

Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan, Preliminary Recommendations Briefing

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Description

Briefing on preliminary recommendations and ‘big ideas’ for the Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan.

Summary

The Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan is a corridor-focused amendment to the 1997 Fairland Master Plan. This update includes five major goals: creating a more complete community, fostering corridor growth, promoting economic development, increasing housing opportunities, and improving connectedness.

The master plan amendment kicked off in April 2021 with an approved Scope of Work by the Planning Board. Since then, the planning team has briefed the Planning Board on the community engagement and existing conditions assessment. The purpose for this briefing is to summarize the results from the vision workshops and highlight the ‘big ideas’ and other preliminary recommendations for the plan.

This report includes a discussion of a draft Concept Framework Plan, an overview of the Vision Workshops conducted this past summer, along with key take-aways, and a selection of preliminary recommendations. A complete set of workshop feedback notes is included as Attachment A.

Draft Concept Framework Plan

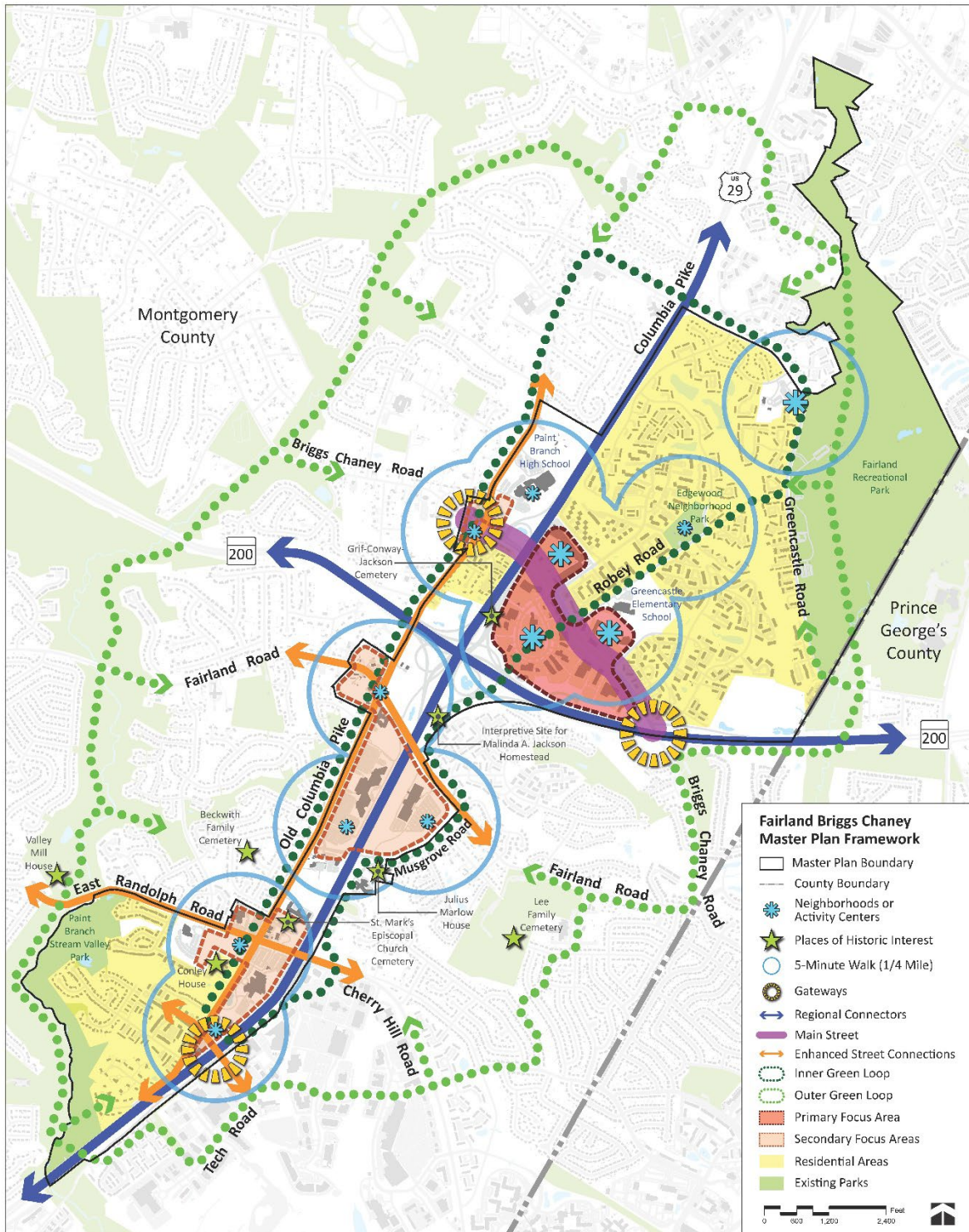
The draft Concept Framework Plan (Figure 1, below) lays out the overall vision for physical and experiential features of the Master Plan in how the various land use, transportation, parks, and other community amenities fit together as a cohesive whole. The Framework Plan identifies key elements of the existing community landscape, overlaid by aspirational elements to be realized through implementation of the Master Plan.

Feedback received through the course of the plan update's public engagement, especially Vision Workshops held earlier this summer, are captured in many elements of the draft Concept Framework Plan, including greater access to park trails, more active gathering spaces at key intersections, safer travel along and across roadways for non-vehicular modes, and inspiring community gateways at key access points to the community.

Elements of the draft Concept Framework Plan in Figure 1 include:

- An enhanced 'Main Street' corridor on Briggs Chaney Road
- A Primary Focus Area for future development along the Briggs Chaney Road corridor
- Secondary Focus Areas for future development at key activity centers
- Existing Residential Areas
- Active Transportation 'Inner' and 'Outer' Loops and Connections
- Enhanced Street Connections
- Existing Parkland
- Neighborhood Centers or Places of Interest and their related 5-minute walking radii
- Community Gateways
- Historic Sites

Figure 1 - Draft Concept Framework Plan



Vision Workshops

The planning team held a series of visioning workshops in June and July 2022, ranging in formats, times, and locations. During this series, staff collected the community's ideas and visions for the future. These workshops were thoughtfully coordinated with the help of Story Tapestries (a non-profit arts organization) to ensure an inclusive and safe space with a variety of communication techniques. Through this hands-on experience, planning staff gained insights on existing challenges and explored possible resolutions, which have led to potential plan recommendations. A summary of these workshops are as follows:

- **Monday, June 27, 6-7:30 p.m.** – Virtual workshop via Zoom, which focused on the entire Master Plan area.
- **Wednesday, July 6, 6-8 p.m.** – In-person workshop at Seventh-Day Adventist World Headquarters (12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, MD), which focused on the southern portion of the Master Plan area.
- **Thursday, July 14, 6-8 p.m.** – In-person workshop at Greencastle Lakes HOA Community Center (3661 Turbridge Dr, Burtonsville, MD), which focused on the northern portion of the Master Plan area.
- **Tuesday, July 19, 6-7:30 p.m.** – Virtual workshop via Zoom, which focused on the entire Master Plan area.
- **Friday, July 22, 5-8 p.m.** – In-person, outdoor workshop event at Fairland Recreational Park (3928 Greencastle Rd, Burtonsville, MD). Workshop focused on parks and recreation elements and included other agency partners and service providers, food vendors, and games.
- **Sunday, July 24, 2-4 p.m.** – In-person workshop at East County Community Recreation Center (3310 Gateshead Manor Way, Silver Spring, MD), which focused on the central portion of the master plan area.

Except for the outdoor event at Fairland Recreational Park, each in-person and virtual workshop followed a similar agenda. The workshops began with an introduction by planning staff and overview of the plan update process and purpose of the meeting. Participants were then asked to break into small groups to contribute ideas in three group exercises: (1) a high-level, 'ice-breaker' visioning activity; (2) a more structured brainstorming, illustration, and map-based feedback activity; and (3) an open discussion to reflect on feedback seen and heard from other breakout groups and any other issues and ideas not previously shared. Planning staff then reconvened all participants for a workshop wrap-up and explanation of the plan update's next steps.

Throughout the six visioning workshops, just over 100 participants provided more than 500 individual comments, reactions, visions, and illustrations. See Attachment B for the full set of comments received from each workshop.

Vision Workshop Key Take-Aways

The following is a summary of the main comments shared by participants of the vision workshops, organized by policy theme. These comments greatly influenced the preparation of the preliminary recommendations, presented in this report, in addition to the findings of the existing conditions analysis, meetings with community stakeholders, and professional expertise of the planning team.

Community Health & Culture

- Residents want active, lively, vibrant, and diverse activity centers that are inclusive and encourage social interactions
- Crime is a concern, especially at the Briggs Chaney Marketplace and in the Castle Boulevard communities
- Residents want higher-paying job opportunities
- Perceptions of the east county as unsafe or undesirable community inhibits people from visiting the parks and patronizing their shopping centers

Development & Design

- Interest in community gathering/ event spaces with amenities, water features, and culturally relevant elements
- Interest in more retail options, including more choice in grocery stores, sit-down restaurant, and cafés
- Residents want safer and better designed shopping centers and commercial districts with ethnic diversity
- Desire for community gateways and better signage and wayfinding
- Desire for a more intensive and accessible town center in the Briggs Chaney Road area

Environment

- Desire for more and better-maintained landscaping and natural areas
- Need for more shade in developed commercial areas experiencing high urban heat levels
- Interest in financial support to make photovoltaic systems & EV charging stations more affordable and accessible

Food Access

- Desire for a more traditional grocery store in the Briggs Chaney Marketplace
- Interest in more healthy fast food and fine dining restaurants
- Desire for farmer's markets in the plan area, particularly at the Tech Road Park & Ride lot
- Food distribution, bringing people together

History, Culture & Art

- Interest in a cultural/ entertainment/ nightlife destinations and activities in the plan area
- More artwork, landmarks, and cultural elements in the public realm that contribute to the area's identity
- Interest in locally relevant historical markers and plaques throughout the plan area
- Stronger sense of pride in the community and a need to know about the community's story

Housing

- Support for more housing units and types, in a compact form of development, in a range of price points that compliments the existing affordable housing units in this part of the county
- Interest in more opportunities for homeownership for first-time homebuyers, seniors, and recent immigrants
- Need for better maintained and healthier (smoke-free) rental properties
- In-home businesses and need for live / work units to decrease cost burdens
- Concern that cost burdened households could lead to homelessness; need for access to more resources

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

- Need for better connections between existing parks, recreation centers, trails, and neighborhoods
- Interest in more indoor (e.g., pool, badminton, rock climbing) and outdoor (e.g., mini-golf, game tables, skate park, water features, Yoga, Thai-Chi, Zumba) recreation options for younger kids and seniors
- Interest in more events and programming at existing parks and facilities
- Interest in specialized park types (e.g., dog park, outdoor exercise, meditation spaces, spaces for religious/ ethnic groups)

Schools & Education

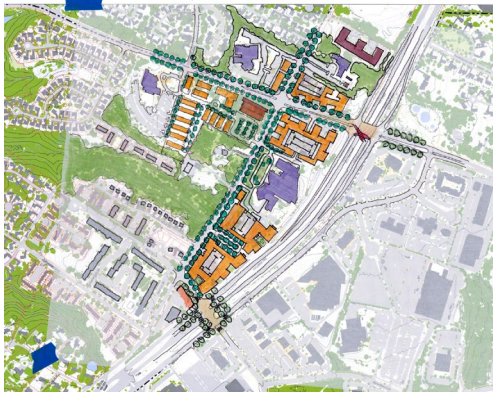
- Need for more educational programs and activities (e.g., after-school activities, life skills, finance, mentorships)
- Interest in a vocational choice in the NE Consortium
- Integrate Paint Branch HS in the community for both indoor and outdoor activities in evenings and weekends
- Desire for renovation of Greencastle Elementary School
- Better access to healthy food, as there are a significant number of students on the Free and Reduced Meals program
- Desire for an east county community college
- Need for professional training opportunities and better workforce development

Transportation

- Major intersections, interchanges, community barriers, and topography divide communities
- Increase pedestrian/bike safety along major roadways (e.g., E. Randolph Road, Old Columbia Pike, Briggs Chaney Road)
- Improve vehicle operation at Briggs Chaney Marketplace
- Interest in safer, more comfortable, and accessible bike/ pedestrian/ roll travel through the master plan area and across neighborhoods where there are barriers or gaps today
- Increase maintenance and repair of existing pedestrian facilities
- Expand BRT and other bus service to access more areas of the county (and beyond), every day of the week, with more travel priority
- Address speeding of minor arterial roads (Greencastle Road, Robey Road, Briggs Chaney Road, Old Columbia Pike, East Randolph Road) through multimodal design
- Undergrounding of utilities for more shade trees along heavily traveled pathways

Internal Design Charette

In advance of developing a draft Concept Framework Plan, staff held an internal design charette to test elements of the preliminary recommendations, building upon feedback received at the Vision Workshops. The images below show possible development concepts created in the charette that explore potential development patterns of properties and streetscapes within the Plan Area.

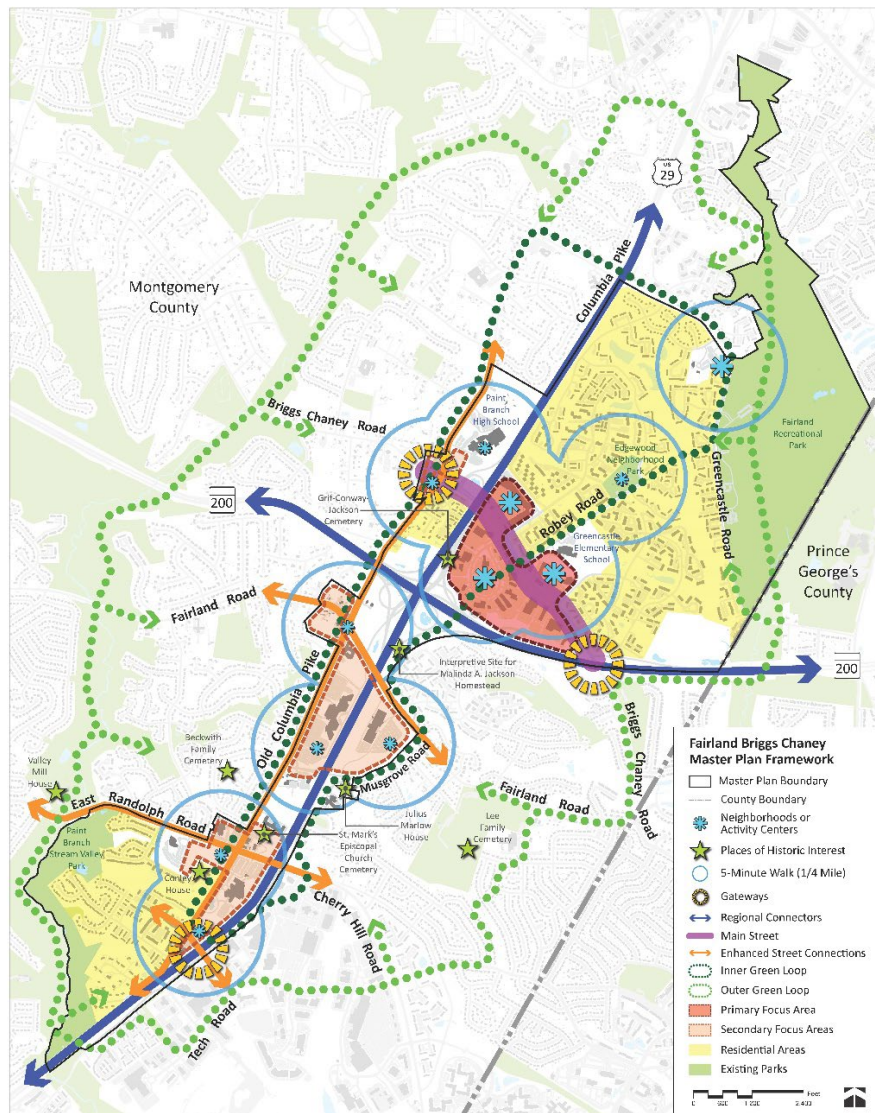


Design concept at East Randolph Road and Old Columbia Pike



Design concept along Briggs Chaney Road

Figure 1 - Draft Concept Framework Plan (included again for quick reference)



Preliminary Recommendations

Staff requests feedback from the Planning Board on the following preliminary recommendations in advance of the preparation of a Working Draft plan that is expected to be presented to the Planning Board in December 2022.

Preliminary Recommendations ‘Big Ideas’

The following is a selection of the preliminary recommendations that have the potential to make a significant impact on the Master Plan area. Staff is calling this selection our “Big Ideas”.

1. Activity Centers

Establish a strong emphasis on community gateways and activity centers consisting of compact, mixed-use developments focused around high-frequency transit service and community gathering spaces.

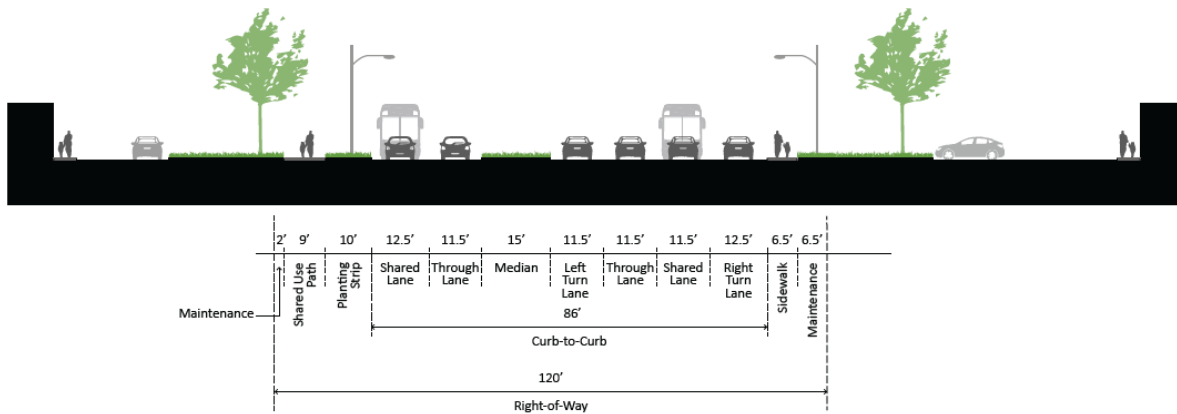
- a. Primary Activity Center:** Create a compact, mixed-use, ‘main street’ corridor along Briggs Chaney Road, between Old Columbia Pike and Aston Manor Drive, that serves as a gateway and focal point in the community, focused on the Flash BRT, community gathering spaces, and artistic, cultural and historic landmarks. A new Flash BRT station should be considered, either on US-



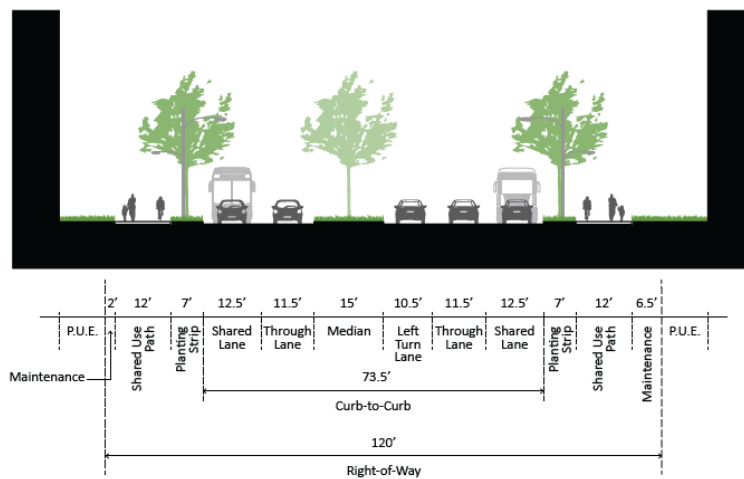
Briggs Chaney Road Activity Center Concept

29 or near Castle Boulevard. New development on both sides of the roadway should orient building frontages toward the street and include pedestrian amenity areas and sidewalks to activate the public realm, and ornamental and shade tree plantings will by improving the existing environment and enhancing pedestrian comfort. A ‘road diet’ should also be considered for Briggs Chaney Road to slow speeds, calm traffic, and create new space for safe and comfortable pedestrian and bike movement (see below).

Existing typical cross section for Briggs Chaney Road



Proposed typical 'road diet' design for Briggs Chaney Road



b. Secondary Neighborhood Centers:

Support development of compact, neighborhood-focused development along US-29 and Old Columbia Pike within about a 5-minute walk of their respective intersections with Briggs Chaney Road, Fairland Road, Musgrove Road, East Randolph Road, and Tech Road, as well as the Bus Station Park & Ride locations of Greencastle Road, Briggs Chaney Road, and Tech Road. Incorporate major art installations at each center as unique, distinguishing features.



East Randolph Road / Old Columbia Pike Activity Center Concept

- c. **Montgomery College East County Campus:** Locate a new East County campus for Montgomery College in the master plan area. Possible locations include a portion of the Auto Sales Park off Briggs Chaney Road or a site near the intersection of US-29 and East Randolph Road.



*Potential Auto Sales Park and East County
Montgomery College Location Concept*

- d. **Auto Sales Park:** In conjunction with new mixed-use development on the vacant lot south of 3110 Automobile Blvd., establish a reimagined Auto Sales Park that integrates a more pedestrian-oriented development pattern, that compliments either the Montgomery College East County Campus or mixed-use development, oriented around a new public park space with a continuous, unimpeded daylight stream and shared use path running south from the Auto Sales Park, east along the north side of the ICC to open space and streams connecting to Fairland Recreation Park and Little Paint Branch.
- e. **Resiliency / Health Hub & Learning Community Center:** Create a Health/Resilience Hub and Learning Center in the vicinity of the East County Regional Services Center that serves as a community center for day-to-day community needs, as well as a destination providing a reliable source of electricity, potable water, temporary shelter, food, indoor heating or cooling, and social services during public emergencies.
- f. **Activate Park and Ride Locations:** Allow context-sensitive infill development at bus station park and ride locations within the Plan Area to support increased bus ridership and more accessible, transit-oriented community destinations. These include park and ride lots at Greencastle Road, Briggs Chaney Road, and Tech Road.
- g. **Mitigate Urban Heat Islands:** Drastically reduce urban heat island effects along Briggs Chaney Road and Old Columbia Pike to improve community safety, comfort, and experience at new activity centers by increasing tree canopy and shade structures, decreasing impervious surfaces and hardscapes,

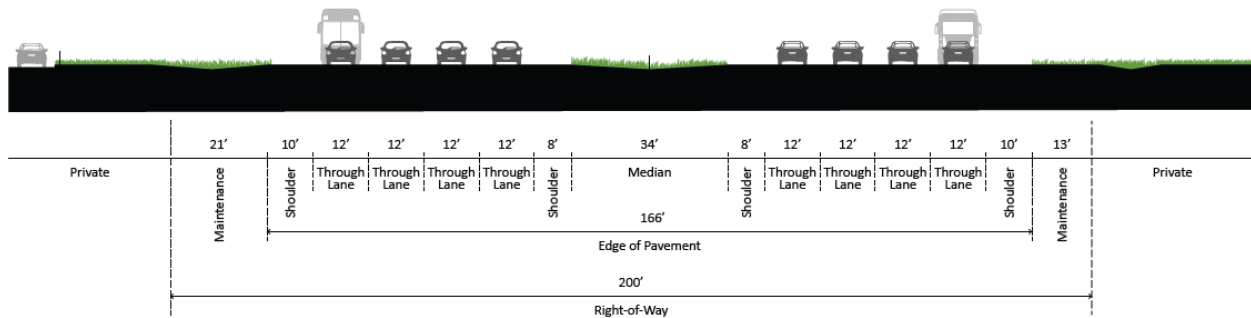
and requiring ‘cool pavements’, ‘cool facades’, and other heat-reducing construction techniques in the public realm.

2. US-29 as a BRT Transit Expressway

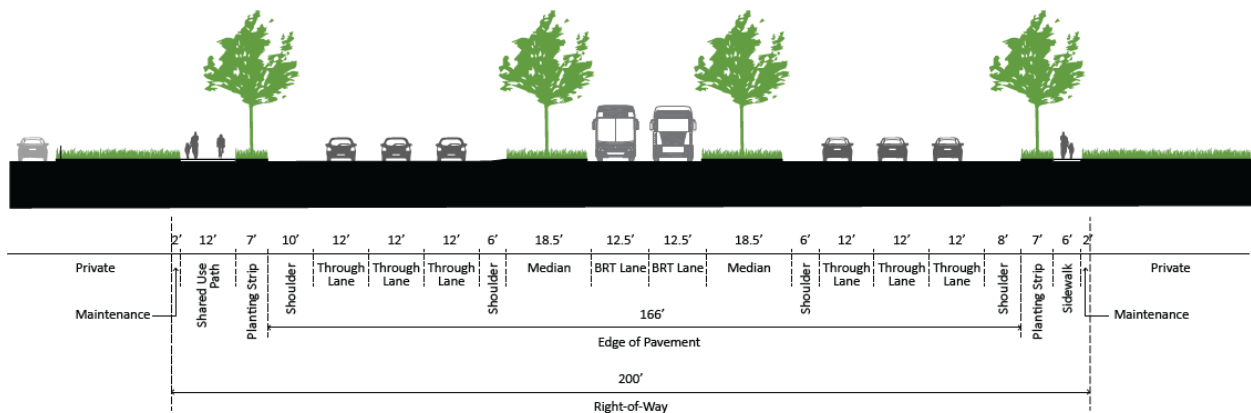
The long-term vision for the US-29 Corridor is to prioritize transit and improve the safety and comfort of its crossings while maintaining the corridor’s primary purpose as a convenient regional connection from the Plan Area to Silver Spring, Washington DC, Columbia, and Baltimore.

- a. Dedicated Transit Lanes:** Build high-quality, dedicated BRT lanes on US-29 with stations connected to compact, pedestrian-friendly overpasses at key intersections. Prioritize transit movement on US-29 by accepting increases in single-occupancy vehicle travel time. Encourage extension of the US-29 Flash BRT service north into Howard County. Actual BRT alignment and lane design would be determined as part of a study in conjunction with Montgomery County Department of Transportation.

Existing US-29 (Columbia Pike) cross section



Proposed Briggs Chaney Road bridge cross section with dedicated BRT lanes



- b. Revisit US-29 Interchanges:** Emphasize non-automobile mode safety, comfort, and design at all US-29 intersections within the Plan Area.
- i. No New Interchanges:** Remove all remaining proposed grade-separated interchanges previously recommended by the 1997 Fairland Master Plan at *Greencastle Road*, *Fairland Road*, *Musgrove Road*, and *Tech Road*.
 - ii. Redesign Existing At-Grade Intersections:** Configure all existing at-grade intersections on US-29 within the Plan Area to maximize non-automobile safety and comfort (i.e., *Greencastle Road*, *Fairland Road*, *Musgrove Road*, and *Tech Road*). Possible solutions may include shrinking the footprint of an intersection through travel lane narrowing or elimination, removing left turn lanes, providing median pedestrian refuges and protected crossings.
 - iii. Expand Briggs Chaney Road Bridge:** Expand the bridge over US-29 to include a public plaza with small-scale retail, entertainment, and other activated uses to improve the safety, comfort, and interest of the crossing over US-29 along Briggs Chaney Road. Commemorate the bridge as the Malinda Jackson Memorial Bridge, metaphorically bridging the past to a vibrant future for the Fairland and Briggs Chaney community. May also incorporate a new BRT station on US 29.

Existing Briggs Chaney Road bridge



Potential Bridge Design Examples



Washington, D.C.



Philadelphia, PA

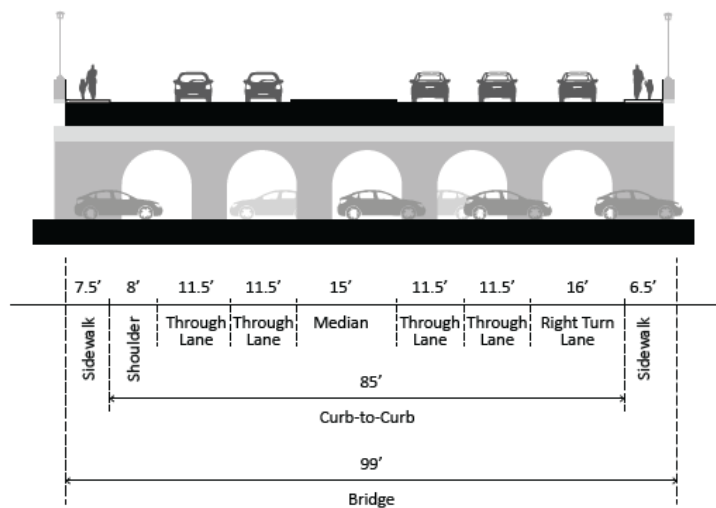


Alexandria, VA

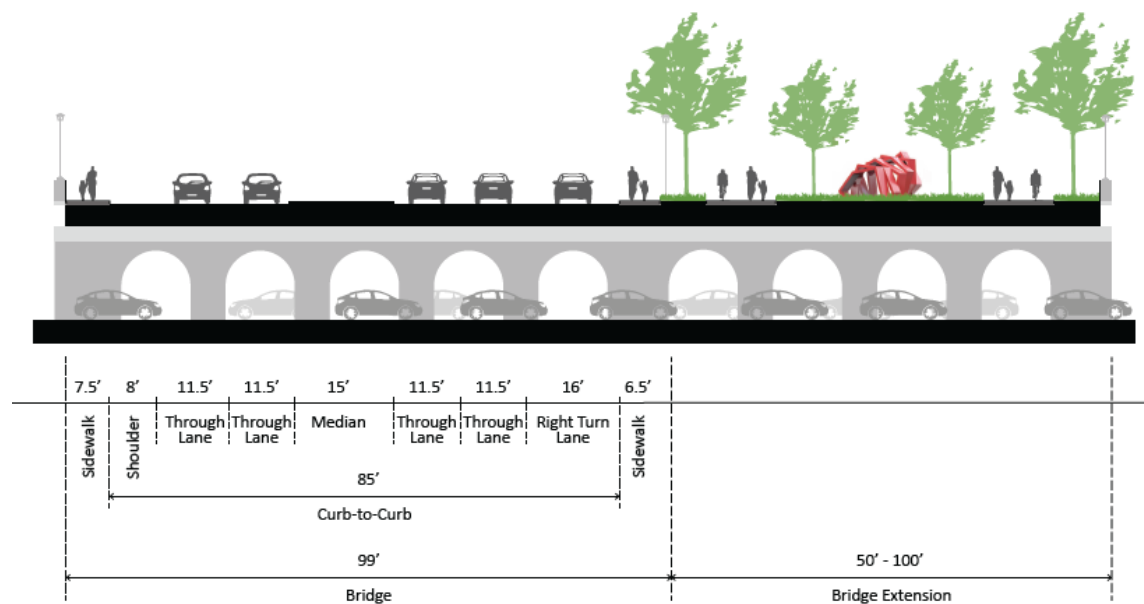


Philadelphia, PA

Existing Briggs Chaney Road bridge cross section

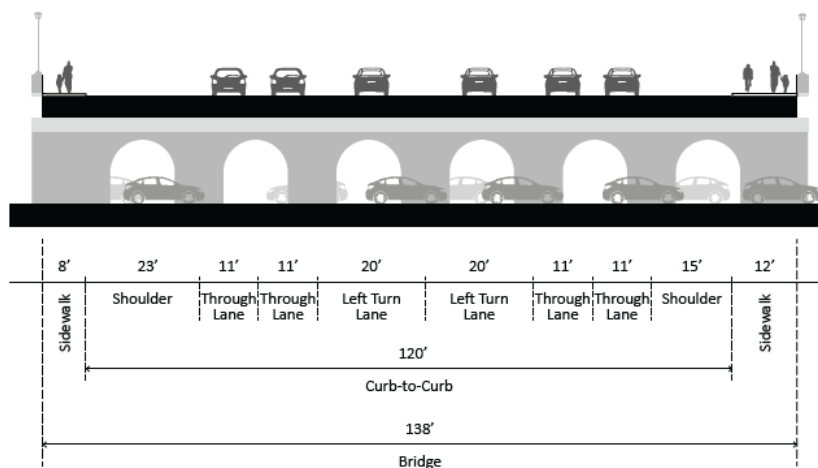


Proposed Briggs Chaney Road bridge cross section



- iv. **Repurpose East Randolph Road / Cherry Hill Road Bridge:** Maximize safety, comfort, and right-of-way for bicycle, pedestrian, and rolling travel by reducing space dedicated to vehicles, eliminating unprotected pedestrian crossings (e.g., 'hot rights'), slowing travel speeds through design.

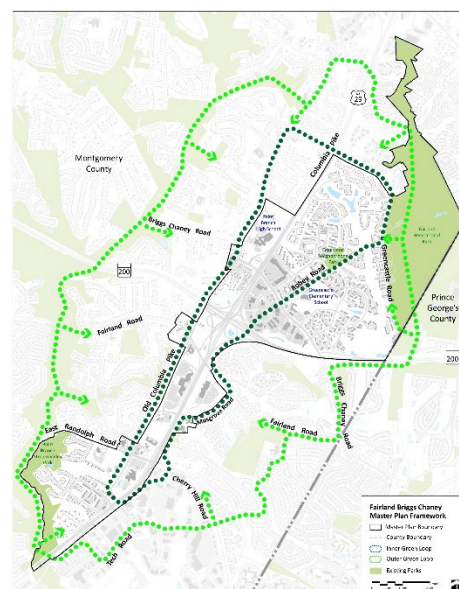
Existing East Randolph Road / Cherry Hill Road bridge cross section and aerial image



3. Bike-Ped Loops and Greenway Network

This plan envisions a complete greenway network of bicycle and pedestrian trails and pathways that consists of inner and outer loops with radial and internal connections between neighborhoods and activity centers in the Master Plan area and beyond. This circulation system is used for both active and passive recreation and enhances regional connectivity.

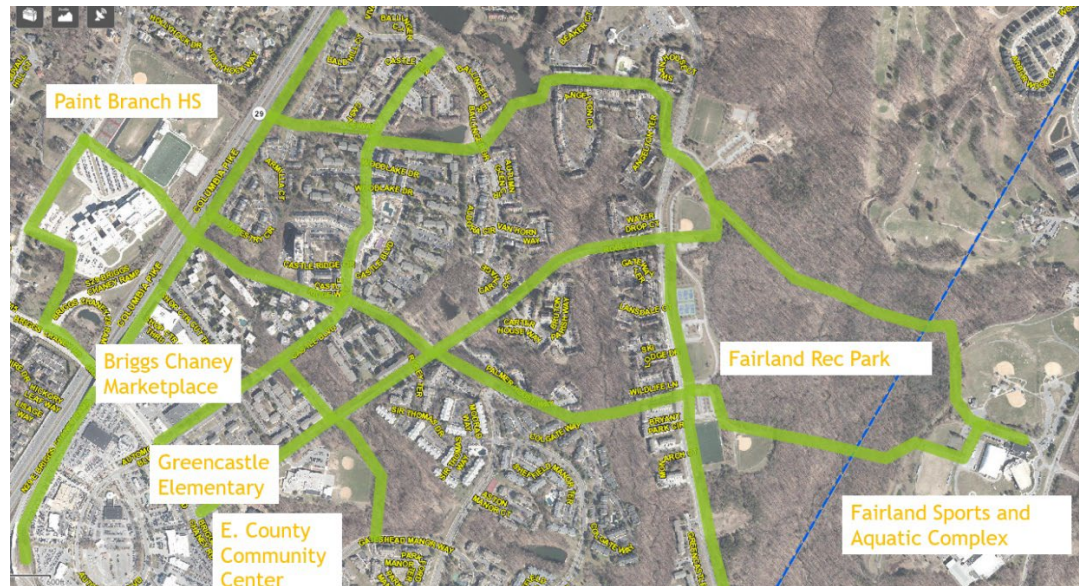
- a. **Paint Branch Parks Loop:** Create a continuous trail system encircling the master plan area comprised of natural surface trail, paved trails, and side paths that connect parks, open spaces, community facilities, bus stops, and neighborhoods in Montgomery County and Prince George's County. The trail system should incrementally seek to connect existing trails and paths on public parkland, public rights-of-way, and, if necessary, through private property with missing connections.



Potential Paint Branch Parks and 'Pike' Loops

Trail amenities should include resting areas, community gathering and event spaces, linear parks, community gardens, historical and cultural wayfinding, and public art with connections via radial paths to activity centers along Columbia Pike (US 29) and Old Columbia Pike.

- b. Active Transportation ‘Pike Loop’:** Create a continuous off-street shared use path loop running parallel to Columbia Pike (US-29) and Old Columbia Pike that links neighborhoods and activity centers with connections to the outer trail loop via radial paths.
- c. Neighborhood connections:** Establish publicly accessible trail connections connecting neighborhoods, activity centers, public parks, and recreation centers through HOA common area properties, public parkland, and road rights-of-way. Work with HOAs to enable trail connections, primarily through monetary incentives and public maintenance agreements, as well as through property acquisition, public access agreements, and/or trail easements, as appropriate.



Potential neighborhood connections in the Briggs Chaney Road area

4. Bi-County Approach for Fairland Recreational Park and Fairland Regional Park

The plan envisions a bi-county approach to the planning, improvement, operations, and maintenance of Fairland Recreational Park (operated by Montgomery Parks) and Fairland Regional Park (operated by Prince George’s Parks & Recreation). Existing natural resources should be preserved and enhanced for both parks, while additional activities and amenities should be considered on already developed portions of the parks, such as an outdoor pool facility, sports fields catering to diverse cultures, refreshment facilities, etc.

Next Steps

As the development of the Master Plan continues, Montgomery Planning will further engage with the community by participating in community-led events (like Burtonsville Day), interviewing property owners, and hosting community meetings to discuss the recommendations, vision and Master Plan working draft document. The Working Draft of the Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan is targeted to be drafted in Fall 2022 with a public hearing for the plan in late 2022 or early 2023. Montgomery Planning anticipates transmitting the Planning Board draft plan to the County Council for review and approval by the Spring of 2023.

Attachments

- A. Vision Workshop Feedback Matrix

Fairland and Briggs Chaney Master Plan Area

