

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS: FROM FOREST GLEN ROAD TO 16TH STREET

Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation



October 2015

Federal Highway Administration
MD 97 from Forest Glen Rd. to 16th Street
Montgomery County, Maryland
Project No. MO224M11

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Maryland Division

and

State of Maryland
Department of Transportation
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I. Introduction

Section 4(f) as amended and codified in the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, 49 U.S.C 303 (c), states that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) “may not approve the use of land from a significant publicly owned public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site unless a determination is made that: 1) there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of land from the property and 2) the action includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the property resulting from such use” [23 CFR 774.3(a)].

This Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation has been prepared in accordance with 23 CFR 774 and 49 USC 303 to assess the potential effects of the MD 97 Montgomery Hills Project Planning Study upon Section 4(f) resources and evaluate options that avoid or minimize impacts to those resources caused by the project's build alternatives. The Final Section 4(f) evaluation will provide a determination on whether feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives to the use exist, and whether all possible planning to minimize harm to the resources has been performed.

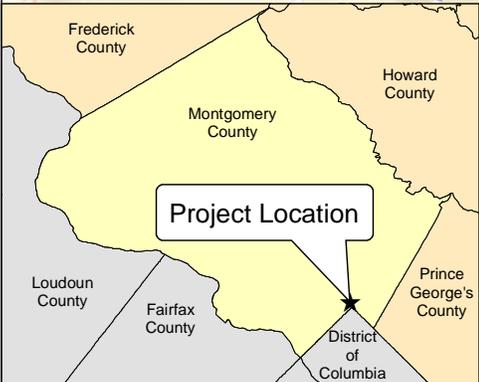
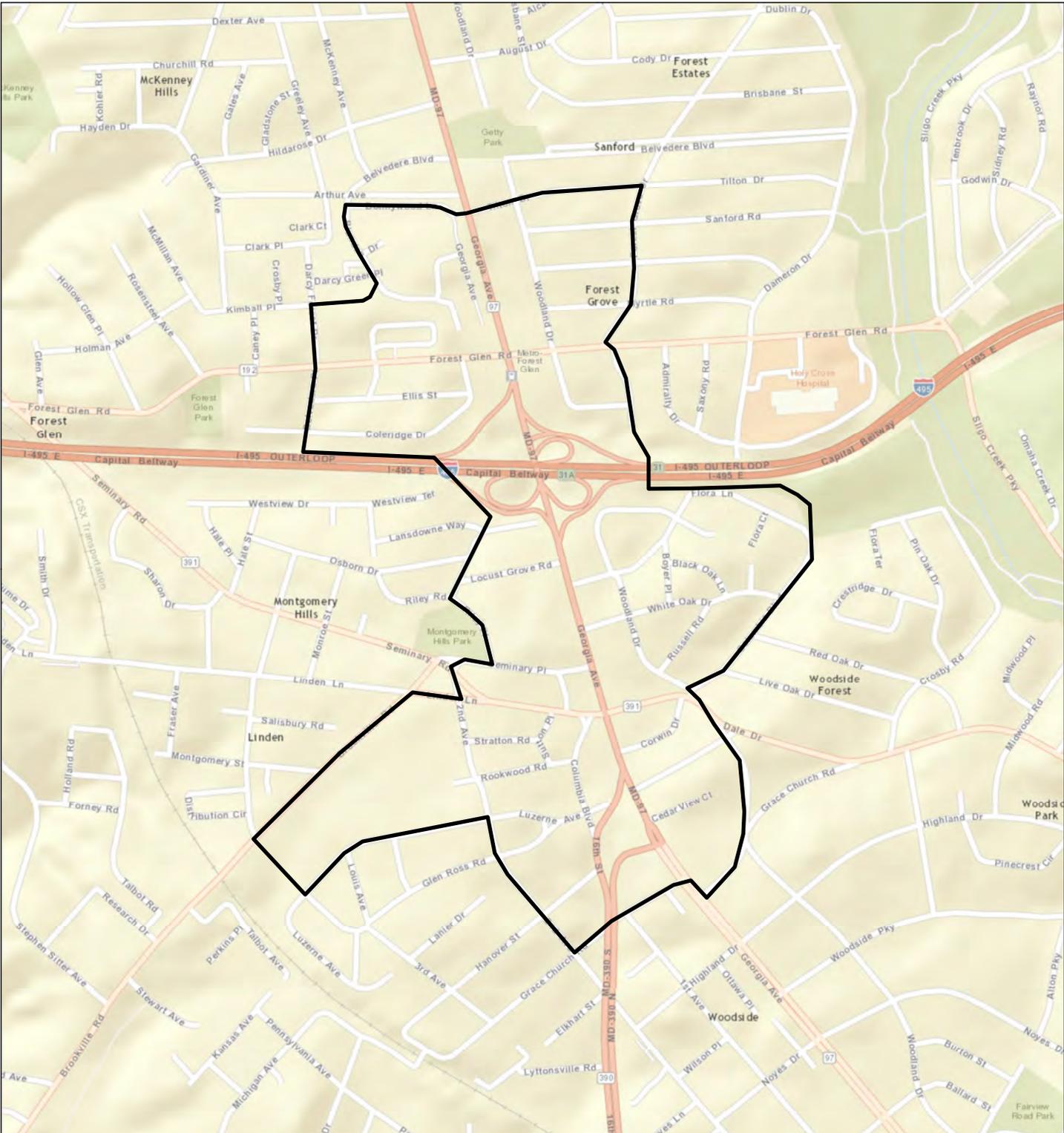
The MD 97 Montgomery Hills Project Planning Study is the result of recommendations documented in Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission’s (M-NCPPC) North and West Silver Spring Master Plan, which was adopted in 2000. The Montgomery Hills Proposed Concept included in the Master Plan envisions the future appearance of the corridor as “a landscaped urban boulevard with a center median and wide, unobstructed, tree-lined sidewalks.” It also recommends the transformation of the MD 97 corridor into a “pedestrian-friendly urban boulevard with improved local circulation that supports both residents and merchants.”

The MD 97 Montgomery Hills Project Planning Study includes improvements to address vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist mobility and safety; maintain access to local businesses; and foster the County's long-term goal of developing a sense of place in Montgomery Hills. The project consists of a combination of roadway improvements, sidewalk upgrades, and transit enhancements to achieve this goal.

The project is located in the community of Montgomery Hills in southeastern Montgomery County (*Figure 1*). The study area is centered around the 0.7-mile segment of MD 97 that extends from Forest Glen Road (MD 192) to 16th Street (MD 390), through the MD 97 interchange with the Capital Beltway (I-495). The study area encompasses the main project corridor along MD 97 as well as the residential communities located behind the businesses that front MD 97.

II. Purpose and Need

The purpose of the MD 97 Montgomery Hills Project Planning Study is to establish a balanced approach to transportation within the MD 97 corridor that equally addresses existing vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist mobility and safety, while accommodating proposed transit enhancements and establishing a sense of place within the corridor.

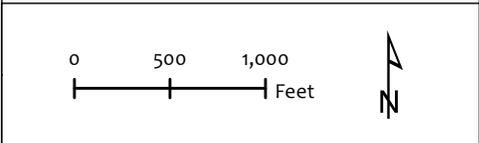


Legend

 MD 97 Study Area

MD 97 Montgomery Hills Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

Figure 1:
Project Location & Study Area



Three hundred eighty police-reported crashes occurred within the study limits during the three-year period from 2007 through 2009. Approximately 150 of those crashes (40 percent) resulted in injuries. No fatalities were documented. Rear-end, sideswipe, left-turn, angle, pedestrian, and truck-related crashes each occurred at a rate significantly higher than the statewide average for those types of crashes on similar roadways.

Heavy traffic volumes have the greatest impact on safety along the study corridor, as reflected in the high occurrence of sideswipe and rear-end collisions. Heavy traffic volumes decrease the following distance between vehicles, lessening driver reaction time and resulting in rear-end collisions, which account for almost half of all collisions along the corridor. Dense traffic conditions, which decrease vehicle following distance and available gaps, result in increased sideswipe crashes as well.

The safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists along the Montgomery Hills corridor is also adversely impacted by a large number of commercial access points and limited access consolidation in both directions. Almost half of all reported crashes resulted from angle and rear end collisions, which are commonly related to turning-movement conflicts and highly congested roadways. More than 25 percent of the crashes involved vehicle sideswipes, which are typically associated with a high volume of merging vehicles and lane changes.

During off-peak periods, the two-way center left-turn lane encourages unmanaged circulation patterns and increases safety concerns, as evidenced by the high proportion of sideswipe, left-turn, and angle crashes which account for just under half of all crashes along the corridor. These types of crashes typically reflect unsafe lane-change and turning-movement conditions. Because the center turn lane allows uncontrolled turning movements, motorists are unable to accurately anticipate when they may have to contend with turning vehicles. Motorists using the two-way center travel lane must make assumptions about the intentions of drivers of oncoming vehicles and determine whether those drivers are turning or continuing on their current paths.

The current mix of local and regional (commuter) traffic, coupled with the existing roadway design and sidewalk conditions, creates an automobile-dominated environment that is not always conducive to other modes of transportation. As a result, local business accessibility, pedestrian accessibility, bicycle connectivity, and transit use have become major challenges within the project area.

III. Proposed Action

In addition to the No-Build Alternative, SHA is evaluating three build alternatives as part of this study. In addition, two design options (Option B and Cycle Track Option) that may be applied to Alternative 5 are currently under consideration. For the purpose of this analysis, Alternative 5, Alternative 5 with Option B, and Alternative 5 with Cycle Track Option are each evaluated as stand-alone alternatives. The alternatives and design options are described below and are depicted on plans in *Appendix A*.

A. Alternative 1: No-Build

No major improvements are proposed under Alternative 1, the No-Build Alternative. Minor short-term improvements would occur as a part of routine maintenance and safety operations. The No-Build Alternative does not address the purpose and need for the project. It serves as a baseline for comparing the impacts and benefits associated with the build alternatives.

B. Alternative 2: Transportation Systems Management (TSM/TDM)

The TSM/TDM alternative would include improvements at existing signalized intersections such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP), queue jumps, and access consolidation. TSP allows for approaching buses to send a call to a transmitter at a signalized intersection to modify the signal timing and to enable buses to make it through the signal without stopping. Queue jumps are short auxiliary lanes that can be combined with right-turn lanes and introduced at various intersections along the corridor. Queue jumps allow the transit buses at signalized intersections to move in front of the through traffic on a green light. Access consolidation increases safety and improves vehicular traffic flow by minimizing disruptions caused by turning vehicles. Alternative 2 would also maintain the existing center reversible lane and include a 14 to 16-foot wide outer travel lane in each direction to accommodate on-road bicyclists. Alternative 2 only partially addresses the purpose and need for the project as it would not eliminate the center reversible lane and would not address pedestrian mobility and safety.

C. Alternative 3: Master Plan

The Master Plan Alternative is consistent with M-NCPPC's North and West Silver Spring Master Plan. Alternative 3 would consist of four travel lanes in the southbound direction at all times and a 16-foot grass median that would replace the existing reversible center turn lane. Three travel lanes would be maintained in the northbound direction from 16th Street to Seminary Place and the typical section would be widened to four travel lanes from Seminary Place through Forest Glen Road. A 13.5-foot sidewalk would be provided on both sides of MD 97, and a new signal at Flora Lane would help bicyclists and pedestrians cross MD 97. Flora Lane would be shifted south to intersect MD 97 opposite the driveway entrance to the shopping center. Left-turn lanes would be included on MD 97 at the intersections with Forest Glen Road, Flora Lane, Seminary Place, and Seminary Road.

D. Alternative 5: Four Lanes SB and Three to Four Lanes NB

Alternative 5 would provide four lanes in the southbound direction with a 17-foot center grass median. Three travel lanes would be maintained in the northbound direction from 16th Street to Seminary Place and the typical section would be widened to four travel lanes from Seminary Place through Forest Glen Road. In an effort to minimize right-of-way impacts, the center line of the roadway would be shifted slightly near Columbia Boulevard to optimize available right-of-way in this area. Left-turn lanes would be provided on MD 97 at Forest Glen Road and Seminary Road. The ramp to southbound 16th Street would be relocated to the signalized intersection with northbound 16th Street. Alternative 5 includes a 16-foot outside travel lane to

accommodate on-road bicycle use. A five-foot sidewalk would be provided on both sides of MD 97 and would be set back from the curb by five feet where space allows.

E. Alternative 5 with Option B: Flora Lane Intersection

Alternative 5 with Option B includes the addition of a new traffic signal along MD 97 at Flora Lane. Flora Lane would be shifted south to intersect MD 97 opposite the driveway entrance to the shopping center. The new signalized intersection would accommodate left turning movements onto Flora Lane and provide improved access for vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists accessing MD 97 and the Forest Glen Metro Station.

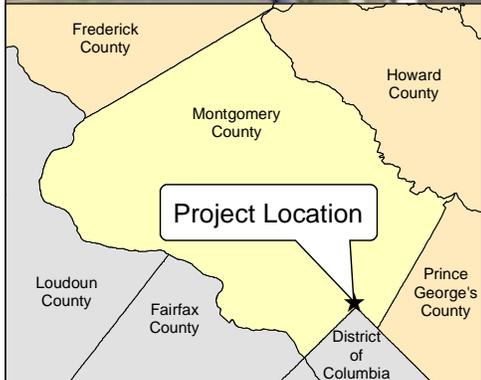
F. Alternative 5 with Cycle Track Option

Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option would provide a similar lane configuration to Alternative 5. However, with this option, a two-lane cycle track would be provided on the southbound side of MD 97 that would extend from the existing pedestrian bridge (just south of the I-495 interchange) to the existing 16th Street slip ramp. The cycle track would include two, four-foot bike lanes and a three-foot buffer that separates vehicular traffic from bicycle traffic. From the slip ramp to northbound 16th Street, on-road bicycle lanes would be provided on both sides of the roadway. When northbound cyclists reach Seminary Road, they would be directed to make their way across the intersection where they would enter the cycle track. The intersection at 16th Street would be redesigned similarly to the proposed design in Alternative 5. The ramp to southbound 16th Street would be relocated to the signalized intersection with northbound 16th Street. A five-foot sidewalk would be provided on both sides of MD 97 and would be set back from the curb by five feet.

IV. Section 4(f) Properties

One Section 4(f) property was identified within the study area. This property is the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church located along northbound MD 97 at 9545 Georgia Avenue (*Figure 2*). The church property is located just south of I-495 and is bound by MD 97 to the west, Flora Lane to the south, Woodland Drive to the east, and the ramp from MD 97 to I-495 East to the north.

The church property is 1.75 acres in size. It contains five attached church buildings, as well as a basketball court and a playground, which are situated on the south side of the parcel adjacent to Flora Lane. The five church buildings were constructed over three building campaigns. The chapel and administration building were constructed in 1948. The school building was constructed in 1951; and a multi-purpose building and sanctuary were constructed in 1962. The basketball court and playground area is surrounded by a chain-link fence. A small retaining wall currently exists along the west side of the basketball court parallel to MD 97. The wall ranges from three to four feet in height. A stone sign structure currently exists at the southwest corner of the church property. There is also a short wooden fence located adjacent to the existing sidewalk along MD 97 that holds a sign for the Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf. The portions of the parcel north of the church building and the east side of the parcel along Woodland Drive contain trees. A noise barrier is also located just outside of the property along the eastbound I-495 on-ramp.

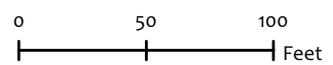


Legend

 Section 4(f) Boundary

MD 97 Montgomery Hills Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation

Figure 2:
Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church



The property is accessed from a driveway directly off of MD 97. The asphalt driveway wraps around the north side of the property exiting onto Woodland Drive. On the west side of the property, there is a small parking lot adjacent to MD 97 through which the driveway passes. The parking lot has eight angled parking spaces along the east side of the driveway and four parking spaces parallel to the curb on the west side of the driveway. Additional parking for the church is available along Woodland Drive and Flora Lane. A small parking lot located outside of the church property along the south side of Flora Lane is also available for church parking on Sundays.

In addition to the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, this facility also houses the Auburn School and the congregation of the Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf. The Auburn School is an independent day school serving children from kindergarten through eighth grade. The Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf is a separate congregation that utilizes the church facility.

The Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church qualifies for protection under Section 4(f) because it is a significant historic site. This property was previously evaluated and determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on June 9, 2013. This site is historically significant under Criterion C because the original chapel and the administration building are excellent examples of post-World War II suburban religious architecture.

Coordination with officials from Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church revealed that the church has plans for future improvements on the property. These plans include the construction of a circular drop-off/pick-up driveway in the northeast corner of the property and for the expansion of the school building on the southern end of the property.

V. Section 4(f) Uses

Section 4(f) uses of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church would occur under Alternative 3, Alternative 5, Alternative 5 with Option B, and Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option. The Section 4(f) uses and Section 106 effect determination of each alternative are summarized in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Summary of Section 4(f) Uses

	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 5 Option B	Alternative 5 Cycle Track Option
Section 4(f) Use (acres)	0.26	0.24	0.27	0.24
Section 106 Effect Determination	Adverse Effect	Adverse Effect	Adverse Effect	Adverse Effect

A. Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would result in a Section 4(f) use of 0.26 acre (11,498 square feet) from the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church (*Figure 3*). The Section 4(f) use would occur along the west side of the property adjacent to northbound MD 97 and would extend for approximately 175 feet along the length of the property. The Section 4(f) use area would encroach approximately seven to 21 feet onto the church property. At the southern end of the property, the Section 4(f) use would involve the removal of several existing trees, the relocation of the existing chain link fence, and the relocation of the church's stone sign structure. A portion of the church's sidewalk leading from the school building and connecting to the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97 would be eliminated by the widening of the roadway and the relocation of the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97. A new ADA-compliant sidewalk would be constructed along the entire length of the church property, broken only by the church driveway. A short retaining wall would be constructed along the east side of the new sidewalk just south of the church driveway. The new sidewalk along MD 97 would be connected through a small break in the retaining wall to the remaining portion of the church's existing sidewalk. The short wooden fence that is located adjacent to the existing sidewalk and that holds a sign for the Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf would also be removed and relocated.

The existing retaining wall along the west side of the church's basketball court would be reconstructed in the same location under this alternative. The new retaining wall would be no more than five feet high. A portion of the basketball court would become temporarily unusable while the reconstruction of the retaining wall is underway.

In addition, the following permanent impacts would occur on the church property. The existing church driveway off of MD 97 would be shortened due to the widening of the roadway in the vicinity of the church. Access to the church via the driveway would be maintained; however, the existing parking lot would be impacted. In addition, the reconfiguration of the driveway would also require adding new pavement on a portion of the existing lawn located immediately south of the parking lot. In the parking lot, the eight existing angled handicapped parking spaces on the east side of the lot would be replaced by five parallel parking spaces. The four existing parallel parking spaces on the west side of the lot would be eliminated. In total, seven of the twelve existing parking spaces would be lost.

A small retaining wall (no more than eighteen inches high) would also be constructed along the western edge of the redesigned parking lot and a new ADA-compatible sidewalk would be constructed immediately to the west of the retaining wall. Several small trees that currently exist between the existing sidewalk and the parking lot would be removed.

B. Alternative 5 and Alternative 5 with Cycle Track Option

Although the roadway design is slightly different when the Cycle Track Option is applied to Alternative 5, the Section 4(f) use of Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church would be nearly the same under each of these options. Alternative 5 would result in a Section 4(f) use of 0.24 acre (10,542 square feet) from the church (*Figure 4*). Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option would result in a Section 4(f) use of 0.24 acre (10,654 square feet) from the church (*Figure 5*).

WOODLAND DRIVE

FLORA LANE

Calvary Evangelical
Lutheran Church

REBUILD EXISTING WALL BY LESS THAN 1' AS NEEDED TO MATCH 3:1
PROPOSED ROW LINE

WALL HEIGHT VARIES 1.7' MAX

4 - 11' LANES

- LEGEND
- SECTION 4(f) BOUNDARY
 - SECTION 4(f) USE

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Figure 3:
Section 4(f) Use: Alternative 3

SCALE:
1" = 40'

TO I-95

TO CHESAPEAKE CITY

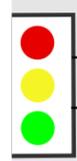
WOODLAND DRIVE

FLORA LANE

Calvary Evangelical
Lutheran Church

PROPOSED ROW LINE

WALL HEIGHT VARIES 2.75 MAX



- LEGEND**
-  SECTION 4(f) BOUNDARY
 -  SECTION 4(f) USE

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Figure 4:
Section 4(f) Use: Alternative 5

SCALE:
1" = 40'

BY: SPMartin

WOODLAND DRIVE

FLORA LANE

Calvary Evangelical
Lutheran Church

WALL HEIGHT VARIES 8" MAX

- LEGEND**
- SECTION 4(f) BOUNDARY
 - SECTION 4(f) USE

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Figure 5:
Section 4(f) Use: Alternative 5
with Cycle Track Option

SCALE:
1" = 40'

For each of these alternatives, the Section 4(f) use would occur along the west side of the property adjacent to northbound MD 97 and would extend for approximately 175 feet along the length of the property. The Section 4(f) use area would encroach approximately six to 21 feet onto the church property. At the southern end of the property the Section 4(f) use would involve the removal of several existing trees, the relocation of the existing chain link fence, and the relocation of the church's stone sign structure. A portion of the existing sidewalk leading from the school building to the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97 would be eliminated by the widening of the roadway and the relocation of the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97. A short retaining wall (no more than eighteen inches high) would be constructed along the east side of the new sidewalk just south of the church driveway. The new sidewalk would be connected through a small break in the retaining wall to the remaining portion of the church's existing sidewalk. The short wooden fence holding the sign for the Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf would also be removed and relocated. The impacts to church driveway and parking lot would be the same as those described under Alternative 3.

C. Alternative 5 with Option B

Alternative 5 with Option B would result in a Section 4(f) use of 0.27 acre (11,682 square feet) from the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church (*Figure 6*). The Section 4(f) use would occur along the west side of the property adjacent to northbound MD 97 and would extend for approximately 175 feet along the length of the property. The Section 4(f) use area would encroach approximately nine to 21 feet onto the church property. The Section 4(f) use associated with Alternative 5 with Option B is similar to that of Alternative 5, but would encroach further east into the property at the southern end. This is the result of the need for a wider median north of Flora Lane to accommodate the additional left-turn lane added along northbound MD 97 at the proposed traffic signal at Flora Lane. Impacts to the church's existing trees, sign structure, sidewalk, and fences would be the same as described for Alternative 5. The additional encroachment into the property would also require the reconstruction of the retaining wall along the basketball court. The wall would be replaced in the same location, but would be higher than the existing wall. The new retaining wall would be no more than five feet high. A portion of the basketball court would become temporarily unusable while the reconstruction of the retaining wall is underway.

The impact of Alternative 5 with Option B on the church's parking lot would be similar to that of Alternative 5, but the additional encroachment into the property under Alternative 5 with Option B would result in the driveway being slightly narrower than it would be under Alternative 5.

VI. Avoidance Analysis

Avoidance alternatives are those alternatives that avoid all Section 4(f) uses within the corridor. An analysis of alternatives that avoid the use of Section 4(f) properties is required when Section 4(f) uses that do not have *de minimis* impacts are present. Such an analysis was undertaken for the Section 4(f) uses of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church associated with Alternative 3, Alternative 5, Alternative 5 with Option B, and Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option. Four avoidance alternatives were identified. These include the No-Build alternative, Alternative 2 (TSM/TDM), relocation of MD 97, and realignment of MD 97 within the existing corridor. Each of these avoidance alternatives was evaluated to determine if it would constitute a feasible and prudent avoidance alternative as defined in 23 CFR 774.17.

WOODLAND DRIVE

FLORA LANE

Calvary Evangelical
Lutheran Church

WALL HEIGHT VARIES 2.75' MAX

- LEGEND**
- SECTION 4(f) BOUNDARY
 - SECTION 4(f) USE

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

Figure 6:
Section 4(f) Use: Alternative 5
with Option B

SCALE:
1" = 40'

BY: SPMartin -

A. Alternative 1: No-Build

Alternative 1, the No-Build Alternative, would completely avoid all Section 4(f) properties. However, the No-Build Alternative would not meet the project's purpose and need because it would not address existing vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle mobility and safety, accommodate proposed transit enhancements, or establish a sense of place within the corridor. As such, Alternative 1 (No-Build) would compromise the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed with the project in light of its stated purpose and need.

B. Alternative 2: TSM/TDM

Alternative 2, the TSM Alternative, would completely avoid all Section 4(f) properties. However, Alternative 2 would only partially meet the project's purpose and need. While the TSM/TDM alternative would address some of the vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle mobility issues by consolidating access points, providing ADA compatible sidewalks and providing wide outside lanes for bicyclists, it would do little to address safety as no center median would be provided along MD 97. Likewise, Alternative 2 would allow for some accommodation of proposed transit enhancements through the implementation of TSP and queue jumps, but would ultimately retain the same general roadway configuration, including the reversible center lane. As such, Alternative 2 would not provide a level of safety comparable to Alternatives 3 and 5 (all options) and would not include changes aimed at establishing a sense of place within the corridor. Therefore, Alternative 2 would compromise the project to a degree that it is unreasonable to proceed with the project in light of its stated purpose and need.

C. Relocation of MD 97

Avoidance of the Section 4(f) use of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church could be achieved by relocating MD 97 on a new alignment to the east or west of its current location. However, relocating MD 97 would not be feasible because the roadway is a well-established transportation corridor within a densely developed area. The location of MD 97 in the vicinity of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church is highly constrained by the location of the I-495/MD 97 interchange, which is located immediately north of the church property. Relocation of MD 97 to either the east or the west would require relocation of the interchange and its associated ramps. In addition, relocation of the roadway in either direction would result in substantial impacts to the residential communities that exist behind the businesses that front both northbound and southbound MD 97. It would be necessary to provide a transportation corridor of equal width to accommodate the large volume of traffic that MD 97 currently carries. Placing a roadway of this width and the traffic that utilizes it on an alignment that passes through the residential communities east or west of existing MD 97 would cause severe disruption to those communities. Furthermore, it would also impact the businesses along MD 97 by eliminating their current access to the MD 97 mainline. For these reasons, relocation of MD 97 is expected to result in severe social, economic or environmental impacts.

D. Realignment of MD 97 within the Existing Corridor

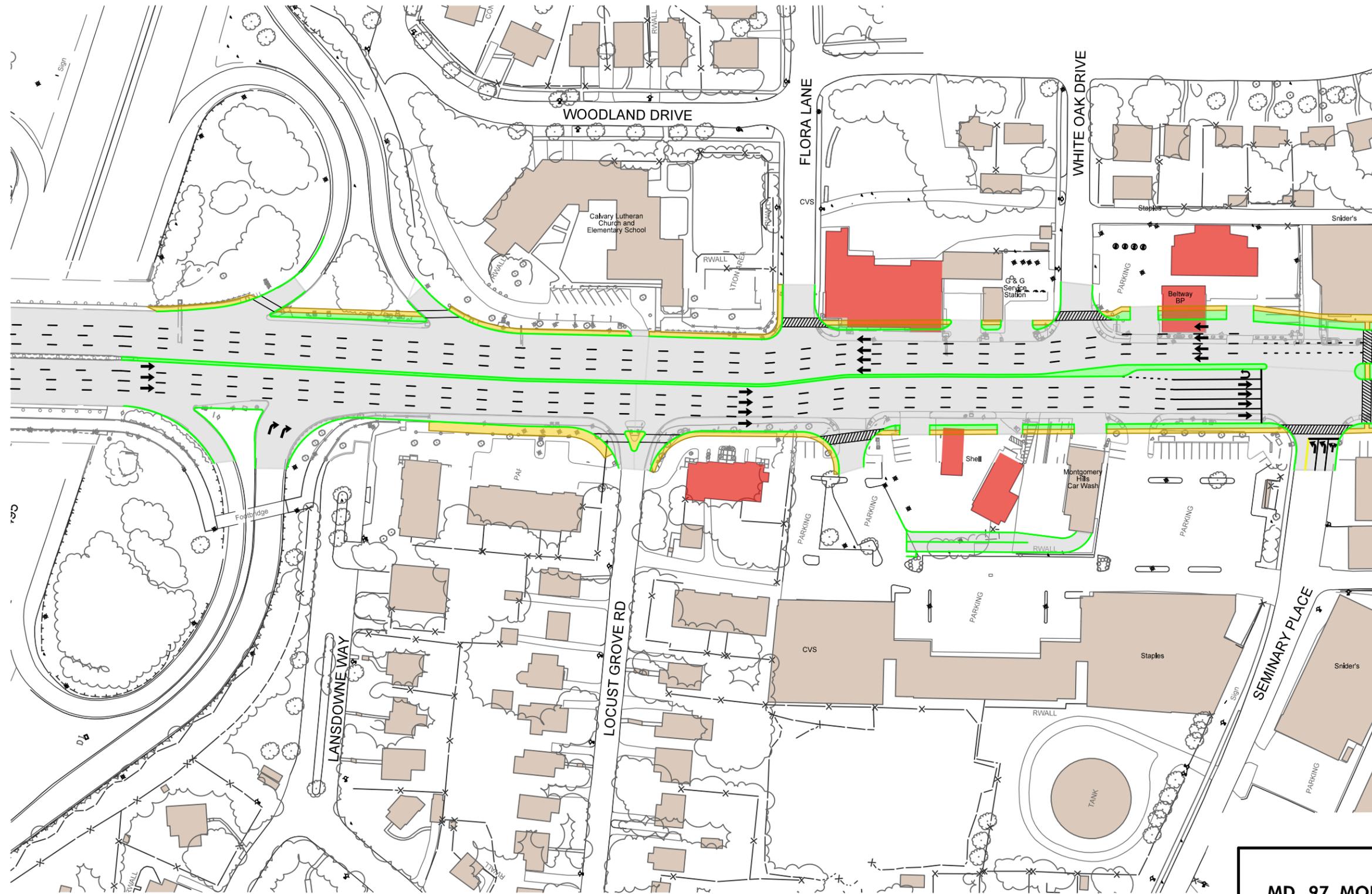
Avoidance of the Section 4(f) use of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church could be achieved by realigning MD 97 within the existing corridor (*Figure 7*). This alternative would involve shifting the alignment of MD 97 approximately eight to ten feet to the west to avoid the use of the church property. Shifting the alignment far enough to the west to avoid the church property would result in substantial impacts along the southbound side of MD 97. The south end of the pedestrian bridge would be impacted approximately 75 feet from where it ties into the sidewalk requiring this portion of the structure to be relocated or reconstructed. The existing brick barrier in front of the townhomes that are located along southbound MD 97 just north of Locust Grove Road would also be impacted and would need to be reconstructed. Impacts to the driveway for the four townhomes located between Locust Grove Road and the CVS shopping center would eliminate access to those properties, thus requiring displacement of the residences. The gas pumps at the Shell station located along southbound MD 97 just south of Locust Grove Road would be impacted. Removal of the gas pumps would result in the displacement of the gas station because it could no longer serve its current function. Furthermore, the abrupt change in the center line of the roadway that is necessary to implement the alignment shift necessary to avoid the church property while maintaining the same number of travel lanes through the I-495 interchange would be uncomfortable and unsafe for drivers. For these reasons, realignment of the existing MD 97 corridor is expected to result in severe social, economic or environmental impacts.

E. Avoidance Analysis Findings

Based on the above analysis, all of the avoidance alternatives considered in this Section 4(f) evaluation would "cause other severe problems of a magnitude that substantially outweighs the importance of protecting the Section 4(f) property." However, a finding of whether each avoidance alternative is considered feasible and prudent must be made with consideration of input from the jurisdictional officials and the public. Therefore, the final determination of whether these avoidance alternatives are feasible and prudent has been reserved for the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.

VII. Least Overall Harm

Pursuant to 23 CFR 774.3(c)(1), if the avoidance analysis determines that there is no feasible and prudent avoidance alternative, then only the alternative that causes the least overall harm may be approved. *Table 2* presents a summary of the environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives that would require the use of Section 4(f) properties. A comparison of the alternatives then evaluates which would result in the least overall harm. The least overall harm analysis is based upon the seven factors identified in 23 CFR 774.3(c)(1). *Table 3* presents a summary comparison of the alternatives by each least overall harm evaluation factor. Since this analysis may change as a result of input received from the public or the officials with jurisdiction, only a preliminary conclusion is provided at this time. The final identification of the least overall harm alternative is reserved for the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.



**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

Figure 7:
Avoidance Alternative:
Realignment of MD 97

VIII. All Possible Planning to Minimize Harm

Section 4(f) requires that all possible planning to minimize harm to Section 4(f) properties be included in a project before it may be approved by FHWA. “All possible planning” includes all reasonable measures to minimize harm and mitigate for adverse impacts and effects. It does not require analysis of feasible and prudent avoidance alternatives. The avoidance analysis has already occurred in the context of searching for alternatives that avoid Section 4(f) properties altogether, pursuant to 23 CFR 774.17. For this Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation, possible planning to minimize harm has been included for the alternatives currently under consideration and is documented in this section; however, the determination of whether all possible planning has occurred has been reserved for the Final Section 4(f) Evaluation.

During the development of the project alternatives, it was recognized that possible planning to minimize harm to Section 4(f) properties could be achieved in this corridor through various measures. These include minor alignment shifts as well as measures to minimize the footprint of the roadway in the vicinity of Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church. Where possible, these measures have been incorporated into the current design of the alternatives. The following describes the numerous measures that were applied to each alternative.

A. Alternative 3

Section 4(f) minimization measures for Alternative 3 included reducing the sidewalk width from the master plan-recommended 13.5 feet to the ADA minimum width of five feet on the northbound side of MD 97 in the vicinity of the church.

On the southbound side of MD 97, Alternative 3 included a shared use path instead of a sidewalk between the existing pedestrian bridge and Locust Grove Road. In this location, the width of the shared use path was reduced to ten feet, which is the minimum width for a shared use path according to SHA design standards. South of Locust Grove Road, the sidewalk width along southbound MD 97 was reduced to the ADA minimum width of five feet. In addition to the minimization of sidewalk widths, the alignment of MD 97 was shifted slightly away from the church to further minimize the use of the church property.

This shift was limited to between seven and twelve feet because shifting the alignment further to the west would result in impacts to the I-495/MD 97 interchange, the existing pedestrian bridge structure, and the existing brick retaining wall that supports the parking area of the townhomes along southbound MD 97 immediately across from the church. By incorporating these minimization measures, the Section 4(f) use of the property under Alternative 3 was reduced from 0.28 acre to 0.26 acre.

Table 2: Summary of Environmental Impacts¹

Resources		Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 5 Option B	Alternative 5 Cycle Track Option
Relocations/Property	Residential Displacements	0	0	0	0
	Business Displacements	5	5	5	5
	Right-of-way required (acres)	3.75	3.81	3.76	3.39
Natural Resources	Woodland/Forest impacts (acres)	0.54	0.72	0.73	0.74
	Hazardous Waste Sites (no.)	13	13	13	13
Cultural Resources	Historic Sites (no.)	1	1	1	1
	Archeological Sites (no.)	0	0	0	0
	Section 106 Effect Determination (NPA, NAE, AE)	AE	AE	AE	AE
Noise	NSA's Impacted (number)	N/A ²	N/A ²	N/A ²	N/A ²
Section 4(f) Resources	Name of resource(s)	Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church			
	Resource impact (acre or constructive use impact)	0.26	0.24	0.27	0.24
Total cost (million \$)		\$75 - \$85	\$70 - \$80	\$70 - \$80	\$70 - \$80

¹ There would be no impacts to the following resources by any alternative: Rare, threatened or endangered species; streams; 100-year floodplain; wetlands; prime farmland; Chesapeake Bay Critical Area

² A noise analysis for the project is currently underway, but has not been completed to date.

Table 3: Least Overall Harm Analysis

23 CFR 774.3(c)(1) Factor	Alternative 3	Alternative 5	Alternative 5 Option B	Alternative 5 Cycle Track Option	Preliminary Conclusion ¹
i. The ability to mitigate adverse impacts to each Section 4(f) property (including any measures that result in benefits to the property)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relocation of Flora Lane creates an opportunity to provide mitigation immediately adjacent to the existing church property. The displacement of the Conley Building, a commercial building located at 9517-9525 Georgia Avenue just south of Flora Lane creates an opportunity to provide mitigation for lost parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The displacement of the Conley Building, a commercial building located at 9517-9525 Georgia Avenue just south of Flora Lane creates an opportunity to provide mitigation for lost parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The relocation of Flora Lane creates an opportunity to provide mitigation immediately adjacent to the existing church property. The displacement of the Conley Building, a commercial building located at 9517-9525 Georgia Avenue just south of Flora Lane creates an opportunity to provide mitigation for lost parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The displacement of the Conley Building, a commercial building located at 9517-9525 Georgia Avenue just south of Flora Lane creates an opportunity to provide mitigation for lost parking. 	Compared to Alternative 5 and Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option, Alternative 3 and Alternative 5 with Option B both create additional opportunities for providing mitigation by relocating Flora Lane to the south. However, the impacts to the property should be able to be adequately mitigated by the opportunities available for all alternatives. Therefore, the alternatives are substantially equal for this analysis factor.
ii. The relative severity of the remaining harm, after mitigation, to the protected activities, attributes or features that qualify each Section 4(f) property for protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.26 acre of Section 4(f) use No direct impact to the church buildings, which are the primary features that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f). The historic setting would be altered by the acquisition of right-of-way to construct the sidewalk, reconfigure the driveway and parking lot, remove and alter landscaping, and reconstruct the retaining wall at the basketball court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.24 acre of Section 4(f) use No direct impact to the church buildings, which are the primary features that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f). The historic setting would be altered by the acquisition of right-of-way to construct the sidewalk, reconfigure the driveway and parking lot, and remove and alter landscaping. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.27 acre of Section 4(f) use No direct impact to the church buildings, which are the primary features that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f). The historic setting would be altered by the acquisition of right-of-way to construct the sidewalk, reconfigure the driveway and parking lot, remove and alter landscaping, and reconstruct the retaining wall at the basketball court. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.24 acre of Section 4(f) use No direct impact to the church buildings, which are the primary features that qualify the property for protection under Section 4(f). The historic setting would be altered by the acquisition of right-of-way to construct the sidewalk, reconfigure the driveway and parking lot, and remove and alter landscaping. 	Although the Section 4(f) use areas for each of the alternatives considered in this analysis vary slightly in size, the overall harm to the Section 4(f) property is very similar. Alternative 3 and Alternative 5B include the reconstruction of the retaining wall along the basketball court while Alternative 5A and the Cycle Track Option do not. Based on these minor differences, the alternatives are substantially equal for this analysis factor.
iii. The relative significance of each Section 4(f) property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church is the only Section 4(f) property impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church is the only Section 4(f) property impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church is the only Section 4(f) property impacted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church is the only Section 4(f) property impacted. 	There is only one Section 4(f) property; therefore, the alternatives are substantially equal for this analysis factor.
iv. The views of the officials with jurisdiction over each Section 4(f) property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MHT concurred with Adverse Effect finding for Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MHT concurred with Adverse Effect finding for Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MHT concurred with Adverse Effect finding for Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MHT concurred with Adverse Effect finding for Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church 	The officials with jurisdiction made the same finding for all alternatives; therefore, the alternatives are substantially equal for this analysis factor.
v. The degree to which each alternative meets the purpose and need for the project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets all aspects of the purpose and need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets all aspects of the purpose and need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets all aspects of the purpose and need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meets all aspects of the purpose and need. 	All alternatives fully meet the purpose and need; therefore, Alternative 3, Alternative 5, Alternative 5 with Option B and Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option are substantially equal for this analysis factor.
vi. After reasonable mitigation, the magnitude of any adverse impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Table 2 for a comparison of the impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Table 2 for a comparison of the impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Table 2 for a comparison of the impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Table 2 for a comparison of the impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f). 	Adverse impacts to resources not protected by Section 4(f) are very similar between each of the alternatives. There are marginal differences in right-of-way acquisition and woodland impacts. However, these differences are so minor that all alternatives are considered substantially equal for this factor.
vii. Substantial differences in cost among the alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$75 - \$85 Million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$70 - \$80 Million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$70 - \$80 Million 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$70 - \$80 Million 	The difference in the costs between the alternatives is minor relative to the overall project cost. Therefore, the alternatives are substantially equal for this analysis factor.

¹ Preliminary conclusion may change as a result of input from the officials with jurisdiction and/or the public.

B. Alternative 5 and Alternative 5 with Option B

Measures to minimize the Section 4(f) use of Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church associated with Alternative 5 and Alternative 5 with Option B are the same for both alternatives and include similar measures as those discussed for Alternative 3. The proposed grass buffer between the roadway and the sidewalk was removed on both the northbound and southbound sides of MD 97 in the vicinity of the church. On the southbound side of MD 97, the width of the shared use path was reduced to the minimum ten feet from the end of the existing pedestrian bridge to Locust Grove Road. South of Locust Grove Road, the sidewalk width was reduced to the ADA minimum width of five feet. The alignment of MD 97 was shifted slightly to the west away from the church property. Under Alternative 5 and Alternative 5 with Option B, this shift ranged between two feet and four feet because shifting any further to the west would result in impacts to the MD 97/I-495 interchange, the existing pedestrian bridge structure, and the brick retaining walls supporting the parking for the townhomes along southbound MD 97 immediately across from the church. The proposed median width was reduced from an average of sixteen feet to an average of six feet. Six feet is the minimum width allowed for a pedestrian refuge, which is needed for the crossing of highways that are as wide as MD 97. Incorporating these minimization measures resulted in minor reductions to the Section 4(f) use of the property under Alternative 5 and Alternative 5 with Option B. For both alternatives the total reduction of the Section 4(f) use was less than 0.01 acre.

C. Alternative 5 with Cycle Track Option

Under Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option, Section 4(f) minimization measures resemble those of the previously described alternatives. The proposed grass buffer between the MD 97 roadway and the sidewalk was eliminated on both the northbound and southbound sides of MD 97 in the vicinity of the church. On the southbound side of MD 97, the width of the sidewalk/shared use path was reduced to the minimum ten feet from the end of the existing pedestrian bridge to Locust Grove Road. South of Locust Grove Road, the sidewalk width was reduced to the ADA minimum of five feet. The alignment of MD 97 was shifted slightly to the west away from the church property. Under Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option, this shift ranged between ten feet and fifteen feet because shifting any further to the west would result in impacts to the MD 97/I-495 interchange, the existing pedestrian bridge structure, or the brick retaining walls supporting the parking for the townhomes along southbound MD 97 immediately across from the church. Similar to Alternative 5 and Alternative 5 with Option B, the proposed median width for Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option was reduced from an average of sixteen feet to an average of six feet. By incorporating these minimization measures, the Section 4(f) use of the property under Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option was reduced from 0.25 acre to 0.24 acre.

IX. Coordination

As part of the process followed to demonstrate compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, coordination with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) took place throughout the early stages of this project. SHA identified potentially eligible historic properties within the project's area of potential effects, evaluated each property, and determined if each was

listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP. SHA's eligibility determinations were coordinated with MHT. On June 19, 2013, MHT concurred that the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church was eligible for listing in the NRHP.

On May 21, 2015, members of the project team met with representatives from the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church to discuss the potential impacts that the project alternatives would have on the church property. The church representatives discussed their future plans to renovate and expand the facility. They are at the very beginning of the planning/fundraising process so the improvements would happen over several years. Potential improvements include short term ADA and access improvements, new options for parking and dropping off students at the Auburn School, and building an addition to the school in the area of the existing playground. Representatives mentioned they would like to keep their front driveway entrance (on MD 97) open even if the parking lot was smaller and the parking configuration changed. They also mentioned they would like SHA to look into the possibility of adding some screening (vegetation) between MD 97 and their property. SHA discussed the schedule for the MD 97 project and will continue to coordinate with Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church as the project moves forward through planning and into the design phase.

Having obtained input from representatives of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, SHA sent additional correspondence dated July 7, 2015 to MHT requesting concurrence with the SHA's determination that there would be no historic properties affected under Alternative 1 (no Build); no adverse effect on historic properties under Alternative 2; and adverse effects on historic properties under Alternative 3, Alternative 5, Alternative 5 with Option B, and Alternative 5 with the Cycle Track Option (see *Appendix B*). MHT concurred with SHA's effect determination in a letter dated August 4, 2015.

By carbon copy of its July 7, 2015 letter to MHT, SHA also invited the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, and Montgomery Preservation, Inc. to provide comments and participate in the Section 106 process.

APPENDIX A

DLAWN DRIVE

BONNYWOOD LANE

COLERIDGE DRIVE

EW TERRACE

FOREST GLEN ROAD

Forest Glen Metro Station

Montgomery Hills Baptist Church



LEGEND

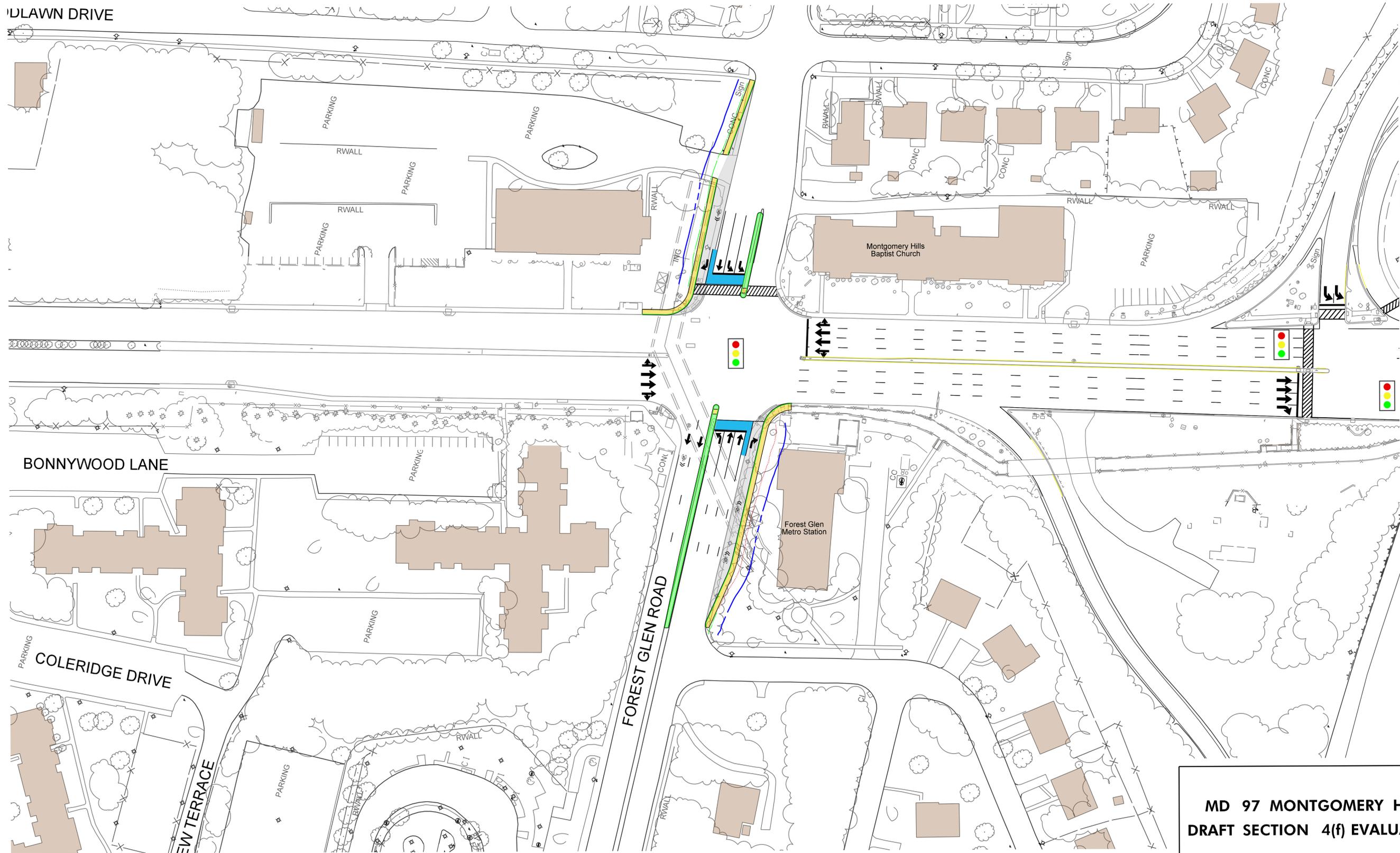
PROPOSED LOD

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

ALTERNATIVE 2

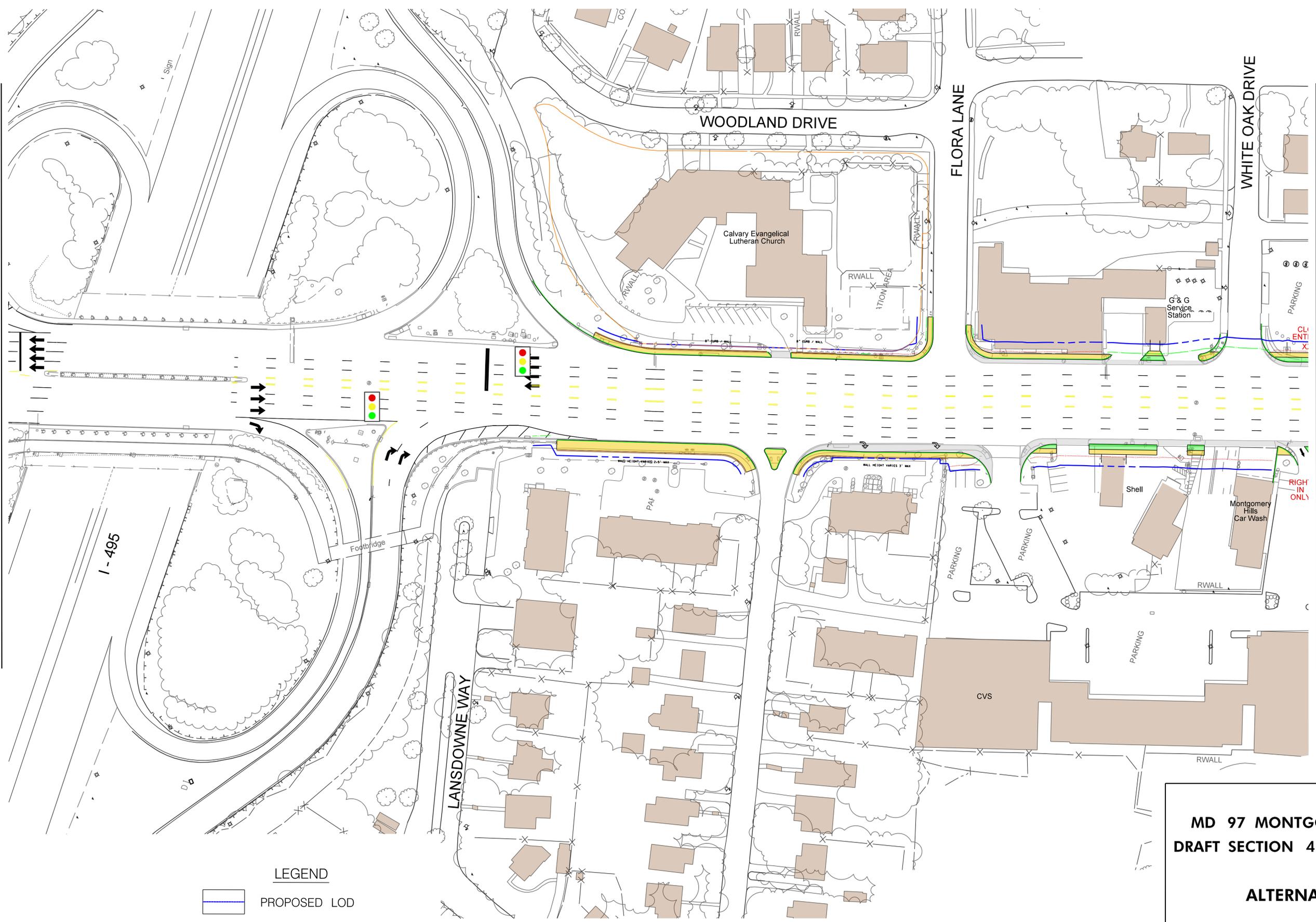
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BY: SPMartin



MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-01

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-03



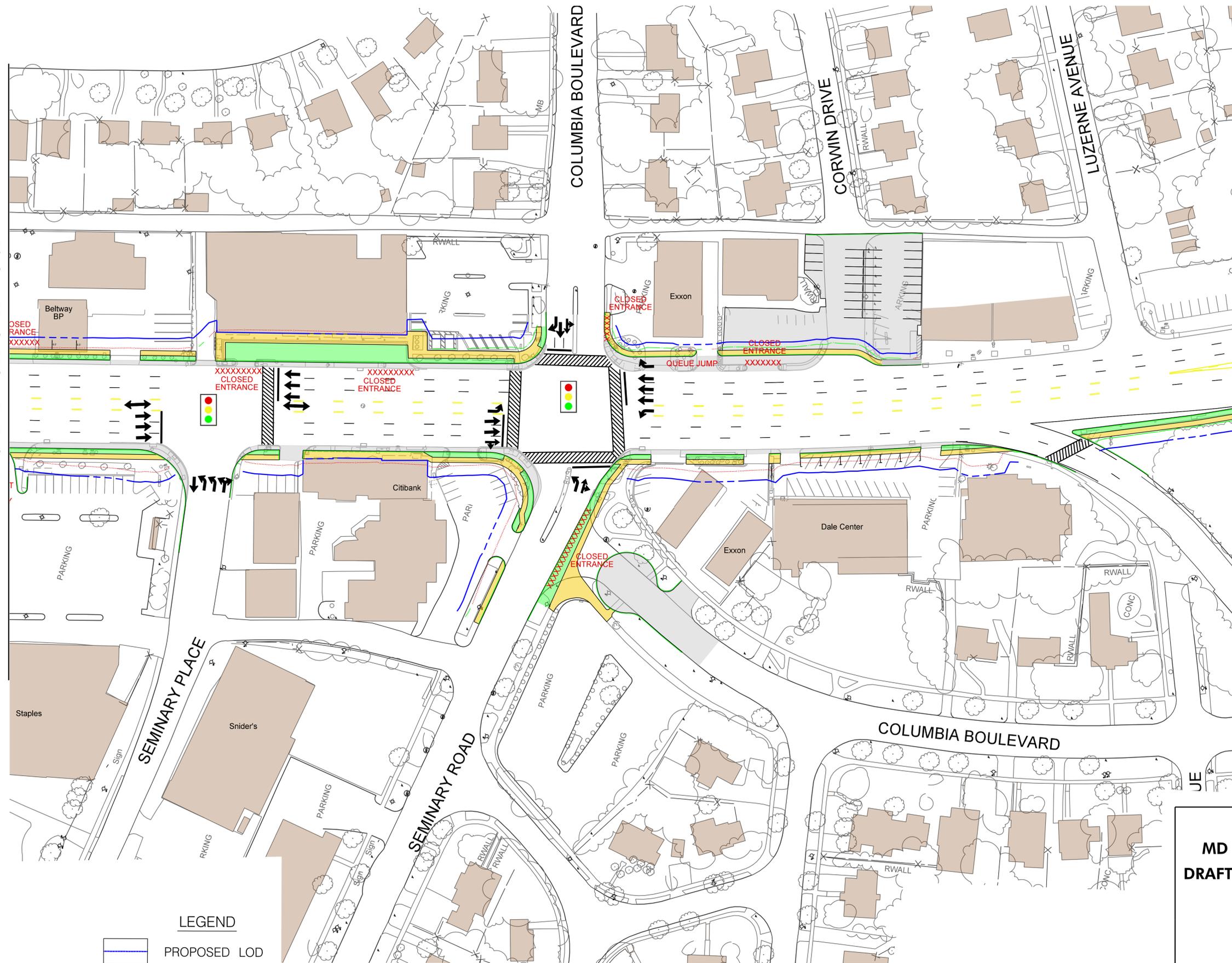
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 PROPOSED LOD

**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
 DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 2

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-02

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-04



**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 2



MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-03



**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 2

BY: SPMartin -

DLAWN DRIVE

BONNYWOOD LANE

COLERIDGE DRIVE

NEW TERRACE

FOREST GLEN ROAD

Montgomery Hills Baptist Church

Forest Glen Metro Station

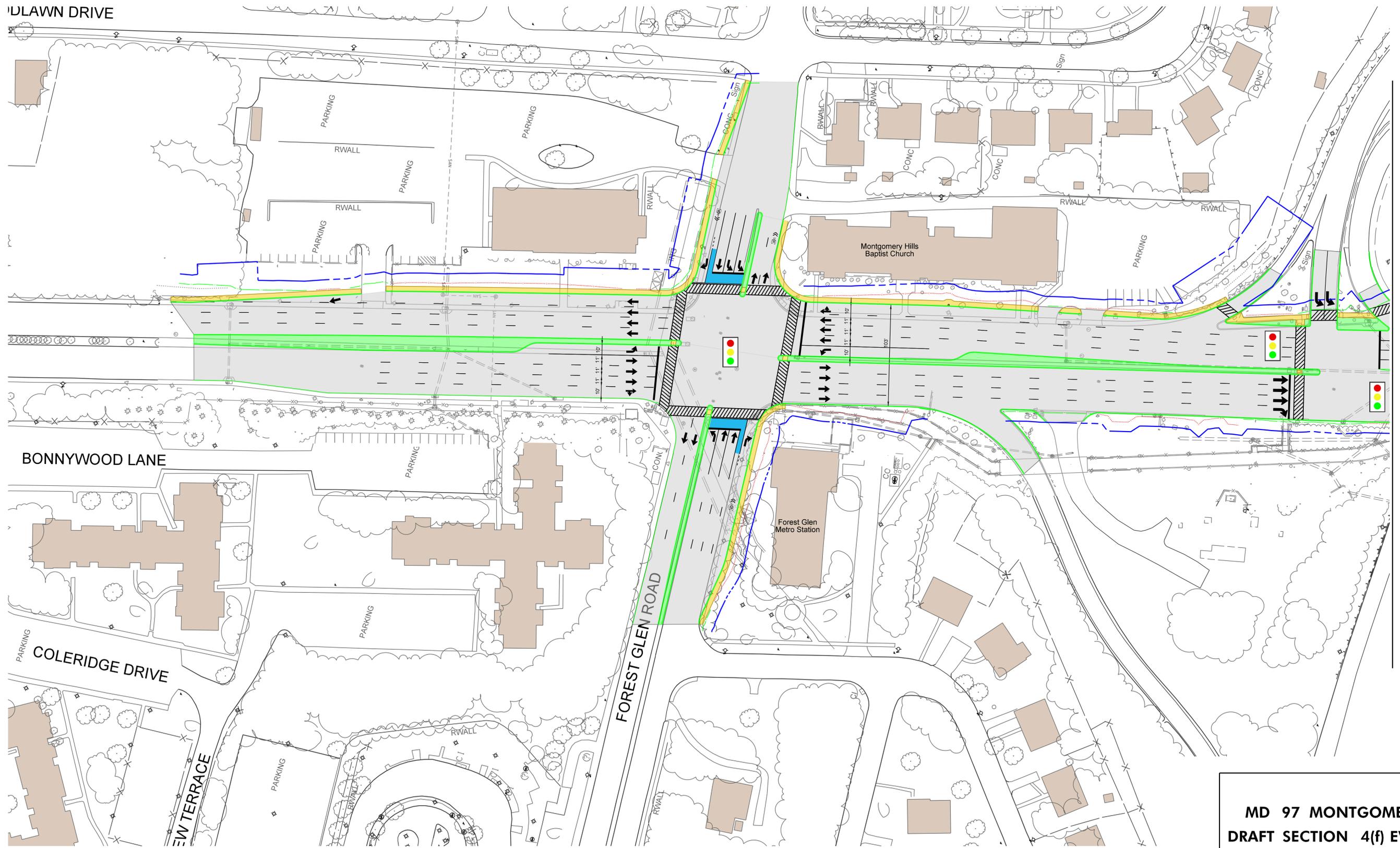
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PROPOSED LOD

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

ALTERNATIVE 3

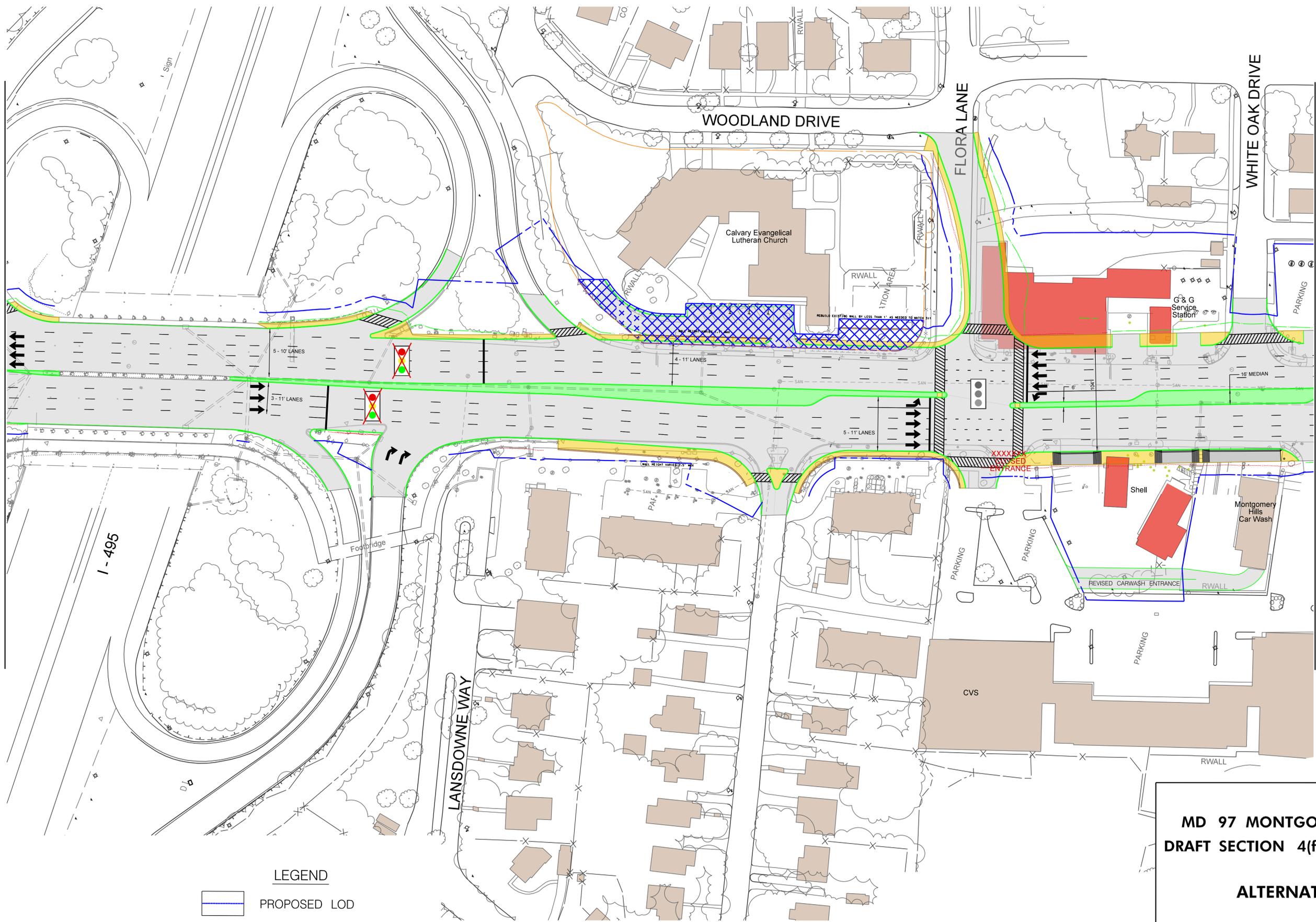
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MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-05

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-07



LEGEND

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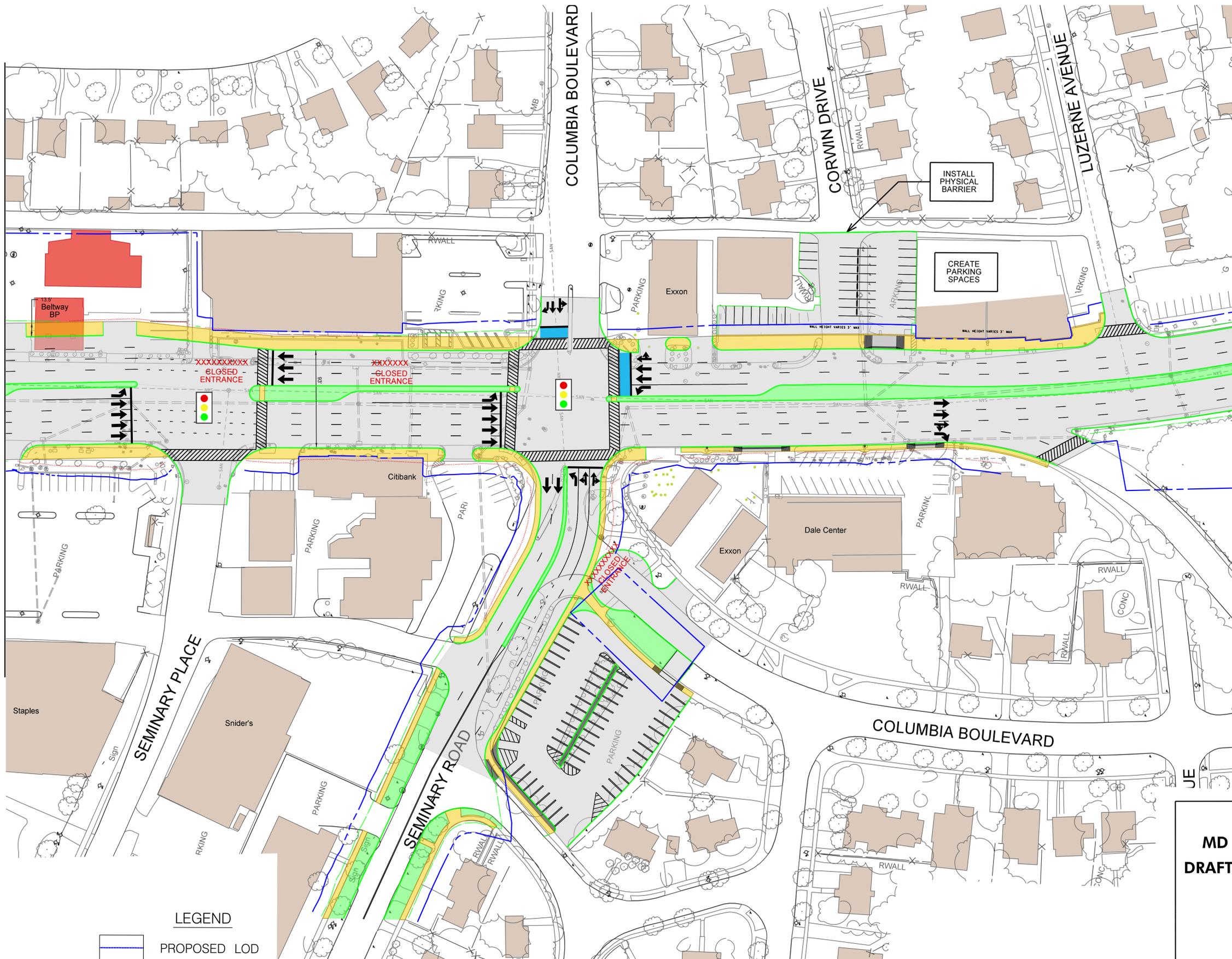
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DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 3

BY: SPMartin -

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MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-08



LEGEND
 PROPOSED LOD

**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
 DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

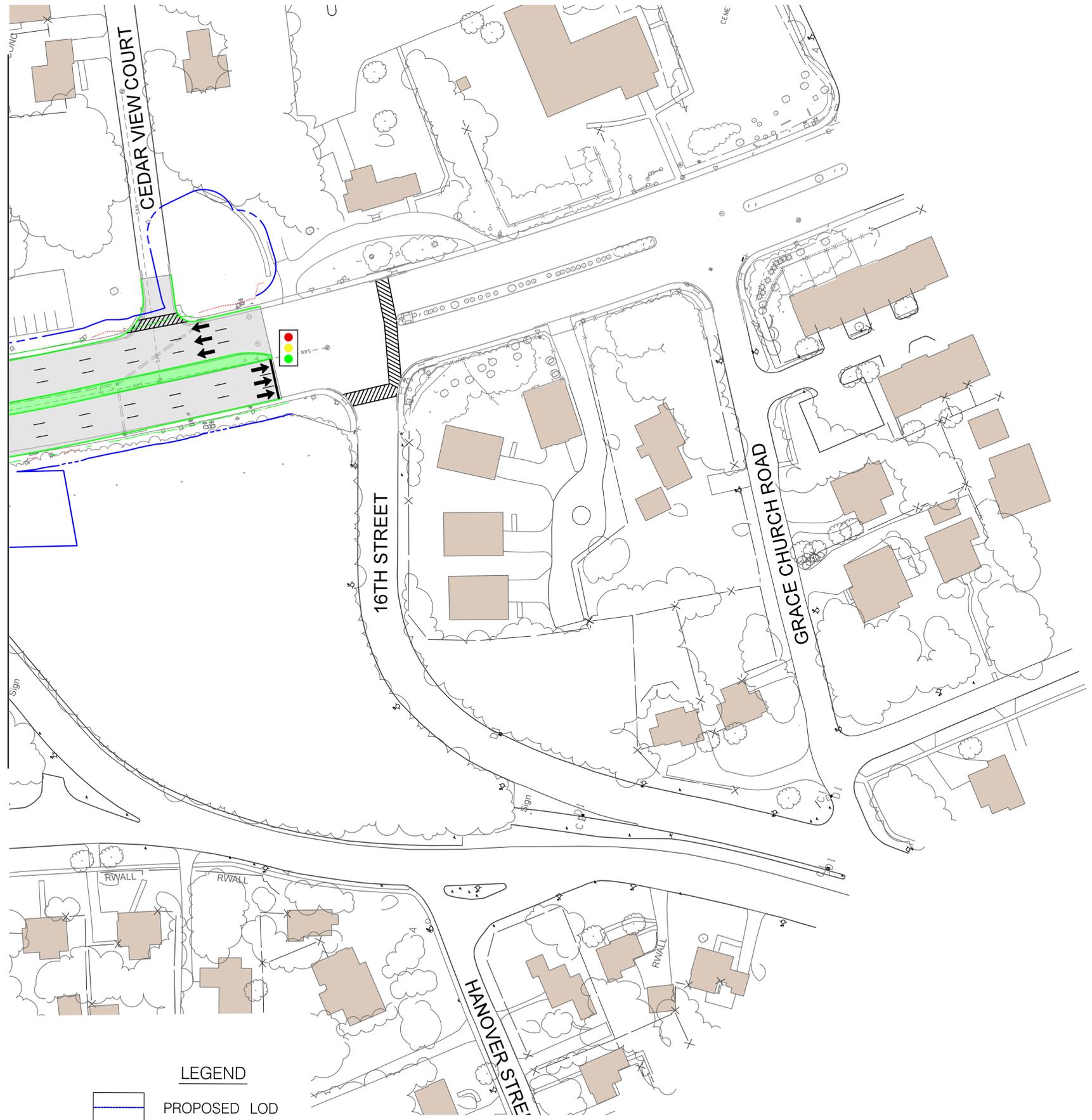
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BY: SPMartin



BY: SPMartin -

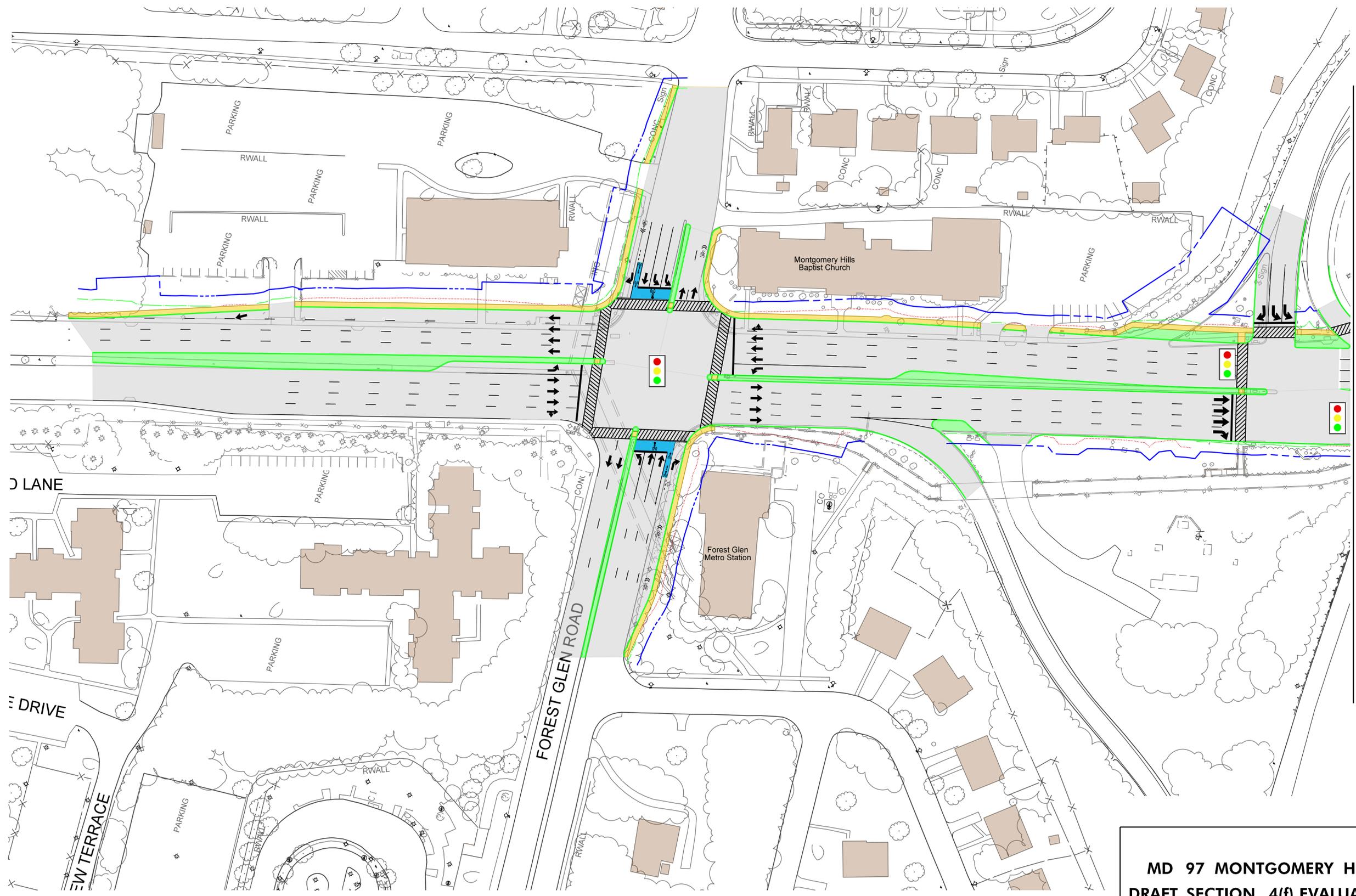
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LEGEND
 PROPOSED LOD

**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
 DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 3



MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-10

**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 5

LEGEND
 PROPOSED LOD

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-09

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-11

I - 495

WOODLAND DRIVE

FLORA LANE

WHITE OAK DRIVE

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

G & G Service Station

Paf

Shell

Montgomery Hills Car Wash

CVS

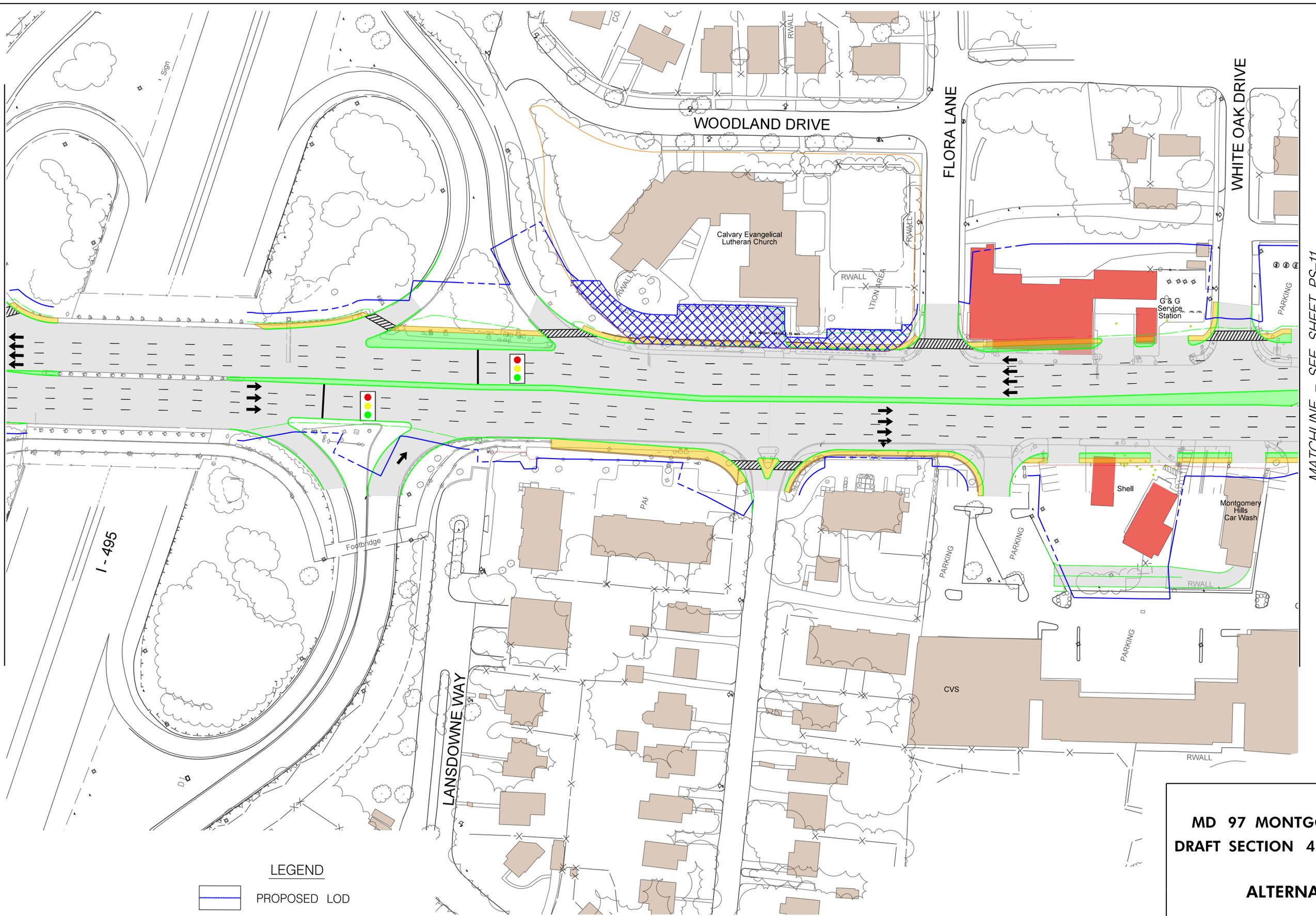
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LEGEND

PROPOSED LOD

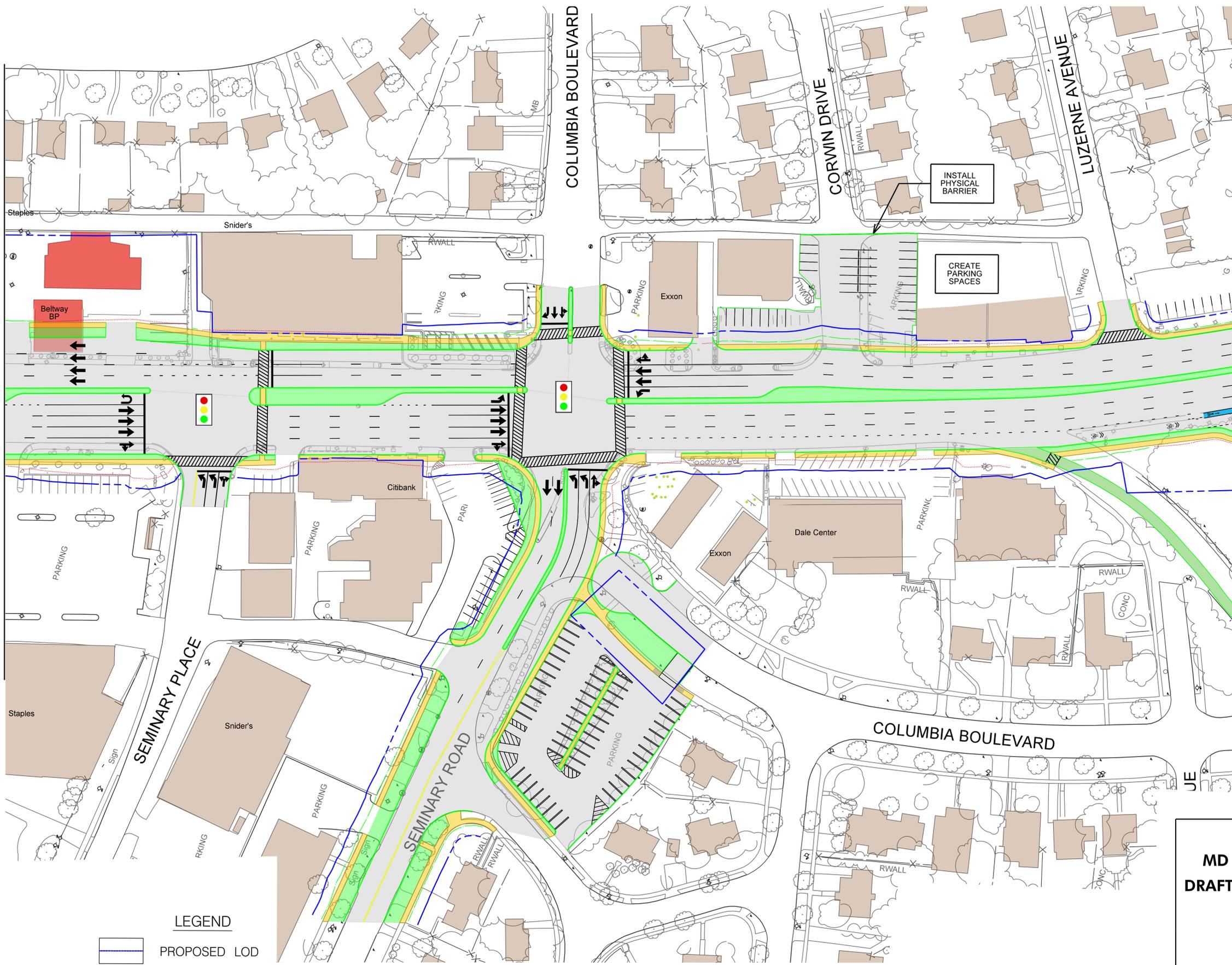
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ALTERNATIVE 5



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MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-12



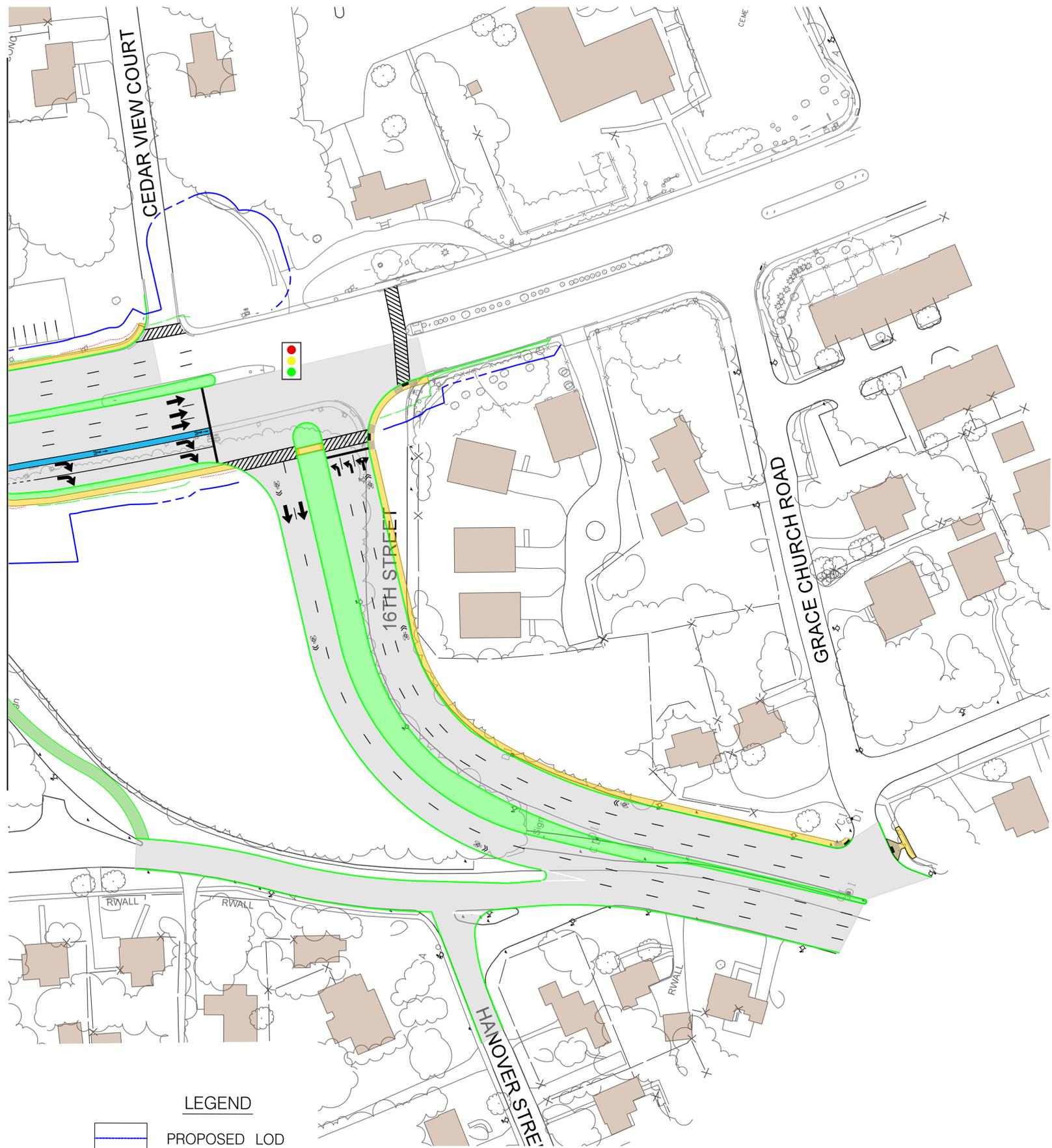
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**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
 DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 5

BY: SPMartin -

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-11



LEGEND

 PROPOSED LOD

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

ALTERNATIVE 5

WILLOW DRIVE

BONNYWOOD LANE

COLERIDGE DRIVE

NEW TERRACE

FOREST GLEN ROAD

Montgomery Hills Baptist Church

Forest Glen Metro Station

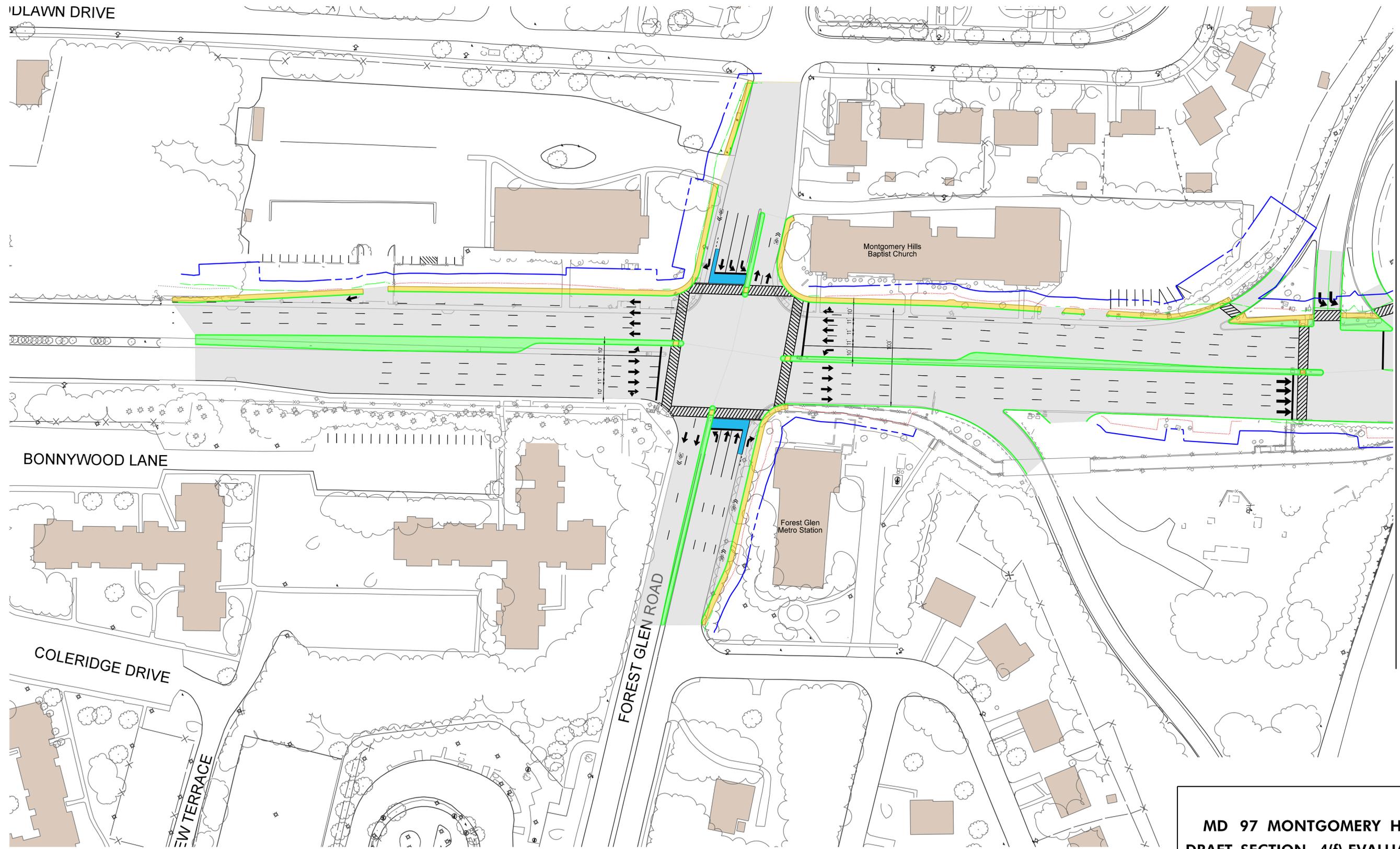
LEGEND

PROPOSED LOD

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

CYCLE TRACK

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-14





MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-13

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-15

I-495

LANSOWNE WAY

WOODLAND DRIVE

FLORA LANE

WHITE OAK DRIVE

Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

G & G Service Station

Shell

Montgomery Hills Car Wash

CVS

LEGEND

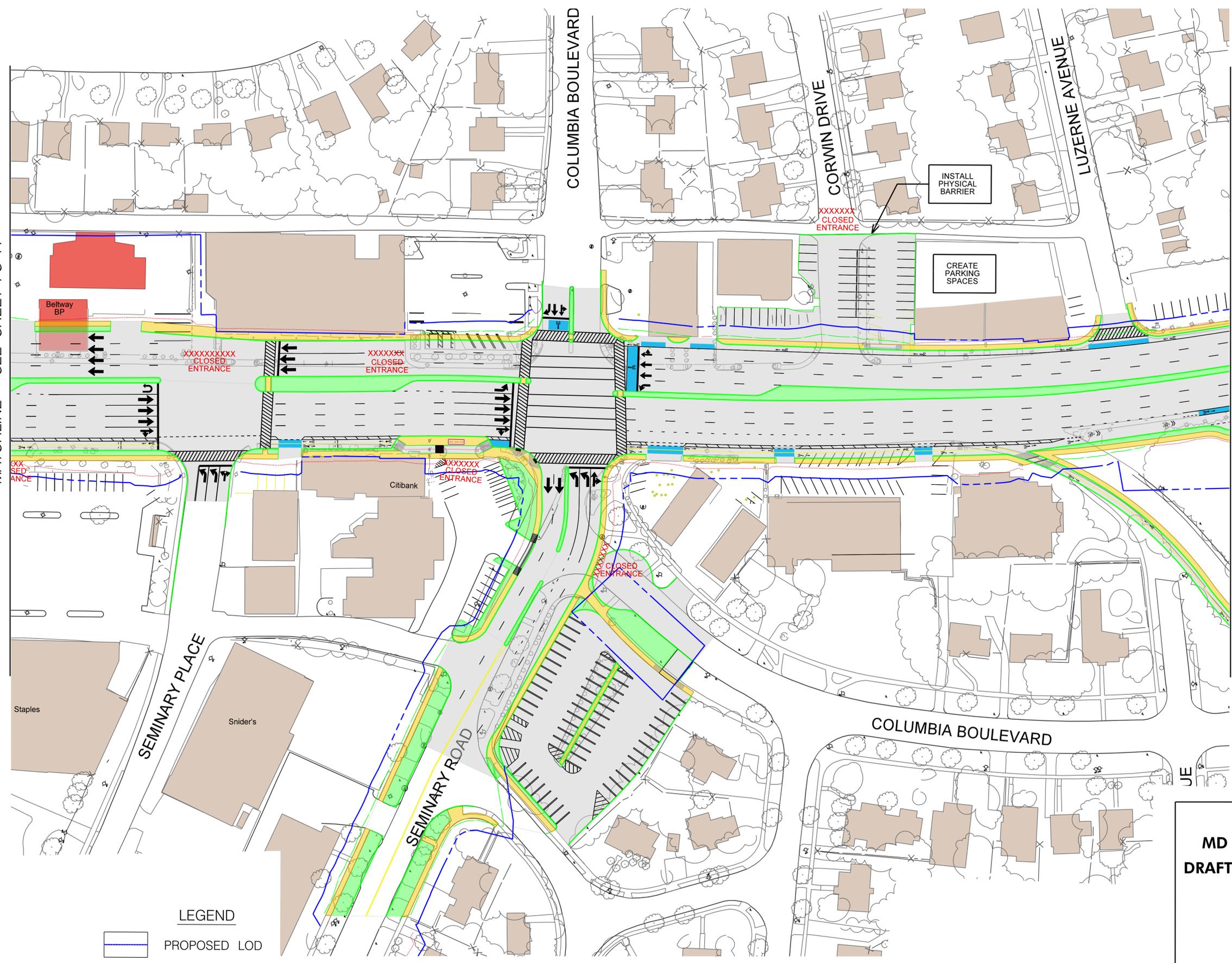
 PROPOSED LOD

**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

CYCLE TRACK

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MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-16



LEGEND
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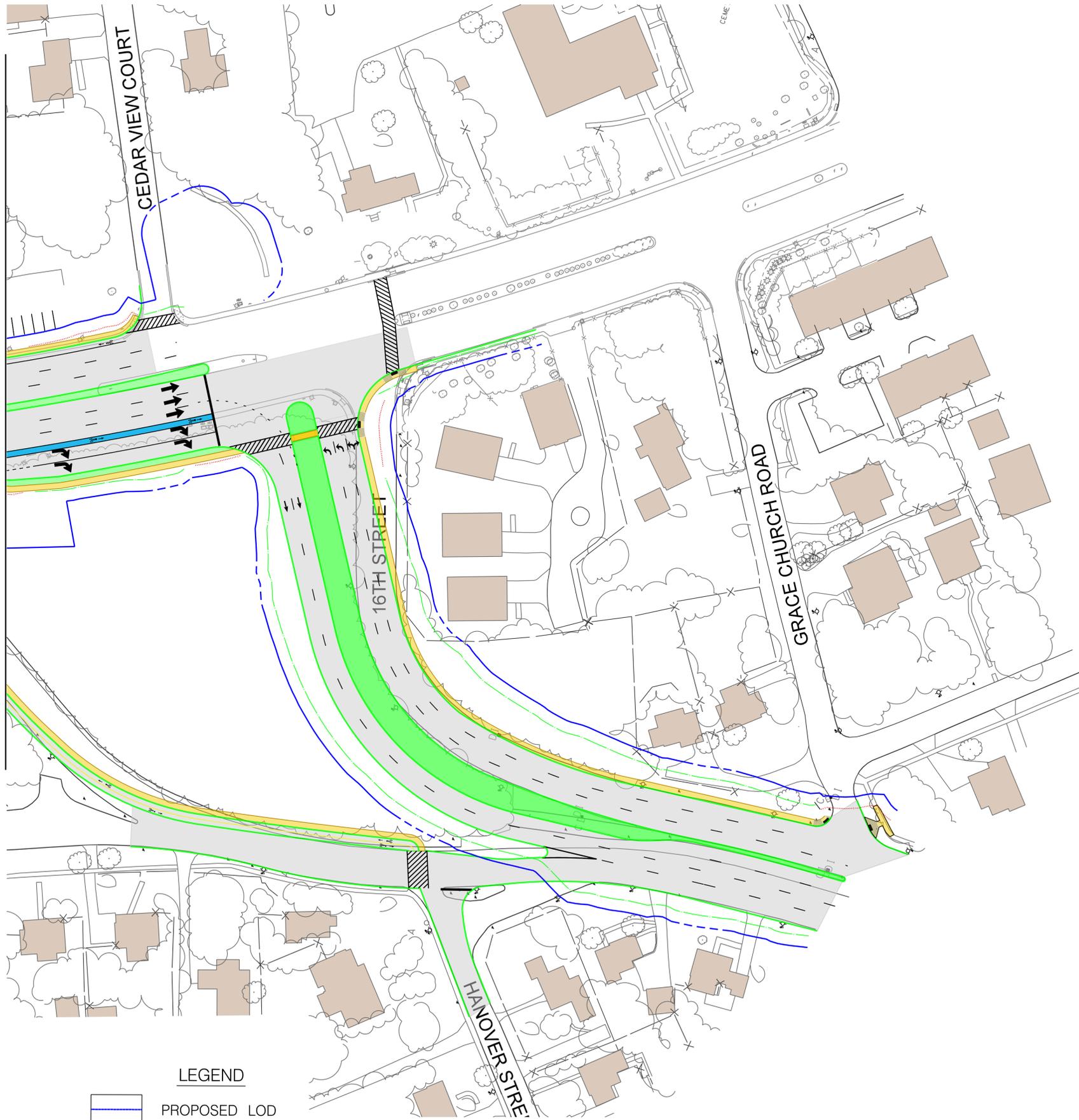
**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
 DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

CYCLE TRACK

BY: SPMartin -



MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-15



LEGEND

PROPOSED LOD

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

CYCLE TRACK

BY: SPMartin -

DLAWN DRIVE

BONNYWOOD LANE

COLERIDGE DRIVE

WATER TERRACE

FOREST GLEN ROAD

Montgomery Hills Baptist Church

Forest Glen Metro Station

LEGEND

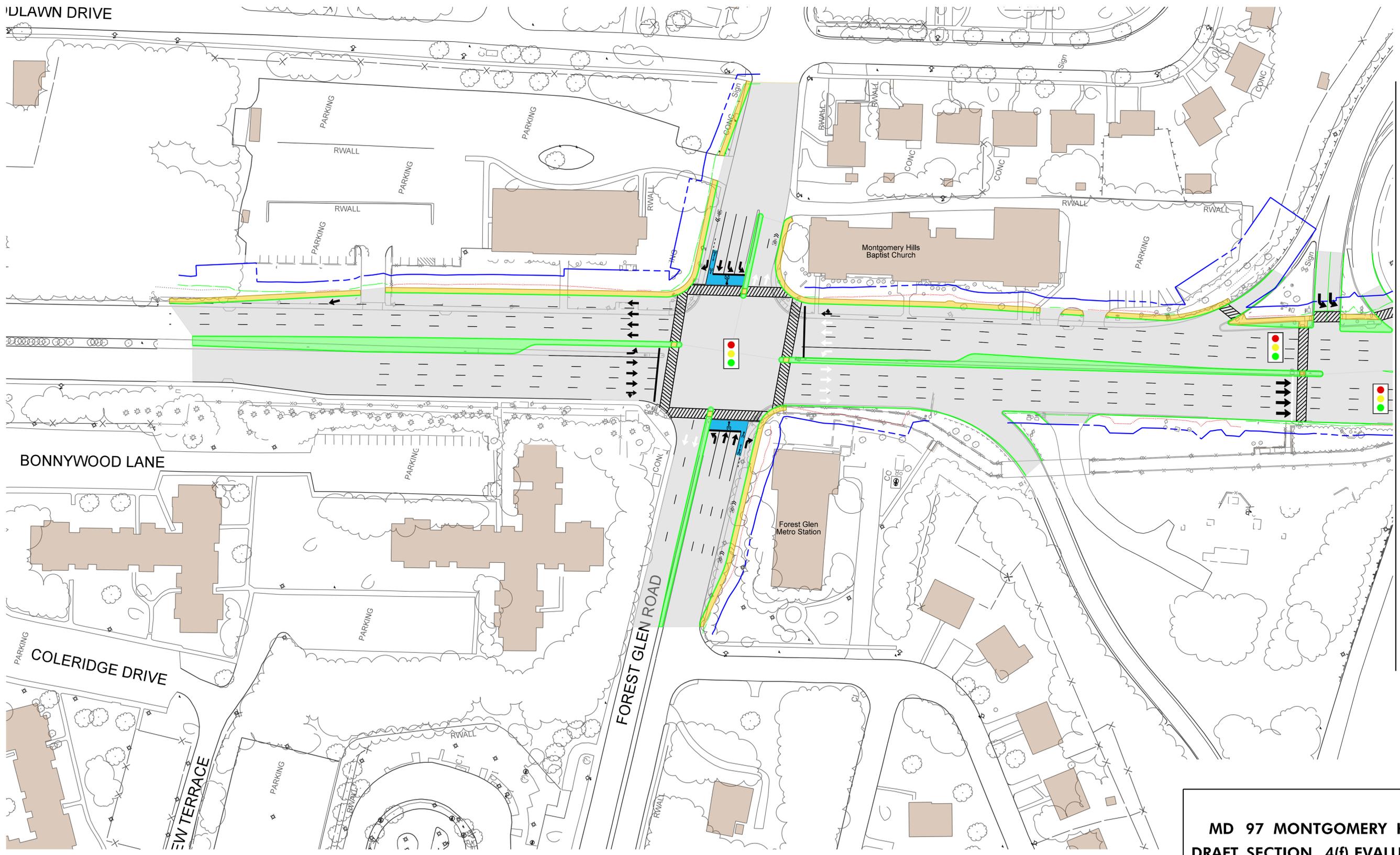
PROPOSED LOD

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

ALTERNATIVE 5B

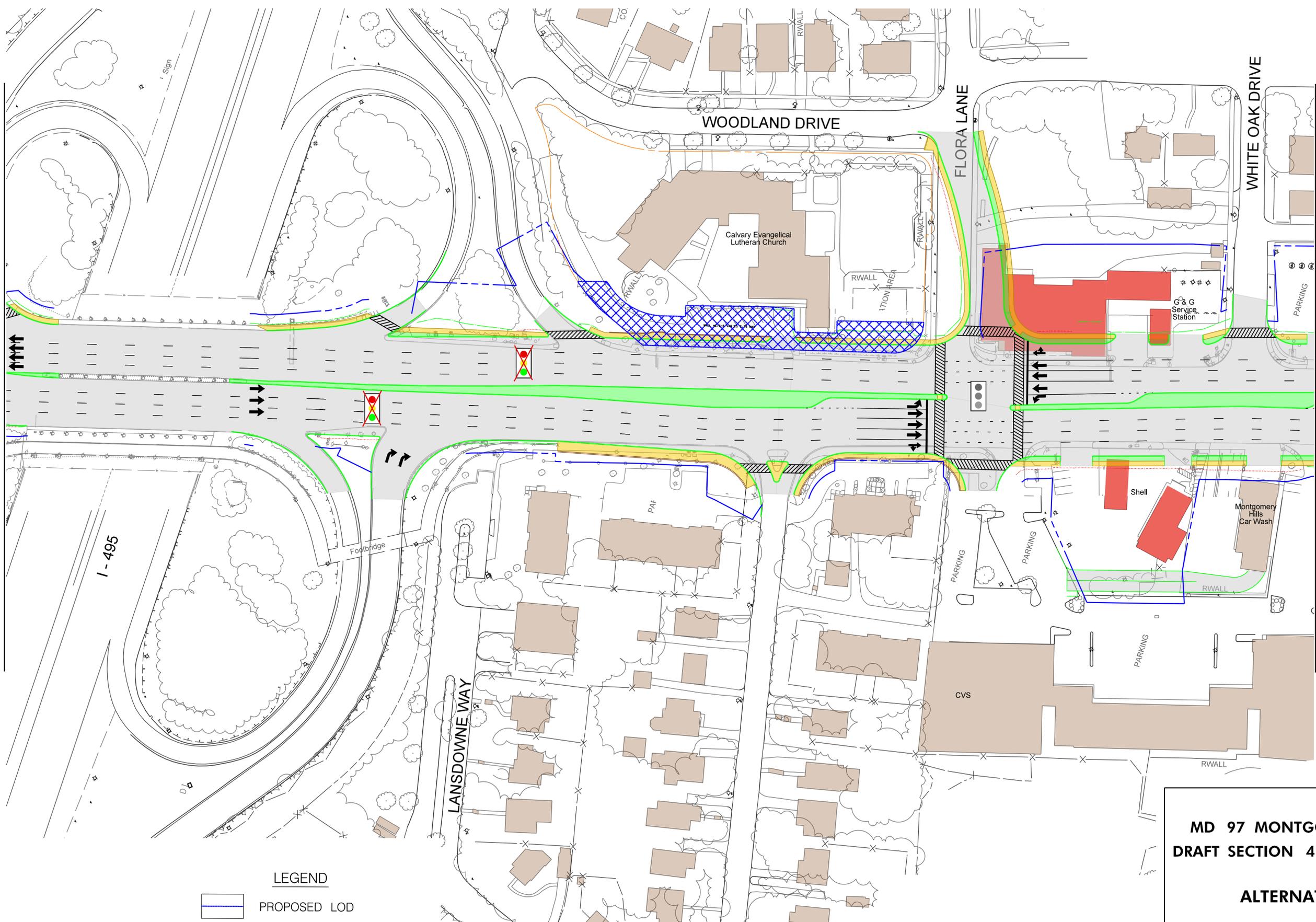
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BY: SPMartin -



MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-17

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-19



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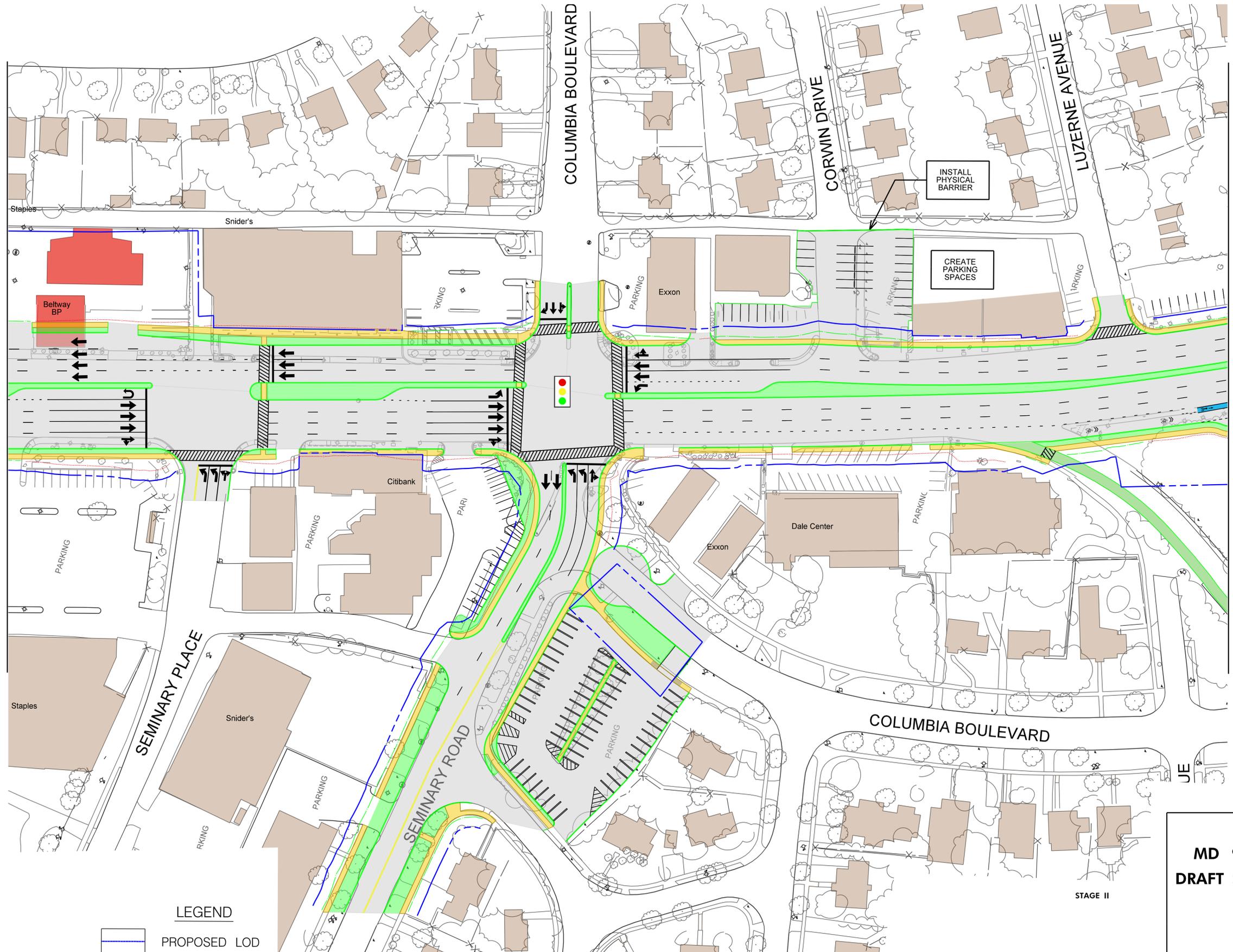
PROPOSED LOD

MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION

ALTERNATIVE 5B

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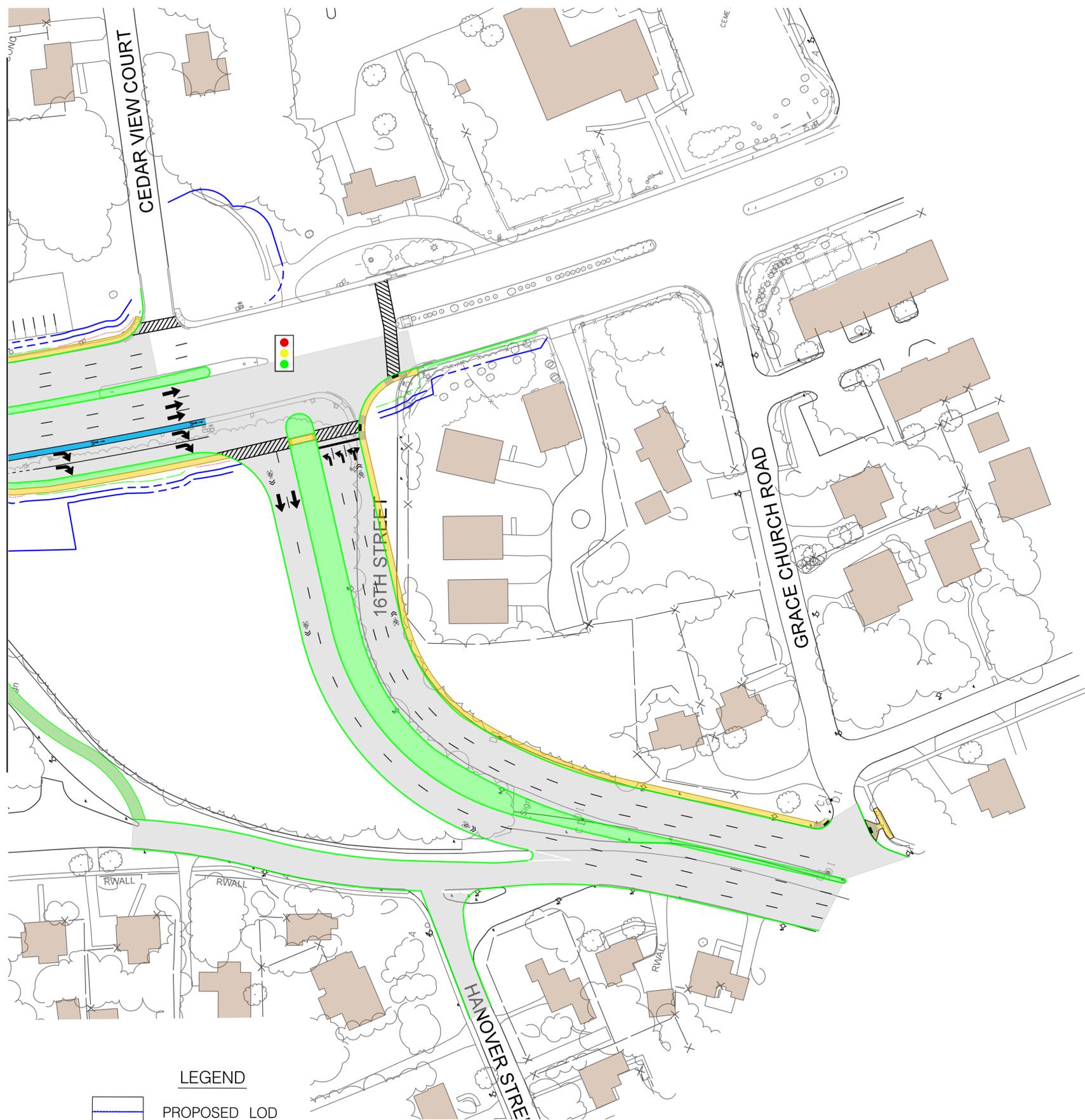


LEGEND
 PROPOSED LOD

**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
 DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 5B

MATCHLINE - SEE SHEET PS-19



LEGEND
 PROPOSED LOD

**MD 97 MONTGOMERY HILLS
 DRAFT SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION**

ALTERNATIVE 5B

BY: SPMartin -

APPENDIX B

Larry Hogan, *Governor*
Boyd Rutherford, *Lt. Governor*



Pete K. Rahn, *Secretary*
Douglas H. Simmons, *Acting Administrator*

July 7, 2015

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes
State Historic Preservation Officer
Maryland Historical Trust
100 Community Place
Crownsville MD 21032-2023

Dear Ms. Hughes:

Introduction and Project Description

This letter serves to inform the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) of the Maryland State Highway Administration's (SHA) finding that proposed Project No. MO244M11, MD 97 Forest Glen Road to 16th Street Corridor Improvements in Montgomery County would have an adverse effect on historic properties, including Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties (MIHP) Number M:36-37. The project is a Project Planning Study to address vehicle, pedestrian and cyclist mobility and safety and it is not yet funded for final design. SHA has reached the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS) stage and is providing MHT and the consulting parties with information about the five alternatives being investigated and the likely impacts under each. Project plans and the impact plates for each alternative are included as Attachments 1 and 2. The project is located on the USGS Kensington 7.5' Quadrangle.

SHA began consultation on June 7, 2013, when information about the Area of Potential Effects (APE) and historic standing structures was provided to MHT. MHT concurred on June 19, 2013 with the proposed APE and that Grace Episcopal Cemetery & Confederate Monument and Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church are eligible to be included in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), while the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare, Georgia Avenue Commercial Corridor and the Montgomery Hills Shopping were determined to be not eligible for the NRHP.

Purpose and Need: The purpose of the MD 97 (Montgomery Hills): Forest Glen Road to 16th Street Planning Study is to establish a balanced approach to transportation within the MD 97 corridor which equally addresses existing vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle mobility and safety concerns, while accommodating proposed transit enhancements, and establishing a sense of place within the corridor. The mix of local and regional commuter traffic, along with current

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Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech 1,800,735,2258 Statewide Toll Free

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Ms. Elizabeth Hughes
MD 97: Forest Glen Road to 16th Street
Page Two

roadway and sidewalk conditions in the study area, create an automobile-dominated environment that is not always conducive to other modes of transportation. As a result access to local businesses, pedestrian accessibility, bike connectivity and transit utilization have all become major challenges within the project area.

SHA has met with representatives of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church and also held a Purpose and Need Public Workshop on March 13, 2012, an Alternatives Public Workshop on June 25, 2013 and issued a project newsletter in Fall 2012, to inform the public about the project.

Alternatives Retained For Detailed Study (ARDS):

Below are descriptions of the alternatives SHA is studying:

Proposed Action

In addition to the No-Build Alternative, SHA is evaluating three build alternatives (2, 3 and 5) as part of this study. In addition, four options that may be applied to Alternative 5 are currently under consideration.

Alternative 1: No-Build

No major improvements are proposed under Alternative 1, the No-Build Alternative. Minor short-term improvements would occur as a part of routine maintenance and safety operations. The No-Build Alternative does not address the purpose and need for the project. It serves as a baseline for comparing the impacts and benefits associated with the build alternatives.

Alternative 2: Transportation Systems Management/Transportation Demand Management

The TSM/TDM alternative includes improvements at existing signalized intersections, Transit Signal Priority (TSP), queue jumps, and access consolidation. TSP allows for approaching buses to send a call to a transmitter at a signalized intersection to modify the signal timing and to enable buses to make it through the signal without stopping. Queue jumps allow the transit buses at signalized intersections to move in front of the through traffic on a green light. Access consolidation increases safety and improves vehicular traffic flow by minimizing disruptions caused by turning vehicles. Alternative 2 would also maintain the center reversible lane and include a 14- to 16-foot outer travel lane to accommodate on-road cyclists.

Alternative 3: Master Plan

The Master Plan Alternative is consistent with M-NCPPC's North and West Silver Spring Master Plan. Alternative 3 consists of four travel lanes in the southbound direction at all times and a 16-foot grass median that would replace the center turn lane. The northbound direction would maintain three travel lanes from 16th Street to Seminary Place and four travel lanes from Seminary Place through Forest Glen Road. A 13.5-foot sidewalk would be provided on both sides of MD 97, and a new signal at Flora Lane would help cyclists and pedestrians cross MD 97. Left-turn lanes would be included on MD 97 at the intersections with Forest Glen Road, Flora Lane, Seminary Place, and Seminary Road. Although Alternative 3 does not provide wider outside travel lanes for bicycles, cyclists can use the existing pedestrian bridge and the existing local roadway network to travel through the area.

Alternative 5: Four Lanes Southbound and Three Lanes Northbound

Alternative 5 eliminates the reversible center lane and replaces it with a 17-foot center grass median. This alternative provides four lanes in the southbound direction. In the northbound direction, there would be three lanes from 16th Street to Seminary Place and four lanes from Seminary Place to Forest Glen Road. In an effort to minimize right-of-way impacts, this alternative would slightly shift the center line of the roadway near Columbia Boulevard to optimize the available right-of-way in this area. Left-turn lanes would be provided on MD 97 at Forest Glen Road, Flora Lane, and Seminary Road. The ramp to southbound 16th Street would be relocated to the signalized intersection with northbound 16th Street. Alternative 5 would provide either a 14- or 16-foot outer travel lane to accommodate on-road bicycle use. A five-foot sidewalk would be provided on both sides of MD 97 and would be set back from the curb by five feet. Four design options (Options A, B, C and Cycle Track) are also under consideration for Alternative 5.

Alternative 5 with Option A: Queue Jumps/Transit Signal Priority

Option A includes queue jumps on MD 97 near the Forest Glen Road and Seminary Place intersections, coupled with TSP to improve transit access. Queue jumps are short auxiliary lanes that can be combined with right-turn lanes and introduced at various intersections along the corridor. Buses traveling through the intersection can enter the queue-jump lanes to receive a green signal that allows them to move in front of through traffic and improve their overall travel times. TSP is an operational strategy in which an approaching transit vehicle sends a call to the traffic signal, which modifies the signal timing to improve the chances of the transit vehicles passing through the intersection without stopping.

Alternative 5 with Option B: Signal Relocation/Modification

Option B removes the traffic signal at Seminary Place and replaces it with a right-in/right-out connection with MD 97. Vehicles intending to turn left (north) onto MD 97 would be shifted onto Seminary Road. A traffic signal at Flora Lane would also be introduced to provide improved pedestrian and cyclist access across MD 97. Eliminating the existing Seminary Place signal would increase the spacing between signalized intersections. That action could help with queuing on Georgia Avenue but could also result in longer back-ups along Seminary Road during peak periods.

Alternative 5 with Option C: Four Lanes Northbound at Seminary

Option C adds a fourth lane in the northbound direction after the intersection at Seminary Place. Adding a fourth lane at this location helps add capacity and relieve some of the congestion that occurs in this area as vehicular traffic approaches the I-495 interchange and intersection at Forest Glen Road.

Alternative 5 with Cycle Track Option

The Cycle Track Option provides a two-lane cycle track on the southbound side of the roadway that would extend from the existing pedestrian bridge just south of the I-495 interchange to Seminary Road. The Cycle Track would include two, four-foot bike lanes and a three-foot buffer that separates vehicular traffic from bicycle traffic. From Seminary Road to 16th Street, on-road bicycle lanes would be provided on both sides of the roadway. When northbound cyclists reach Seminary Road, they would be directed to make their way across the intersection where they would enter the Cycle Track. The ramp to southbound 16th Street would be relocated to the signalized intersection with northbound 16th Street. A five-foot sidewalk would be provided on both sides of MD 97 and would be set back from the curb by five feet. SHA has dropped Alternative 4 (Three-Lanes Northbound and Southbound), 6 (Bus Rapid Transit) and 7 (Georgia Avenue Tunnel) because these alternatives either reduce the number of travel lanes or have constructability issues.

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Funding

Federal funds are anticipated for this project.

Area of Potential Effects

In determining the APE for this project, SHA considered possible visual, audible, atmospheric and/or physical impacts to historic properties, both archaeological sites and standing structures that would diminish any NRHP qualifying characteristic of the historic property's integrity. The project will require additional right-of-way, as well as perpetual and temporary easements. The APE includes those buildings facing MD 97 between 16th Street and Forest Glen Road since SHA does not anticipate construction activities beyond the rear lot of any building facing the highway. The archaeology survey area within the APE is defined as the limits of construction where ground disturbance would occur. The APE is indicated on the attached USGS quadrangle map for Kensington in Attachment 3.

Identification Methods and Results

Potentially significant architectural and archaeological resources were both researched as part of the historic investigation instigated by the proposed highway improvement project.

Architecture: SHA Architectural Historian Anne E. Bruder consulted the SHA-GIS Cultural Resources Database, and reviewed the Determination of Eligibility (DOE) form for the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church (Calvary Church), MIHP No. M:36-37. Field visits were made on January 24 and 25, 2012 and August 7, 2012.

SHA also met with representatives of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church on May 21, 2015, to discuss the project, the church's eligibility to be included in the NRHP, as well as the role of a consulting party and the church's future plans. SHA anticipates that there will be additional discussions with both MHT and church representatives as SHA continues its studies. The complex is used on a weekly basis by two different churches, Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church and Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf as well as a private school.

Calvary Church is the only standing historic property in the APE since the project will not extend on MD 97 beyond 16th Street. The Grace Episcopal Cemetery and Confederate Monument, MIHP No. M:36-4-1, faces MD 97, but is on the south side of 16th Street and the proposed MD 97 alternatives will not introduce new visual or physical elements that are out of keeping with the qualifying qualities of the historic property. All other standing structures in the APE including, the Prestige Exceptional Fabricare, Georgia Avenue Commercial Corridor and the Montgomery

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Hills Shopping have been determined not eligible.

Calvary Church is a religious complex containing two churches, a school and offices and other church facilities in the southeast quadrant of the MD 97/I-495 intersection. During three building campaigns dating to 1948, 1951 and 1962, the complex was constructed. Calvary Church is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C (Architecture) as an example of the work of Architects Philip H. Frohman (1948 buildings) and Stanley Arthur (1962 buildings), and Criterion Consideration A as a religious structure which exemplifies both the post-World War II Gothic Revival Style and the early 1960s Contemporary Style. In addition to the buildings, there is a driveway that extends from the front of the building and to the rear of the property, exiting to Woodland Drive. There are twelve (12) parking spaces at the front of the church, some of which are designated as handicapped spaces, and some are designated for church staff parking.

The historic property consists of 1.75 acres contained in the church's tax parcel boundary. This is the church's setting and includes exterior areas such as the driveway, parking lots, signs, lawns and other landscaping, playground and basketball court.

Impacts to Calvary Church by Each Alternative:

Alternative 1: No Build – no major improvements are proposed under this alternative and it would have no impact on the historic property.

Alternative 2: Transportation Systems Management/Transportation Demand Management

Alternative 2 would require intersection improvements at MD 97 at Forest Glen Road, MD 97 at I-495, MD 97 at Columbia Boulevard/Seminary Road and MD 97 at 16th Street. In the corridor beyond the intersections, no road widening would occur, but SHA would construct a new ADA-compliant sidewalk within existing right-of-way, including along the frontage of Calvary Church. Since there is currently sidewalk along the church's frontage, a wider sidewalk would have no adverse impact on the historic property since it would not require right-of-way from the church, or cause any physical or visual impacts that alter the church's historic qualities.

Alternative 3: Master Plan -- Alternative 3 would require taking 0.26 acre (11,498 square feet) of right-of-way from the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church along its west side adjacent to northbound MD 97 and would extend the length of the property. At the southern end of the property, physical impacts would include the removal of several existing trees, the relocation of the existing chain link fence, and the relocation of the church's stone sign structure.

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A portion of the church's sidewalk leading from the school building and connecting to the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97 would be eliminated by the widening of the roadway and the relocation of the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97. A new ADA-compliant sidewalk would be constructed along the entire length of the church property, broken only by the church driveway. A short retaining wall would be constructed along the east side of the new sidewalk just south of the church driveway. The new sidewalk along MD 97 would be connected through a small break in the retaining wall to the remaining portion of the church's existing sidewalk. A short wooden fence that is located adjacent to the existing sidewalk and that holds a sign for the Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf would also be removed and relocated.

The existing retaining wall along the west side of the church's basketball court, which is approximately three to four feet high, would be reconstructed in the same location under this alternative. The new retaining wall would be no more than five feet high, which would introduce a new visual element to the complex. A portion of the basketball court would become unusable while the reconstruction of the retaining wall is underway.

The existing church driveway off of MD 97 would be narrowed due to the widening of the northbound roadway in the vicinity of the church. Access to the church via the driveway would be maintained; however, the existing parking lot would be impacted. In addition, the reconfiguration of the driveway would also require adding new pavement to a portion of the existing lawn located immediately south of the parking lot. In the parking lot, the existing eight angled handicapped parking spaces on the east side of the lot would be replaced by five parallel parking spaces. The existing four parallel parking spaces on the west side of the lot would be eliminated. In total, seven of the twelve existing parking spaces would be lost. A small retaining wall would also be constructed along the western edge of the re-designed parking lot and the sidewalk would be constructed immediately to the west of the retaining wall. Several small trees that currently exist between the existing sidewalk and the parking lot would be removed. These changes would alter the historic setting of Calvary Church, since SHA will require right-of-way to construct the sidewalk, reduce the parking lot, and remove or alter landscaping and the basketball court's retaining wall within the area of the historic boundary.

Alternative 5 4 Lanes Southbound and 3 Lanes Northbound with Option A, C, or Cycle Track Option -- Although the roadway design is slightly different for Alternative 5 with Option A, C, or the Cycle Track Option, the right-of-way requirements from Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church would be identical under each of these options. Alternative 5 with Option A, C, or the Cycle Track Option would result in a taking of 0.24 acre (10,542 square feet) right-of-way from the church along the west side of the property adjacent to northbound MD 97 and would extend

the entire length of the property from Flora Lane to the I-495 Exit Ramp. At the southern end of the property the impacts would include removing several existing trees, the relocating the existing chain link fence and the church's stone sign structure. A portion of the existing sidewalk leading from the school building and connecting to the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97 would be eliminated by the widening of the roadway and the relocation of the existing sidewalk along northbound MD 97. A short retaining wall would be constructed along the east side of the new sidewalk just south of the church driveway. The new sidewalk would be connected through a small break in the retaining wall to the remaining portion of the church's existing sidewalk. A short wooden fence that is located adjacent to the existing sidewalk and that holds a sign for the Christ Lutheran Church of the Deaf would also be removed and relocated.

The existing church driveway off of MD 97 would be narrowed due to the widening of the northbound roadway in the vicinity of the church. Access to the church via the driveway would be maintained; however, the existing parking lot would be impacted. In addition, the reconfiguration of the driveway would also require adding new pavement to a portion of the existing lawn located immediately south of the parking lot. In the parking lot, the eight existing angled handicapped parking spaces on the east side of the lot would be replaced by five parallel parking spaces. The four existing parallel parking spaces on the west side of the lot would be eliminated. In total, seven of the twelve existing parking spaces would be lost. A small retaining wall would also be constructed along the western edge of the re-designed parking lot and the sidewalk would be constructed immediately to the west of the retaining wall. Several small trees that currently exist between the existing sidewalk and the parking lot would be removed. These changes would alter the historic setting of Calvary Church, since SHA will require right-of-way to construct the sidewalk, reduce the parking lot, and remove or alter landscaping within the area of the historic boundary.

Alternative 5 4 Lanes Southbound and 3 Lanes Northbound with Option B -- Alternative 5 with Option B would result in a Taking of 0.27 acre (11,682 square feet) from the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Taking associated with Alternative 5 with Option B is similar to that of Alternative 5 with Option A or C, but encroaches further east into the church property. This is the result of the need for a wider median north of Flora Lane to accommodate the additional left-turn lane added along northbound MD 97 at the proposed traffic signal at Flora Lane. Impacts to the church's existing trees, sign structure, sidewalk, and fences would be the same as described for Alternative with Option A or C. The additional encroachment into the property would also require the reconstruction of the retaining wall along the basketball court. The wall would be replaced in the same location, but would be higher than the existing wall. The new retaining wall would be no more than five feet high. A portion of the basketball court would become unusable while the reconstruction of the retaining wall is underway.

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The impact of Alternative 5 with Option B on the church's parking lot would be similar to that of Alternative 5 with Option A or C, but the additional encroachment into the property under Option B would result in the driveway being slightly narrower than it would be under Option A or C. These changes would alter the historic setting of Calvary Church, since SHA will require right-of-way to construct the sidewalk, reduce the parking lot, and remove or alter landscaping within the area of the historic boundary.

Avoidance Options:

MD 97 Relocation -- SHA has considered relocating MD 97 in order to avoid the historic property, but the highway is in a dense urban area of residential and commercial development that constrains SHA's ability to relocate the road either to the west or to the east without impacting the surrounding neighborhoods, and other infrastructure such as the Forest Glen Metro Station. This avoidance option was not pursued.

MD 97 Shift West -- SHA has considered relocating MD 97 by using Alternative 5 but shifted eight to ten feet to the west in order to avoid the historic property. However, this relocation would impact the existing pedestrian bridge, as well as townhouses near Locust Grove Road, and a gas station adjacent to southbound MD 97. This avoidance option was not pursued.

Minimization Options:

SHA considered several ways to minimize the highway alternatives such as reducing the width of the grass buffers between the highway and the sidewalk, reducing the width of the sidewalks from 13-feet 6-inches to 5-feet, or on the southbound MD 97 replacing a sidewalk with a shared-use path, reducing the median width from 16-feet to 6-feet, and shifting the alignment seven to twelve feet to the west in the vicinity of Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church. None of these items provided sufficient minimization to significantly reduce the impact on the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Impact Assessment:

Since SHA's proposed minimization and avoidance alternatives do not meet the project's Purpose and Need we are actively pursuing the build alternatives. SHA has determined that the MD 97 Alternatives 3, 5 with or without Options A, C, and/or Cycle Track and Alternative 5 with Option B will each adversely impact the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church. We make this finding because the amount of right-of-way (.24 to .26 acres from a 1.75 acre parcel) that will be required from the church complex's frontage, as well as the alterations to the church's setting, including the driveway, parking lot, landscaping and basketball court. Under all of the alternatives, the parallel parking area now in place will be lost, and the angled parking will be changed to fewer parallel parking spaces.

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Also, the retaining wall at the west end of the school's basketball court will need to be reconstructed and raised. These changes will introduce new physical and visual elements that will alter the setting of the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church that meet the requirements of the Adverse Effect Criteria found at 36 CFR §800.5(2), including physical destruction of the historic property's setting. SHA also finds that MD 97 Alternative 2 will have no impact on historic standing structures, including the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church. SHA has also determined that the MD 97 Alternatives 2, 3, 5 with or without Options A, B, C or Cycle Track will have no impact on the Grace Episcopal Cemetery and Confederate Monument since it is outside the APE. Attachment 2, Impact Plates, show the extent of the impacts on the historic property. The Effects Table is included in Attachment 4 summarizing SHA's determination.

Next Steps:

Before selecting an alternative for construction, SHA will continue to seek ways to avoid and reduce the impacts on the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church and plans to hold meetings with both MHT and the Calvary Church to discuss ways to avoid or reduce the impact if possible, and to discuss mitigation if avoiding the adverse impact is not possible. SHA will also hold a public hearing in Fall 2015 to allow public comment on the project before selecting an alternative for construction.

Archaeology: SHA Consultant Archaeologist Lisa Kraus assessed the archaeological potential of the project area based on review of the SHA-GIS Cultural Resources Database, soil survey data, aerial photography, and historic maps.

The survey area was included in two prior archaeological investigations (Gardner 1977; Diamanti et al. 2005), but no sites have been recorded there. Historic maps (Martenet 1860; Hopkins 1878) show a roadway alignment that corresponds to modern MD 97, and structures are depicted on either side of the roadway; however, aerial photos and tax maps indicate that the structures currently standing along MD 97 were built during the latter half of the 20th century. Soils throughout the survey area and surrounding terrain are recorded as urban land and urban land complexes; the survey area is located in a highly developed urban region and has been impacted by road construction and development. These soils are unlikely to contain intact archaeological remains.

Given the negative survey coverage and evidence for prior disturbance, the proposed work is unlikely to impact any intact or potentially significant archaeological resources, and no further work is recommended.

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Review Request

Please examine the attached map, plans, and Effects Table. We request your concurrence by August 10, 2015 that there would be adverse effects on historic properties, including the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church by the MD 97 from Forest Glen Road to 16th Street Alternatives 3, or 5 with Options A or C or Cycle Track, or 5B, and that MD 97 Alternative 2 would have no adverse impacts on the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, but that under MD 97 No Build, there would be no impact to standing historic properties by the proposed project. By carbon copy, we invite the Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission, and Montgomery Preservation Inc. to provide comments and participate in the Section 106 process. Pursuant to the requirements of the implementing regulations found at 36 CFR Part 800, SHA seeks their assistance in identifying historic preservation issues as they relate to this specific project (see 36 CFR §800.2(c)(3) and (5), and §800.3(f) for information regarding the identification and participation of consulting parties, and §800.4, and §800.5 regarding the identification of historic properties and assessment of effects). For additional information regarding the Section 106 regulations, see the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's website, www.achp.gov, or contact the Maryland State Highway Administration or the Maryland Historical Trust. If no response is received by August 10, 2015, we will assume that these offices decline to participate. Please call Anne E. Bruder at 410-545-8559 or via email at abruder@sha.state.md.us with questions regarding standing structures for this project. Lisa Kraus may be reached at 410-545-2884 or via email at lkraus@sha.state.md.us with concerns regarding archaeology.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by April Fehr
DN: cn=April Fehr, o=MD SHA,
ou=Cultural Resources Section,
email=afehr@sha.state.md.us, c=US
Date: 2015.07.07 14:01:56 -04'00'

For
Julie M. Schablitsky
Assistant Division Chief
Environmental Planning Division

Attachments:

- 1) Project Plans
- 2) Impact Plates
- 3) APE Map
- 4) Effects Table

Ms. Elizabeth Hughes
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cc: Ms. Jeanette Mar, FHWA-MD Divn. (w/Attachments)
Ms. Eileen McGuckian, Montgomery Preservation Inc. (w/Attachments)
Mr. Scott Whipple, Montgomery County Historic Preservation Commission
(w/Attachments)
Mr. Jeremy Beck, SHA-PMD
Ms. Christina Brandt, SHA- EPLD
Ms. Anne E. Bruder, SHA-EPLD (w/Attachments)
Dr. Lisa Kraus, SHA-EPLD (w/Attachments)
Mr. Bob Maimone, SHA-EPLD
Dr. Julie M. Schablitsky, SHA-EPLD

F
SHA
TJT/EJC

**Concurrence with the MD State Highway Administration's
Determination(s) of Eligibility and/or Effects**

Project Number: MO244M11

MHT Log No. 201502766

Project Name: MD: 97: Forest Glen Road to 16th Street Project Planning Study

County: Montgomery

Letter Date: July 7, 2015

The Maryland Historical Trust has reviewed the documentation attached to the referenced letter and concurs with the MD State Highway Administration's determinations as follows:

Eligibility (as noted in the Eligibility Table [N/A]):

- Concur
- Do Not Concur

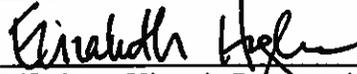
Effect (as noted in the Effects Table [Attachment 4]):

- No Properties Affected
- No Adverse Effect
- Conditioned upon the following action(s) (see comments below)
- Adverse Effect

Comments:

THE TRUST CONCURS WITH SHA'S EFFECT DETERMINATIONS FOR
THE FOLLOWING ALTERNATIVES:

- NO BUILD ALTERNATIVE - NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED
- ALTERNATIVE 2 - NO ADVERSE EFFECT
- ALTERNATIVE 3 - ADVERSE EFFECT
- ALTERNATIVE 5 A, B AND C - ADVERSE EFFECT

By: 
 MD State Historic Preservation Office/
 Maryland Historical Trust

8-4-15
 Date

Return by U.S. Mail or Facsimile to:
 Dr. Julie M. Schablitsky, Assistant Division Chief, Environmental Planning Division,
 MD State Highway Administration, P.O. Box 717, Baltimore, MD 21203-0717
 Telephone: 410-545-8870 and Facsimile: 410-209-5046
 A_proj No. 8013

Attachment 4: Effects Table

Project Name: MD 97; Forest Glen Road to 16th Street Project Planning Study

July 7, 2015

Resource	Type	Alternative #2			Alternative #3			Alternative #5 with/without Option A or C or Cycle Track			Alternative #5B			
		Impact	SHPO Concur	SHPO Requested	Impact	SHPO Concur	SHPO Requested	Impact	SHPO Concur	SHPO Requested	Impact	SHPO Concur	SHPO Requested	Attachment
Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church, M.35-36	S	No Adverse	Requested 7/2015	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015		
Grace Episcopal Cemetery & Confederate Monument, M.36-4-1	S	None	Requested 7/2015	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015		
Georgia Avenue Commercial Corridor Survey, M.36-88	SD	None	Requested 7/2015	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015		
Montgomery Hills Shopping Center M.36-57	S	None	Requested 7/2015	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015		
Prestige Exceptional Fabricare, M.36-89	S	None	Requested 7/2015	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015	None	Requested 7/2015		
Effect		NAE	Requested 7/2015	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015	Adverse	Requested 7/2015		

Codes:
 Resource Types: S (Structure), A (Archaeological Site), HD (Historic District), NHL (National Historic Landmark)
 Impact: None, No Adverse, Adverse
 Effect: NPA (No Properties Affected), NAE (No Adverse Effect), AE (Adverse Effect)
 Bold rows indicate review action requested