

July 7, 2025

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: July 8, 2025 Public Hearing on Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT) - 2025 Technical Update

Dear Council President Stewart, Council Vice President Jawando, and Councilmembers Friedson, Fani-González, Albornoz, Balcombe, Glass, Katz, Luedtke, Mink, and Sayles:

On behalf of the Wildwood Manor Citizens Association (WMCA), I am writing to provide our comments on Montgomery County's Master Plan of Highways and Transitways (MPOHT) -- 2025 Technical Update.¹ WMCA represents more than 500 homes located just east of Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) and bordered by I-270 on the North, Snow Point Drive on the East, and Grosvenor Lane and Southport Drive on the South.

WMCA is concerned about the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) efforts through the MPOHT to further reduce speed limits on critical roadways throughout the County. Has M-NCPPC, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT), and/or the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) conducted traffic engineering studies to support the proposed target speed limits? WMCA fears that these proposed speed limit reductions will increase traffic congestion and hinder economic development in the County.

Below are our comments and recommendations on some of the roads with which we are most familiar:

Concerns about Proposed Speed Limit Reduction on Old Georgetown Road (MD 187)

WMCA is particularly concerned about the proposed further reduction of the speed limit on Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) from 35 mph to 25 mph between Cheshire Drive and I-270.² Already, the combination of the reduction in the speed limit to 35 mph³ and

¹ Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). (2025, April). *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways - 2025 Technical Update* (hereinafter "MPOHT"), available at: https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MPOHT_Planning-Board-Draft2025.pdf

² MPOHT at p. 73.

³ Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA). (2024, October). *Information Related to Bike Lanes on Old Georgetown Road (MD 187): A Report for the Maryland General Assembly Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and House Appropriations Committee* (hereinafter "October 2024 Report") at p. 6. Available at: https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/JCR/2024/2024_83-

In addition, as the Oct. 2024 Report shows, northbound travel times have increased starting at 2:00 PM through about 8:00 PM⁶ – impacting traffic far more than just at peak hour. While not as high as during the afternoon hours, northbound travel times have also increased between 7:00 AM and about 9:30 AM compared to pre-installation travel times.⁷ Post-installation southbound travel times have also increased beginning at about 8:00 AM through about 5:00 PM⁸ -- a period of 9 hours. **The MPOHT's proposed reduction in the speed limit to 25 mph between Cheshire Drive and I-270 will exacerbate traffic congestion on the entirety of MD 187.**

Concerns about Proposed Speed Limit Reduction on Portions of Rockville Pike/Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355)

[84.pdf?nvep=&hmac=&emci=4fe5b9c4-79aa-ef11-88cf-6045bdf8d29&emdi=ea000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&ceid=#.~:text=It%20should%20be%20noted%20that,40%20mph%20to%2035%20mph\).&text=Bicycle%20volumes%20along%20the%20MD,a%20typical%20weekday%20and%20Saturday](#). The report notes that the posted speed limit reduction implemented by SHA came into effect in April 2023 (40 mph to 35 mph).

¹² MPOHT at pp. 102-103, 105.

installation has had on Old Georgetown Road. This is especially troubling since the County and State view Rockville Pike – and especially the North Bethesda area -- as a critical economic engine for the County.¹³

Concerns about Proposed Speed Limit Reductions on Democracy Boulevard and Tuckerman Lane

WMCA is also concerned about the proposed reductions in the speed limit to 25 mph on Democracy Boulevard¹⁴ and Tuckerman Lane.¹⁵ These are key East-West corridors linking Wildwood Manor residents to I-270, Montgomery Mall, Cabin John Regional Park and mall, and other neighborhoods to the west. Taken collectively, the MPOHT's proposed speed limit reductions will make it very difficult to travel throughout the County – when the County is trying to spur economic development, not hinder it.

Concerns about Proposed Lane Reductions on Rockledge Drive

WMCA is also concerned about the proposed lane reductions on Rockledge Drive -- in some portions reducing it down to 2 lanes.¹⁶ Rockledge Drive is a key gateway to Walter Johnson High School, the medical office parks that are frequented by Wildwood Manor and other County residents, as well as a back way to Montgomery Mall, Home Depot, the USPS Westlake post office, and Cabin John Regional Park. Reducing the number of lanes on Rockledge Drive will only make it more difficult to access these important locations. The same concerns extend to the proposed lane reductions on Westlake Terrace¹⁷ and Fernwood Road between Democracy Blvd. and Rock Spring Drive.¹⁸ The County should preserve the number of lanes on these important roads.

Concerns about Inclusion of Old Georgetown Road as a Growth Corridor Area Type and Growth Corridor Boulevard Street Type

WMCA was never consulted, nor did we endorse the inclusion of Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) as a “Growth Corridor” in *Thrive Montgomery 2050*.¹⁹ As such, we strongly oppose the inclusion of Old Georgetown Road as a Growth Corridor area type and

¹³ University of Maryland Institute for Health Computing. (2025, May 28). *Master Developer Selected for North Bethesda Metro Station Mixed-Use Development Anchored by UM-IHC* [Press release]. <https://www.ihc.umd.edu/news-events/master-developer-selected-for-north-bethesda-metro-station-mixed-use-development-anchored-by-um-ihc>. At the press conference, Governor Wes Moore stated, “Together, we are transforming North Bethesda into a hub for innovation, opportunity and growth.”

¹⁴ MPOHT at p. 59.

¹⁵ Id. at p. 80.

¹⁶ Id. at p. 78.

¹⁷ Id. at p. 82.

¹⁸ Id. at p. 62.

¹⁹ Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). (2022, October). *Thrive Montgomery 2050 – Approved and Adopted - October 2022* (hereinafter “Thrive Montgomery 2050”), available at: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/THRIVE-Approved-Adopted-Final.pdf>

Growth Corridor Boulevard street type in the MPOHT and the Complete Streets Design Guide.²⁰

MCDOT/MDOT SHA should Implement Smart Signaling Technology and Additional Red Light Cameras at Key Intersections

In order to address the need for timely connectivity County-wide, MCDOT and MDOT SHA should implement Smart signaling technology to move traffic more efficiently on key roads. To improve safety, MCDOT/MDOT SHA should also install additional red-light cameras at key intersections.²¹ For example, the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and Democracy Blvd. would be a good location for a red-light camera. In addition, MCDOT/MDOT SHA should consider installing a red-light camera where cars turn right from Democracy Blvd. to go south on Old Georgetown Road. Despite the “No Turn on Red” sign, we frequently see cars go right-on-red at this intersection, rather than waiting for the arrow or the green light.

Conclusion

WMCA is concerned that the MPOHT’s recommendations regarding speed limit and lane reductions will greatly increase traffic congestion, hamper business development, and drive residents from the County. In addition, we oppose the inclusion of Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) as a “Growth Corridor” in *Thrive Montgomery 2050*, MPOHT, and the Complete Streets Design Guide. WMCA urges MCDOT/MDOT SHA to conduct traffic engineering studies before reducing speed limits on key roads, preserve the number of lanes on important roads, implement Smart signaling technology to move traffic more efficiently, and install additional red-light cameras at key intersections to improve safety.

Thank you for your consideration of WMCA’s concerns and recommendations. If you have any questions or would like to follow-up with us about our comments, please contact me at kbolte6008@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Karin Bolte, President
Wildwood Manor Citizens Association

6008 Chatsworth Lane
Bethesda, MD 20814-2206
(301) 648-0673
Kbolte6008@gmail.com

²⁰ MPOHT at pp. 134-137.

²¹ Montgomery County Department of Police. (2025). *Red Light Camera Locations*. Available at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/pol/howdof/red-light-camera-locations.html>

Cc: Arlet Koseian-Beckham, Vice President, WMCA
Marie Wierzbic, Secretary, WMCA
Tim Taylor, Treasurer, WMCA
Ann Bowker, past Co-Chair, Development Committee, WMCA
County Executive Marc Elrich
William Pines, Administrator, Maryland Department of Transportation State
Highway Administration (MDOT SHA)
Christopher Conklin, Director, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
(MCDOT)
Maryland State Senator Sara Love
Maryland State Delegate Marc Korman
Maryland State Delegate Sarah Wolek
Maryland State Delegate Teresa S. Woorman