

Next Steps

- Conduct Purpose and Need Informational Workshop –
March 13, 2012
- Develop Preliminary Alternatives –
Spring/Summer 2012
- Conduct Alternatives Public Workshop –
Winter 2012/2013
- Conduct Location/Design Public Hearing –
Winter 2013/2014
- Identify Selected Alternative –
Fall 2014
- Receive Location/Design Approval –
Spring 2015



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link to project page

Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor
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PROJECT UPDATE NEWSLETTER • FEBRUARY 2012

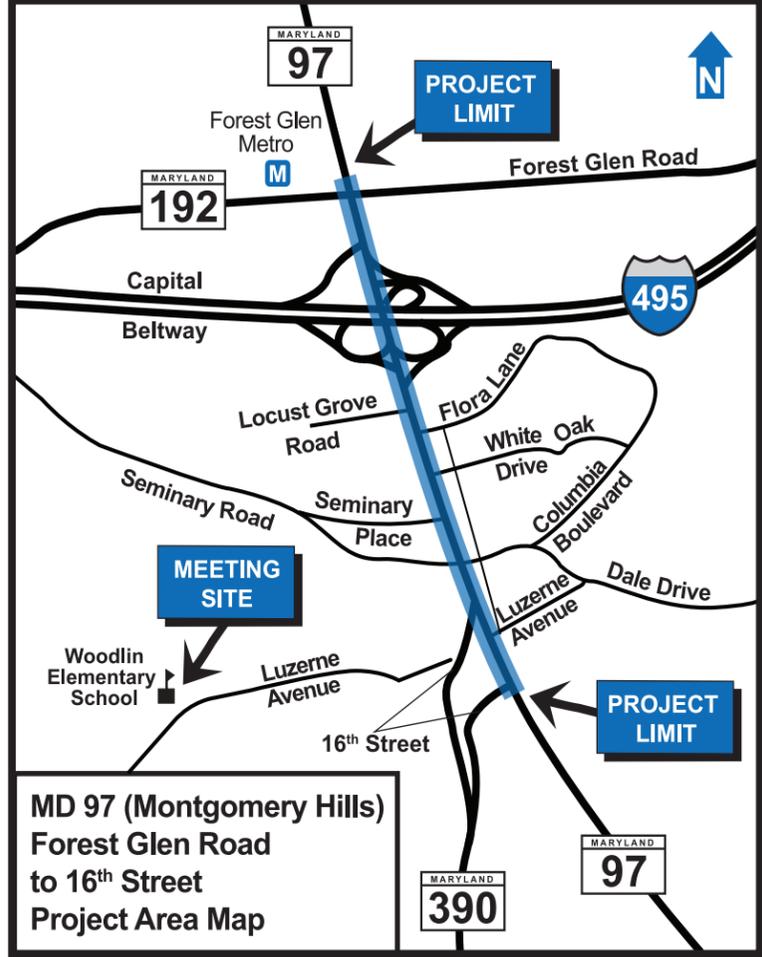
MD 97 (Montgomery Hills) Project Initiated/ Informational Workshop Scheduled

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA), in conjunction with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Montgomery County, has initiated a Project Planning Study to investigate transportation improvements to 0.7 mile of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) between Forest Glen Road (MD 192) and 16th Street (MD 390) in Montgomery County. The study will focus on establishing a balanced approach to transportation within the MD 97 corridor by evaluating existing vehicular, pedestrian, and bicyclist mobility and safety, while accommodating proposed transit enhancements and establishing a sense of place within the Montgomery Hills community.

SHA and Montgomery County have scheduled an **Informational Workshop for Tuesday, March 13, 2012, from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM, in the Woodlin Elementary School cafeteria**, 2010 Luzerne Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. The snow date for the meeting is Tuesday, March 20. Members of the project team will present the purpose and need for the project and take project-related questions and comments from members of the public. **The Workshop will not include a formal presentation**; participants may walk through the displays at any time during Workshop hours.

Project Description

Between 16th Street and the Capital Beltway (I-495), MD 97 currently has three travel lanes in each direction and a reversible lane that provides a fourth lane southbound in the morning and northbound in the evening. During non-peak hours, this reversible lane operates as a two-way center left-turn lane. From I-495 to Forest Glen Road, MD 97 currently has four northbound lanes, three southbound lanes, and a southbound auxiliary lane. Left turns from MD 97 onto side streets are restricted during peak travel periods. The posted speed limit on MD 97 is 35 miles per hour.



Businesses and residences along MD 97 can be reached by numerous unrestricted access points that may cause conflicts between traffic and pedestrians. The project area includes five signalized intersections along MD 97: Forest Glen Road, the I-495 interchange, Seminary Place, Seminary Road/Columbia Boulevard, and northbound 16th Street.

The Forest Glen Metrorail Station generates pedestrian traffic at the northern end of the project corridor. In 2006, Montgomery County constructed a pedestrian bridge to provide safe passage over the I-495 ramps. However, general connectivity to the Forest Glen Metrorail Station for persons with disabilities and the overall quality of pedestrian facilities along the corridor are insufficient and pose safety concerns.

SI DESEA UNA COPIA DE ESTE VOLANTE EN ESPAÑOL, POR FAVOR CONTACTARSE CON EL SR. JEREMY BECK, GERENTE DE PROYECTO, LLAMANDO AL 410-545-8518 (GRATIS AL 1-800-548-5026)

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Purpose and Need Overview

The purpose of the MD 97 (Montgomery Hills) Project 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. The 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.



Traffic Volumes

SHA has developed Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes for MD 97 within the study limits. Table 1 shows 2011 existing and 2040 projected no-build AADT traffic volumes.

MD 97 Segment	2011 Existing	2040 No-Build
Forest Glen Rd. to I-495	73,000	84,000
I-495 to Seminary Place	81,000	93,000
Seminary Place to Seminary Rd.	71,000	82,000
Seminary Rd. to SB 16th St.	66,000	76,000
SB 16th St. to NB 16th St.	51,000	59,000

Table 1

According to historical data, MD 97 within the project area is currently operating at or above the capacity for roadways of this type, and traffic along MD 97 is expected to increase.



Levels of Service

Planners often use a simple grading system, much like the one used in school, to characterize the traffic operations at intersections. Level of Service (LOS) A indicates no delay or congestion, while LOS F indicates that the intersection is failing, with long delays and high levels of congestion.

Table 2 shows the 2011 existing and projected 2040 no-build LOS of the major intersections within the study area. Several intersections are currently failing or will fail in 2040 under no-build conditions.

MD 97 Intersection	2011 LOS		2040 LOS	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
Forest Glen Road	F	E	F	F
I-495 WB Ramps	B	C	B	D
I-495 EB Ramps	E	C	F	C
Seminary Place	E	B	E	C
Seminary Road	D	C	E	D
16th Street (NB)	C	C	C	C

Table 2

The Level of Service for each intersection has been averaged over all approaches. Because the signalized intersections are generally timed to keep traffic moving along MD 97, side street approaches experience worse LOS.

Safety

Of the 380 police-reported crashes that occurred from 2007 through 2009, approximately 150 resulted in injuries, and none were fatal. Rear-end, sideswipe, left-turn, angle, truck-related, and pedestrian crashes occurred at a rate significantly higher than the statewide average for crashes on similar types of roadways. As the project moves forward, the project team will perform a detailed evaluation to determine the potential causes of crashes along the corridor.

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Access

This segment of MD 97 was designed to support the large volume of motorized vehicles that travel throughout the corridor, to the detriment of pedestrian and bicyclist mobility. For approximately the last decade, the need for improved pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity within the study area has grown. The extensive residential network of communities east and west of MD 97, the presence of the Forest Glen Metrorail Station, and key commercial destinations within the corridor contribute to this increased need for pedestrian and bicyclist connectivity.

Project Status

The MD 97 (Montgomery Hills) project is currently funded for Project Planning only. During the Planning phase, the study team gives careful consideration to a project's impacts on the community before choosing an alternative for design and construction. Additional time and funding will be required to complete the Final Design, Right-of-Way Acquisition, and Construction phases. More information about this project planning study, as well as other projects, is available on SHA's website at www.roads.maryland.gov under **Projects and Studies, SHA Projects Page, Montgomery County.**

Public Involvement

SHA and Montgomery County will maintain public involvement throughout the MD 97 (Montgomery Hills) Project Planning Study. We encourage residents, business owners/operators, and other project stakeholders to identify and discuss project-related issues. Representatives of SHA and Montgomery County are available to meet with community groups,

civic associations, and other organizations. To request a meeting, receive project information, submit a comment, or add your name to the MD 97 project mailing list, please contact:

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SHA will provide a telephonic interpreter for those who need assistance with the English language. For a Spanish-language copy of this newsletter, please contact the Project Manager at 410-545-8518 (or toll-free at 1-800-548-5026).

The MD Relay Service can assist teletype users at 7-1-1.

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