



HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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T7106 Old Montgomery Road at Tamar Drive Full Roundabout – Frequently Asked Questions

Q: The road is presently shared by both cars and bicyclists. How will this roundabout feel different?

A: A series of advanced warning sign assemblies will notify roadway users of the upcoming intersection roundabout and advised speed reduction. The physical deflection leading into the roundabout forces the reduction of motor vehicle speed. Bicyclists have the option of using the ADA pedestrian ramps onto the sidewalk and to adjacent crosswalks or traverse the roundabout in the travel lane. The recommended 15 MPH travel speed and 16-ft travel lane within the roundabout will be of greater rider comfort than the existing intersection configuration. Additionally, roundabout intersection conflict points are reduced from a traditional intersection layout. Vehicles entering the roundabout (motor vehicles or bicycles) must yield to vehicles in the circle, coming from the left, and must yield to pedestrians in the crosswalk. At a traditional intersection, conflict points to an approaching car include cross street traffic from both directions, turning vehicles from the opposite approach, and pedestrians in the crosswalks.

Q: How will this roundabout be different from the one at Stevens Forest Road at Farewell Road?

A: This proposed roundabout includes full-height curb at the center island as well as at the approach splitter islands. Circumscribing the center island will be a mountable truck apron for the rear wheels of larger vehicles (school busses and firetrucks) to traverse, as well as a mountable apron on the northwest outside corner radius for larger right turning vehicles. This design is more complementary of the existing roundabouts at Blandair Park, however not as large, and with a tighter entry radius. The mini-roundabout at Stevens Forest Road at Farewell Road consists of a smaller diameter center island and was constructed within the existing right-of-way of the intersection. While the signing pavement markings of the mini roundabout guide drivers to the circular path, the center island must remain mountable for larger vehicles to traverse.

Q: Since this is a school-zone, how will the design of this round-about ensure the safety of children and pedestrians? The round-about by Blandair that was discussed does little to slow down drivers. This poses a safety risk for children who need to cross to the school, pool, playground.

A: The present intersection includes a crosswalk on the south leg of a non-stop controlled roadway. This proposed intersection layout is smaller than the roundabout at the intersection of Oakland Mills Road at Old Montgomery Road with tighter entry radii forcing a motor vehicle speed reduction approaching, through, and exiting the intersection. Crossing widths are decreased with the lane reduction and tightening of the corner radii at the intersection, while pedestrian refuge is provided in the north and west leg splitter islands. Roundabout designs allow for crosswalks to be placed farther from the intersection, allowing drivers more visibility to pedestrian in crosswalks than conventional intersection/crosswalk layouts. School zone crossing sign assemblies are to be installed at this location.

Q: Tamar southbound to MUP(Multi-Use Pathway) along Old Montgomery northside--will there be a ramp permit bicyclists to get onto the MUP without entering the roundabout? Could the southbound lane on Tamar be widened enough for cars to pass bicyclists with 3' of clearance prior to that ramp?

A: Bicyclists may have full use of the roadway to traverse the roundabout or may access the sidewalk and crosswalks by ADA ramps prior to the roundabout vehicular entry. Entry(s) to the roundabout are a Share the Road condition. The lane narrowing and deflection is to force a motor vehicle speed reduction.

Q: How many street lights will be installed at the new circle?

A: A total of six (6) lights are being installed to replace/upgrade the lighting at the intersection. The light spread of the proposed lighting will illuminate the intersection as well as the crosswalks.

Q: Will there be improvement in the line of sight at the circle? Currently there is limited sight when travelling Tamar Drive as Old Montgomery is a high spot or hump.

A: The vertical profile approaching and through the intersection is being modified and as part of this of this project to smooth transition for both driver comfort and visibility. Underground utility lines are being lowered in preparation for this construction.

Q: Will new trees be planted to replace the existing trees lost to this project?

A: Yes. Trees are replaced on a 1:1 basis.

Q: Will there be signs that prohibit left turns into the school and community center?

A: Turning movements into the Jeffers Hill Elementary School lot will remain as the existing condition. While the concept plans presented show a hatched island prohibiting left turns at the Community Center, the operation is still under consideration.

Q: Will south bound traffic on Tamar that turns left into the Community Center must go through the roundabout first to basically turn around?

A: The existing left turn movement from southbound Tamar Drive is being considered to remain as Tamar Drive currently operates as non-stop controlled with no speed reduction, while the roundabout will reduce the operating speed of the roadway from its existing condition.

Q: Will signage reinforce that cars must yield to pedestrians and cyclists in the crosswalk?

A: Pedestrian (school) crossing sign assemblies will be installed at all crosswalks with supplemental “Yield to Pedestrian” paddles in the splitter islands.

Q: Is it possible to add rumble strips or humps be installed at all entry points to help slow people down?

A: The County does not install rumble strips on roadways in residential areas due to noise levels. Tamar Drive does not qualify for speed humps under the current policy.

Q: Coming south on Tamar toward the circle, will the traffic calming humps at Major Lane and in front of the community center be removed or altered?

A: While Tamar Drive does not qualify for traffic humps under the current policy, existing humps at Majors Lane are not within the limit of disturbance and will not be removed. The hump between the school entrance and Community Center driveway will not be replaced after geometric modification and repaving.

Q: The previous meeting stated that construction may take 10 weeks. It now looks like it will take six months. Can you elaborate on the schedule for construction?

A: Roadway construction is anticipated to take 12 weeks, weather permitting. Underground utilities must be relocated (by each individual utility company) prior to the commencement of roadway construction. County underground fiber has already been relocated, while BGE, Comcast, and Verizon utilities must be lowered/relocated. We anticipate roadway construction to begin this fall with a spring 2022 completion. Construction is broken out into phases: Construction of pavement, curb and gutter and sidewalk construction on each corner of the intersection one at a time to not disrupt two-way traffic operation, and then Construct center island, splitter islands, final pavement surface, signs, pavement markings, lighting and landscaping.

Q: While the intersection is under construction, what do you anticipate with be the disruption to the neighborhood traffic around Tamar Drive, including pedestrian traffic?

A: Access to roadways and driveways will be maintained. No road closures or detours are planned for this project construction. Temporary lane shifts will be delineated by work zone signage, temporary pavement markings and channelizing devices. Pedestrian access will be maintained and will be coordinated such that new crossings will be put in place to cross pedestrians away from each respective quadrant while under construction. While there may be occasions of one-way flagging during the construction hours, two-way traffic will be maintained on both roadways during evening hours. On-roadway construction will be limited to between school bell times.

Q: Will residential driveway access approaching the intersection be affected by construction at all?

A: Residential driveway access will be maintained at all times, except for in instances with driveway apron reconstruction (property owners will be notified and coordinated with in advance, this limit to access should not exceed one construction day). There may be times where construction flaggers may need to stop traffic to flag residents in and out of driveways due to active work in the immediate vicinity, however, full access will be restored each day during non-construction hours.

Q: Why was the idea of a 4 way stop intersection not considered?

A: When considering the possibility of a Multi-Way Stop at a given location on public roadways, we are required to follow the guidelines set forth in the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). The MUTCD, a Federal Highway Administration document that is used nationally and adopted by Maryland and its jurisdictions, outlines minimum requirements to ensure that traffic control devices are used where they are found to be justified through a comprehensive and objective analysis. Federal warrants were not met for the installation of a 4-Way stop at this location.

Q: What traffic study was done leading into this design? With Tamar going from 2 lanes to 1, how much traffic backup is anticipated?

A: A corridor analysis along Old Montgomery Road from Tamar Drive to Oakland Mills Road was conducted in 2015 using peak period turning movement counts collected at the intersection during the autumn of 2014 while Howard County Schools were in session. Below is summary of the overall improvement of Level of Service* of the intersection. It should be noted that what appears to be an increase in delay on the Tamar Drive approach is relative to what is now an uncontrolled (no stop) free flow condition.

Table 1. Existing Operational Analysis Summary (2014)

Old Montgomery Road Intersection	Peak Period	Northbound		Southbound		Westbound		Eastbound		Overall	
		Delay (sec)	LOS								
Tamar Drive assumed to run North-South	AM	2.5	A	0	A	8.6	A	13	B	7.1	A
	PM	2.2	A	0	A	8.5	A	15.5	C	8.6	A

Table 2. Projected Operational Analysis Summary – No-Build (2019)

Old Montgomery Road Intersection	Peak Period	Northbound		Southbound		Westbound		Eastbound		Overall	
		Delay (sec)	LOS								
Tamar Drive assumed to run North-South	AM	2.5	A	0	A	8.7	A	15	B	8.1	A
	PM	2.3	A	0	A	8.6	A	19.9	C	11	B

Table 3. Projected Operational Analysis Summary – Proposed Roundabout (2019)

Old Montgomery Road Intersection	Peak Period	Northbound		Southbound		Westbound		Eastbound		Overall	
		Delay (sec)	LOS								
Tamar Drive assumed to run North-South	AM	6.7	A	5.8	A	5.4	A	7.3	A	6.7	A
	PM	6.7	A	7.5	A	5.9	A	10.6	B	9.1	A

* North American highway Level of Service of an intersection is measured by parameters stipulated in the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) and AASHTO Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, federal guidelines adhered to by the State of Maryland and its local jurisdictions, using letters A through F, with A being the best and F being the worst.

Q: Have you considered working with CA to move the entrance to the community center from Tamar to access via Old Montgomery Road?

A: Revisions to access must be coordinated through the Department of Planning and Zoning and is not part of this capital project.