

UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD CORRIDOR PLAN WORKING DRAFT



Description

Staff will present the Working Draft of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan, which establishes a vision and recommendations for approximately 3.5 miles of University Boulevard East and West (MD 193) between the Capital Beltway (I-495) and Amherst Avenue. The Draft Plan focuses on developing a multimodal corridor that supports safe, accessible, and healthy travel options and connects vibrant communities with a diverse range of housing options, supported by bus rapid transit (BRT). In addition, it also envisions a new range of residential housing typologies for existing detached residential properties and new infill development on larger institutional and commercial properties.

Staff recommends approval of the Working Draft as the Public Hearing Draft and requests that the Planning Board schedule a public hearing on February 27, 2025.

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SUMMARY

- The University Boulevard Corridor Plan is a comprehensive amendment to the approved and adopted 1989 *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton*, 1996 *Four Corners Master Plan*, 2001 *Kemp Mill Master Plan*, and 2012 *Wheaton Central Business District and Vicinity Sector Plan* and covers approximately 3.5 miles along University Boulevard between the Wheaton Central Business District and Four Corners.
- The University Boulevard Corridor Plan (Plan) envisions transforming approximately 3.5 miles of University Boulevard West and East (MD 193) into a pedestrian-oriented and multimodal corridor that supports safe movement for all people, especially those walking, biking, and rolling.
- This Plan also envisions a more compact, corridor-focused land use pattern that concentrates future development along University Boulevard and near five planned bus rapid transit (BRT) stations. The Plan supports lower density, predominantly residential development with a range of building types between planned BRT stations, and higher density, mixed-use development near planned stations.
- The Draft Plan includes recommendations for land use, zoning, urban design, housing, transportation, parks and trails, historic resources, public open space, community facilities, and the environment.

MASTER PLAN INFORMATION

Draft

Working Draft

Date

January 9, 2025

Lead Planner

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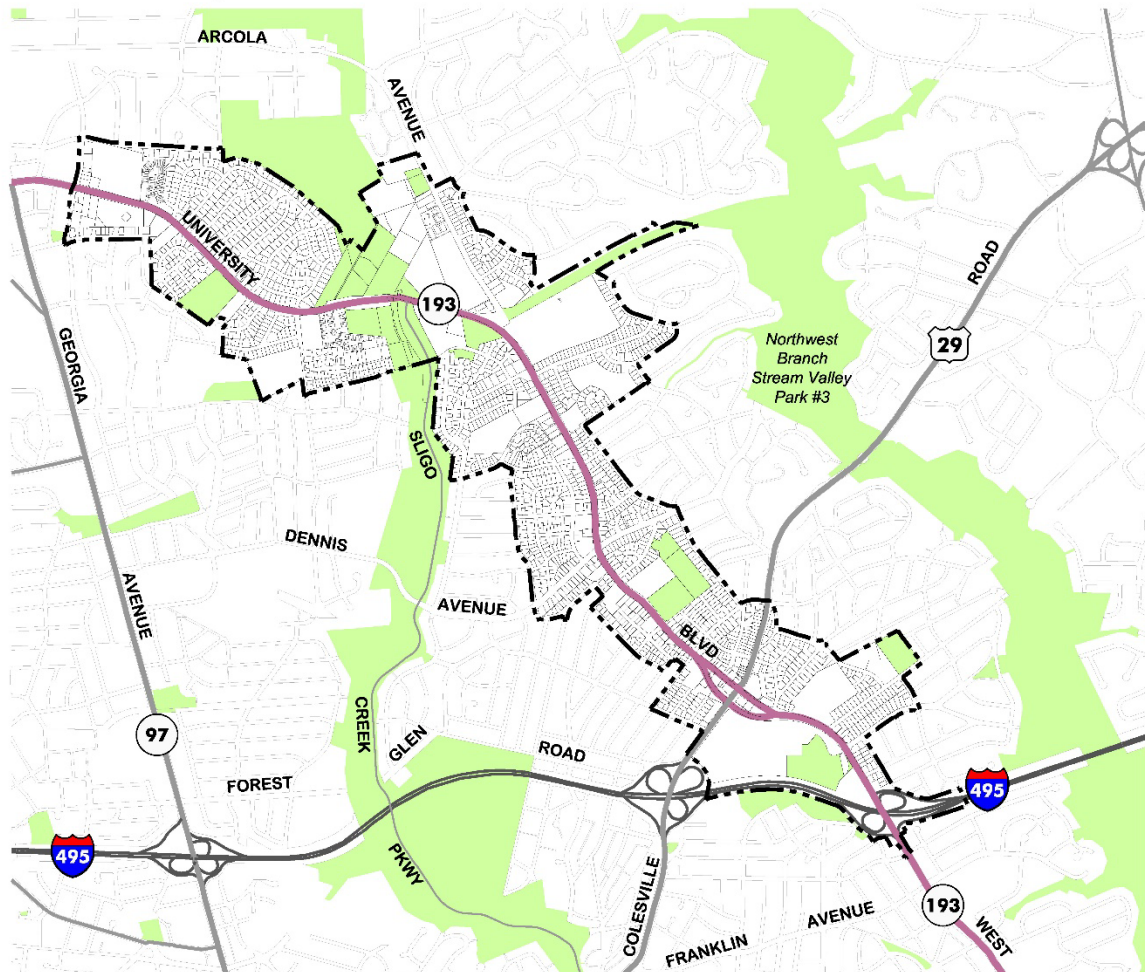
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Planning Board Information

MCPB

Item No. 12

January 16, 2025



- Parks
- University Boulevard
- University Boulevard Corridor Boundary



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PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan is to comprehensively review the built, natural, and social environment within the Plan area and consider opportunities to further the outcomes and objectives of previously approved plans and policies, including *Thrive Montgomery 2050*.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Rezone corridor-fronting residential blocks to the Commercial Residential Neighborhood (CRN) Zone, and institutional properties, such as properties used for religious assembly, and single-use commercial shopping centers to Commercial Residential Town (CRT) to promote sustainable development patterns, provide housing options, and support transportation safety enhancements in the Plan area. (An interactive map of the zoning recommendations is available at the following link: <https://ubc-zoning-changes-mcplanning.hub.arcgis.com/>)
- Establish an overlay zone to define neighborhood residential building types, prioritize development standards that further compact growth and transportation safety, and explore modifications, as necessary to achieve transitions in height, mass, and scale. The overlay zone will apply to properties recommended for rezoning by this Plan.
- Designate the Romeo and Elsie Horad House (M: 31-87) to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*.
- Embed racial equity and social justice at the core of all planning efforts along the corridor, ensuring that the previously neglected areas receive focused attention to rectify historical and current inequities.
- Expand housing options and unit types for residents at different stages of life and at different price points.
- Create new open spaces and/or expand existing parks to promote physical activity, social gathering, and environmental stewardship.
- Improve connections to, and explore improvements within, existing parks, including Sligo Creek Park and the Northwood Chesapeake Bay Trail.
- Protect existing trees and increase tree canopy with native species for the Plan area.
- Develop the corridor as a ‘cool’ corridor with street trees, shaded bus stops, stormwater management, landscaped buffers, and other environmentally sustainable features.
- Provide guidance for University Boulevard, between Wheaton and I-495, as a multimodal corridor with bus rapid transit (BRT) features. Redevelopment or implementation of BRT on University Boulevard should consolidate, remove, or relocate driveways from University Boulevard to side streets and alleys, and limit future driveways.

- Implement a connected network of streets, comfortable walkways, and low-stress bicycle facilities, and right-size roadways and intersections to create a safer and more comfortable environment for people who are walking, rolling, bicycling, riding transit, and driving.
- Accommodate new protected crossings to minimize the distance between safe crossings and enhance the walking experience along the corridor.
- Provide alternative ways to navigate the Four Corners area that include short-term recommendations for limited change to the street network to provide safe, accessible, and healthy travel options for people walking, biking, rolling, riding transit, and traveling in cars. With more detailed design for bus rapid transit, further study additional street connections in the Four Corners area to achieve a long-term vision for a more connected network of Town Center Streets that increase local connectivity and a more regular street pattern.

PROCESS TO DATE

The University Boulevard Corridor Plan Working Draft was developed through an iterative process over the last three years. Planning staff began gathering background information, compiling relevant policies, and engaging stakeholders in early 2022, and held community open houses to introduce the Plan in November 2022.

Key milestones in the development of the Working Draft Plan include:

- February 2023: Scope of Work approved by the Planning Board
- October 2023: Planning Board Briefing – Existing Conditions Analysis
- June 2024: Planning Board Briefing – Emerging Ideas
- October 2024: Planning Board Briefing – Preliminary Recommendations

During this time, Planning staff have hosted nearly 20 in-person and virtual community meetings; participated in at least 17 neighborhood association meetings, events, and festivals; mailed over 10,000 bilingual postcards and flyers (in English and Spanish) to corridor facing properties, residents of multifamily buildings, and residents in Plan area; mailed 600 letters (in English and Spanish) to notify residents and property owners of recommended zoning changes; knocked on approximately 1,000 doors and conducted interviews in six languages; collected input through an online questionnaire and interactive map; and participated in interviews on Montgomery al Día and En Sintonía con el Concejo del Condado de Montgomery, among other engagement efforts.

In addition to engaging with community members, staff also engaged business owners and non-profit organizations, as well as pursued consultant assistance to evaluate market conditions and complete detailed transportation analyses. Staff coordinated with partner agencies including the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection, Montgomery County Public Schools, and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission, among other agencies, to consider public infrastructure capacity. The Working Draft Plan represents a balance between best

practices, professional expertise, data analysis and modeling, and the lived experiences and vision of the community. While the Plan’s recommendations build on countywide plans and policies, they are unique to the context and conditions of the Plan area.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff will present the Working Draft of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan to the Planning Board on January 16, 2025. Staff recommends approval of the Working Draft as the Public Hearing Draft and requests that the Planning Board schedule the public hearing for February 27, 2025. The Public Hearing Draft and Plan Appendices will be available on the Plan website (www.montgomeryplanning.org/ubc) prior to the public hearing.

Following the public hearing this winter, staff will schedule work sessions with the Planning Board to discuss the public testimony received and refine the Draft Plan. The work sessions will culminate in the Planning Board Draft, anticipated for transmittal to the County Council late spring 2025.

ATTACHMENTS

University Boulevard Corridor Plan Working Draft