

# Bethesda Downtown Plan

community  
identity

equity

habitat +  
health

access +  
mobility

water

energy



Approved and Adopted May 2017

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION



# Transportation Recommendations

by reducing reliance on single-occupancy vehicles during the most congested periods. TDM strategies will become increasingly important through the horizon year of this Plan and will both manage traffic congestion and reinforce the Sector Plan area as a transit-oriented area. All optional method projects should participate in the Bethesda Transportation Management Organization.

This Plan recommends continuing the 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan's recommendation of maintaining a constrained long-term parking supply strategy, which has been in effect since the 1994 Bethesda CBD Sector Plan. A constrained parking strategy helps to mitigate traffic congestion by encouraging other modes of transportation and discouraging single-occupancy vehicle trips. All optional method projects should participate in the constrained parking policy.

In addition, this Plan recommends that public-private partnerships and co-location of public facilities be considered as part of future parking facility development. These strategies have been implemented with success in recent years within the Bethesda, Silver Spring and Wheaton Parking Lot Districts.

### 2.3.1 Goals

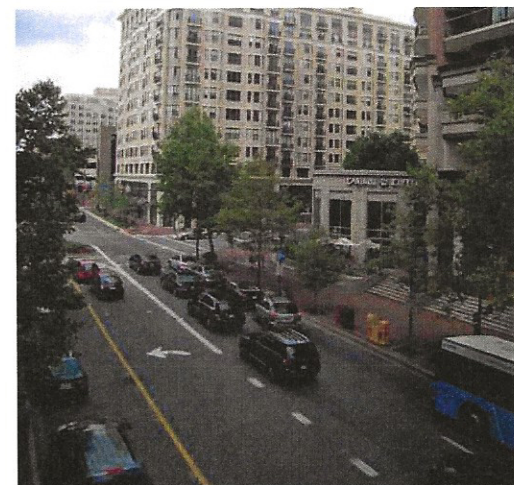
- Enhance roadway accommodation of all users.
- Increase the use of non-auto driver travel.
- Implement new transit alternatives.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
- Expand the constrained parking policy.



*Crosswalk at Bethesda Avenue and Woodmont Avenue*

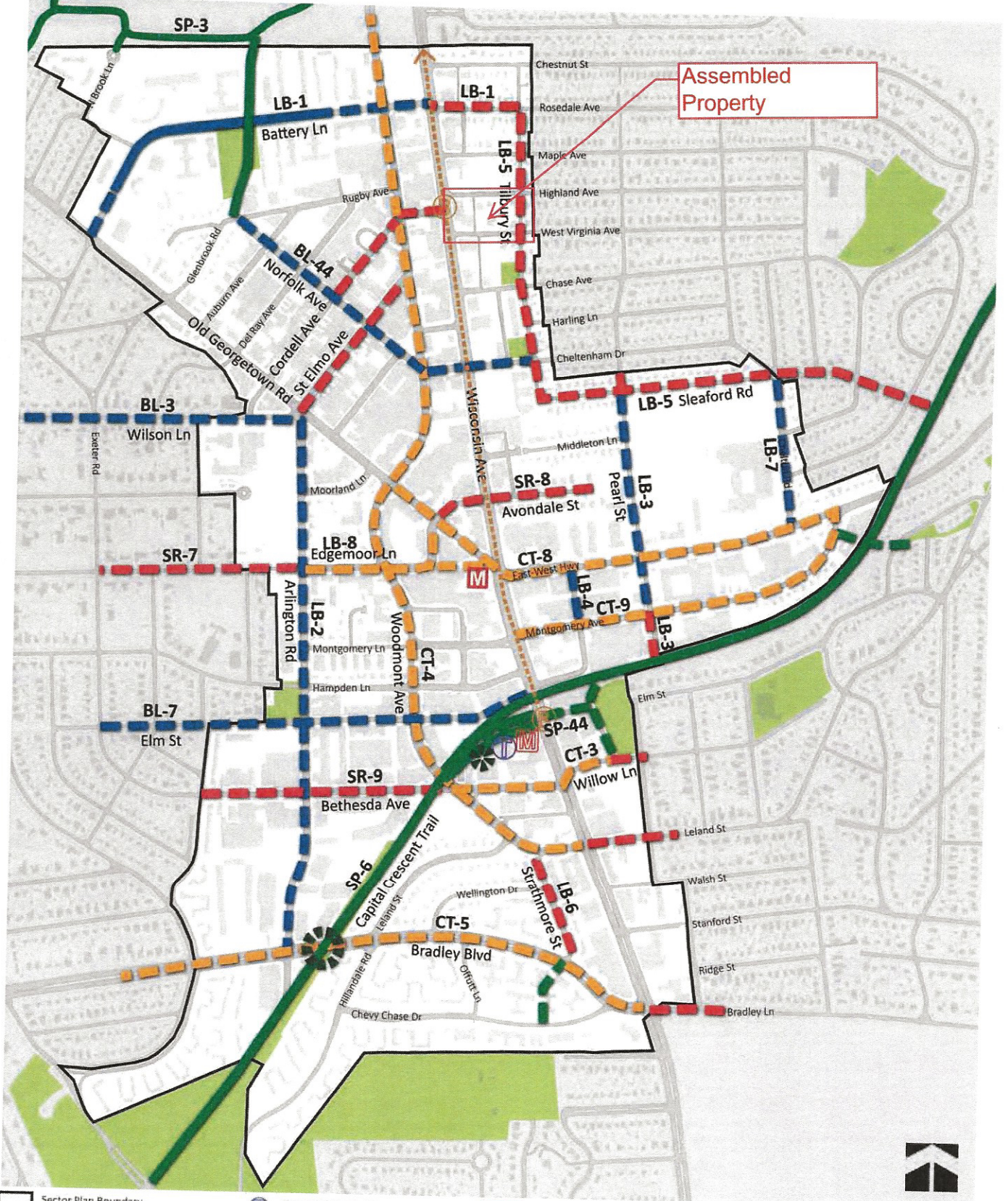


*Capital Crescent Trail*



*View of Old Georgetown Road*

Figure 2.10: Bikeway Classification



Assembled Property

- |                                 |                                  |                                 |                                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sector Plan Boundary            | Proposed Purple Line             | Proposed Tunnel                 | Recommended Separated Bike Lane (CT) |
| M-NCPPC Park                    | Proposed BRT                     | Recommended Shared Roadway (SR) | Recommended Bike Parking Station     |
| Metro Station                   | Existing Shared Use Path (SP)    | Existing Bike Lane (BL)         | New Ramp Connection                  |
| Proposed Metro Station Entrance | Recommended Shared Use Path (SP) | Recommended Bike Lane (BL)      |                                      |

**Table 2.02: Bicycle Network Recommendations**

Designation	Roadway/ Route	Limits	Status
<b>Separated Bike Lane</b>			
CT-4	Woodmont Avenue <sup>1</sup>	N. Sector Plan Boundary to Wisconsin Avenue	New Recommendation
CT-5	Bradley Boulevard	W. Sector Plan Boundary to E. Sector Plan Boundary	New Recommendation
CT-3	Capital Crescent Trail (Surface Route: Bethesda Ave/ Willow Ln)	47th Street to Woodmont Avenue	Recommended
CT-8	Old Georgetown Road	Woodmont Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue	New Recommendation
	East West Highway	Wisconsin Avenue to Montgomery Avenue	
CT-9	Montgomery Avenue	Wisconsin Avenue to East-West Highway	New Recommendation
LB-2 <sup>3</sup>	Arlington Road	Old Georgetown Road to Bradley Boulevard	New Recommendation
<b>Bike Lane</b>			
BL-3	Wilson Lane (MD 188)	Aberdeen Road to Old Georgetown Road	Recommended
BL-7	Elm Street	Exeter Road to Wisconsin Avenue	Recommended
LB-1	Battery Lane	Old Georgetown Road to Wisconsin Avenue	Recommended
BL-44	Norfolk Avenue/Cheltanham Drive	Battery Lane Urban Park to Tilbury Street	New Recommendation
LB-3	Pearl Street	Sleaford Road to Montgomery Avenue	New Recommendation
LB-4	Waverly Street	East-West Highway to Montgomery Avenue	New Recommendation
LB-7	Chelton Road	Sleaford Road to East-West Highway	New Recommendation
LB-8	Edgemoor Lane	Arlington Road to Metro Station	New Recommendation
<b>Shared Roadway<sup>2</sup></b>			
SR-7	Edgemoor Lane	Exeter Road to Arlington Road	New Recommendation
SR-8	Commerce Ln/ Avondale St	Edgemoor Lane to Avondale Street	New Recommendation
SR-9	Bethesda Avenue	Clarendon Road to Woodmont Avenue	Recommended
LB-1	Rosedale Avenue	Wisconsin Avenue to Tilbury Street	New Recommendation
LB-5	Tilbury Street/ Sleaford Road	Rosedale Avenue to CCT	New Recommendation
LB-6	Strathmore Street	Woodmont Avenue to Bradley Boulevard	Recommended
LB-3	Pearl Street <sup>4</sup>	Montgomery Avenue to S. Sector Plan Boundary	New Recommendation
<b>Shared Use Path</b>			
SP-3	North Bethesda Trail	N. Sector Plan Boundary to Rugby Avenue	Existing
SP-6	Capital Crescent Trail	S. Sector Plan Boundary to E. Sector Plan Boundary	Existing
SP-44	Capital Crescent Trail (Surface Route)	Elm Street to Willow Lane via 47th Street	Recommended
SP-62	Wisconsin-Woodmont Trail	N. Sector Plan Boundary to Battery Lane	Existing
LB-6	Strathmore Street Extended	South of Bradley Boulevard to Chevy Chase Drive	New Proposal

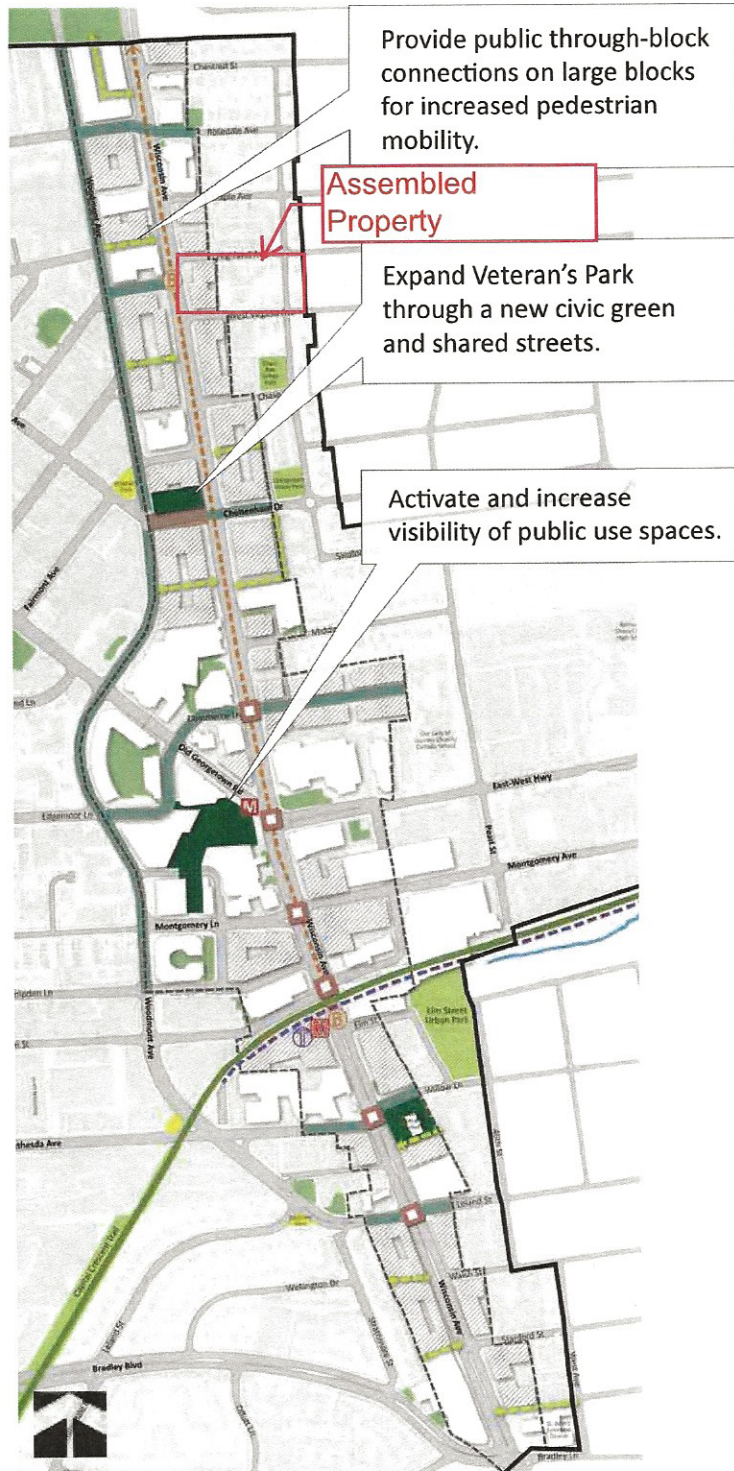
<sup>1</sup> Woodmont Avenue may be improved with either bike lanes or separated bike lanes, depending on the future one-way/two-way operation of the street. If the street remains one-way southbound in its ultimate condition, two-way separated bike lanes are necessary to facilitate safe, adequate and efficient bicycle circulation. Design and operation to be determined by MCDOT at the time of facility planning.

<sup>2</sup> All roads in the Sector Plan area should be designed for shared use by motor vehicles and bicycles and are designated as shared roadways unless another higher quality bicycle facility is provided (e.g. bike lanes). These shared roadways are called out for wayfinding purposes. This sector plan recommends amending the practice of implementing shared roadways on wide travel lanes; Bicycles should operate on-road as vehicles where the prevailing roadway operation is characterized by low vehicular speed and volume.

<sup>3</sup> The "LB" designation is a "Local Bikeway" that is not included in the Countywide Bikeway Master Plan due to its limited importance to the County as a whole. LB bikeways can be implemented as any facility designation.

<sup>4</sup> The LB-3 Bikeway, South of Montgomery Avenue, may be implemented as a shared use path if the County Council abandons that section of Pearl Street.

**Figure 3.02: Wisconsin Avenue Corridor District Public Realm Improvements**



Provide public through-block connections on large blocks for increased pedestrian mobility.

**Assembled Property**

Expand Veteran's Park through a new civic green and shared streets.

Activate and increase visibility of public use spaces.



*Inviting through-block connection and public plaza*

Source: buildpublic.org

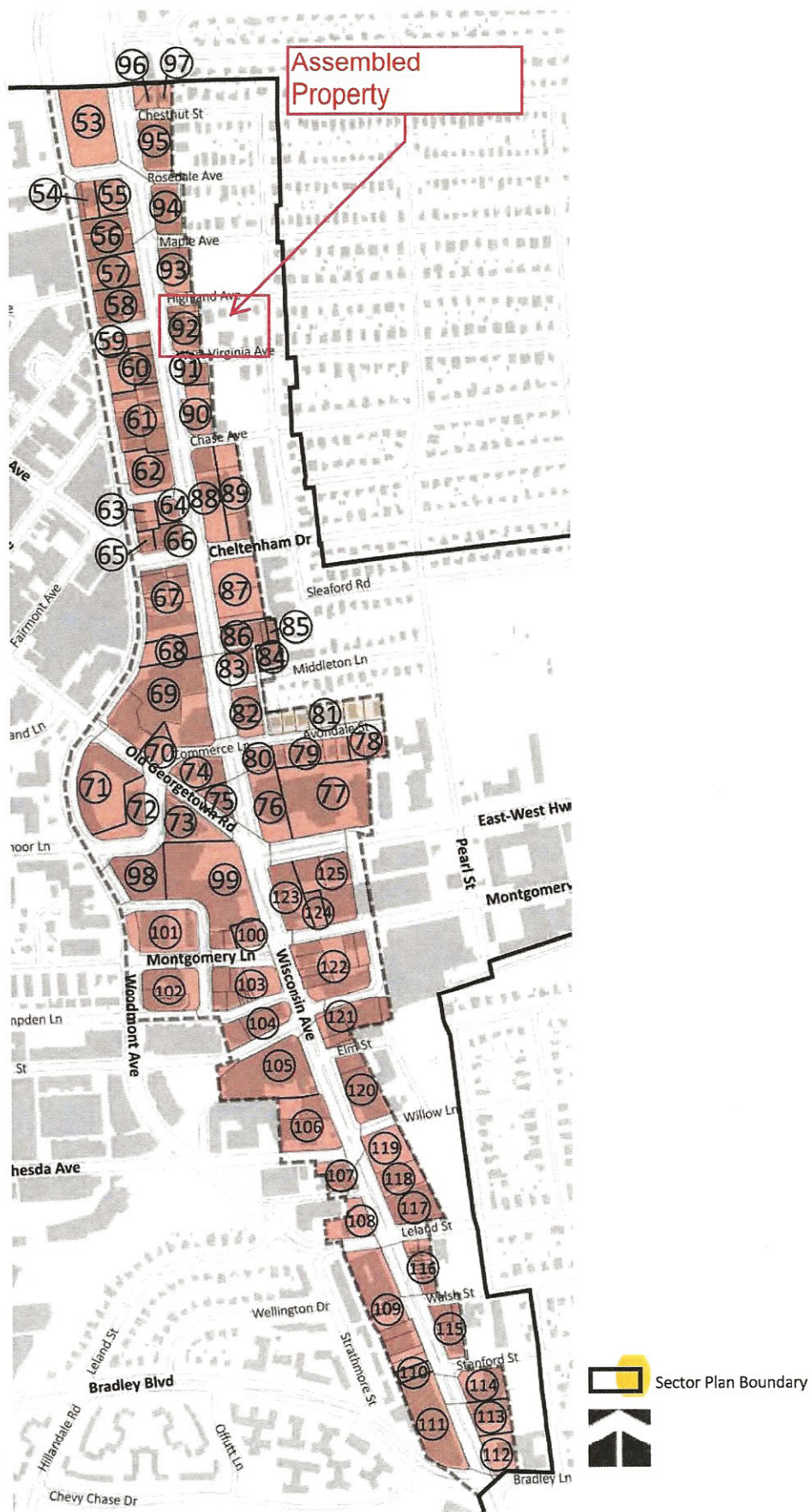


*Streetscape design with planting buffer and outdoor dining space*

- |                                  |                                 |  |   |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Sector Plan Boundary             | Trail                           | Recommended Bike Priority Street + Canopy Corridor | Recommended Gateway and Enhanced Intersection |
| District Boundary                | Metro Station                   | Recommended Public Connection                      | Recommended/Enhanced Open Space               |
| M-NCPPC Park                     | Proposed Metro Station Entrance | Recommended New Street                             | Potential Open Space (Location TBD)           |
| County DOT Owned Public Space    | Proposed Purple Line            | Recommended Shared Street                          | Illustrative Potential Development            |
| Privately Owned Public Use Space | Proposed BRT                    | Enhanced Intersection                              |   |

Property Specific Land Use and Zoning  
Recommendations

**Figure 3.01: Wisconsin Avenue District Recommended Zoning**

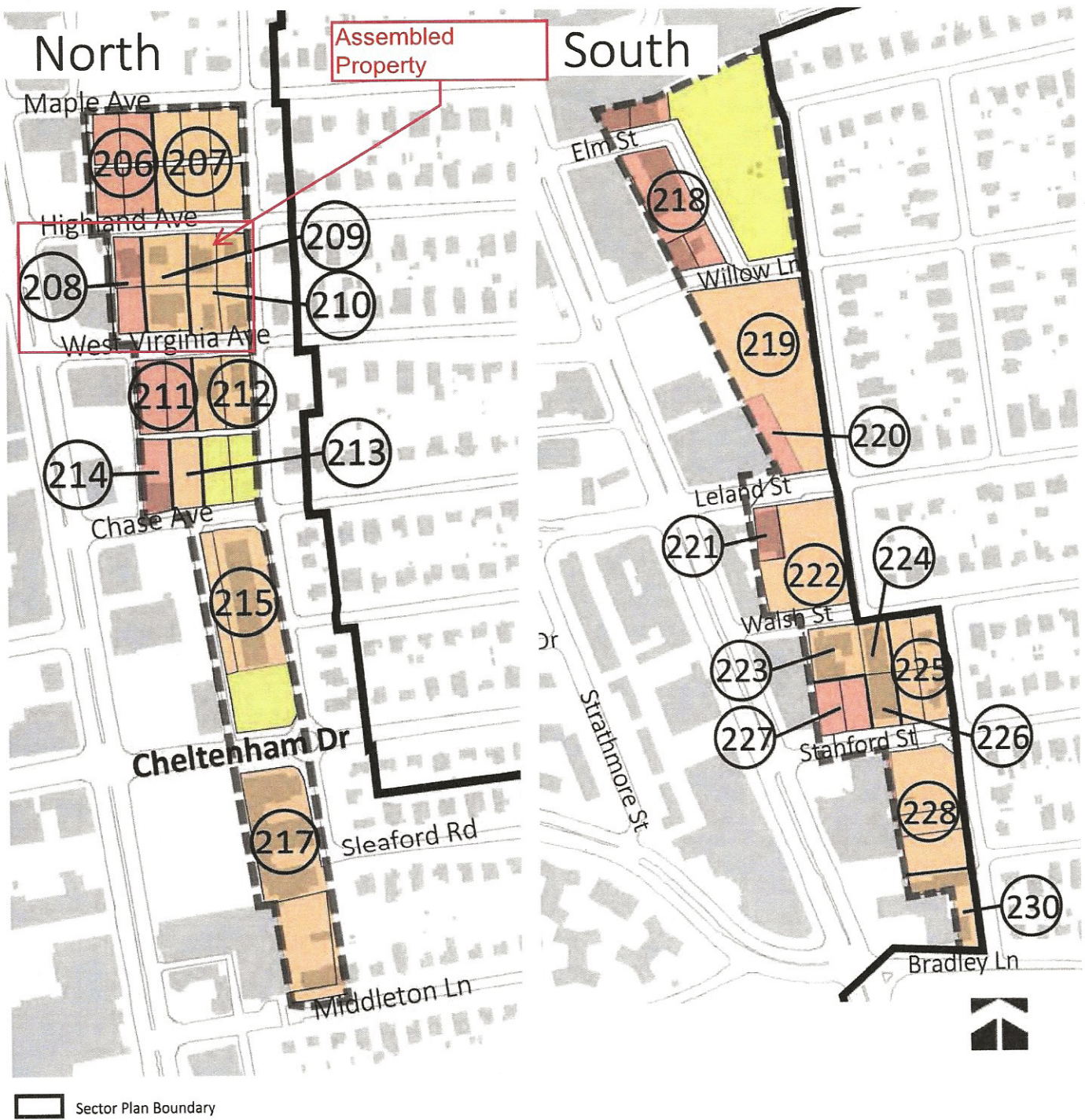




Avenue and the adjacent single residential unit neighborhood of East Bethesda.

- Rezone Map #88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, to increase the maximum allowable building heights to 90 feet to provide for an appropriate transition to the adjacent single family unit neighborhoods of East Bethesda. Increase the commercial FAR on Map #90, #91, and #92 from 2.0 to 3.0 and the residential FAR on Map #91 from 2.75 FAR to 3.0 FAR to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #96 to reduce the maximum allowable building height to 70 feet to provide for an appropriate transition to the adjacent single residential unit neighborhoods of East Bethesda and Glenbrook Village.
- Rezone Map #97 to increase the maximum allowable building heights to 70 feet to provide for an appropriate transition to the adjacent single residential unit neighborhoods of East Bethesda.
- Rezone Map #98 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 6.0 FAR to 8.0 FAR and increase the maximum allowable building height from 175T to 210 to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #99 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 6.0 FAR to 8.0 FAR and increase the maximum allowable building height from 175T to 290 feet to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #100 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 6.0 FAR to 8.0 FAR, increase residential FAR from 7.5 to 7.75 and increase the maximum allowable building height from 145T to 290 to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #101 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 6.0 FAR to 8.0 FAR, increase residential FAR from 7.5 to 7.75 and increase the maximum allowable building height from 200T to 250 to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #102 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 4.0 FAR to 5.0 FAR and increase the maximum allowable building height to 200 feet on the east side of the property closest to the Bethesda Metro tapering down to a compatible building height as it gets closer to Woodmont Avenue.
- Rezone Map #103, #104 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 4.0 FAR to 5.0 FAR and increase the maximum allowable building height to 250 feet to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #105 from its current zone to increase the maximum allowable building height to 290 feet to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #106 from its current zone to increase the maximum allowable building height to 250 feet to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #107 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 2.0 FAR to 3.0 FAR and increase the maximum allowable building height to 200 feet to provide flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions. Allow an increase in the maximum allowable building height to 225 feet if the property redevelops in a manner that benefits the Farm Women's Cooperative Market to the east.
- Rezone Map #108 from its current zone to increase the commercial density from 1.0

Figure 3.14: Eastern Greenway Districts Recommended Zoning



- Eliminate the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) designation.
- Rezone Map #206 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 60T to 70 feet with the goal of converting this parking lot to parkland.
- Rezone Map #207 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 60 feet to 70 feet with the goal of converting this parking lot to parkland.
- Rezone Map #208 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 60T to 90 feet to provide an appropriate step up transition from the properties along Tilbury Street to Wisconsin Avenue and to allow for flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #209 from its current zone to CR 0.5, C-0.5, R-0.5, H-70 to allow for flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions and to provide an appropriate step up transition from the properties along Tilbury Street to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Rezone Map #210 from its current zone to CRT 0.5, C-0.25, R-0.5, H-70 to facilitate the eastern green way if the property redevelops.
- Rezone Map #211 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 60T to 70 feet with the goal of converting this parking lot to parkland.
- Rezone Map #212 from its current zone to CRT 0.5, C-0.25, R-0.5, H-70 to facilitate the eastern greenway if the property redevelops.
- Rezone Map #213, the portion that is not parkland, from its current zone of R-60 to CRT 0.5, C-0.25, R-0.5, H-70 to allow for flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions.
- Rezone Map #214 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 60T to 70 feet to provide an appropriate step up transition from the properties along Tilbury Street to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Rezone Map #215 from its current zone R-10 to a comparable CR zone, CR 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70, to facilitate the greenway if the property redevelops in the future.
- Rezone Map #217 from its current zone (PD-35) to a comparable CRT 1.25, C-0.25, R- 1.25, H-35 zone to promote infill redevelopment.
- Rezone Map #218 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 35T to 70 feet to provide an appropriate step up transition from Elm Street Park to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Rezone Map #219 (PLD Lot 24) from its current R-60 zone to CRT 0.5, C-0.25, R-0.5, H- 70 to facilitate the eastern greenway and additional parkland.
- Rezone Map #220 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 35T to 90 feet to provide flexibility with the goal of converting this parking lot to parkland.
- Rezone Map #221 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 75T to 90 feet to provide an appropriate step up transition from 46th Street to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Rezone Map #222 (PLD Lot 10) from its current R-60 zone to CRT 0.5, C-0.25, R-0.5, H- 70 to facilitate the eastern greenway and additional parkland.
- Rezone Map #223 from its current R-60 zone to CR 1.5, C-1.5, R-0.5, H-70 to allow for flexible development opportunities and allow future development to better adapt to market conditions. This is currently a County owned property and is being used as the Writer's Center for the downtown Bethesda area.
- Rezone Map #224 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 45 feet to 70 feet to provide an appropriate step up transition from West Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Rezone Map #225 from its current R-60 zone

# Eastern Greenway Recommendations

to CRT 0.5, C-0.25, R-0.5, H-70 to facilitate the eastern greenway if the property redevelops in the future.

- Rezone Map #226 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 35 feet to 70 feet to provide an appropriate step up transition from West Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Rezone Map #227 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 35T to 70 feet to provide an appropriate step up transition from West Avenue to Wisconsin Avenue.
- Rezone Map #228 and #229 from their current R-60 zone to CRT 1.5, C-0.25, R-1.5, H-70 to facilitate the eastern greenway if the property redevelops in the future.
- Rezone Map #230 to increase the maximum allowable building height from 35 feet to 45 feet to provide compatibility with the surrounding single family unit neighborhood.

no less than 20 feet, with a maximum height of 35 feet if the proposed development otherwise achieves the Eastern Greenway District vision and is compatible with the surrounding community.

- Activate ground floors of buildings facing onto the greenway, provide entries, articulate/step back upper floors and encourage balconies to ensure that the greenway facing facade is compatible with adjacent neighborhoods and is not designed as the back of the building.
- Encourage a larger destination park adjacent to the Farm Women's Cooperative Market on Parking Lot 24 to provide green space and programming within a short walk of the future Metrorail station entrance and Purple Line station.
- Allow structured parking to be built underneath the greenway or neighborhood green with sufficient soil depth for tree planting.

## B. Urban Design

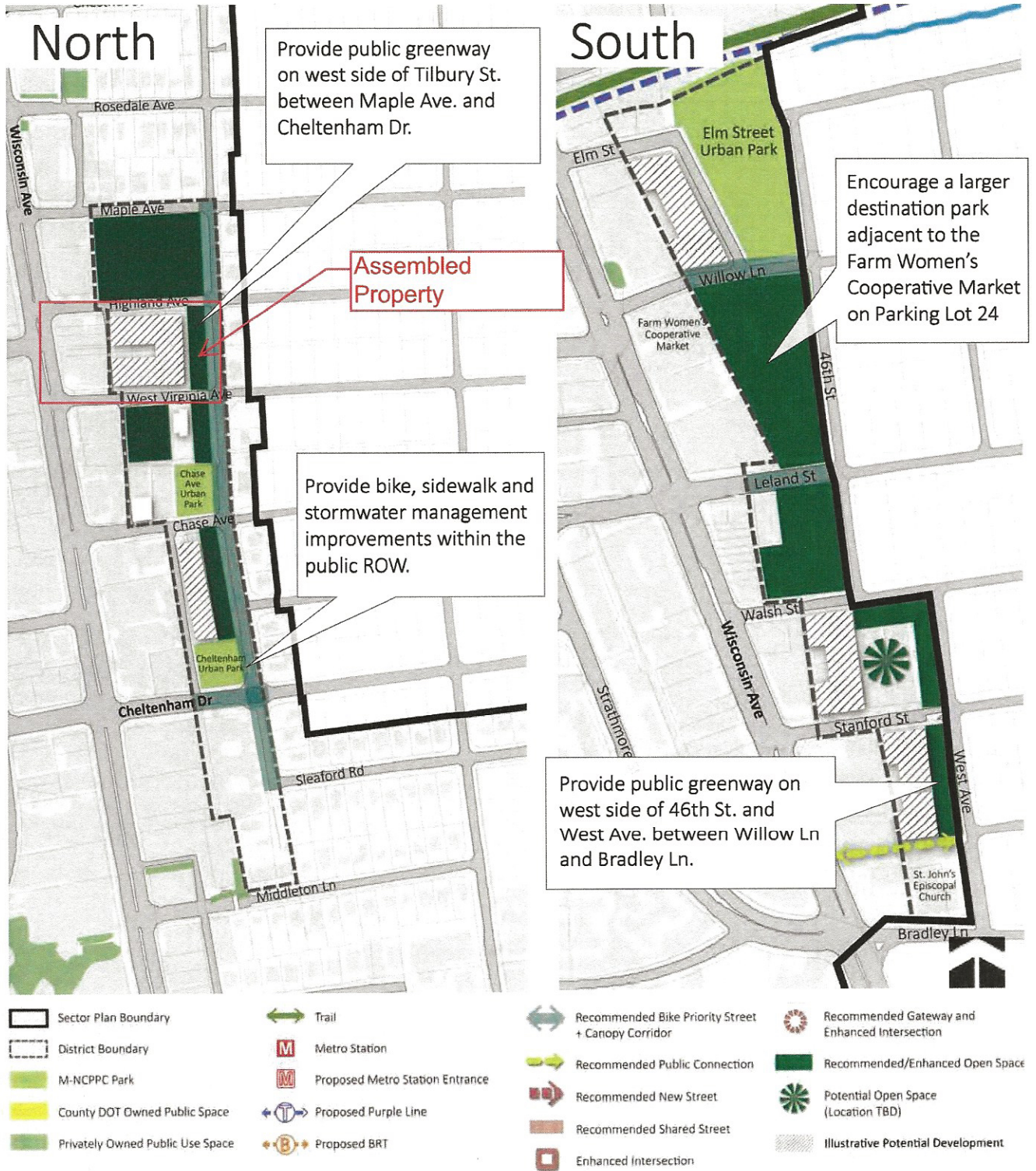
### 1. Public Realm and Building Form

- a. *Goal: Height limits and greenways will ensure compatibility with adjacent neighborhoods, provide public open space, improve connections and enhance environmental benefits.*

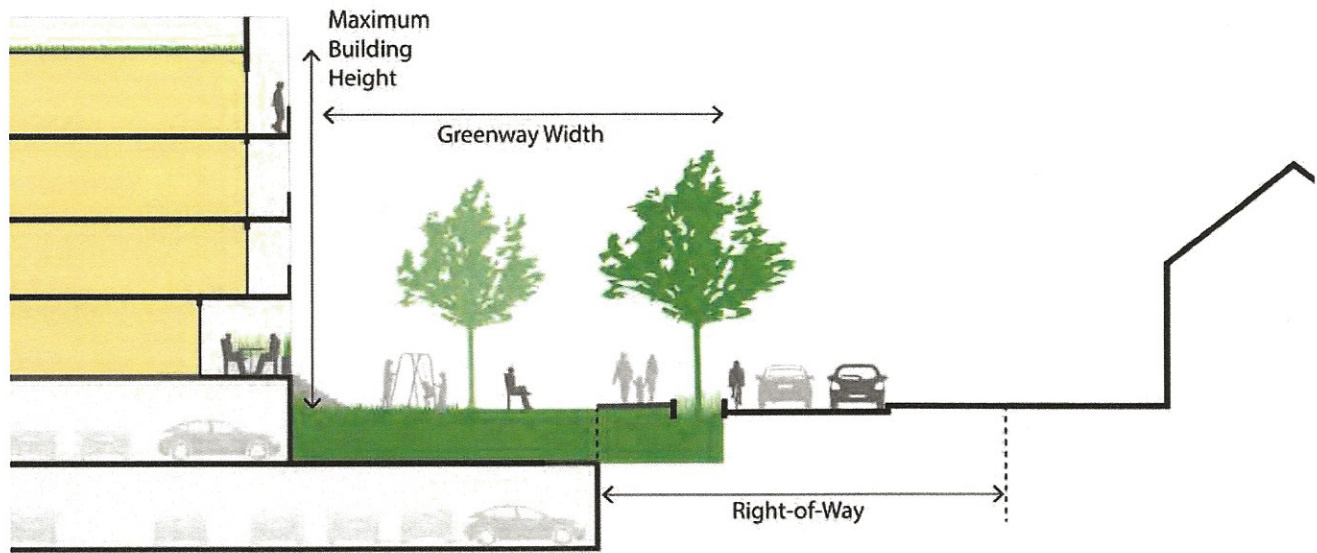
**Recommendations:**

- The greenway should be designed to accommodate elements such as tree canopy and vegetation; wide pathways; seating; stormwater management; and activity space, such as small play areas, exercise stations and community gardens.
- To enhance compatibility with the adjacent residential neighborhood, the required greenway width is equal to the amount of building height proposed. For example, a building proposed to have a maximum height of 50 feet must provide a minimum 50-foot greenway width from the existing curb. All sites should provide at minimum a 35-foot greenway. If this is not feasible because of site constraints, the Planning Board may approve a reduced greenway of

**Figure 3.15: Eastern Greenway Districts Public Realm Improvements**



**Figure 3.16: Eastern Greenway Districts Allowable Heights**



*Neighborhood green provides a place for informal gatherings*