

**SUBJECT:** Preliminary Greenbelt Metro Area and MD 193 Corridor Sector Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment (referred to as the “GMA Sector Plan” or “plan” in this report)

**BACKGROUND:** The County completed *The Greenbelt Metro Area Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* in October 2001. Other areas included in the GMA Sector Plan were last studied in the 1989 *Approved Master Plan for Langley Park-College Park-Greenbelt and Vicinity* and the 1990 *Adopted Sectional Map Amendment for Planning Areas 65, 66, and 67*. The County has stated that the purpose of the GMA Sector Plan is to:

...build upon the foundation provided by the *2001 Approved Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment for the Greenbelt Metro Area*, the 2002 General Plan, and the countywide functional master plans to develop a refined vision and realistic approach to implementing the community vision for the future of the Greenbelt Metro Station, Greenbelt Road/MD 193 Corridor, and existing residential communities of Greenbelt, Berwyn Heights, and College Park.

The County’s planning process for the GMA Sector Plan began with data collection and analysis in late 2010. The first community meeting was held on March 2, 2011, and a total of eight (8) public workshops were held over a 10-month period. Outreach also included community interviews, a business open house and survey, agency engagement, and information dissemination and education.

**ANALYSIS:** The Board would like to stress the disconnect between the plan’s purpose and vision and its recommendations, specifically those addressing transit and roadways. The Board believes the purpose and vision—as well as the public workshops—emphasized walkability, connectedness, transit improvements, pedestrian and bicyclist safety and facilities, mixed-use and green development, economic development, and traffic calming throughout the sector plan area, and the word clouds on page 27 of the plan are illustrative of these concepts. The Board believes that implementation of the proposed road

widenings and alterations (page 134, Table 30 and Strategy 3.2<sup>1</sup>) would contradict both residents' wishes and the goals stated in the GMA Sector Plan itself.

In particular, the Board would like to highlight the lack of road diet recommendations in the plan, as well as their opposition to the addition of a diverging diamond interchange on the MD 193 bridge over Kenilworth Avenue:

- **Road Diet:** The Transportation Appendix on page A-8 states that a road diet on Greenbelt Road/MD 193, "while initially considered as an alternative to enhance pedestrian and bicycle accessibility and safety," is infeasible because removing a lane in each direction between Hanover Parkway and Cherrywood Lane "would deteriorate the AM and PM peak hour LOS at its intersections." While the Board understands the traffic projections under the proposed development in the plan, the Board reads this justification as an admission that the County's desire to prioritize through-traffic is more important than the community's desire for walkability, safety, and connectedness. The Board is concerned that the plan's focus on widening roads will undermine the ability of the County to improve safety, walkability, and transit-oriented or mixed-use development in the plan area. Instead of widening roads in the City, the Board suggests the County consider including in the plan shorter light cycles times to achieve steadier, slower maximum speeds. Additionally, the Board suggests including complete street redesigns in the plan, allowing for safe use for all users.
- **Diverging Diamond Interchange:** The Board believes the addition of a diverging diamond interchange on the Greenbelt Road/MD193 bridge over Kenilworth Avenue represents an attempt to facilitate through-traffic that is in direct contradiction to the plan's vision and goals for increased connectivity and accessibility. While the current design is unsafe and virtually impossible to navigate by foot or bicycle, the Board does not believe the proposed diverging diamond would be an improvement for all users.

Concerning pedestrian and bicyclist improvements, the Board supports the plan's recommendations, while at the same time noting there is little included in the plan that is actionable in terms of transit innovation.

With regard to specific land uses and zoning in the Sectional Map Amendment, the Board supports the rezoning of Beltway Plaza to Mixed-Use-Infill (MUI), and opposes the exemption of portions of Beltway Plaza from the Development District Standards/DDOZ. While the Board supports the future re-zoning of

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<sup>1</sup> This includes widening Kenilworth Avenue to six (6) lanes throughout the sector plan area; widening Greenbelt Road/MD 193 to eight (8) lanes between the Capital Beltway and Hanover Parkway and between Walker Drive and 62<sup>nd</sup> Avenue; and reconfiguring the MD 193 bridge over Kenilworth Avenue as a diverging diamond interchange.

Maryland Trade Center and Greenway Shopping Center, members agree that both areas should be included in Development District Standards/DDOZ in order to guide their redevelopment/revitalization consistent with rules, standards, and guidelines. Without enforceable design standards, the zoning itself does not encourage thoughtful development in accordance with the City's vision and goals.

The Board is concerned that the plan's emphasis on road building will not only decrease safety, walkability, and bikeability in Greenbelt, but by focusing on roadway throughput from the Developing and Rural Tiers, it will also undermine the demand for retail, office, and housing space in the GMA Sector Plan area.

**RECOMMENDATION:** The board recommends that Council oppose the Preliminary Greenbelt Metro Area and MD Corridor Sector Plan and Proposed Sectional Map Amendment as it is written.

Respectfully submitted,

George Branyan  
Chair

This report was adopted by a vote of 4-0.