

# **MONTGOMERY VILLAGE FOUNDATION, INC. TRANSPORTATION POLICY**

## **BACKGROUND**

Montgomery Village is one of the oldest and largest planned communities in Maryland. Located in the heart of Montgomery County, the Village is reached from the Montgomery Village Avenue (Route 124) interchange with Interstate 270, Route 355, or by way of Midcounty Highway from the Shady Grove Metro Station.

The developers of Montgomery Village were innovators in the planned community form of suburban living. Working with a flexible form of zoning, they built a network of private streets to meet the transportation needs of the new community. During the design and construction of the roadway system, care was taken to preserve and protect the natural environment.

Many changes have occurred in the Village since its inception in 1966. The Village is now home to about 40,000 residents. Rapid, extensive development around the Village has resulted in traffic congestion and overcrowding. Many of the developer-constructed streets are county arterial roads.

In 1988, the Montgomery Village Foundation adopted a transportation policy to clarify its position on a number of roadway projects in and around the Village. This policy is updated on a regular basis to reflect the MVF Board position, after actively seeking input from the homes corporations and condominium associations.

The Montgomery Village Foundation Transportation Policy defines the official position of the Montgomery Village Foundation. The policy addresses the following:

- Montgomery Village Avenue and other major roads within Montgomery Village
- Speed Limits on County Roads in Montgomery Village
- Roadway Improvements In and Around the Village
- Alternative Transportation Systems
- Pedestrian and bicycle safety infrastructure

In 1994, the Montgomery Village Foundation and the county's Department of Transportation entered into a Memorandum of Understanding. It was designed to improve communication and safeguard opportunities for resident input on speed limit, transportation and roadway improvement issues of vital interest to the community.

The Foundation recognizes the importance of having an integrated transportation network to serve the needs of Village residents, including adequate roads, bus service, mass transit, sidewalks and bikeways. The transportation network must support residents' quality of life by offering easy access to employment centers locally and regionally, shopping, service and recreational areas and other public facilities.

The Foundation supports with few exceptions the improvements to roadways in the master plan alignments. However, the Foundation believes strongly that the County must take into account residents living in close proximity to the right-of-ways by protecting their properties when designing and constructing roadway improvements. The Foundation understands that it is important to design and construct roadways which are aesthetically pleasing with modern amenities, including adequately sized sidewalks and bikeways,

medians for safety and landscaping and turn lanes to facilitate pedestrian safety and adequate traffic flow. The Foundation supports traffic calming measures to slow traffic and protect pedestrians.

The Foundation cooperates with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation and other local governments and agencies including the City of Gaithersburg and State Highway Administration to ensure that local and regional plans meet Montgomery Village's current and future transportation needs.

The Foundation recognizes that the transportation needs of the region must be met by a complex network including roadways, mass transit and safe pedestrian routes. Improvements to this transportation network must have minimal damaging effects on the environment.

### **MONTGOMERY VILLAGE AVENUE**

Montgomery Village Avenue is considered the "Main Street" of the Village. This tree-lined avenue passes lakes, an 18-hole golf course and other recreation facilities, shopping areas, houses of worship, office buildings, senior housing and assisted living facilities and homes. Several years ago, both the county and state proposed widening the Avenue, which would have destroyed greenspace, trees, and the natural beauty of the community. Any proposed widening of the avenue would divide the Village and endanger pedestrians. The Montgomery Village Foundation has aggressively opposed and will continue to oppose any widening of Montgomery Village Avenue as well as any future diminution of the median.

### **SPEED LIMITS ON COUNTY ROADS IN MONTGOMERY VILLAGE**

Montgomery Village Foundation believes that drivers' habits should not dictate the speed limit; but rather that community well being and safety should be paramount and, on this basis, aggressively opposes raising the speed limit on County roads within the Village and asks for strict enforcement of existing speed limits.

### **ROADWAY IMPROVEMENTS IN AND AROUND THE VILLAGE**

The Montgomery Village Foundation has a vital interest in a number of roadway improvements in and around the Village. The Foundation supports county and state analysis and improvement of the Village roadway network – in particular, Goshen Road, East Village Avenue, Snouffer School Road, Watkins Mill Road, Route 355, Alternatives 1, 2 and 5 of the Midcounty Corridor Study, Wightman Road, MD 118 Extended (Germantown Road), Brink Road, and Blunt Road. The Foundation strongly opposes building Highway M-83. The Foundation supports the Safe Routes to Schools Program.

The Foundation's interest is to improve traffic conditions and safety for both motorists and pedestrians and to that end, MVF supports continuing the study of pedestrian and vehicular safety at Village intersections.

Specific projects of vital interest to the Foundation have been categorized below, based on information from transportation project managers and the CIP regarding when their design and construction are likely to move forward.

1. **Goshen Road:** The Foundation supports the widening of Goshen Road to a maximum of four lanes in no more than and, where possible, less than a 91-foot maximum variable right-of-way. We ask that the county give special attention to areas throughout the length of the road where the new road position and its close proximity to residential areas have a continuing negative impact on homeowners, including the consideration of waivers of the new road code, where necessary. In addition, we ask the County to establish a right-of-way of the proposed road at 79 feet, as shown in Section A-A, Typical Roadway Section in Vicinity of Goshen Elm, (attachment 1), and in sections of the road where the right-of-way abuts the back yards of private residences.  
The Foundation requests that DOT work with individuals who are significantly impacted to address the need for retaining walls or other enhancements to minimize impacts to their properties (attachment 1).
2. **East Village Avenue:** The Foundation supports projects to improve traffic and pedestrian safety conditions, including regular analysis of East Village Avenue to examine ways that a traffic mitigation plan would calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety.
3. **Snouffer School Road:** The Foundation strongly supports improvement of Snouffer School Road to the original 80-foot right-of-way Master Plan specifications the full distance between MD Rt 124 (Woodfield Road) and Goshen Road. The Foundation does not recommend attaching the widening of the segment between Centerway Road and Goshen Road to any future development of the Webb Tract.
4. **Watkins Mill Road and Interchange:** The Foundation supports projects to improve traffic and pedestrian safety conditions, including: a continuing analysis of Watkins Mill Road to examine ways that a traffic mitigation plan would calm traffic and improve pedestrian safety along the residential portion of Watkins Mill Road between Apple Ridge Road and Watkins Mill Elementary School. The Foundation supports the strict enforcement of the speed limit, especially adjacent to the 4 schools on Watkins Mill Road. The Foundation opposes widening Watkins Mill Road between the bridge south of Watkins Mill Elementary School and the traffic circle where the road becomes MD 118.
5. **M-83 and Midcounty Corridor Study:** The Foundation opposes the construction of M-83 and recommends its removal from the Master Plan for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, the following: serious negative environmental impact on the adjacent homes and Watkins Mill Elementary School, impact to streams, wetlands, and forests; destruction of parkland and recreational facilities; escalating costs; and the county's projected certain failure of the intersection of M-83 and Montgomery Village Avenue.

**Midcounty Corridor Study:** The Foundation supports alternatives 1 (No-Build), 2 (intersection improvements on MD 355 and pedestrian safety improvements on Midcounty Highway and Montgomery Village Avenue), and 5 (intersection improvements and addition of auxiliary lanes between select intersections on MD 355) to be retained for detailed study. The Foundation also asks that the Midcounty Corridor Study Team be directed to expand the study area to include the vicinity west of I-270 and develop additional options/alternatives in the broadened area that include Great Seneca Highway.

6. **MD 118 Extended (Germantown Rd)**: Because the Foundation opposes M-83, the Foundation also opposes the construction of MD 118 Extended (M-61), a six lane, 150 foot right-of-way major highway to connect MD 118 Extended to Watkins Mill Road at M-83. However, the Foundation would support the widening of MD 118 Extended up to a maximum of four (4) lanes plus turn lanes between the traffic circle where Watkins Mill Road becomes MD Rt. 118 and MD Rt. 355.
7. **Route 355**: The Foundation supports intersection improvements that will relieve traffic congestion at Route 355 and Montgomery Village Avenue.
8. **Wightman Road**: The Foundation supports improvement of Wightman Road to a maximum of four (4) lanes in no more than the 80-foot right-of-way Master Plan specifications within the existing and established residential context of the corridor. We ask that the county give special attention to areas where the new road's position and its close proximity to residential areas have a continuing negative impact on homeowners throughout its entire length, including waivers of selected road codes where necessary.  
The Foundation requests that DOT work with individuals who are significantly impacted to address the need for retaining walls or other enhancements to minimize impacts to their properties.
9. **Brink and Blunt Roads**: The Foundation supports improvement of Brink and Blunt roads to a maximum of four (4) lanes in no more than the 80-foot right-of-way Master Plan specifications within the existing and established residential context of the corridor. We ask that the County pay special attention to areas where the new road's position and its close proximity to residential areas have a continuing negative impact on homeowners throughout its entire length, including waivers of selected road codes where necessary and that retaining walls be installed, where necessary, to mitigate impacts to residential communities.

## **ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS**

The Foundation supports alternative transportation systems that reduce reliance on the automobile. Included are:

1. **Mass Transit**: The Foundation supports moving forward now on the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT), preferably with the light rail option. However, the Foundation also looks forward to seeing the county's studies on Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and how BRT can quickly address mass transit needs to reduce roadway congestion and enhance economic development opportunities in and around the Village.  
The Foundation also supports adding enhancements to bus stops, as appropriate, including pedestrian crosswalks, adding shelters and sufficient lighting at the highest use stops; properly trimming landscaping at all Ride-On stops; adding trash cans at all stops; and adding benches at all stops.
2. **Sidewalks/Crosswalks**: The Foundation supports the addition and improvement of pedestrian crosswalks in the Village for safe crossing of the streets. The Foundation also supports adequate maintenance of:
  - County sidewalks;
  - Hiker/biker paths

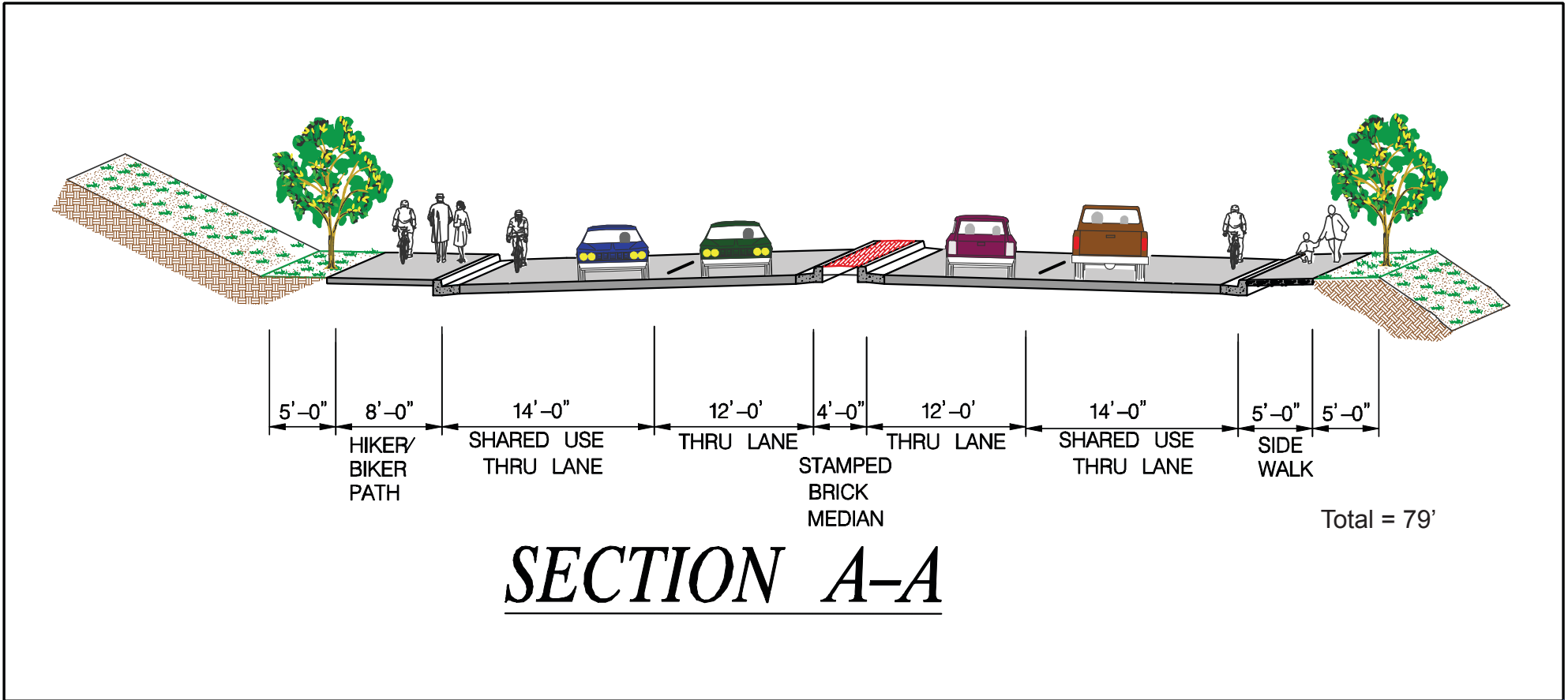
3. **Bikeways:** Bikeways should be maintained and their use encouraged. Bikeways should be constructed along new road projects and along major roadway improvement projects where feasible.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

The Montgomery Village Foundation encourages the county and state to view the upcounty transportation proposals as a unified but complex network which requires careful study, thoughtful design, resident involvement, and prompt action to meet the needs of the growing region. The Foundation has and will continue to meet with local officials to promote this adopted policy.

*Attachment (1) DOT Section A-A -79 foot right-of-way exhibit at Goshen Elm*

Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – May 26, 1988  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – December 5, 1991  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – October 27, 1994  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – April 27, 1995  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – April 27, 2000  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – October 25, 2001  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors - January 22, 2004  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – January 25, 2007  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – October 22, 2009  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – August 26, 2010  
Revised and Adopted by MVF Board of Directors – April 28, 2011



## Attachment 1

Proposed cross-section in vicinity of Goshen Elm