

BRIEFING: MD 190 NEEDS ANALYSIS



Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) completed the MD 190 Needs Analysis for River Road / MD 190 between Springfield Drive and Little Falls Parkway within the Westbard neighborhood of western Montgomery County. The document outlines short-, mid-, and long-term improvements for the corridor by identifying strategies to address pedestrian and bicycle network deficiencies, enhance multimodal safety and improve travel conditions along the corridor.



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SUMMARY

- Maryland State Highway Administration (MDSHA) completed a comprehensive Needs Analysis for MD 190 (River Road) between Springfield Drive and Little Falls Parkway within the Westbard neighborhood of western Montgomery County.
- The analysis was set in motion by the death of Sarah Langenkamp, who died while biking in a marked bicycle lane on eastbound MD 190 (River Road) east of Brookside Drive in 2022.
- The document includes short-, mid-, and long-term improvements for the MD 190 (River Road) corridor that address pedestrian and bicycle network deficiencies, enhance multimodal safety, and improve travel conditions.

INFORMATION

[Draft](#)

Briefing

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SECTION 1 – COMMENTS

Planning Staff recommend that the Planning Board transmit the following comments to the Maryland State Highway Administrative (SHA):

1. In the short-term, ladder-style crosswalks should be considered for crosswalk improvements that have not already been completed.
2. In the mid-term, SHA should evaluate implementing a right turn on red restriction and Leading Pedestrian Intervals at all three signalized intersections along the study corridor and for all legs of these intersections.
3. In the mid-term, provide another crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection of MD 190 (River Road) and the Kenwood Shopping center.
4. In the mid-term, SHA should provide hardened separation between the travel lanes and the separated bike lanes using materials such as curb stops, rather than flex posts.
5. In the mid-term, SHA should further explore how to extend the eastbound separated bike lane on the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) between Butler Road and Little Falls Parkway.
6. In the long-term, further explore how to extend the eastbound shared use path on the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) between Butler Road and Little Falls Parkway.

SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION

SHA completed a comprehensive Needs Analysis for MD 190 (River Road) between Springfield Drive and Little Falls Parkway within the Westbard neighborhood of western Montgomery County. The analysis was set in motion by the death of Sarah Langenkamp, who died when she was struck by a truck turning right into a parking lot while biking in a marked bicycle lane on eastbound MD 190 (River Road) east of Brookside Drive in August 2022. Planning Staff have reviewed the MD 190 Needs Analysis and have provided recommendations for SHA based on this review.

SECTION 2 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SHA completed a comprehensive Needs Analysis for MD 190 (River Road) between Springfield Drive and Little Falls Parkway. The document identifies short-, mid-, and long-term pedestrian and bicycle network improvements to improve safety along the corridor.

The MD 190 Needs Analysis includes a brief existing conditions review of corridor Pedestrian Level of Comfort, Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress, transit connectivity, Annual Average Daily Traffic, and crash history between Springfield Drive and Little Falls Parkway. The project team built on this data collection by observing pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and motor vehicle behavior in the area.

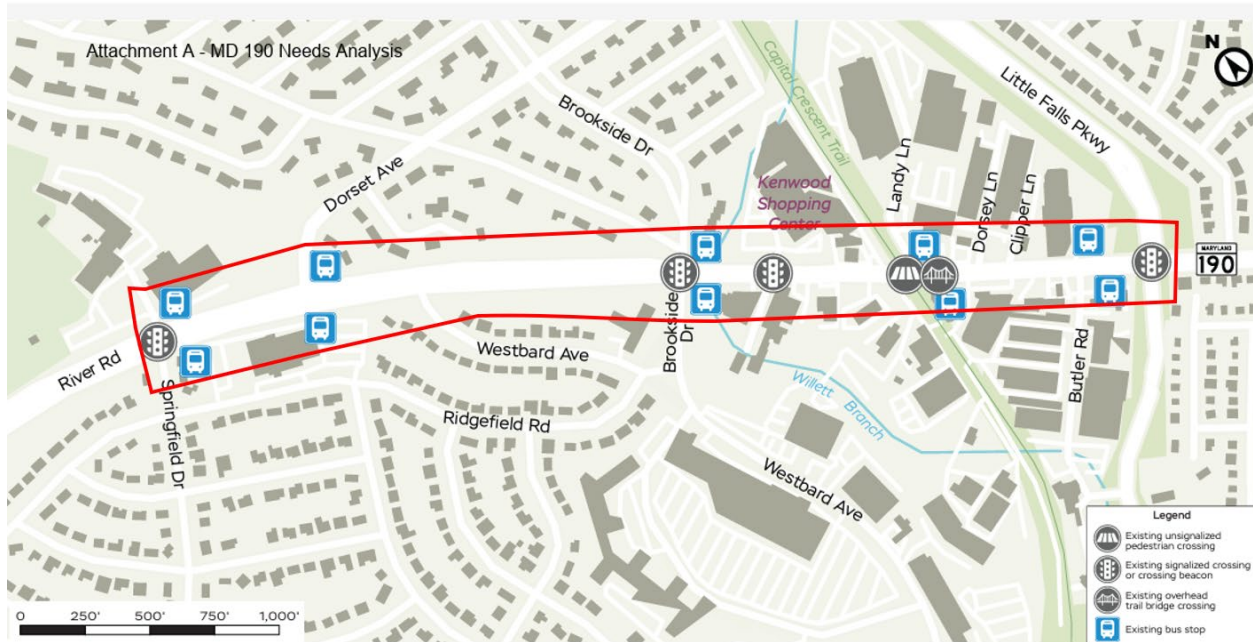


Figure 1: Needs Analysis Corridor Area

Data and observations form the basis for a suite of recommended improvements that can be implemented in the short-, mid-, and long-term to improve visibility of pedestrians and bicyclists while working to achieve the 2016 *Westbard Sector Plan* vision.

In the short-term (within three to six months), the analysis recommends:

- Updating crosswalks to have continental markings
- Providing flexposts or other vertical separation in two specific circumstances:
 - along the roadway centerline at key uncontrolled driveways to limit certain turning movements, and
 - on the edge of the parking lane to prevent vehicles from parking on the sidewalk
- Installing additional signage focused on awareness of speed and bicyclists, including potentially implementing “No Parking/Stopping/Stopping” zones and signage to prevent trucks from blocking the bike lane.
- Modifying traffic signal timing to increase time allotted for pedestrians to cross MD 190 (River Road) and to adjust vehicle clearance intervals to minimize conflict between motor vehicles traveling along MD 190 (River Road) and those on intersecting streets.
- Vegetation maintenance
- Evaluating Brookside Drive intersection pedestrian activity once it is functioning as a four-legged intersection again to determine if further adjustments are necessary. At the time of the analysis, Brookside Drive was operating as a three-legged intersection because the south leg was closed due to the construction of Westbard Avenue

In the mid-term (within a year), the analysis recommends:

- Converting the existing shoulder bike lane and striped bike lanes into barrier-separated bike lanes with green pavement at conflict zones between Springfield Drive and Little Falls Parkway
- Implementing signal timing phasing improvements, including:
 - adding a Leading Pedestrian Interval at the western leg of the intersection with Kenwood Station Shopping Center
 - potentially implementing No Turn on Red for motor vehicles exiting the Kenwood Station Shopping Center, and
 - installing a Pedestrian Hybrid Beacon, median refuge, and other treatments at the currently uncontrolled Landy Lane intersection
- Relocating obstructions like utility poles, signposts, and hydrants within the sidewalk along the corridor
- Reducing speed limit from 35mph to 30mph

In the long term (within several years), the analysis recommends:

- Improving access management along the corridor by consolidating driveways and addressing left-turn crash issues
- Implementing a shared use path along the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) between Springfield Drive and Little Falls Parkway. To provide the space needed to do this, the vehicle lane widths would be reduced, and the street-level separated bike lanes constructed as part of the mid-term improvements on both sides of the road would be removed between Brookside Rive and Little Falls Parkway. The separated bikeway would also be removed on the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) would be removed between Springfield Drive and Brookside Drive.
- Ensuring all streetlights are LED and evaluating existing corridor lighting.

SHA has secured federal carbon reduction program (CRP) funding to address near-term improvements and advance planning for long-term improvements. As long-term design advances, the SHA project team will return to the Planning Board for Mandatory Referral.

SECTION 3 – ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY

The MD 190 Needs Analysis study area is within the 2016 *Westbard Sector Plan* boundaries. The sector plan has several recommendations for MD 190 (River Road) in the study area. The plan envisions an emphasis on complete streets. In particular, recommendations for MD 190 (River Road) include:

- Reducing the number of curb cuts and driveway access points

- New traffic signals at Landy Lane and Clipper Lane
- Construction of a median with designated left-turn locations
- 11' two-way separated bike lanes on the north side (westbound direction) of the street
- 15' sidewalks on both sides of the street

The 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* recommends:

- Separated bike lanes on the north side (westbound direction) of the street.
- Shared use path on the south side (eastbound direction) of the street.

The recommended improvements identified in the MD 190 Needs Analysis are consistent with the appropriate master plans for this area. Specifically, the Needs Analysis mid-term improvements include converting the existing shoulder bike lane and striped bike lanes into barrier-separated bike lanes and the long-term improvements include improving access management along the corridor and converting the separated bike lanes to a shared use path along the south side of the road, by narrowing the road.

PEDESTRIAN LEVEL OF COMFORT AND BICYCLE LEVEL OF TRAFFIC STRESS

As noted in the Needs Analysis, the Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC) on the corridor is undesirable along MD 190 between Brookside Drive and Little Falls Parkway. Along this segment the sidewalk on both sides of the road is approximately 5-foot-wide with no buffer between the narrow sidewalk and travel lanes. Additionally, there are no existing pedestrian facilities between Springfield Drive and Brookside Drive. The proposed improvements address this condition by reducing the speed limit from 35mph to 30mph and adding a shared use path along the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 with a buffer from the travel lanes in the long term. This will provide a more comfortable and complete pedestrian facility along the corridor.

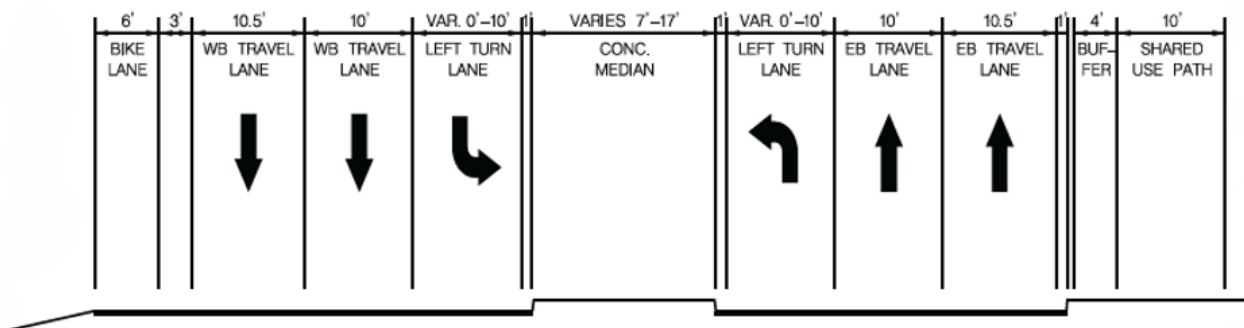


Figure 2: Long-term Conceptual Cross-section

The Needs Analysis also noted that the Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) along the corridor is high. The existing bicycle infrastructure is limited to a marked bike shoulder on the north side (westbound direction) of the roadway which narrows and disappears to accommodate acceleration and

deceleration lanes. The proposed improvements address this condition by reducing the speed limit from 35mph to 30mph and constructing barrier separated bike lanes on both sides of the road to provide a consistent buffered bike lane in the medium term and then replacing the separated bike lanes with a shared use path on the south side (eastbound direction) of the road in the long term. The barrier separated bicycle lanes layout concept is shown on pages 18-19 in the MD 190 Needs Analysis Report and the shared use path layout concept is shown on page 21 (see Attachment A).

TRANSPORTATION BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Short-Term Improvements

The 2023 *Pedestrian Master Plan* states that the ladder-style crosswalk marking is preferred over the continental-style crosswalk marking because it incorporates the parallel lines of the standard-style crosswalk that pedestrians with low vision find helpful to maintain the correct heading in the crosswalk. **In the short-term, ladder-style crosswalks should be considered for crosswalk improvements that have not already been completed.**

Mid-Term Improvements

The Needs Analysis identifies implementing a right turn on red restriction and Leading Pedestrian Intervals as a mid-term improvement for just the signalized access to the Kenwood Shopping Center. **In the mid-term, SHA should evaluate implementing a right turn on red restriction and Leading Pedestrian Intervals at all three signalized intersections along the study corridor and for all legs of these intersections.** The Safe Streets Act of 2023 (Bill 11-23) requires MCDOT to post “No Right Turn On Red” signs at County intersections in downtown and town center areas. The bill also requires Leading Pedestrian Intervals in downtown and town center areas. While the intersections in the study area are SHA intersections, we strongly encourage that SHA follow the Montgomery County policy on this corridor as the area between Brookside Drive and Little Falls Parkway is within a Town Center.

Currently, there are only crosswalks provided on the north and east legs of the intersection of MD 190 (River Road) and the Kenwood Shopping Center. **In the mid-term, provide another crosswalk on the south leg of the intersection of MD 190 (River Road) and the Kenwood Shopping center.**

While the Needs Analysis proposes separated bike lanes on both sides of the roadway, it is unclear what kind of separation treatment will be provided. **In the mid-term, SHA should provide hardened separation between the travel lanes and the separated bike lanes using materials such as curb stops, rather than flex posts.** Hardened separation will provide a greater deterrent to incursions into the separated bike lanes. This is especially important to consider for the north side (westbound direction) facilities as a separated bike lane is the ultimate facility per the 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*.

As currently shown, the proposed separated bicycle facility on the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) between Butler Road and Little Falls Parkway. **In the mid-term, SHA should**

further explore how to extend the eastbound separated bike lane on the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) between Butler Road and Little Falls Parkway.

Long-Term Improvements

As currently shown in the Needs Analysis document, the proposed shared use path facility on the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) ends to provide space for three travel lanes (two through-lanes and one left-turn lane). **In the long-term, further explore how to extend the eastbound shared use path on the south side (eastbound direction) of MD 190 (River Road) between Butler Road and Little Falls Parkway.** The 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan* identifies this facility connecting to Little Falls Parkway. The long-term improvement should be consistent with the *Bicycle Master Plan*.

CONCLUSION

Planning Staff supports the phased approach to this project. SHA's proposed short-, mid- and long-term recommendations will help to improve conditions for walking and bicycling along this segment of MD 190 (River Road) by reducing vehicle speeds, making bicyclists more visible, providing greater separation between peds/bikes and traffic and improving crossings.

Both the 2016 *Westbard Sector Plan* and the *MD 190 Needs Analysis* highlight that the consolidation and reduction in driveways are crucial to improving safety along the corridor. SHA plays a role in this effort as they must approve any new or reconfigured access points. However, the ability to remove and consolidate access points will largely be determined by redevelopment along the corridor. The development review process needs to prioritize the removal and/or consolidation of access points.

Additionally, a secondary roadway network or alleyway network in the area advanced through redevelopment could maintain and improve access while also reducing the number of conflict points between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians. Land redevelopment plays a significant role in improving the overall safety of the corridor. During the development review process efforts should be made to facilitate a secondary road or alleyway network by both Planning Staff and SHA.

SECTION 4 – COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The SHA project team conducted engagement activities during the development of the MD 190 Needs Analysis.

These are the project's touch points with the community:

- 9/21/2023: Virtual Public Meeting
- 12/17/2024: MD 190 Action Plan Community Meeting Presentation

SECTION 5 – ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: MD 190 Needs Analysis

Attachment B: MDOT SHA Presentation