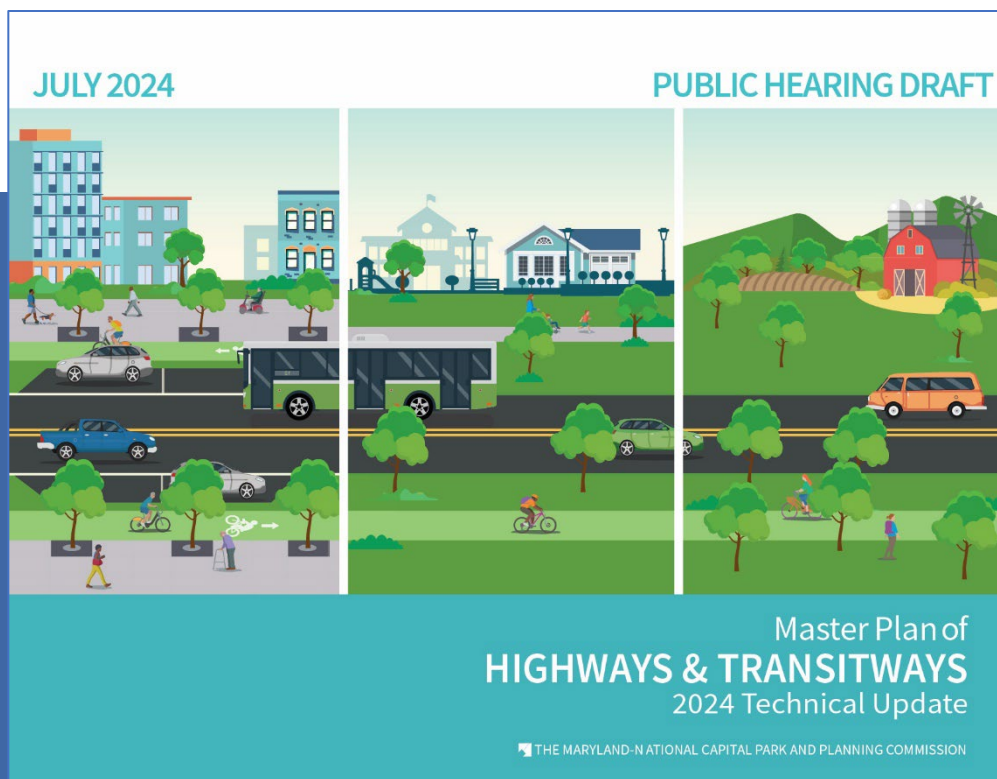


# MASTER PLAN OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSITWAYS – 2024 TECHNICAL UPDATE WORK SESSION #2



## Description

The Planning Board will consider making changes to the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways – 2024 Technical Update* based on public comments received before the closing of the public comment period on Friday, January 24, 2025.



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## INTRODUCTION

A technical update to the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* (MPOHT) is necessitated by the County Council's approval of two bills in 2022 (Bill 24-22 and 34-22) that revised the street types identified in Chapter 49 of the County Code, also known as the "Road Code," to conform to the county's Complete Streets Design Guide. While the updated county code provides an interim translation from the previous "functional" classification system to the new "complete streets" classification system, adjustments to these default translations are needed for various road segments in the county. Master plan recommendations are presented in the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT to modify street classifications, master planned target speeds, number of planned travel lanes, transitway removals and additions, transit station removals and additions, and the identification of a new Growth Corridor Street type. A total of three work sessions are planned for this master plan as follows:

- Work Session #1 – conducted on February 13, 2025 – this meeting focused on Topic 1 – Midcounty Highway Extended (M-83)
- Work Session #2 – Update on Topic 1 – Clarksburg to Germantown Infrastructure Map and review of Topics 2 through 8 – March 6, 2025
- Work Session #3 – Topic 1 - Comprehensive Transportation Study for Clarksburg to Germantown Corridor, Status of southern segment of Midcounty Highway Extended (M-83) and other remaining topics

**The purpose of these work sessions is for the Planning Board to consider making changes to the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways – 2024 Technical Update* based on public comments received before closing the public comment period on Friday, January 24, 2025.**

In the staff report, proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT are shown in underlines and ~~strikethroughs~~.

Many of the recommendations in the MPOHT can be viewed with this interactive map:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/3681ac25153542d484fa740563b71904/page/HIGHWAYS/>

## TOPIC 1 - MIDCOUNTY HIGHWAY EXTENDED

### MIDCOUNTY HIGHWAY EXTENDED RECAP

On February 13, 2025, the Planning Board voted 3-1 (Commissioner Hedrick was absent) to make the follow changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways – 2024 Technical Update:

1. Remove the northern section of Midcounty Highway Extended from the MPOHT as it is inconsistent with Thrive Montgomery 2050 and the Climate Action Plan.
2. Conduct a comprehensive study of travel needs along the Clarksburg to Germantown corridor to determine if there is sufficient master-planned transportation capacity to accommodate planned development.

### DEVELOPMENT OF CLARKSBURG TO GERMANTOWN TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE MAP

During the first work session the Planning Board requested a better understanding of the status of transportation infrastructure in the Clarksburg to Germantown area. In response, Planning Staff develop a GIS web application that shows the existing and planned highways, transitways, and bikeways in this portion of the county, with one map for each mode. Each map symbolizes features based on its “Status,” summarized as follows:

- Fully Constructed - Post 2019
- Fully Constructed - Pre 2019
- Partially Constructed
- Not Constructed - Funded for Construction
- Not Constructed - Funded for Design
- Not Constructed - Approved Development
- Not Constructed - Master-Planned Only

The map can be located at this link: <https://mcatlas.org/clarksburg-germantown>.

Figure 1 displays a screenshot of the web map portal showing the coverage area, with a side panel showing information about a selected feature.

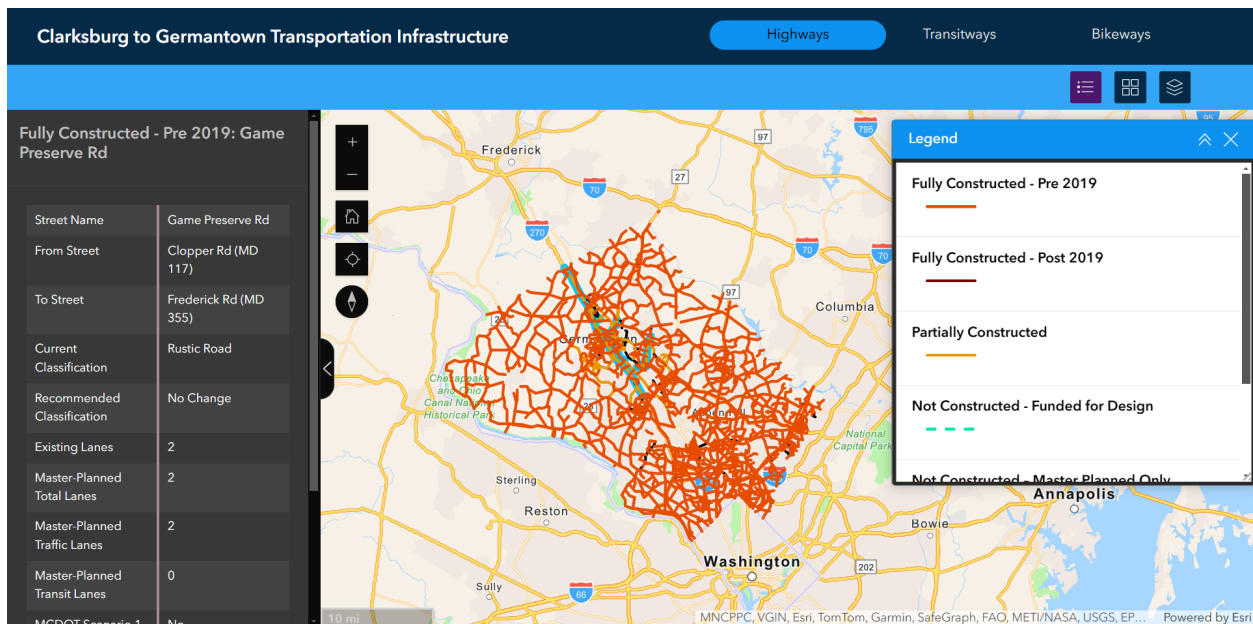


Figure 1: Clarksburg to Germantown Transportation Infrastructure Web Map

## REVIEW OF SOUTHERN SEGMENT OF MIDCOUNTRY HIGHWAY EXTENDED

At Work Session #1, no decision was made regarding the southern segment of Midcountry Highway Extended, and a desire was expressed by Chair Harris for more information on the southern segment and its issues. This information will be provided as part of Work Session #3, scheduled for March 20, 2025.

## COMPREHENSIVE TRANSPORTATION STUDY ELEMENTS

At Work Session #1, supported a comprehensive study of travel needs along the Clarksburg to Germantown corridor to determine if there is sufficient master-planned transportation capacity to accommodate planned development.

Planning Staff is coordinating with the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan and Germantown Sector Plan Amendment teams and MCDOT on the scope, timeline and cost of this effort. Planning Staff will report back to the Planning Board on this subject at work session #3, scheduled for March 20.

## TOPIC 2 - STREET CLASSIFICATION

Staff received 12 comments questioning whether a particular street is appropriately classified. The following sections group these comments based on the street classification recommended in the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT and the classification recommended in the comment. Figure 9 displays a map of roadways where street classification comments were made.

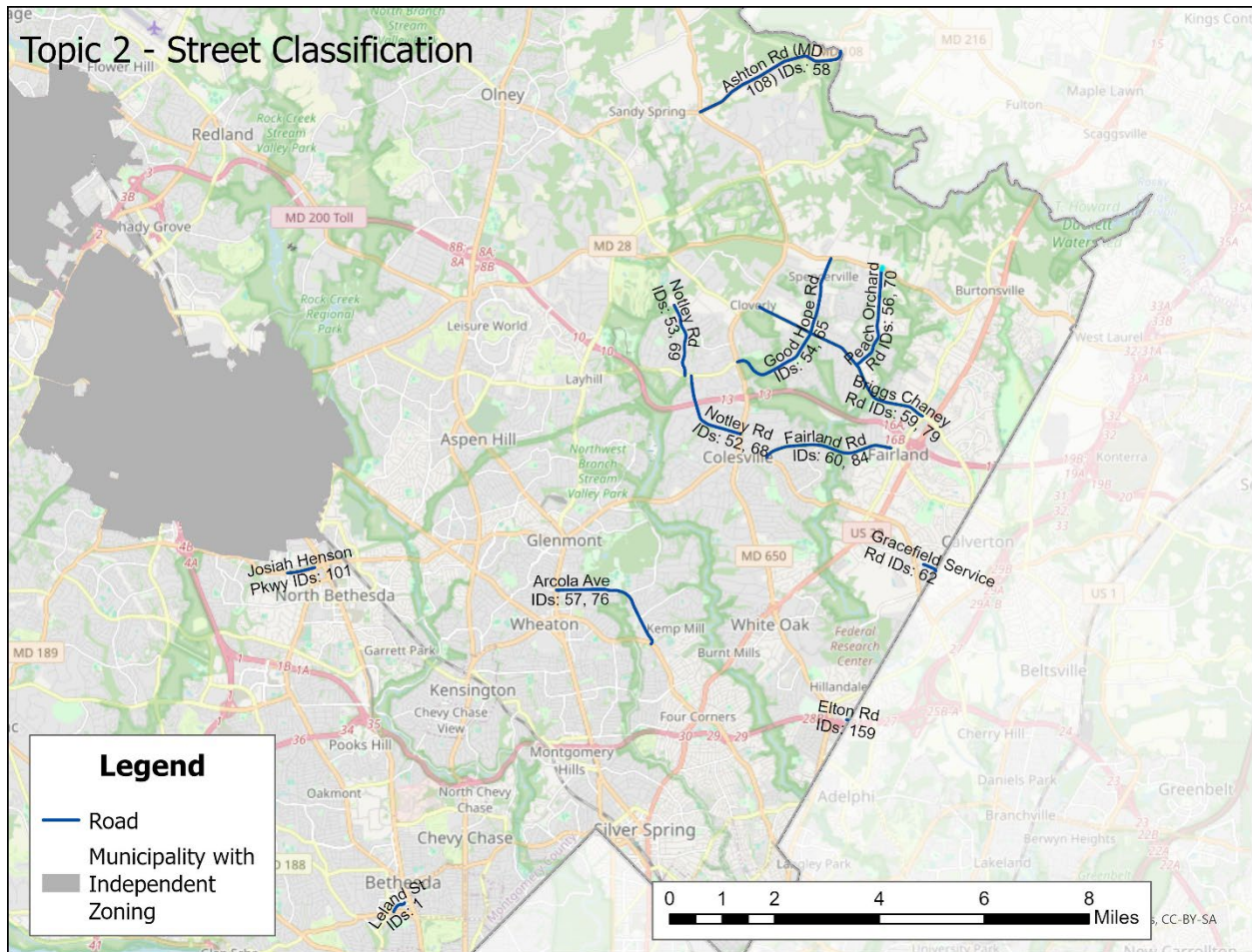


Figure 2: Topic 2 - Street Classification

### DOWNTOWN BOULEVARDS VS PARKWAYS

One comment requested a change in classification from Parkway to Downtown Boulevard. Parkways are a street type included for purposes of grandfathering a unique type of road that the county is no longer constructing. These streets are designed with a focus on the natural environment and tend to prioritize recreational uses and aesthetics over mobility. In contrast, Downtown Boulevards are 4 – 6 lane roads located in Downtown Areas. They are intended to be the County’s highest intensity streets – with a bustling mix of vehicle traffic, dense development, walking, bicycling, and transit.

**Comment 101:** Classify Josiah Henson Parkway between East Jefferson Street and Towne Road as a Downtown Boulevard instead of Parkway. (Wilco and Affiliate representing the Washington Science Joint Venture, owners of the adjacent parcel on the north side of Josiah Henson Parkway)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT classifies Josiah Henson Parkway between East Jefferson St and Towne Rd as a Parkway, however, between Towne Rd and MD 355 it is classified as a Downtown Boulevard. Since the full extent of this road, between the western edge of Downtown White Flint and MD 355 is in a downtown area, Planning Staff recommend revising the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT to designate Josiah Henson Pkwy between the western edge of Downtown White Flint and Towne Rd as a Downtown Boulevard, similar to the adjacent section between Towne Rd and MD 355. This designation creates a consistent classification in the downtown area. For the vision of a Downtown Boulevard to be fulfilled, future redevelopment will need to reorient land uses toward Josiah Henson Parkway to activate the street.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT include:

- Page 60 (Table 10): Add the following row:
  - Road Name: Josiah Henson Pkwy
  - From: Western edge of Downtown White Flint
  - To: East Jefferson St
  - Current Classification: Parkway
  - Recommended Classification: Downtown Boulevard
  - Current Target Speed: None
  - Recommended Target Speed: 25 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 4
  - Current Planned Lanes: 4
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 4
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 300 ft
- Page 60 (Table 10): Add the following row:
  - Road Name: Josiah Henson Pkwy
  - From: East Jefferson St
  - To: Towne Rd
  - Current Classification: Parkway
  - Recommended Classification: Downtown Boulevard
  - Current Target Speed: None
  - Recommended Target Speed: 25 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 4
  - Current Planned Lanes: 4
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 4
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 130 ft



## BOULEVARDS VS AREA CONNECTORS AND COUNTRY CONNECTORS

There were four comments requesting the Planning Board designate certain streets as Boulevards instead of Area Connectors and Country Connectors, as recommended in the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT. Boulevards are 4 – 6 lane road located in Suburban Areas. They are critical roadways that typically connect employment and entertainment centers, civic, commercial, and institutional land uses and may also provide cross-county and regional connections. In contrast, Area Connectors are two-lane residential streets that assign a higher priority to motor vehicles. Country Connectors are also two-lane streets, and often have a mix of country and residential land uses.

**Comment 57:** Classify Arcola Ave between Georgia Ave and University Blvd as a Boulevard instead of an Area Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Disagree.** Arcola Ave between Georgia Ave and University Blvd is recommended to be an Area Connector, which is consistent with the context and surrounding land use. Arcola Avenue functions primarily as a two-lane street, providing a direct connection between Georgia Ave and University Boulevard (both state highways) and is not planned to be widened. Maryland SHA estimates a 2022 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 15,075 vehicles. Arcola Avenue serves a major through street connection between Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and University Boulevard (MD193) through the Kemp Mill neighborhood. Its high daily traffic volume confirms its role as a connector street. Parking is provided intermittently along the street, but typically in a striped parking lane/shoulder. As it meets the definition of an Area Connector, **Planning Staff recommend maintaining this street classification for Arcola Ave between Georgia Ave and University Blvd.**

**Comment 58:** Classify Ashton Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Howard County Line as a Boulevard instead of an Areas Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Disagree.** The recommended street classification is consistent with the context and surrounding land use. Ashton Rd currently has two travel lanes and is not planned to be widened. As it meets the definition of a Country Connector, **Planning Staff recommend maintaining this street classification for Ashton Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Howard County Line.**

**Comment 59:** Classify Briggs Chaney Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Old Columbia Pike as a Boulevard instead of an Area Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Disagree.** The recommended street classification is consistent with the context and surrounding land use. Briggs Chaney Rd currently has two travel lanes and is not planned to be widened. As it meets the definition of an Area Connector, **Planning Staff recommend maintaining this street classification for Briggs Chaney Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Old Columbia Pike.**

**Comment 60:** Classify Fairland Rd between East Randolph Rd and Old Columbia Pike as a Boulevard instead of an Area Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Disagree.** The recommended street classification is consistent with the context and surrounding land use. This street currently has two travel lanes and is not planned to be widened. As it meets the definition of an Area Connector, **Planning Staff recommend maintaining this street classification for Fairland Rd between East Randolph Rd and Old Columbia Pike.**

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#### BOULEVARDS VS NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTORS

There was one comment requesting the Planning Board designate a street as a Boulevard instead of a Neighborhood Connector. Boulevards are 4 – 6 lane road located in Suburban Areas. They are critical roadways that typically connect employment and entertainment centers, civic, commercial, and institutional land uses and may also provide cross-county and regional connections. In contrast, Neighborhoods Connectors are two-lane residential streets.

**Comment 62:** Classify Gracefield Service Rd between Gracefield Rd and Prince George’s County Line as a Neighborhood Connector instead of a Boulevard. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Disagree.** Gracefield Service Rd between Gracefield Road and Prince George's County line is recommended to be a Boulevard. Boulevards are planned to have multiple travel lanes in each direction (4-6 lane streets). This street currently has two travel lanes but is planned to be expanded to four lanes. As it meets the definition of a Boulevard, **Planning Staff recommend maintaining this street classification for Gracefield Service Rd between Gracefield Rd and Prince George’s County Line.** However, this classification should be reconsidered at a future date as part of a comprehensive MPOHT that reconsiders whether roadway widenings are still desirable.

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#### AREA CONNECTORS VS NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTORS

There were four comments requesting the Planning Board consider whether the appropriate street classification is a Neighborhood Connectors or Area Connector. Area Connectors and Neighborhood Connectors are similar as they are both residential streets with two lanes. The main difference is that a higher priority is given to motor vehicles on Area Connectors than on Neighborhood Connectors, which is reflected in their target speed: Area Connectors typically have a target speed of 25 mph whereas Neighborhood Connectors typically have a target speed of 20 mph. Compared to Area Connectors, Neighborhood Connectors are:

- Less likely to connect two boulevards.
- More likely to be lined by homes.
- More likely to have on-street parking.
- More likely to have lower traffic volumes.

Planning Staff agrees with two of these comments but disagrees with the other two.

**Comment 52:** Classify Notley Rd between New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) and Bonifant Rd as an Area Connector instead of a Neighborhood Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree. Planning Staff recommends changing the street classification on Notley Road between New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) and Bonifant Rd from Neighborhood Connector to Area Connector.** This road connects to New Hampshire Ave, a Boulevard, is lined with homes, does not have on-street parking and had an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 4,805 vehicles in 2022, based on Maryland SHA estimates. The primary impact of this change would increase the target speed from 20 mph to 25 mph.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT include:

- Page 38 (Table 9): Remove the row for Notley Rd between New Hampshire Ave and ICC right-of-way.
- Page 38 (Table 9): Modify the row for Notley Rd between ICC right-of-way and End of Road by replacing “ICC right-of-way” with “Bonifant Rd.”
- Page 66 (Table 10): Add the following row:
  - Road Name: Notley Rd
  - From: New Hampshire Ave
  - To: ICC right-of-way
  - Current Classification: Neighborhood Connector
  - Recommended Classification: Area Connector
  - Current Target Speed: None Assigned
  - Recommended Target Speed: 25 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 70 ft
- Page 66 (Table 10): Add the following row:
  - Road Name: Notley Rd
  - From: ICC right-of-way
  - To: Bonifant Rd
  - Current Classification: Neighborhood Connector
  - Recommended Classification: Area Connector
  - Current Target Speed: None Assigned
  - Recommended Target Speed: 25 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 70 ft

**Comment 53:** Classify Notley Rd between Bonifant Rd and the end of road as an Area Connector instead of a Neighborhood Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Disagree.** Notley Rd between Bonifant Rd and the end of the road to the north is recommended to be a Neighborhood Connector. This street classification is consistent with the context and surrounding land use. Currently, this section of Notley Rd carries less traffic than the southern section of Notley Rd to the south of Bonifant Rd, is lined with homes and one elementary school, and primarily serves neighborhood access only.

**Planning Staff recommend maintaining Notley Rd between Bonifant Rd and the End of the Road as a Neighborhood Connector.**

**Comment 54:** Classify Good Hope Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Briggs Chaney Rd as an Area Connector instead of a Neighborhood Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** Planning Staff recommends changing the street classification on Good Hope Rd between New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) and Brigg Chaney Rd from Neighborhood Connector to Area Connector. Maryland SHA estimates a 2022 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 8,815 vehicles. It connects two boulevards (New Hampshire Ave and Spencerville Rd), has no on-street parking and is lined by homes. The primary impact of this change would increase the target speed from 20 mph to 25 mph.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT include:

- Page 33 (Table 9): Modify the row for Good Hope Rd from New Hampshire Ave to Spencerville Rd by replacing “New Hampshire Ave” with “Briggs Chaney Rd.”
- Page 59 (Table 10): Add the following row:
  - Road Name: Good Hope Rd
  - From: New Hampshire Ave
  - To: Briggs Chaney Rd
  - Current Classification: Neighborhood Connector
  - Recommended Classification: Area Connector
  - Current Target Speed: None Assigned
  - Recommended Target Speed: 25 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 70 ft

**Planning Staff recommends that the remaining segment of Good Hope Rd from Briggs Chaney Rd to Spencerville Rd remain as a Neighborhood Connector as the AADT is lower on this segment.**

**Comment 56:** Classify Peach Orchard Rd between Spencerville Rd and Briggs Chaney Rd as an Area Connector instead of a Neighborhood Connector. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Disagree.** The recommended street classification is consistent with the context and surrounding land use. Planning Staff reviewed existing traffic volumes for Peach Orchard Rd. Maryland SHA estimates a 2022 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) of 2,325 vehicles. Peach Orchard Rd has no on-street parking, is lined by homes, and trees and connects two boulevards (Spencerville Rd and Briggs Chaney Rd). Based primarily on the low AADT, **Planning Staff recommends maintaining Peach Orchard Rd between Spencerville Rd and Briggs Chaney Rd as a Neighborhood Connector.**

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#### NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS

**Comment 159:** Classify Elton Rd between Avenel Garden Ln and the Prince George's County as a Neighborhood Yield Street instead of a Neighborhood Connector. (Eileen Finnegan)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree with Modifications.** Elton St between Avenel Garden Ln and the Prince George's County is a 150 feet-long street segment that is currently recommended to be a Neighborhood Connector. The street does not have a master plan designation in the Prince George's County Master Plan of Transportation. **Planning Staff agree that this street segment is a Neighborhood Street due to its narrow 50-foot-wide right-of-way and lack of a designation in Prince George's County and therefore that it should be removed from the MPOHT.**

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Page 18 (Table 5): Add the following row:
  - Road Name: Elton St
  - From: Avenel Garden Ln
  - To: Prince George's County
  - Current Classification: Neighborhood Connector
  - Recommended Classification: Neighborhood St
  - Current Target Speed: None
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 50 ft

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## COMMENTS RELATED TO ONGOING MASTER PLANS

**Comment 1:** Reclassify Leland Street between Bradley Blvd and Woodmont Ave as a Neighborhood Street instead of a Downtown Street.

- **Planning Staff Response: No Action.** Planning Staff recommends that the Planning Board take no action on the recommendation. A street classification issue is best handled by an area master plan when that plan is still in development. The Planning Board Draft of the *Bethesda Downtown Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment*, which includes Leland Street, was recently transmitted by the Planning Board to the County Council and the Council’s public hearing on the plan is scheduled for February 26, 2025. In general, Planning Staff are supportive of the proposed street classification change for the 4800 block of Leland Street from Downtown Street to Neighborhood Street.

### TOPIC 3 – TARGET SPEED

55 comments questioned whether target speeds in the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT are appropriate. Some of these identified target speeds that were higher than existing posted speeds, while others just focused on concerns with target speeds and did not identify conflicts with existing posted speeds.

Figure 10 displays a map of roadways in East County where comments pertaining to target speed were made; Figure 11 displays roadways in Upcounty.

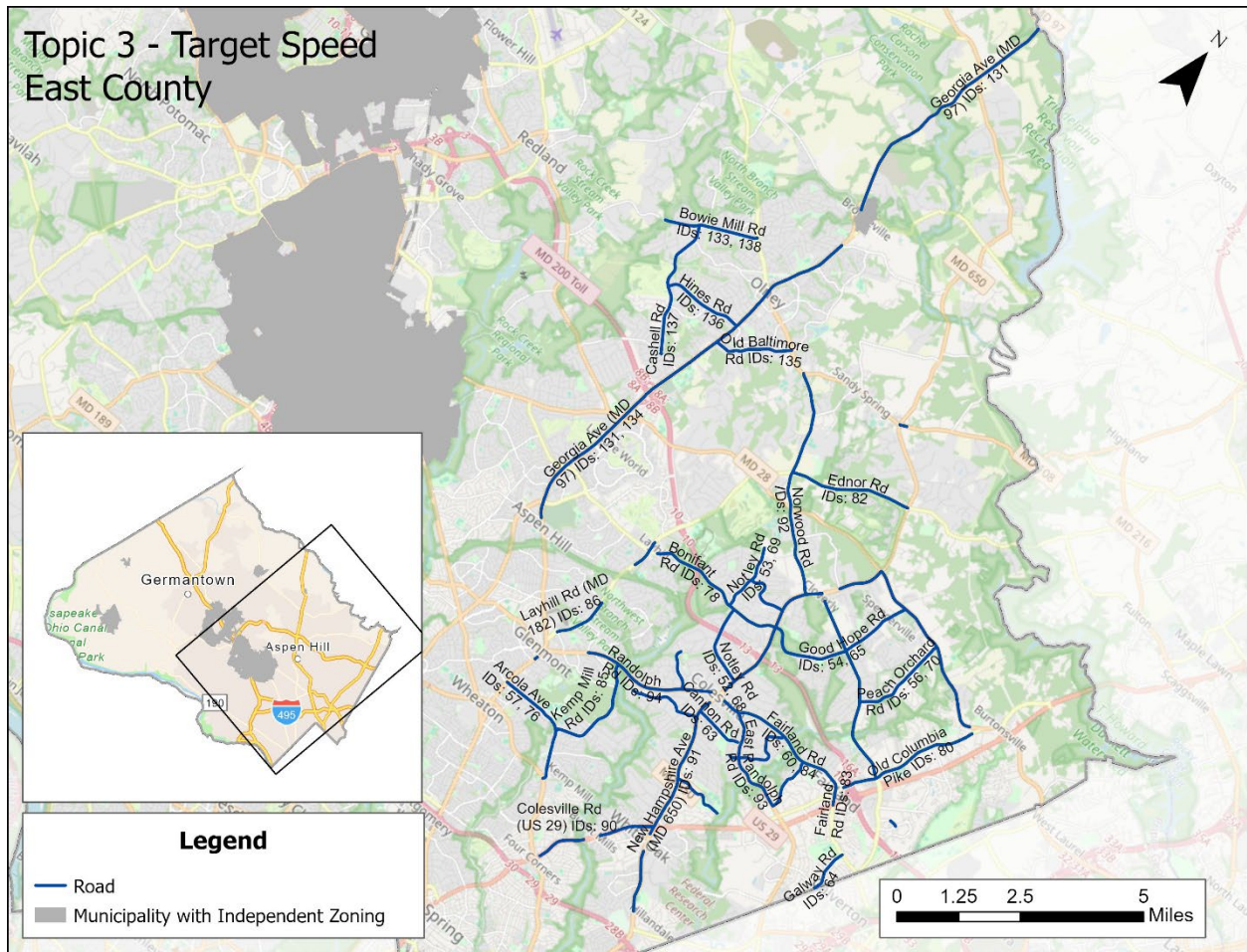


Figure 3: Topic 3 - Target Speed East County

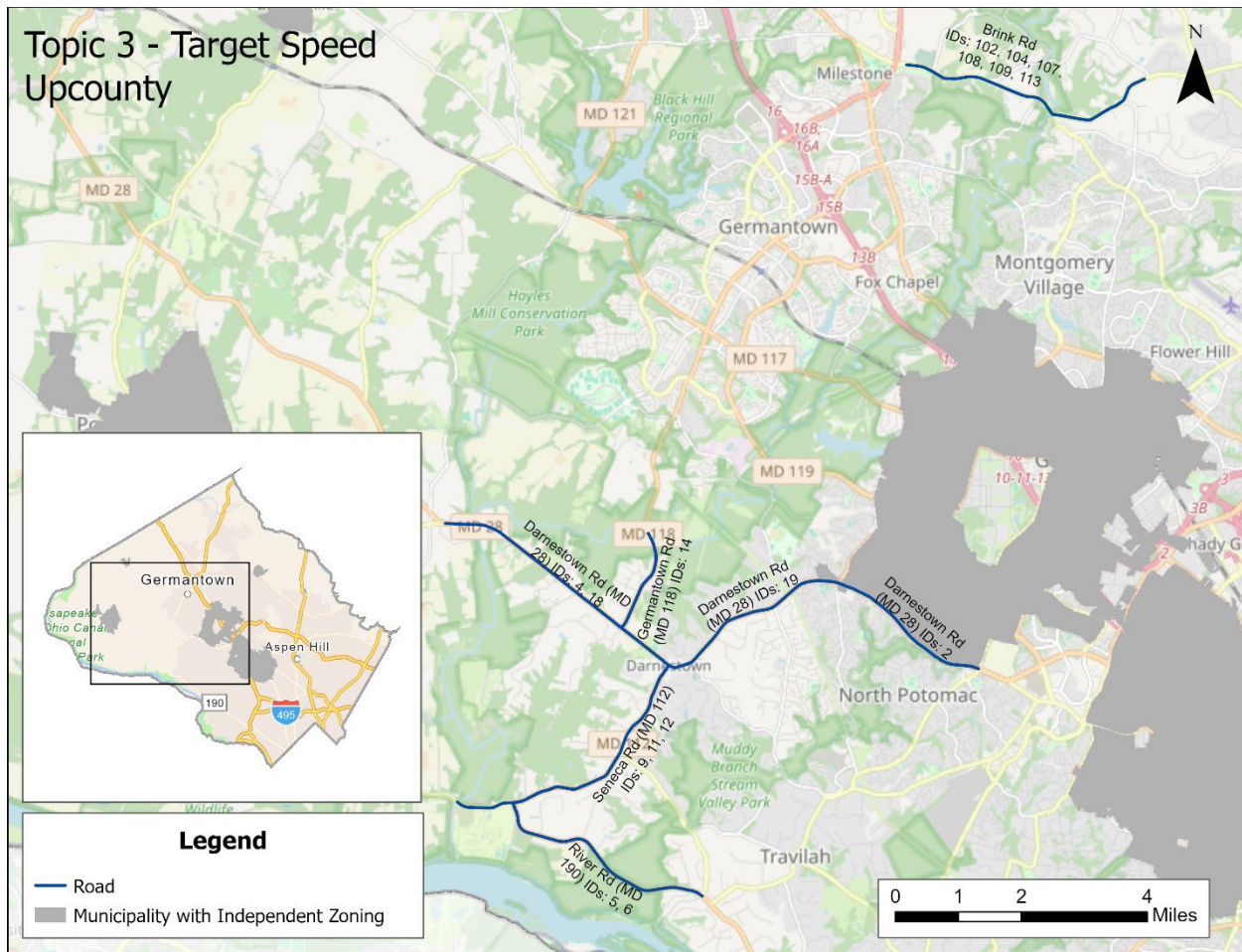


Figure 4: Topic 3 - Target Speed Upcounty

Target speeds are the desired operating speed for a roadway facility – the vision. These speeds are based on safe operations and are tailored to the functionality and context of the roadway. Presence, proximity, and volume of pedestrians, bicyclists, passenger vehicles, transit vehicles, and commercial vehicles are considered when determining an appropriate target speed. Posted speed limits are sign-posted along the road and are enforceable by law. In many instances, the posted speed limit exceeds the target speed of a road. Over time as the land use and street design vision are implemented, the posted speed limits on a street should be reduced to match the target speed. In no instance should the target speed exceed the posted speed. While there is research that indicates that lowering posted speed limits can reduce the speed of motor vehicles, in general, it is a better practice to advance land use and transportation infrastructure that encourages drivers to travel at the target speed.

[Section 49-32 \(f\)](#) of the County Code provides default maximum target speed for each street classification “unless otherwise specified in a master plan or the approved capital improvements program”. These target speeds are set to help the county eliminate transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries as part of its Vision Zero program and are listed below:



- Downtown Boulevard: 25 mph
- Downtown Street: 20 mph
- Boulevard: 35 mph (except 25 mph in urban areas)
- Town Center Boulevard: 30 mph (except 25 mph in urban areas)
- Town Center Street: 25 mph
- Area Connector: 25 mph
- Neighborhood Connector: 20 mph
- Industrial Street: 25 mph
- Country Connector: 40 mph
- Country Road: 20 to 35 mph
- Controlled Major Highway: 45 to 55 mph.

#### TARGET SPEED INCORRECT

While target speeds can be lower than posted speed limits, they should not be higher than posted speed limits. Planning Staff recommend lowering the target speed to match the posted speed limit in the following locations and updating all corresponding maps:

**Comment 2:** Lower the target speed on Darnestown Rd between Briar Rock Dr and Blackberry Dr from 40 mph to 30 mph. (Darnestown Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The target speed should be lowered to match the posted speed limit.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Page 81 (Table 11): Add a row for with the following characteristics:
  - Road Name: Darnestown Rd
  - From: Briar Rock Dr
  - To: Blackberry Dr
  - Current Classification: Boulevard
  - Recommended Classification: No Change
  - Current Target Speed: 40 mph
  - Recommended Target Speed: 30 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 4
  - Current Planned Lanes: 4
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 4
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 120 ft

**Comment 4:** Lower the target speed on Darnestown Rd between Seneca Rd and Turkey Foot Rd from 40 mph to 30 mph. (Darnestown Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The target speed should be lowered to match the posted speed limit.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Page 104 (Table 13): Modify the row for Darnestown Rd from Whites Ferry Rd to Suburban Boundary by replacing “Suburban Boundary” with “Seneca Rd.”
- Page 81 (Table 11): Add a row with the following characteristics:
  - Road Name: Darnestown Rd
  - From: Seneca Rd
  - To: Suburban Boundary
  - Current Classification: Country Connector
  - Recommended Classification: No Change
  - Current Target Speed: 40 mph
  - Recommended Target Speed: 30 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 120 ft

**Comment 19:** Lower the target speed on Darnestown Rd between Suburban Boundary and Riffle Ford Rd to 30 mph. The current posted speed is 30 mph to just west of Chestnut Oak Dr, then 40 mph to Riffle Ford Rd. (Darnestown Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The target speed should be lowered to match the posted speed limit in the portion of the segment where it is not aligned (Suburban Boundary to Chestnut Oak Dr). There is no change recommended for the recommended target speed for the rest of the segment (Chestnut Oak Dr to Riffle Ford Rd).

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Page 89 (Table 12): Modify the row for Darnestown Rd from Suburban Boundary to Riffle Ford Rd by replacing “Suburban Boundary” with “Chestnut Oak Dr.”
- Page 81 (Table 11): Add a row for with the following characteristics:
  - Road Name: Darnestown Rd
  - From: Suburban Boundary
  - To: Chestnut Oak Dr
  - Current Classification: Area Connector
  - Recommended Classification: No Change
  - Current Target Speed: None Assigned
  - Recommended Target Speed: 30 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 120 ft

**Comment 12:** Lower the target speed on Seneca Rd between Mockingbird Dr and Darnestown Rd from 40 mph to 30 mph. (Darnestown Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The target speed should be lowered to match the posted speed limit.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Page 105 (Table 13): Modify the row for Seneca Rd from River Rd to Darnestown Rd by replacing “Darnestown Rd” with “Mockingbird Dr.”
- Page 84 (Table 11): Add a row for with the following characteristics:
  - Road Name: Seneca Rd
  - From: Mockingbird Dr
  - To: Darnestown Rd
  - Current Classification: Country Connector
  - Recommended Classification: No Change
  - Current Target Speed: None Assigned
  - Recommended Target Speed: 30 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 80 ft

**Comment 14:** Lower the target speed on Germantown Rd between Darnestown Rd and Citizen Ln from 40 mph to 30 mph. (Darnestown Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The target speed should be lowered to match the posted speed limit.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Page 104 (Table 13): Modify the row for Germantown Rd from Darnestown Rd to Great Seneca Creek (Southern Branch) by replacing “Darnestown Rd” with “Citizen Ln.”
- Page 82 (Table 11): Add a row for with the following characteristics:
  - Road Name: Germantown Rd
  - From: Darnestown Rd
  - To: Citizen Ln
  - Current Classification: Country Connector
  - Recommended Classification: No Change
  - Current Target Speed: None Assigned
  - Recommended Target Speed: 30 mph
  - Existing Lanes: 2
  - Current Planned Lanes: 2 to 4
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 2 to 4

- Master Plan ROW (feet): 120 ft

**Comment 18:** Lower the target speed on Darnestown Rd between Darnestown Local Park and Germantown Rd from 40 mph to 30 mph. (Darnestown Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The target speed should be lowered to match the posted speed limit.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Shift the row for Darnestown Rd between Darnestown Local Park and Germantown Rd from page 104 (Table 13) to page 81 (Table 11) and change the target speed to 30 mph.

**Comment 104:** Lower the target speed on Brink Rd between Seneca Crossing Dr and Goshen Rd Extended from 40 mph to 35 mph. (Greater Goshen Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** The target speed should be lowered to match the posted speed limit.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Shift the following rows from page 103 (Table 13) to page 87 (Table 12) and change the target speed to 35 mph:
  - Brink Rd from Seneca Crossing Dr to Midcounty Hwy
  - Brink Rd from Midcounty Hwy to Wightman Rd
  - Brink Rd from Wightman Rd to Goshen Rd extended.

## TARGET SPEED DISAGREEMENT

There are 48 comments that disagree with recommended target speeds. These comments are organized by street classification: Boulevards (Table 9), Area Connectors (Table 10), Neighborhood Connectors (Table 11) and Country Connectors (Table 12). For each street segment, the existing posted speed limit and proposed target speed are identified, as well as the public comment. In all but three instances, Planning Staff recommend retaining the target speed in the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT, as these align with the default target speeds identified in the county code. The exceptions are:

**Comment 86:** Do not set the target speed on Layhill Rd between Hathaway Dr and Glenallen Ave at 25 mph. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** There are two errors in this recommendation that need to be fixed. First, the street segment should end at Briggs Rd, not Glenallan Ave. Second, since Layhill Rd between Hathaway Dr and Briggs Rd is appropriately classified as a Boulevard, the target speed should be 35 mph, not 25 mph.

Proposed changes to the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT:

- Page 61 (Table 10): Delete the row for Layhill Rd (MD 182) from Hathaway Dr to Glenallan Ave
- Page 91 (Table 12): Add the following row:
  - Road Name: Layhill Rd (MD 182)
  - From: Hathaway Dr
  - To: Briggs Rd
  - Current Classification: Boulevard
  - Recommended Classification: No Change
  - Current Target Speed: None Assigned
  - Recommended Target Speed: 35
  - Existing Lanes: 4
  - Current Planned Lanes: 5
  - Recommended Planned Lanes: 5
  - Master Plan ROW (feet): 120 ft

**Comment 65:** Do not set a target speed of 20 mph on Good Hope Rd from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Spencerville Rd. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** As discussed in Topic 2, Planning Staff recommend changing the street classification on Good Hope Rd from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Briggs Chaney Rd to an Area Connector. **If the Planning Board supports the change to the street classification, Planning Staff recommend that Good Hope Rd from New Hampshire Ave to Briggs Chaney Rd have a 25-mph target speed.**

**Comment 68:** Do not set a target speed of 20 mph on Notley Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Bonifant St. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Planning Staff Response: Agree.** As discussed in Topic 2, Planning Staff recommend changing the street classification on Notley Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Bonifant St to an Area Connector. **If the Planning Board supports the change to the street classification, Planning Staff recommend that Notley Rd between New Hampshire Ave and Bonifant St have a 25-mph target speed.**

Table 1: Comments on Boulevard Target Speeds

ID #	Street Segment	Existing Speed Limit (mph)	Target Speed (mph)	Comment
90	Colesville Rd (US 29) / Columbia Pike (US 29) from Timberwood Ave to Burnt Mills Town Center	35-40	35	Do not lower to 35 mph
89	Columbia Pike (US 29) from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Burnt Mills Town Center	40-45	35	Do not lower to 35 mph
93	East Randolph Rd from Serpentine Way to Fairland Rd	40	35	Do not lower to 35 mph
134	Georgia Ave (MD 97) from Aspen Hill Town Center Boundary to Old Baltimore Rd	45	35	Do not lower
86	Layhill Rd (MD 182) from Hathaway Dr to Glenallan Ave	40	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
91	New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) from Spencerville Rd (MD 198) to Oaklawn Dr	40-45	35	Do not lower to 35 mph
92	Norwood Rd from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Ednor Rd/Layhill Rd	40	35	Do not lower to 35 mph
94	Randolph Rd from Colesville Town Center to Middlevale Rd	40	35	Do not lower to 35 mph
95	Spencerville Rd from Old Columbia Pike to New Hampshire Ave (MD 650)	25-40	35	Do not lower to 35 mph

Table 2: Comments on Area Connector Target Speeds

ID #	Street Segment	Existing Speed Limit (mph)	Target Speed (mph)	Comment
76	Arcola Ave from Georgia Ave to University Blvd	30	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
78	Bonifant Rd from Layhill Town Center Boundary to New Hampshire Ave (MD 650)	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
138	Bowie Mill Rd from North Branch of Rock Creek to Olney-Laytonsville Rd	30-40	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
79	Briggs Chaney Rd from Gallaudet Ave to Old Columbia Pike	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
137	Cashell Rd from Emory Ln to Bowie Mill Rd	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
81	Doctor Bird Rd (MD 182) from Olney-Sandy Spring Rd to Norwood Rd	40	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
82	Ednor Rd from Norwood Rd to New Hampshire Ave (MD 650)	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
83	Fairland Rd from Columbia Pike to Old Columbia Pike	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
84	Fairland Rd from East Randolph Rd to Old Columbia Pike	40	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
136	Hines Rd from Georgia Ave to Cashell Rd	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
85	Kemp Mill Rd from Randolph Rd to Arcola Ave	30-35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
87	Norwood Rd (MD 182) from Ednor Rd/Layhill Rd to Doctor Bird Rd	35-40	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
135	Old Baltimore Rd from Georgia Ave to Olney-Laytonsville Rd	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
80	Old Columbia Pike from 400 feet south of Edfinn Road to Spencerville Rd	35	25	Do not lower to 25 mph
88	Olney-Sandy Spring Rd (MD 108) from Doctor Bird Rd / Norwood Rd to Dominion Dr	30	25	Do not lower to 25 mph

Table 3: Comments on Neighborhood Connector Target Speeds

ID #	Street Segment	Existing Speed Limit (mph)	Target Speed (mph)	Comment
63	Cannon Rd from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Broadmore Rd	25	20	Disagree
64	Galway Rd from Calverton Blvd to Fairland Rd	25	20	Disagree
65	Good Hope Rd from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Spencerville Rd	30 - 35	20	Disagree
66	Jackson Rd from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Paint Branch Park	25	20	Disagree
67	Locksley Ln from Randolph Rd to Beaumont Rd	25	20	Disagree
68	Notley Rd from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Bonifant Rd	30	20	Disagree
69	Notley Rd from Bonifant Rd to end-of-road	25	20	Disagree
70	Peach Orchard Rd from 65' south of Spencerville to Briggs Chaney Rd	30	20	Disagree
71	Serpentine Way from East Randolph Rd to Fairland Rd	30	20	Disagree
72	Shaw Ave from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Springloch Rd	25	20	Disagree
73	Springloch Rd from Shaw Ave to Springtree Rd	25	20	Disagree
74	Stonegate Dr from New Hampshire Ave (MD 650) to Notley Rd	25	20	Disagree
75	Tamarack Rd from East Randolph Rd to Fairland Rd	25	20	Disagree



Table 4: Comments on Country Connector Target Speeds

ID #	Street Segment	Existing Speed Limit (mph)	Target Speed (mph)	Comment
77	Ashton Rd from Ashton Town Center Boundary to Howard County Line	40-45	40	Do not lower to 25 mph
18	Darnestown Rd from Whites Ferry Rd to Suburban Boundary	50/40	40	Varies
14	Germantown Rd from Darnestown Rd to Great Seneca Creek (Southern Branch)	40	40	30 mph
5	River Rd (MD 190) from Seneca Creek to Esworthy Rd	50	40	30 mph
6	River Rd (MD 190) from Seneca Creek to Violettes Lock Rd	50	40	35 mph
9	Seneca Rd from Darnestown Rd to Berryville Rd	40	40	35 mph
11	Seneca Rd from Esworthy Rd to Mockingbird Dr	45/40	40	35 mph

## TOPIC 4 – TRAVEL LANE REDUCTION

Three comments recommend a reduction in the number of travel lanes. Figure 12 displays a map of roadways where this comment was made.



Figure 5: Topic 4 - Travel Lane Reduction

**Comment 25:** Consider reducing the number of planned lanes along Old Columbia Pike between Stewart Lane and Tech Road from 4 lanes to 2 lanes. The four lanes were planned by the *White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan*, and at the time we noted the impracticality of such widening. Since that time, Thrive Montgomery 2050 has deprioritized widening roads to four lanes, and our ongoing CIP project is unlikely to move forward with a four-lane alternative. (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

**Response: Disagree.** While there are many new 4+ lane roads and road widenings recommended in the MPOHT, **Planning Staff proposes to consider whether these new roads and road widenings should be retained as part of master plan amendment in the next few years and provide a robust opportunity for community engagement.**

**Comment 122, 150:** Do not expand Riffle Ford Rd between Great Seneca Creek and Darnestown Rd from two to four lanes. Comments specifically note loss of recreational opportunities, environmental degradation, and safety issues. (Seneca Creek Watershed Partners, Deborah Sarabia)

**Response: Disagree.** While there are many new 4+ lane roads and road widenings recommended in the MPOHT, **Planning Staff proposes to consider whether these new roads and road widenings should be retained as part of master plan amendment in the next few years and provide a robust opportunity for community engagement.**

## TOPIC 5 – AREA TYPES AND GROWTH CORRIDORS

Three comments related to area types. Figure 13 displays a map of roadways where this comment was made.

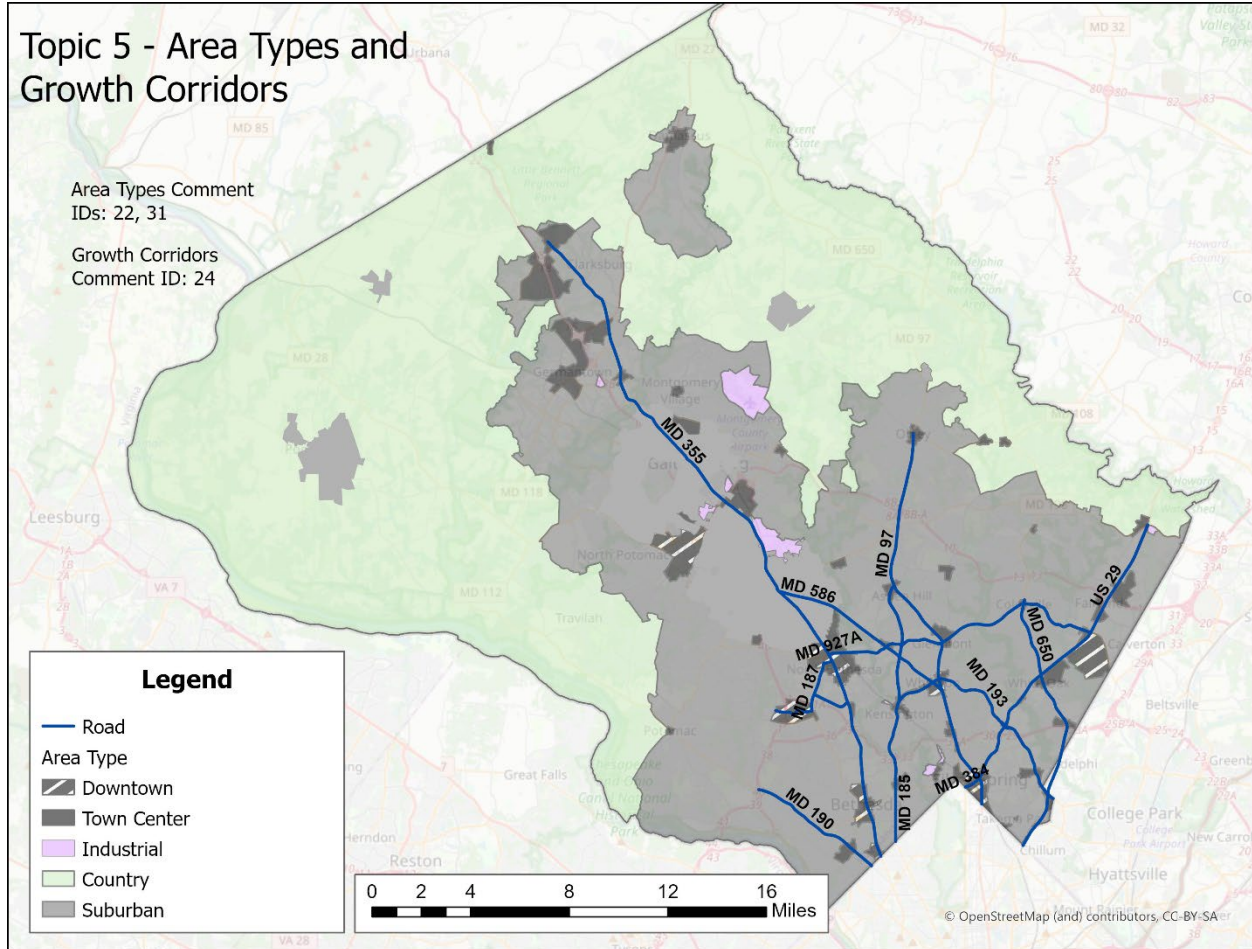


Figure 6: Topic 5 - Area Types and Growth Corridors

**Comment 22:** We want to be on the record with concerns over parts of Darnestown being changed from Country to Suburban. We ask you to instruct staff to review how these areas became reclassified, and to work with the community and our Councilmembers to ensure these actions are in concert with community needs, our master plan, other countywide plans, and the new general plan. (Darnestown Civic Association)

**Response: Disagree.** The changes in area type occurred as part of the 2023 *Pedestrian Master Plan* and were based on an extensive review of zoning and other land use determinants.

**Planning Staff recommend that area type changes be considered as part of future updates to the MPOHT.**

**Comment 31:** The draft master plan refers to downtown and town center boundaries but does not specify where the boundaries are identified. The plan needs to identify where these locations are defined. (Greater Colesville Civic Association)

**Response: Disagree.** Downtown and town center boundaries are shown in Appendix B-5: MPOHT Mapbook. These boundaries are not necessarily the same as Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area (BiPPA) boundaries. Area types were first established in the 2023 *Pedestrian Master Plan* and have been amended by subsequent master plans.

**Comment 24:** Support the intent of Growth Corridors to benefit transit ridership with more urban street layouts and denser blocks. However, Growth Corridors also risk penalizing upstream transit riders as their buses must stop at more of these denser intersections. (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

**Response: Agree with modifications.** The identification of the Growth Corridor Street type is a critical first step to advancing Growth Corridors as envisioned in Thrive Montgomery 2050. Planning Staff agrees that the Growth Corridor Street type should only be applied to locations that are also recommended to have moderate to high densities, as identified on pages 127-130 of the Public Hearing Draft of the MPOHT. **Planning Staff will work with corridor master plan teams to ensure that this designation to appropriately applied.**

## TOPIC 6 – OTHER HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION CONCERNS

Five comments were provided on other planned streets. Figure 14 displays a map of roadways where these comments were made.

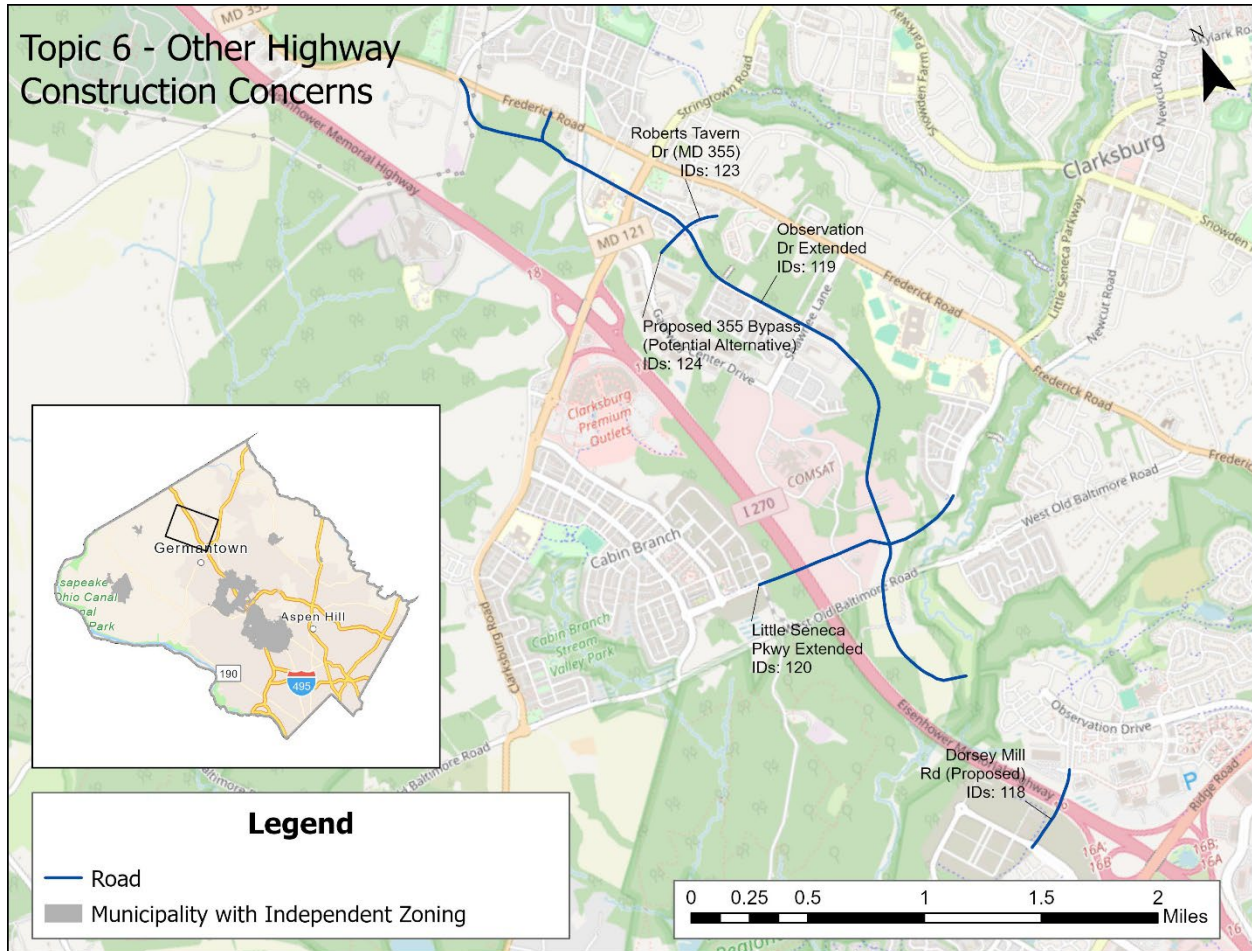


Figure 7: Topic 6 - Other Highway Construction Concerns

**Comment 118:** Eliminate the Dorsey Mill Road Bridge from the MPOHT as this road would remove 3-4 acres of forest and open space and a cemetery. (Deborah Sarabia)

**Response: Disagree.** There is a known cemetery on private land adjacent to the Dorsey Mill Road Bridge right-of-way: the Zachariah Waters Family graveyard that is part of the Symmetry Development. Archaeological investigations completed by MCDOT in late 2018 suggested the possibility of four graves within the right-of-way. If / when the bridge project moves forward, MCDOT will be required to treat the graves in accordance with state and county law. Additionally, Montgomery Planning recommends that MCDOT coordinate an approach to the graves with potential descendants and members of the community. This connection was recently reaffirmed by the County Council as part of 2022 *Corridor Forward: The I-270 Plan*.

**Comment 119:** Revise or remove Observation Drive Extended from the MPOHT. This proposed four-lane divided highway will have a minimum 150-foot right-of-way and a limit of disturbance up to 250 feet wide and would bring traffic noise, light pollution, road salt pollution, and trash. The road would run through mature hardwood upland and bottomland Priority 1 forests, North Germantown Greenway Park, wetlands, floodplains, FIDS bird habitat, conservation easements, historic and archaeological sites, 25% steep slopes and across Little Seneca Creek. (Deborah Sarabia)

**Response: Disagree.** The future of Observation Drive Extended should be deferred to the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*.

**Comment 120:** Revise or remove Little Seneca Parkway Extended. This proposed four-lane divided highway will have a minimum 150-foot right-of-way and a limit of disturbance up to 250 feet wide and would bring traffic noise, light pollution, road salt pollution, and trash. The roads would run through mature hardwood upland and bottomland Priority 1 forests, North Germantown Greenway Park, wetlands, floodplains, FIDS bird habitat, conservation easements, historic and archaeological sites, 25% steep slopes and across Little Seneca Creek. (Deborah Sarabia)

**Response: Disagree.** The future of Little Seneca Parkway Extended should be deferred to the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*.

**Comment 123:** Support removing Roberts Tavern Drive from the MPOHT. This unnecessary four-lane highways would run through forest, wetlands, forests, streams, and steep slopes and not provide any meaningful benefits. (Deborah Sarabia)

**Response: Disagree.** The future of Roberts Tavern Drive should be deferred to the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*.

**Comment 124:** Supports removing the MD 355 Clarksburg Bypass. This unnecessary four-lane highways would run through forest, wetlands, forests, streams, and steep slopes and not provide any meaningful benefits.” (Deborah Sarabia)

**Response: Disagree.** The future of the MD 355 Clarksburg Bypass should be deferred to the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*.

## TOPIC 7 - TRANSIT

13 comments were made about the transitway and transit station recommendations in the Public Hearing Draft.

Figure 15 displays a map of transit stations and transitways identified in the comments.

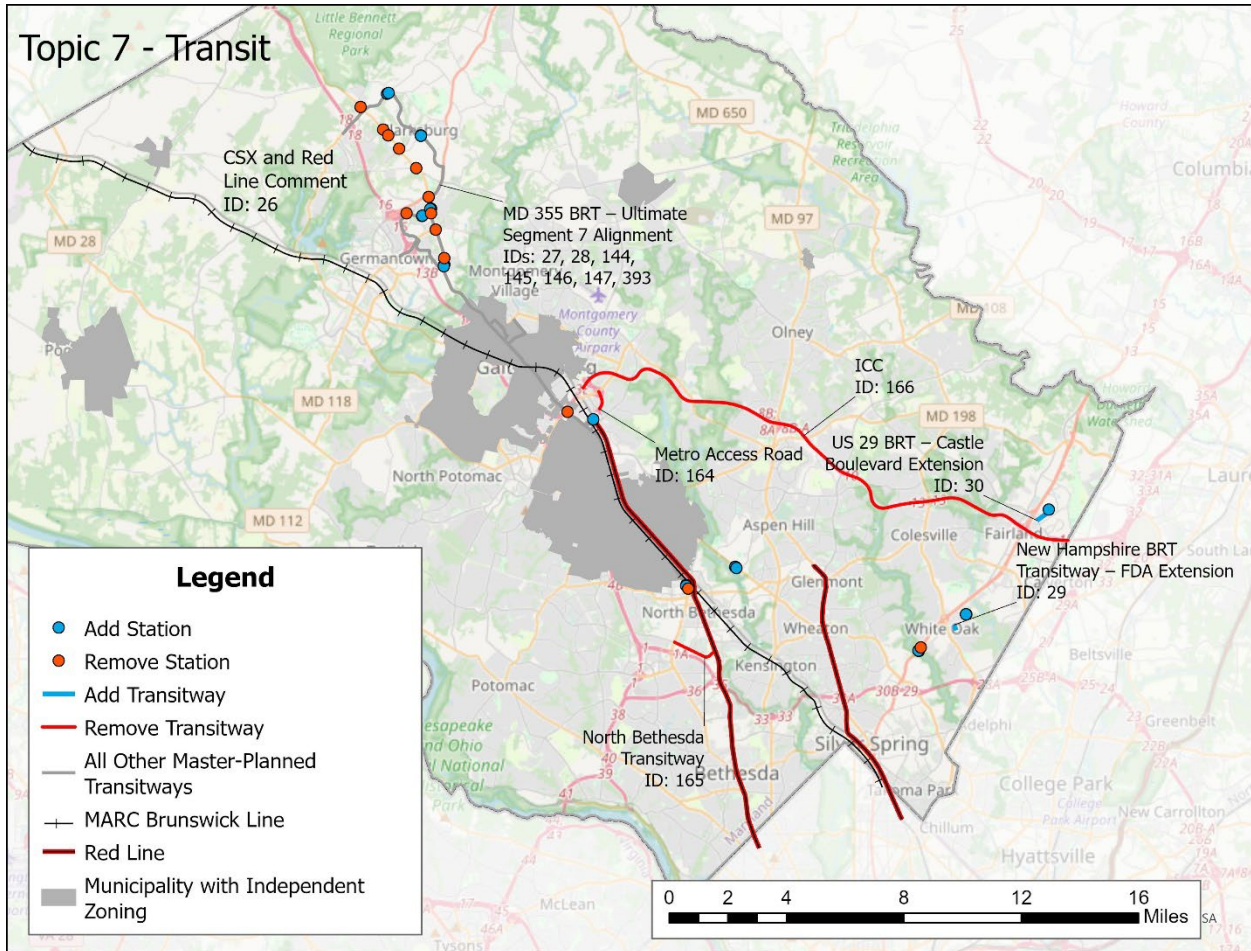


Figure 8: Topic 7 - Transit



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## CSX CORRIDOR

**Comment 26:** Consider including rights-of-way along the CSX and Red Line corridors in the Appendix (p86). It can be difficult to assess right-of-way needs on developments alongside these corridors due to the inconsistent availability of this information. (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

**Response: Agree.** *Corridor Forward: the I-270 Transit Plan (2022)* has two recommendations about the Brunswick Line on page 44: 1) Reserve and/or acquire through dedication 62 feet of space as measured from the outer southbound track of the existing CSX Brunswick Line along the Metropolitan Branch Subdivision. 2) Reserve and/or acquire through dedication 62 feet of space as measured from the outer southbound track of the existing CSX Brunswick Line along the Metropolitan Branch Subdivision. **Planning Staff will update the appendix to reflect these recommendations.**

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## MD 355 BRT

**Comment 27:** MCDOT is conducting a facility planning study to evaluate adding a reversible bus rapid transit (BRT) lane along MD 355 north of Ridge Road. However, the Public Hearing Draft proposes to remove all stations along MD 355 and replacing them with two stations along Snowden Farm Parkway. It may be premature to eliminate these stations before the facility planning study is complete. (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

**Comment 393:** There is no real public transit in our area. And why, if BRT is the solution, is the number of proposed BRT stops in Clarksburg being reduced from six to two? We need both BRT and additional roadways. (Clarksburg Neighbors Alliance)

**Comment 144:** With a revised MD 355 BRT route, the West Old Baltimore Road station needs to remain in the MPOHT. (Tim Goodfellow)

**Comment 145:** With a revised MD 355 BRT route, the Little Seneca Parkway station needs to remain in the MPOHT. (Tim Goodfellow)

**Comment 146:** With a revised MD 355 BRT route, the Foreman Boulevard station needs to remain in the MPOHT. (Tim Goodfellow)

**Comment 147:** With a revised MD 355 BRT route, the Shawnee Lane station needs to remain in the MPOHT. (Tim Goodfellow)

**Response: Disagree.** Upon further review, Planning Staff realized that *Corridor Forward: the I-270 Transit Plan (2022)* removed both the transitway and transit stations from MD 355 north of Ridge Rd, as shown in the Public Hearing Draft on Table 16 on page 120 and Figure 17 on page 121. **If MCDOT determines that a reversible transitway is desirable on MD 355 north of Ridge Rd, it would be appropriate for Montgomery Planning to undertake a future master**

**plan amendment to consider adding a transitway and transit stations into the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways*.**

**Comment 28:** The station at Stringtown Rd / St. Clair Rd is currently expected to be a potential infill station. Removing it may make it difficult to add in the future. (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

**Response: Disagree. Planning Staff recommend no change as this station is not recommended to be removed from the MPOHT.**

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE BRT**

**Comment 29:** BRT: New Hampshire (p118-119) – The FDA-Lockwood Connector may be in one of several alignments. We are grateful to see this connection included in the master plan, but the narrative on page 118 should note the other options. (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

**Response: Agree with modifications.** While Planning Staff agree that the FDA Connection alignment identified on page 119 is the best option at this time, we concur with MCDOT that there may be other options.

Planning Staff therefore recommend adding the following sentences to the end of the paragraph on page 118:

- The Montgomery County Department of Transportation is currently evaluating options for this connection. The default master planned option is shown on page 119, but the ultimate location of the connection may be modified with concurrence from the County Council.

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**US 29 BRT**

**Comment 30:** BRT: US 29 (p124) – We do not currently expect a station at FDA as part of the US 29 BRT corridor. (Montgomery County Department of Transportation)

**Response: Agree.** Planning Staff recommends the following revision:

- Page 124, Figure 19: Remove the master planned station and route, which is part of the New Hampshire Avenue BRT corridor.

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**METRO ACCESS ROAD (SHADY GROVE)**

**Comment 164:** Any plan to remove transitways should be reconsidered (Metro Access Rd - Shady Grove). (Jake Goodman)

**Response: Disagree.** Planning Staff consulted with MCDOT and there is a consensus that these transitways are no longer realistic or needed.

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#### NORTH BETHESDA – TUCKERMAN LANE ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

**Comment 165:** Any plan to remove transitways should be reconsidered (North Bethesda – Tuckerman Lane Alternate Route). (Jake Goodman)

**Response: Disagree.** The 2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan identified two alternative alignments for the North Bethesda Transitway: via Old Georgetown Road to the North Bethesda Metrorail station OR via Tuckerman Lane to the Grosvenor Metrorail station. MCDOT and Planning Staff agree that designating a transitway via Old Georgetown Road is preferable. However, removing the Tuckerman Lane alternative does not mean that buses will not be able to travel on Tuckerman Lane to the Grosvenor Metrorail station. Rather, it means that this connection will not have a dedicated transitway.

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#### INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR TRANSITWAY

**Comment 166:** Any plan to remove transitways should be reconsidered. The ICC should be for more than just cars. (Jake Goodman)

**Response: Disagree.** Planning Staff consulted with MCDOT and there is consensus that this transitway is no longer realistic or needed. Whether the ICC Transitway is removed from the master plan has no bearing on whether transit vehicles will be able to use the freeway. The purpose of designating a transitway is to improve travel times and reliability. The ICC does not need to be designated as a transitway as its tolling mechanism is designed to always achieve free flow travel speeds.

## TOPIC 8 - CLIMATE ASSESSMENT

Planning Staff anticipates that most of MPOHT 2024 Technical Update recommendations will have positive minor impacts and a few minor negative impacts on the county's goals of addressing greenhouse gas emissions, and insignificant negative impacts on carbon sequestration, and, for the most part, minor to moderately positive or, in some cases, no significant impacts on community resilience and adaptive capacity. Removal of Midcounty Highway Extended, however, would result in significant positive GHG and carbon sequestration impacts, and indeterminate negative impacts on accessibility to community and public spaces, access to transportation options, and community connectivity. On the other hand, removing Midcounty Highway Extended would have significant positive impacts on heat-related impacts, exposure to noise, forest cover, non-forest tree canopy, other green areas, pervious cover, stormwater quality and quantity, and air quality. The full climate assessment is included as Attachment F.

## ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Public Hearing Draft of the Master Plan of Highways and Transitway – 2024 Technical Update
- Attachment B: Written Testimony
- Attachment C: Summary of testimony and Planning Staff responses
- Attachment D: October 31, 2017, Montgomery County Council Resolution No. 18-957 “Transportation Solution for Northwest Montgomery County”
- Attachment E: Conceptual Trail Alignment
- Attachment F: Climate Assessment