



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item No. 6
7-18-02

July 12, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief
County-wide Planning Division

Glenn Kreger, Team Leader
Community-Based Planning

Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief
Transportation Planning

FROM: Larry Cole: 301-495-4528, for the Park and Planning Department *LC*

PROJECTS: University Blvd. (MD193)/International Corridor Streetscape
Piney Branch Road (MD320) to Adelphi Road
Mandatory Referral No. 02804-SHA-1

REVIEW TYPE: Design Review

APPLICANT: Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)

COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING TEAM AREA: Silver Spring-Takoma Park

RECOMMENDATION: TRANSMIT COMMENTS TO SHA

The following comments are recommended on the proposed project (see Attachment 1: Vicinity Map):

1. We support this project as the County's third priority in the category of Commercial Revitalization. This project should include funding to make any necessary right-of-way purchases to achieve at least the minimum 120-foot width called for in the East Silver Spring and Takoma Park Master Plans.

2. We support the proposed interim improvement project to address the most immediate pedestrian safety needs and improve the character of this area.
3. Where five foot-sidewalks are constructed under this project, they should be completely unobstructed and be limited to lengths of no more than 200 feet.
4. Develop a signal timing plan in cooperation with the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) that discourages excessive speeds along University Boulevard.
5. Provide sufficient lighting to achieve the lighting levels recommended by the International Illuminating Society of North America (IESNA) for both sidewalks and intersections.
6. Differentiate the proposed bike lanes from the travel lanes by means of color or material.
7. Consider various barrier options to discourage pedestrians passively or actively from crossing at unsafe locations.
8. Design the landscaping of this project in accordance with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED).
9. Evaluate the length of the existing left-turn bays to determine where there are opportunities to reduce their length and support additional landscaping.
10. Provide trees and other streetscaping where possible in the median of University Boulevard as part of the interim improvement project.
11. Consider including public art as part of this project.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION

None

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would construct sidewalks and five-foot bike lanes along both sides of University Boulevard from Piney Branch Road in Montgomery County to Adelphi Road in Prince George's County. The sidewalk width would be eight feet preferred, five-foot minimum. Streetscaping elements such as street trees, brick paving and ornamental streetlights would be included.

The project would also include pedestrian safety improvements such as relocating bus stops to safer locations and providing additional crosswalks with pedestrian-actuated traffic signals and/or other enhancements.

STAFF ANALYSIS

This project would implement several of the recommendations in the Takoma Park and East Silver Spring Master Plans, which were approved and adopted in December 2000 (see Attachment 2).

The study was initiated at the request of various community organizations and was performed by SHA under the auspices of the Neighborhood Conservation Program, which relies on substantial community involvement to determine the scope of the required improvements.

The main concerns of the citizens and business people in this area were to improve the pedestrian and aesthetic environment. The need to better accommodate bicyclists was agreed upon later in the process. These concerns were expressed by the members of the task force that SHA appointed to study the needs of this area and by residents who attended the public meetings. M-NCPPC staff were members of this task force. The task force's recommendations for the ultimate concept plan are shown as Attachment 3. SHA's last public meeting brochure is shown as Attachment 4.

Project Location

The project is fairly complex in regard to jurisdictional coordination, involving the City of Takoma Park and the unincorporated areas of both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

The segment of University Boulevard from Piney Branch Road to Carroll Avenue is wholly within the unincorporated area of Montgomery County, shown as Segment A on Attachment 5.

From Carroll Avenue to just east of Merrimac Drive, shown as Segment B, the right-of-way and the area north of University are in the unincorporated area of Montgomery County. The area south of the right-of-way is in the City of Takoma Park.

From just east of Merrimac Drive to just east of 14th Avenue, shown as segment C, the right-of-way and the area north of University are in the unincorporated area of Prince George's County. The area south of the right-of-way is in the City of Takoma Park.

From just east of 14th Avenue to Adelphi Road, Segment D is wholly within the unincorporated area of Prince George's County.

For Segments B and C, while the existing right-of-way is not in the City of Takoma Park, direct access to the homes and businesses in the city is via University Boulevard. Any additional right-of-way or easements on the south side of the road would come from land in the City. Staff's comments on this project are confined to Segments A, B and C.

Jurisdictional Coordination and Planning Board Review

SHA staff presented their design study to the Takoma Park City Council on July 1, 2002. Comments made by both the City Council members and citizens were very supportive of the project.

The Prince George's County Planning Department is anticipated to bring the study to the Prince's George's County Planning Board for their review in the near future.

A Mandatory Referral presentation of the project will also be made to the Montgomery County Planning Board when the design has progressed, but staff believes that it is important for the Board comment at this time, early in the process, in order to influence the final product most effectively.

The County Council is expected to vote on its list of state project priorities on either July 23 or July 30. ***If the Board supports this project as a priority in the Commercial Revitalization Category, staff will prepare a transmittal letter to this effect to the County Council.***

Right-of-Way and Project Funding

While none of the project is yet funded for construction, the main constraint on providing the whole program of desired improvements in the project area is the lack of adequate right-of-way. The East Silver Spring and Takoma Park Master Plans call for University Boulevard to be a six-lane divided road with a minimum 120-foot right-of-way within the project limits. This right-of-way width is the minimum needed to accommodate both an eight-foot sidewalk and a landscape panel of sufficient width to support street trees as recommended in the Master Plans. However, in some areas, the existing right-of-way is only 100 feet. Staff notes that having this wide sidewalk and landscape panel would only be possible in a 120-foot right-of-way because the median and travel lanes are narrower than the County's standard for a major highway.

The Neighborhood Conservation Program (NCP), under which this study has been performed, does not provide for any right-of-way acquisition. In the most constrained areas, only a five-foot sidewalk with no landscape panel could be built within the right-of-way. The NCP program also has limited funding that all of the eligible projects have to compete for. Undertaking all of the improvements proposed by the study recommendations would cost an estimated thirty to forty million dollars, necessitating that the project be broken up into multiple smaller segments, and extending the time needed to complete the whole project to perhaps ten or fifteen years.

Because of the problems with limits and limitations, ***staff recommends that this project be made a standalone major project, enabling it to be funded all at one time and allowing right-of-way to be purchased.*** The desired typical section could then be achieved throughout the project area. SHA staff has said that in order for

University Boulevard to proceed as a major project, both Counties would have to nominate this as a priority.

Montgomery County currently has only two projects of this type listed as priorities, Frederick Avenue in Gaithersburg and Georgia Avenue in Montgomery Hills. Council staff has recommended that the order be reversed to place Georgia Avenue as the County's number one priority in this regard. Given that the other projects have been on the list for a couple of years already, **staff recommends that the Board endorse the University Boulevard project as the County's third priority in the Commercial Revitalization category.**

The scheduling of this project has been affected by the Inner Purple Line now being studied. Since SHA does not want to make curb line changes that would have to be removed if University Boulevard is selected as the alignment for the transit line, they propose that some interim improvements be made that would not involve significant lengths of curb changes, so as to avoid the expense of duplicating utility relocations. These interim improvements are listed as Attachment 6. Staff supports the proposed interim improvements, but neither the full project nor the interim improvements have yet been funded for construction.

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Accommodation

The project includes five-foot on-road bike lanes on both sides of University Boulevard through the project area. Off-road accommodation would also be provided in some areas via eight-foot wide sidewalks that would also accommodate bicyclists; however, that accommodation would not be continuous unless adequate right-of-way exists or easements are granted from adjacent property owners to provide more than the minimum five-foot wide sidewalks. **Given the right-of-way constraints discussed above, it is unlikely that continuous off-road bikeways could be constructed if this project is funded under the NCP program.**

Staff is concerned that the ultimate project could provide a significant benefit for bicyclists only at a potential cost to pedestrians if additional right-of-way cannot be obtained. The East Silver Spring and Takoma Park Master Plans support continuous bike lanes on University Boulevard. However, the Plans assume the availability of a minimum 120-foot right-of-way, not 100 feet as is the existing condition in some areas. Attachment 7 shows the areas which have 120' of right-of-way or greater, and those with less than 120'. While each half of the roadway pavement of University Boulevard is proposed to be narrowed by two feet to gain space for the bike lanes, three feet would come out of the panel between the curb and right-of-way line. **If no additional right-of-way is obtained, the pedestrian area would be reduced in the ultimate concept since continuous sidewalks already exist within the project limits in Takoma Park and the unincorporated area of Montgomery County.**

The most constrained segments of the project in the area under review are between Gilbert Street and Bayfield Street and between New Hampshire Avenue and

Edwards Place, where the existing right-of-way is only one hundred feet wide. Since the proposed curb-to-curb width is ninety feet, only five feet would remain on each side for sidewalks. Where five-foot sidewalks are proposed directly adjacent to the curb, the goal would be to limit them to 200 feet in length to minimize the area where pedestrians would be more exposed to traffic.

The five-foot sidewalk however would also have to accommodate signposts, streetlight poles and utility poles, and in some places would be laterally constrained by walls, fences or hedges at the property line, leaving a continuous usable pedestrian space of less than five feet. **Staff believes that this space would be insufficient to accommodate pedestrians adequately and that if only the minimum five-foot sidewalk is provided, it must be completely clear of obstructions.**

There are some opportunities to increase the space available on the north side of University in the vicinity of Gilbert Street. Providing the Master Plan right-of-way along the frontage of New Hampshire Estates Park opposite Gilbert Street would provide sufficient space to accommodate the desired landscape and sidewalk panel. **CASA of Maryland's property is immediately south of the park and staff is recommending that land be placed in reservation for these improvements as part of their proposed expansion, which the Board is scheduled to review on the same date as this item.**

SHA has stated that the on-road bike lanes would provide greater separation between pedestrians on the sidewalk and vehicles on the roadway. Staff questions whether drivers or pedestrians will perceive this separation and believes that a change in material is necessary to provide a greater sense of comfort for pedestrians. **Staff recommends that the Board support painting or using colored asphalt for the bike lanes,** now being considered by SHA. Raising the bike lanes to the level of the sidewalk is not recommended because of conflicts with vehicles at driveways and intrusions by pedestrians.

In order to get the desired landscape panel and sidewalk, more space is required. SHA intends to work with adjacent property owners to get permission to construct the desired landscaping and sidewalk on private property. There are some apartment complexes and commercial properties where gaining easements looks promising. However, easements are less likely with owner-occupied homes. Therefore, the projects funding needs to allow the possibility of acquiring right-of-way to ensure that the desired typical section can be achieved throughout the project area. **Creating a landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and the travel lanes has an additional safety advantage in that studies have shown that pedestrians are less likely to cross mid-block if the sidewalk is not directly adjacent to the curb.**

Traffic and Safety

This project would affect traffic conditions in several ways. The travel lanes would be reduced from the standard twelve feet to eleven feet. While there may be some

reduction in safety for drivers associated with the narrower lanes due to a possible increase in sideswipes, the addition of the bike lanes will mean better sight distance for drivers turning out of the side streets and a lesser likelihood of crashes with turning traffic. The bike lanes will greatly increase safety for bicyclists on the road.

The narrower lanes will likely encourage slower vehicular speeds, decreasing the severity of the crashes that do occur, particularly pedestrian crashes that are a major concern in this area. University Boulevard has a posted speed of 35 mph, but many drivers exceed this speed. Studies have shown that relatively small decreases in vehicular speed for such roads greatly reduce pedestrian fatalities. A 6 mph reduction in speed would be expected to reduce pedestrian fatalities by 48% and reduce the number of pedestrian crashes by 22%.

The triangle formed by University Boulevard, Carroll Avenue and Merrimac Drive will be the subject of a special study (see Attachment 8). While the University Boulevard/Carroll Avenue intersection is traffic signal-controlled, University Boulevard/Merrimac Drive and Carroll Avenue/Merrimac Drive are not. Westbound left-turns from University Boulevard to Carroll Avenue are not allowed, requiring drivers to turn left at Merrimac Drive. These three streets work together to handle the desired traffic movements, and the best solution may be to have all three be signal-controlled. Adding signal control for the two Merrimac Drive intersections would also improve pedestrian safety in this area by creating protected crossings that are shorter than those at the University Boulevard/Carroll Avenue intersection, which are much longer because of the skew of the intersection.

An additional northbound left-turn lane from New Hampshire Avenue to University Boulevard would be added, improving traffic operations at this major intersection. The pedestrian crossing would be longer, but more time could be added to the pedestrian signal if the New Hampshire Avenue traffic can get through in less time. The eastbound University Boulevard free right-turn lane would be made sharper and narrower to slow traffic at this pedestrian crossing.

In regard to pedestrian safety, equally or more important than improvements in the typical section are the proposed changes in how pedestrians cross the road. SHA and DPWT are cooperatively looking at relocating bus stops so that they are opposite each other and are located in places where pedestrians can safely cross University Boulevard. SHA will also evaluate making tighter curb radii to reduce vehicle speeds around corners and to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, and eliminating free rights at some intersections.

This project may also add pedestrian-actuated traffic signals that would mean additional stops for drivers, but would greatly increase safety for pedestrians by providing them more protected crossing opportunities. Attachment 9 shows the locations of existing traffic signals within the area under review. There are some long distances between traffic signals, a condition that adversely affects pedestrians in two ways; there are long distances between protected crossings, and drivers have a greater

length of open road to increase their speed between signals. This is particularly the case at night when there are few cars on University Boulevard, but all six lanes are available for travel because on-street parking is prohibited.

For State highways in Montgomery County, SHA sets the phasing of the traffic signals but DPWT determines the timing. Setting traffic signals to allow smooth progression is beneficial for rush hour traffic, allowing the maximum volume to pass through intersections. During the off-peak however, progression and long signal phase times for the main road, in this case University Boulevard, mean that drivers can easily exceed the posted speed limit. **Staff recommends that, in addition to adding pedestrian-actuated signals, SHA work cooperatively with DPWT to develop a signal timing plan that discourages excessive speeds.**

Pedestrian Barriers

SHA considered but rejected the concept of installing barriers to prevent pedestrians from crossing University Boulevard at non-intersection locations. Their concern was that, for example, placing a fence in a narrow median would allow someone to cross to the median then walk along the fence on the curb, placing the pedestrian in more danger than if the fence was not there. Staff does not disagree with this concern but thinks that more discussion is necessary.

The places with the highest volume of pedestrians crossing at non-intersections are at the shopping centers at the intersection of University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue. This is despite the fact that this is where we have the closest spacing of signalized intersections and the safest legal opportunities to cross. Staff believes that installing fences along the frontage of these shopping centers, in addition to the proposed hedges, would better direct pedestrians to cross at the safest locations, the signalized crosswalks. This was done effectively by SHA as part of the Four Corners improvements at the intersection of University Boulevard and Colesville Road. Staff notes that the Taco Bell in the northwest quadrant of the University Boulevard/New Hampshire Avenue intersection already has a fence to discourage the reverse occurrence, pedestrians crossing the restaurant drive-thru lane from the sidewalk area.

In addition, some modification of the existing medians should be considered. The medians could be mounded up to discourage pedestrian crossings at non-intersection locations. This has been done successfully along Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda; non-intersection crossings have not been eliminated but have been greatly reduced.

Staff recommends that the Board encourage SHA to consider various barrier options to discourage pedestrians passively or actively from crossing at unsafe locations.

Lighting

Existing lighting of both the roadway and sidewalks in the segment of University Boulevard covered by this project is quite poor. Good lighting is a critical element in providing a safe environment for walking and bicycling, particularly in an area with such a high population density.

Ornamental lighting is proposed to enhance the pedestrian environment, but no target lighting level has been set. The task force recommendations also omit any recommendations on lighting at intersections. If we want pedestrians to cross at intersections, good lighting is needed to make them as safe as possible. **Staff recommends that the project include sufficient lighting to achieve the lighting levels recommended by the International Illuminating Society of North America (IESNA) for both sidewalks and intersections.**

Landscaping and Aesthetics

Where the right-of-way is available, six- to eight-foot wide landscape panels would be provided along University Boulevard to allow the planting of street trees; almost no street trees exist along this road presently. Attachment 7 shows where sufficient right-of-way already exists to achieve the desired landscape panels. Unit pavers would be used to highlight pedestrian areas such as bus stops and intersections. Ornamental streetlights would be installed.

In addition to increasing the size of bus shelters and/or waiting areas, additional landscaping opportunities will be investigated to improve the comfort of bus stops whose capacity is often oversubscribed in this heavily-used transit corridor. Landscaping would also be used to improve the appearance of major intersections and gateways to the City of Takoma Park and the Takoma-Langley Crossroads shopping area.

Three-foot high hedges would be used to screen parking lots and reduce the visibility of continuous expanses of paving in this area. Staff agrees with this goal but believes that the final design should be in concert with the principles of Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to ensure that there are adequate opportunities for surveillance of potential criminal activities. The plant material should be chosen with strong consideration to the maintenance that it will receive to ensure that it will not easily get too tall and become a problem..

Improving the aesthetics of this area is one of the primary goals of this project. As such, the proposed interim improvement project should include landscaping where the curb lines are not anticipated to change in the near future. **Staff recommends that street trees and other streetscaping be provided where possible in the median of University Boulevard to provide a very visible immediate improvement to the character of this area.**

Opportunities to provide landscaping in existing medians are limited however since the majority of the medians in this area are very narrow monolithic concrete. **Staff recommends that SHA evaluate the length of the existing left-turn bays to determine where there are opportunities to reduce their length.** In the past, left-turn bays have often been constructed back-to-back, leaving no place where the median is wide enough for landscaping. If enough space could be created to plant one tree between each set of back-to-back turn bays, the aesthetics of this area would be greatly improved.

Public art could provide an excellent vehicle to improve the aesthetics and show public interest in this area, particularly where landscaping opportunities are limited. Citizens in this area have asked for art to be included (see Attachment 10, comment #1, fifth bullet). **Staff recommends that the Board encourage SHA to consider providing public art as part of this project.**

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

SHA established a large task force composed of community members, agency staff, and several elected officials. The task force meetings were attended by other interested individuals. SHA also sponsored a number of public forums, including several where interpreters met with groups of Spanish speaking residents to discuss issues, ideas, and concepts.

SHA requested that M-NCPPC planning staff assist them in obtaining a broader community involvement. We responded by conducting three "Listening to Learn" sessions with various community groups that are usually under-represented in discussions of community improvements. Our meetings included a diverse range of people including Vietnamese, Latino, and African-American participants. We have previously described this approach to the Planning Board. Planning staff also arranged for representatives from the three earlier sessions to participate in the February 20, 2002 SHA public forum where the concept plan was presented.

Throughout the project, SHA staff has taken great interest in the information that we received during the "Listening to Learn" sessions. We found that area residents place great value on improvements to the pedestrian and bus environment. They are concerned about safe crossings, about having larger covered bus stops, and about providing gateway sculptures to reflect local cultural groups. These concerns are well reflected in the concept plan. Early action to provide the proposed interim measures would be welcomed by these community residents. Attachment 10 includes a summary list of comments received during our outreach efforts to these diverse populations.

RELATED PROJECTS

The Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) has contracted with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) to conduct a line and grade

study for the Inner Purple Line, including the area along University Boulevard in the subject project study area. This study is scheduled to be completed in November. The information gained in this study will be used for the preparation of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), which should be completed two years from now.

DPWT is discussing restarting the Takoma-Langley transit station project in the same area for their bus services. The earlier project was derailed a couple of years ago when the property owner in the southwest quadrant of the intersection pulled out of the negotiations.

SUMMARY

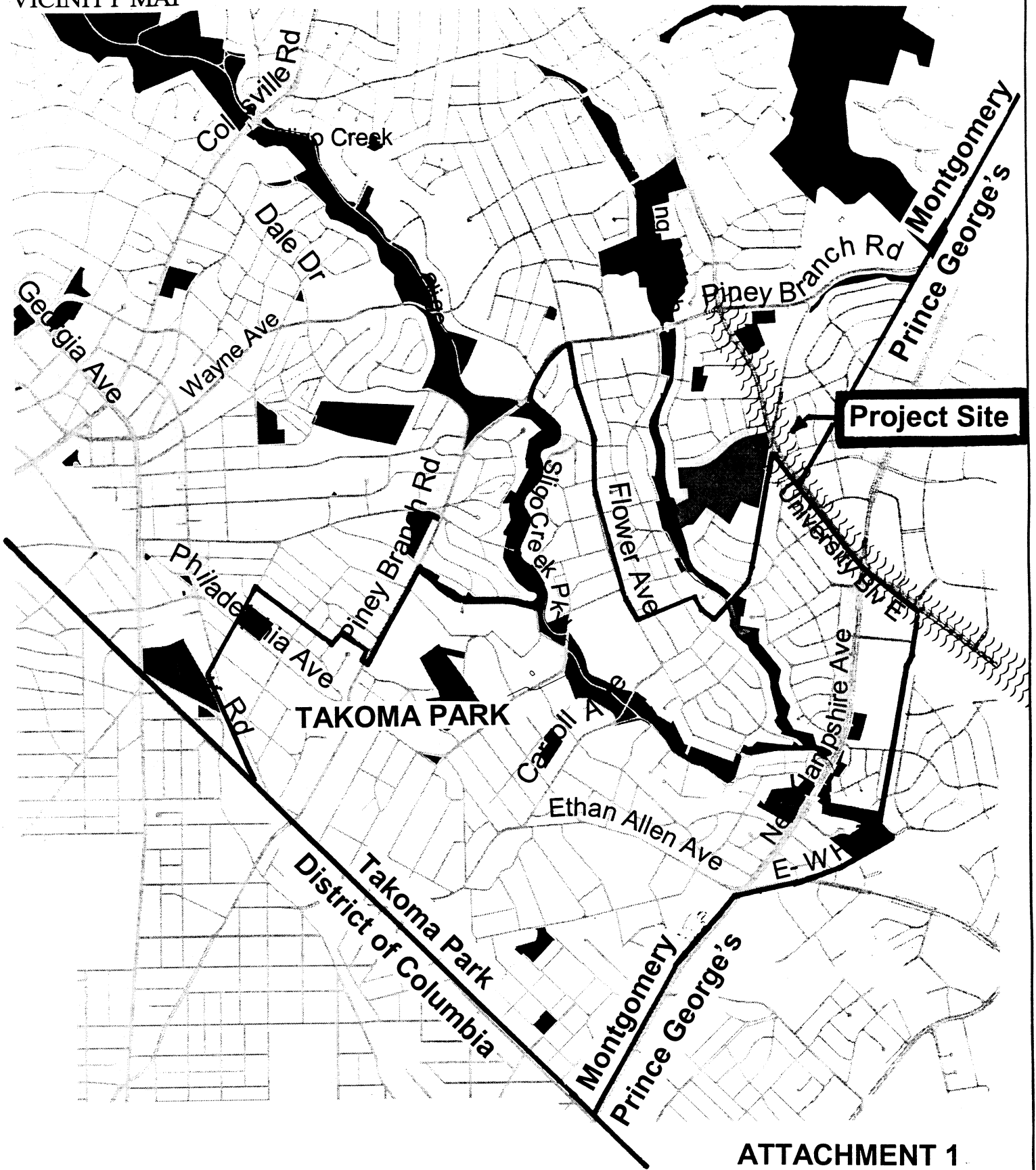
Staff believes that this is an extremely important project that will promote the Master Plan goals to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and accessibility and improve the aesthetics of this area. We do not believe that construction of the ultimate project should be pursued through the Neighborhood Conservation Program since that program's lack of funding for right-of-way will likely prevent the project's achieving the Master Plan's goals and could compromise pedestrian accommodation in this important transit corridor during the very long period of time it would likely take to complete the project under this program. This is a major project for Montgomery County that needs to be funded accordingly so that the task force's recommendations, and the Master Plan goals, can be fully realized.

LC:cmd

Attachments

DR University Blvd - MR #02804-SHA-1.doc

VICINITY MAP









ATTACHMENT 1

Map Compiled On 07-09-2002 at 04:55 PM
 Map Scale: 1 inch = 2000 feet or 1:24000



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 Transportation Planning Unit
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- Text Street and Stream Names
-  Streams
-  Street Pavement
- All Parks
 -  Existing
 -  Proposed
-  Municipalities
-  Montgomery County

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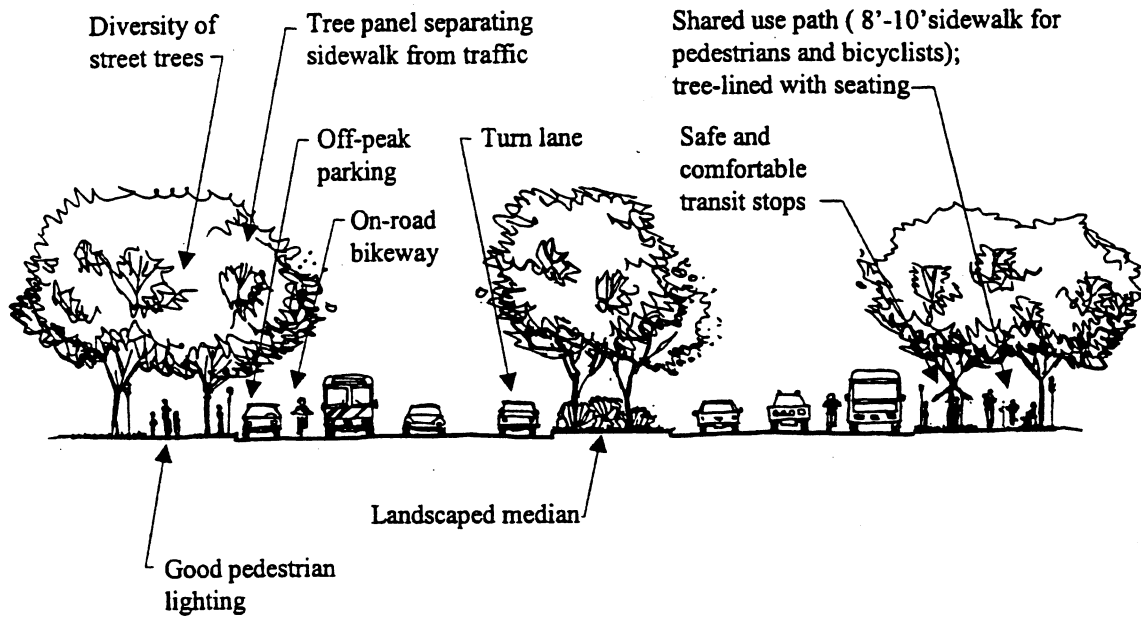
Streetscape Treatments

University Boulevard Recommendations

- Provide tree-lined sidewalks, landscaped medians, and street trees in wide panels separating sidewalks from traffic. Provide on-road bikeways and “shared use paths” (8 foot- to 10-foot-wide sidewalks) on both sides. (See Appendix F, “Bikeway Plan.”)
- The right-of-way on University Boulevard should remain at 120 feet, except that where any existing right-of-way is greater than 120 feet, the existing right-of-way should be maintained. However, future studies could result in the need for increased right-of-way requirements along University Boulevard for sidewalks and streetscape improvements, but not to exceed 150 feet.
- Coordinate enhancements to University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue with Prince George’s County, State Highway Administration, and the City of Takoma Park.
- Prepare a concept study of major improvements to the pedestrian environment and to the attractiveness of the area along University Boulevard. A streetscape concept is shown in Figure 3. The study should address the following issues:
 1. Provision of a streetscape and landscaping treatment, possibly reflecting the international character of businesses along University Boulevard.
 2. Enhancement of selected locations to improve pedestrian comfort and safety and to improve character, such as bus stops and pedestrian crossings.
 3. Provision of on-street parking during off-peak periods to buffer pedestrians from moving traffic, provide parking options for residents, and reduce traffic speeds.
- **Revise this Master Plan if the “Purple Line” for transit is approved along University Boulevard.** Revisions should reflect any needed changes in right-of-way or easement acquisition, or changes in land use, zoning, and design recommendations. The transit alignment is an alternative under study by the State of Maryland as part of the Capital Beltway Major Investment Study.

New Hampshire Avenue Recommendations

- Provide tree-lined sidewalks, landscaped medians, and street trees in wide panels separating sidewalks from traffic. Provide on-road bikeways and “shared use paths” (8 foot- to 10-foot-wide sidewalks) on both sides. (See Bikeway Appendix.)
- Acquire right-of-way to the full 150-foot standard to provide adequate space for landscaping and sidewalks. (Assumes the Department of Public Works and Transportation Design Standard number MC-218.02.) Purchase the land or acquire it through dedication-at-redevelopment.
- Coordinate enhancements to University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue with Prince George’s County, State Highway Administration, and the City of Takoma Park.



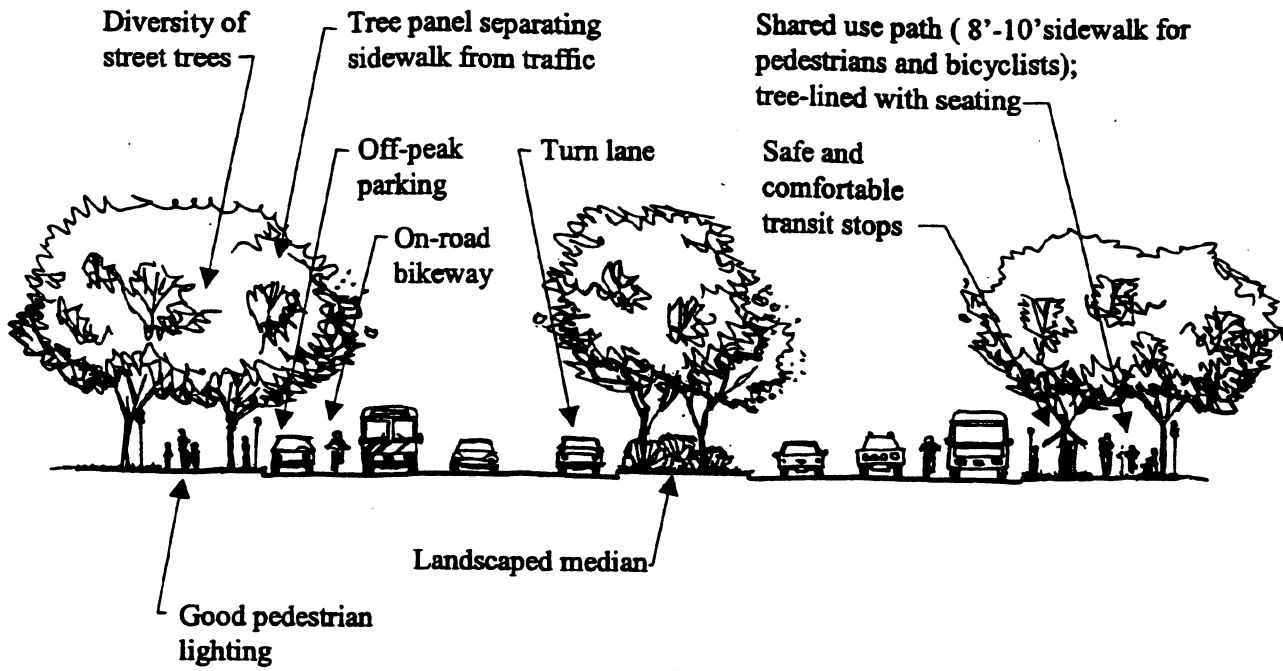
Streetscape Treatments

University Boulevard Recommendations

- **Provide tree-lined sidewalks, landscaped medians, and street trees in wide panels separating sidewalks from traffic. Provide on-road bikeways and “shared use paths” (8-foot to 10-foot-wide sidewalks) on both sides. (See Bikeway section.)**
- **The right-of-way on University Boulevard should remain at 120 feet, except that where any existing right-of-way is greater than 120 feet the existing right-of-way should be maintained. However, future studies could result in the need for increased right-of-way requirements along University Boulevard for sidewalks and streetscape improvements, but not to exceed 150 feet.**
- **Coordinate enhancements to University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue with Prince George’s County, State Highway Administration, and the City of Takoma Park.**
- **Prepare a concept study of improvements to the pedestrian environment and to the attractiveness of the area along University Boulevard. A streetscape concept is shown in Figure 2. The study should address:**
 1. **Provision of a streetscape and landscaping treatment, possibly reflecting the international character of businesses along University Boulevard.**
 2. **Enhancement of selected locations to improve pedestrian comfort and safety and to improve character, such as bus stops and pedestrian crossings.**
 3. **Provision of on-street parking during off-peak periods to buffer pedestrians from moving traffic, provide parking options for residents, and reduce traffic speeds.**
 4. **Enhancement of the existing gateway features of University Boulevard at Takoma/Langley Crossroads.**
- **Revise this Master Plan if the “Purple Line” transit alignment is approved along University Boulevard. Revisions to the Takoma Park Master Plan should reflect any needed changes in right-of-way or easement acquisition, or changes in land use, design, and zoning recommendations. The transit alignment is an alternative under study by the State of Maryland as part of the Capital Beltway Major Investment Study.**

New Hampshire Avenue Recommendations

- **Provide tree-lined sidewalks, landscaped medians, and street trees in and wide panels separating sidewalks from traffic. Provide on-road bikeways and “shared use paths” (8-foot to 10-foot-wide sidewalks) on both sides . (See Bikeway section.)**
- **Acquire right-of-way to the full 150-foot standard to provide adequate space for landscaping and sidewalks. (Assumes the Department of Public Works and Transportation Design Standard number MC-218.02.) Purchase the land or acquire it through dedication-at-redevelopment.**
- **Coordinate enhancements to University Boulevard and New Hampshire Avenue with Prince George’s County, State Highway Administration, and the City of Takoma Park.**





**University Boulevard / International Corridor
Streetscape Concept Project
From Piney Branch Road to Adelphi Road
And New Hampshire Avenue, from Erskin Drive to Merrimac Drive**

**Summary and Recommendations of
Concept Plan
(June 19, 2002)**

The task force for this project has concluded its work after 19 months, nine task force meetings and two public meetings in addition to several coordination meetings related to the Carroll Avenue intersection and the New Hampshire Avenue south of University Boulevard.

The University Boulevard corridor has large traffic volumes and heavy pedestrian use. MD 193 through this corridor is predominantly a six-lane major arterial roadway. This corridor also experiences a substantial bus transit ridership. There is also potential for greater bicycle use in this corridor, given better bicycle facilities. The proximity of the University of Maryland with the abundant availability of rental apartments in the area, the new immigrant residents residing in the area, the commercial characteristics of the properties along the corridor, and the proximity of several parks, schools, and other attractions will potentially draw a large number of bicyclists along this corridor, given safe bicycle facilities.

The corridor has a very limited right-of-way width and a narrow median. A typical existing section is comprised of a 100-foot right-of-way width and 84-foot curb-to-curb roadway width (comprised of six through lanes and a 16 foot wide median for turn lanes). The remaining eight feet outside of the curb in each direction is currently used for sidewalks and grass buffers of varying widths.

The existing pedestrian environment is less than desirable. There are many sections of sidewalk that are inadequate for the volume of pedestrians using the corridor. Paved areas at bus stop locations are also undersized.

These inadequacies result in the degradation of adjacent lawn and planting areas. Many areas are characterized by the six lanes of University Boulevard on one side, a narrow sidewalk area in the middle, and either frontage roads or large parking lots on the other side.

TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Add a five-foot wide dedicated bike lane in each direction**
- **Widen the sidewalk to eight feet**
- **Add streetscaping treatments throughout the corridor to enhance the aesthetic attractiveness and functionality (mobility and social activity)**
- **Improve pedestrian crosswalks by enhancing visibility and relocation for pedestrians safety**
- **Improve transit bus shelters and stops**
- **Establish a way to maintain the corridor's enhancements**

There is little separation provided for pedestrians between these heavy vehicular uses. Street trees and ground level plantings rarely exist to provide any buffer or sense of scale.

There is no unifying design element within the corridor to help create a sense of place. Neither the streetscape treatment nor adjacent land use improvements create any continuity in terms of architectural character, construction materials, landscaping, or street furnishings. Similarly there are no gateway elements, either east/west or north/south, to create a sense of arrival.

The proposed recommendations show a 90-foot width of roadway (curb to curb) to accommodate a 5-foot dedicated bike lane in each direction, six eleven-foot wide through lanes and a 14-foot wide median. The addition of these two five-foot wide bike lanes will be accomplished by narrowing the three through lanes in each direction a total of 2 feet from 35 feet to 33 feet and reducing the 8-foot wide sidewalk/buffer area to a minimum of a five wide sidewalk. The five-foot wide sidewalk is the absolute minimum width. However, the Task Force has requested that the desirable width should be at least an eight-foot wide sidewalk and, where possible, at least an additional two or more feet of width between the curb and the sidewalk. Most of the corridor has room for the eight-foot desirable sidewalk but this will generally require an agreement with the adjacent landowner to build part of the wider sidewalk on his/her property.

Although the 100-foot right-of-way width (which is the predominant width of right-of-way through this corridor) only allows for the minimum five-foot wide sidewalks on the state owned right-of-way, most of the length of the corridor (93%) has space outside of the state owned right-of-way which, if given permission by the landowner, could be used to construct a wider sidewalk, landscaping and possibly a buffer between the sidewalk and the curb. Thus, our goal will be to construct an eight-foot wide sidewalk with a six-foot buffer area between the sidewalk and the curb as well as add landscaping treatments wherever agreements with the landowners can be obtained. Where only five-foot wide sidewalks can be provided, the goal will be to keep these lengths of the minimum width sidewalk to no greater than 200 feet.

The Task Force has also evaluated the proposed/revised location of crosswalks, bus stops and commercial entrances to improve pedestrian compatibility and safety along all sections of MD 193 within the project limits and has made some site-specific recommendations. Other recommendations to improve safety will be prohibiting free rights at certain intersections, narrowing the width and reducing the radius of the free rights at New Hampshire Avenue and Riggs Roads for the south movements from University Boulevard, adjusting some of the intersections/driveways geometrics and possibly adding pedestrian signals in a few areas. Access points to businesses have been consolidated in certain areas, which will also contribute to a safer pedestrian environment.

The Task Force has concurrently discussed and approved creating a more attractive and better way to handle service road parking and access along MD 193 and the lessening of vehicular/vehicular and pedestrian/vehicular conflicts at the service road entrances. This can be accomplished by reconfiguring some of these entrances and moving the sidewalk away from traffic wherever possible. Bus stops are proposed to be relocated and/or consolidated to improve safety, and accessibility to both transit and destination points.

The use of special paving such as a 4" x 8" unit paver is proposed to highlight pedestrian areas. These would be considered at bus stop locations, at corners where pedestrians cross, and in other areas of high activity. A unit paver edge is also proposed along the inside edge of the median curb as well as along portions of the outside curb. This will create a continuous design element throughout the corridor serving as a unifying decorative element.

Landscape opportunities include the use of 3' high evergreen hedges throughout the corridor to screen parking and soften the pedestrian environment. Street trees are proposed wherever space allows and utilities do not pose a conflict. A palette of native plant materials should be developed as part of the next phase of work.

Several gateway opportunities have been highlighted on the concept plans (at Piney Branch Road, Carroll Avenue, New Hampshire Avenue, Riggs Road and West Park Drive). These may serve in both an east/west and north/south capacity. They may be utilized to celebrate a single theme for the entire corridor or may be designed to announce more localized communities or cultures.

The improvements recommended to make this corridor safer and accessible to pedestrians and transit users, to add on-road bike lanes for the bicycle community, to improve the geometrics for better and safer traffic flow and operations and to incorporate landscaping for a more attractive corridor, should play a major role in enhancing the value of this corridor leading to a long term healthy international corridor.

These Task Force recommendations have met the project goals initially established by the Task Force.

Project Description

Limits of Project

University Boulevard (MD 193)
International Corridor
Streetscape Concept Project (2.9
Miles) from Piney Branch Road
to Adelphi Road. (See location
map in back)

Includes Following Major Intersections

- Piney Branch Rd. (MD 320)
At MD 193
- Carroll Ave. At MD 193
- New Hampshire Avenue
(MD 650) At MD 193
- Riggs Road (MD 212) At
MD 193
- West Park Drive At MD 193
- Adelphi Rd. At MD 193

Multi-Jurisdictional Project

- Montgomery County
- Prince George's County
- City of Takoma Park

University Boulevard (MD 193) is
a 6-lane east-west urban arterial
highway connecting Kensington
with College Park and Greenbelt
before turning south and
heading towards Largo.

Public Meeting

University Boulevard (MD 193)

International Corridor Streetscape Improvement Conceptual Study
A Neighborhood Conservation Project



Concept Design

A Conceptual Plan has been developed for the State Highway Administration's Neighborhood Conservation Program Project on University Boulevard (MD 193) from Piney Branch Road (MD 320) to Adelphi Road in cooperation with the Takoma/Langley Crossroads Development Authority, Inc., the International Corridor Community Development Corporation, the Hispanic Resource Center, the City of Takoma Park and Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. The Neighborhood Conservation Program (NCP) is part of Governor Parris N. Glendening's Smart Growth Initiative. Since 1996, the Neighborhood Conservation Program has provided funding for roadway and aesthetic improvements to communities in established neighborhoods to support revitalization of these areas.

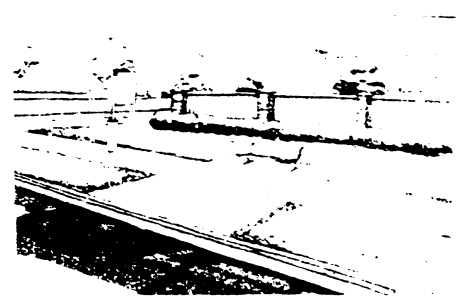
This project, which has been developed with community participation and consensus, will be potentially broken-up into smaller projects for funding, final design and construction. During the final design phase, concepts can be refined and crosswalks and bus stop locations can be revisited.

Project Goals

1. Improve pedestrian compatibility and safety along all sections of University Boulevard within the project limits.
2. Improve bicycle compatibility and safety along MD 193, both on the outside lane of the roadway and on the sidewalk.
3. Improve the aesthetics along this corridor.
4. Create a neighborhood sense with a streetscape plan.
5. Create a more attractive and better way to handle on-street/service road parking along University Boulevard.
6. Improve accessibility to transit.
7. Improve traffic flow and operations.
8. Improve access to businesses.
9. Attract variety and types of businesses and activities for a healthy international corridor.
10. Balance pedestrian/traffic demand and accommodate volumes of

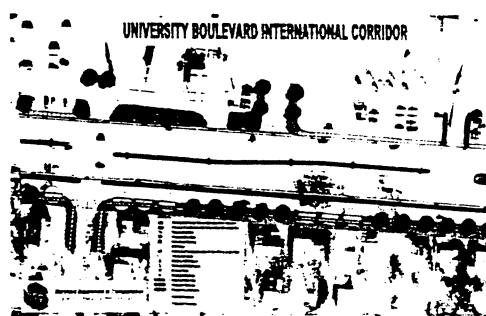
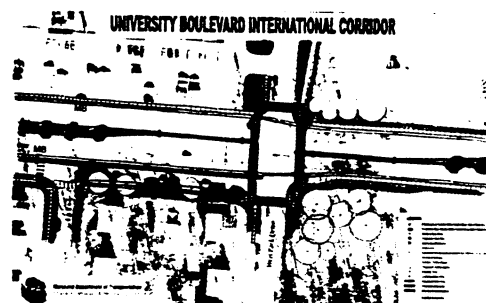
Task Force Consensus

- Develop a roadway cross section with a minimum of 90 feet curb to curb (narrowed lanes, 5-foot bikeways, 4-foot to 14-foot medians) and a sidewalk between 5' to 8' depending on space availability.
- Provide safer pedestrian crossings. This includes investigating the possibility of introducing signalized mid-block crossings. These crossings would be well signed and marked and the signals would be synchronized.

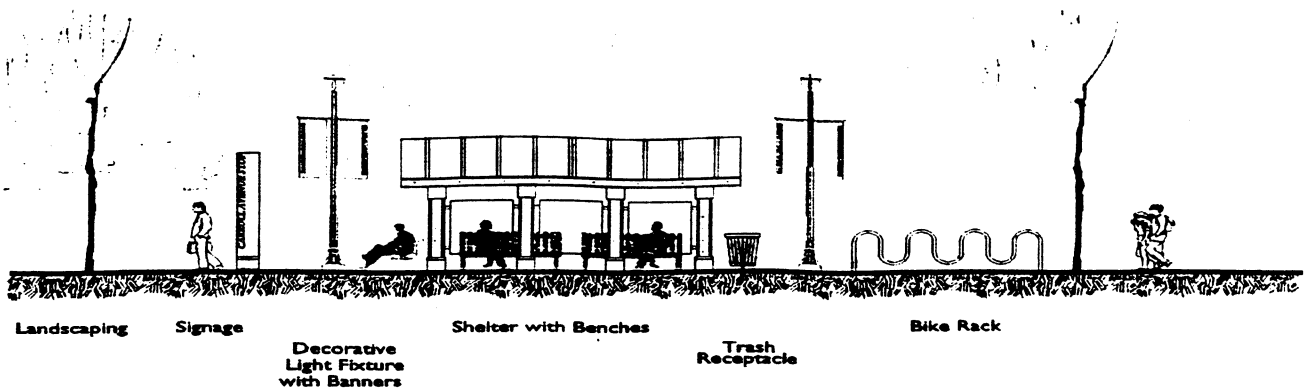


- Coordinate the streetscape with public transit by organizing the bus stops with the crosswalks.
- Beautify the corridor through landscaping and amenities.

Project Photos



- Key (From top to bottom, left to right)**
1. Riggs Road/MD 193
 2. West Park Drive/MD 193
 3. Phelps Road/MD 193
 4. 25th Avenue/MD 193



Traffic and Pedestrian Issues

Pedestrian Circulation

- Numerous Crosswalks
- Pedestrian Signal Timing (Non- Exclusive):
Piney Branch Rd.
Carroll Ave.
New Hampshire Ave.
Riggs Rd.
West Park Dr.
- Generated By:
Residential Areas
Recreational Areas
Commercial Developments
School Areas Including University of Maryland Transit

1. 132 Hours of Counts = 6,571 Pedestrian

Bicycling Needs

- University of Maryland
- Portion of corridor is inside Anacostia Trails Heritage Area
- Northwest Branch Trail
- Sligo Creek Trail (west of corridor)
- Paint Branch & Northeast Branch Trails (east of corridor)
- Montgomery County proposed Bike Routes

Transit Demand

Stops:
18 Westbound
15 Eastbound

Metrobus Service Lines:
Lines C2, C4, and F8

Ride-On Service Routes:
Routes 14, 15, 17, and 18

Westbound Direction Peaks at:
Riggs
New Hampshire
Lebanon
Piney Branch

Total Ridership in Network in Westbound Direction
(daily) = 2694 riders

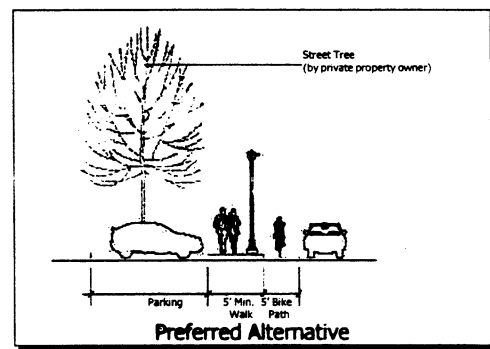
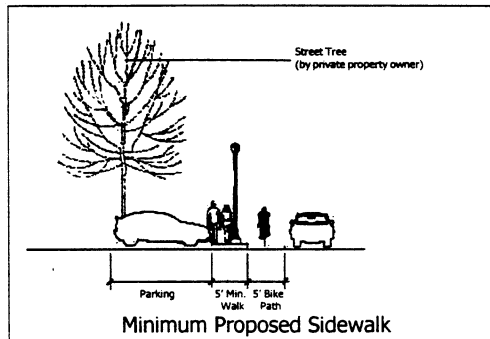
Eastbound Direction Peaks at:
15th Street
New Hampshire
Riggs Rd.
Piney Branch

Total Ridership in Network in Eastbound Direction
(daily) = 2494 riders

Total in Network Both Directions
(daily) = 5188 riders

Next Steps

1. Receive comments from public.
2. Present results to local jurisdictions.
3. Develop implementation plan.
4. Determine potential breakout projects and funding.



Accident Analysis

(Between 1997-1999)

Intersection	Accidents
Piney Branch Rd.	42
Carroll Ave.	15
Merrimac Dr.	23
New Hampshire Ave.	30
14 th St.	12
15 th St.	27
Riggs Rd.	42
Guilford Rd.	15
23 rd Ave.	20
West Park Dr.	10
Adelphi Rd.	23

Task Force Members

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Councilman Peter Shapiro's Office Staff

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University of Maryland

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Takhoma/Langley CDA, Inc.

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MIC/CDC

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Adventist School

Noreene Stehlik
New Hampshire Estates School

Laverne Williams
Lewisdale Citizens Association

Suzanne Ludlow
City of Takoma Park

Ronald Vaughn
City of Takoma Park

Martha Waddy
New Hampshire Estates
Community Association

Imani Kazana
Department of Housing and
Community Development

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Resident

Jim Mitchell
AHD, inc.

Eric Shulman
Resident

Judith Banks-Johnson
Resident

Kim Propeack
Casa De Maryland

Gustavo Torres
Casa De Maryland

John Brill
HotSpot

Gary Stith
Silver Spring Regional Center

Bob Simpson
Montgomery County DPW&T

Gul Guleryuz
Redevelopment Authority of
Prince George's County

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M-NCPPC-Montgomery County

Lawrence Cole
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Margaret Rifkin
M-NCPPC-Montgomery County

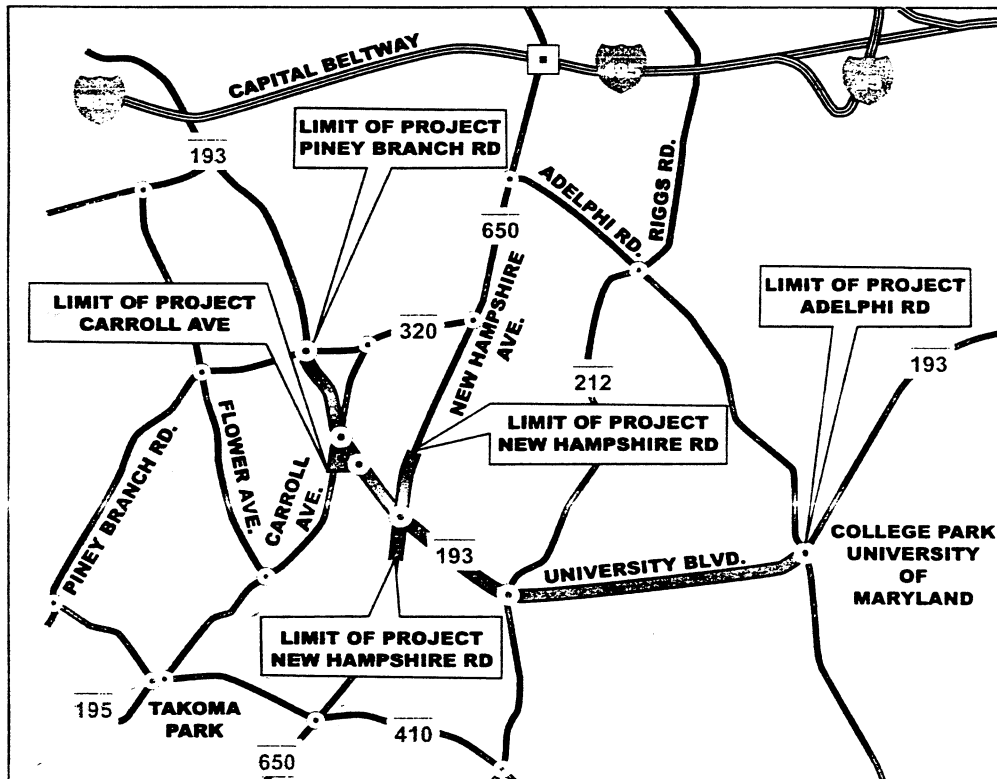
Dineene O'Connor
M-NCPPC-Prince George's County

Joe Chang
M-NCPPC-Prince George's County

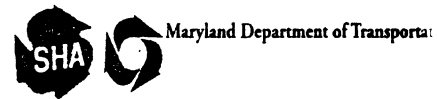
Elected Officials

Peter Shapiro
Chairman
Prince George's County Council

Share Maack
Takoma Park Council Member



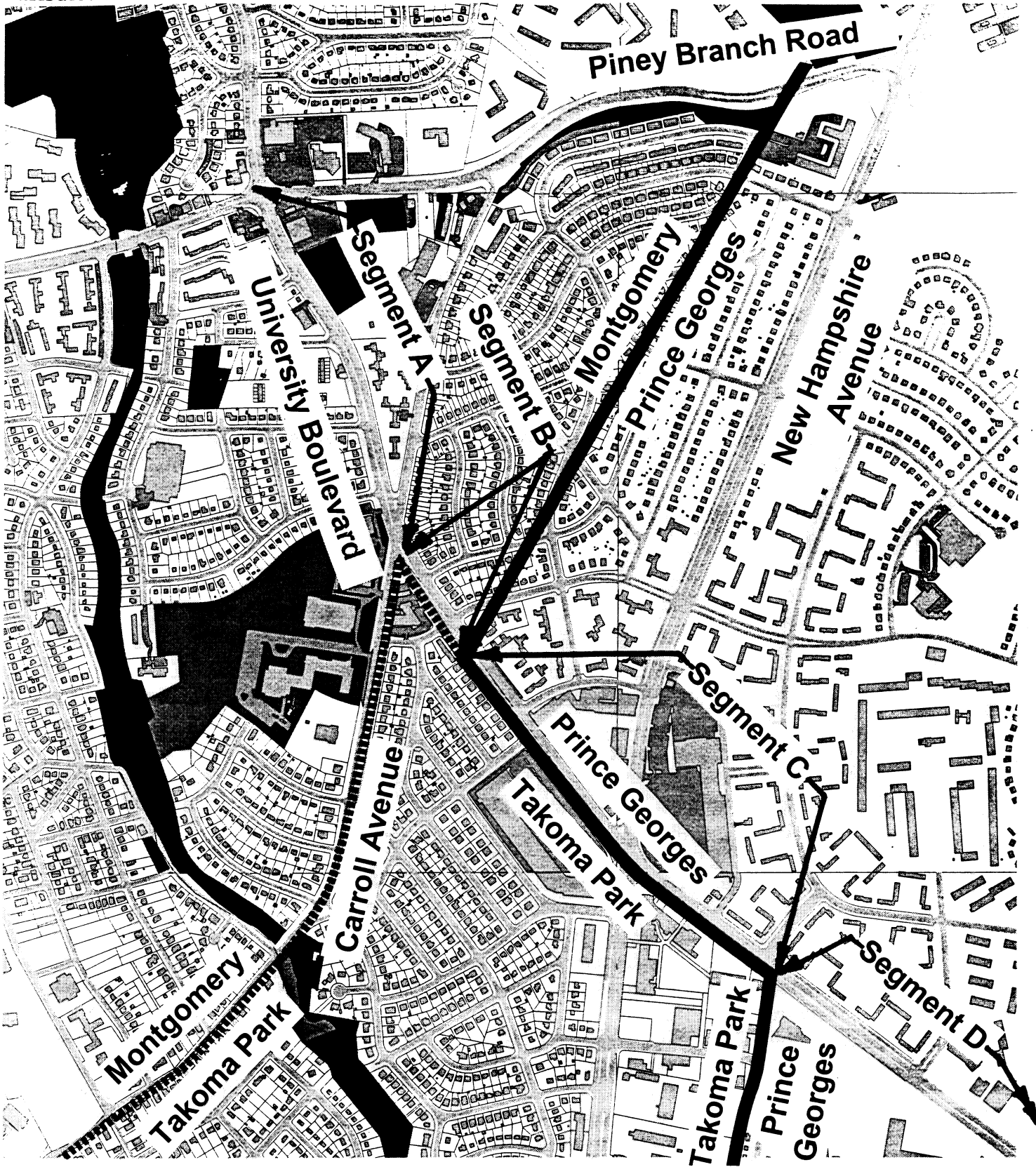
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Jurisdictions



ATTACHMENT 5

Map Compiled On 07-11-2002 at 11:40 AM
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0 800 Feet



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- Streams
- Street Pavement
- Buildings
- Parking Lots
- PAVED PARKING LOT
- UNPAVED PARKING LOT
- Individual Park Facilities
- All Parks
- Existing
- Proposed
- Property
- Municipalities
- Montgomery County

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**University Boulevard / International Corridor
Streetscape Concept Project
From Piney Branch Road to Adelphi Road
And New Hampshire Avenue, from Erskin Drive to Merrimac Drive**

**Summary and Recommendations of
Interim Improvements
(June 19, 2002)**

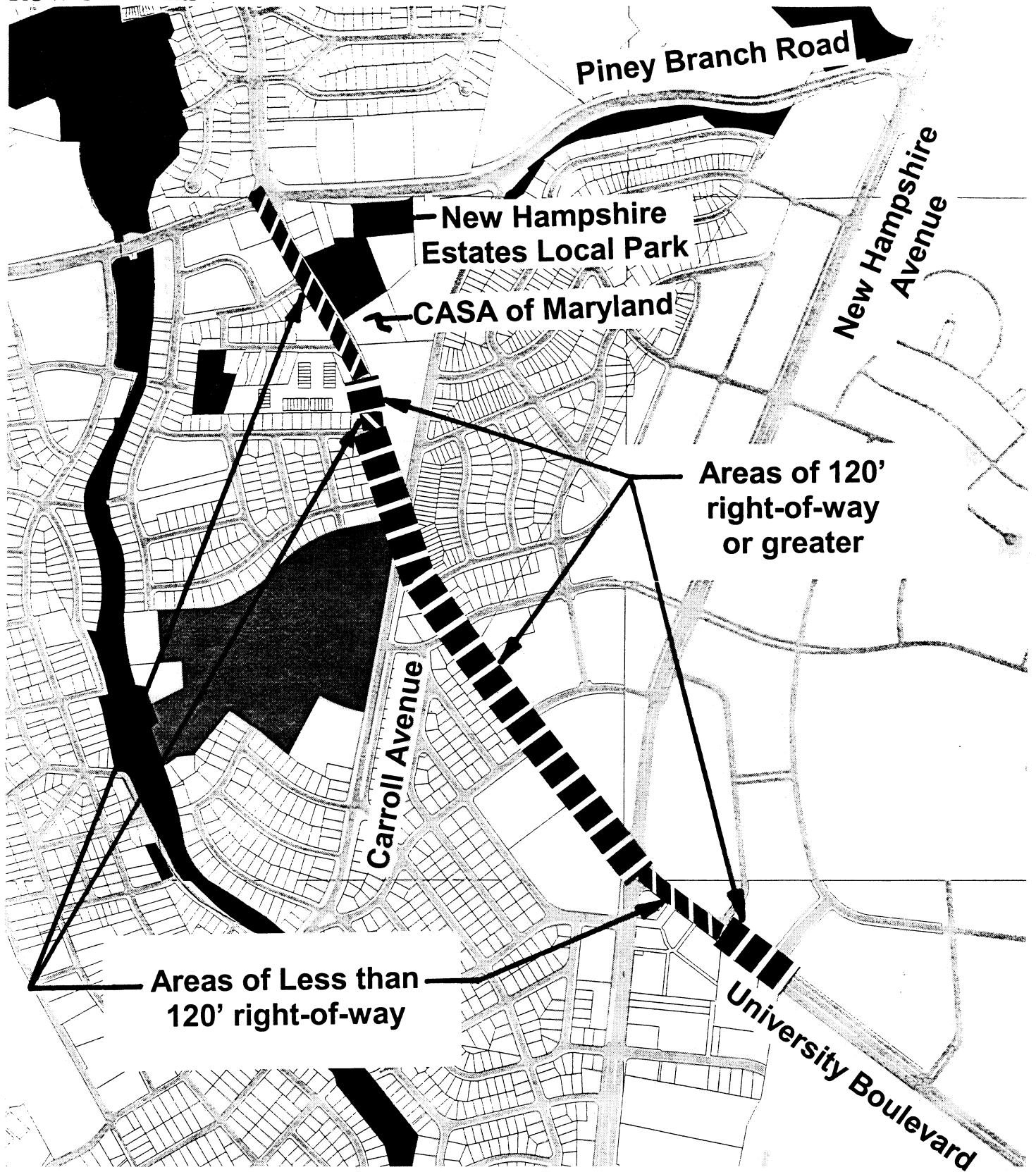
The following is a list of recommended interim improvement projects that may be undertaken in fiscal year 2004 and beyond.

- **Bus Shelters, Bus Stops, Crosswalks, Pedestrian Signals, and an Interconnect System:** These would be constructed as established in the initial recommendations for the entire scope of the project throughout the study limits.
- **University Blvd /Carroll Avenue / Merrimac Drive Triangle:** This work will include the possibility of adding a new signal at Merrimac Drive / University Boulevard, new curb, sidewalks, resurfacing and striping along Carroll Avenue. It will also include a significant amount of landscaping along Both Carroll Avenue and University Boulevard due to the availability of right-of-ways at that location. The interim project will be studied further before proceeding with final design.
- **Right Turn Lane to Southbound Riggs Road:** This interim project proposes converting the current right turn lane to southbound Riggs Road into a third through lane which would be carried across the intersection. It also proposes constructing a new right turn lane to southbound Riggs Road. The new right turn lane will be narrower with a smaller radius to discourage vehicular speed and enhance pedestrian safety. This work will impact the islands and require the reconstruction of the existing signal. Extra space becomes available for enhanced landscaping when realigning this ramp.
- **Left Turn Lane at University Garden Apartments:** Add a left turn lane to eastbound MD 193 east of Riggs Road to allow a left to University Garden Apartments. This work will also include minimal realigning and narrowing work on Phips Drive for safety purposes.
- **MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue Improvements):** This interim project will possibly combine all work along MD 650 from Holton lane to Merrimac Drive. The improvements South of Holton Lane will be part of the current adjacent SHA project to the South. Included in this work is the relocation of the current at-grade-intersection at MD 650 and Kirkland Drive further south, as agreed, and the addition of a second left turn lane to westbound MD 193. This proposed work would require a new signal installation at that intersection, the construction of a retaining wall and major impacts to the 7676 Office Building parking. The ramp to southbound MD 650 will also be narrowed and its radius reduced to discourage vehicular speed. Other improvements proposed include reconfiguring the entrance and exit points at the service roads

adjacent to MD 650 to separate vehicular-vehicular conflicts and vehicular-pedestrian conflicts. Ample space is available in this area for streetscaping as proposed in the initial concept plan.

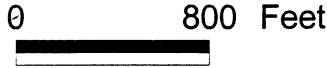
New Sidewalk Immediately East of MD 650 in the Eastbound Direction of MD 193: This interim project will need to be further investigated for feasibility. In order to provide for a sidewalk in that area next to the existing retaining wall, major cost will be incurred. This will require shifting the MD 193 alignment away from the existing wall and reconstruct approximately 500 feet of roadway length usable for a very short duration before the light rail construction begins. This project could be implemented at a later phase.

ROW Constraints



ATTACHMENT 7

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- Streams
- Street Pavement
- Individual Park Facilities
- All Parks
- Existing Property
- Proposed Property
- Municipalities
- Montgomery County

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Triangle

Sligo 7th Day Adventist Elementary School

Takoma Academy

Gas

7-11

Existing Traffic Signal

Potential Traffic Signal Locations

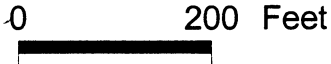
Merrimac Drive

University Boulevard

Carroll Avenue

ATTACHMENT 8

Map Compiled On 07-11-2002 at 11:33 AM
Map Scale: 1 inch = 200 feet or 1:2400



- Streams
- Street Pavement
- Buildings
- Parking Lots
- PAVED PARKING LOT
- UNPAVED PARKING LOT
- Individual Park Facilities
- All Parks
- Existing Property
- Proposed Property
- Municipalities
- Montgomery County

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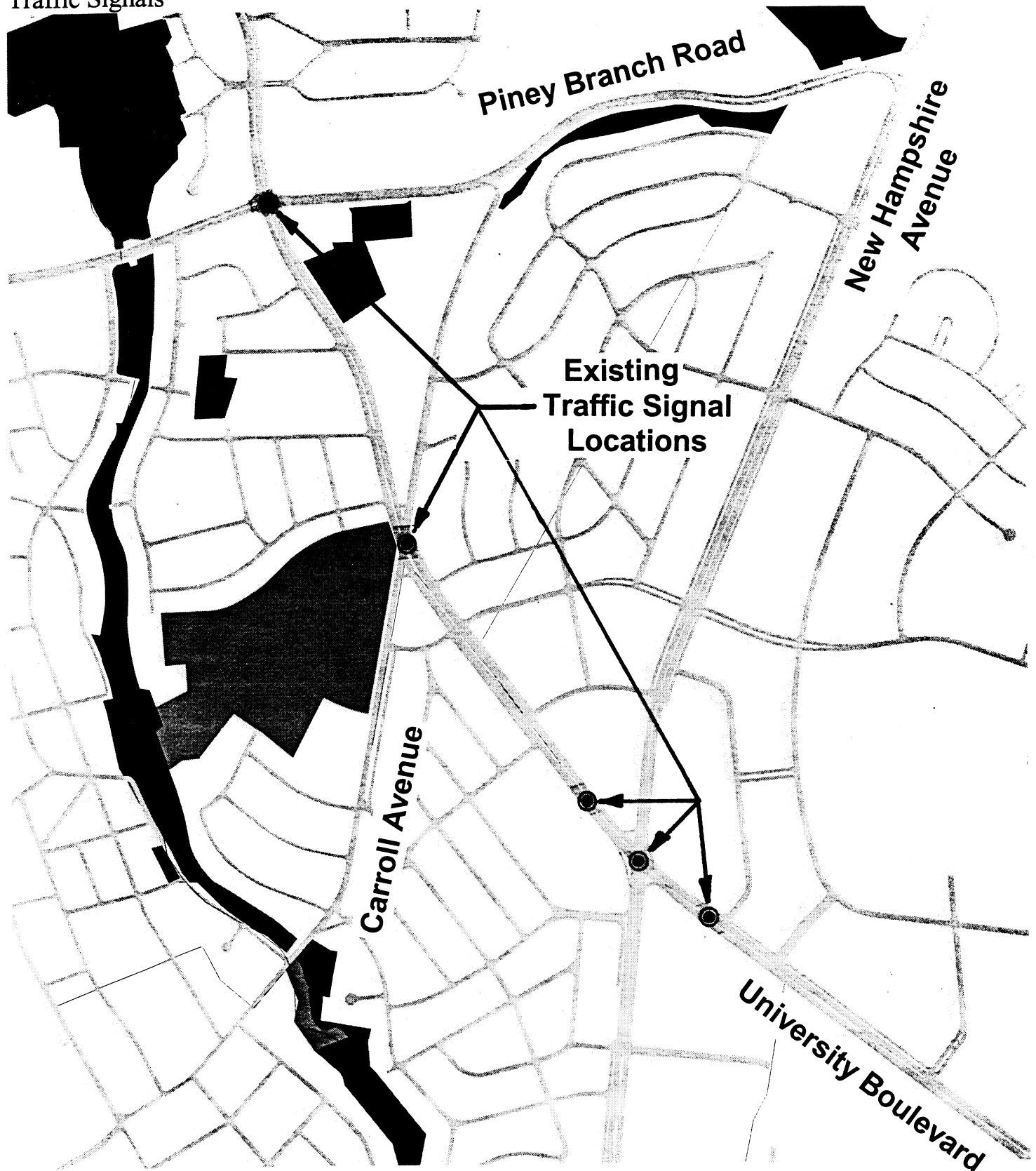
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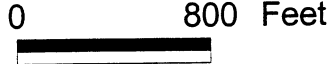
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Traffic Signals



ATTACHMENT 9

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MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
"Listening to Learn" Outreach Comments
UNIVERSITY BOULEVARD STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

Comments by Vietnamese, Latino, and African-American participants in the M-NCPPC\IDMA Bowie State "Listening to Learn" project.

1. Participants were very pleased with the concept plan presented at the February 20, 2002 SHA public forum. During our "Listening" sessions and the public forum they strongly urged support for:
 - Covered bus stops of various sizes
 - Additional crosswalks, with clear patterns and pavements
 - Mid-block bus stops and crosswalk at selected locations, such as Seek Lane
 - Safer crossings at major intersections
 - Gateway sculptures and other art features to reflect local cultural groups (i.e. Vietnamese and/or Latino, etc.)
2. Strongly urge that there be more frequent bus service, extension of service to later hours, and added service on Sundays.
3. Support selective use of barriers to limit or control the location of pedestrians crossing University Boulevard.
4. Support a traffic signal and prohibiting cross traffic of Merrimac to assure safety (since regular accidents occur).
5. Support traffic calming; believe that speeds are too fast and should be held to 35-40 mph.

We heard a particular urgency from all groups for early action wherever feasible in regard to:

- Safe pedestrian crossings
- Improved, covered bus shelters

