

# BETHESDA TWO-WAY STUDY BRIEFING

## Description

The Bethesda Two-Way Study was conducted by MCDOT to evaluate the feasibility of converting the one-way segments of East-West Highway, Old Georgetown Road, Woodmont Avenue, Montgomery Lane and Montgomery Avenue to two-way streets, as recommended by the Bethesda Downtown Plan.

MCPB

Item No. 9

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#### LOCATION

Downtown Bethesda

#### MASTER PLAN

Bethesda Downtown Plan (2017)

Bicycle Master Plan (2018)

#### AGENCY

Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

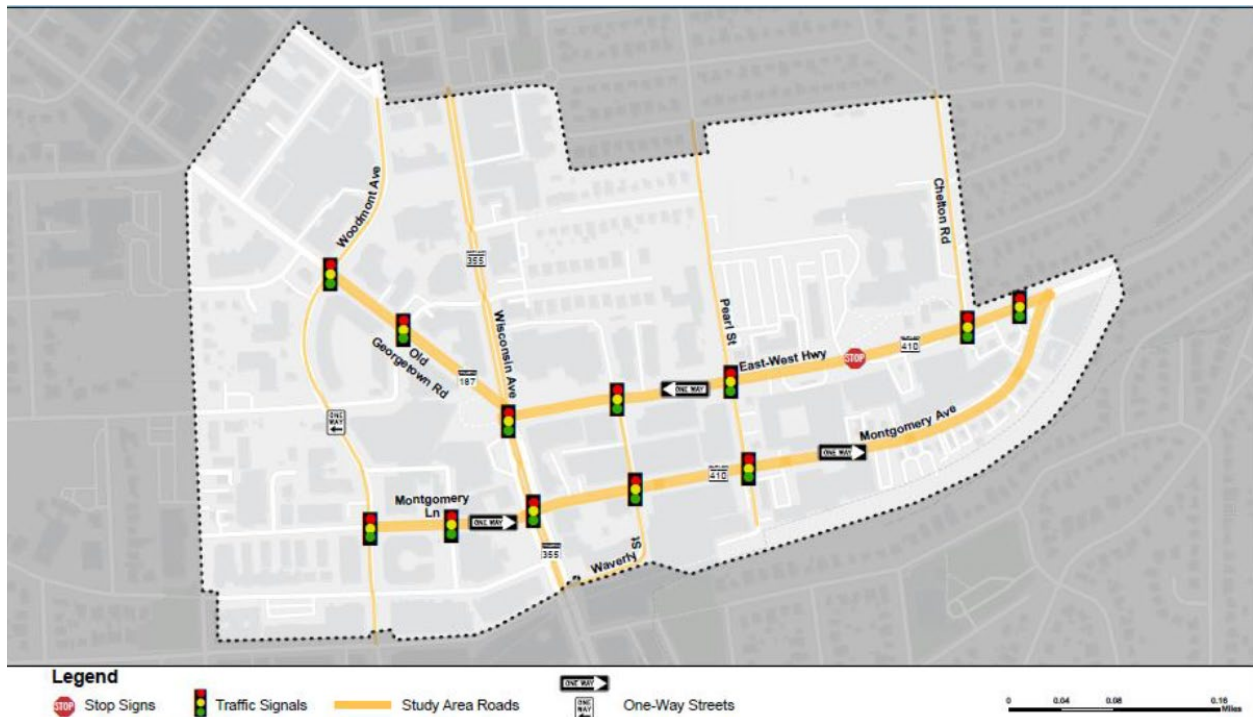
## Summary

- The Planning Board will receive a briefing from MCDOT about the feasibility of implementing the Bethesda Downtown Plan's recommendation to change the one-way segments of Old Georgetown Road, East-West Highway, Montgomery Lane, Montgomery Avenue, and Woodmont Avenue to two-way operations.
- MCDOT will also discuss the analysis of other alternatives that may achieve similar goals.

## SECTION 1 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The *Bethesda Downtown Plan* (2017) vision is for the area to be a model of sustainability, accessibility, equity, and innovation. One recommendation on page 36 of the plan in support of this vision is to “Evaluate reconfiguration of the East-West Highway (MD 410)/ Montgomery Lane/ Old Georgetown Road (MD 187)/ Woodmont Avenue one-way pair into a two-way street system.” The logic behind this recommendation was that a conversion to two-way operations would “... slow vehicular traffic, improve bicycle accommodation (by virtue of slower vehicular traffic) and enliven the street for pedestrians... [while] increasing visibility to commercial establishments along the one-way segment and provide new opportunities for placemaking.” The recommendation also includes an alternative that would instead use a “road diet” to convert traffic lanes to bikeways.

Figure 1: Map of Study Area Streets



MCDOT worked with Mead & Hunt, a traffic engineering consultant, to understand the traffic implications for implementing these recommendations. The team analyzed several alternatives:

- Alternative 1: Two-Way Road Diet with Separated Bike Lanes
  - o This alternative is the main *Bethesda Downtown Plan* recommendation while fully implementing the *Bicycle Master Plan*-recommended bikeway network.
- Alternative 2: Partial Two-Way Road Diet with Separated Bike Lanes

- This alternative would make East-West Highway two-way while maintaining Montgomery Lane and Montgomery Avenue one-way eastbound and fully implementing the *Bicycle Master Plan*-recommended bikeway network.
- Alternative 3: One-way Couplet Road Diet with Dedicated Bus Lanes and Separated Bike Lanes
  - This alternative would maintain existing one-way traffic operations while providing a dedicated bus lane on East-West Highway, Montgomery Lane, Montgomery Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and Woodmont Avenue and fully implementing the *Bicycle Master Plan*-recommended bikeway network.
- Alternative 3a: One-way Couplet Partial Road Diet with Separated Bike Lanes
  - This alternative would maintain existing one-way traffic operations while fully implementing the *Bicycle Master Plan*-recommended bikeway network.

A summary of the analysis is Attachment A. A more detailed explanation of the analysis is Attachment B. The *Bicycle Master Plan* bikeway network for Downtown Bethesda is Attachment C.

## SECTION 2 – CONCLUSIONS

The MCDOT study found that Alternative 3a best achieved the goals of street reconfiguration identified in the *Bethesda Downtown Plan* while minimizing negative effects on motor vehicle travel to and through the area.

Planning staff has reviewed the analysis and supports MCDOT’s recommendation to advance Alternative 3a.

## SECTION 3 – ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Bethesda Two-Way Conversion Study Analysis Summary

Attachment B: Bethesda Two-Way Conversion Study Analysis Results Memo

Attachment C: Bicycle Master Plan Bethesda Bikeway Network