop a case study and framework examining the existing regulatory environment including current state codes impacting the White Flint TOD permitting, such as Traffic Impact Study methodology, access management policies and roadway design standards.*



## TASK 5: STUDY REPORT

Mead & Hunt will compile and make consistent all the technical documentation and policy recommendations developed during the study and prepare a well-formed report for use and distribution as the project team sees fit.

### Task 5 Deliverables:

Mead & Hunt will:

- Provide a draft report for internal review. This version will include relevant images but not be designed for publication.
- Provide a draft report incorporating internal review comments. NOTE: We request that M-NCPPC staff reconcile competing/conflicting comments from within the project team prior to returning the document to Mead & Hunt for review. This version will be designed for publication.
- Provide a final report that incorporates final staff and Planning Board comments.

## TASK 6: PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Mead and Hunt will prepare a slide deck presentation for use in public meetings and participate in two public meetings, including at least one meeting of the Planning Board. Mead & Hunt will provide the slide deck to the project team for review at least one week prior to its use and make one round of edits requested by the project team.

Presentations will be informed by the forthcoming work of *NCHRP 25-47: How to Measure and Communicate the Value of Access Management* which is being led by Kristine Williams at CUTR. Publication is expected during this project for M-NCPPC.

### Task 6 Deliverables:

Mead & Hunt will:

- Prepare the slide deck presentation of Task 5 report
- Prepare notes from public meetings.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

The Mead & Hunt team is prepared to meet M-NCPPC's proposed schedule, however, we note that with anticipated review times for draft and final reports (10 – 14 days each) and the Planning Board's typical August recess, such a schedule may not be feasible. At the project kick-off meeting, we will work together to establish a project schedule that meets M-NCPPC's needs.