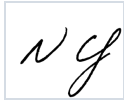


2023 BIENNIAL MONITORING REPORT FOR THE NORTH BETHESDA (WHITE FLINT) SECTOR PLAN AREA



Description

Every two years, Montgomery Planning staff prepares the North Bethesda Sector Plan Biennial Monitoring Report (BMR) for the Planning Board's review and transmittal to the County Council and County Executive. The BMR is a requirement from the Approved and Adopted 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan*.



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SUMMARY

The 2023 North Bethesda Sector Plan Biennial Monitoring Report (BMR) provides a comprehensive summary of the efforts to implement the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan*, including development approvals, public facilities, transportation, and recommendations to further the implementation of the Sector Plan. Key monitoring updates discussed in this report include:

- The Western Workaround, which is the roadway realignment of Old Georgetown Road (MD 187), Executive Boulevard, and Towne Road, was completed in December 2022.
- New bikeways and pedestrian improvements have been implemented along Towne Road and Old Georgetown Road to further enhance the bike and pedestrian networks.
- Some property owners, including Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT) and Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP), have continued to invest in the plan area by building new non-residential and residential developments.
- In November 2022, the County Executive signed a transformative partnership to establish the Institute for Health Computing at North Bethesda with the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), in collaboration with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

DRAFT

2023 Biennial Monitoring Report for the North
Bethesda (White Flint) Sector Plan Area

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Planning Board Information

MCPB

Item No. 6

10-19-2023



STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Transmit the 2023 North Bethesda Sector Plan Biennial Monitoring Report to the County Executive and the County Council, including the District Councilmember.

ATTACHMENT:

2023 North Bethesda Biennial Monitoring Report

2023

North Bethesda

BIENNIAL MONITORING REPORT



ABSTRACT

This report meets the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* and 2018 *White Flint 2 Sector Plan* requirements for monitoring and providing the County Executive and County Council with advance guidance regarding implementation of these Plans for the upcoming FY2025–2030.

Sources of Copies

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

Online at montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/midcounty/white-flint/

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting and amending or extending The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George’s Counties. The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by those county governments. The Planning Boards are responsible for implementation of local plans, zoning ordinances, and subdivision regulations and the administration of the bi-county park system.

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2023
NORTH BETHESDA
BIENNIAL MONITORING REPORT

M-NCPPC
Montgomery County Planning Department
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Protected Bikelanes at Rose Avenue

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 Biennial Monitoring Report (BMR) is a comprehensive update on development, infrastructure and staging requirements as required by the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* for the White Flint/North Bethesda area. This edition of the BMR also provides an in-depth review of the plan area's existing real estate market conditions.

The nation is recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, and several important staging requirements have been implemented. The Planning Board has approved 318,500 square feet of non-residential development and 708 residential dwelling units in recent years. The following are key accomplishments in the plan area:

- The Western Workaround, which is the roadway realignment of Old Georgetown Road (MD 187), Executive Boulevard, and Towne Road, was completed in December 2022.
- New bikeways and pedestrian improvements have been implemented along Towne Road and Old Georgetown Road to further enhance the bike and pedestrian networks.
- Some property owners, including Federal Realty Investment Trust (FRIT) and Montgomery Housing Partnership (MHP), have continued to invest in the plan area by building new non-residential and residential developments.
- In November 2022, the County Executive signed a transformative partnership to establish the Institute for Health Computing at North Bethesda with the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) and the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), in collaboration with the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS) and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

This report provides a status update and direction toward achieving key staging requirements in the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* and the 2018 *White Flint 2 Sector Plan*, as required by the 2010 Plan.



INTRODUCTION

The Approved and Adopted 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* framework is to create a mixed-use downtown destination in North Bethesda with enhanced mobility options, including bus rapid transit (BRT) on Rockville Pike (MD 355), new public amenities and facilities, and new infrastructure within a three-phase staging plan. This 2023 BMR is delivered as the county continues to move forward from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has negatively impacted public transit, offices, and commercial development.

The completion of the Western Workaround is a significant mobility and staging trigger accomplishment for the plan area. New bikeways

have been implemented along Towne Road and Old Georgetown Road, and additional bikeways are anticipated on Marinelli Road. Several Phase 1 staging requirements have been implemented, but there are additional streetscapes and bikeways that should be implemented.

Property owners have submitted new development proposals, and infrastructure improvements have advanced to implement the Sector Plan recommendations further. Public engagement, via virtual meetings, has continued to provide input regarding the implementation of the Sector Plan.

The BMR is a Sector Plan requirement to monitor and assess progress toward implementing key elements in the Sector Plan, and the document must be submitted to the County Council and County Executive

KEY NORTH BETHESDA MONITORING UPDATES

Western Workaround

- The roadway realignment of Executive Boulevard, Grand Park Avenue, Old Georgetown Road, and Towne Road was completed in December 2022.

Institute for Health Computing

- In November 2022, the County Executive announced the formation of the Institute for Health Computing at North Bethesda. The Institute will leverage advances in artificial intelligence, machine learning, and clinical analytics research to create a premier learning healthcare system. The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB); the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP); the University of Maryland Medical System (UMMS); and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) are included in this partnership.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Improvements

- The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has completed the first phase of pedestrian enhancements at Rockville Pike and Old Georgetown Road, including new sidewalks and landscape buffers. The second phase, which will remove the slip lanes or ‘hot’ rights at this intersection, will be completed in 2024 (see Map 7).
- A new protected bikeway has been installed along Towne Road, between Old Georgetown Road and Josiah Henson Parkway. In addition, the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) installed buffered bike lanes along Old Georgetown Road, between Nicholson Lane and the Capital Beltway (I-495).
- New protected bikeways have been installed along Old Georgetown Road and a protected bikeway is anticipated later this year or in 2024 along Marinelli Road, between MD 355 and Nebel Street.

Metro Station Name

- In September 2022, the White Flint Metrorail Station was renamed the North Bethesda Metrorail Station.

NORTH BETHESDA MARKET CONDITIONS

This market overview examines real estate conditions and trends in the Sector Plan area. It also highlights how new development is changing market conditions in the area.

Two developments are driving the shift in market conditions in the Sector Plan area: Pike & Rose and North Bethesda Market. These projects account for most of the mixed-use developments in the plan area and establish a sense of place that will likely catalyze more growth.

Pike & Rose is a landmark, award-winning, mixed-use development with 420,000 square feet of office space, 300,000 square feet of retail, and 765 residential units boasting low vacancy rates and commanding high rents.

Built prior to the 2010 Sector Plan approval, North Bethesda Market is another significant mixed-use development that has also added higher-end retail and other amenities to the plan area.

Residential

Residential growth in the Sector Plan area between 2010 and 2021 built upon sustained growth since the 1990s. Since 2010, the plan area has accounted for 45 percent of the residential growth in the larger North Bethesda Census Designated Place (CDP).

Most of the residential development in the Sector Plan area is multi-family rentals in buildings larger than 50 units, resulting in a disproportionately high share of renter households (68 percent) compared with the County as a whole (35 percent). Average asking rents are approximately \$2,455 for apartments and are above countywide averages, reflecting the higher price point of newly constructed buildings, proximity to Metrorail, and growing number of amenities in the area.

As shown in **Table 1**, of the 3,221 multi-family rental units in the Sector Plan area, 444 (13.8 percent) are Moderately Priced Dwelling Units (MPDUs).

Table 1: Summary of Multi-family Rentals, 2023

Multifamily Summary	Sector Plan Area
Inventory, Q1 ¹ 2023 (buildings)	10
Inventory, Q1 2023 (units)	3,221
MPDUs	444
Average Unit Size (sf)	951
Avg. Asking Rent per unit, Q1 2023	\$2,455
Vacancy	
Vacant Units, Q1 2023	278
Vacancy Rate, Q1 2023	8.6%

Notably, in the three multi-family buildings built before 2010, the average unit size is 1,050 square feet, compared with 900 square feet in buildings built after 2010. Average asking rents are similar regardless of the year built (between \$2,400 and \$2,500 per unit), although on a per square foot basis, rents in newer buildings are slightly higher given the smaller unit sizes.

There are eight condominium buildings in the plan area. The Residences at Pike & Rose is the only condominium built since 2010. The average condo sale price in the plan area in 2023 is approximately \$480,000, while recent sales at the Residences at Pike & Rose averaged \$760,000.

¹ The first quarter of the year.



Retail

The retail market in the plan area is evolving. The area is historically a retail district, with the former White Flint Mall, big box stores, and strip retail lining Rockville Pike. The trade area, which is the source of demand for retail, is large, with patrons coming from Bethesda, Rockville, and beyond. In part due to the high household incomes (and therefore, spending power) of the surrounding North Bethesda CDP, as well as the larger trade area, new retail built since the Sector Plan was approved is higher-end and contained within walkable, mixed-use developments. Moreover, mixed-use developments that include residential development and office help sustain retail viability by adding spending on-site in addition to the trade area. New retail is also consistent with the Sector Plan’s vision, which sets the stage for the development of a ‘Pike District.’ Approximately one-quarter of the retail development in the plan area is in either Pike & Rose or North Bethesda Market.

The plan area has approximately 1.5 million square feet of retail development in 53 buildings, with a vacancy rate of 3.2 percent and average asking rents of \$35 per square foot (Table 2).

Countywide, the estimated retail vacancy is 5.2 percent. Pike & Rose and North Bethesda Market developments are considered higher end; however, the rents at these two locations are similar to rents in the older strip retail within the plan area (Table 3). These older retail developments command high rents because of their convenient and central location along MD 355 in the large, high-income Bethesda–Rockville trade area. Retail rents in the plan area exceed the countywide average asking retail rent of \$30 per square foot.

Table 2: Retail Inventory

Retail Summary	Sector Plan Area
Inventory, Q1 2023 (buildings)	53
Inventory, Q1 2023 (sf)	1,468,285
Avg. Asking Rents, NNN²	
Avg. Asking Rent per sf, Q1 2023	\$35.00
Vacancy	
Vacant sf, Q1 2023	46,619
Vacancy Rate, Q1 2023	3.2%

Table 3: New Retail Properties in the Plan Area

New Retail Properties	Rentable Building Area (sf)	Average Asking Rent - NNN	Vacancy (%)
Pike and Rose	299,651	\$34.55	1.4%
North Bethesda Market	61,095	\$35.20	1.7%

Sources: CoStar, 2023; Montgomery Planning, 2023

² NNN or triple net lease is a property agreement where the lessee or tenant agrees to pay all expenses of property, including real estate taxes, building insurance and maintenance.

Office

The plan area has 3.2 million square feet of office and is a significant and growing node of office development within Montgomery County (Table 4). It is an established office market, with predominantly Class A buildings, that has been growing since the 1980s. Tenants in the area include a mix of local and national firms as well as several federal agencies, including the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC). The future Institute for Health Computing at North Bethesda will add to the office presence in the plan area. The Institute’s permanent location is anticipated at the WMATA site in the future.

Pike & Rose has reinvigorated the office market by providing modern, ‘trophy’ office buildings with several corporate headquarters, including Federal Realty Investment Trust and Bright MLS. The new Choice Hotels corporate headquarters will also be at Pike & Rose. Completion of the new office building is expected by Q4 2023. The office development in these projects also contributes to the viability of the retail space, adding demand on-site.

Class A buildings, which comprise half of the Sector Plan’s office inventory, have a low vacancy rate of 6.7 percent and high rents averaging \$38 per square foot. As shown in Table 4, the vacancy rate is higher among Class B buildings; seven of the 11 Class B buildings are fully leased, while the four properties with vacant space have vacancy rates ranging from 25 percent to 53 percent (One Central Plaza at 11300 Rockville Pike). Class C buildings typically include a wide range of building types, including some medical office buildings, warehouse, flex or industrial uses.

Table 4: Office Inventory

Sector Plan Are		Rentable Building Area (RBA)		Est. Gross Rent (per sf)	Vacancy	Average Year Built
Office Inventory	Buildings	Square Feet	Percent			
Class A	8	1,600,553	50%	\$37.91	6.7%	2000
Class B	11	988,522	31%	\$29.48	32.9%	1979
Class C	16	622,392	19%	\$30.95	3.2%	1970
Total	35	3,211,467	100%	\$33.53	15.2%	1980

While the average vacancy rate in plan area office buildings is 15.2 percent, the 6.7 percent vacancy rate in Class A buildings signals a strong and healthy office market. Countywide, the vacancy rate for Class A buildings is 15 percent.

The future of office demand is tenuous and difficult to predict. Hybrid work and telework has curtailed demand for office space, but there remains demand for higher-end, modern office buildings that provide space for collaboration and offer workers a convenient and productive alternative to working from home. The buildings

in demand today are generally near transit, have spaces and the appropriate technology to facilitate collaboration, and are located near amenities that are attractive to workers. Pike & Rose, which is fully leased, meets these criteria, explaining why rents at Pike & Rose are the highest in the plan area at \$40 per square foot (Table 5). This is in line with Downtown Bethesda, which tends to command the highest office rents in the county.

Table 5: Pike & Rose Office

Pike and Rose	Rentable Building Area (sf)	Under Construction (sf)	Avg. Asking Rent - Gross	Vacancy (%)
Office	421,579	276,000	\$40.00	0.2%

Sources: CoStar, 2023; Montgomery Planning, 2023



NORTH BETHESDA SECTOR PLANS³

Background

The 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan* establishes a framework to create a mixed-use downtown destination in North Bethesda that is supported by a new urban boulevard for Rockville Pike, along with a new grid of streets, parks and open spaces, and public facilities. Unique to the plan area, a special taxing financial district that assesses an ad valorem tax on existing commercial properties was created in March 2011 to provide funding for mobility infrastructure in the plan area. The 2018 *White Flint 2 Sector Plan* extended the development framework and the special taxing district for three properties.

Map 1: North Bethesda Sector Plan Area

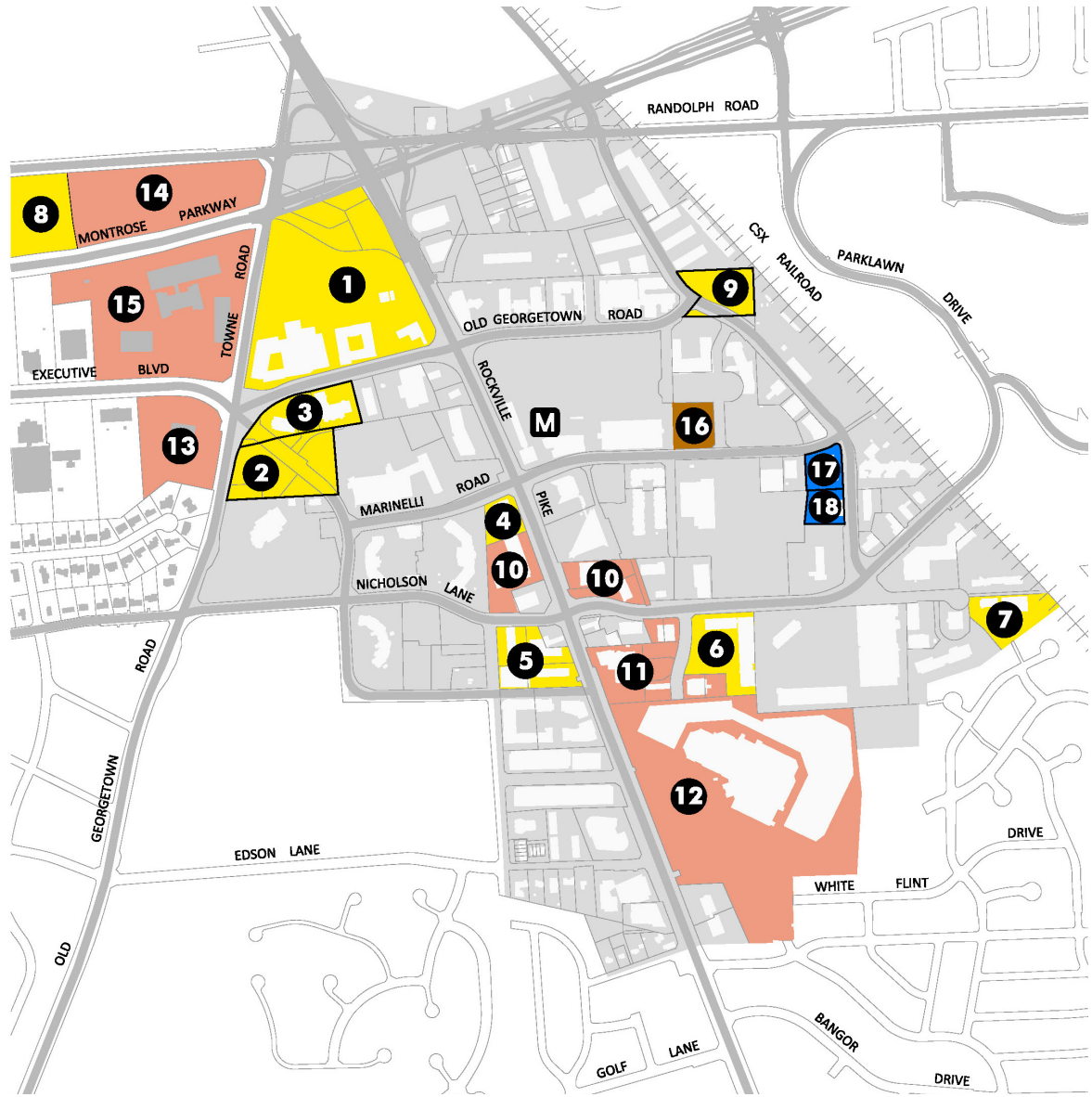


³ This edition of the BMR references the plan area as North Bethesda, following the Metro renaming.

DEVELOPMENT APPROVALS

All approved development plans, including Sketch, Preliminary, Site and Mandatory Referrals approved since 2010 are illustrated below (Map 2).

Map 2: Approved North Bethesda Development



- White Flint Sector Plan Area Boundary
- M** White Flint Metro Station
- Approved Sketch Plans/Preliminary Plans/Site Plans
- 1** Pike & Rose
- 2** Evolution Labs North Bethesda
- 3** Grand Park Development
- 4** Saul Centers Pike District West (Building A)
- 5** NoBo II
- 6** Hardwood Flats
- 7** 4900 Nicholson Court
- 8** Montrose Park North
- 9** MHP Nebel Street
- Approved Sketch Plans
- 10** Saul Centers Pike District
- 11** North Bethesda Gateway
- 12** White Flint Mall
- 13** 6000 Executive Blvd
- 14** Montrose Park North
- 15** Rose Village
- Approved Pipeline Site Plan
- 16** Arrowood
- Approved Mandatory Referral
- 17** Pepco Substation
- 18** 1600 Nebel Street

The following is a description of the development plans, Mandatory Referrals, and Staging Allocation Requests approved since the 2021 BMR.

Sketch Plans

The Planning Board approved a sketch plan amendment in July 2023 for the Evolution Labs North Bethesda property, which is the former Gables Pike District site. This new development included only non-residential, rather than the prior mixed-use development.

Preliminary and Site Plans

In July 2022, the Planning Board approved a preliminary plan and site plan for the Nebel Street development. Located at the southeast and southwest intersection of Old Georgetown Road and Nebel Street, the mid-rise multi-family development will include 163 residential units. Of these, 41 units (25 percent) will be MPDUs.



Street view of MHP Nebel Street

In June 2023, the Planning Board approved a new preliminary plan and site plan for the Evolution Labs North Bethesda development. This development, located adjacent to Wall Local Park/Kennedy Shriver Aquatic Center and west of the Bethesda North Conference Center, will develop up to 709,396 square feet of Research and Development (R&D) use. Evolution Labs will be implemented over three phases. The first phase will permit up to 236,466 square feet of development with a garage that includes 692 parking spaces. A minimum 100 parking spaces

on this property will be provided to support Wall Park's future redevelopment and the Josiah Henson Museum.

An amendment for North Bethesda Market II, which is located between Nicholson Lane and Executive Boulevard and east of Woodglen Drive, was approved in July 2023 that permitted 7,500 square feet of non-residential development and up to 280 residential units in a seven-level multi-family building.

Mandatory Referrals

No new mandatory referrals have been approved since the 2021 BMR. The White Flint Metro Station Access (P502106) project, which the Board reviewed in September 2021, will be completed in 2024. The final phase of this project will remove the existing free-right turns or slip lanes at the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and Rockville Pike.



Evolution Labs North Bethesda (Phase 1) with parking structure



Staging Allocation Request

The Staging Allocation Request (SAR) process permits the allocation of new development per the residential and non-residential development limits established in the Sector Plan. It is unique to the North Bethesda area where a SAR is required prior to the submission of building permits to ensure that the development is within the staging limits. All approved SARs are shown on Map 3.

In March 2022, the Board approved SAR No. 27800 for 297,500 square feet of non-residential development at Pike & Rose.

SAR No. 28000 was approved in December 2022 for Grand Park development (Phase 1). This development will implement 210 residential units and up to 16,000 square feet of non-residential development.

In July 2023, MHP Nebel Street (SAR No. 28200) received an allocation for 163 residential units to this development.

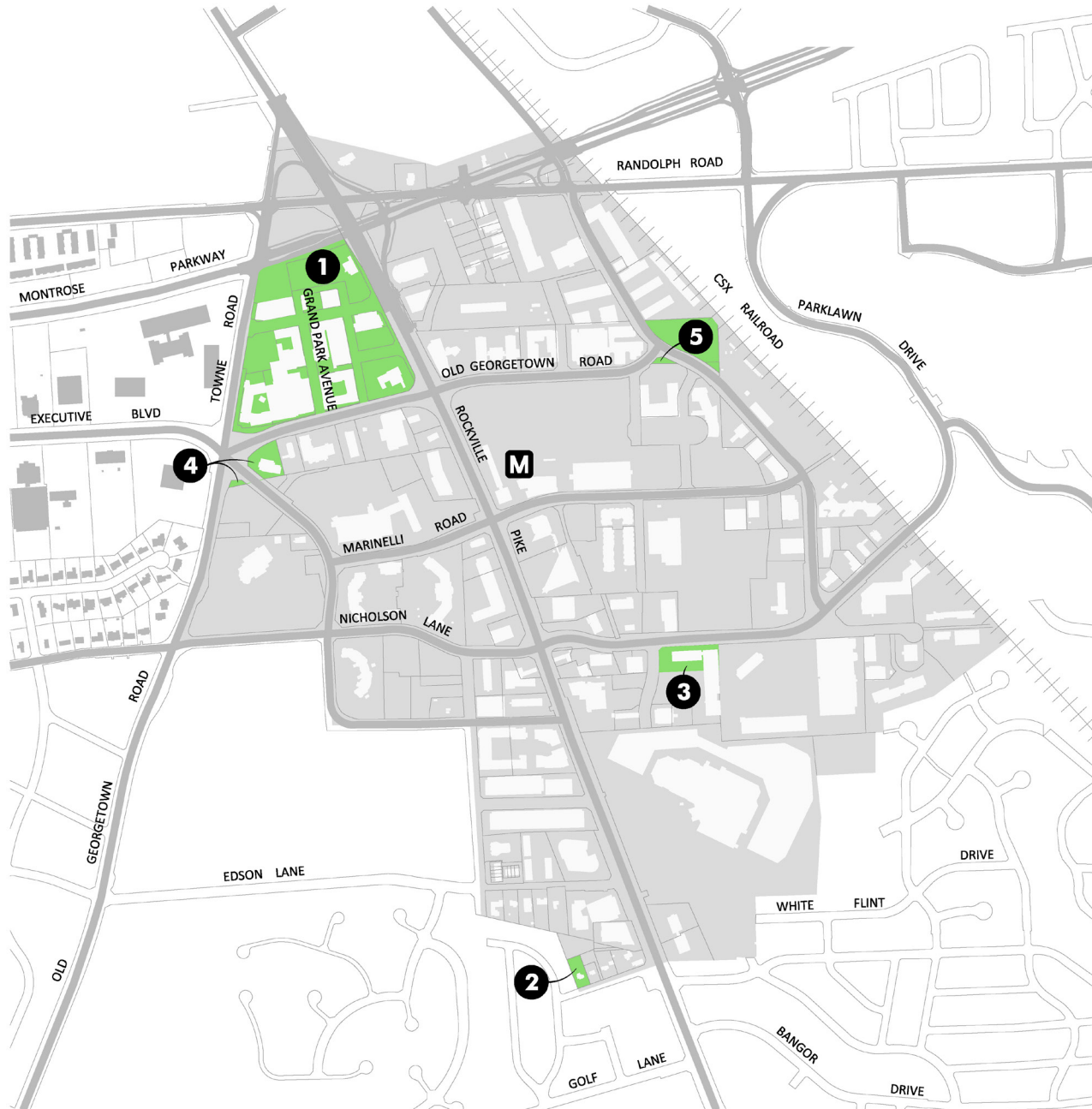
The status of the allocated residential and non-residential development limits for Phase 1 is shown in Table 6.









Table 6: North Bethesda Phase 1 Development

	Residential	Non-Residential
Sector Plan Phase 1⁴	4,800 dwelling units	2.75 million square feet
Allocated Development	1,412 dwelling units	940,140 square feet
Remaining Phase 1 Development	3,393 dwelling units	1,809,860 square feet

⁴ The 2018 *White Flint 2 Sector Plan* added 1,800 dwelling units and 750,000 square feet of non-residential development to the 3,000 dwelling units and 2 million square feet of non-residential development allowed in the Phase 1 Staging Requirements of the 2010 *White Flint Sector Plan*.

Map 3: Approved White Flint/North Bethesda Allocated Developments



-  White Flint Sector Plan Area Boundary
-  White Flint Metro Station
-  Approved Sketch Plans/Preliminary Plans/Site Plans
-  1 Pike & Rose
-  2 Offutt Estates
-  3 Harwood Flats-Phase 1
-  4 Grand Park Development (Phase 1)
-  5 MHP Nebel Street



STAGING

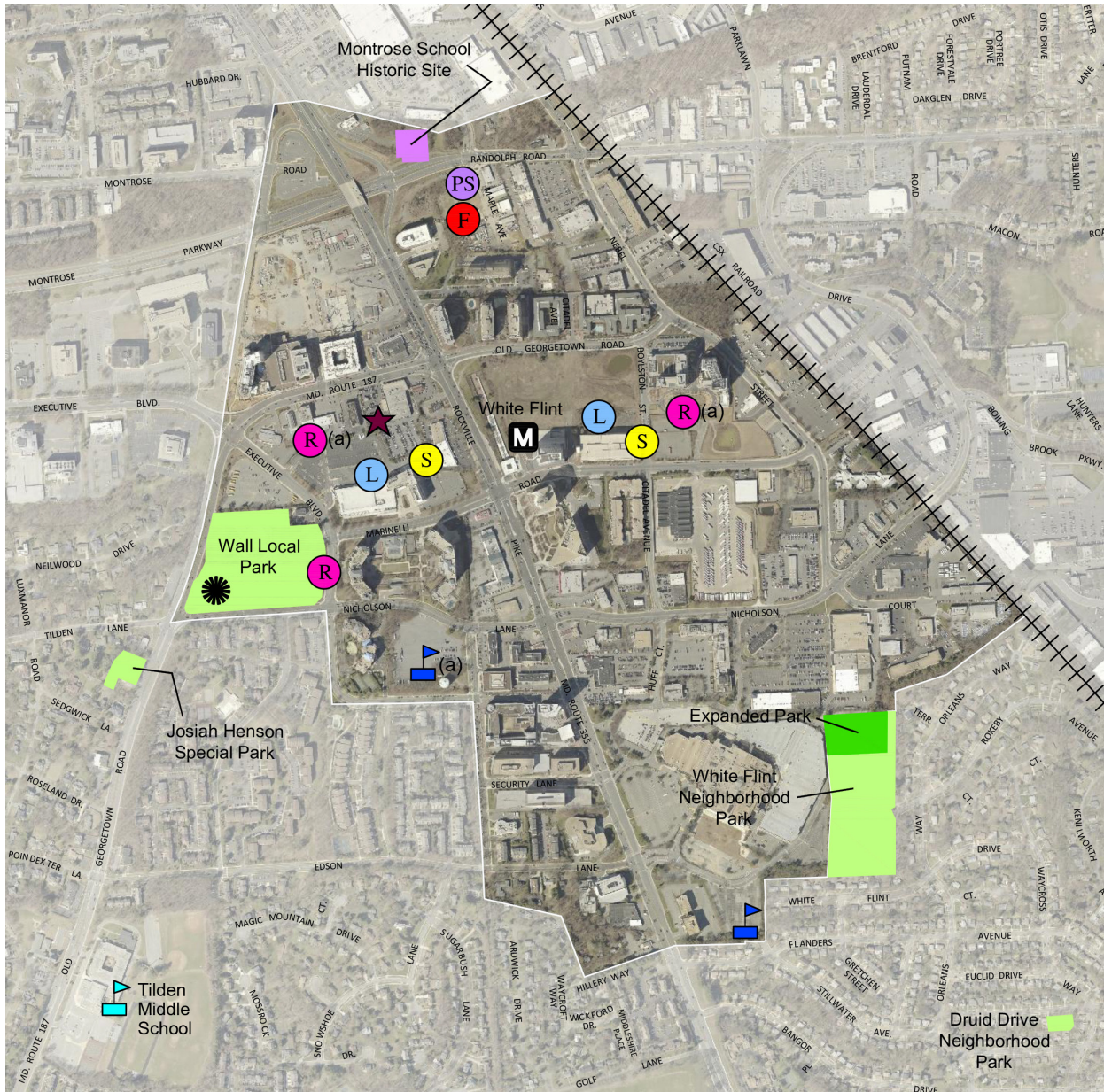
Staging Triggers

Most of the Sector Plan’s Phase 1 staging triggers have been implemented or will be implemented in the near-term. Staging triggers were included in the Sector Plan to ensure that new infrastructure is implemented along with new development. Table 7 shows the status of each Phase 1 trigger.

Table 7: Status of Phase 1 Staging		
Phase 1	Staging Requirement	Status
	Contract for the construction of the realignment of Executive Boulevard and Old Georgetown Road.	This requirement has been achieved by implementing the Western Workaround.
	Contract for the construction of Market Street (B-10) in the Conference Center block.	This trigger has been implemented with the construction of Banneker Street on the Bethesda North Conference Center property. Other properties in the Conference Center block have not submitted redevelopment plans.
	Fund streetscape improvements, sidewalk improvements and bikeways for substantially all the street frontage within one-quarter mile of the Metrorail station: Old Georgetown Road, Marinelli Road and Nicholson Lane.	The White Flint Metro Station Access Capital Improvements Program project installed new sidewalks and a planted area at the southwest and southeast quadrants at MD 355 and Old Georgetown Road. A second phase of this project will remove free right turns at this intersection. A new Marinelli Road protected bikeway, between Rockville Pike and Nebel Street, will provide another bikeway within a quarter mile of the Metro. There are no current streetscape or bikeway projects for Nicholson Lane.
	Fund and complete the design study for Rockville Pike to be coordinated with the Maryland State Highway Administration, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).	MCDOT is conducting a bus rapid transit (BRT) study for Rockville Pike (MD 355) The final design will begin in FY24 and should be completed in FY26.
	Achieve 34 percent non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) for the plan area.	MCDOT’s 2023 assessment indicated that the NADMS was 67 percent. The 2017 and 2019 BMR reports indicated that this requirement had been achieved. No assessments were made in 2021 because of the pandemic.
	The Planning Board should assess whether the build-out of the Sector Plan is achieving the Plan’s housing goals.	Based on square feet as a measurement, more residential development has been built than non-residential development.

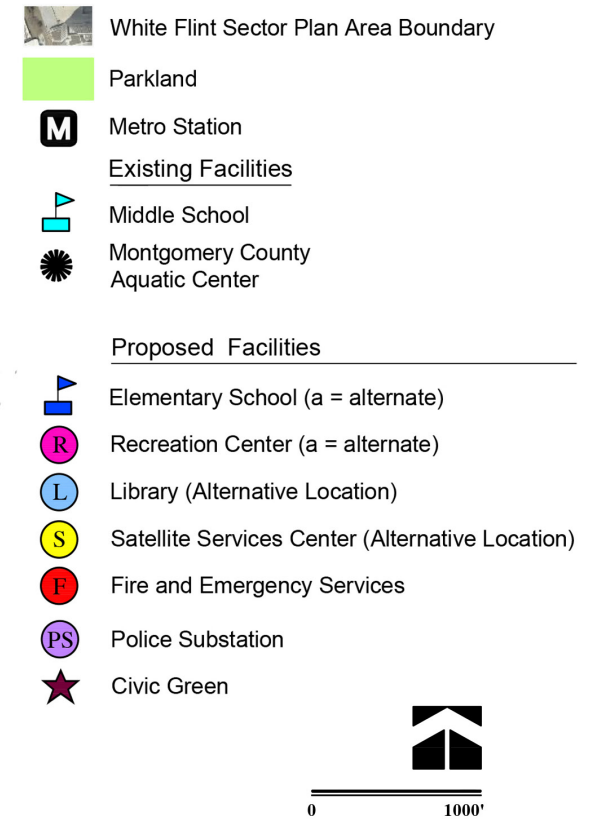
PUBLIC FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Map 4: Existing and Proposed North Bethesda Public Facilities



Plan Recommendations

A broad range of public facilities, including an elementary school, civic green, fire station, and recreation center are some of the public facilities recommended in the 2010 Sector Plan (Map 4). Currently, the proposed fire station is included in the county's Capital Improvements Program (CIP), and the Parks Department is pursuing the acquisition of a property for the civic green.



Public Parks

The approved Grand Park development, at the northwest and northeast intersection of Grand Park Avenue and Banneker Street, has dedicated approximately half an acre of open space for a portion of the recommended civic green (Map 5). The Parks Department is in the process of acquiring an adjacent property, which will exceed the minimum land area recommended for the civic green.

White Flint Neighborhood Park

It is anticipated that any future redevelopment of the former White Flint Mall property would dedicate additional land to expand the existing White Flint Neighborhood Park. The approved 2012 Sketch Plan for the property illustrated the extension of White Flint Neighborhood Park by 2.5 acres. No new development approvals have occurred on this property since 2012.

Map 5: Grand Park Development: Open Space



Wall Park and Recreation Center

The approved Evolution Labs at North Bethesda development will provide a minimum of 100 parking spaces in a parking garage to support future changes at Wall Local Park/Kennedy Shriver Aquatic Center site (Map 6). It is anticipated that Stonebridge LLC, the owner of the Evolution Labs property, will enter into a parking agreement with Montgomery County to provide the parking spaces. The first phase of the Evolution Labs property will include a parking garage structure for 692 parking spaces.

Fire Station and Emergency Medical Services Station

Construction for the proposed White Flint Fire Station and Emergency Medical Services Station should begin by summer 2025 and it is projected to be completed by summer 2027. Located at the southeast quadrant of MD 355 and Josiah Henson Parkway, the proposed new five-bay Class I fire station will accommodate a police substation.

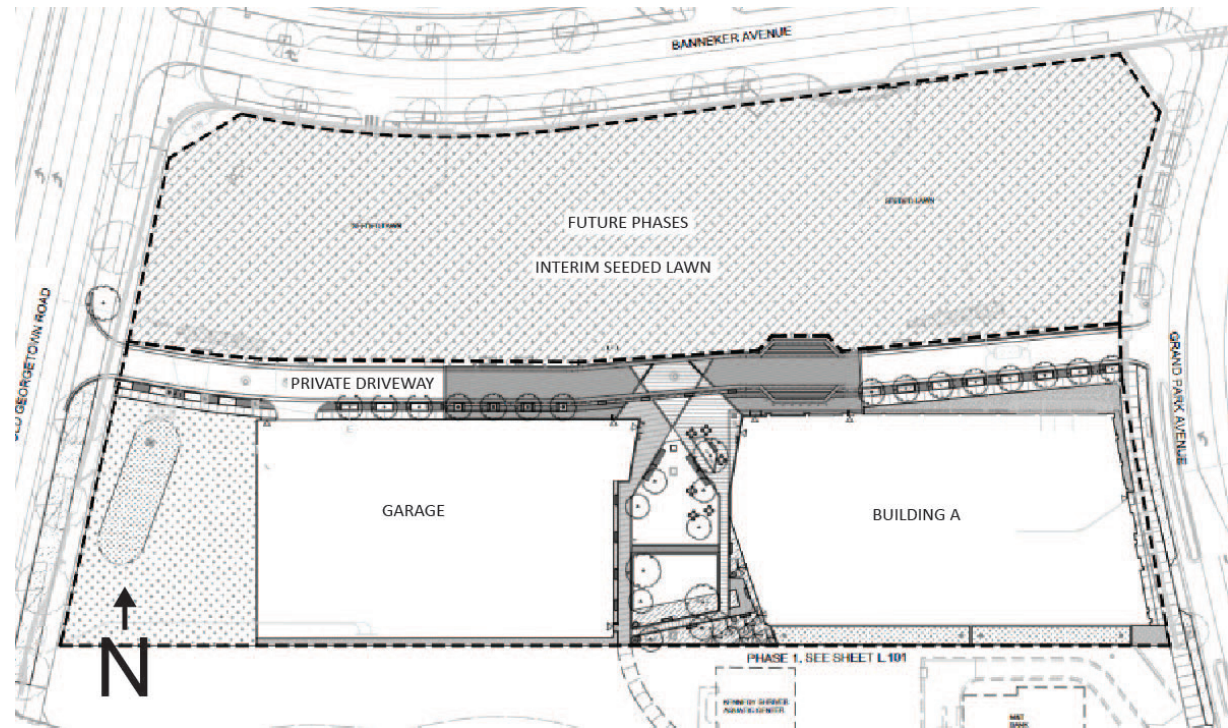
Library and Satellite Regional Services Center

A library or satellite regional services center are recommended for the plan area's Metro West and Metro East districts. Future redevelopment of properties in these districts, including the WMATA property, could provide space for either facility as a public benefit.

Public Schools

The Walter Johnson School Cluster includes all the 2010 Sector Plan area and a large portion of the 2018 White Flint 2 Sector Plan area, including Luxmanor Elementary and Garrett Park Elementary Schools. Based on the Board of

Map 6: Evolution Labs (Phase 1) and Future Phases



Education's FY23–28 CIP, Garrett Park Elementary will remain within its program enrollment capacity, while Luxmanor Elementary will exceed its capacity. Both cluster middle schools, Tilden, and North Bethesda, are projected to be within enrollment capacities per the CIP in the long term. Walter Johnson High School is currently over capacity and is forecast to remain over capacity throughout this decade.

Key school updates since the 2021 BMR are the following:

- The new Woodward High School is anticipated to open by summer 2026.
- No new development activities have taken place on the two properties recommended in the Sector Plan for an elementary school.

MOBILITY

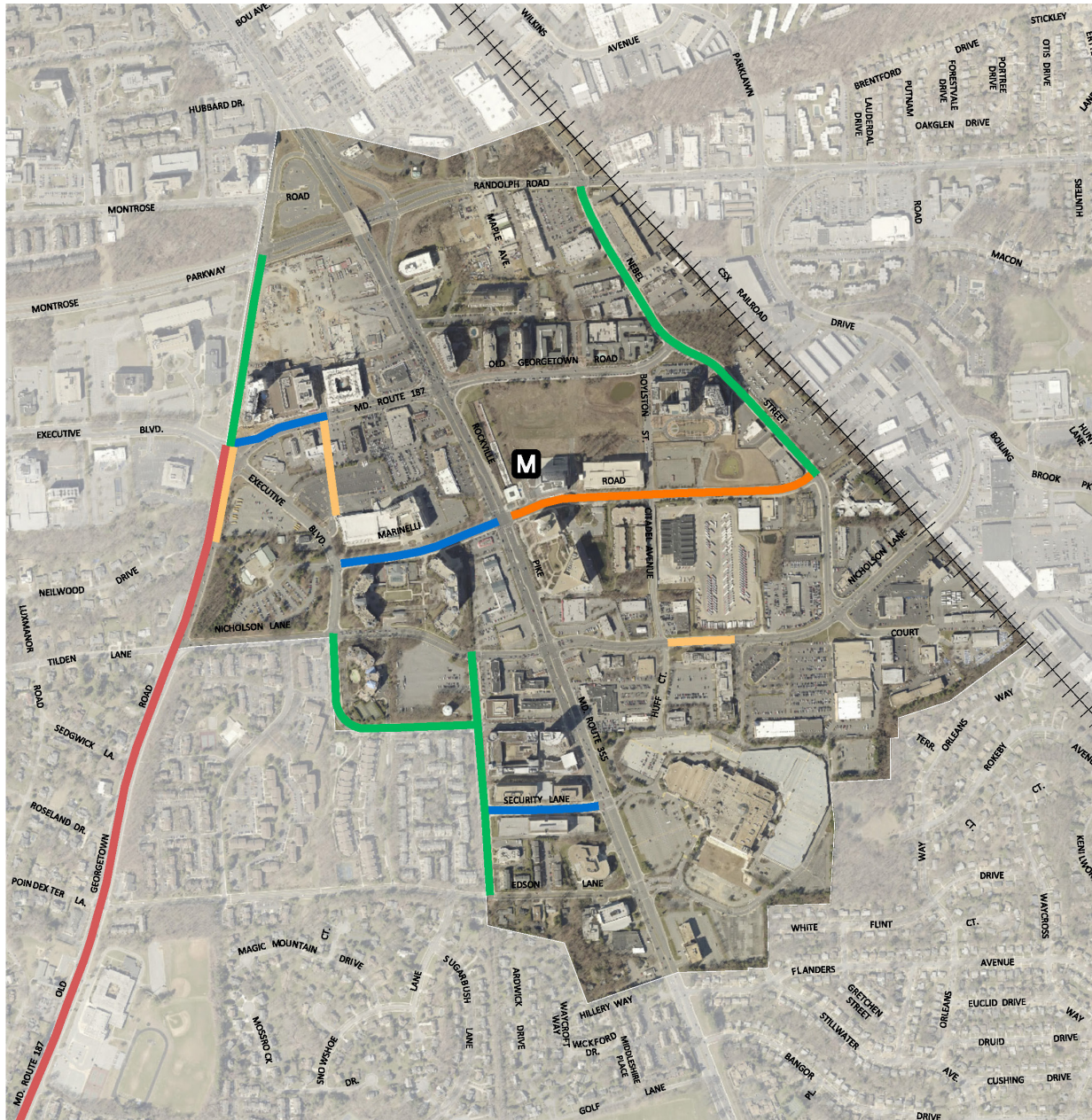
Street Network

Creating a new street grid east and west of Rockville Pike (MD 355) is a key street network Sector Plan recommendation. Completing the Western Workaround, which creates new streets around the Bethesda North Conference Center, implements a significant Sector Plan recommendation.

View of a portion of the new streets: Grand Park Avenue and Banneker Avenue










Map 7: Existing and Under Review Bikeways



Bicycle and Pedestrian Connections

A broad range of public facilities, including an Since the 2021 BMR, the following bikeway improvements have occurred within the plan area:

- A new protected bikeway has been installed along Towne Road, between Josiah Henson Parkway and Executive Boulevard.
- A new sidepath was installed along Old Georgetown Road between the entrance to Wall Local Park and the proposed Grand Park development on Old Georgetown Road.
- MCDOT has established new sidewalks and green panels along the southeast and southwest quadrants of MD 355 and Old Georgetown Road.
- The MDOT SHA also installed buffered bike lanes between Nicholson Lane and the Capital Beltway (I-495) along Old Georgetown Road (Map 7).

-  White Flint Sector Plan Area Boundary
-  White Flint Metro Station
-  Existing Sidepaths
-  Existing Separated Bike Lanes
-  Existing Bike Lanes
-  Existing Buffered Bike Lanes
-  Separated Bike Lanes Under Review



Non-Auto Driver Mode Share

Achieving a higher percentage of non-auto driver mode share (NADMS) goal is a key recommendation in the Sector Plan. MCDOT’s Commuter Services Division conducted a survey earlier this year that indicated the NADMS for the plan area is 67 percent. This significant shift reflects a dramatic increase in employees working from home and in hybrid work environments. Prior 2017 and 2019 BMR NADMS surveys revealed that the 34 percent goal required for Phase 1 of the staging plan was achieved. The 2021 BMR did not report a NADMS percentage because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Transit Ridership

During the COVID-19 pandemic, bus and rail transit use dropped off significantly, regionally and nationally. As the county moves forward in a post-pandemic environment, transit use is beginning to return to pre-pandemic levels. New hybrid and work-from-home policies have also contributed to changes in transit use.

Ride On ridership is at 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels carrying approximately 55,000 riders daily. Metrorail ridership has not returned to pre-pandemic levels (Table 8). However, according to WMATA, rail ridership is up 40 percent in May 2023 compared with May 2022. Average daily entries are up 42 percent at the North Bethesda station within the same time.

Table 8: Average Daily Entrances at the North Bethesda Metrorail Station

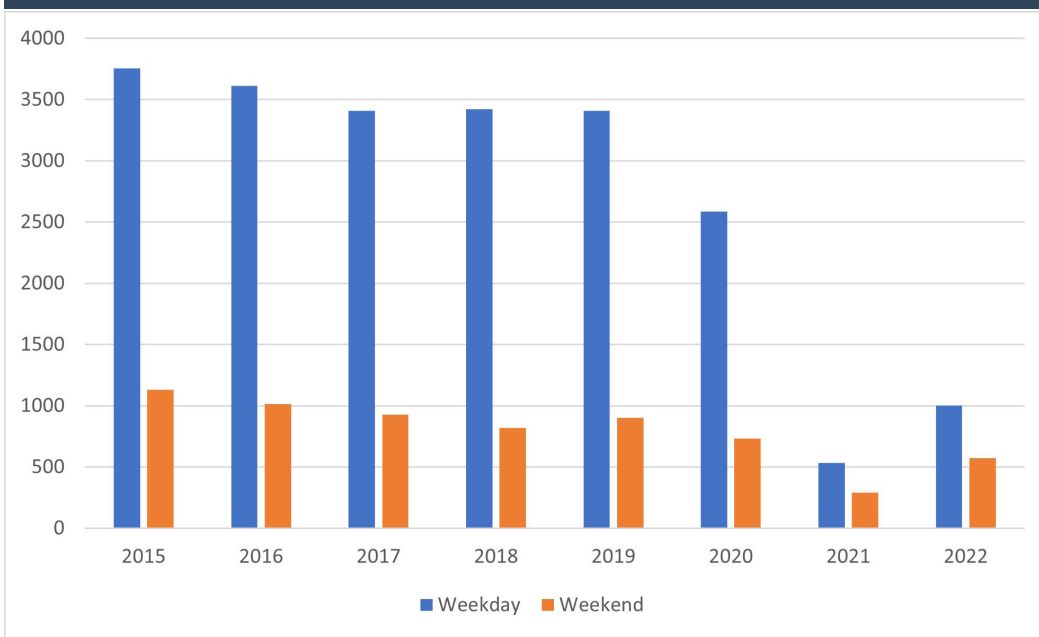


Figure 1: Rockville Pike (MD 355) Median BRT Concept



VISION ZERO

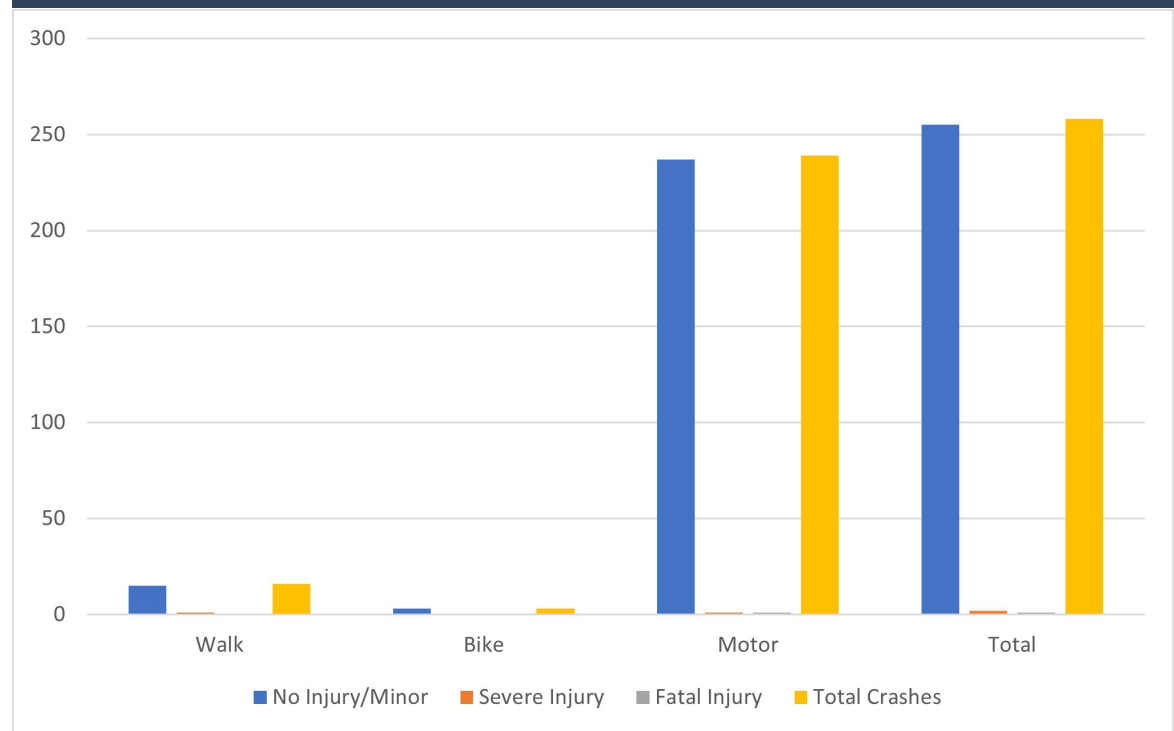
Vision Zero is a comprehensive strategy to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries along roadways. In 2016, the county committed to eliminating traffic fatalities and severe injuries by 2030. The County’s Vision Zero 2030 Action Plan states, “Montgomery County will systematically update the roadway network to create complete, safe streets and build a culture of safety through purposeful campaigns and engagement to eliminate serious and fatal collisions by 2030.”

Several implemented mobility changes advance the implementation of Vision Zero enhancements, including the following:

- New implemented sidewalks and landscape buffer at MD 355 and Old Georgetown, and the future removal of slip lanes.
- The posted speed limit on Woodglen Drive between Nicholson Lane and Edson Lane, and Executive Boulevard between Nicholson Lane and Rockville Pike, was reduced to 20 mph as part of the 20 is Plenty initiative.
- The MDOT SHA has implemented approximately two miles of buffered bicycle lanes along Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) between the Capital Beltway (I-495) and Tilden Lane/Nicholson Lane.⁵

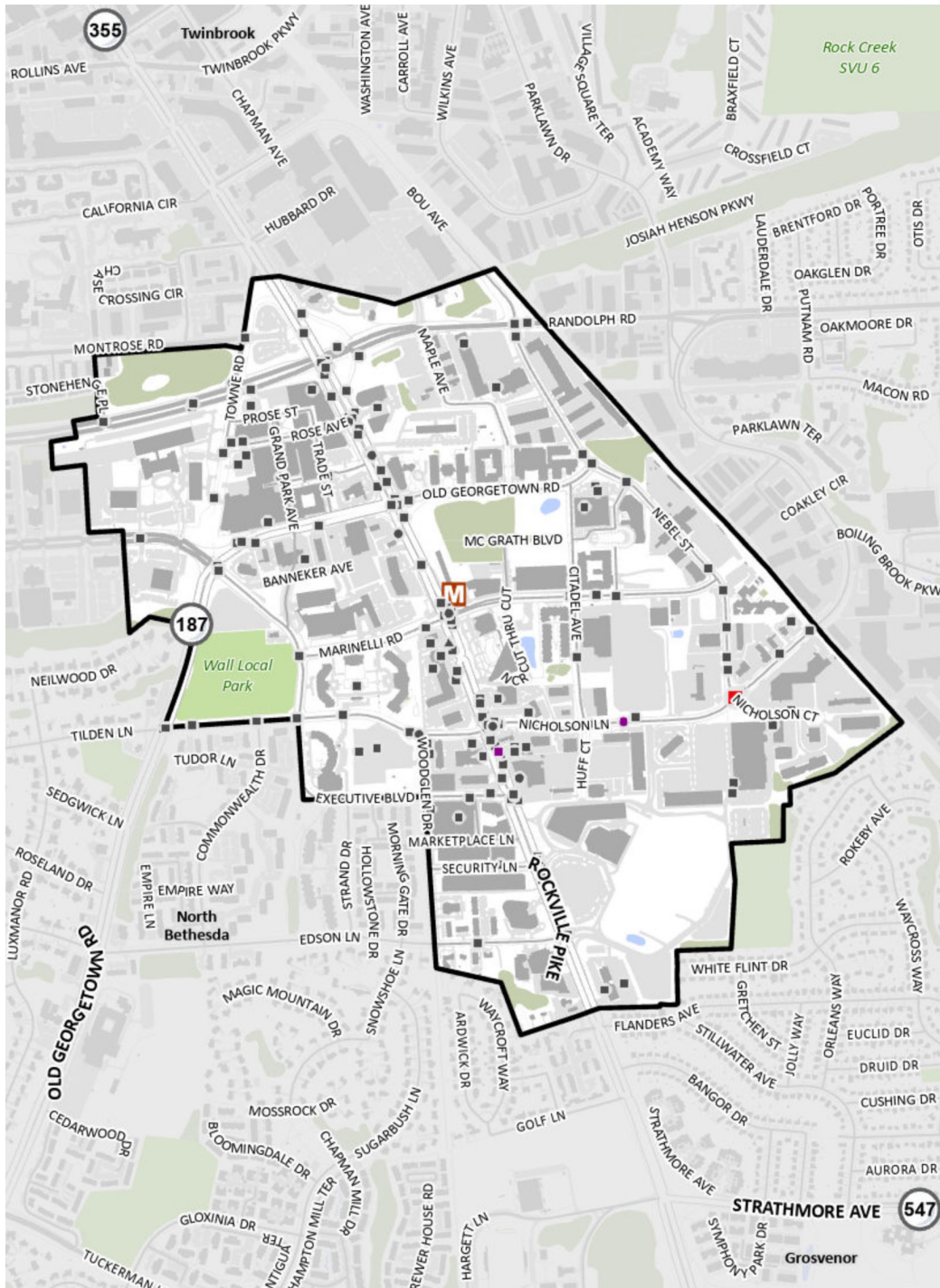
Between 2021 and 2022, there have been more than 255 crashes within the plan area, shown in Table 9 and on Map 8.

Table 9: Crashes by Type of Travel and Injury Severity in the Plan Area, 2021–2022

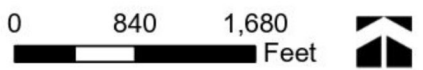


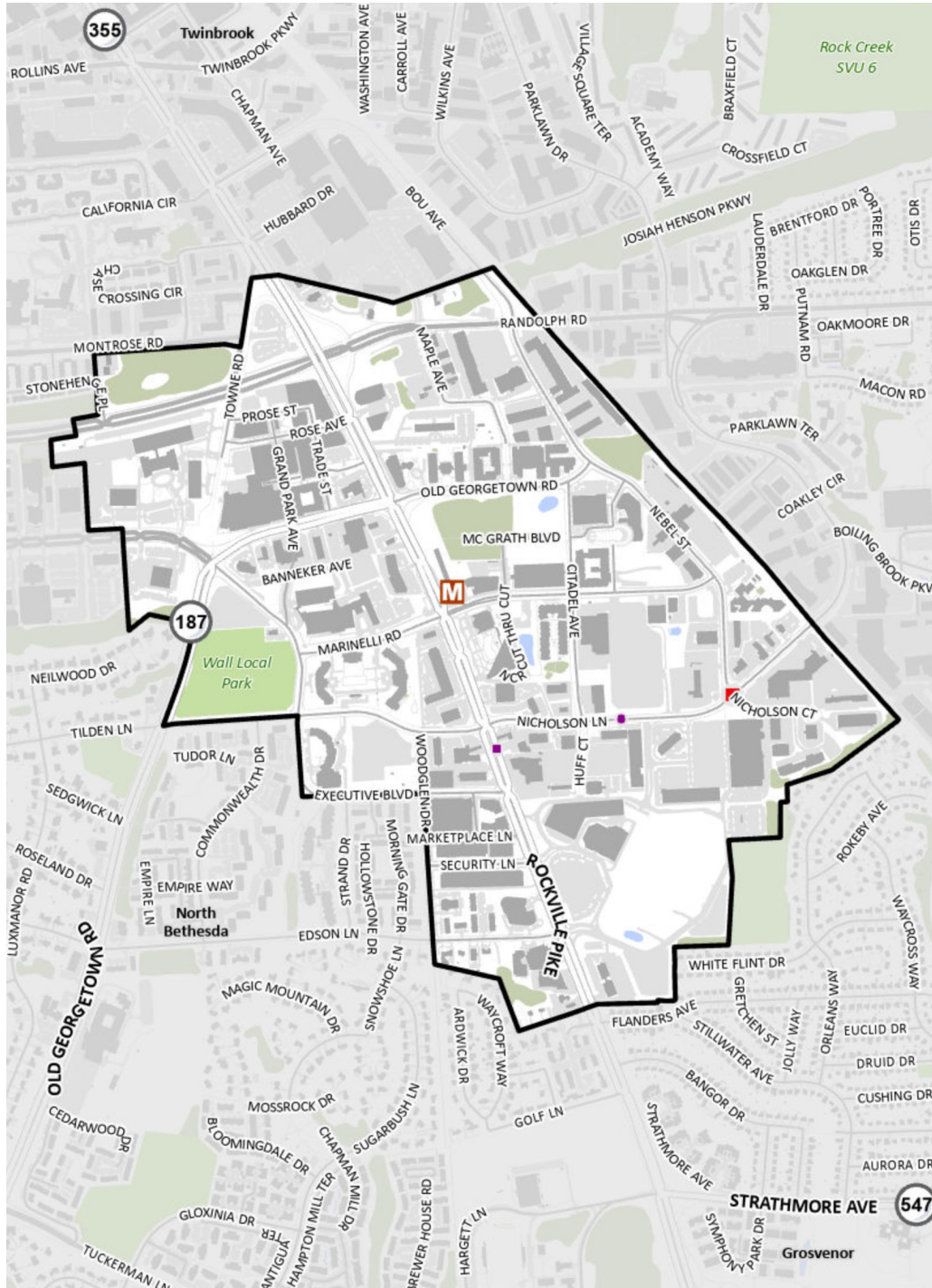
⁵ The current buffered bicycle lanes are an interim condition. The Woodward High School construction and the North Bethesda Transitway will address the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan recommendation for a 16-foot breezeway along Old Georgetown Road.

Map 8: Overall Crashes in the Plan Area 2021-2022



- Pedestrian Fatality
- ▲ Bicycle Fatality
- Fatal Motor Vehicle Crash
- Pedestrian Severe Injury
- ▲ Bicycle Severe Injury
- Severe Motor Vehicle Crash
- Pedestrian Crash
- ▲ Bicycle Crash
- Pedestrian & Bicycle Crash
- Motor Vehicle Crash





Map 9: Fatal and Severe Crashes and Injuries in the Plan Area 2021-2022

- Fatal Motor Vehicle Crash
- Pedestrian Severe Injury
- Severe Motor Vehicle Crash



CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM

The Sector Plan has several active Capital Improvements Program (CIP) projects, including the North Bethesda Metro Station Northern Entrance, the North Bethesda Metro Station Area Redevelopment Infrastructure, and the North Bethesda Fire Station Emergency Medical Services Station.

The Council has approved \$8.1 million in the CIP for the recommended northern entrance to the Metro Station. The 2019 projected cost for the new entrance was \$35 million. WMATA is evaluating options to build above the proposed northern entrance. The 2019 projected costs did not include development above the new entrance. The State of Maryland's FY23 operating budget provided \$10 million to support redevelopment at the Metro Station with life sciences and mixed uses. This project will complete some of the Metro Station property's roadway infrastructure, including the McGrath Boulevard extension.

Since the last BMR, the White Flint District West Workaround (No. 501506) was completed, in 2022. The first phase of the White Flint Metro Station Access Improvements (No. 502106) has been implemented. The second phase of this project, which will remove the slip lanes or 'hot rights' from all quadrants at the Old Georgetown Road and MD 355 intersection, should commence in January 2024.

The MD 355 South/North bus rapid transit (BRT)- (P502309) is the northern and southern portions of the proposed MD 355 BRT, which includes the North Bethesda Metro Station area. The overall MD 355 route is from Bethesda to Clarksburg. Preliminary engineering is projected to be completed in 2023, and final design should begin in FY24 and is anticipated to be completed by FY26. Construction is anticipated to be completed by FY28.

The White Flint District East: Transportation (P501204), which will include the extension of Executive Boulevard/Grand Park Avenue, east of the current terminus at Rockville Pike, has been delayed beyond FY28 because of projected cost. The existing lease on the MCDOT's Nicholson Court Bus Depot property will expire in 2027. The New Transit Maintenance Depot (P502402) project will fund land acquisition and construction for a new transit depot.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The existing North Bethesda/White Flint Sector Plan Implementation Advisory Committee has continued to meet virtually to receive briefings and updates on the Sector Plan's implementation. The Committee also reviewed a draft of this report. Some of the issues raised by some members are the following:

- Until BRT is implemented, frequent Ride On service is critical. The express Route 101 should have service throughout the day.
- Climate change goals for the county, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency should be addressed.

PIKE DISTRICT PARTNERSHIP

The Pike District Partnership (PDP) is a nonprofit organization that blends together the former Friends of White Flint and the White Flint Downtown Advisory Committee. The PDP will continue to advance the mission of both groups to support and promote community and businesses in the plan area. It sponsors several events in the plan area, including Friday Night Salsa, Yoga in the Park, and other activities. The PDP recently hired Mr. Eugene Cornelius as its first Executive Director.

2023 BIENNIAL MONITORING REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

The following mobility and public facilities projects should be completed to achieve the Phase 1 staging requirements and successful implementation of the Sector Plan:

Mobility

- Per Phase 1 staging requirements, MCDOT should fund streetscape and bikeways improvements for Marinelli Road and Nicholson Lane, which are within a quarter mile of the Metrorail Station.
- MCDOT should implement a coordinated bikeway plan for Old Georgetown Road, between Towne Road and Nebel Street.
- The existing Nebel Street protected bikeway should extend to Nicholson Lane, to further implement the bikeway network.

Infrastructure

- Additional public funding must be provided for the future construction of the northern Metrorail Station entrance.

Public Facilities and Amenities

- Upon future property acquisition for the Civic Green, the Parks Department should develop a facility plan to implement the Grand Park Civic Green.

CONCLUSION

The continued implementation of new residential and non-residential development, completion of the Western Workaround, and new bikeways are significant accomplishments for the Sector Plan area. Additional bikeways and streetscape improvements are needed to complete the Sector Plan's Phase 1 staging requirements as well as more public resources are required for

the eventual construction of the new northern Metrorail Station entrance. The positive reception of new development in the marketplace highlights, as noted in the beginning of this report, is a success for the plan area and should be supported with additional public infrastructure as recommended in the Sector Plan.



(left to right) Chris Conklin (MCDOT Director), Evan Glass (Council President, At-Large), Marc Elrich (Montgomery County Executive) Andrew Friedson (Council Vice President, District 1), Kate Stewart (Councilmember District 4), Matt Herman (Pike District Partnership) and Pete Fosselman (Bethesda- Chevy Chase Regional Services Center)

**2023
NORTH BETHESDA
BIENNIAL MONITORING REPORT**

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