

NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE BUS RAPID TRANSIT STUDY



Description

The New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study evaluates five alternatives for enhancing transit service on MD 650 / New Hampshire Avenue between Randolph Road and the Fort Totten Metrorail Station in Washington, DC. This discussion provides the Planning Board with the opportunity to recommend a preferred alternative to the County Council, as well as other recommendations related to the project.

COMPLETED: 3/5/2026

PLANNING BOARD HEARING DATE: 3/12/2026

MCPB ITEM NO. 10



Planning Staff



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LOCATION

New Hampshire Ave between Colesville and Washington DC

MASTER PLAN

Thrive Montgomery 2050
Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan (2013)
Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (2025)
White Oak Master Plan (1997)
White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan (2014)
East Silver Spring Master Plan (2000)
Takoma / Langley Crossroads Sector Plan (2012)
Takoma Park Master Plan (2000)

APPLICANT

Montgomery County Department of Transportation

ACCEPTANCE DATE

January 16, 2026

Summary:

- Planning Staff recommends advancing the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative.
- Planning Staff recommends transmitting additional comments related to station locations, station access, and interim approaches to improving transit service on the corridor.

CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS.....	3
SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION	4
Proposal.....	4
What is BRT?	6
Montgomery County’s BRT Vision.....	6
SECTION 3 – CORRIDOR DESCRIPTION.....	7
Vicinity	7
Related Projects.....	7
SECTION 4 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION	11
Project Purpose	11
Description of Alternatives.....	11
SECTION 5 – ANALYSIS.....	18
Master Plan Consistency	18
Project Evaluation	24
Additional Considerations	27
SECTION 6 – COMMUNITY OUTREACH	30
SECTION 7 – ATTACHMENTS	30

SECTION 1 – RECOMMENDATIONS

Montgomery Planning staff recommends that the Planning Board transmit the following recommendations to the Montgomery County Council regarding the New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study:

1. Advance the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative.
2. Support the station locations identified in the study, while continuing to evaluate a potential station at the Colesville Park & Ride lot.
3. Establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area – New Hampshire Avenue BRT program to fund access improvements to proposed stations.
4. Provide additional funding in the Bus Priority Program – Minor Projects program to fund interim bus-only lanes on New Hampshire Avenue to build ridership on the corridor and advance near-term transit benefits in advance of full BRT implementation.

SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION

Proposal

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) proposes to construct Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) infrastructure along an 8.5-mile segment of the New Hampshire Avenue between Randolph Road and the Fort Totten Metrorail Station in Washington, DC with infrastructure improvements focused in Maryland (see Figure 1). Through the *New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study*, MCDOT has identified 14 station locations along the corridor and evaluated the benefits, costs, and impacts of five alternative approaches to improving transit travel times and reliability along the corridor.

See Attachment A for the New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study.

See the project [webpage](#) for the New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study appendices.

MCDOT coordinated extensively with the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT SHA), Prince George's County, the City of Takoma Park, and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA), among others.

Attachment B is a letter for support from MDOT SHA, the agency that controls the road.

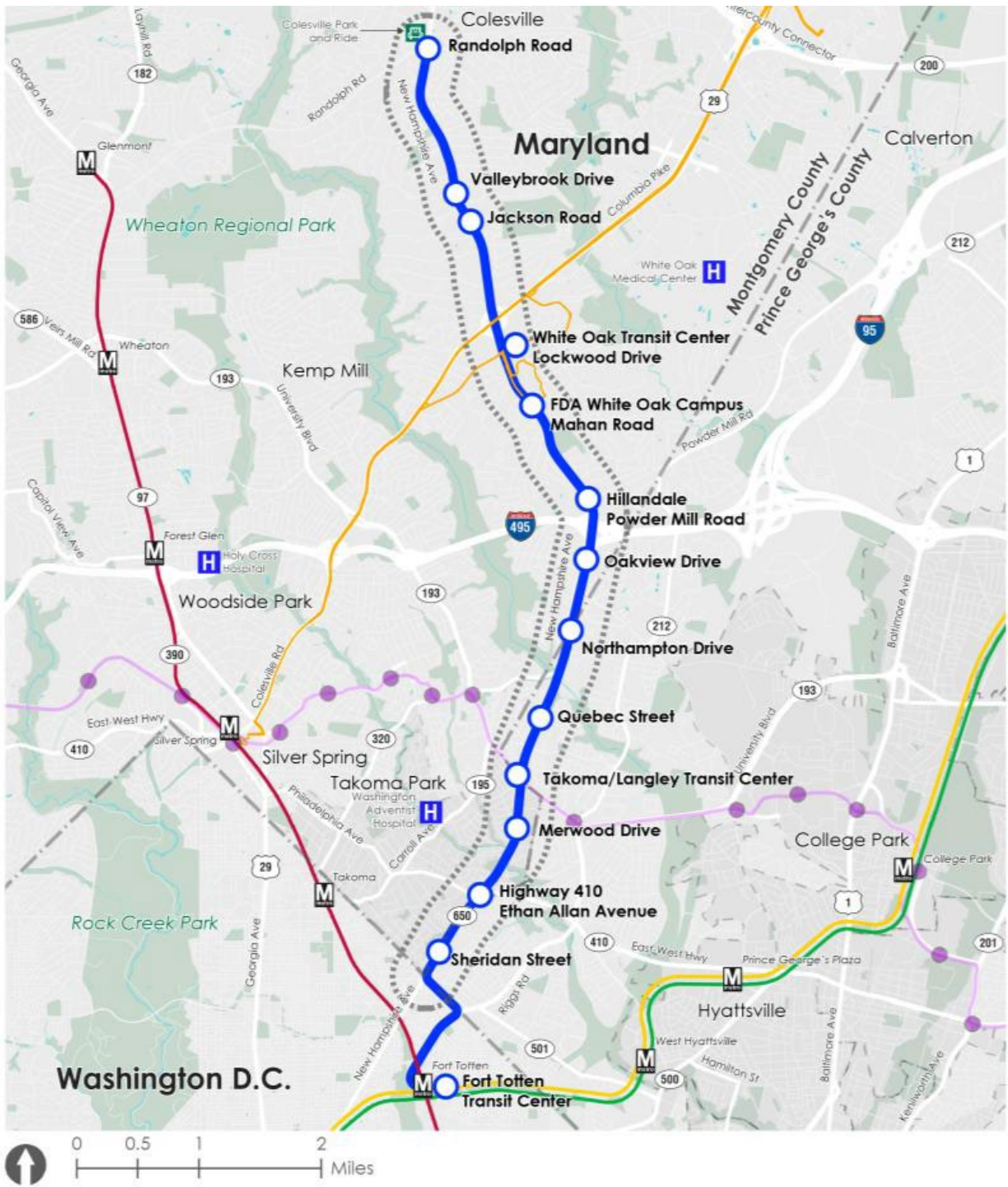


Figure 1: Location of the New Hampshire Avenue BRT Project (Source: MCDOT)

What is BRT?

BRT is a high-quality and high-capacity bus-based transit system that delivers fast, comfortable, reliable, and cost-effective transit service. It does this through a combination of elements that can include the provision of dedicated transit lanes, branded stations and buses, off-board fare collection, real time information, queue jump lanes, and fast and frequent operations, among other things. Because BRT contains features like light rail, it is more reliable, convenient, and faster than other bus services. With the right features, BRT can avoid the causes of delay that slow local bus services.

See Attachment D for a more thorough description of the elements that distinguish BRT from standard local bus service.

Montgomery County's BRT Vision

Montgomery County plans to construct a 100+ mile BRT network comprising 8 major transportation corridors, including New Hampshire Avenue. The BRT network would complement the county's existing and emerging transit network, including the WMATA Red Line metro rail, the MARC Brunswick Line commuter rail, the future Purple Line light rail, the US 29 BRT, and an extensive network of local (Ride On) and regional (Metrobus) bus services.

SECTION 3 – CORRIDOR DESCRIPTION

Vicinity

The area surrounding New Hampshire Avenue along the study corridor is largely characterized by suburban residential land uses with areas of mixed-use and institutional development. The corridor passes through multiple jurisdictions, including both Montgomery County and Prince George’s County, as well as the City of Takoma Park. Commercial centers exist at Colesville Town Center, White Oak Town Center, Hillandale Town Center, and Takoma-Langley Crossroads, with smaller strip retail around MD 410 / East-West Highway and adjacent to the District of Columbia border. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is a major federal agency with over 10,000 employees at its White Oak campus. The corridor also crosses two stream valleys: Northwest Branch and Sligo Creek.

New Hampshire Avenue is a six-lane state highway with a posted speed limit of 40 mph north of Piney Branch Road and 35 mph south of Piney Branch Road. While most of the corridor experiences an average of 35,000 to 43,000 vehicles per weekday, around I-495 the volume reaches an average of 75,000 to 80,000 vehicles per weekday.

The corridor has among the highest bus ridership in the region. Service is provided by WMATA Metrobus (M60 and M6X), Ride On (16, 20, 21 and 22) and Prince George’s The Bus. In some locations bus frequencies reach 20 buses per hour in peak periods, or one bus every three minutes on average. Transit stations exist at White Oak Town Center and Takoma / Langley Crossroads Town Center.

Related Projects

MD 650 Pedestrian Safety Action Plan

MDOT SHA Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) program focuses on improving pedestrian safety and accessibility on state highways through Maryland. Initiated in 2023, the first corridor to begin construction is MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue) PSAP between Powder Mill Road and University Boulevard. Improvements along the corridor include new crosswalks and signals, upgraded pedestrian ramps and bus stops to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards, corridor-wide lighting improvements, ramp realignments at the I-495 interchange among other things.

New Avenue Bikeway

The City of Takoma Park has completed final design for Segment A and B of the New Avenue Bikeway project, which runs along New Hampshire Avenue between Holton Lane and Poplar Avenue (Figure 2). The two-way bikeway will include a combination of separated bike lanes, sidepaths and shared roadways, including the service lanes along southbound side of New Hampshire Avenue. The City of Takoma Park has requested that “the design details [of the New Hampshire Avenue BRT] address the requirements of the Takoma park New Hampshire Avenue Bikeway project.” MCDOT has determined

that each of the New Hampshire Avenue BRT alternatives discussed in this staff report incorporates the New Avenue Bikeway, though minor changes would be needed at BRT station locations. For more information on this project see: <https://takomaparkmd.gov/1524/New-Avenue-Bikeway>

Attachment C is a letter for support from the City of Takoma Park.

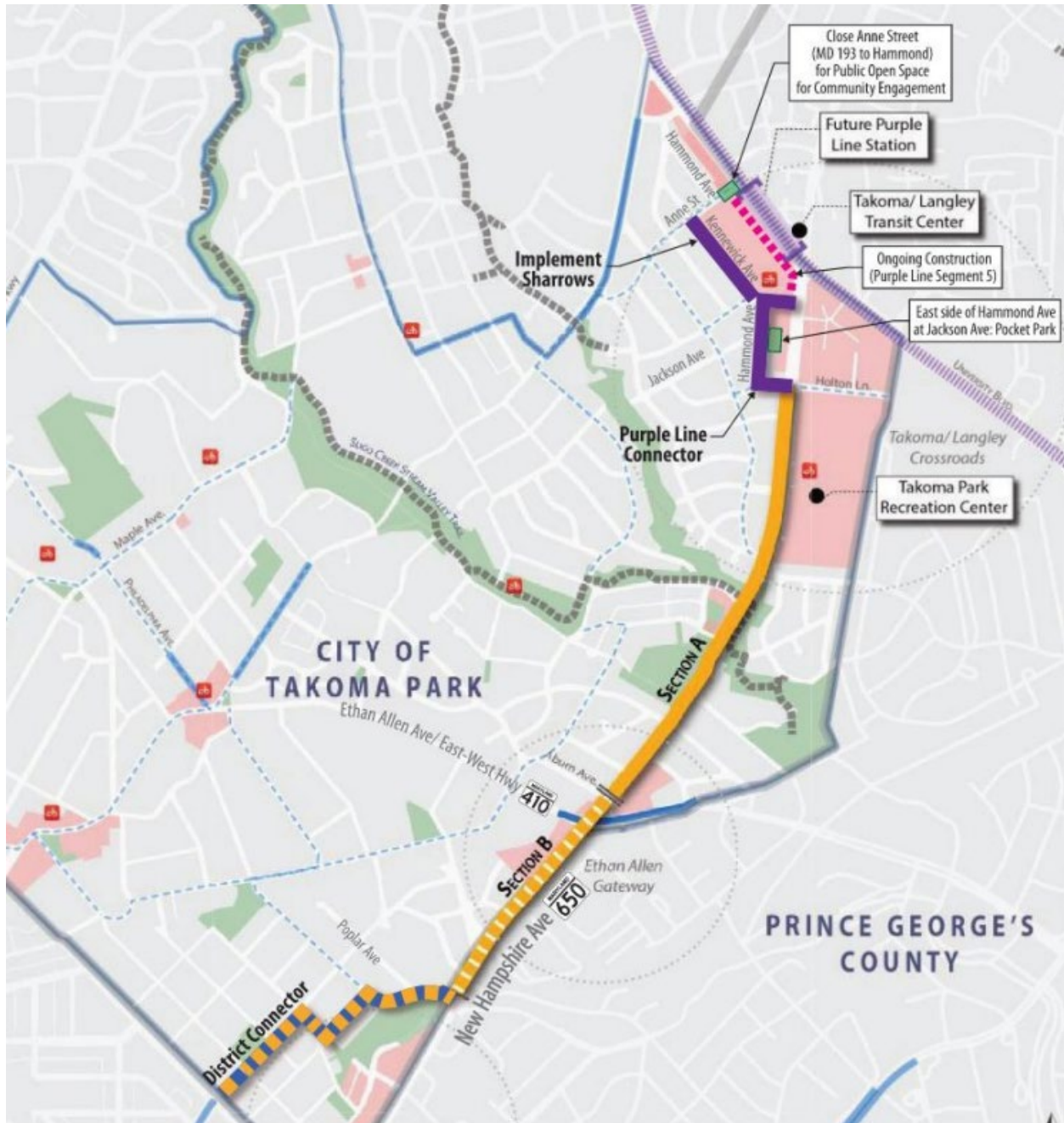


Figure 2: New Avenue Bikeway (source: City of Takoma Park)

US 29 FLASH BRT

The US 29 Flash BRT, Phase 1 opened in October 2020 between Briggs Chaney and Downtown Silver Spring with enhanced buses and enhanced stations. Phase 2 proposes upgrading the corridor to include a combination of one-way and two-way median transit lanes between Tech Road and Sligo Creek Parkway as shown in Figure 3. The project is now completing preliminary engineering (35% design) and the Planning Board will review the project as a mandatory referral in April 2026. For more information see: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/US29BRT/>

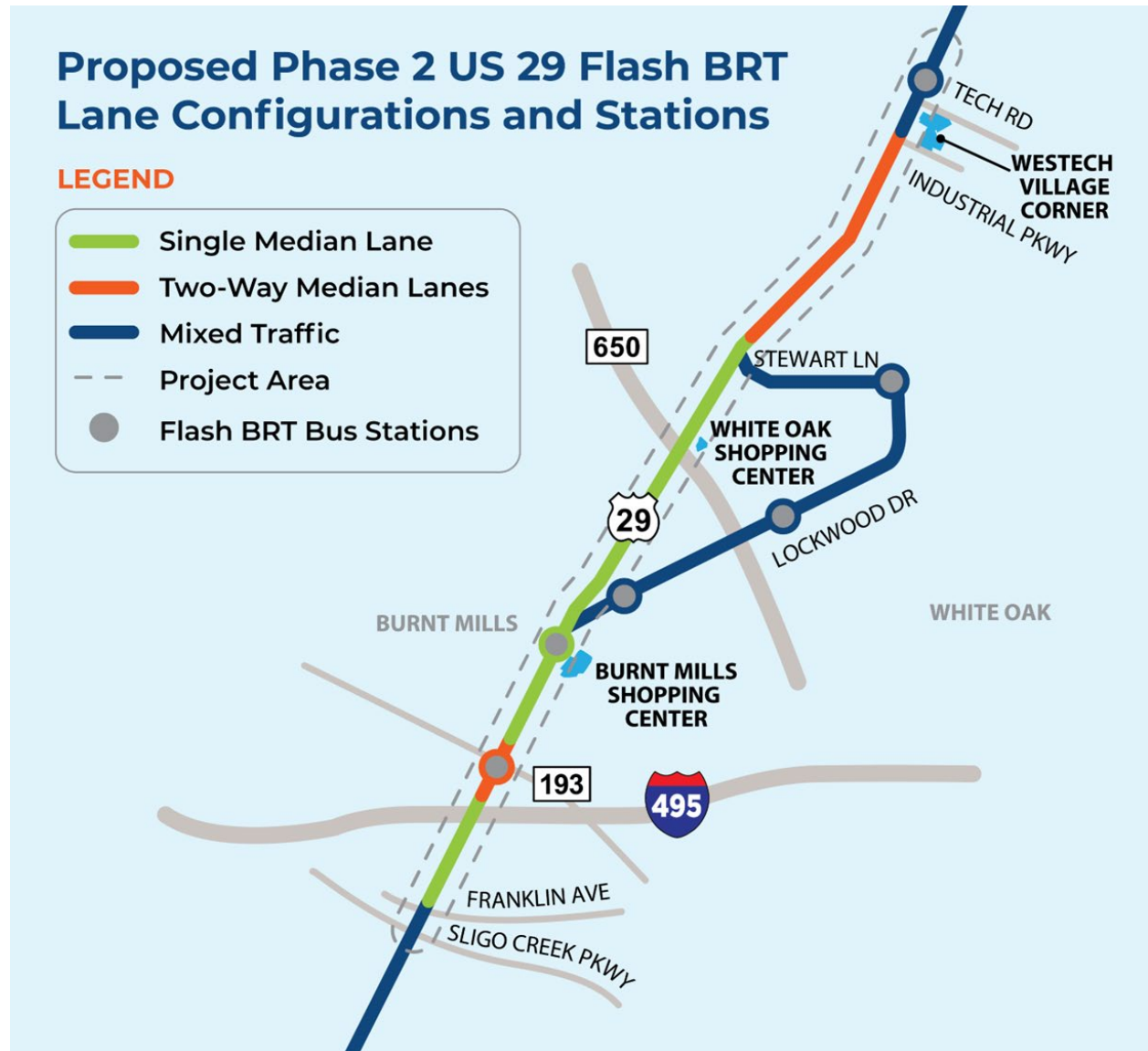


Figure 3: US 29 Flash Phase 2 Lane Configuration (Source: MCDOT)

DMV Moves

DMV Moves is a regional initiative led by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority to develop a unified, sustainable funding model for public transit across DC, Maryland, and Virginia. This plan identifies New Hampshire Avenue as one of seven initial bus priority corridors (see Figure 4). According to DMV Moves, these corridors have the following characteristics:

- Routes with frequent service
- High bus ridership
- Slow bus speeds and unreliable service
- High densities of people and jobs (by 2050)
- Potential for high return on investment
- Reflects jurisdictional priorities
- Unified approach across borders — benefits Metro, local bus, and commuter bus customers

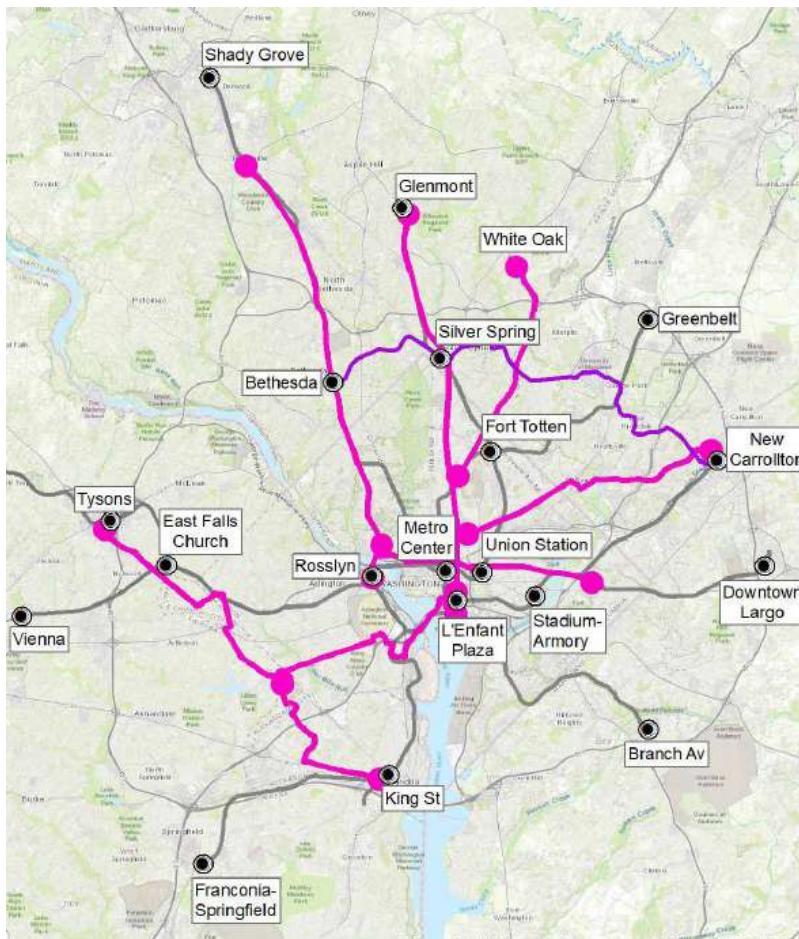


Figure 4: Initial Bus Priority Corridors (Source: DMV Moves)

Project Purpose

MCDOT proposes to construct a BRT corridor that will operate along New Hampshire Ave between Randolph Road and Fort Totten Metrorail Station in Washington DC, with infrastructure improvements focused in Maryland. The goals of the project are to:

- Provide high-quality, cost-effective transit options to serve existing riders.
- Connect people to job centers and new developments with faster transit trips.
- Increase connections and access to regional destinations.
- Improve on-time performance and provide consistent travel times for more predictable transit arrival times.

Description of Alternatives

Overview of Alternatives

The project evaluated multiple alternatives to identify the alternative that best addresses the project goals while minimizing costs and impacts, including a No-Build Alternative and five Build Alternatives:

- **No-Build Alternative:** Maintains existing roadway conditions and all current bus services along the corridor. This alternative provides a baseline for comparison but does not improve travel time or reliability.
- **Alternative 1 – Mixed Traffic with Queue Jumps (TSM Alternative):** BRT vehicles would operate in general traffic without dedicated bus lanes. The alternative would include Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and queue jumps at select locations to improve speed and reliability. This alternative serves as the federally required low-cost Transportation System Management (TSM) alternative.
- **Alternative 2 – Curbside Lanes:** This alternative would convert existing curbside lanes to dedicated bus lanes south of Piney Branch Road for use by both BRT and local buses. North of Piney Branch Road, buses would benefit from TSP but without dedicated lanes. This option improves transit performance with moderate roadway impacts.
- **Alternative 3 – Median Lanes:** This alternative would include dedicated two-way median bus lanes south of Piney Branch Road. It would install a single reversible median bus lane between Piney Branch Road and Lockwood Drive, with buses operating in traffic north of Lockwood Drive with TSP. Median bus lanes would be available to BRT buses only as local buses would operate in the remaining traffic lanes. This alternative prioritizes reliability but has greater roadway impacts and costs.
- **Alternative 4 – Additional Median Lanes:** This alternative would include two-way median bus lanes south of Piney Branch Road and between Powder Mill Road and Lockwood Drive, with a

reversible median lane in between. North of Lockwood Drive, buses would benefit from TSP. Median bus lanes would be available to BRT buses only as local buses would operate in the remaining traffic lanes. Like Alternative 3, this alternative prioritizes reliability but has greater roadway impacts and costs.

- Hybrid Alternative:** This alternative is like Alternative 2 in that it includes dedicated curbside lanes south of Piney Branch Road. The Hybrid Alternative builds on Alternative 2 by providing dedicated curbside lanes between Powder Mill Road and Lockwood Drive and queue jumps elsewhere. Dedicated curbside lanes would be available to bus BRT and local buses. At high-ridership locations local buses would pull into the pull offs so that they do not block passing BRT vehicles. **MCDOT finds that this alternative achieves the greatest balance of benefits, costs and impacts and recommends it as the preferred alternative.** The Prince George’s Planning Board also supports this alternative.

Figure 5 shows the overall layout of Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4 and the Hybrid Alternative.

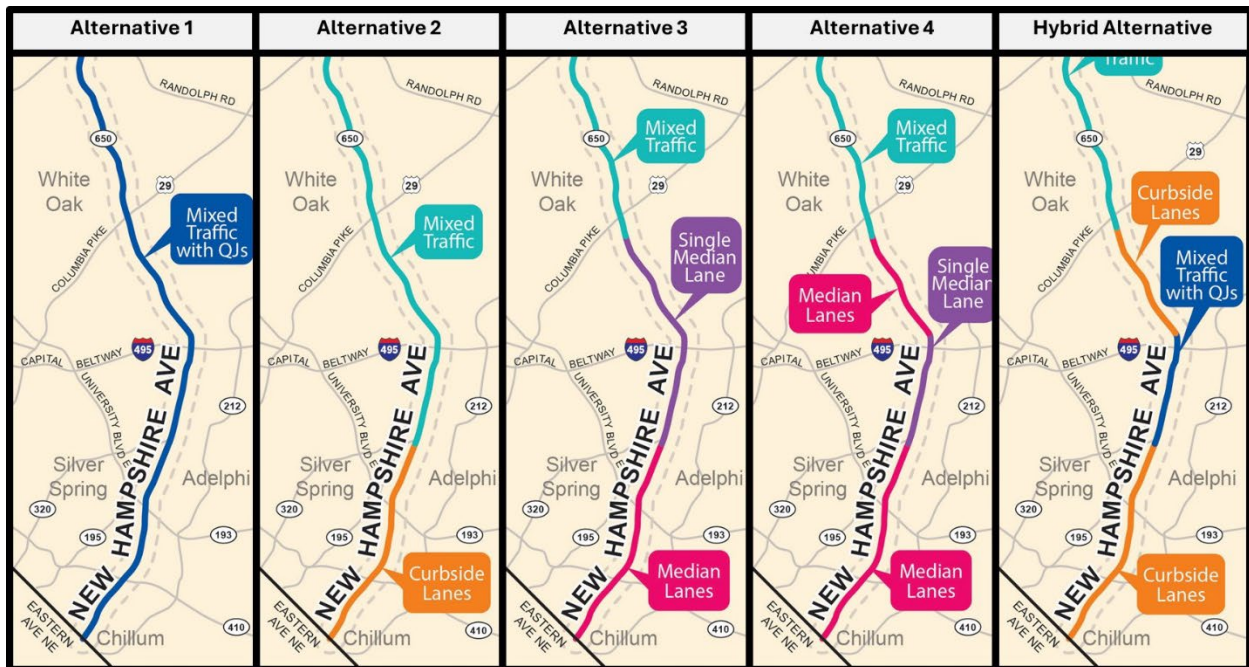


Figure 5: Alignment Configurations

[Appendix G](#) and [Appendix H](#) provide conceptual plans for each of the alternatives.

BRT Cross-Section Elements and Configurations by Alternative

Images depicting buses in mixed traffic, curbside bus lanes, curbside bus lanes with local bus pulloffs, one-lane median bus lane and two-lane median bus lanes are shown in Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9 and Figure 10:

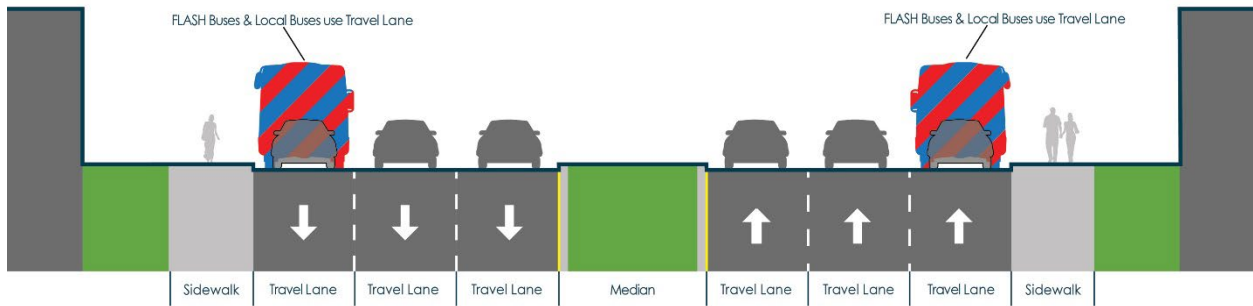


Figure 6: Buses in Mixed Traffic

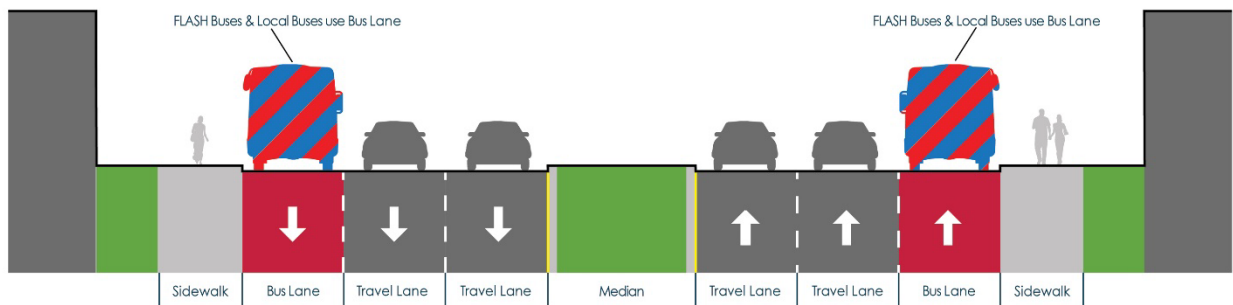


Figure 7: Two Traffic Lanes Converted to Curbside Bus Lanes

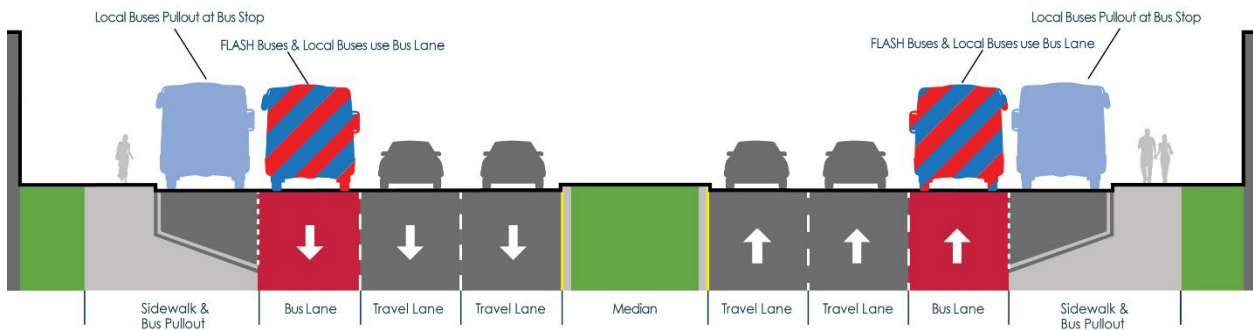


Figure 8: Two Traffic Lanes Converted to Curbside Bus Lanes with Local Bus Pulloffs

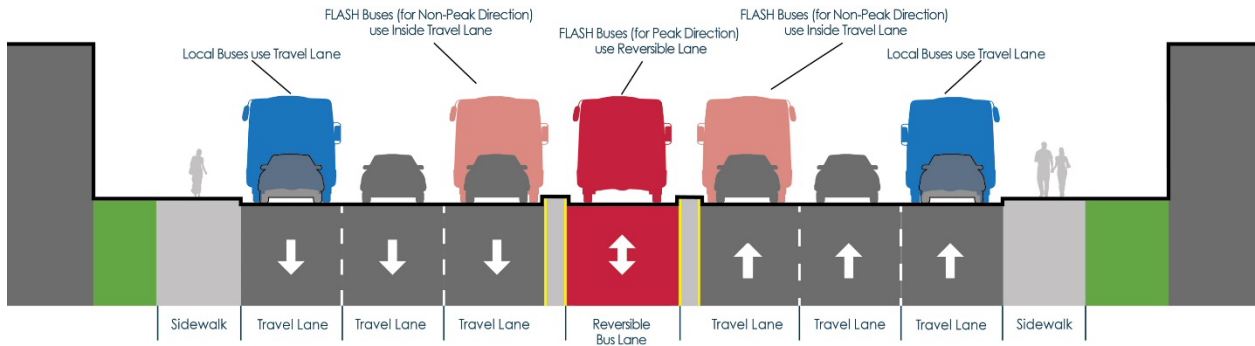


Figure 9: Added Single Reversible Median Bus Lane

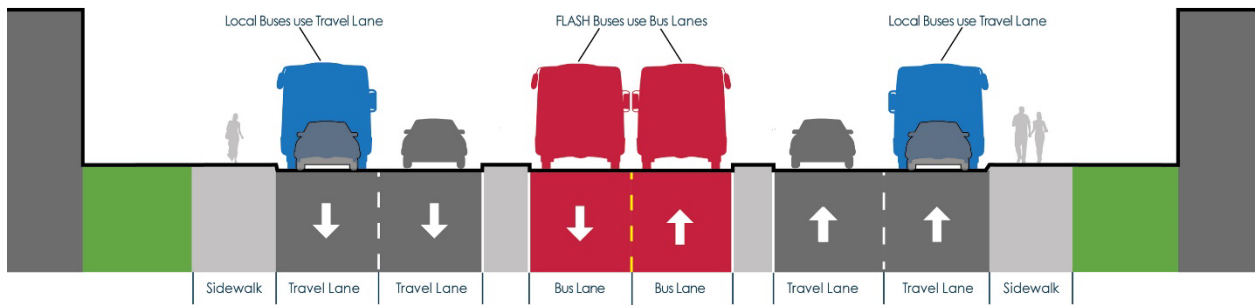


Figure 10: Two Traffic Lanes Converted to Two-Way Median Bus Lanes

Table 1 compares the elements of Bus Rapid Transit included in each alternative along different segments of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor. The table illustrates where transit priority treatments—such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP), queue jumps (QJ), dedicated curbside bus lanes, or dedicated median bus lanes (two-way or single reversible)—would be provided under each alternative.

Table 1: Comparison of BRT Elements by Alternative

From	To	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Hybrid
Randolph Rd	Lockwood Dr	TSP / QJ	TSP	TSP	TSP	TSP / QJ
Lockwood Dr	Powder Mill Rd	TSP / QJ	TSP	1 Median Bus Lane	2 Median Bus Lanes	2 Curbside Bus Lanes w/Pull Offs
Powder Mill Rd	Piney Branch Rd	TSP / QJ	TSP	1 Median Bus Lane	1 Median Bus Lane	TSP / QJ
Piney Branch Rd	Eastern Ave	TSP / QJ	2 Curbside Bus Lanes	2 Median Bus Lanes	2 Median Bus Lanes	2 Curbside Bus Lanes w/Pull Offs

TSP = Transit Signal Priority; QJ = Queue Jumps

Table 2 shows the number of general traffic lanes and bus lanes by segment for each alternative.

Table 2: Lane Configuration by Alternative (Traffic Lanes / Bus Lanes)

From	To	No Build	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Hybrid
Randolph Rd	Lockwood Dr	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 0
Lockwood Dr	Cresthaven Dr	7 / 0	7 / 0	7 / 0	6 / 1	5 / 2	5 / 2
Cresthaven Dr	Powder Mill Rd	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 1	4 / 2	4 / 2
Powder Mill Rd	Piney Branch Rd	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 0	6 / 1	6 / 1	6 / 0
Piney Branch Rd	Eastern Ave	6 / 0	6 / 0	4 / 2	4 / 2	4 / 2	4 / 2

Proposed BRT Station Locations

All alternatives include stations at the following locations (see Figure 1):

- New Hampshire Avenue and Randolph Road
- New Hampshire Avenue and Valley Brook Drive
- New Hampshire Avenue and Jackson Road
- White Oak Transit Center
- FDA White Oak Campus
- New Hampshire Avenue and Powder Mill Road
- New Hampshire Avenue and Oakview Drive
- New Hampshire Avenue and Northampton Drive
- New Hampshire Avenue and Quebec Street (Prince George's County)
- Takoma/Langley Transit Center (Prince George's County)
- New Hampshire Avenue and Merwood Drive (Prince George's County)
- New Hampshire Avenue and MD 410/ Ethan Allen Avenue
- New Hampshire Avenue and Sheridan Street
- Fort Totten Metrorail Station Transit Center (District of Columbia)

Hybrid Alternative Anticipated Ridership

Figure 11 summarizes forecast average weekday boardings by station for the Hybrid Alternative in 2024 (opening year) and 2045. The station with the highest boardings is the Fort Totten Metrorail Station. The stations in Maryland with the highest boardings are forecast at White Oak Transit Center, followed by MD 410/Ethan Allen Ave, Takoma/Langley Transit Center, Quebec Street, and Northampton Drive. The lowest boardings are forecast at Oakview Drive, Powder Mill Rd, FDA White Oak Campus, Jackson Rd, Valley Brook Drive, and Randolph Road.

The figure also indicates that most ridership would be realized in the opening year, with additional growth as the corridor builds out by 2045. In total, the Hybrid Alternative is forecast to carry more than 8,200 average weekday riders in 2024 and nearly 11,000 in 2045.

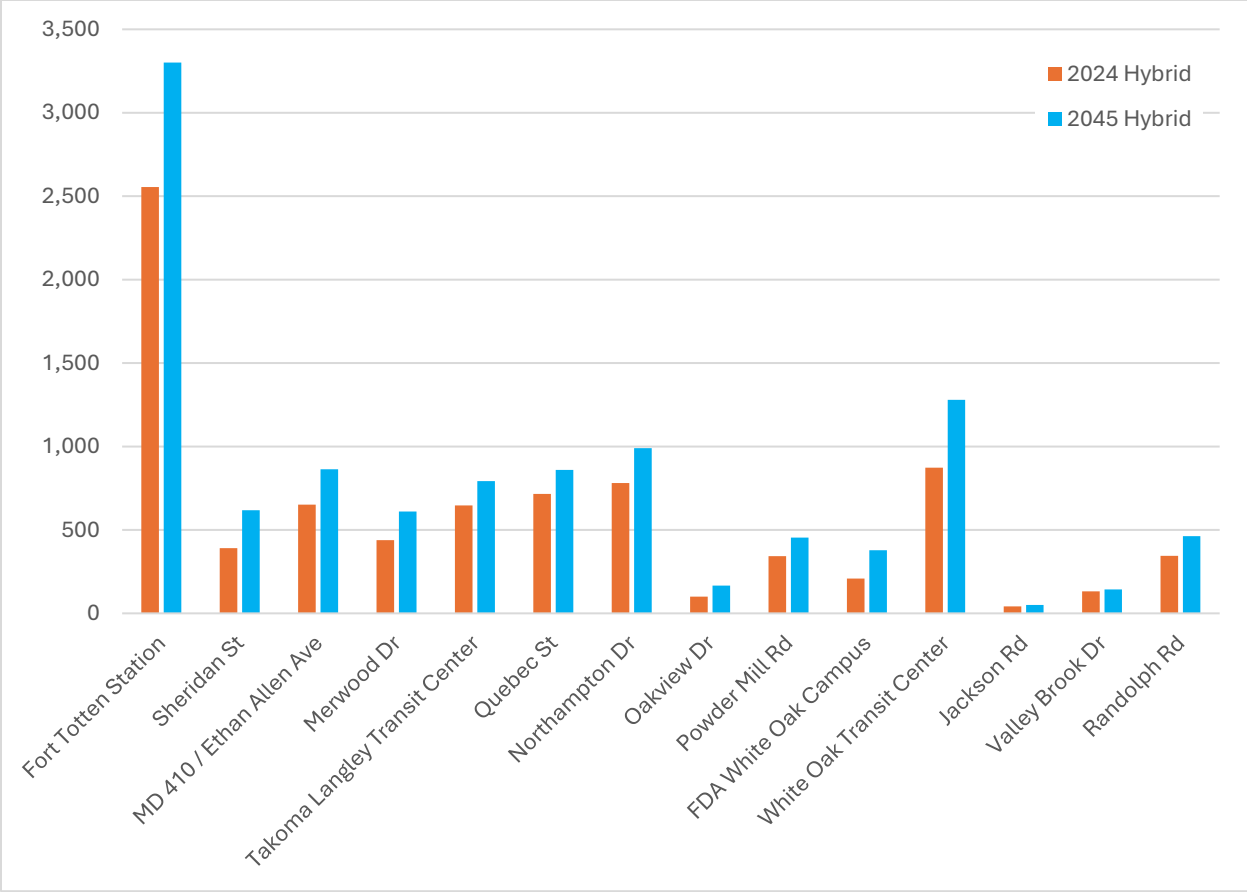


Figure 11: Hybrid Alternative Estimated Average Weekday Boardings by Station in 2024 and 2025

Master Plan Consistency

This section of the staff report identifies key master plan recommendations. It also reviews master plan recommendations in Prince George’s County as a half-mile of the New Hampshire Avenue BRT would pass through that jurisdiction.

Functional Plans

Thrive Montgomery 2050

Thrive Montgomery 2050, the County’s General Plan, focuses on concentrating growth in centers of activities as well as along the county’s major transportation corridors, including New Hampshire Avenue, to maximize the efficient use of land and create Complete Communities. Specifically, Thrive recommends that the County “Build a frequent, fast, convenient, reliable, safe, and accessible transit system.” Thrive includes the following practices related to transit:

- Build a network of rail, bus rapid transit, and local bus infrastructure and services— including demand-responsive transit service—that make transit the fastest, most convenient and most reliable way to travel to centers of economic, social, and educational activity and opportunity, both within and beyond Montgomery County.
- Convert existing general purpose traffic lanes to dedicated transit lanes, in a manner consistent with other county policies.
- Improve travel times and travel costs of transit services to achieve greater parity with automotive travel.

The New Hampshire Avenue BRT project is consistent with *Thrive Montgomery 2050* as it recommends providing BRT service on this corridor by converting general traffic lanes to bus-only lanes.

2013 Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan

The 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* recommends BRT service on New Hampshire Avenue between the Colesville Park & Ride and the District of Columbia (see Figure 12). The plan recommends the BRT operate without dedicated bus lanes north of Lockwood Dr and with dedicated bus lanes south of Lockwood Drive.

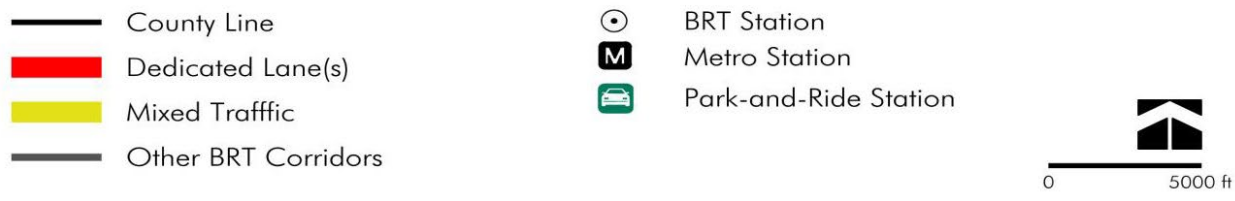
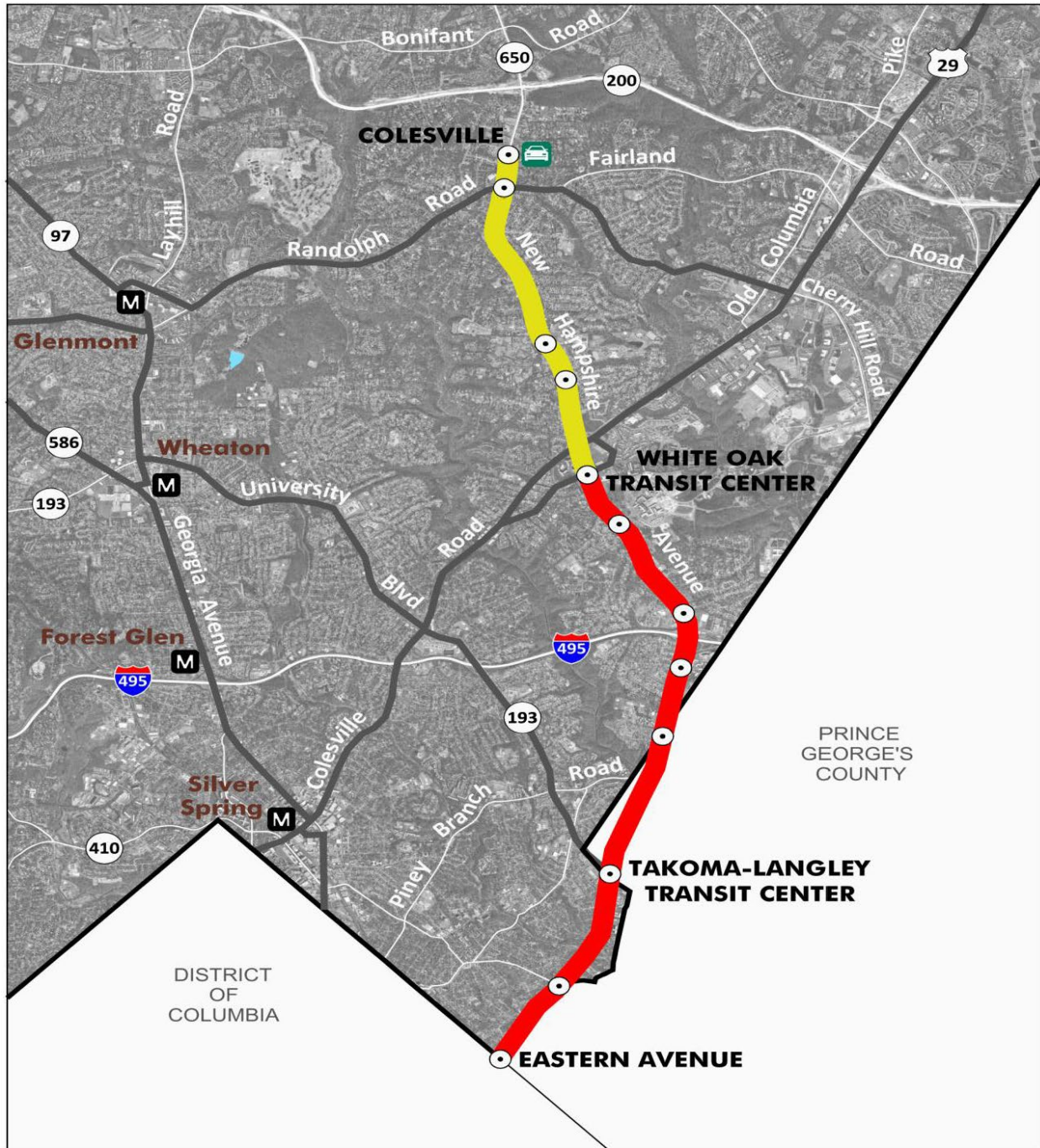


Figure 12: New Hampshire Avenue BRT as Recommended in the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan

The plan also provides recommendations on station locations to allow the Planning Board to require additional property dedication for transit stations as part of development approvals, if needed. The plan recognizes that the Council may need to update master-planned station locations during the facility planning process. Page 22 states: "...station locations are subject to modification during these more detailed planning and engineering phases of project development and implementation..." Page 35 states: "...the specific location of the station...should be determined during facility planning."

Most of the stations identified in the New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study align with the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*, including:

- MD 650 & Randolph Road Station
- MD 650 & Valley Brook Drive Station
- MD 650 & Jackson Road Station
- White Oak Transit Center Station
- FDA White Oak Campus
- MD 650 & Powder Mill Road Station
- MD 650 & Oakview Drive Station
- MD 650 & Northampton Drive Station
- Takoma / Langley Transit Center Station
- MD 650 & MD 410 Station
- MD 650 & Sheridan St Station

Exceptions include:

- **Added Stations:** The study recommends adding three stations, two of which are not part of the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*, as they are outside of Montgomery County.
 - New Hampshire Avenue and Quebec Street: The study recommends adding this station in Prince George's County to address ridership demands and to ensure equitable access.
 - New Hampshire Avenue and Merwood Drive: The study recommends adding this station in Montgomery County to serve the Takoma Park Recreation Center, Hampshire Tower Apartments, Takoma Overlook Condominium, and Sligo Creek Trail.
 - Fort Totten Metrorail Station: The study recommends adding this station in Washington, DC to connect to the Metrorail system.
- **Excluded Stations**
 - Colesville Park & Ride: The study excludes a station at this location due to its proximity to Randolph Road station. However, the study notes that the park & ride lot could be used for a layover and turnaround station and future phases of the project may further evaluate the location as an additional station.

- Relocated Stations
 - New Hampshire Avenue & Eastern Avenue: The study recommends relocating the station to the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Sheridan Street, which is one block away. This is because at its original location it would be difficult for southbound buses to stop at Eastern Avenue and then make a left turn onto Eastern Avenue into the District of Columbia, crossing two lanes of traffic.

The New Hampshire Avenue BRT project is consistent with the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan* as it recommends providing BRT service on this corridor by converting general traffic lanes to bus-only lanes and includes most of the station locations identified in that plan.

Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (2025)

The 2025 *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* recommends New Hampshire Avenue as a six-lane Town Center Boulevard in the Town Centers (Colesville, White Oak, Hillandale, Takoma Langley Crossroads, Ethan Allen Avenue Gateway and Maryland Gateway Town Center) and Suburban Boulevard in the areas in between. Additionally, it includes target speeds ranging from 25 to 35 mph, with lower speeds in town centers and higher speeds in the suburban areas in between. The plan includes the lane allocations shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Master-Planned Lane Allocations

From Street	To Street	Total Lanes	General Traffic Lanes	Dedicated Bus Lanes
Colesville Park & Ride	Lockwood Drive	6	6	0
Lockwood Drive	Capital Beltway (I-495)	6 – 7	4 - 6	1 – 2
Capital Beltway (I-495)	Northampton Drive	6 – 9	4 - 8	1 – 2
Northampton Drive	District of Columbia	6	4 - 5	1 – 2

The New Hampshire Avenue BRT project is consistent with the 2025 *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* as it recommends providing BRT service on portions of this corridor south of Lockwood Avenue by converting general traffic lanes to bus-only lanes with buses operating in mixed traffic with queue jumps between Piney Branch Road and Powder Mill Road.

Go Prince George's

Prince George's County's ongoing transportation plan update, *Go Prince George's*, identified New Hampshire Avenue between Quebec Street and University Boulevard as a four-lane highway with two curbside bus lanes. The New Hampshire Ave BRT project is consistent with *Go Prince George's County* as it recommends providing BRT service on this corridor by converting general traffic lanes to bus-only lanes.

Area Master Plans

White Oak Master Plan (1997)

The overall goal of the 1997 *White Oak Master Plan* ("WOMP") is to ensure livable communities for the future by protecting and strengthening their positive attributes and encouraging development that will enhance the communities' function, sense of place, and identity (page 16). The WOMP recommends bus stops with bus shelters and trash receptacles within the commercial centers to provide pedestrian comfort and encourage ridership (page 26). The Colesville Commercial Center at New Hampshire Avenue and Randolph Road is recognized in the WOMP as a local/neighborhood focused retail center with a park & ride lot, and the plan supports a transit center next to the park & ride if warranted by future demand (page 32). The New Hampshire Avenue BRT proposal supports the WOMP goals and recommendations to enhance the functionality of the community by providing an additional mode of transit for area residents and visitors.

White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan (2014)

The New Hampshire Avenue BRT project supports the 2014 *White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan's* ("WOSGMP") vision of the evolution of White Oak's major centers from conventional, auto-dependent suburban shopping centers, business parks, and light industrial areas into vibrant, mixed-use, transit-served nodes. BRT will help connect White Oak's centers to each other and to the broader region (page 11). The three BRT stations proposed along New Hampshire Avenue within the plan area are consistent with those identified on the WOSGMP BRT Conceptual Alignment Map (Map 13, page 62). The mixed-use CR zoning implemented through the WOSGMP supports redevelopment of commercial parcels located near the proposed stations.

East Silver Spring Master Plan (2000)

Overall, the 2000 *East Silver Spring Master Plan* emphasizes preserving existing residential uses, which characterizes most of this section of the New Hampshire Avenue corridor, save for two churches and two small existing commercial properties at the Northampton Drive station (currently a 7-Eleven and Pizza Hut). Today, the building types located most proximate to the Oakview Drive and Northampton Drive stations are high and medium density residential. The *East Silver Spring Master Plan* also includes a "streetscape concept" for New Hampshire Avenue, including street buffers with planted trees, sidepaths and safe and comfortable transit stops (Figure 3, page 70). The ongoing

Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan will update these recommendations and land use vision, when adopted (anticipated in Fall 2027).

Takoma / Langley Crossroads Sector Plan (2012)

The 2012 *Takoma/Langley Crossroads Sector Plan* was a bi-county effort developed in coordination with the City of Takoma Park and Prince George’s County. It establishes a land use vision that reinforces the area’s role as a mixed-use, transit-oriented activity node, directly supporting MCDOT’s enhanced transit investments particularly at the transit center station (pages 17-18). The plan promotes a denser mix of residential, retail, and employment uses along the New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard corridors, with an emphasis on pedestrian-oriented redevelopment, streetscape improvements, and improved access to high-capacity transit. It identifies the Crossroads as a diverse commercial district with redevelopment potential along New Hampshire Avenue and University Boulevard, where the predominance of auto-oriented strip centers is expected to transition toward more walkable, mixed-use forms. The plan highlights the importance of pedestrian safety, connectivity, and transit integration, making the consolidated transit center including the Purple Line and now the BRT station location, a cornerstone of its long-term vision (page 24). These land use goals align with MCDOT’s BRT program by supporting increased transit use, enabling development patterns that accommodate higher ridership, and reinforcing the corridor as a major multimodal hub.

Takoma Park Master Plan (2000)

The 2000 *Takoma Park Master Plan* (pages 27 and 34) together with the City of Takoma Park 2008 New Hampshire Avenue Corridor Concept Plan envisions New Hampshire Avenue as a revitalized, mixed-use, and pedestrian-oriented corridor where redevelopment is concentrated along New Hampshire Avenue while nearby residential neighborhoods are protected. This vision supports MCDOT’s BRT investments by encouraging transit-supportive, mixed-use infill at the New Hampshire Avenue and Merwood Drive, New Hampshire Avenue and Ethan Allen Avenue, and New Hampshire Avenue and Sheridan Street station areas—all designated for reinvestment and improved walkability.

Eastern Silver Spring Communities Plan (Ongoing)

This plan is currently in the preliminary recommendations stage, with adoption anticipated in Fall 2027. As currently drafted in the preliminary recommendations, this plan will update the previous *East Silver Spring Master Plan* recommendations to invite mixed-use development at existing multifamily residential and institutional properties at both the proposed Oakview and Northampton BRT stations, with additional housing types (duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, townhouses and small multifamily apartments) proposed along the entire stretch of the corridor from I-495 to the Prince George’s County border. This plan supports Bus Rapid Transit by improving pedestrian connections to future stations and exploring better connections across I-495.

Project Evaluation

Alternatives Selection

While the New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study evaluated each alternative with over 20 metrics, five metrics are key differentiators among the alternatives. They are:

- Corridor Travel time (BRT, Local Bus, and General Traffic)
- Property impacts and ROW needs for roadway and stormwater infrastructure
- Estimated total capital costs for construction, design, and new buses
- Total capital cost per mile
- BRT transit ridership

Table 4 compares the relative performance, costs, and impacts of the No-Build and Build Alternatives using key evaluation metrics for the year 2045. Alternatives with greater levels of dedicated bus lanes—namely Alternatives 3, 4, and the Hybrid—provide the fastest BRT travel times and therefore the highest projected ridership. However, Alternatives 3 and 4 require substantially more right-of-way acquisition and therefore have higher capital costs due to the extent of median lane construction. In contrast, the Hybrid Alternative achieves the shortest BRT travel time while requiring significantly less right-of-way and lower capital costs than the median-lane alternatives.

Travel times for local buses in Alternatives 3 and 4 get worse because local buses are not permitted to operate in median bus lanes and have fewer general traffic lanes available to them. In contrast, local bus travel times are about 15 to 20 minutes faster for Alternatives 1 and 2, respectively and about 25 minutes faster for the Hybrid Alternative because they are able to benefit from transit signal priority and queue jumps (Alternative 1) as well as curbside bus lanes (Alternative 2 and Hybrid).

Finally, general traffic travel times for Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 (roughly 46 to 50 minutes) are all within a few minutes of the No Build alternative (48 minutes), but both Alternative 1 and the Hybrid Alternative experience substantially improved travel times (31 and 40 minutes, respectively) compared to the No Build Alternative.

Table 4: Comparison of Alternatives (2045)

Metric	No Build	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3	Alt 4	Hybrid
BRT Travel Time (minutes)	N/A	47.3	43.1	36.4	36.3	33.4
Local Bus Travel Time (minutes)	62.6	47.0	43.2	64.7	67.5	38.2
Traffic Travel Time (minutes)	48.0	31.3	45.7	47.5	50.2	39.9
ROW Needed (acres)	N/A	4.2	1.7	26.1	24.0	4.0
Capital Costs (\$ millions)	N/A	\$119.5	\$109.0	\$455.7	\$441.0	\$142.1
2045 BRT Boardings	N/A	7,720	8,168	9,210	9,181	10,973

A summary of anticipated intersection delay in 2045 is included in [Appendix F](#). The intersections with the heaviest delay include:

- New Hampshire Avenue & University Boulevard
- New Hampshire Avenue & Eastern Avenue

As with all projects, MCDOT will look to reduce delay as the project moves into the design phase.

Overall, the comparison highlights that the Hybrid Alternative offers a favorable balance of transit benefits, cost effectiveness, and reduced corridor impacts, supporting its advancement as the preferred alternative.

Recommendation: Advance the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative.

Station Evaluation

As noted in previous sections, MCDOT’s recommended station locations closely align with the 2013 *Countywide Transit Corridors Master Functional Plan*, with the following exceptions:

- Add a station at New Hampshire Avenue and Quebec Street.
- Add a station at New Hampshire Avenue and Merwood Drive.
- Add a station at Fort Totten Metrorail Station.
- Exclude the planned station at Colesville Park & Ride.
- Relocate the planned station at New Hampshire Avenue & Eastern Avenue to New Hampshire Avenue and Sheridan Street.

MCDOT's rationale for adding and relocating stations is sound. Planning staff believe there is merit to continuing to evaluate a station at the Colesville Park & Ride lot for a few reasons:

- If the park & ride lot is used for layovers and / or a turnaround location for BRT vehicles, the operational impact of establishing an additional station at this location would likely be negligible.
- As an end-of-the-line station, a park & ride lot can attract drivers traveling from a large catchment area to the north. Motorists parking at the park & ride would be more likely to ride the BRT if there is a station at the park & ride lot, rather than walk to the Randolph Road station, a walk of approximately five minutes.

Recommendation: Support the station locations identified in the study, while continuing to evaluate a potential station at the Colesville Park & Ride lot.

Additional Considerations

Transportation

Station Access

BRT patrons typically access stations by walking and bicycling and therefore a high-quality pedestrian and bicycle environment is critical to attracting riders and ensuring their safety. As with other transitway projects in Montgomery County, including the Purple Line, Veirs Mill Road BRT and US 29 Flash BRT, Montgomery County is advancing pedestrian and bicycle station access improvements as part of separate funding programs. These include:

- Purple Line (Project Number [P502004](#)): \$13.7 million to be spent on construction through FY30
- US 29 (Project Number [P502304](#)): \$5.7 million to be spent on construction through FY30

While more funding is needed, the County is making substantial improvements to these areas.

Figure 5 shows an evaluation of walking and bicycling conditions within one-half mile of proposed BRT stations using Montgomery Planning's Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC) and Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (BLTS) tools. PLOC captures how comfortable it is to walk and roll in different conditions in Montgomery County. Similarly, BLTS captures how comfortable it is to bicycle in different conditions in Montgomery County. For each station, the table measures the quality of the walking and bicycling environment to the northbound and southbound stations and shows the relative ridership. A score of 100% represents the highest quality walking and bicycling experience while a score of 0% represents the lowest quality walking and bicycling experiences. Bicycling scores tend to be worse than walking scores as even a short gap in a bikeway is considered to render that trip unbikeable.

Overall, bicycle conditions are poor, largely as there are few bikeways or parallel neighborhood streets along the corridor. PLOC scores are better, though some station areas will require substantial improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure, including Randolph Road, Powder Mill Road, etc.

Recommendation: Establish a Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area – New Hampshire Avenue BRT program to fund access improvements to proposed stations.

Table 5: Proposed Station Area Walking and Bicycling Conditions within 1/2 Mile of Proposed Stations¹

Station	PLOC Accessibility Score – Northbound Station	PLOC Accessibility Score – Southbound Station	BLTS Accessibility Score – Northbound Station	BLTS Accessibility Score – Southbound Station	Anticipated Ridership
Randolph Rd	25%	16%	0%	0%	Lowest
Valley Brook Dr	50%	35%	0%	0%	Lowest
Jackson Rd	17%	42%	0%	55%	Lowest
White Oak Transit Center	49%	62%	0%	0%	Highest
FDA White Oak Campus	69%	64%	0%	0%	Lowest
Powder Mill Rd	9%	10%	0%	0%	Lowest
Oakview Dr	81%	80%	98%	0%	Lowest
Northhampton Dr	85%	72%	0%	0%	Moderate
Quebec St	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	Moderate
Takoma/Langley Transit Center	63%	54%	0%	0%	Moderate
Merwood Dr	72%	8%	96%	0%	Lowest
MD 410 / Ethan Allen Ave	59%	60%	0%	0%	Moderate
Sheridan St	91%	47%	0%	61%	Lowest

¹ PLOC Accessibility Score evaluates the total “somewhat comfortable” and “very comfortable” distance of all residential trips within the station area as a percent of the total distance of all residential trips in the station area. BLTS Accessibility Score evaluates the percentage of dwelling units within the “network distance” miles of each transit station that are connected to the public facility on a completely “low stress” or “very low stress” bicycling network.

Interim Transit Operations

Montgomery County's proposed BRT network comprises over 100 miles and will take many years to build out. In the interim, the county is advancing low-cost bus improvements through the Bus Priority Program – Minor Projects ([P502204](#)), including bus lanes, queue jumps, passenger boarding and alighting improvements, implementation of transit signal priority, enhanced bus stops, and other similar capital improvements that will result in improved bus operations throughout Montgomery County. Completed projects include bus lanes on Veirs Mill Road in Wheaton; Century Boulevard, Crystal Rock Drive, and Aircraft Road near the Germantown Transit Center; and University Boulevard from Dennis Avenue to Amherst Avenue. Current and future projects include: upgrades to the MD 97 - Georgia Avenue bus lanes, MD 355 bus lanes, and capital improvements to support the WMATA ClearLanes program.

Recommendation: Provide additional funding in the Bus Priority Program – Minor Projects program to fund interim bus-only lanes on New Hampshire Avenue to build ridership on the corridor and advance near-term transit benefits in advance of full BRT implementation.

Environment

None of the alternatives appear to have significant environmental impacts. A more detailed review will be provided at time of Mandatory Referral.

Historic Preservation

The only historic site listed in the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* adjacent to the project area is the Naval Ordnance Laboratory Administration building (M:33/25-1), which is part of the FDA White Oak campus. As such, the work proposed at that intersection of New Hampshire and Mahan Road may require a Historic Area Work Permit.

Parks

The New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study did not evaluate alternatives by parkland impact. The Montgomery County parks immediately adjacent to the study corridor include Sligo Mill Neighborhood Conservation Area, Takoma Park Neighborhood Park, Hillwood Manor Neighborhood Park, Sligo Creek Stream Valley Unit 1A, Northwest Branch SVU3, and Hillendale Local Park. Parkland immediately adjacent to New Hampshire Avenue, is forested apart from Hillendale Local Park, which supports active recreation.

Based on the information provided in the alternatives concept maps and efforts to make improvements within the existing New Hampshire Avenue right-of-way, none of the alternatives are proposing significant impacts to these existing parks. Once the County Council selects a preferred alternative and MCDOT advances the design to show grading, stormwater management, and any other temporary or permanent construction impacts, Montgomery Parks will work with MCDOT through the Concept Review and Park Construction Permit processes to avoid, minimize, mitigate, and/or

compensate for any parkland that is affected by the work. Any parkland approved for the proposed BRT ROW would require mitigation or compensation at an equal or greater natural, cultural, and/or recreational value.

SECTION 6 – COMMUNITY OUTREACH

A complete discussion of the community outreach for this plan is included in [Appendix K](#) and includes:

- Technical Advisory Committee
- Supplemental Agency Meetings
- Corridor Advisory Committee Meetings
- Initial Public Meetings: June 15, 2022, June 16, 2022, June 18, 2022
- Open House: May 14, 2025
- Pop-Up Events
- Digital Engagement

SECTION 7 – ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: New Hampshire Avenue Bus Rapid Transit Study

Attachment B: Maryland State Highway Administration Letter of Support

Attachment C: City of Takoma Park Letter of Support

Attachment D: Glossary of Bus Rapid Transit Components