

## FOREST GLEN ROAD SIDEWALK FACILITY PLANNING STUDY BRIEFING



### Description




The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) will provide a project briefing on pedestrian and bicycle improvements proposed on Forest Glen Road between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway. Planning Staff is seeking Planning Board comments on two concept options developed by MCDOT as well as two alternative concepts identified by Planning Staff.

Completed: 09-29-2022

MCPB  
Item No. 5  
10-06-2022

Montgomery County  
Planning Board  
2425 Reedie Drive, Floor 14  
Wheaton, MD 20902

## Planning Staff

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### LOCATION/ADDRESS

Forest Glen Road between Woodland Road and Sligo Creek Parkway

### MASTER PLAN

Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills

### APPLICANT

Montgomery County Department of Transportation

### REVIEW BASIS

Briefing by MCDOT with Planning Board comments requested



## Summary:

- The proposed project is the addition of a sidewalk along the north side of Forest Glen Road between Woodland Avenue and Sligo Creek Parkway. The project includes safety and mobility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists on Forest Glen Road. The applicant has developed two design options that will be presented at today's briefing,
- Planning Staff supports the addition of a sidewalk along Forest Glen Road, but recommends that it be developed within the long-term master plan context. Accordingly, staff has developed Option 3 to explore how the master plan transportation vision will be fulfilled along this section of Forest Glen Road.
- During the applicant's public outreach process in 2021, the Washington Area Bicycling Association (WABA) proposed specific changes to the corridor design to better accommodate on-road bicyclists. Option 4 developed by Planning Staff seeks to address some of these concerns with the addition of a westbound five-foot-wide bike lane in addition to improvements developed for Option 3.
- Recognizing that the current project may be limited in scope, the ultimate desired cross section should still be considered in designing the sidewalk along this road. Option 4 is Planning Staff's preferred long-term option for this corridor.
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SECTION 1: RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is proposing to design and construct a sidewalk on the north side of Forest Glen Road between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway with safety and mobility improvements. They have developed two design options, referred to as Option 1 and Option 2 in this report, that are being presented to the Planning Board for review and comment.

In alternatives analysis, where staff is weighing the pros and cons of different options, there always needs to be one option that represents current policy as captured in approved master plans and the Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG). At a minimum, this allows a comparison between an interim design improvement and the ultimate master plan vision.

Planning Staff believes that neither option developed by MCDOT completely meets the master plan vision and CSDG standards for this section of Forest Glen Road, and recommends that MCDOT

consider two additional options that meet the default master plan requirements, referred to as Options 3 and 4.

While both proposed alternatives are consistent with CSDG standards, Option 4 adds a five-foot-wide uphill bike lane on the north side of Forest Glen Road between the westbound travel lane and the street buffer.

Planning Staff recommends the Planning Board endorse Option 4 as the design concept that best matches the Master Plan requirements and the standards in the CSDG and addresses valid concerns from the bicycling community. If the spatial requirements of an uphill bicycle lane create excessive property impacts or costs, staff recommends Option 3. If this option entails prohibitive costs, Planning Staff recommends pursuing Option 1.

If MCDOT adjusts only the sidewalk on the north side of the road without making any other improvements, MCDOT will need to ensure that there is adequate right of way to make all other required master plan improvements on the roadway in the future. Even simple, interim projects can make implementing the master plan vision more challenging if not planned carefully.

Independent of the option selected, Planning Staff recommends that MCDOT consider reducing the posted speed limit on this section of Forest Glen Road.

## SECTION 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### SITE LOCATION

The project is located on Forest Glen Road between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway, as shown below in Figure 1. Forest Glen Road is a key arterial road connecting Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and the Forest Glen Metro Station with Holy Cross Hospital, Sligo Creek Trail, and Sligo Creek Parkway. This road is therefore in need of adequate road capacity and improved facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.



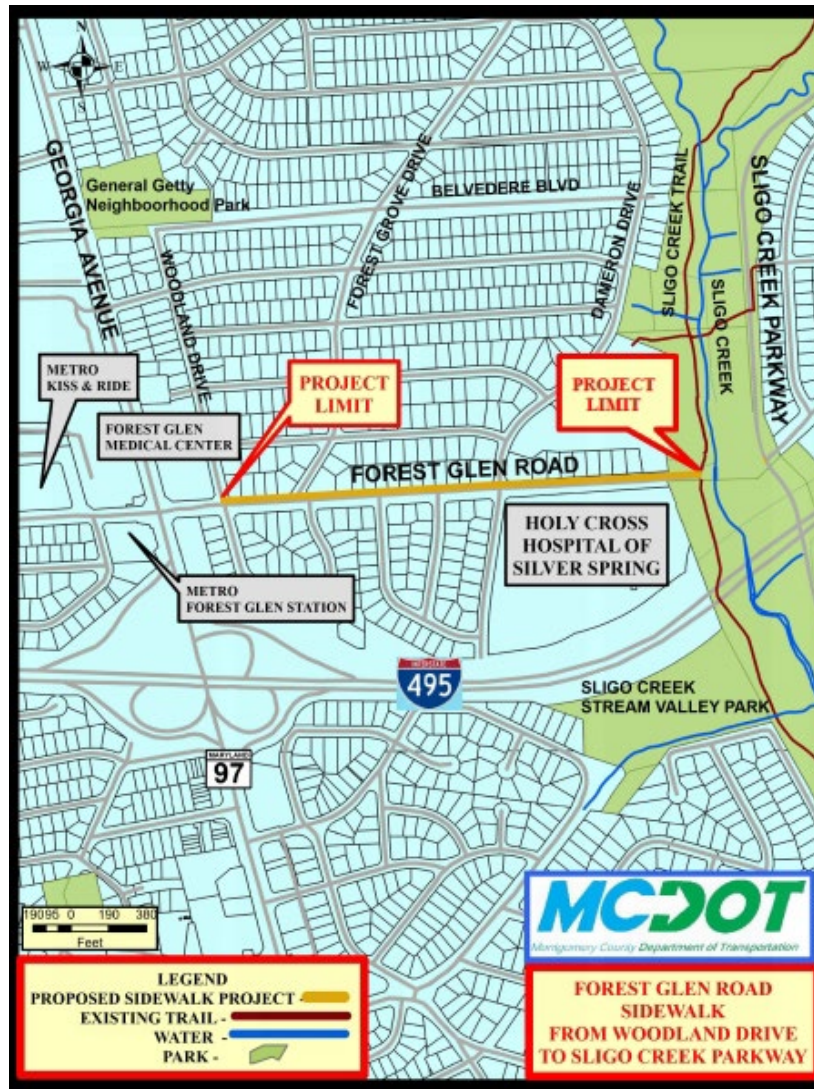


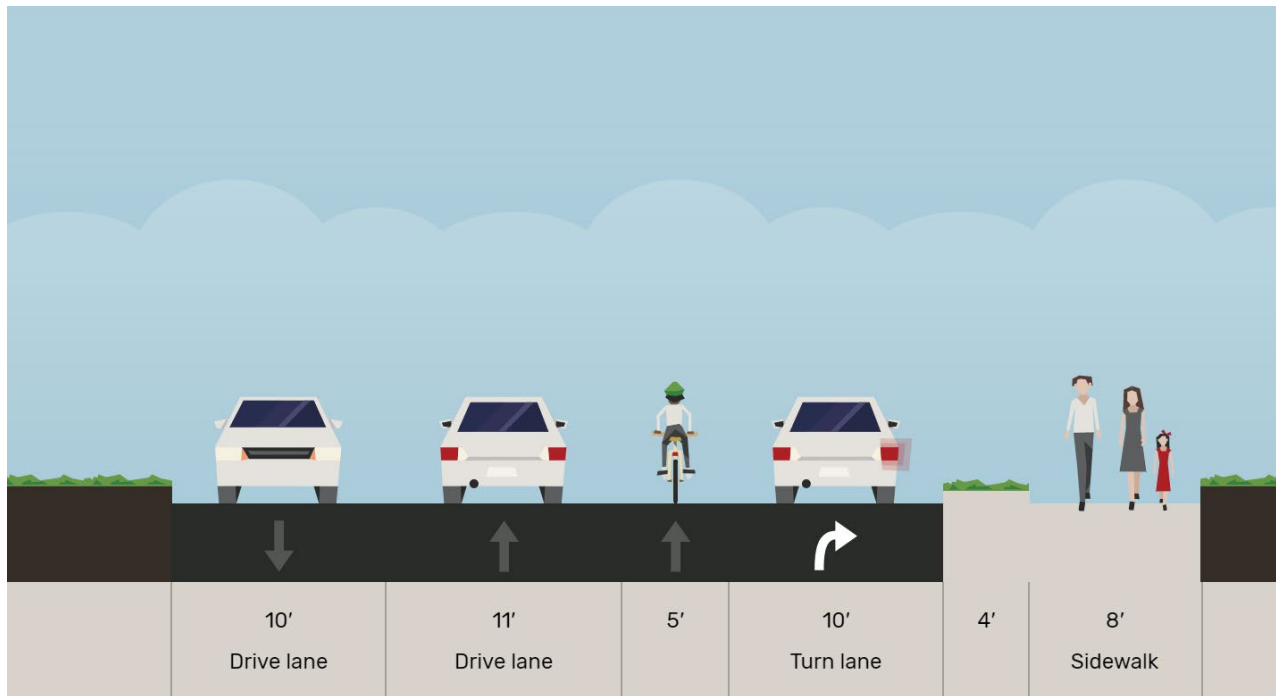
Figure 1 – Vicinity Map

At the intersection of Georgia Avenue with Forest Glen Road, MCDOT is also designing the Forest Glen Passageway project, which is a pedestrian tunnel underneath Georgia Avenue to connect directly to the Forest Glen Metro station mezzanine. The eastern tunnel portal will be designed on the north side of Forest Glen Road between Georgia Avenue and Woodland Drive. This certainly helps strengthen the need for pedestrian facilities along the north side of Forest Glen Road.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section of Forest Glen Road is a two-lane street with an eight-foot-wide sidepath located on the south side of the street between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Trail. There is no sidepath on the south side between Sligo Creek Trail and Sligo Creek Parkway. There are no sidewalk facilities on the north side of the street. The posted speed limit on the road is 30 mph. Forest Glen Road currently has

a varying pavement width (36 feet to 44 feet), but it is 36-foot-wide wide between Saxony Drive and Dameron Drive, as shown below in Figure 2.



*Figure 2 – Existing Cross Section (Saxony Drive to Dameron Drive)*

The cross section is variable with shoulders provided on either the north or side sides at different locations. In the western part of the corridor, the eastbound bike lane and right-turn lane are replaced with a wider shoulder where on-street parking and on-street bicycling are allowed. The westbound shoulder is extremely narrow (one to two feet) where provided, and much of the corridor has no westbound shoulder at all. Forest Glen Road is a major pedestrian and bicycling connection between Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and the Forest Glen Metro Station and Sligo Creek Trail. An eastbound bike lane is only provided in the eastern portion of the corridor near Holy Cross hospital where continuous right-turn lanes are provided for hospital access at Dameron Drive and the two hospital access driveways.

## MCDOT OPTIONS

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation is conducting a facility planning study on Forest Glen Road between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway. The project intent is to add a sidewalk along the north side of Forest Glen Road with safety and mobility improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists. Additional design modifications have been added to make room for this improvement as well as modifying the roadway cross-section to be more consistent with the CSDG. The project was initiated in 2017, and the facility planning portion of this project is funded by a Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) grant.

Two options have been developed by MCDOT, and the concept plans and typical cross sections for each option are included with this staff report as Attachment A. Option 1 was the initial concept, which was to simply add a sidewalk on the north side of Forest Glen Road, and the second option was developed in response to concerns raised by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA) about the need for bike lanes (Attachment C). Presentation slides used at a public information meeting on June 10, 2021, are included with this staff report as Attachment B. Option 2 adds a bike lane in the uphill (westbound) direction on Forest Glen Road.

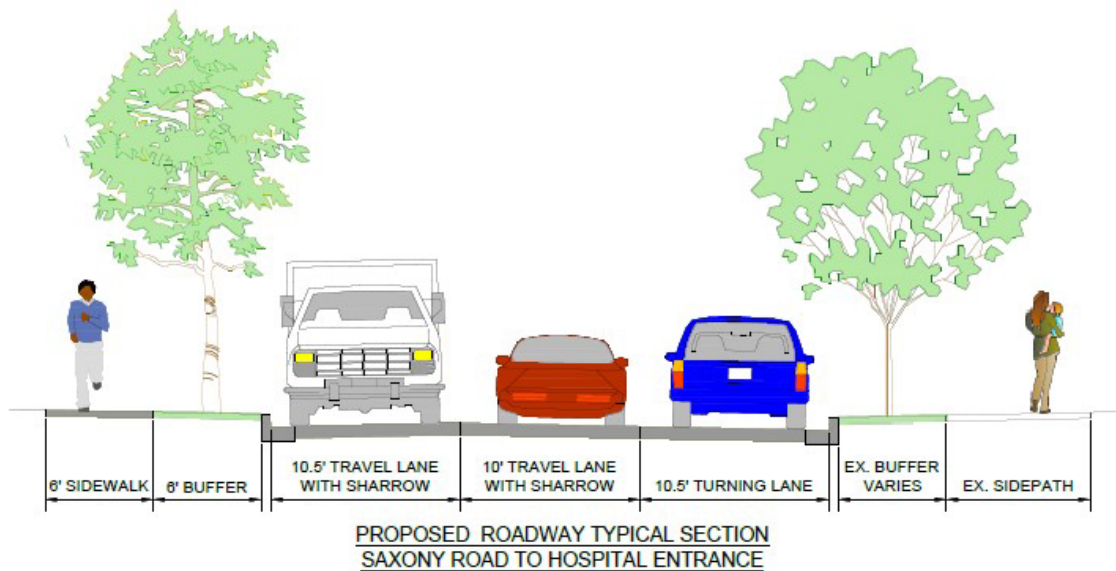
The specific design elements of each design concept are summarized below:

### **MCDOT Option 1**

- Sidewalk (North Side): Six-foot-wide sidewalk between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway.
- Street Buffer (North Side): Varies from zero feet to six feet:
  - Five-foot-wide buffer between Woodland Drive and 250 feet east of Forest Grove Drive,
  - No buffer between 250 feet east of Forest Grove Drive and Admiralty Drive,
  - Three-foot-wide buffer between Admiralty Drive and Saxony Road,
  - Six-foot-wide buffer between Saxony Road and the main Holy Cross Hospital entrance driveway (station 30+00 on the concept plans),
  - Three-foot-wide buffer between the main Holy Cross Hospital entrance driveway and Sligo Creek Trail, and
  - No buffer between Sligo Creek Trail and Sligo Creek Parkway.
- Travel Lanes: Provision of one travel lane per direction with CSDG-compliant 10.5-foot-wide widths (10-foot-wide lane provided when adjacent to exclusive right-turn lane).
- Bike Lane (South Side): Elimination of the existing eastbound bike lane between Saxony Road and the easternmost Holy Cross Hospital driveway entrance.
- On-Street Parking (South Side): Provision of on-street parking spaces on the south side of Forest Glen Road between Forest Grove Drive and Saxony Road.
- Street Buffer (South Side): Varies from zero feet to 22 feet:
  - Five-foot-wide buffer between Woodland Drive and Forest Grove Drive,
  - Varying buffer (two to eight feet) between Forest Grove Drive and Admiralty Drive,
  - 22-foot-wide buffer between Admiralty Drive and Saxony Road,
  - Five to six-foot-wide buffer between Saxony Road and 175 east of Dameron Drive,
  - No buffer between 175 feet east of Dameron Drive and the easternmost Holy Cross Hospital entrance driveway, and
  - There is no buffer between the easternmost Holy Cross Hospital entrance driveway and Sligo Creek Trail as there are no off-street pedestrian/bicycle facilities on this segment.

- Sidepath (South Side): No widening of the existing eight-foot-wide sidewalk on the south side of Forest Glen Road between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Trail. The existing sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road does not extend to the project limits (Sligo Creek Parkway).

A typical cross section for Option 1 in the vicinity of the hospital is shown below in Figure 3.



*Figure 3 – MCDOT Option 1 Cross Section*

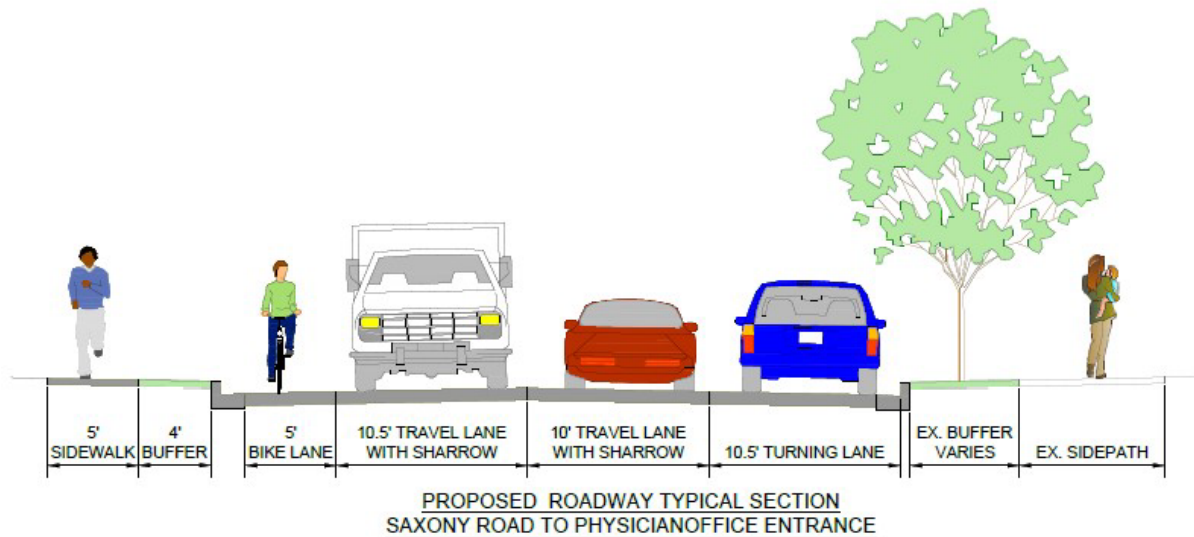
## **MCDOT Option 2**

- Sidewalk (North Side): Five-foot-wide sidewalk between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway.
- Street Buffer (North Side): Varies from zero feet to four feet:
  - Four-foot-wide buffer between Woodland Drive and 250 feet east of Forest Grove Drive,
  - No buffer between 250 feet east of Forest Grove Drive and Admiralty Drive,
  - Four-foot-wide buffer between Admiralty Drive and 300 feet east of the central Holy Cross Hospital driveway, and
  - No buffer between 300 feet east of the central Holy Cross Hospital driveway and Sligo Creek Parkway.
- Bike lane (North Side): Five-foot-wide conventional bike lane in the westbound direction between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway.
- On-Street Parking (South Side): Provision on on-street parking on the south side of Forest Glen Road between Forest Grove Drive and Saxony Road.



- Travel Lanes: Provision of one travel lane per direction with CSDG-compliant 10.5-foot-wide widths (10-foot-wide lane provided when adjacent to exclusive right-turn lane).
- Bike Lane (South Side): Elimination of the existing eastbound bike lane between Saxony Road and the easternmost Holy Cross Hospital driveway entrance.
- Street Buffer (South Side): Varies from zero feet to 22 feet:
  - Five-foot-wide buffer between Woodland Drive and Forest Grove Drive,
  - Varying buffer (two to eight feet) between Forest Grove Drive and Admiralty Drive,
  - 22-foot-wide buffer between Admiralty Drive and Saxony Road,
  - Five to six-foot-wide buffer between Saxony Road and 175 feet east of Dameron Drive,
  - No buffer between 175 feet east of Dameron Drive and the easternmost Holy Cross Hospital entrance driveway), and
  - There is no buffer between the easternmost Holy Cross Hospital entrance driveway and Sligo Creek Trail as there are no off-street pedestrian/bicycle facilities on this segment.
- Sidepath (South Side): No widening of the existing eight-foot-wide sidewalk on the south side of Forest Glen Road between Woodland Drive and Sligo Creek Trail. The existing sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road does not extend to the project limits (Sligo Creek Parkway).

A typical cross section for Option 2 in the vicinity of the hospital is shown below in Figure 4.



*Figure 4 – MCDOT Option 2 Cross Section*

## SECTION 3: MASTER PLANS AND THE COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDE

Planning Staff has reviewed the two design concepts options for consistency with approved Master Plans and the CSDG. As a starting point, master plan recommendations are summarized below:

### APPLICABLE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

[Master Plan of Highways and Transitways \(2018\)](#) – Forest Glen Road is classified as a Minor Arterial in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT) with an 80-foot-wide master planned right-of-way. A change to the MPOHT classification is now under consideration by the County Council with proposed changes to the Road Code to adopt CSDG street types and standards. With this change, Forest Glen Road would be classified as an Area Connector, which requires providing a six-foot-wide sidewalk and a 10-foot-wide sidepath, both with six-foot-wide street buffers.

[Bicycle Master Plan \(2018\)](#) – The master plan recommends a sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road between Georgia Avenue and Brunett Avenue. The sidepath is recommended as a Tier 1 (high) bikeway. While a sidepath is the preferred bikeway type for an Area Connector,<sup>1</sup> “where space is available and does not substantially detract from the default bikeway, bike lanes or bikeable shoulders can be added in addition to the default bikeway” (page 67).

[Forest Glen/ Montgomery Hills Sector Plan \(2020\)](#) – The sector plan recommends a sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road between Georgia Avenue and Brunett Avenue.

### COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDE STANDARDS

Area Connector is a new street type being proposed since the approval of the CSDG document by the Planning Board in 2021. The typical cross section for an Area Connector is shown below in Figure 5.

An Area Connector Street has the following design parameters in the CSDG:

- Travel lane width – 10.5 feet
- Left-Turn Lane width – 10 feet
- Parking lane – 8 feet
- Street buffer – 6 feet
- Bikeway – sidepath on one side of the street: 10 feet default, 8 feet minimum. Bike lanes can be added where doing so does not detract from the sidepath. Bike Lanes are 6 feet default, 5 feet minimum
- Sidewalk width – 6 feet minimum
- Sidepath width – 10 feet default, 8 feet minimum (typically reserved for environmentally-constrained areas)

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<sup>1</sup> The Bicycle Master Plan refers to Minor Arterials, which will become Area Connectors via the CSDG translations currently under consideration by the County Council.



*Figure 5 – Cross Section for an Area Connector*

The CSDG has considerable detail on priorities for each design element within each street type. For an Area Connector, the following priorities are provided:

- Street Buffer – High
- Bikeway – Medium
- Sidewalk/Sidepath – High
- Parking Lane – Low

Based on the priorities shown, street buffers should be designed to the 6-foot-wide width, default sidewalks (6-feet wide) and default-width sidepaths (10-feet wide) should be designed. A parking lane is the lowest priority along this street type, and therefore if there are right-of-way constraints, on-street parking should be eliminated in order to obtain higher priority elements of the street design.

#### **MASTER PLAN AND COMPLETE STREETS DESIGN GUIDE CONSISTENCY**

Based on the above master plan recommendations and CSDG standards, Planning Staff offers the following comments on each MCDOT option as summarized below:

### **MCDOT Option 1**

- The six-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of Forest Glen Road is consistent with the CSDG.
- Despite what is shown in the cross section in Figure 3, the proposed buffer on the north side of Forest Glen Road for most of the corridor is less than the CSDG minimum buffer width of six feet.
- The proposed through travel lane widths on Forest Glen Road are consistent with the CSDG.
- The existing buffer on the south side of Forest Glen Road varies considerably (0 to 22 feet). There are some segments where the buffer is less than six feet.
- The existing sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road is only eight-feet wide, which meets minimum CSDG standards; however, this minimum is typically used only in environmentally constrained areas.
- The existing sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road does not extend to the project limits (Sligo Creek Parkway). This is inconsistent with the Bicycle Master Plan and the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan.

### **MCDOT Option 2**

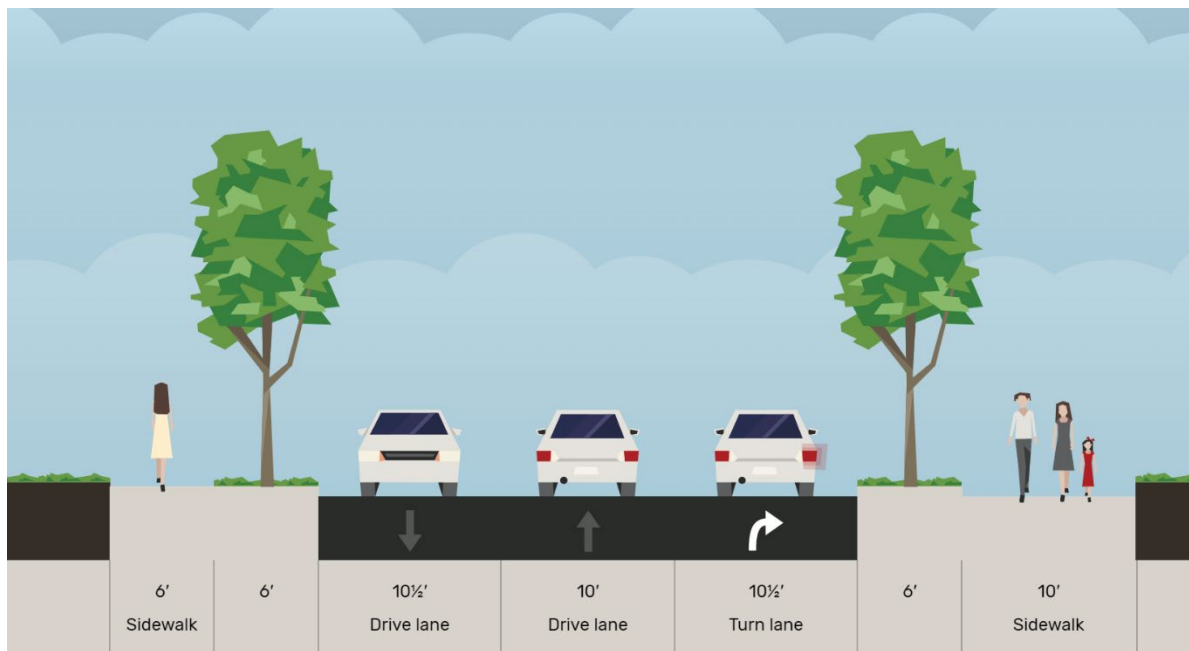
- The five-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side of Forest Glen Road is not consistent with the CSDG which specifies a six-foot minimum width.
- The proposed westbound bike lane is not included in either the Bicycle Master Plan or the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan, but can be added per the Bicycle Master Plan if it does not detract from the provision of a sidepath.
- The proposed buffer on the north side of Forest Glen Road ranges from no buffer to a maximum of four feet, and therefore is less than the CSDG minimum buffer width of six feet.
- The proposed through travel lanes on Forest Glen Road are consistent with the CSDG.
- The existing buffer on the south side of Forest Glen Road varies considerably (0 to 22 feet). There are some segments where the buffer is less than six feet.
- The existing sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road is only eight-feet wide, which meets minimum CSDG standards; however, this minimum is typically used only in environmentally constrained areas.
- The existing sidepath on the south side of Forest Glen Road does not extend to the project limits (Sligo Creek Parkway). This is inconsistent with the Bicycle Master Plan and the Forest Glen/Montgomery Hills Sector Plan.

## **SECTION 4: POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES**

Reviewing the proposed project was challenging for Planning Staff. While the project was initially conceived as an interim, smaller project to add a sidewalk on the north side of Forest Glen Road, it is very difficult to evaluate the merits of an interim improvement without careful planning of how the long-term, master plan solution can be achieved. In alternatives analysis, where staff is weighing the pros and cons of different options, there always needs to be one option that represents current policy

as captured in approved master plans and the CSDG. Planning Staff believes that neither option completely meets CSDG standards, and recommends that MCDOT review both a third option that meets the default master plan requirements and a fourth option that meets these requirements and introduces an uphill (westbound) climbing bike lane to address concerns from the bicycling community.

Planning Staff first developed an option to address the long-term master plan vision. Option 3 provides all facilities identified in the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways and with dimensions and priorities from the CSDG. Option 3 is displayed in Figure 6.



*Figure 6 – Option 3 - Master Plan Vision Cross Section*

Option 3 provides a six-foot-wide sidewalk, six-foot-wide minimum buffers on both sides of the street, two 10.5-foot-wide travel lanes, an exclusive eastbound right-turn lane where it currently exists, and a 10-foot-wide sidepath along the corridor extents (Woodland Drive to Sligo Creek Parkway). This is a generalized cross section (59.5 feet wide) and does not apply uniformly across the study area. The exclusive right-turn lane depicted only exists between Saxony Drive and the hospital driveways.

In addition, Planning Staff agrees with some of the concerns raised by WABA. The addition of a westbound bike lane (in the uphill direction) is a great suggestion, despite not being a current master plan recommendation. Planning Staff therefore identified Option 4, which would build on Option 3 with the addition of a westbound five-foot-wide bike lane. This cross section would be 65 feet wide. Option 4 is shown below in Figure 7. Note that the westbound through travel lane shown in Option 4 is 11-feet-wide compared to the 10.5-feet used for Option 3. This additional ½ foot is needed when adjacent to a bike lane to provide a total distance of 16 feet (travel lane plus bike lane).



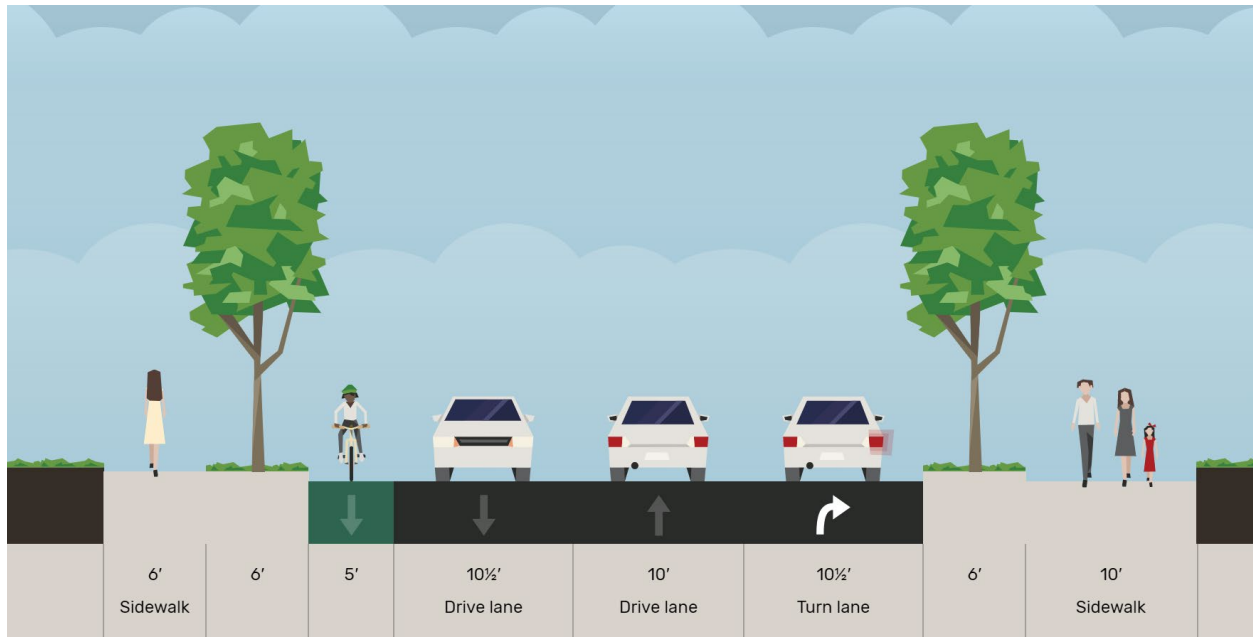


Figure 7 – Option 4 - Master Plan Vision Cross Section with Climbing Lane

## SECTION 5: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ALL FOUR OPTIONS

### QUALITATIVE COMPARISON

Table 1 provides a qualitative (generalized) summary of findings from our staff review of Option 1 and Option 2 as provided by MCDOT and Option 3 and Option 4 as developed by Planning Staff.

Table 1 – Qualitative Comparison of Design Options

Qualitative Summary						
Active Zone Element	Ex	Op 1	Op 2	Op 3	Op 4	Notes
Sidewalk (north)	-	+	-	+	+	Option 2 is only 1ft short of the default. All others meet the default standard.
Street Buffer (north)	-	-	-	+	+	Variable buffers. Generally substandard in Option 1 and 2. Option 3 and 4 improve to default
On-Street Bike Lane (north)	N/A	N/A	x	N/A	x	Option 2 and 4 provide this uphill bike lane.
On-Street Bike Lane (south)	x	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Option 1 and 2 remove existing bike lane without widening sidepath. Option 3 and 4 remove the bike lane but widen sidepath to default standard.
Street Buffer (south)	-	-	-	+	+	Variable buffers. Generally substandard in Option 1 and 2. Option 3 and 4 improve to default
Sidepath (south)	x	x	x	+	+	No change in Op 1 and 2. Option 3 and 4 improve to default standard.

Legend	
+	Meets default standard
x	Meets minimum standard
-	Does not meet standards

### **Pedestrian Facilities:**

- Option 1 street buffers and south sidepath are all narrower than either the minimum or default standards.
- Option 2 north sidewalk, street buffers, and south sidepath are all narrower than either the minimum or default standards.
- Option 3 facilities meet all default standards.
- Option 4 facilities meet all default standards.

### **Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC) Scores:**

- Option 1 and Option 2:
  - In two sections of roadway, Option 2 has worse PLOC scores than Option 1. In one section of roadway, Option 2 has worse PLOC scores than the existing conditions. Both Option 1 and 2 improve some segments on the north side of the road from PLOC 4 to PLOC 3. Other segments remain PLOC 4.
- Option 3 and Option 4:
  - These options improve all segments PLOC scores to PLOC 3 or better. In two segments of roadway, Option 3 and 4 have one PLOC grade lower scores than Option 1 and 2, due to the removal of a designated parking lane which transfers ROW to the uphill (north side) bike lane. Importantly, this tradeoff does result in improved bicycle level of traffic stress scores, and the PLOC scores provided by Option 3 and 4 are overall better than any of the other options.

### **Bicycling Facilities:**

- Option 1 and Option 2:
  - Option 1 and Option 2 retain right-turn traffic lanes but remove the existing bike lane on the south side of the road (downhill direction, also called a “pocket lane”). In addition, neither option widens the sidepath to the default 10 feet or widens the buffer to six feet on the south side of the road. Therefore, overall biking conditions on the south side of the road are worsened from existing conditions.
  - Option 2 provides an on-road bike lane in the uphill direction, essentially repurposing the existing downhill bike lane into the uphill lane. Given the existing grades, this concept has merit.
- Option 3 and Option 4:
  - Option 3 and Option 4 also retain right-turn traffic lanes and remove the existing bike lane on the south side of the road (downhill direction, also called a “pocket lane”). However, in these options, the sidepath is widened to the default 10 feet and the street buffer is widened to the default 6 feet on the south side of the road. Therefore, overall biking conditions on the south side of the road remain relatively stable.

- Option 4, Similar to Option 2, provides an on-road bike lane in the uphill direction, essentially repurposing the existing downhill bike lane into the uphill lane. Given the existing grades, this concept has merit.

### **Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) Scores:**

- Option 1 and Option 2:
  - On the north side of the road, Option 1 BLTS remains the same as existing conditions (BLTS 4), but Option 2 provides an on-road bike lane which improves to BLTS 3 (the same as Option 4).
  - On the south side of the road, Option 1 and Option 2 remove the existing on-road bike lane, which worsens the mixed-traffic BLTS grades. For sidepath biking on the south side of the road, conditions in Option 1 and Option 2 remain generally unchanged from existing conditions. However, the width and buffers of the existing sidepath currently do not meet all CSDG standards.
- Option 3 and Option 4:
  - On the north side of the road, Option 3 BLTS remains the same as existing conditions (BLTS 4), but Option 4 provides an on-road bike lane which improves to BLTS 3 (the same as Option 2).
  - On the south side of the road, Option 3 and Option 4 remove the existing on-road bike lane, which worsens the mixed-traffic BLTS grades. However, Option 3 and 4 widen the sidepath (and extend it to Sligo Creek Parkway) and the street buffer on the south side of the road as a replacement for the on-road lane, which improve BLTS to the best grade all along the sidepath (BLTS 1).

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### **PRIORITIES FOR FOREST GLEN ROAD**

Planning Staff also identified the following priorities for Forest Glen Road (in order of importance) for evaluating the four options:

1. Providing a high-quality sidewalk on the north side of the road (this was the original intent of the project).
2. Providing a high-quality sidepath on the south side of the road consistent with the Bicycle Master Plan and CSDG.
3. Ensuring that all dimensions and priorities align with the CSDG: 6-foot-wide sidewalk, 10 foot-wide sidepath, and 6-foot-wide street buffers.
4. Reducing the posted speed limit from the existing 30 mph to the CSDG target speed for Area Connectors, which is 25 mph (this is also the current target speed in the MPOHT).
5. Providing an uphill (westbound) conventional bike lane.

Planning Staff assessed all four options against the above priorities. Both Options 3 and 4 addressed more transportation planning priorities than Options 1 and 2.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Priority 1: North side sidewalk	✓		✓	✓
Priority 2: South side sidepath			✓	✓
Priority 3: CSDG standards			✓	✓
Priority 4: Posted speed limit				
Priority 5: West-bound bike lane				✓

None of the Options directly addresses Priority 4.

## SECTION 6: PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this very detailed review of the MCDOT and Planning options, Planning Staff recommends the Planning Board endorse Option 4 as the design concept that best matches the Master Plan requirements and the standards in the CSDG and addresses valid concerns from the bicycling community. If the spatial requirements of an uphill bicycle lane create excessive property impacts or costs, staff recommends Option 3. If this option entails prohibitive costs, Planning Staff recommends pursuing Option 1.

If MCDOT adjusts only the sidewalk on the north side of the road without making any other improvements, MCDOT will need to ensure that there is adequate right of way to make all other required master plan improvements on the roadway in the future. Even simple, interim projects can make implementing the master plan vision more challenging if not planned carefully.

Independent of the option selected, Planning Staff recommends that MCDOT consider reducing the posted speed limit on this section of Forest Glen Road.

## ATTACHMENTS

*Attachment A: MCDOT Concept Design Plan and Typical Cross Sections: Options 1 and 2*

*Attachment B: Presentation Slides – Virtual Public Meeting July 10, 2021.*

*Attachment C: Comments provided by WABA – July 6, 2021.*

October 12, 2022

Mr. Christopher Conklin, PE, Director  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Executive Office Building  
101 Monroe Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

**SUBJECT: Project Briefing: Forest Glen Road Sidewalk Project**  
Proposed sidewalk improvements

Dear Mr. Conklin:

At its regularly scheduled meeting on October 6, 2022, the Montgomery County Planning Board received a presentation from Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) staff on their proposed design options (Options 1 and 2) and from Planning Staff who identified two additional design options (Options 3 and 4). The Planning Board had the following comments for MCDOT:

1. Independent of the option selected, MCDOT should reduce the posted speed limit on this section of Forest Glen Road to 25 mph consistent with the master planned target speed of 25 mph.
2. The Planning Board endorses Option 4 as the design concept that best matches the Master Plan requirements and the standards in the Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG) and addresses valid concerns from the bicycling community.
3. If the spatial requirements of an uphill bicycle lane create excessive property impacts or costs, the Planning Board recommends Option 3. If this option entails prohibitive costs, the Planning Board recommends pursuing Option 1. The Board understands the importance of advancing a sidewalk along the north side of Forest Glen Road, to ensure that this sidewalk is present when the Forest Glen Passageway project is completed.
4. If MCDOT adjusts only the sidewalk on the north side of the road without making any other improvements, MCDOT will need to ensure that there is adequate right of way to



Mr. Christopher Conklin  
October 12, 2022  
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make all other required master plan improvements on the roadway in the future. Even simple, interim projects can make implementing the master plan vision more challenging if not planned carefully.

The Planning Board appreciates the opportunity to review this project and continue coordinating with your staff on this and future projects. If you have questions, please contact Stephen Aldrich at 301-495-4528 or [Stephen.Aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:Stephen.Aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org).

Sincerely,

*Tanya Stern*

Tanya Stern,  
Acting Planning Director

cc: Stephen Aldrich, Master Planner, M-NCPPC  
Jason Sartori, Chief, M-NCPPC  
Dan Sheridan, MCDOT  
Rebecca Park, MCDOT

Enclosure:  
M-NCPPC Briefing Staff Report

CA:SA:aj