

Amended written comments concerning the Planning Board Draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan

Submitted: August 3, 2023

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I generally concur with the goals of the Plan but specifically support objectives 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 1.7, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, and 4.4.

The Village of Friendship Heights is a densely populated jurisdiction which borders the Brookdale Neighborhood and West Friendship Association. Easing “cross-border” pedestrian access will increase the ease and safety of pedestrians in these neighboring areas. Access to limited park space is essential.

Generally speaking for this area:

- 1) Pedestrian shortcuts along the south boundaries of GEICO property from Willard Avenue to Brookdale Park should be recognized as two-way, enabling Brookdale residents and those of the Village of Friendship Heights and the West Friendship Association to move smoothly in both directions. Those seeking access from Western Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue to Willard Avenue would benefit from a trail along this fence line as well. This pedestrian shortcut is currently obstructed by one homeowner’s posting at the ends of Sherrill and Saratoga Avenues.
- 2) Bicycle sidepaths are needed from Western Avenue at River Road to the Ridgefield Road/Kenwood intersection into the new housing and shopping developments. One death is too many.
- 3) Regular maintenance is needed on River Road surrounding the bus stop between the entrance to Willard Avenue Neighborhood Park and 5001 River Road, especially at the area surrounding the bus stop. Overgrowth makes it dangerous for pedestrians travelling east or west on River Road to pass through this area since the sidewalk narrows increasingly with overgrown during the spring and summer months and is uncared for in winter months.
- 4) Intersections at North Park Avenue and Willard Avenue and Friendship Boulevard and Willard Road are dangerous to pedestrians. While drivers know they should stop at stop signs and yield to pedestrians, they turn into and out of North Park Avenue and Friendship Boulevard on a regular basis in front of and behind pedestrians and do not yield to those in crosswalks.
- 5) Raised bicycle and sidewalk crossings are needed in front of 4701 Willard Avenue and at the top of the rise in front of 5326 Willard to provide safe access to pedestrian and proposed bicycle trails as recommended in the Friendship Heights Master Plan and the County’s Bicycle Master Plan.
- 6) Please coordinate the recommendation contained in these three Master Plans as well as any related findings from the Friendship Heights Urban Design study and from the new Business Alliance relating to pedestrian and bicycle safety

I highly agree with key actions: B-2, B-3, B-4 (f,g,h), B-6, B-7, B-8a, B-9, B-10, MA-2, P2 (a, d,e), P-7b, P8, EA-1 (a,b,c), EA-2, EA-3, EA-5, EA-8.

I ask that downtown Friendship Heights be made a Tier 1 BiPPA.

I ask that the projects at Sherrill, Baltimore, and Saratoga Avenues (Willard Avenue Trail) be given the highest priority.