

Project Planning Team

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Introduction

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Maryland Transit Administration (MTA), in cooperation with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), are completing a study to evaluate **alternatives*** to provide a new **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** service along MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and Montgomery General Hospital. Funding for the project may be sought from the Federal Transit Administration once a locally preferred alternative is selected.

Purpose of the Workshop

The purpose of the Alternatives Public Workshop is to familiarize interested persons with the project planning process and present the preliminary BRT alternatives. Individuals and members of associations, citizen groups, and government agencies will have an opportunity to offer spoken or written comments about the study. They may also recommend the preliminary alternatives they would like the team to study in greater detail and the alternatives they would like the team to dismiss.

The workshop is being conducted in an interactive open house format to enable attendees to conduct self-paced reviews of project information at any time during workshop hours. Maps and other exhibits depicting preliminary alternatives under consideration will be on display, and team members will be available to answer project-related questions and receive comments. **There will be no formal presentation.**

How to Comment on the Project

SHA encourages your participation in the workshop and during the project planning process. Please use the enclosed postage-paid mailer to submit your comments. Additional copies of the mailer will be available at the reception desk during the workshop and may be found on the project website at www.roads.maryland.gov. You may also provide spoken and written comments to project representatives during the workshop or contact Miss Carmeletha Harris, SHA Project Manager, using the contact information on the inside front cover of the brochure. **The project team will evaluate your comments and consider them as the project moves forward.**

Project Mailing List

You may add your name to the project mailing list by completing the enclosed mailer or by submitting your information at the workshop. If you have received this brochure in the mail, you are already on the project mailing list.

* All terms that appear in **bold italics** are defined in the glossary at the back of this brochure.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose of the MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) BRT Study is to provide new high-efficiency bus service along Georgia Avenue between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and Montgomery General Hospital. The project team has identified four specific needs for the project:

- *System connectivity* – A high-quality, north-south transit connection is not available between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and Montgomery General Hospital.
- *Mobility* – Traffic congestion currently impedes bus mobility and results in unpredictable bus service, longer travel times, and delayed schedules.
- *Transit demand/attractiveness* – Transit demand and ridership in the Georgia Avenue corridor continue to grow. A high-quality transit service is also needed to maintain current transit riders and attract new transit riders.
- *Livability* – Transit improvements are needed throughout the Georgia Avenue corridor to create a transportation network that enhances choices for transportation users and promotes positive effects on the surrounding communities.

Existing Conditions

Georgia Avenue, which is classified as a **Principal Arterial**, carries approximately 30,000 to 50,000 vehicles per day within the study corridor and regularly experiences congestion. It is one of the most heavily used transportation and non-rail transit corridors in Montgomery County.

Local bus service along the Georgia Avenue corridor is currently provided by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's (WMATA) Metrobus and Montgomery County's Ride On. Thirty-four bus routes provide service along a segment of Georgia Avenue or cross Georgia Avenue within the study corridor. Of those 34 bus routes, 10 are operated by WMATA, 20 by Montgomery County, and four by MTA Commuter Bus service. WMATA's Y lines travel the entire length of Georgia Avenue between the Wheaton Metrorail Station and Montgomery General Hospital.

Project Schedule/Remaining Steps in Project Planning Process

- Conduct Alternatives Public Workshop - May 14, 2014
- Assess Stakeholder/Public Comments and Environmental Impacts - Summer 2014
- Mail **Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS)** Newsletter - Fall 2014

Traffic Operations

Roadway Operations

SHA developed 2012 (existing) traffic volumes by collecting data along the Georgia Avenue study corridor at each signalized intersection. Table 1 provides a summary of 2012 and 2040 No-Build **Average Daily Traffic (ADT)** for six segments of the study corridor. The 2040 **No-Build** condition assumes that the Randolph Road/Georgia Avenue Interchange is in place but that no additional roadway improvements (other than routine maintenance and operations) have been implemented.

MD 97 Segment	Average Daily Traffic (Vehicles per Day) Ranges		
	2012	2040	Percent Increase
Prince Phillip Drive to MD 108	21,000	26,000	24%
MD 108 to Old Baltimore Road	33,350	40,300	21%
Old Baltimore Road to MD 28	44,100 – 47,100	53,150 – 55,450	18% - 21%
MD 28 to MD 185	44,950	52,600	17%
MD 185 to Randolph Road	30,150 – 42,200	35,050 – 48,650	16%
Randolph Road to MD 586	37,900 – 50,000	40,800 – 56,450	8% - 13%

SHA conducted a Level of Service (LOS) analysis for Existing (2012) and Future (2040) No-Build conditions for the study area intersections. LOS is a measure of the congestion experienced by drivers and ranges from “A” (free flow, with little or no congestion) to “F” (failure, with stop-and-go conditions). LOS is normally computed for the peak periods of a typical weekday, with LOS D (approaching unstable flow) or better generally considered acceptable for intersections or highways in urban and suburban areas. At LOS E, volumes are near or at capacity. Once an intersection surpasses its theoretical capacity, extensive delay begins. LOS F represents conditions where demand exceeds capacity and where there are operational breakdowns with stop and go traffic and extremely long delays at signalized and unsignalized intersections.

SHA analyzed several roadway segments along the Georgia Avenue study area to determine LOS for morning and evening peak periods (See Table 2). Table 2 also provides **Arterial** LOS (mainline segment LOS not impacted by intersection traffic) for Georgia Avenue in both directions between key intersections under 2012 Existing and 2040 No-Build conditions.

Table 2: MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Arterial Level of Service (LOS)

Arterial Level of Service	2012 Existing		2040 No-Build	
	AM	PM	AM	PM
MD 97 Northbound				
MD 586 to MD 193	C	C	D	D
MD 193 to Randolph Road	D	E	E	F
Randolph Road to MD 182 (Layhill Road)	D	C	C	E
MD 182 (Layhill Road) to Glenallan Avenue	E	D	D	C
Glenallan Avenue to MD 185	C	C	C	D
MD 185 to Bel Pre Road	C	E	B	C
Bel Pre Road to MD 28	E	F	F	E
MD 28 to ICC Westbound (WB) Ramps	C	C	F	C
ICC WB Ramps to Old Baltimore Road	C	C	B	D
Old Baltimore Road to Prince Phillip Drive	B	D	C	F
Prince Phillip Drive to MD 108	C	F	D	F
MD 108 to Queen Elizabeth Drive	A	B	A	C
MD 97 Southbound				
Queen Elizabeth Drive to MD 108	F	C	F	D
MD 108 to Prince Phillip Drive	C	B	C	C
Prince Phillip Drive to Old Baltimore Road	D	B	F	B
Old Baltimore Road to ICC WB Ramps	C	C	D	B
ICC WB Ramps to MD 28	F	E	F	D
MD 28 to Bel Pre Road	D	C	C	C
Bel Pre Road to MD 185	E	D	F	C
MD 185 to Glenallan Avenue	B	C	E	C
Glenallan Avenue to MD 182 (Layhill Road)	D	B	D	B
MD 182 (Layhill Road) to Randolph Road	F	F	F	F
Randolph Road to MD 193	C	D	D	E
MD 193 to MD 586	C	E	D	E

Transit Operations

SHA is currently evaluating how the proposed BRT service for the Georgia Avenue corridor will integrate with the existing bus services. WMATA and Ride On bus routes in the area may adjust schedules, route locations, and/or bus stop locations to complement the proposed BRT. Depending upon the direction of travel, buses require approximately 27 to 35 minutes to travel one way between Montgomery General Hospital and the Wheaton Metrorail Station during peak hours. Automobiles require approximately 16 to 19 minutes during peak hours to travel one way along the same route.

Buses currently transport approximately 8,600 riders throughout the study corridor each day. Future demand analysis projects that total bus ridership will more than double by 2040.

Alternatives and Options Currently Under Consideration

In developing the conceptual alternatives, SHA considered transit operations, traffic circulation, safety, *aesthetics*, pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and the effects of proposed roadway improvements on the response times for emergency services providers. To evaluate the merits of each Alternative, the study team divided the 8.6-mile-long Georgia Avenue study corridor into the following segments:

Northern Segment – MD 108 (Sandy Spring Road/Olney Road) to Emory Church Road

Central Segment – Emory Church Road to Aspen Hill Road

Southern Segment – Aspen Hill Road to Wheaton Metrorail Station

SHA has developed five conceptual alternatives for consideration:

Alternative 1, No-Build: Would include planned and programmed transit and roadway improvements only, as currently listed in the ***Constrained Long-Range Plan***. (See Figure 1, page 8)

Alternative 2, Transportation Systems Management (TSM): Would include upgrades to existing WMATA and Ride On bus service, operational improvements, and physical improvements such as ***queue jumps, transit signal priority (TSP)*** measures, and bus stop renovations. Other potential TSM improvements include bus stop platforms at new locations and enhanced bicycle and pedestrian access and/or amenities, such as bus stop shelters, bike racks, and passenger information signage. Alternative 2 would include widening sections of Georgia Avenue or improving traffic capacity only to accommodate transit vehicles at selected signalized intersections. Alternative 2 would result in **minor** travel-time savings for buses traveling the length of the corridor, as compared to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3, Business Access Transit (BAT): Would maintain the number of existing general-use lanes on Georgia Avenue and widen the roadway to provide a dedicated lane along the outside curb lane in each direction for proposed BRT service and existing bus service. Vehicles turning right and bicyclists would be allowed to use the BAT lane. Local buses would use the new BRT station platforms and continue to operate in mixed traffic where dedicated lanes are not feasible. A six-foot-wide bike lane and a five-foot-wide sidewalk would be provided along the outside curb lane in each direction. Alternative 3 would result in **substantial** travel-time savings for buses traveling the length of the corridor, as compared to Alternative 1 or 2. (See Figure II, page 9)

Alternative 4, New One-Lane Reversible BRT in a Dedicated Median Lane with Bicycle Path: Would provide one additional lane in the Georgia Avenue *median* for new BRT service. BRT vehicles would operate exclusively in the reversible lane, where they would be physically separated from general traffic traveling south during the morning peak period and north during the evening peak period. An eight-foot-wide bike path would be provided in the median, adjacent to the BRT lane. Outside roadway widening could occur in some areas to accommodate the new BRT lane, and new station platforms would be located in the median near safe pedestrian-crossing areas. Doors on both sides of the BRT vehicles would permit access to the same platform for riders traveling in either direction. Local buses would continue to use the general-use curb lane and existing bus stops. A five-foot-wide sidewalk outside the curb lane would be provided on each side of the roadway. Alternative 4 would result in **substantial** travel-time savings for buses traveling the length of the corridor, as compared to Alternative 1 or 2. (See Figure III, page 10)

Alternative 5, New Two-Way, Two-Lane BRT in Dedicated Median Lanes: Would provide dedicated BRT service along a new, physically separated two-lane roadway in the Georgia Avenue median. BRT vehicles in the two-way lanes would stop at new BRT stations within the median. With two lanes available for BRT vehicles, platforms would be located on the right side of the median and passengers would board and exit from the right side of the bus. Further evaluation would determine whether local buses would have access to the median lanes or continue to operate exclusively in the general-use curb lane. Outside roadway widening could occur in some areas to accommodate the new median BRT lanes. A six-foot-wide bike lane and a five-foot-wide sidewalk would be provided along the outside curb lane in each direction. Alternative 5 would result in **substantial** travel-time savings for buses traveling the length of the corridor, as compared to Alternative 1 or 2. (See Figure IV, page 11)

Help Us Improve

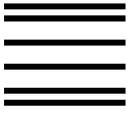
To help us improve our public involvement program, we would appreciate your thoughts on this project brochure.

<i>Please circle the most appropriate number.</i>	Poor	1	2	3	4	Excellent
Overall, was the brochure useful and informative?		1	2	3	4	4
<u>Was each part of the brochure easy to understand?</u>						
Purpose of the Workshop		1	2	3	4	4
Public Comments		1	2	3	4	4
Purpose and Need		1	2	3	4	4
Traffic Operations		1	2	3	4	4
Description of Alternatives and Options		1	2	3	4	4
Environmental Summary		1	2	3	4	4
Related Transportation Projects		1	2	3	4	4
Typical Sections and Corridor Map		1	2	3	4	4
Tables and Charts		1	2	3	4	4
Remaining Steps in Planning Process		1	2	3	4	4
<i>Which part of the brochure was most valuable?</i>		1	2	3	4	4

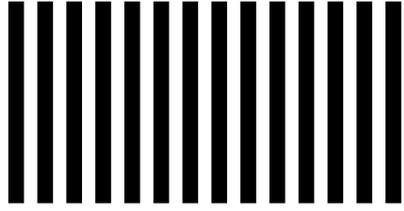
Which part of the brochure was least valuable? _____

How can we improve the brochure? _____

Thank you for answering this questionnaire. Please return it to us by mail or bring it with you to the workshop.
 MD 97 GEORGIA AVE BRT Study - Project No. MO973M11



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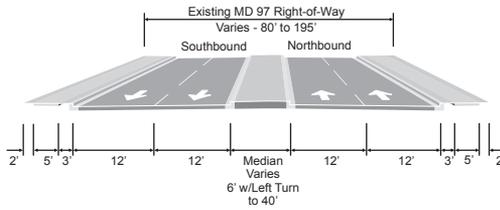
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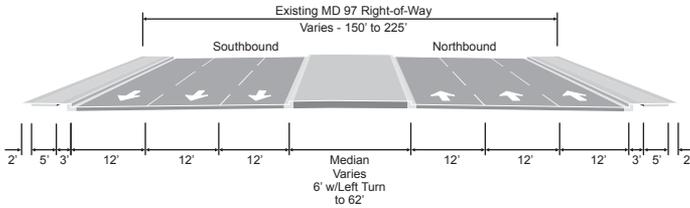
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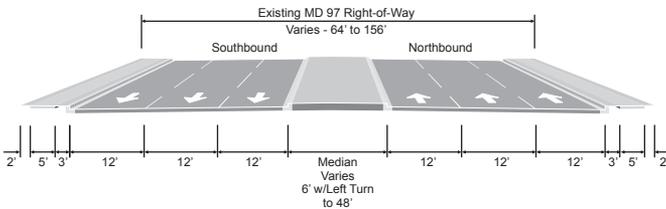
Alternative 1 - No-Build



Northern Segment - MD 108 (Sandy Spring Road / Olney Road) to Emory Church Road



Central Segment - Emory Church Road to Aspen Hill Road



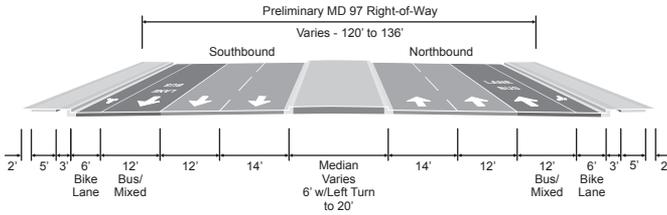
Southern Segment - Aspen Hill Road to Wheaton Metrorail Station

NOTE:

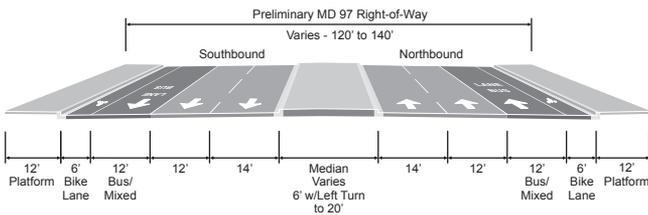
Typical Sections do not show left- or right-turn lanes at individual locations.

Figure I

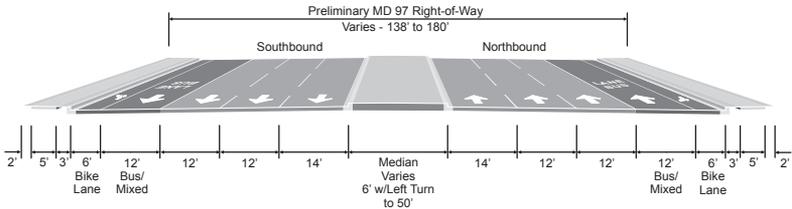
Alternative 3 - Business Access Transit (BAT) Lane



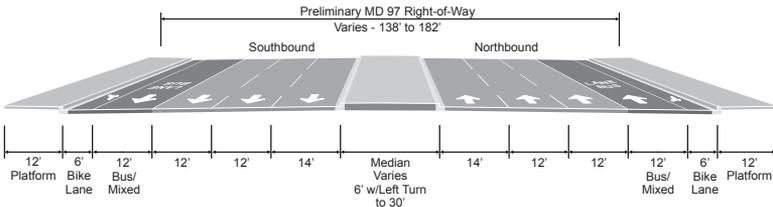
Northern Segment - MD 108 (Sandy Spring Road / Olney Road) to Emory Church Road



Northern Segment with Outside Bus Platforms



Central Segment - Emory Church Road to Aspen Hill Road Southern Segment - Aspen Hill Road to Wheaton Metrorail Station

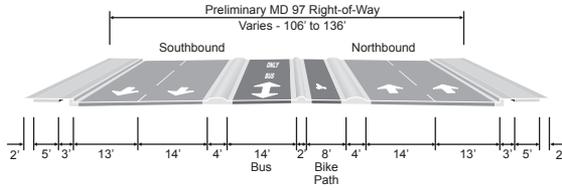


Central and Southern Segments with Outside Bus Platforms

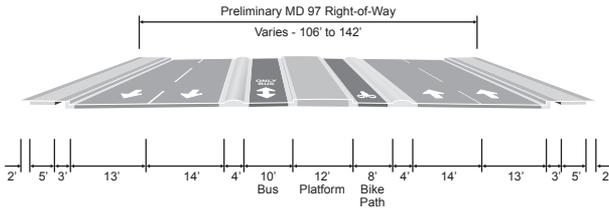
NOTE:
Typical Sections do not show left- or right-turn lanes at individual locations.

Figure II

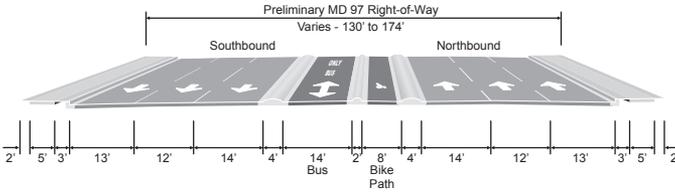
Alternative 4 - One-Lane Reversible BRT



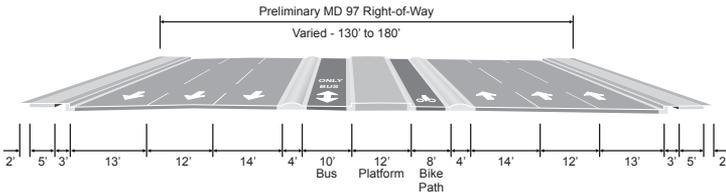
Northern Segment - MD 108 (Sandy Spring Road / Olney Road) to Emory Church Road



Northern Segment with Bus Platform



Central Segment - Emory Church Road to Aspen Hill Road
Southern Segment - Aspen Hill Road to Wheaton Metrorail Station

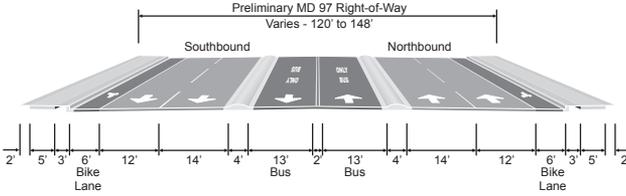


Central and Southern Segments with Bus Platform

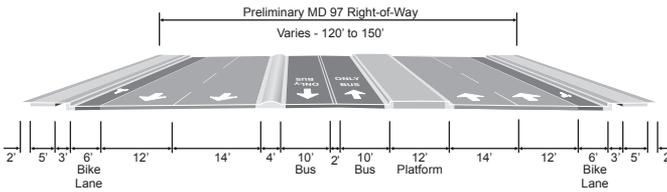
NOTE:
Typical Sections do not show left- or right-turn lanes at individual locations.

Figure III

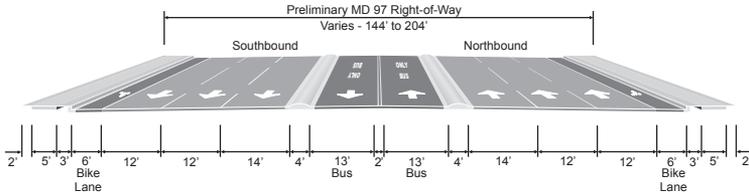
Alternative 5 - Two-Lane, Two-Way BRT



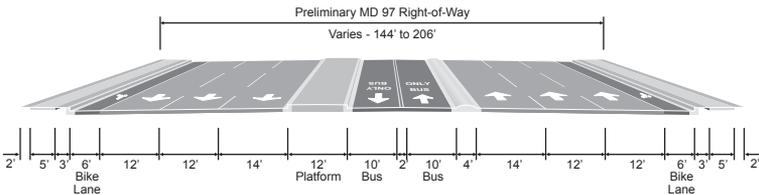
Northern Segment - MD 108 (Sandy Spring Road / Olney Road) to Emory Church Road



Northern Segment with Bus Platform



Central Segment - Emory Church Road to Aspen Hill Road
Southern Segment - Aspen Hill Road to Wheaton Metrorail Station



Central and Southern Segments with Bus Platform

NOTE:
Typical Sections do not show left- or right-turn lanes at individual locations.

Figure IV

Transit Service Analysis and Options to be Developed

SHA is conducting an analysis to determine how the new BRT service will be coordinated with existing bus service and integrated with existing and proposed activity centers throughout the corridor. Examples of issues under analysis and options under development include:

- SHA will consider several BRT routing options to determine the best means of serving the Olney area at the northern end of the study corridor, which includes Montgomery General Hospital and shopping centers and residential communities near the MD 108/Georgia Avenue intersection. Several combinations of station location options, each of which will include a station at the hospital, will be considered throughout the Olney area.
- SHA will evaluate each BRT Alternative on a segment-by-segment basis and develop optional scenarios for each segment that mix and match alternatives to minimize property impacts and optimize transit service. For example, the TSM measures described under Alternative 2 in the northern and southern segments of the corridor may be combined with BRT alternatives (Alternatives 3, 4, 5) in the central segment of the corridor.
- As SHA further develops the BRT alternatives during the next stage of the study, team members will coordinate with transit planners for WMATA and Montgomery County Ride On to identify changes that may be needed in routing, scheduling, and facilities for existing service and to determine the best way to integrate BRT and existing transit service. For example, Ride On routes may be adjusted to feed into BRT stations.

Environmental Summary

SHA has conducted research and field reviews to identify the following conditions and resources within the study area:

Land Use

The project corridor is addressed in numerous **master plans**, including the *Glenmont Sector Plan* (currently being updated), the *Olney Master Plan* (2005), the *Wheaton CBD and Vicinity Sector Plan* (2012), the *Aspen Hill Master Plan* (1994), and the *Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan* (1989). In accordance with these plans, future land use within the Georgia Avenue corridor includes **enhanced transit** throughout the area to accommodate high-density **mixed-use development** in the vicinity of the Glenmont and Wheaton Metrorail stations.

The *Smart Growth Priority Funding Areas Act of 1997* was enacted to limit sprawl and direct state funding for growth-related projects toward county-designated Priority Funding Areas (PFAs). Priority Funding Areas are geographic growth areas defined by state law and designated by local jurisdictions as targets for economic development. The Georgia Avenue study area is located entirely within a designated PFA, with the exception of a small (one-mile) area north of Norbeck Road (MD 28), and the project is consistent with Maryland's **Smart Growth Initiatives**.

Socioeconomic Resources

The existing SHA-owned **right-of-way** along Georgia Avenue within the study limits varies from 80 to 270 feet in the northern segment, 150 to 350 feet in the central segment, and 65 to 200 feet in the southern segment. Additional right-of-way (parcels and buildings) along the corridor will be required to accommodate proposed additional roadway reconfigurations to address the project's purpose and need.

In compliance with Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations*, SHA will avoid disproportionately high and/or adverse effects on minority and low-income populations throughout the study area. A preliminary review of Census data reveals the presence of minority and low-income populations within the project study area. Further outreach and additional research of study area demographic and economic characteristics will be completed as the study progresses.

Cultural Resources

Based on archeological surveys that have been conducted along sections of the Georgia Avenue BRT corridor, five archeological sites have been identified that would need to be evaluated for **National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)** eligibility. In addition, archeological remains associated with several historic properties may be located along the corridor or in previously untested areas. A study may be required to examine untested areas and determine the eligibility of existing archeological sites in the **Area of Potential Effects**.

The following five historic properties in the study area are listed on or eligible for listing on the NRHP:

- Hammond Wood Historic District
- Glenmont Forest Apartment Complex
- Oakdale-Emory United Methodist Church
- Aspin Hill Memorial Park (pet cemetery)
- White's Hardware Store

As design plans for the area are further developed, SHA will coordinate with the **Maryland Historical Trust** to determine the possible impacts the alternatives may have on significant historic or archeological sites, as required under **36 CFR 800.4**. In accordance with the **Section 106 procedures of the National Historic Preservation Act**, this workshop provides the opportunity for public comment regarding impacts on historic properties.

Natural Environmental Features

Natural areas, including publicly owned public parks and recreation areas abutting the Georgia Avenue corridor, are concentrated primarily within the **Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC)** and state-owned Matthew Henson State Park and trail and within four other M-NCPPC owned public parks: Evans Parkway Neighborhood Park, Olney Manor Recreational Park, Harmony Hills Neighborhood Park, and Glenmont Greenway Urban Park. A **Section 4(f)** Evaluation will be required to address any proposed impacts and must include a description of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

Coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), MD Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Integrated Policy and Review Unit, and DNR-Wildlife and Heritage Services has been initiated to identify the presence of any federal- or state-listed rare, threatened, or endangered species within the project area. Field reviews and **GIS** desktop investigations conducted to supplement coordination with DNR have indicated the presence of **tributaries, wetlands, streams, and 100-year floodplains** associated with Rock Creek and Turkey Branch within the immediate project area. **Use I streams** are subject to an in-stream construction closure period from March 1 to June 15. Any in-stream construction will require construction permits from the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Woodland impacts will be documented. Adverse impacts on water quality will be minimized through strict adherence to state sediment and erosion procedures in accordance with MDE stormwater criteria.

Anticipated increases in traffic volumes within the project area may lead to increased traffic noise and vehicle emissions. SHA will complete detailed traffic noise- and air-quality analyses during the detailed engineering phase.

A hazardous site inventory identified nine dry cleaning facilities, three gas stations, and three automobile service facilities. These types of facilities and businesses typically generate, handle, or store hazardous materials or petroleum products. Coordination with MDE would occur, if required, during construction to minimize the potential for adverse effects as a result of treatment, storage, cleanup, or disposal of hazardous waste.

Table 3: MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) BRT

CONCEPTUAL ALTERNATIVES and SEGMENTS						
Category	Alternative 1 No-Build	Alternative 2 Transportation Systems Management (TSM)			Alternative 3 Business Access Transit (BAT) Lane	
		Northern	Central	Southern	Northern	Central
		Social/Cultural Environment				
1. Potential Displacements (No.)						
A. Residential	0	0	0	0	1	0
B. Commercial	0	0	0	0	9	0
C. Church/School	0	0	0	0	0	0
D. Historic	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0	10	0
2. Properties/Resources Affected (No.)						
A. Residential	0	0-4	0	0	34	35
B. Commercial	0	1	1-2	3-7	23	13
C. Church/School	0	0	0-1	0-2	5	3 ¹
D. Historic	0	0	0	0	0	1 ¹
E. Parks/Recreational Facilities	0	0	0	1 ²	0	1 ²
Total	0	1-5	1-3	6-7	62	52¹
3. Right-of-Way Required (Acres)						
A. Residential	0	0-0.2	0	0	8	3
B. Commercial	0	.01	.01-.02	.05-.14	4	1
C. Church/School	0	0	0-0.2	0-.07	1	1 ¹
D. Historic	0	0	0	0	0	1 ¹
E. Parks/Recreational Facilities	0	0	0	0-.12	0	1
Total	0	.01-0.2	.01-0.3	.05-0.3	13	6¹
Natural Environment						
Wetlands (Acres)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Stream Crossings (No.)	0	0	0	2	0	0
Streams (Linear Feet)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Woodlands (Acres)	0	0-0.2	0-0.01	0	3.8	8.4
100-Year Floodplain (Acres)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cost (\$million)						
Preliminary Total Construction Cost Range ³	\$0	\$10 - \$20M			\$220 - \$250M	

¹ The Oakdale Emory United Methodist Church is included in both the Historic category and the Church/School category, but its impacts are calculated only once.

² Some Church/School and Parks/Recreational Facilities contain multiple properties within the resource boundary.

³ Potential Right-of-Way costs (which could significantly increase the total project cost) are not included.

Summary of Potential Environmental Impacts and Costs

	Alternative 4 1-Lane Reversible Median BRT			Alternative 5 2-Lane, 2-Way Median BRT		
Southern	Northern	Central	Southern	Northern	Central	Southern
47	0	0	72	2	0	79
55	11	2	57	12	2	59
0	0	0	0	0	0	1
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
102	11	2	129	14	2	139
121	23	16	132	40	35	148
99	21	11	100	25	16	100
4 ²	4	3 ¹	5 ²	5	4 ¹	5 ²
2	0	1 ¹	2	0	2 ¹	2
4 ²	0	1	4 ²	0	1 ²	4 ²
230	48	31¹	243	70	57¹	259
14	3	1	17	10	3	18
26	4	2	27	5	3	29
1	1	1 ¹	1	1	2 ¹	4
1	0	1 ¹	1	0	1 ¹	1
6	0	1	5	0	1	6
48	8	5¹	51	16	9¹	58
0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	2	0	0	2
120	0	0	95	0	0	160
2.7	3.5	6.6	1.8	6.5	10.5	3.4
0.7	0	0	0.8	0	0	0.9
	\$300 - \$340M			\$340 - \$380M		

Description of Segments

Northern Segment - MD 108 (Sandy Spring Road/Olney Road) to Emory Church Road (1.6 Miles)

Central Segment - Emory Church Road to Aspen Hill Road (3.5 Miles)

Southern Segment - Aspen Hill Road to Wheaton Metrorail Station (3.5 Miles)

Related Transportation Projects

- *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*: This plan identifies a BRT network throughout the county, recommends rights-of-way for individual transit corridors and station locations for the proposed transit network, and makes other roadway recommendations to support the network. One of the corridors included in the Master Plan is Georgia Avenue North from the Montgomery General Hospital to the Wheaton Metrorail Station. The M-NCPPC approved the draft plan on July 11, 2013. The County Council public hearing occurred September 24, 2013. On December 18, 2013, M-NCPPC adopted the Planning Board Draft of the *Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan*, as modified by the County Council on November 25, 2013.
- *Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT)*: The CCT is a 15-mile-long BRT project in Montgomery County, from the **COMSAT facility** near Clarksburg to the Shady Grove Metrorail Station. The portion of the project from Metropolitan Grove to Shady Grove is proceeding with engineering and environmental analysis, is funded for formal environmental documentation, and will be completed in Fall 2015. Final design and right-of-way acquisition for the project are also funded.
- *MD 586 (Veirs Mill Road) Bus Rapid Transit Study*: This study is evaluating BRT service along MD 586 from the Rockville Metrorail Station to the Wheaton Metrorail Station. The southern portion of this study is located adjacent to the Georgia Avenue BRT study area and both studies are being coordinated. The MD 586 BRT Study is currently funded for project planning only.
- *MD 97 Montgomery Hills Project Planning Study*: This study is evaluating improvements to the Georgia Avenue corridor between MD 192 (Forest Glen Road) and MD 390 (16th Street). The purpose of the study is to establish a balanced approach to transportation within the Georgia Avenue 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. This project is funded for project planning only.
- *Purple Line Study*: This 16-mile-long light rail transit line from Bethesda in Montgomery County to New Carrollton in Prince George's County is presently funded through design and right-of-way acquisition. The public review period for the final environmental document recently concluded. Construction is expected to begin in 2015.
- *MD 97 at Randolph Road Project*: The purpose of this project is to construct an interchange at Georgia Avenue and Randolph Road. The project will include sidewalks where appropriate and wide curb lanes to accommodate bicycles. Construction is expected to begin in 2014.

Non-Discrimination in Federally Assisted and State-Aid Programs

For information concerning non-discrimination, please contact:

Mr. David Pinckney, Deputy Director
Office of Equal Opportunity
Maryland State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop LL3
Baltimore, MD 21202
Telephone: (410) 545-0330
Toll-free within Maryland: (888) 545-0098
Email: dpinckney@sha.state.md.us

Right-of-Way and Relocation Assistance

The proposed project may require the acquisition of additional right-of-way. Residential and commercial relocations may also be required. For information regarding right-of-way and relocation assistance, please contact:

Mr. Paul Lednak
District 3, Office of Real Estate
Maryland State Highway Administration
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt, MD 20770
Telephone: (301) 513-7466
Toll-free within Maryland: (800) 749-0737
Email: plednak@sha.state.md.us

Public Involvement

SHA, Montgomery County, and MTA will maintain public involvement throughout the Georgia Avenue BRT Study. Agency and county representatives are available to meet with community groups, civic associations, and other organizations. To request a meeting, please contact Miss Carmeletta Harris (SHA), using the information provided inside the front cover of the brochure.

SHA will provide a telephonic interpreter for those who need assistance with the English language. A Spanish-language interpreter will be available during the Alternatives Public Workshop. **For a Spanish-language copy of this brochure, please contact Miss Harris at (410) 545-8522/toll-free 1-800-548-5026, use the QR Code to access the translated brochure online, or go to www.roads.maryland.gov and click on Projects and Studies, SHA Projects Page, Montgomery County, MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Wheaton Metrorail Station to Montgomery General Hospital.**

SI DESEA UNA COPIA DE ESTE VOLANTE EN ESPAÑOL, POR FAVOR CONTACTARSE CON LA CARMELETTA HARRIS, GERENTE DE PROYECTO, LLAMANDO AL 410-545-8522 (GRATIS AL 1-800-548-5026), utilice este código QR para acceder vía internet una copia traducida del volante, o visite nuestro sitio web en: www.roads.maryland.gov y haga clic en Projects and Studies, SHA Projects Page, Montgomery County, MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Wheaton Metrorail Station to Montgomery General Hospital.



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

Media Used for Media Notification

An advertisement appeared in the following newspapers to announce this Alternatives Public Workshop:

<u>PUBLICATION</u>	<u>DATE</u>
Gazette – R and S zones	04/30/14
Washington Post	04/30/14
Afro-American	05/02/14
El Tiempo Latino	05/02/14

Your Opinion Matters

This workshop offers members of the public the opportunity to discuss their thoughts and concerns about the project and to provide spoken and written comments. We will carefully review and consider project concerns and preferences expressed at the workshop. To assist you in providing comments, we have included in this brochure a postage-paid mailer and the contact information for members of the project team.

Questions or comments following the workshop may be addressed to any of the project team members listed inside the front cover of the brochure.

Thank You

Thank you for participating in the Alternatives Public Workshop for the MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Study. Your comments are appreciated. Please direct your questions or concerns to project team members by mail, telephone, or email.

For information about other SHA projects in Montgomery County, visit our internet site at www.roads.maryland.gov and click on **Projects and Studies, SHA Projects Page, Montgomery County**, or use the QR Code provided on this page.



Aesthetics: Beauty or attractiveness and people's responses to it.

Alternatives: Potential solutions that are evaluated to determine whether they will address the project's purpose and need.

Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS): A document that summarizes and compares the initial alternatives and recommends those to be carried forward for detailed study.

Area of Potential Effects: The geographic area(s) within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause changes in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist.

Arterial: A roadway that carries longer distance traffic between important centers of activity. Arterials are laid out as the backbone of a traffic network and should be designed to provide the highest level of service possible.

Average Daily Traffic (ADT): A useful and simple measurement of how busy a road is. It is calculated by dividing the total volume of vehicle traffic of a highway or road by 365 days.

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): A high-performance bus service that combines bus lanes with high-quality bus stations, transit vehicles, and other enhancements to achieve the performance and quality of a light rail or metro system, with the flexibility, cost, and simplicity of a bus system.

Business Access and Transit (BAT): The outside lanes of a roadway that are reserved for buses, bicycles, and right-turning vehicles only. They

improve access to businesses and residences and save time for transit riders. BAT lanes also enhance the capacity of the remaining travel lanes by removing buses from general traffic.

36 CFR 800.4: PROTECTION OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES—requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their actions on historic properties.

COMSAT facility: COMSAT is short for Communications Satellite Corporation, the company that was created in 1962 with the passage of the Communications Satellite Act. The COMSAT facility, located just north of West Old Baltimore Road at I-270, is mostly vacant. Future commercial, retail, and residential development is planned around a Corridor Cities Transitway stop proposed for this site. Observation Drive is being designed to extend north through this area to Clarksburg.

Constrained Long-Range Plan (CLRP): The CLRP identifies all regionally significant transportation projects and programs that are planned in the Washington metropolitan area between 2013 and 2040. Over 750 projects are included, ranging from simple highway landscaping to billion-dollar highway and transit projects. The CLRP is updated annually.

Enhanced transit: Transit service that sometimes includes custom vehicles, roadway improvements for transit vehicles, limited stops at upgraded stations, and other elements to minimize transit delays.

GIS: Geographic Information System is a system that integrates, stores, edits, analyzes, shares, and displays geographic information to aid in decision making. GIS applications allow users to create searches, analyze spatial information, edit data in maps, and present the results of those operations.

Location/Design Approval: The formal approvals by the Federal Highway Administration (Location) and the State Highway Administration (Design) indicating that National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements have been satisfied, and that both agencies concur with the selected alternative. This makes the selected alternative eligible to advance to the Final Design, Right-of-Way Acquisition, and Construction stages of project development.

Maryland Historical Trust: An agency of the Maryland Department of Planning that assists with research, conservation, and education about Maryland's historical and cultural heritage.

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC): A bi-county agency, formed in 1927 by the Maryland General Assembly, which administers parks and planning in Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The Commission also offers recreation classes and provides services and educational programs relating to conservation and nature, local history, and the arts.

Master plan: A document that includes goals and policies to inform long-range land-use decision-making.

Median: The area that divides traffic moving in opposite directions on a single roadway.

Mixed-use development: Any building, complex of buildings, or district of a town or city that blends a combination of residential, commercial, cultural, institutional, or industrial uses, where those functions are physically and functionally integrated, and that provides pedestrian connections.

National Register of Historic Places: The official list of the nation's historic places that are worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act, the NRHP is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

No-Build: An alternative that includes no major capital improvements and serves as a baseline for comparing the impacts and benefits of the other (build) alternatives.

Principal Arterial: Arterial roadways are classified as principal or minor. Both classes carry longer-distance traffic between important centers of activity. Arterials are laid out as the backbone of a traffic network and should be designed to provide the highest level of service possible.

Queue jump: A short additional lane for transit vehicles, which may be combined with a right-turn lane at an approach to an intersection. The queue-jump lane receives a green light that allows transit vehicles to proceed through the intersection while traffic in the through lanes waits at a red light.

Right-of-way: Land or property (often in a strip) required for transportation purposes, such as roadway widening and improvements.

Section 106 procedures: Derived from Section 106 of the **National Historic Preservation Act** of 1966, these procedures govern the identification, evaluation, and protection of historical and archeological resources affected by state and federal transportation projects.

Section 4(f): Enacted as a portion of the **Department of Transportation Act** of 1966, Section 4(f) requires that the proposed use of land from a publicly owned public park, recreation area, wildlife and/or waterfowl refuge, or any significant historic site, as part of a federally funded or approved transportation project, is permissible only if there is no feasible and prudent alternative to that use.

Sense of place: The qualities of a community that create its unique character.

Smart Growth Initiatives: First implemented in Maryland in 1997 with the passage of the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative. Smart growth concentrates new development and redevelopment in areas that have existing or planned infrastructure in order to avoid sprawl. Its purpose is to conserve valuable natural resources through the efficient

use of land, water, and air; to create a sense of community and place; to expand transportation, employment, and housing choices; and to promote public health.

Transit Signal Priority (TSP):

An onboard system that enables approaching buses to alert a transmitter that modifies signal timing at an intersection and allows the buses to pass through the signal without stopping.

Tributaries: Rivers or streams flowing into a larger river or lake.

Use I Streams: The Department of Natural Resources defines Use I streams as Water Contact Recreation and Protection of Nontidal Warmwater Aquatic Life.

Wetlands: Areas that are regularly wet or flooded, with vegetation adapted for life under those soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, bogs, marshes, and similar areas.

100-year floodplains: The 100-year floodplain refers to the areas along or adjacent to a stream or body of water that are capable of storing or conveying floodwaters during a 100-year-frequency storm. U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5650.2, "Floodplain Management and Protection," prescribes policies and procedures for ensuring that proper consideration is given to the avoidance and mitigation of floodplain impacts.



Maryland Department of Transportation
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
Office of Planning and Preliminary Engineering
707 North Calvert Street
Mail Stop C-301
Baltimore, MD 21202



Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lieutenant Governor

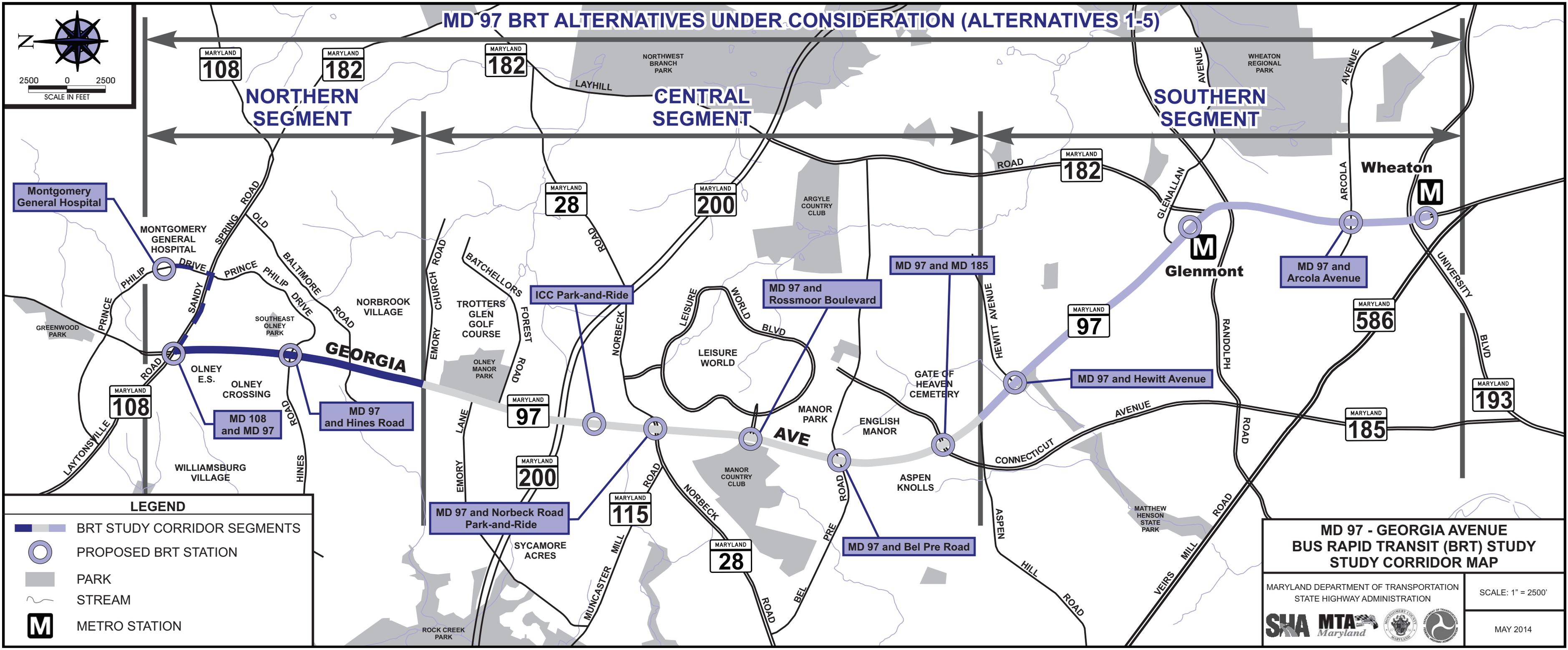
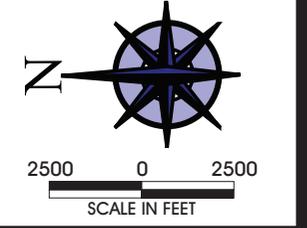
James T. Smith, Jr.
Secretary

Melinda B. Peters
Administrator



printed on recycled paper

MD 97 BRT ALTERNATIVES UNDER CONSIDERATION (ALTERNATIVES 1-5)



LEGEND

- BRT STUDY CORRIDOR SEGMENTS
- PROPOSED BRT STATION
- PARK
- STREAM
- M METRO STATION

**MD 97 - GEORGIA AVENUE
BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT) STUDY
STUDY CORRIDOR MAP**

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

SCALE: 1" = 2500'

MAY 2014