

MD 197 Improvements Receive Final Approvals

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has selected Alternative 4 Modified for improvements to MD 197 from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated, in Bowie. In December 2009, the Federal Highway Administration concurred with SHA's selection and granted location approval. The purpose of the study was to investigate ways to relieve congestion, enhance safety, and upgrade bicyclist and pedestrian travel along this 1.4-mile segment of MD 197.

Project Background

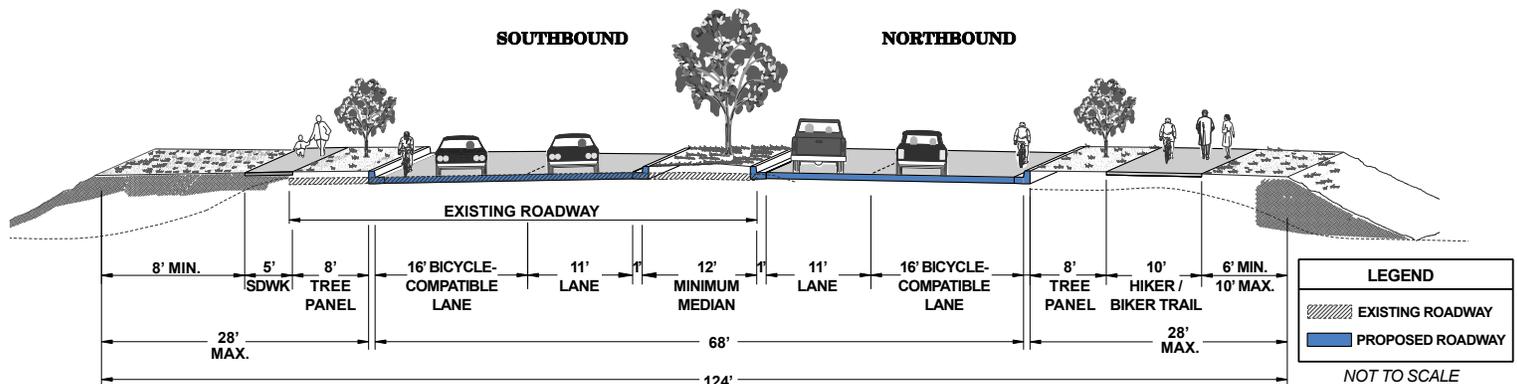
Since the 1980s, the MD 197 study area has experienced significant residential and commercial growth, which has led to increases in traffic volumes and congestion. The existing two-lane segment of MD 197 constricts traffic volumes, which leads to safety hazards and operational delays. North and south of the two-lane study portion of MD 197, the roadway consists of four or more lanes, which increase capacity and improve traffic operations. Six alternatives, ranging from low-cost and intermediate types of improvements to alternatives that would widen the roadway, were considered throughout the planning study. The study team held two informal public meetings, an Alternates Public Workshop and a Location/Design Public Hearing in 2008, and participated in several City Council meetings to provide information about the study and solicit suggestions and comments from interested stakeholders. All comments received from members of the public, regulatory agencies, and local officials were considered in the development and selection of Alternative 4 Modified.

Selected Alternative

The Selected Alternative, Alternative 4 Modified—Four-Lane Divided includes the following features:

- A four-lane divided roadway with a raised grass median, 11-foot-wide inside travel lanes, and a 16-foot-wide bicycle-compatible outside travel lane in each direction;
- A five-foot-wide sidewalk along the western edge of MD 197 and relocation/reconstruction of the existing 10-foot-wide bicycle trail along the eastern side;
- A 20-foot-wide raised grass median throughout the corridor, except for a median section narrowed to 12 feet between the Long Ridge Lane/Tulip Grove Drive and Lerner Place/Foxhill Park intersections. In this section, an eight-foot-wide tree panel along the outside edge of the pavement is proposed as a buffer for pedestrians and for aesthetic enhancement;
- Closure of the proposed median opening at the Faith Lane/Lyle Lane intersection to provide the transition lengths required to minimize the width of the median to 12 feet between Long Ridge Lane/Tulip Grove Drive and to improve traffic safety throughout this portion of the corridor;
- Expansion of Foxhill Lake to handle retention and treatment of stormwater runoff;
- One additional southbound through lane at MD 450 Relocated dropping at Old Annapolis Road, and one additional southbound through lane just south of Lerner Place extending through Kenhill Drive;
- Reconfiguration of lanes at Kenhill Drive and Tulip Grove Drive to include right-turn-only onto MD 197;
- Further consideration of retaining walls to minimize property and environmental impacts;
- Traffic-signal-synchronization improvements with enhanced bus-stop shelters.

The Selected Alternative would improve traffic flow, reduce congestion, and provide safety enhancements. This project provides many benefits to regional and local transportation networks and includes noise-reduction walls and improved pedestrian, bicycle, and drainage facilities. The design of these highway improvements ultimately balances safety enhancements, traffic operational needs, and community improvements determined by technical and engineering studies and from extensive stakeholder outreach and interaction.



Alternative 4 Modified with Sidewalk and Street Trees

Four-Lane Divided Typical Section between Long Ridge Lane and Lerner Place

Next Steps

Although the Location and Design Approvals make this project an eligible candidate for future activities, funding is not currently available for Final Design, Right-of-Way Acquisition, or Construction.

Thank You

SHA and the entire study team thank everyone who participated in this successful project planning study. Please direct all questions and requests for information to:

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The Maryland Relay Service can assist teletype users at 7-1-1. For more information on this and other SHA projects, visit www.roads.maryland.gov and click on **Projects and Studies/Prince George's County**.

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