





Long Branch Sector Plan, Worksession 2

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Description

Following the March 7th work session a number of issues were left unresolved. Consequently, they have been added to the March 21st agenda as follows:

- Approve language revisions
- Approve the Plan strategy to address the impacts of the Purple Line along Arliss Street
- Approve recommendations for the development of the Long Branch Town Center and the Piney Branch Neighborhood Village
- Transportation
- Parks and Recreation

Scheduled Work Sessions

April 4th

- Environment
- Affordability
- Parking Strategy

May 9th

- Finalize Sector Plan and Request Approval to Transmit

Phasing – March 7th Issue

After considering comments by the City of Takoma Park and the Housing Opportunities Commission's requests for changes in phasing, the Board expressed concerns that the current approach may limit development potential in an area that needs revitalization. The Board agreed with Staff's recommendations to move sites #3 and #4 into the Interim Development phase, but further asked Staff to draft language that would allow the development of sites, upon meeting certain conditions, in the Long Term phase before the full funding of the Purple Line is in place.

Staff Response:

The original recommendation can be found on page 39 - "Commercial properties will be rezoned to an appropriate CRT Zone and will be phased through two Sectional Map Amendments to minimize residential displacement and the loss of affordable housing, to leverage public investments, and to encourage infill development with a maximum 3.0 FAR and heights ranging from 36 to 60 feet"

Staff proposes the following addition:

"As retaining affordability remains a primary Plan goal, sites that are designated for the Long Term phase may be developed during the Interim Development phase as long as a minimum 20% MPDUs are provided and development is consistent with the Plan's ultimate vision."

Board Response – March 7th:

The Board requested Staff prepare language to allow for the development of affordable housing, other than just MPDUs. Staff was further asked to work with DHCA and HOC to accomplish this. Staff is having ongoing conversations with these agencies as part of the larger affordability discussion and anticipates that final language will be available at the March 21st work session.

Arliss Street – March 7th Issue

Staff presented the Plan strategy, which addressed the physical impacts of the Purple Line on Arliss Street and nearby properties. The Plan offered the following land use, zoning and mobility recommendations:

- Rezone the Arliss Street townhome site to allow higher density, mixed land uses that better address significant right-of-way changes and that also provide an appropriate transition between the adjacent single family homes and the proposed Long Branch Town Center.
- Introduce a private street network that interconnects the Super Block and adjacent properties and addresses the loss of left turns along Arliss Street.
- Provide an attractive pedestrian-friendly street cross section that includes street furniture, wider sidewalks and bike lanes.
- Reduce the visual impact of the tunnel portal, which will be addressed in greater detail in the urban design guidelines.

Inconsistent Section on Arliss Street

The Sector Plan recommends a typical 100-foot cross section along Arliss Street. The Purple Line Concept Plan is proposing essentially three different sections along Arliss Street: a tunnel section with a 109 ft. ROW; a portal section with a 116 ft. ROW; and a street/station section with a 112 ft. ROW.

Testimony:

Executive staff commented that the Staff Draft is inconsistent with the Purple Line Concept Plan width and sections for Arliss Street. Further, the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) is not planning to accommodate the proposed wider sidewalks and landscape panel.

Response:

On Arliss Street the Staff Draft is inconsistent with the Purple Line Concept Plan for two reasons:

- The Purple Line Concept Plan includes 16 to 20 ft. wide lanes that are required by Fire & Rescue for access by emergency vehicles, as well as on-street parking along the existing residential side of the street. It also provides right-of-way for turn lanes, but does not include bicycle lanes.
- The Staff Draft Plan would be fully implemented after construction of the Purple Line AND following redevelopment. The Purple Line constructed sidewalk (essentially eight feet wide with no buffer) would be replaced with consistent 5 ft. tree buffers and 10 ft. sidewalks. The Plan would also eliminate on-street parking and provide for striped bike lanes¹. Consistent with other area plans, this Sector Plan recommended minimum right-of-way does not include area for turn lanes.

The proposed Purple Line and Sector Plan sections are the subjects of ongoing discussions with MTA, MCDOT and other stakeholders. An update will be provided at the March 21st worksession.

Potential impacts or rezoning/redevelopment of the Arliss Street Townhomes

The Plan recommends the following for the Arliss Street Town Homes – Site #7 (page 76):

- CRT 2.5, C .25, R 2.5, H 60
- Provide appropriate transitions
- Limit development to less intensive commercial uses
- Consider live/work units
- Provide for a vegetated buffer

¹ While the Sector Plan recommended bike lanes are not shown in the concept plan they could be striped within the 16 to 20 ft. wide lanes, except at the turn lanes. Partial bike lanes are not a preferred treatment, but they are not uncommon in constricted environments. With redevelopment it is possible to extend the bike lanes.

The Board received the following testimony:

Testimony:

“Proposed commercial apartment building proposed for the north side of Arliss is especially egregious...how can 50 foot buildings immediately adjacent to the backyards of single family homes be a transition?” – Page 31 (Public Hearing Record: Long Branch Sector Plan)

Staff Response:

The average depth of Site #7 parcels is 100 feet, which allows for an adequate transition. There is also an existing vegetated buffer that further reduces visual impacts. The noticeable difference in topography will need to be addressed as a part of the design guidelines. Staff proposes the following additions to the Plan recommendations to address the community’s concerns:

- *Maintain the existing vegetated buffer on Site #7, which may need to be supplemented, to provide an appropriate transition between new development and existing single family homes along Plymouth Avenue.*
- *Maintain a maximum 40 foot building height along the rear property line of site #7 to allow an appropriate transition to adjacent single family homes.*

Design guidelines will also provide language supporting adequate, compatible transitions with the existing single family development on Plymouth Avenue. Staff believes these recommendations will help mitigate the impacts of new development on the existing single family community.

Board Response:

While the Board did take a favorable view toward the increased density they also expressed concerns about the potential impacts to the single family residential community along Plymouth Street. The Board requested that Staff provide a 3-D model of the site showing the proposed recommendations illustrating the proposed transitions. Staff will prepare a model of the site for the March 21st work session.

The Board also wanted Staff to expand/clarify the term “less intrusive commercial uses” in the Plan. Staff is proposing the following language:

Less intrusive commercial uses are defined as small, neighborhood serving retailing and offices with limited trip generation. Special Exceptions and limited uses are also not encouraged in these areas.

Long Branch Town Center and Town Center Area – March 7th Issue

The Long Branch Town Center area includes all of the commercially zoned properties and identified residential properties east of the Long Branch Stream Valley Park. The Super Block (Long Branch Town Center) represents one of the largest developable sites within the Town Center area and serves as the focal point for Long Branch. The Town Center (aka Super Block) is comprised of six individually owned parcels and acts as the economic engine and the primary destination within the Plan area. It has a strong

regional reputation due to its concentration of small businesses including a large number of culturally diverse shops and eateries, which also provide a considerable number of local jobs.

Equally important is the site's proximity to a number of public facilities (i.e. Long Branch Library, Community Center and Swimming Pool), densely populated garden apartment complexes and a planned Purple Line station. The Sector Plan seeks to enhance the capacity of the Town Center by increasing density, introducing mixed use development, and defining its focus as the center of the Long Branch Community.

Long Branch Town Center

8701, 8800, 8805-8809 Flower Avenue

8528 and 8550 Piney Branch Road

8750 Arliss Street

Size: 431, 010 square feet

Existing Zoning: C-1 and CROZ Existing Height: varied 18-45 feet

The Sector Plan recommends the following:

Zoning: CRT – 2.5, C .5, R 2.0, H 60

Additional recommendations include the conveyance of up to one-half acre of land to the Parks Department for the creation of a Civic Green. This would provide much needed urban open space within the Long Branch Town Center area.

Testimony:

Public Hearing testimony addressed the use of the CRT Zones, rather than the less intensive CRN Zones. While residents primarily raised issues of compatibility and appropriate transitions Flower Theater and Shopping Center owners and Washington Real Estate Investment Trust (WRIT) representatives expressed concerns, suggesting that proposed densities and building heights were insufficient for many sites to reach full development potential. They testified that this was due in part to the Plan's proposed recommendations and proposed public benefits and amenities.

Staff Response:

Staff believes that the proposed CRT Zones are appropriate for the Long Branch Town Center as the majority of the properties are currently zoned C-1, with a CROZ overlay allowing a mix of uses. Additionally, a Purple Line station is planned for the area, which benefits from and supports the Plan's mixed use development recommendations. Development of the Super Block and other properties located in the area is best suited for the CRT Zones since they accommodate buffers and transitions to protect existing single-family neighborhoods from potential impacts. These transitions and buffers will be described further in the urban design guidelines.

Staff is also proposing the following changes to the Site 1 recommendations:

Remove

- Designate the Flower Theater and Shopping Center and its environmental setting as a historic resource in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and incorporate them as part of any proposed redevelopment
- Achieve minimum LEED Gold or equivalent building certification and efforts to improve tree canopy to cover between 25 and 30 percent or greater
- Establish a new urban park as Long Branch’s central civic gathering space that is:
 - at least ½ acre
 - owned, operated, and maintained by the Parks Department
 - with its exact location and design determined during the development review

Add

- Staff is proposing the following language for the Civic Green:
 - *“A central civic green, urban park with a minimum size of .5 acre, to be located on an Interim Development (Phase One) site within an area of highest density. The park should be located near the planned Arliss Street Station and have a visible connection to nearby activating uses and contain a mixture of hard and soft surfaces, including an event space.”*
- Designate the Flower Theater façade on the Locational Atlas and incorporate it into any proposed redevelopment.

Revisions

- Identify sites and design solutions to increase the parking supply, ~~including the construction of a public parking facility~~ and applying shared parking programs.
- A private street that connects Flower Avenue with Garland Avenue at a signalized location.

Public Benefits and Amenities

There was also general discussion and testimony regarding recommended public benefits and amenities and the resulting impacts on the potential redevelopment of the Super Block.

Staff Response:

Staff believes the mix of uses as proposed are adequate and reflect the vision of creating a neighborhood-serving town center with local retail and commercial uses. Additionally, Staff believes the remaining recommended Public Benefits and Amenities (i.e. affordable housing, support for small businesses and parking strategies) are comprehensive in nature and are necessary to provide the community with much needed physical and quality of life improvements.

Staff also proposes the following changes to the CR Zone incentive density category recommendation:

- Major Public Facilities
 - Public Parking (remove)
 - Police Sub-Station (added)

- Quality of Building and Site Design
 - ~~Historic resource protection (Flower Theater at 8701 Flower Avenue)~~
- ~~Retained buildings (Flower Theater)~~

WRIT

The largest property owner on the Super Block is the *Washington Real Estate Investment Trust (WRIT)* and it owns the 5.4 acre site located close to the planned Purple Line Station. This property is home to the Giant grocery and a number locally-serving retail and commercial services.

WRIT representatives testified that the Sector Plan’s recommended 2.5 FAR is not achievable due to the following limiting factors:

- Maximum 60 foot height
- Loss of land along Arliss Road due to an expanded Purple Line and ROW
- proposed public benefits and amenities (including structured parking and the Civic Green)

WRIT has proposed a maximum height of 150 feet, with a transition to 60 feet along Arliss Road. Additionally, they would like to relocate the proposed private street so it does not bifurcate their property. According to WRIT, the street as currently proposed, further reduces developable area.

Staff Response:

Due to time constraints Staff was unable to finish discussing this issue at the February 21st worksession. Staff acknowledges that recent increases to the width of Arliss Street have reduced the developable area of the Super Block. However, there have been additional conversations with property owners, including several meetings where Staff presented and discussed revised plan concepts. Staff continues to refine the land use and zoning recommendations to attempt to offset the encroachment of the Purple Line and encourage redevelopment of this site. Based on recent property reductions, Staff believes additional height and an increased FAR will be required to accommodate full development potential of this 5.4 acre parcel.

An additional meeting is scheduled for March 15th to discuss the impacts of an expanded Arliss Street and Purple Line on the property. Staff will meet with the WRIT, MTA, Kay Properties and SHA to conclude recommendations for a cross section and subsequent land use and zoning changes. The final recommendations will be described in a 3-D model that will be presented at the March 21st work session.

Encroachment into Town Center (Site 1)

MTA’s proposed alignment of the Purple Line along Arliss Street goes from a tunnel, to a portal, and then to an at-grade transit way. This requires a significant expansion of the Arliss Street right-of-way. Most of this right-of-way is acquired from the Town Center (Site 1) side of the road, ranging from an estimated 25 to 50 feet.

Testimony:

WRIT submitted testimony that the Purple Line Concept Plan encroachments hinder redevelopment of the Town Center block. WRIT is concerned that the proposed alignment impacts 17% of their property (0.9 acres) and results in a loss of 22,400 square feet of commercial space and 90 residential units. In general, the proposed alignment unfairly burdens landowners on the Town Center site. According to WRIT, the MTA alignment, combined with other Plan recommendations, creates a scenario where the recommended 2.5 FAR is unachievable.

Staff Response:

There has been general discussion about these issues at the first two worksessions, along with a decision to discuss them in greater depth on March 21st. This follows a series of meetings to discuss issues and potential options for reducing impacts to Town Center. At this time, Staff has met with MTA and MCDOT separately. MTA has presented several draft options for reducing encroachments, while the typical Arliss Street cross section has been discussed with MCDOT in depth, particularly on-street parking.

Staff and the various stakeholders - MTA, MCDOT, WRIT, and Kay Management (owners of the Flower Branch Apartments) - are scheduled to meet prior to March 21st with an update provided at the worksession.

Staff agrees that the Purple Line Plan for this area, as currently proposed, does not provide an equitable distribution of impacts to both sides of Arliss Street. Also acknowledged are the existing apartments on the north/east side of the street and the large parking lot on the Town Center side and the reasonable approach of restraining costs by shifting impacts to the parking lot. However, efforts should examine feasible alternatives to reduce impacts and strive for a more equitable outcome.

In essence, the discussion revolves around the space provided for four elements of the typical section and how they can be reduced:

- **Pedestrian Realm**: The Sector Plan recommends a consistent 15-foot pedestrian area, including sidewalk and a tree buffer. Both Planning Department staff and MCDOT staff agree that to promote pedestrian safety and to accommodate an intense level of activity, 15 ft. sidewalks are the minimum width acceptable adjacent to a transit station and a dense, mixed-use Town Center. WRIT would prefer 20 foot sidewalks for mixed-used developments, as long as they do not result in additional taking or dedication of their property.
- **On-street Parking**: Planning Department and MCDOT staffs do not agree whether to provide on-street parking on the east or west side of Arliss Street, south of Garland Avenue, after construction of the Purple Line.
 - MCDOT staff recommends retaining on-street parking along the Flower Branch Apartment's frontage after completion of the Purple Line because it is heavily used by residents. They further believe parking should remain adjacent to the apartments for safety reasons (reducing midblock crossings).

- Planning Department staff recommends shifting the proposed on-street parking from the Flower Branch Apartment frontage to the Town Center frontage with construction of the Purple Line, and then eliminating on-street parking altogether after redevelopment. This is because parking will be provided both on the Town Center and the Flower Branch Apartments sites. This shift would provide 12 ft. of additional space for the Town Center site. Staff does not believe that shifting parking to the west side of the road degrades pedestrian safety because the distance between signals is about 700 ft., with a mid-block crossing in between. Furthermore, the number of trips per day between the apartments and residents parked on the street is minimal.
- WRIT does not support on-street parking on either side of Arliss Street, either in the temporary or permanent condition. In their experience, it is atypical to have a street with both surface light rail and parking in such a tight configuration.
- MTA does not have a position regarding on-street parking, but included it in the Concept Plan at the request of MCDOT.
- Bike Lanes: While the Sector Plan recommended bike lanes are not shown in the concept plan, they could be striped within the 16 to 20 ft. wide lanes required by Fire & Rescue, except where turn lanes are shown. Partial bike lanes are not a preferred treatment, but they are not uncommon in constricted environments. With redevelopment it is possible to extend the bike lanes. Therefore, the presence of bike lanes on Arliss Street does not affect the encroachment into the Town Center, except along turn lanes.
- Traffic Lanes: Fire & Rescue requires 20 ft. travel lanes on Arliss Street to accommodate the outriggers of emergency vehicles. In areas where on-street parking is not provided, traffic lanes can be reduced to 16 ft. if the sidewalks are constructed to bear the weight of emergency vehicles.

Access to Town Center from Arliss Street

The Purple Line Concept Plans accommodate full turn access to the Town Center site at the Arliss Street and Garland Avenue signalized intersection and partial access near Flower Avenue and the existing access along the rear of the Flower Theater and Shopping Center property.

Testimony:

WRIT is concerned that the location of site access, as proposed, reduces developable site area. Therefore, they prefer shifting the signalized intersection just to the north of the Long Branch Station on Arliss. This would either require an additional traffic signal between Piney Branch Road and Garland Avenue, or would require relocating Garland Avenue to just north of the station platform. They acknowledge that shifting the signal to the south would require relocating Garland Avenue (the access road to the Long Branch Library) as part of redevelopment of the Flower Branch Apartments.

George French expressed concern that the Purple Line will reduce access to businesses and suggested a “cut and cover” tunnel extending from the tunnel on Arliss Street all the way to University Blvd.

Lynn Westrope expressed concerns about access to and from the Super Block.

Staff Response:

Staff acknowledges the concerns raised by WRIT, as well as the challenges of adding or shifting the proposed traffic signal to the south of Garland Avenue. Because the Purple Line is proposed within the Arliss Street median, and within dedicated lanes, traffic movements across the tracks can only be accommodated at signalized intersection. Staff believes the proposed traffic signal at Arliss Street and Garland Avenue is well located to accommodate local access. It connects to the Long Branch Library and is midpoint between the signalized Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road intersections.

MCDOT does not recommend an additional signal between Garland Avenue and Piney Branch Road because the intersections are too closely spaced. Furthermore, MCDOT believes that the proposed signal is appropriately located.

In the event that WRIT can develop an acceptable solution for shifting the traffic signal, the Sector Plan text should be revised to state:

“The eventual redevelopment of parcels on either side of Arliss Street may require a network of internal streets that necessitate signalized intersections where those internal streets intersect Arliss Street, Flower Street, or Piney Branch Road. The eventual location of any additional signalized intersection(s) will be subject to site plan review and ultimately an operational decision made by the applicable implementing agency.”

To improve access to and from the Super Block, the Sector Plan proposes additional roadway connections, including private streets, to alleviate congestion and improve access.

Staff believes that the cost of a “cut and cover” option is excessive and instead has proposed ways to reduce access restrictions that are necessary to accommodate a dedicated median transitway.

Choke Point at Arliss Street / Walden Avenue / Garland Avenue / Super Block Driveway

Currently, Walden Avenue and Garland Avenue intersect Arliss Street in close proximity to each other. The Purple Line Concept Plan reconfigures these intersections, merging Arliss Street and Walden Avenue into a single intersection with Arliss Street. This consolidated intersection is proposed to be signalized under the Purple Line Concept Plan, with a new driveway into the Super Block site.

Testimony

Residents testified to the ongoing access, congestion, and parking issues related to Arliss Street and the Super Block. Residents stated that the introduction of new development, the Purple Line and other plans could create a potential chokepoint at the Arliss Street, Walden Avenue, and Garland Avenue intersections.

Staff Response:

The reconfiguration will simplify existing traffic movements at this intersection, and will introduce a new left turn lane into the Super Block site.

Flower Theater and Shopping Center

The owners of the Flower Avenue Theater and Shopping Center (*Flower Avenue Shopping Center Limited Partnership*) testified that while they support the Plan's goal of reinvestment they disagree with the Historic Preservation Commission recommendation to designate the Flower Theater and Shopping Center as a historic resource. Additionally, the owners testified that the recommended 2.5 FAR is not achievable due to other Sector Plan recommendations (i.e. structured parking, LEED Gold certification, and increased MPDU requirements) and requested that the zoning recommendation be revised to the following: CRT 3.0, C 1.5, R 3.0, H 85).

Their representative (Shalom Baranes and Associates) stated

- "Allow development of up to 3.0 FAR and allow maximum building height of 85 feet, with design guidelines suggesting heights stepping down towards Flower Avenue. Allow an FAR of 3.0 with a maximum height of 85 feet, which is required to support desired community benefits."
- "Allow commercial density up to 1.5 FAR to provide more flexibility to accommodate mixed use development".

Staff Response:

At the March 7th work session the Board decided to only designate on the Locational Atlas the façade of the Flower Theater and its flanking wings, leaving the remainder of the parcel available for full development. As such, Staff believes that the recommended 2.5 FAR is adequate and can be achieved with an increase in the height to a maximum of 70 feet. Staff supported an increase in the FAR in order to achieve the Plan vision of a shared public parking structure, however, this approach has been rejected by the property owner.

Additionally, the Board requested that Staff prepare and include language in the Sector Plan illustrating the intent of the Locational Atlas designation of the Flower Theater. Staff will also include language in the design guidelines to address place-making and potential redevelopment of the site. Staff anticipates meeting again with property owners prior to the worksession to discuss design guidelines and proposed revisions.

8750 Arliss Street - Flower Theater and Shopping Center Limited Partnership

The property owner accepts Staff's suggested density and heights; however, asks for a mix of uses which provide greater flexibility to meet market demand. Pursuant to Site Plan No. 820060080, approved by the Planning Board on September 28, 2006, up to 55,800 square feet of commercial gross floor area has already been approved for this site – an approximately 1.4 FAR.

Staff Response:

Staff is proposing a change in the recommended building heights to better achieve the recommended 2.5 FAR. While Site Plan No. 820060080 was conditionally approved and is valid until 10-26-2013, Staff believes that the Plan’s recommendation is in line with the current vision for Long Branch. Additionally, the owner is not prohibited from developing under the approved Site Plan.

Remaining Properties

Neither testimony nor any comments have been received from the remaining Long Branch Town Center (Super Block) property owners.

Staff Response:

While these property owners have not requested additional density or height, Staff is proposing changes in order to comprehensively address zoning and land use issues within Town Center. These recommendations will be presented as part of the larger Town Center presentation on March 21st.

Piney Branch Neighborhood Village – March 7th Issue

The Piney Branch Neighborhood Village is located east of the Long Branch Stream Valley and is home to a planned Purple Line station to be located within the median along University Boulevard at/near the Gilbert Street intersection. This area also has an existing commercial district, and contains a variety of uses including the New Hampshire Estates Public Park.

Piney Branch Neighborhood Village (Northeast) (page 55)

618,640 and 642 University Boulevard, East and ~~8818 Piney Branch Road~~

Size: 1.83 acres

Existing Zoning: C-1, CROZ and R-60

Existing Height: varied 18-45 feet

The Sector Plan recommends the following:

Zoning: CRT – 2.5, C .5, R 2.5, H 60

Additional recommendations included support for the development of a neighborhood service center that could provide social, educational and naturalization services and a publicly accessible green space of at least ¼ acre.

It includes one Interim Development site (Site #2) which is located at the northeast quadrant of Piney Branch Road and University Boulevard. Please note that testimony was received from the Clifton Park Baptist Church and presented to Board at the March 7th worksession. The church’s representatives requested that the property maintain its existing R-60 zoning as there were no plans to provide for residential and/or commercial uses on site. Additionally, the Church expressed concern that any expansion of the church’s existing facility would trigger the public benefits and amenities provisions of the proposed CRT zone. This requested was supported by Staff and presented to the Board.

Board Response:

The Board accepted the request but asked Staff to prepare language allowing for mixed-use development if the property is sold or acquired by another entity.

Staff Response:

8818 Piney Branch is owned and operated by the Clifton Park Baptist Church as a place of worship. While the owners currently do not plan to redevelop the site for residential and/or commercial uses the property is suitable for mixed use development. The Plan allows for the development of this site as mixed-use should the property is sold and acquired by another entity.

Site #13 - Glenville Road Extension

Glenville Road is currently a cul-de-sac lined with garden apartments and some single family homes. The Plan recommends (page 60) that Glenville Road be extended to Piney Branch Road and reclassified as a Minor Arterial, with a minimum right-of-way of 70 feet to facilitate Long Term redevelopment and improve local circulation. This street is also referenced in the Plan recommendations for Site #13, Piney Branch Road/University Boulevard (Northwest) (page 82).

These recommendations are as follows:

- Appropriately locate residential uses along Glenville Road and only allow limited, less intrusive commercial uses until an adequate vehicular connection between Glenville Road and Piney Branch Road is established

Additionally, the construction of the Glenville Road extension is recommended as a Major Public Facility under the CR Zone incentive density category.

Testimony:

Testimony was received from Brett Rouillier and the Montgomery Housing Partnership regarding the proposed extension and reclassification of Glenville Road. Mr. Rouillier testified to the impact of development on the already failing intersections (page 48 – Long Branch Sector Plan – Public Hearing Record Transcript). He stated that “...Piney Branch and University Boulevard is a failing intersection. They’re building like little ring roads to get around that intersection. One of them is Glenville Avenue...a very small street going through a neighborhood. How can you make this road an arterial street through a community?”

Greg Baker of the Montgomery Housing Partnership testified to the following at the public hearing (see page 86) “we have four properties at Glenville Road. We do not like the idea of connecting Glenville Road to Piney Branch Road”.

Staff Response:

This road was recommended to provide access for future development on Site #13, which includes the four properties owned by the Montgomery Housing Partnership. As a cul-de-sac Glenville Road would be

unsuitable for any significant increase in development. This road is not primarily intended to reduce congestion. It was not tested for congestion relief because it is dependent upon redevelopment, though it may help alleviate some congestion at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and University Boulevard.

Staff continues to support the extension of Glenville Road as a Long Term enhancement to the Plan Area internal road network. The challenges are significant as there is a substantial grade between the cul-de-sac and Piney Branch Rd, and Glenville Road would need to be re-graded to tie into Piney Branch Road. As such, the extension could not likely be constructed without redevelopment of most or all of the residential buildings on Glenville Rd, and without the acquisition of the parcel where the Miles Glass Company is located. While this road is a Long Term recommendation, it could ultimately tie into a realigned driveway to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center driveway. A driveway recommended addressing the loss of access attributed to the construction of the Purple Line.

Issue 1: Piney Branch Road

Inconsistent Sections on Piney Branch Road

The Sector Plan recommends a 112-ft typical section along Piney Branch Rd, between Arliss Street and University Blvd. The Purple Line Concept Plan is proposing a 92 feet section.

Testimony:

Executive staff commented that the Staff Draft is inconsistent with the Purple Line Concept Plan regarding the width and cross sections of Piney Branch Road. In addition, MTA is not planning major widening of these roadways to accommodate the wider proposed sidewalks and landscape panels.

Staff Response:

On Piney Branch Road the inconsistency between the plans is largely due to timing.

- The Purple Line Concept Plan is the interim condition that will be realized upon completion of the Purple Line.
- The Staff Draft is the ultimate condition that will be realized after the completion of the Purple Line and redevelopment.

The differences in right-of-way width result because redevelopment will replace the 5 foot sidewalks adjacent to the curb (provided by the Purple Line) with consistent 5 foot wide tree buffers and 10 foot sidewalks (a combined difference of 20 feet when considering the additional space needed on both sides of the roadway).

Pedestrian Overpass

Testimony:

Johel Garcia testified that a pedestrian overpass is needed on Piney Branch Road.

Staff Response:

A pedestrian overpass was not studied as a part of this section of the Purple Line. Staff acknowledges that there have been significant pedestrian safety issues on Piney Branch Road. In fact, this road was the subject of a pedestrian road safety audit by MCDOT a few years ago due to the high number of pedestrian and vehicular crashes. Several improvements have been made, including crossing improvements at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Garland Avenue. The Purple Line will increase pedestrian safety at this intersection by adding a traffic signal at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Garland Avenue. In addition, with redevelopment, there will be a 10 foot buffer from traffic (5 foot bike lane and 5 foot tree buffer). The staff believes a bridge will result in increased travel (walk) time, require additional effort by a pedestrian to ascend the bridge, and generally not be an inviting way to cross the street. The staff does not believe that it is an effective means to address pedestrian safety concerns and that resources are better targeted toward providing for a safe at grade crossing experience.

Issue 2: Gilbert Street Extended

The Sector Plan proposes an extension of Gilbert Street from University Blvd to Piney Branch Road. This road would have several benefits:

1. Reduce congestion at the intersection of University Blvd / Piney Branch Road.
2. Provide vehicular access to Site 12 (location of the existing Latino market and thrift store).
3. Replacement parking for the New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park parking lot eliminated by the Purple Line.
4. An off-road bikeway connecting the Sligo Creek Trail and Long Branch Trail to the Northwest Branch Trail (though a short segment is in Prince George's County).
5. Enhanced access to the Piney Branch Road station.

Note that #4 and #5 above are dependent upon SHA agreeing to signalize the intersection of University Blvd and Gilbert Street.

*Impacts of Gilbert Street Extended***Testimony:**

Brett Rouillier expressed concern about impacts associated with the Gilbert Street Extended.

Staff Response:

While a portion of Gilbert Street extended would be located in Site 12, a portion would also traverse the New Hampshire Estate Neighborhood Park. The Department of Parks believes that this is acceptable, especially since it would provide replacement parking for the existing parking lot that will be eliminated by the Purple Line, and because it would increase "eyes on the park". Staff continues to support the Gilbert Street extension as proposed in the Staff Draft Plan.

Turn Movements at Both Ends of Gilbert Street Extended

Testimony:

MCDOT staff asked Planning Department staff to consider what turn movements would be permitted on both ends of the Gilbert Street extension.

Staff Response:

From a congestion relief perspective, the Gilbert Street extension is meant to facilitate eastbound traffic on Piney Branch Road headed northbound on University Blvd. At a minimum, right-in/right-out movements would be permitted at both ends of the road, though we believe that full movements to/from Piney Branch Road may be possible without a signal. Full movements at University / Gilbert Street Extended would only be provided if SHA agrees to provide a signalized intersection.

Issue 3: Barron Street and Gilbert Street

The Sector Plan does not propose roadway classifications for Barron Street and Gilbert Street in the southwest quadrant of University Blvd and Piney Branch Road.

Testimony:

Some traffic cuts through the neighborhood in the southwest quadrant of Piney Branch Road and University Blvd. Should Barron Street and Gilbert Street continue to be secondary residential roads?

Staff Response:

These roadways should be classified as Primary Residential Streets to reflect their use as the primary point of access to greater than 200 residential units, rather than their use by cut-through traffic. The recommended road standard is 2003.12 with a 70-foot ROW.

Issue 4: Domer Avenue Multimodal Bridge

A pedestrian bridge currently exists at Domer Avenue over the Long Branch Stream Valley Park. The Staff Draft proposes replacing this bridge with a multimodal bridge to:

- Improve local traffic circulation
- Improve security by increasing “eyes on the street”
- Enhance an east-west off-road bikeway connection from the Sligo Creek Trail to the Northwest Branch Trail

Testimony:

Tony Hausner testified that the restricted left turn access to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center is problematic and could be addressed using local streets and a bridge over the Long Branch Stream Valley at Domer Avenue.

Staff Response:

Staff concurs and reiterates the other benefits the bridge will provide. There has been no official comment from MCDOT on the bridge. However, Parks staff believes that there is a lot of impact to the stream today, and that the Domer Bridge replacement wouldn't make it much worse. If the existing bridge abutments are removed and the stream is spanned, it could ultimately improve water quality. In addition, Staff believes there are multiple other benefits including improved access and security due to eyes on the street, etc.

Issue 5: Winding Hill Way

The Sector Plan recommends extending Winding Hill Way (City of Takoma Park right-of-way) as public alley to Flower Avenue with a minimum right-of-way width of 20 feet (page 60).

Testimony:

Winding Hill Way widening will have impacts.

Staff Response:

There is no increase in width recommended for Winding Hill Way as Staff is making a recommendation only for the extension to Flower Avenue, not the entire length of the right-of-way.

Testimony:

MCDOT staff indicated that turn restrictions may be likely on each end of Winding Hill Way due to proximity to signalized intersections.

Staff Response:

Staff acknowledges that operational decisions will be made by the implementing agency.

Issue 6: University Boulevard Adjacent to the Purple Line

Between Piney Branch Road and Carroll Avenue, the Staff Draft Sector Plan proposes University Blvd. to be a six-lane major highway, with a 120 ft. right-of-way plus the right-of-way required by the Purple Line. The Plan also recommends a Dual Bikeway on University Blvd, with bike lanes and a shared use path in the interim, transitioning to bike lanes and a cycle track upon redevelopment².

Ultimate Section after the Purple Line AND Redevelopment

Testimony:

MTA submitted written testimony that the wider sidewalks, tree buffers, and cycle tracks on University Blvd are not part of the Purple Line and will be implemented through redevelopment.

² The Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan introduced the concept of a Dual Bikeway. Dual Bikeways include two bikeway facilities and are intended to address cyclists of varying abilities and comfort levels.

Staff Response:

The Purple Line concept plans on University Blvd remain under development and have not been shared with Planning Department staff. It is unclear at this time how the staff recommendations for wider sidewalks and bikeways would impact the New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park, single-family homes, and the developable space for redevelopment areas and whether a signalized intersection at University Blvd and Gilbert Street will be permitted by SHA.

Bikeway Recommendation

Testimony:

MCDOT staff wants confirmation that both bike lanes and a cycle track on needed on University Blvd.

Staff Response:

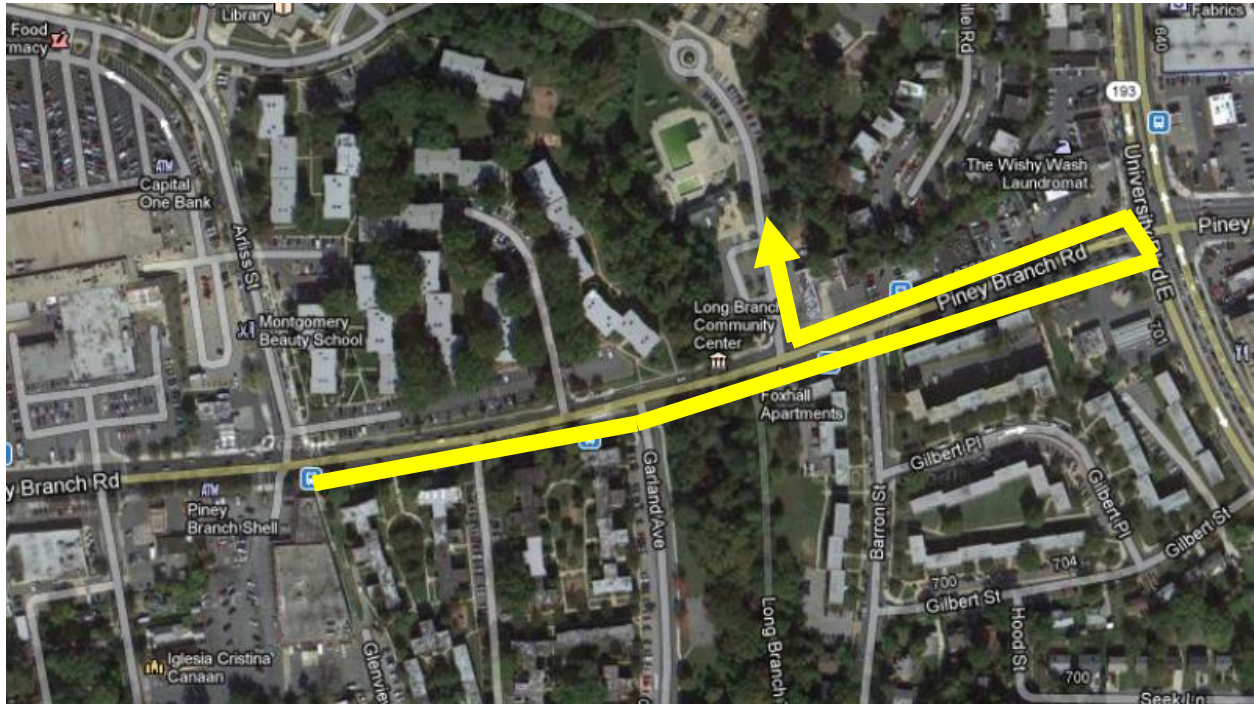
The Sector Plan area has a low level of car ownership and a high level of bicycle usage. The bicycle usage could be expanded if appropriate bicycle facilities are provided. Staff believes that cycle tracks are needed on University Blvd. because on higher speed/higher volume roads a greater portion of the cycling population will use cycle tracks than bike lanes. However, SHA has a policy to include bike lanes on any state highway undergoing widening or new construction. An agreement was reached with SHA during the Takoma/Langley Sector Plan to provide both bikeway types. Staff is recommending the extension of the Takoma/Langley bikeways to Long Branch. The state is updating its Pedestrian/Bicycle master plan and one of Planning Department staff's comments is to provide a more flexible bike lane policy that permits the use of cycle tracks. If cycle tracks are permitted, the bike lanes would no longer be needed. Staff continues to recommend the ultimate provision of cycle tracks on University Boulevard between New Hampshire Boulevard and Piney Branch Road.

Issue 7: Access to Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center

Because the Purple Line is proposed to operate in the median of Piney Branch Road, left turns from Piney Branch Road would be prohibited into Garland Avenue and Barron Street, as well as into and out of all driveways along Piney Branch Road between University Blvd. and Arliss Street. Vehicles intending to make these left turns would be required to travel beyond the intersection, make a U-turn at the next available intersection, and make a right turn onto the desired street or driveway. This is particularly problematic for the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center.

MTA states that facility patrons will still be able to access the facilities via U-turns at Arliss Street and University. Vehicles traveling in the eastbound direction on Piney Branch Road would have to pass the recreation center, make a U-turn at University Blvd., and then turn right into the recreation center (see Exhibit 1).

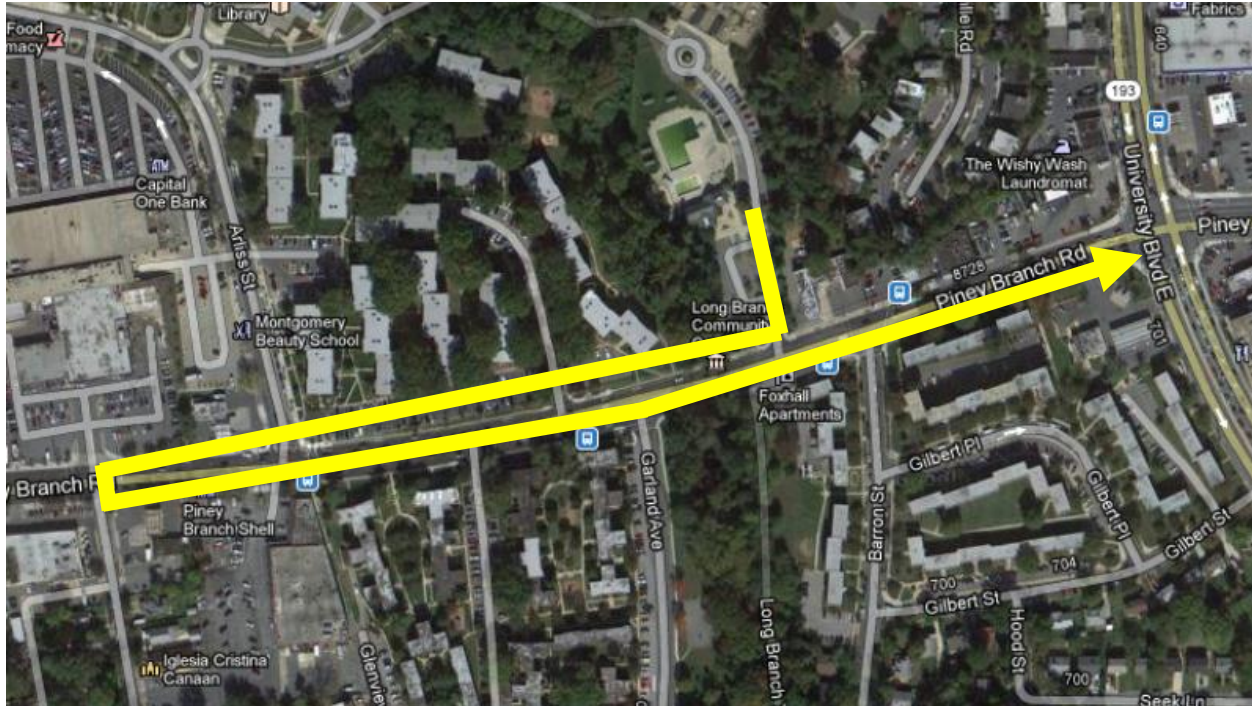
Exhibit 1: MTA's Proposed Access to Long Branch Recreation Center and Pool (From Eastbound Direction)



A plan view of Long Branch showing the proposed access into the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center for motorists traveling from the west.

Exiting vehicles headed in the eastbound direction would have to make a right onto Piney Branch Road, make a U-turn at Greenwood Avenue, and then head in the eastbound direction on Piney Branch Road (see Exhibit 2). Of the two access restrictions, the proposed replacement of the entering left turn with a U-turn at University Blvd. is the most concerning.

Exhibit 2: MTA's Proposed Egress from Long Branch Recreation Center and Pool (To Eastbound Direction)



A plan view of Long Branch showing the proposed egress from the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center for motorists traveling to the west.

M-NCPPC staff (Planning Department and Department of Parks) share the concern that these intersections will be complicated enough post-Purple Line and post-Sector Plan implementation and we should not make the intersections even more complicated by encouraging U-turn movements. In addition, the U-turn concept at the intersection of Piney Branch Road and University Blvd. is incompatible with the proposed congestion relief strategy proposed in the Long Branch Sector Plan. This strategy is intended to relocate left turns from eastbound Piney Branch Road to northbound University Blvd. to Gilbert Street Extended proposed at the southwest corner of the intersection.

MTA has been asked to explore three options to allow full turning movements into and out of these facilities in the Long Branch Sector Plan Public Hearing Draft (page 33). These include:

- Option 1: Align the driveway of the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center with Barron Street and also add a new left turn lane for eastbound traffic along Piney Branch Road.
- Option 2: Widen and improve the new Long Branch Pedestrian Bridge to allow vehicular access to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center from Arliss Street.
- Option 3: Develop preliminary concepts and cost estimates to relocate the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center to a new public facility campus on the west side of the Long Branch Stream Valley, at the current site of the Long Branch Library.

Testimony:

Executive staff commented that access challenges at the entrance driveway to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center will significantly impede pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic from reaching the facility. They stated that a realignment of the driveway to the intersection of Piney Branch Road and Barron Street – as outlined in the staff report – will restore half of the access restrictions proposed by the Purple Line Concept Plan. They also state that a study to relocate the facilities to the Library site is fiscally impractical.

MTA noted that “the options listed, specifically developing preliminary concepts and cost estimate for relocating the community center and pool are beyond the scope of the Purple Line study and reasonable mitigation for the impacts expected as a result of the project.” The Planning Board – in its February 28th review of various Purple Line issues, agreed that the MTA should not incur costs to study the option to relocate the pool and recreation center. MTA has agreed to participate in a study of the other options, but not necessarily assume the lead for a more detailed study of the remaining two options.

Additionally, testimony was received from the community expressing concern about the potential impact of relocation of these facilities on the existing tree canopy.

Staff Response:

In the February 28th briefing, Planning Department staff presented a fourth option – Option 1A – that would realign the driveway with Barron Street, but instead of adding a new left turn lane for eastbound traffic would instead route visitors through south on Garland Avenue, across the proposed Domer Avenue multimodal bridge³, and north on Barron Street (see Exhibit 3). M-NCPPC staff believes this option provides the best value to the County because the two components of the access solution have independent utility:

- A realigned driveway to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center can be tied into an extension of Glenville Road. This will improve local traffic circulation and reduce traffic congestion.
- The Domer Avenue multimodal bridge would improve local traffic circulation, improve security by increasing “eyes on the street”, and enhance an east-west off-road bikeway connection.

We acknowledge that facility visitors will still have to travel out of their way to access the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center, but believe this is the most efficient option available.

Staff Response – Parks:

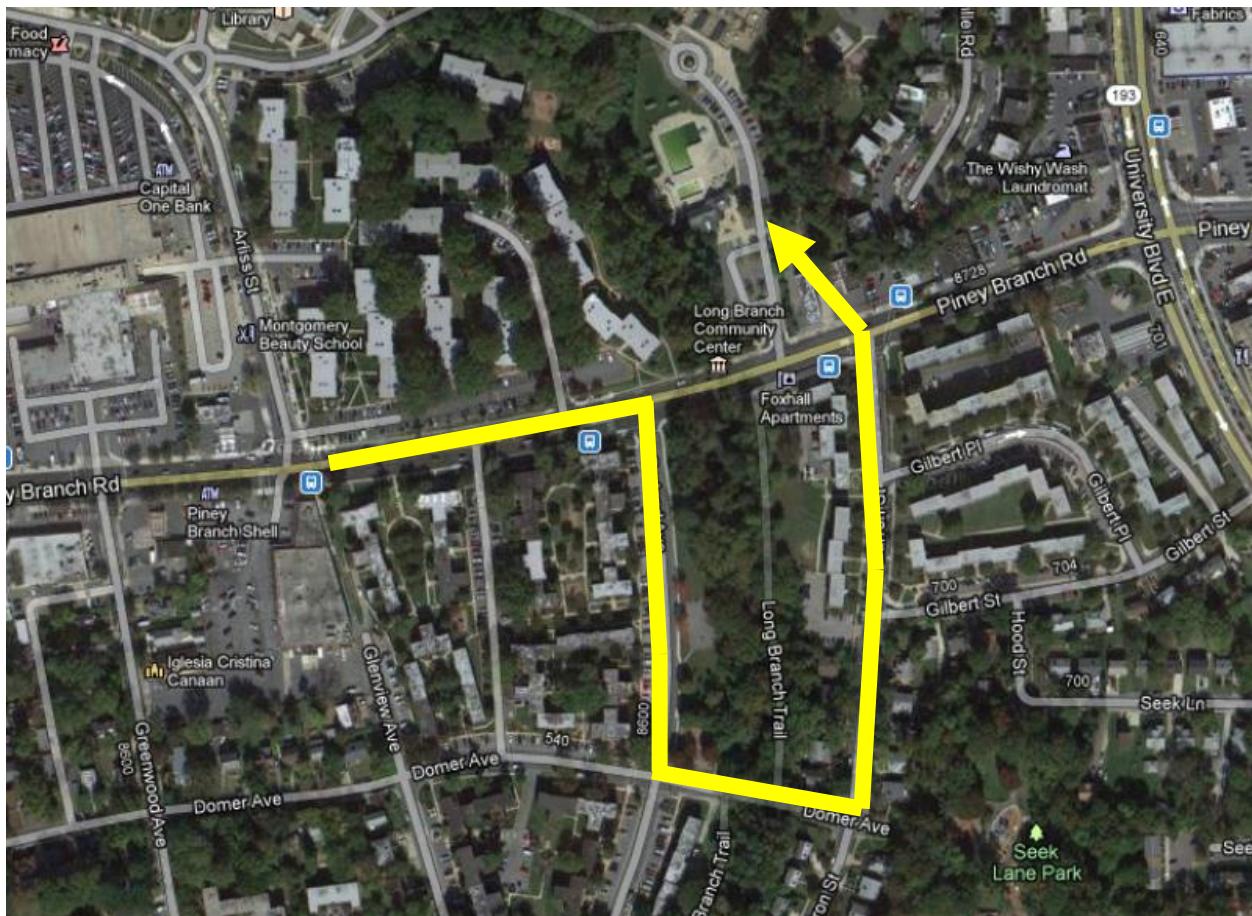
Staff has coordinated closely with MCRD staff about the Smart Growth benefits provided by the relocation of the recreation facilities. The relocation of the pool and recreation center are long-term recommendations, related to the life cycle upgrades and replacement of the facilities and should be included on their own merits and not tied to the construction of the Purple Line.

³ The bridge is currently accessible by walking and bicycling.

There are resource impacts with both the current location and relocation but many positive attributes to relocation including the removal of the pool from within the floodplain and stream buffer in Long Branch Local Park. There is also the potential reuse of this site for environmentally sound activities. However, there may be the loss of some mature trees within the Long Branch-Arliss Neighborhood Park. Staff would work with environmental staff to further study and remediate any potential impact.

Furthermore, because the relocated pool and recreation center will be closer to the future Town Center and also the Purple Line station, it will further activate the area as the Plan proposes a significant increase in the number of residential units. This increase will lead to additional patrons of the pool, recreation center and library who will be able to travel by transit, foot and bicycle to the facility, thereby reducing vehicle trips and traffic within the community.

Exhibit 3: Fourth Access Option to Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center



A plan view showing a variation of Option 1 that routes visitors to the Long Branch Pool and Recreation Center along Garland Avenue, the proposed Domer Avenue multimodal bridge, and Barron Street.

Issue 8: Congestion

The intersection of University Blvd./Piney Branch Road slightly fails the 1600 CLV standard based on a recent traffic count. Congestion at the intersection can be expected to grow over the life of the Sector Plan. To alleviate congestion, the Sector Plan proposes relocating existing left turns from eastbound

Piney Branch Road to northbound University Blvd. to an extension of Gilbert Street between University Blvd. and Piney Branch Road. This would make it possible to eliminate the split phase traffic signal and to provide additional green time for other movements.

Intersection of University Blvd and Piney Branch Rd

Testimony:

Brett Rouillier testified that the community has a history of traffic impacts and the Sector Plan will degrade the already congested intersection at University Blvd./Piney Branch Road and Flower Avenue/Piney Branch Road.

Staff Response:

The Sector Plan is recommending infrastructure improvements and other design improvements to encourage and support multi-modal travel. This will help to alleviate some of the congestion by encouraging people to walk, bicycle or use transit as a means of transportation.

Under existing zoning the intersection of University Blvd / Piney Branch Road could reach a CLV well above the 1600 standard in the PM peak hour by 2040. This is largely a result of growth outside of the sector plan area, since through traffic (traffic that doesn't stop in the plan area) accounts for nearly 90% of traffic. The proposed zoning will not substantially degrade the intersection beyond what existing zoning could cause. Our analyses shows that the land use and transportation recommendations proposed in the Sector Plan will results in a CLV that is slightly over 1700 in the PM peak hour in 2040.

While congestion at the intersection of Flower Avenue and Piney Branch Road will continue to increase, that is the case regardless of the zoning changes proposed by the Sector Plan. Existing CLVs are low and are expected to be well within the 1600 standard in 2040 with the land use and transportation network proposed in the Sector Plan.

Issue 9: Additional Right-of-Way for the Purple Line

Roadway classifications are provided in Table 2 on page 51. For the segment of University Blvd. that includes the Purple Line, note #4 states that "This proposed minimum right-of-way does not include any additional right-of-way that may be required to accommodate the Purple Line. Additional right-of-way requirements for the Purple Line will be determined either at the time of final design for the Purple Line or at the time of subdivision using latest project-level plans available for the Purple Line." This note was included because during the preliminary engineering phase and into the final design phase of the project, the right-of-way requirements for the Purple Line can continue to change. A recent example is Arliss Street, where a minimum lane width requirement by Fire & Rescue increased the right-of-way requirements for the street.

Testimony:

MTA staff asked whether the minimum right-of-way for Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street should include the same reference in note #4 that is shown for University Blvd.

Staff Response:

This note was originally included only for University Blvd. because Purple Line concept plans for University Blvd. remain under development and have not been shared with Planning Department staff. While all rights-of-way are noted as minimums, due to the evolving nature of all segments of the Purple Line, it is prudent to provide additional notice that the minimum rights-of-way may need to increase. Staff supports the inclusion of the additional notice for Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street.

Issue 10: Coordination with MTA on Proposed Road Extensions and Realignment

The Sector Plans recommends extensions of Glenview Rd., Garland Avenue (north of Piney Branch Rd.), and Gilbert Street, and a realignment of Garland Avenue (south of Piney Branch Rd.).

Testimony:

MTA will coordinate with Planning Staff to incorporate proposed road extensions into the Purple Line design plans, but some turn movements may be restricted. On the segment of Garland Avenue south of Piney Branch Rd. the Sector Plan recommends narrowing Garland Street (page 34) and shifting it to the west. This will require changes to the Purple Line design.

Staff Response:

Staff appreciates MTA’s willingness to accommodate proposed road extensions to reduce congestion and improve local circulation. Staff will coordinate with MTA and MCDOT to identify the new alignment of Garland Street to expand the Long Branch-Garland Neighborhood Park, improve the walking and biking experience on Garland Avenue, and calm traffic speeds.

Issue 11: Pedestrian Bridge near the Long Branch Library

The Long Branch Pedestrian Bridge and Walkway is the first of a series of proposed linkages within the Long Branch community. The ADA compliant bridge will improve community accessibility by providing for a safe pedestrian and bicycle connection between the Long Branch Library, Community Center and Pool complex. It will also provide for a linkage between the communities located on either side of the Long Branch Stream Valley Park.

Testimony:

Lynn Westrope opposed expansion of existing pedestrian bridge near the Long Branch Library because it will create cut-through traffic between Piney Branch Road and Arliss Street.

Staff Response:

The pedestrian bridge is part of a larger redevelopment project that is independent of the Sector Plan. However, it should be noted that the current redevelopment of this bridge is designed to only provide vehicular access for Department of Parks and Montgomery County emergency vehicles.

Issue 12: Purple Line Impacts and Operations

Benefits of the Purple Line

Testimony:

Karina Velasco testified that she is unsure why the Purple Line is needed.

Staff Response:

The Purple Line is necessary to provide for improved transit access regionally as well as within Montgomery County and also to act as a catalyst for economic development in the Long Branch community.

Fan house near the portal on Arliss Street

The Purple Line briefing on February 28th discussed fan houses required for emergency ventilation of the Bethesda tunnel.

Testimony:

George French asked if fan houses are required in the Plymouth Avenue tunnel.

Staff Response:

There will not be a requirement for a fan house in the Plymouth Avenue tunnel.

Impacts to Buildings

On roads with dedicated lanes for the Purple Line, the right-of-way is planned to be expanded. This will result in strip acquisitions and full acquisitions of some properties.

Testimony:

How will the Purple Line impact the single-family house at the northeast corner of Flower Avenue/Arliss Street and the Latino Market and thrift store at the southeast corner of University Blvd / Piney Branch Rd?

Staff Response:

The single-family house will be acquired and removed by MTA for the construction of the Purple Line tunnel. It will be replaced with a traction power substation. The structure will be designed by MTA with input from the community.

The commercial buildings will be acquired and removed by MTA for construction of the Purple Line. The redevelopment of these properties will be part of an ongoing discussion with MTA but options include expanded parkland and/or redevelopment.

Business Displacement

Testimony:

MTA submitted written comments that while the Purple Line will displace some businesses; the Plan should indicate that the state/county is working to address these concerns.

Staff Response:

Displacement of businesses and affordable housing retention are addressed comprehensively in the Plan. These issues will continue to be discussed in upcoming work sessions.

Purple Line Fare

Testimony:

What is the estimated fare for the Purple Line?

Staff Response:

This question should be directed to MTA. It is our understanding that fare used by the MTA in the travel forecasting model is equivalent to today's bus fare. The exact fare at the time of implementation will be determined at some point in the future closer to actual implementation.

Issue 13: Clarify how Proposed Road Standards Correspond to Proposed Right-of-Way

The Context Sensitive Road Design Standards (aka Road Code) includes multiple typical sections for different road classifications. It is common practice in recent area plans to identify the road classification, right-of-way, and road code section (which are often modified).

Testimony:

MCDOT submitted written comments regarding the practice of recommending modified road code section, without indicating what the modifications are. They request that the proposed changes to the road code section be clearly identified in area plans, and specifically asked for clarification for four roadways:

- University Blvd., from Carroll Avenue to Piney Branch Rd.
- Flower Avenue, from Wabash Avenue to Domer Avenue
- Garland Avenue, from Wabash Avenue to Piney Branch Rd.
- Domer Avenue, from Flower Avenue to Barron St.

Additionally, the City of Takoma Park recommends a 60 feet typical section on Flower Avenue south of Piney Branch Road, with a 10 feet pedestrian realm and no bike lanes.

Staff Response:

University Boulevard:

The Staff Draft recommends University Blvd to be a Major Highway, modifying section 2008.02 to have a 120 feet right-of-way plus the Purple Line. In the Road Code, section 2008.02 is 150 feet, with six traffic lanes, and bike lanes. The 17 feet median in section 2008.02 would need to be expanded to accommodate the Purple Line. Minor adjustments to other elements of the typical section may also be needed.

The minimum ROW should be revised from 120 feet to 130 feet to reflect the minimum ROW recommended in the Purple Line Functional Master Plan.

Flower Avenue:

The Flower Avenue typical section was the subject of some discussion during the March 7th worksession. The Staff Draft recommended a 70 ft. right-of-way Arterial roadway with two lanes. The Road Code standard recommended in the Staff Draft is 2004.20, an Urban Minor Arterial roadway with two traffic lanes, plus two rows of parking. The standard was modified to swap one row of parking for bike lanes.

Planning Department staff concurs with the narrower right-of-way and believes that the section should be classified as a Minor Arterial instead of an Arterial, to reflect a two lane roadway⁴. We recommend retaining the 2004.20 Minor Arterial standard, modified to a 60 ft. ROW by removing the on-street parking and modifying the landscape buffers.

Garland Avenue & Domer Avenue

These two roads are recommended to be Primary Residential roadways, modifying section 2003.11 to have a 60 feet right-of-way. In the Road Code, section 2003.11 has a 70 feet right-of-way with parking on one side of the road. The 10 foot reduction would come from narrowing the combined tree buffer from 23.5 feet to 13.5 feet.

Issue 14: Operational Issues

MCDOT staff posed a series of operational questions.

Lane Geometry

Testimony:

MCDOT staff asked Planning Department staff to clarify whether left-turns would be intended to occur from shared thru/left lanes or from dedicated left-turn lanes, or if lefts would be prohibited.

Staff Response:

Operational issues are the purview of SHA on state roads.

Spacing of Median Breaks on University Blvd and Piney Branch Road

⁴ By definition the Road Code considers an Arterial roadway a four lane road and a Minor Arterial a two lane road.

Since the Purple Line is a dedicated transitway in the median along Piney Branch Road and University Blvd (among others), median breaks are only permitted at signalized intersections.

Testimony:

MCDOT prefers median breaks with a minimum spacing of 600 ft. on Piney Branch Road and University Blvd., but defers to SHA.

Staff Response:

SHA has agreed to median breaks less than 600 ft. on Piney Branch Road. The concept plans for the Purple Line on University Blvd. remain under development and have not been shared with staff. It is unclear at this time whether a signalized intersection at Gilbert Street will be permitted.

Access Restrictions along the Purple Line Alignment

Testimony:

Access restrictions along the Purple Line alignment are critical and should be restricted to right-in/right-out except where traffic signals are provided.

Staff Response:

Staff acknowledges that access will be restricted.

Signalized Intersections are Subject to Warrant Analyses

Testimony:

Proposed signalized intersections at Piney Branch Road / Garland Street and Arliss Street/Garland Street are subject to warrant analyses.

Staff Response:

Staff acknowledges that operational decisions will be made by the implementing agency.

Issue 15: Pedestrian Safety and Access

There were a number of comments regarding pedestrian safety and access.

Testimony:

George French asked where pedestrians will be able to cross Arliss Street and Piney Branch Road.

Staff Response:

Pedestrians will be able to cross Arliss Street at signalized intersections at Flower Avenue, Garland Avenue, and Piney Branch Rd., and at a mid-block crossing just north of the Long Branch Station

platform. Pedestrians will be able to cross Piney Branch Road at Arliss Street, Garland Avenue, Barron Street, and University Blvd.

Testimony:

MCDOT submitted the following comments regarding safe pedestrian access to the proposed Long Branch and Piney Branch stations in the Long Branch Sector Plan area:

- Consider measures east of University Blvd. to ensure safe/efficient access to the Purple Line stations to the west.
- Consider pedestrian access to the stations, especially from areas north of the Long Branch Station and areas south of the Piney Branch Road station.

Staff Response:

The Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan recommends the designation of Bicycle-Pedestrian Priority Areas around the two stations, as well as a menu of pedestrian/bicycle improvements including ADA-accessible pedestrian crossings at the intersections of all public streets and in close proximity (50') of all transit stops.

Staff recommends a signalized intersection at the intersection of University Blvd./Gilbert Street to provide access to the Piney Branch station from the south (among other things). This is the subject of ongoing analysis by MTA/SHA.

Testimony:

The Plan should document that Piney Branch Road from Flower Avenue to Prince George's County is a High Incidence Area for pedestrian crashes.

Staff Response:

Staff concurs with this recommendation. We recommend the following change on page 19 to document an important existing condition: "Sidewalks are the primary circulation routes for pedestrians and cyclist in Long Branch and it is important that they function safely and efficiently. [But based on a 2008 analysis of crash data, Piney Branch Road between Flower Avenue and the Prince George's County line is one of the County's High Incidence Areas for pedestrian crashes.] New and improved sidewalks [and crossings] will enhance connections [and improve safety] within..."

Testimony:

Consider access issues between Site #2 and Site #12, at the northeast and southeast corners of the University Blvd / Piney Branch Road intersection, respectively.

Staff Response:

Operational issues on state roads are the purview of SHA.

The Sector Plan includes a list of conditions for private streets on page 46. Private streets are proposed in Site 1 (Super Block), Site 5 (West Flower Avenue), and Site 9 (Flower Branch Apartments).

Testimony:

MCDOT staff submitted a comment that private streets should ensure that roads are ADA compliant. They also asked whether there any provisions if a property owner does not remove snow or repair the roads.

Staff Response:

These agreements and designs will be worked out at the time of subdivision.

Issue 17: Graphics

MCDOT staff submitted a number of comments on graphics in the Sector Plan:

Typical Section Illustrations

Testimony:

Label widths on typical-sections and indicate directionality.

Staff Response:

Typical section widths and directionality will be included in the design guidelines.

Illustration 7: Piney Branch Road Typical Section

Testimony:

The Piney Branch Road typical section between Flower Avenue and Arliss Street (page 63) shows five lanes, but the text refers to four lanes.

Staff Response:

The fifth lane is a center turn lane. The text states “Four travel lanes with wide planted median to be used for stormwater recharge. Dedicated left turn lane in median where required.”

Illustration 11: Gilbert Street Extension Typical Section

Testimony:

The Gilbert Street Extension typical section between (page 67) should be modified to show the shared use path.

Staff Response:

Staff concurs.

Map 2 and 7: Vision / Mobility Map

Testimony:

Map 2 and 7 (page 6 and 18) should show existing paths / trails.

Staff Response:

Staff concurs. The maps should be revised to include the Long Branch Trail and Sligo Creek Trail.

Map 12: Proposed Land Use AND Map 13: Proposed Zoning

Testimony:

The Proposed Zoning (page 37) and Proposed Zoning (page 39) maps should show proposed transportation modifications, particularly streets.

Staff Response:

Staff concurs. The maps should be revised to illustrate the transportation recommendations.

Issue 17: Parks

Purple Line Impact – New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park

The New Hampshire Estates Neighborhood Park is located along University Boulevard near its intersection with Piney Branch Road. The University Boulevard right-of-way will be expanded and shifted east; changes which will have a significant impact on the existing park. Additionally, the Plan is proposing an extension of Gilbert Street between Piney Branch Road and University Boulevard which will further impact the park.

The Plan makes the following recommendations to address these impacts:

“Acquire the County-owned property to the south of the park as part of the land swap(s) to improve land-use synergy with the adjacent school and expand the park to potentially allow for a full-size adult rectangular field.” (Page 33)

“Support the development of a neighborhood service center providing social, educational, and naturalization services” (Page 55)

“In conjunction with MCPS, explore options to program the park for education and improve its functional and spatial relationships with New Hampshire Estates Elementary School” (Page 70)

“Pursue a land swap to mitigate any parkland lost to the Purple Line or proposed access road” (Page 70)

“Consider a land swap to acquire 734 University Boulevard East to replace any parking lost to the Purple line and to improve synergy with the adjacent New Hampshire Estates Elementary School” (Page 70)

Testimony:

“CASA strongly opposes the Plan’s recommendation to acquire the CASA Silver Spring Welcome Center. This is unacceptable to be in the Plan. CASA Silver Spring Welcome Center opened its doors to the

community in 1994, 19 years ago. The recommendation to re-acquire the subject is not a viable option for us”.

Staff Response:

Staff is not proposing the acquisition of the Welcome Center property as it is already owned by Montgomery County. Staff is proposing that the use/service being contracted to CASA be relocated upon the development of a new center. Staff recommends that this new center be developed utilizing the CR Zone incentive density provision.

The Plan proposes the development of a new center that would be constructed during the interim development phase and located on Site #2 which is in the vicinity of the existing Welcome Center. Staff revised the recommendation as a part of the March 7th work session to the following:

Recommend the development of a neighborhood service center providing social, educational and naturalization services including but not limited to: legal services, vocational training and employment placement, and health education and community outreach.

There was additional testimony regarding the lack of sufficient park land and gathering spaces.

Staff Response:

The Plan proposes additional parkland and open space. Specifically, the plan recommends a new central civic green urban park to accommodate community events and festivals and renovation of existing parks to improve the overall level of service in the area.

Attachments

1. Updated - Summary of written and verbal testimony received for the public record.
2. Long Branch Sector Plan – Development Site Map
3. Long Branch Sector Plan – Staff Report Worksession #1 and Worksession #2