



City of Annapolis
Planning Commission
Department of Planning & Zoning
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December 19, 2018

To: Annapolis City Council
From: Planning Commission
Re: Findings for R-45-18 Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study

SUMMARY

As is stated in the 2009 *Comprehensive Plan*, the City of Annapolis has a goal to shift away from the land consumptive suburban development pattern to a more sustainable one. A small percentage of the City's developable land is vacant, and so instead of relying on annexation, future development has and will continue to consist of redevelopment and infill development. The Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study originated out of the effort to implement the smart-growth-oriented policy recommendations of the 2009 *Comprehensive Plan* for the two Opportunity Areas of Bay Ridge and Forest Drive. In order to effectively carry out the land use and mobility components of the study, Eastport, which relies on the Forest Drive corridor as a main route in and out of the City, was also included. The vision for the study area, which includes roughly two-thirds of the City's land area and residents, is one of better management of future transportation and growth.

The Planning Commission finds that this study proposes policies that:

- Encourage more mixed use development in place of "single use" development throughout the City
- Knit together more mobility strategies for bicycles and pedestrian while also promoting more connectivity for vehicles.
- Support more emphasis on the form of development rather than on use.
- Build on a comprehensive traffic analysis framework that encompasses both short-term and long-term time horizons for planning purposes.

The Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study ushers in a new era for urban planning and the integration of land use, economic development, technology, and mobility. It provides a specific vision for this part of the City and begins to lay the groundwork for the next *Comprehensive Plan* for the City of Annapolis. Under current regulations, there is a significant amount of development capacity in this portion of the City. This plan attempts to change the character of that possible development, not necessarily to encourage more development.

Resolution R-45-18 proposes that this plan be adopted as an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. It was introduced at City Council on September 24, 2018 and went to a public hearing before the Planning Commission on November 1, 2018.

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Throughout each step in the planning process, residents, business-owners, civic leaders, and other stakeholders were given opportunity to contribute opinions, comments, and questions. There were a total of 24 meetings to engage the public on the Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study—four of which were either open house-style or traditional public meetings. Early in the process, in the summer of 2017, stakeholders belonging to one of several groups—business owners, developers, government officials, environmental groups, mobility groups, non-profits and neighborhood associations—were invited to offer their perspectives on needs and issues in the sector area. A series of work sessions with the Planning Commission were held throughout the process to discuss and distill the progress made to date.

In order to establish a basis for planning decisions, and for coordination with the County, a new traffic model was devised. The new model builds on the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) Regional Model. The BMC is the Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Baltimore region. The new City traffic planning tool was developed in collaboration with the BMC and can model current and future travel demand. This is a refined and more detailed version of the BMC's current regional model. It uses a database that was prepared by City staff that includes demographic data as well as pipeline development projects. This data provides the Baseline Scenario conditions for the future in this study.

In the first phase of the planning process, the planning team inquired about the spectrum of issues at hand pertaining to the entire sector area as well as to specific sub-areas within. The more than 300 issues communicated via various input-gathering means were categorized into six individual themes: Land Use and Design/Community Character; Zoning and Approval Process; Mobility—Vehicular and Transit; Mobility—Bike and Pedestrian; Greening of Annapolis/Environment; and Vibrant Economy. The issues under each theme informed and organized the principal and supporting solutions that were selected based on overall goals, as well as for their viability and impact.

Because the Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study will be adopted as an amendment to the existing Comprehensive Plan, it should also be reviewed for consistency with the Comprehensive Plan. The 2009 Comprehensive Plan took an approach to planning focused on “community character.” The concept of community character provided a “means to understand a community’s physical, functional, and design attributes as a whole and further understand how they work together to create or strengthen a sense of place.” (Annapolis Comprehensive Plan, 2009, p. 3). The Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study likewise seeks to reconcile the different parts of Forest Drive and Eastport and to suggest how different neighborhoods and commercial nodes can be enhanced to strongly create a sense of place.

Three of the Community Character designations used in this study were pulled directly from the Comprehensive Plan—specifically Urban Center, Urban Center Low and Urban Commercial.

Additional Community Character designations were developed for nodes not in an opportunity areas but still deserving of planning attention.

Other important policies from the Comprehensive Plan are furthered in the Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study. For example, Policy 1 in the Land Use and Economic Development Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan calls for growth to be directed primarily into the four Opportunity Areas and that detailed land use and urban design plans ought to be formulated for each of these areas. The Forest Drive/Eastport Study does this by applying the community character designations across sections of the study area that are either in or near the Forest Drive and Bay Ridge Opportunity Areas. Additional areas were selected for their development opportunities that were revealed in an analysis of site, neighborhood and transportation-serving characteristics. Embedded in the community character recommendations is a series of more specific guidelines for design and functional properties such as scale, density, use, role, setback, etc. that would be typical of development that contributes to the overall desired character.

The community character designations were formulated with the aim of achieving several visions expressed throughout the process. These collective visions can be summarized as: compact, walkable, bikeable, village-like, low-scale, attractive, green, transit-served, and distinctive. What does this mean? Many of the new, proposed but not-yet detailed solutions in the plan will be integrated and more fully formulated into the next comprehensive plan. Additionally, in order to implement community character designations, there will need to be changes to the zoning code and the zoning map.

The sector study, with its Community Character and Street Typology recommendations, illustrates context-specific visions for the future. The depictions are more fine-grained and more specific to each place within the study area than the proposed land use maps of the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. One purpose of the community and street character recommendations is to not substantially alter the identity of neighborhoods but to ensure their overall appearance is both enhanced and better conformed to their surrounding areas. While future development in the study area would have to meet adequate public facilities requirements, it would have increased flexibility on form and function over use. In short, rather than planning by zoning uses, the focus in future planning will be on mixing uses and on the size, shape and location of buildings.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

The Planning Commission recommends five amendments to the plan, as follows:

Amendment 1: Add a map that shows specific prospective pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the study area.

On p. 45, add text that states:

Figure Seventeen below shows specific location for prospective pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the study area. Figure Eighteen shows future bicycle trail networks

On p. 45, add the following maps:

Figure Seventeen

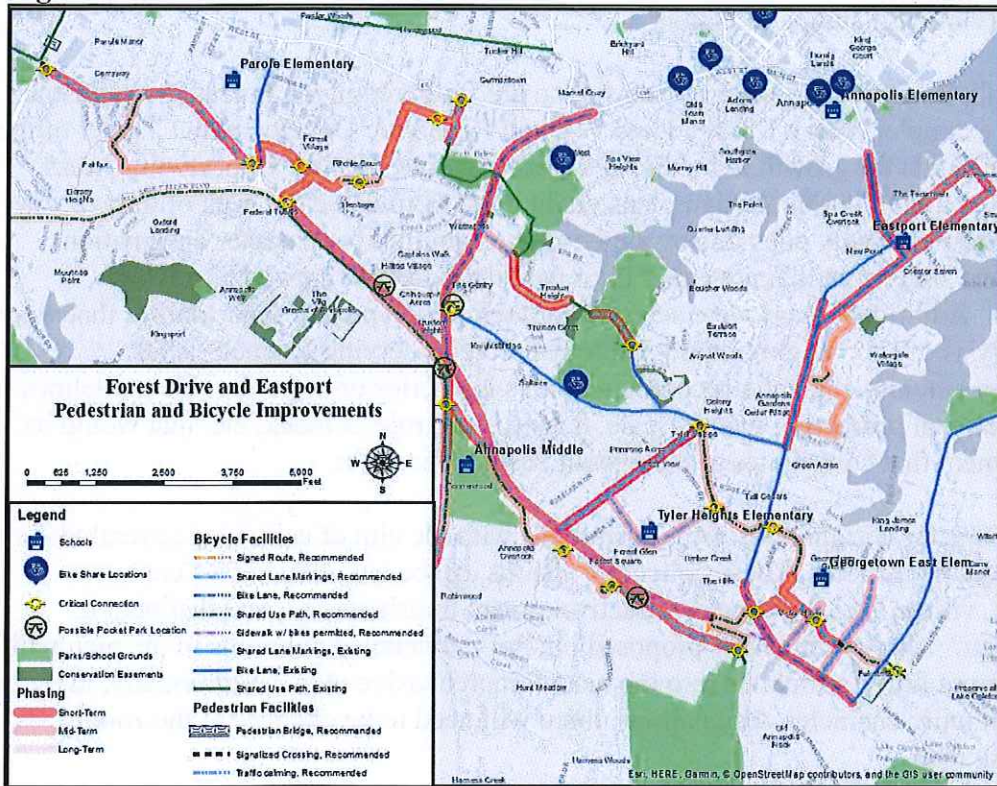
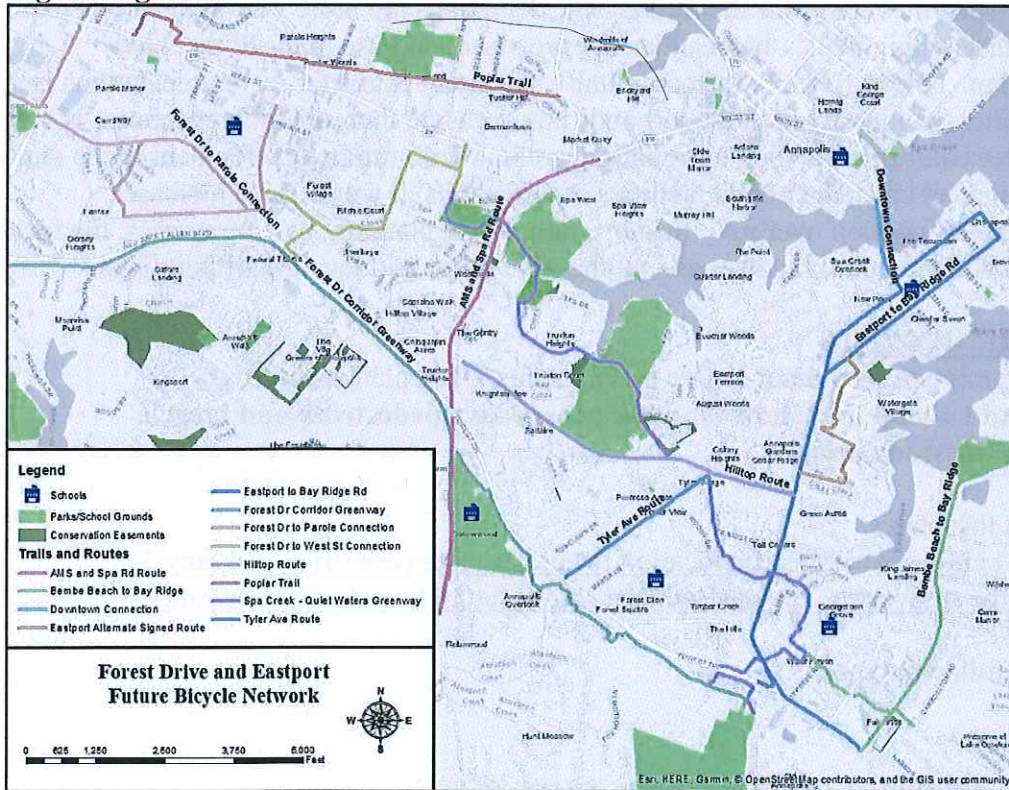


Figure Eighteen



Renumber subsequent figures and update Table of Contents.

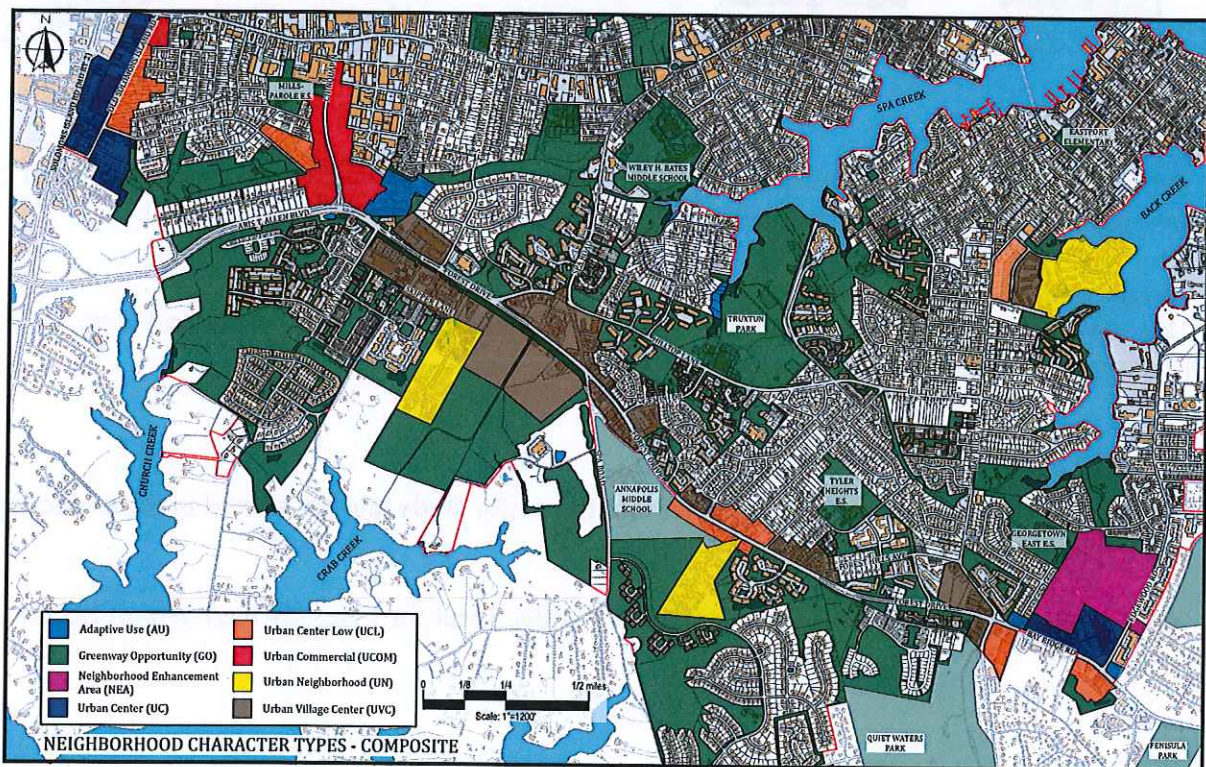
Amendment 2: Add language to include the recommendation that City Council create an escrow fund for roadway improvements.

On pp. 43, 70, E-4, E-4, and E-12 (same language), modify 3.3.1 as follows:

3.3.1 Revise the current City traffic study procedures and traffic adequate public facilities requirements to include assessment of multi-modal trips and non-vehicular mitigation, as well as other items described in Appendix D. City Council should create an escrow fund and other mechanisms for private developers to financially support mitigation throughout the study area. Coordinate with the County on procedures for County roads.

Amendment 3: Change proposed community character designation in Eastport from Urban Center to Urban Center Low.

On pp. 52 and 56, change maps of the community character designation in Eastport from currently proposed Urban Center (purple) to Urban Center Low (orange).





Change text on p. 58 to:

This plan recommends the Urban Center (UC) character type in parts of the Bay Ridge Road area, ~~Eastport~~, and Old Solomon's Island Road (see below for more detailed maps).

Change text on p. 62 to:

This plan recommends UCL in the Bay Ridge Road area, Chinquapin Round Road area, Tyler Road, ~~Eastport~~, and Old Solomon's Island Road.

Amendment 4:

Identify the highest priority budget items from the sector study and get started in the budgeting and implementation processes.

After Appendix E, insert Appendix F: Capital Budget Sheet for Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study.

APPENDIX F: CAPITAL BUDGET FORM

Project Title Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study Projects		Project Number	Initiating Department Planning and Zoning	
Asset Category City Facilities	Asset Number		Priority Score	
Project Description This project consists of four categories of work recommended in the Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study.				
1. Bike and Pedestrian Improvement Projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Trail link from Bay Ridge Road to Hilltop Lane b. Fix existing gaps and provide markings and signage c. Add bike lanes or sharrows in Eastport. d. Work with the County to incorporate a continuous East/West bike route along the corridor including a link from Eastport to Quiet Waters Park 				
2. Signals. Smart city traffic signal conversions throughout the sector.				
3. Road Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Traffic-calming Measures. Develop and install traffic calming measures on local through streets such as Tyler Street, Silopanna Road, and Georgetown Road. b. City street reconnection and extension project planning, including Louis Street reconnection. c. Gemini Road Extension. Develop a final alignment, engineering plans, and acquisition plans as needed for the extension of Gemini Road to Spa Road. Coordinate with property owners and the County. 				
4. Selected Street Edge Pocket Parks. Possible locations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Hilltop Lane and Forest Drive b. Forest Drive and Spa Road c. Forest Drive and Annapolis Neck Road 				
Regulatory or Legal Mandates			Operational Necessity	
Prior Funding			Non-City sources of funding	
FY20 Budget commitment allows project stage:			Project Years	Total Project Budget

Amendment 5: Staff should incorporate State and County comments as appropriate.

From Maryland Department of Planning

A. Clarify Figures Two and Three on p. 4.

Insert text on p. 3: The Comprehensive Plan anticipates that the City will add population and jobs in the future, but that growth will occur largely within its current boundaries; change will occur largely through renovations and redevelopment of currently built sites as has occurred recently in Inner West Street. The Plan focuses on four key opportunity areas for economic change in order to help implement the vision. It defines the desired type, character, and intensity of added development in these opportunity areas based on three desired types of new development: Urban Center Low, Urban Commercial, and Urban Center. Two of these four opportunity areas are located in the Forest Drive corridor. These are the “Bay Ridge” and the “Forest Drive” Opportunity Areas, and are shown on the following page.

Figure Two shows the Forest Drive Opportunity area as proposed in the 2009 plan, which includes an area in front designated Urban Center Low, and an area in the back of the property designated as clustered residential. Figure Three shows the Bay Ridge Opportunity area, which includes an area designated as Urban Center low and a green space buffer. The community character of these areas has been expanded and modified to be more suitable to current conditions.

B. On page 43, re: 3.3.4, include improvements on Forest Drive

Insert text on p. 43 and E-4 (same language):

3.3.4 Work with the County and the State to further improve the Fairfax Road/Forest Drive/Chinquapin Round Road/Bywater Road segment.

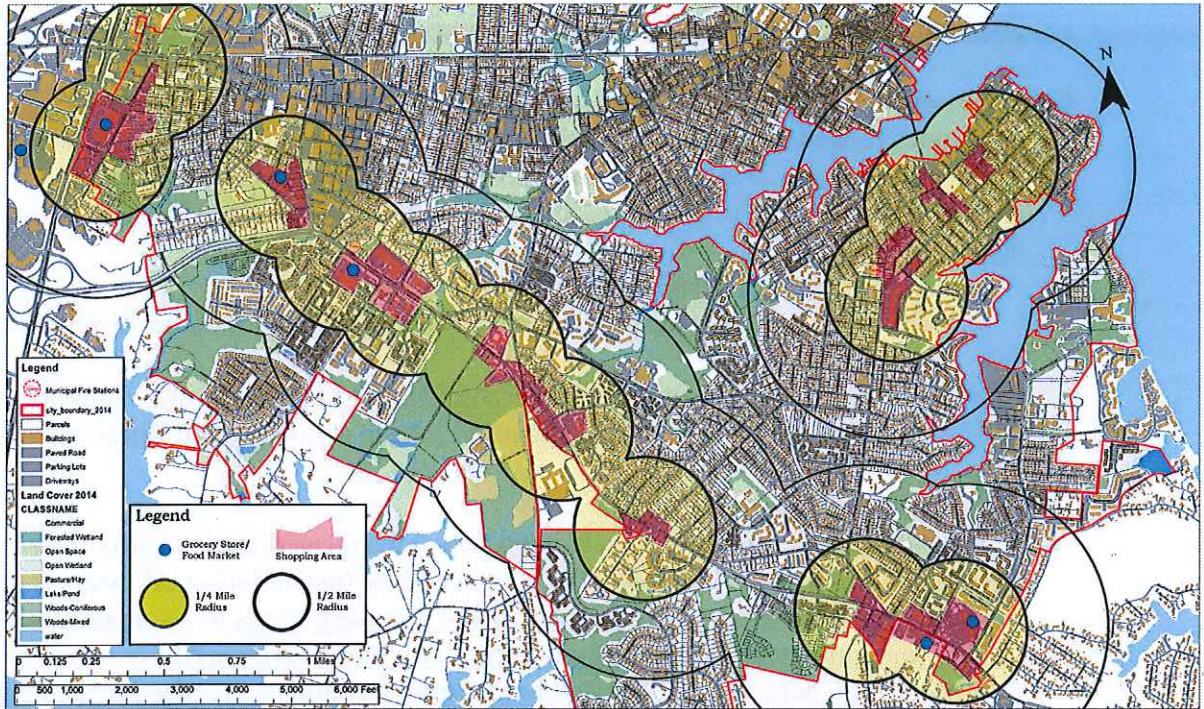
C. On page 44, re: 3.3.15, Planning suggests adding “connections to other major job/employment centers” as part of the purpose for enhancing regional existing routes and developing future routes.

Insert text on p. 44 and E-6 (same language):

3.3.15 Work with the State and County to establish a commuter transit bus line that can tie to existing and future regional routes and provide connections to other major job/employment centers. Plan for stops at the two opportunity sites and a supporting park and ride lot and/or kiss and ride at the eastern end of the corridor.

D. Improve the legibility of the map legend on page 16.

On p. 16, remove existing graphic and replace with the following:



E. Figure 10 is titled “Medium Household Income”. Should this be “Median Household Income”?

On p. 22, in the Legend and Title Block text, insert “Median” and delete “Medium.” In the text, strike “medium” and insert “median”:

The sector also includes a wide diversity in household incomes. Using the Traffic Analysis Zone (TAZ) boundaries to define areas, the U.S. Census shows medium median household incomes in this area to be as depicted in the map below.

F. Demographic information presented as figures and/or text should be cited throughout the document. For example, Figure 11 does not include a source (e.g. decennial Census, American Community Survey, etc.), date, or level of geography (e.g. census tract) associated with the poverty statistics.

Insert text on p. 21 after graphic:

Map shows the census block groups that have minority populations above or below the area average of 27.1%. 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS)

Insert text on p. 22 after graphic:

2018 Round 9 Cooperative Forecast, Baltimore Metropolitan Council

Insert text on p. 23 after graphic:

Map shows which census block groups have a poverty rate above or below the study area average of 7.2%. 2011-2015 American Community Survey (ACS)

Insert text on p. 24 after graphic:

2018 Round 9 Cooperative Forecast, Baltimore Metropolitan Council

- G. The Housing Chapter of the 2009 Annapolis Comprehensive Plan raises multiple challenges related to housing affordability for Annapolis residents of various income levels. Consider summarizing how the sector plan addresses these affordability issues. The following information in the sector plan may relate to housing affordability:
- Public housing redevelopment
 - Recommendations for granny flats or other types of accessory dwelling units
 - Information about employment sectors among workers living in public housing, and any potential increase in jobs in one or more of these sectors

On p. 27, insert text:

Reliable affordable access to jobs is important. Jobs located in close proximity to homes are ideal so that a private vehicle or access to transit during off hours is not needed. This issue has two components—one that there needs to be an assortment of jobs, and, one two, that there needs to be a range of housing options. The community character types discussed in the fourth section of the plan are designed to contain a mixture of both employment and housing opportunities.

From Maryland Department of Transportation

General Comments

- H. MDOT recommends that the plan should reference, when appropriate, the alignment of the Plan's goals with the draft 2040 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP). MOOT commends the City's efforts to achieve a more walkable and bike-able and less auto dependent community.

Insert text on p. 6:

Since 2009, both the City and County have prepared several plans and studies and have adopted several new regulations that are relevant to this effort. These documents provide useful background and help to articulate the sector's current constraints and opportunities. They include the following:

- 2017 Upper West Street Sector Study (Draft)
 - 2016 Annapolis Economic Development Strategic Action Plan
 - 2016 Final Report for 2013 Plan Update Anne Arundel County Major Intersections/Improvement Facilities (MIIF) Study
 - 2018 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan 2040 (Draft)
- I. Commuter Choice Maryland could be incorporated into the Plan as a strategy to support the Town's desire to reduce traffic congestion. More information can be found at <http://www.mdot.maryland.gov/newMDOT/Commuter/Commuting>.

Insert text on p. C-28:

- Enhanced carpooling with new technologies and on-demand services and major employer coordination. This includes services such as “Guaranteed

Ride Home” offered by the Maryland Department of Transportation’s
Commuter Choice Program.

- Enhanced local transit service

- J. When referring to matters related to State-owned streets, roads and highways, the phrase "Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA)" should be incorporated into the plan.

Strike “State” and insert "Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA)" on p. 29:

The Forest Drive and Bay Ridge Road corridor is owned and managed by Anne Arundel County. The ~~State~~ Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) owns and manages Aris T. Allen Boulevard (MD 665)

Strike “State” and insert “MDOT SHA” on p. 30:

The City owns three signals within the Sector Study area, all within Eastport. These are older, pre-timed signals that lack the smart technology needed to manage traffic responsively within a grouped signal network. The City-owned signals do not communicate with the County or ~~State~~ MDOT SHA signal systems.

Strike “State” and insert “MDOT SHA” on p. 30:

A third factor is that key improvements proposed in the 2009 Plan have not been yet been built. The Plan called for improvements to County and ~~State~~ MDOT SHA roadways at the western end of the corridor well as for improvements to several City streets.

**From Maryland Department of Transportation—State Highway Administration
Chapter 2**

- K. On Page 29, it is stated that the State owns and manages up to Chinquapin Round Road intersection. As stated previously, MD 665 technically extends to Bywater Road, another ~700 feet East.

Strike “Chinquapin Round” and insert “Bywater” on p. 29:

The Forest Drive and Bay Ridge Road corridor is owned and managed by Anne Arundel County. The State owns and manages Aris T. Allen Boulevard (MD 665), up to the ~~Chinquapin Round~~ Bywater Road intersection. The County classifies their portion of the Forest Drive corridor from Bywater Road to Hilltop Lane as a Primary Arterial and classifies the remaining section eastward as a Minor Arterial.

Chapter 3

- L. Under section 3.3, there is an emphasis in working with the County. Because MD 665 is within the Study area, please include the State as another partner to work with.

Insert text on pp. 43, 70, and E-4 (same language):

Goal: Formalize inter-jurisdictional cooperation with the County and the State with the mission of having shared design guidelines, complete streets development, public transit improvements, and investments in new technology that helps improve road capacity.

From Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning

- M. Please add the Anne Arundel County 2009 General Development Plan to the list of plans in Section 1.4 (pages 6-7).

Insert text on p. 7:

- 2016 Eastport Transportation Study, Existing Conditions Report and Eastport Transportation Study, Short-term and Long-term Recommendations Report
- 2015 Forest Drive Corridor Study
- 2014 Annapolis Comprehensive Plan Five Year Update
- 2011 Annapolis Bicycle Master Plan
- 2009 Fiscal Impact Analysis of Four Opportunity Sites
- 2009 Annapolis Comprehensive Plan
- 2009 Anne Arundel County General Development Plan

- N. On page 31, second paragraph, strike "which will inform the upcoming General Development Plan"

Strike text on p. 31:

While the State and County have made improvements in the Corridor since 2009 and plan other safety improvements, the current plans and capital improvement budgets for both the State and County do not identify this sector as a priority area for future road capacity improvements. The County's Draft Transportation Functional Master Plan, ~~which will inform the upcoming County General Development Plan~~ is example of this issue. It outlines a constrained approach to road Improvements County wide and focuses on improving transit and converting existing streets to complete street standards. It does not identify Rt. 665 or Forest Drive as one of the County's key priority areas.

From Anne Arundel County Traffic Engineering Division

- O. What is the definition of "smart city traffic signal"? I could not find a definition in the report. Currently, Forest Drives has an adaptive control software (ACS-Lite). Does the report refers to this type of technology? Or does the document refers to a more infrastructure to vehicle communication technology? The report should define what is the meaning of the "smart city traffic signal."

Insert text on pp. 71, E-6, E-7, and E-13 (same language):


b. Signals. Smart city traffic signal conversions throughout the sector. Smart signals include adaptive traffic signal control systems as well as vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communication.

RECOMMENDATION

This Study lays the groundworks for the next Comprehensive Plan for the City of Annapolis, as well as for future comprehensive rezoning. Such a plan will require the coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders. This sector study calls for a phased implementation. The first phase calls primarily for legislative and zoning changes. The second phase calls for project planning for specific projects focusing on bicycle and pedestrian improvements as well as roadway projects. The third phase calls for construction and implementation of those specific projects in the Capital Improvement Program, beginning with the Fiscal Year 2020 CIP.

On November 1, 2018, the Planning Commission held a public hearing on R-45-18 and subsequently moved to recommend that the City Council adopt the plan as amended as an amendment to the 2009 Comprehensive Plan. The recommendation was approved with a vote of 5 to 0.

Adopted this 19th day of December, 2018


Robert Waldman, Chair

