



Memorandum

To: Karen Mierow, M-NCPPC

Date: February 6, 2020

Project #: 38520.08

From: Eric Tang, VHB

Re: Northern Gateway Wayfinding Community Meeting #1 Summary

This memorandum summarizes the Community Meeting held on January 30, 2020 at the Langley Park Community Center. This meeting was held to gather public comment on wayfinding improvements in the Northern Gateway area of Prince George’s County. Approximately 30 members of the public attended the meeting, along with staff from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), Northern Gateway Community Development Corporation (CDC), and the office of Prince George’s County Councilwoman Deni Taveras.

Each of M-NCPPC, the Northern Gateway CDC, and Prince George’s Councilwoman Deni Taveras gave introductions and background on the Northern Gateway area before the VHB team proceeded with wayfinding content. Eric Tang of VHB introduced the Turning Point system which was used to poll the audience on their current wayfinding experience in the Northern Gateway area. Thomas Hillman of Toole Design Group presented the fundamentals of good wayfinding practices. The County provided live Spanish translation of the meeting proceedings.

Polling Questions

The following are the results of the polling questions and any comments by the public to elaborate on their responses.

Do you identify yourself as a resident of:

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Adelphi	22.73%	5
Avondale	0.00%	0
Carole Highlands	4.55%	1
Chillum	4.55%	1
Hampshire Knolls	0.00%	0
Hyattsville	36.36%	8
Langley Park	13.64%	3
Lewisdale	13.64%	3
Takoma Park	4.55%	1
I don't know what these are	0.00%	0

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Totals	100%	22
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This first question gave the audience an opportunity to become familiar with the Turning Point voting system. This question also helped the project team understand how the audience identifies the neighborhoods in the area. Specific addresses for each attendee were not collected to correlate them with the seven neighborhoods of the Northern Gateway. Hyattsville, which is its own incorporated community located just east of the Northern Gateway, received the most responses. Parts of the Northern Gateway have zip codes with a Hyattsville mailing address, and several members of the public stated that this fact influenced their response. This outcome from the polling shows that residents do not necessarily relate to the name of their neighborhood or subdivision but, at least in some cases, their mailing address. There may be other neighborhood names with which residents identify that were not listed as an option, as there is no "other" option on the Turning Point system; however, there were no public comments that indicated strong identification with a different neighborhood name not listed.

Have you heard of the Northern Gateway?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Yes / Sí	70.59%	12
No / No	29.41%	5
Totals	100%	17

This question was intended to gauge the audience on their familiarity with the Northern Gateway name. However, by the time the project team asked this question, the Northern Gateway CDC and Councilwoman Deni Taveras had explained in detail what the definition of the Northern Gateway and the purpose of the CDC.

Do you think there is adequate signage to help you to get around the Northern Gateway area?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Strongly Agree / Totalmente de acuerdo	4.55%	1
Agree / De acuerdo	13.64%	3
Neutral / Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo	18.18%	4
Disagree / En desacuerdo	40.91%	9
Strongly Disagree / Totalmente en desacuerdo	22.73%	5

Totals	100%	22
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Over half of the respondents to this question did not agree there is adequate wayfinding signage in the area. The public provided explanations to these answers including the lack of clear and bright signage, the need for signage for newcomers and visitors to the area, the lack of signage for key destinations such as the University of Maryland, College Park, and interest in showing distance and time on signage. Several members of the public also expressed desire to reduce existing sign clutter and a for new signage to be more welcoming and attractive.

Do you walk to neighborhood destinations?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Yes / Si	38.10%	8
No / No	61.90%	13
Totals	100%	21

How far are you willing to walk to get to neighborhood destinations?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
0.25 mi - 5 minutes / 5 minutos	0.00%	0
0.5 mi - 10 minutes / 10 minutos	30.00%	6
0.75 mi - 15 minutes / 15 minutos	30.00%	6
1 mi - 20 minutes / 20 minutos	40.00%	8
Totals	100%	20

These two questions plus subsequent discussion gauged audience members' level of existing walking in the area. Respondents indicated that while there was inadequate wayfinding signage, other reasons why they chose not to walk included concerns for personal safety—especially at night on unlit roadways or paths—and poor pedestrian infrastructure. However, there were comments about the high number of places that residents could walk to plus the high percentage of zero car households in the area, meaning there is a significant population who presently walk and use public transit. This is reinforced by the fact that 40% of respondents indicated that they currently walk to neighborhood destinations, and that 40% of respondents indicated they would walk one mile, or approximately 20 minutes to their destination.

Do you bike to neighborhood destinations?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
Yes / Sí	23.81%	5
No / No	76.19%	16
Totals	100%	21

How far are you willing to bike to get to neighborhood destinations?

Responses		
	Percent	Count
1.0 mi - 5 minutes / 5 minutos	13.33%	2
2.0 mi - 10 minutes / 10 minutos	13.33%	2
3.0 mi - 15 minutes / 15 minutos	13.33%	2
4.0 mi - 20 minutes / 20 minutos	60.00%	9
Totals	100%	15

Similarly, these two questions and subsequent discussion helped to explain bike usage in the area. Not as many respondents answered them, which may be explained by the fact that not everyone owns or has learned how to ride a bicycle, while others feel unsafe riding a bicycle in shared lanes with motor vehicle traffic. Some audience members expressed that they only use their bicycle for recreational purposes. The lack of bike infrastructure such as bike lanes, separated bike lanes, and shared use paths force bicyclists, in many cases, to use high speed arterial roadways where they feel unsafe. In the absence of bicycle facilities, some bicyclists would choose to ride on the sidewalk to increase physical separation from motor vehicle traffic, especially on roads with higher motor vehicle speeds or traffic volumes. However, some roads in the area do not have sidewalks or bicycle facilities.

What types of destinations do you want to see on wayfinding signage? (select all that apply)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Neighborhoods or Districts / Barrios o Distritos	13.86%	23
Schools / Escuelas	12.05%	20
Colleges and Universities / Universidades	10.84%	18
Community Centers / Centros Comunitarios	12.05%	20
Libraries / Bibliotecas	11.45%	19
Parks / Parques	10.24%	17
Places of worship / Iglesias	5.42%	9
Metro Stations / Estaciones de Metro	9.64%	16
Shopping / Tiendas	7.23%	12
Hospitals / Hospitales	7.23%	12
Totals	100%	166

This question helped to build an understanding of the types of destinations the audience may potentially would like to see on a wayfinding system in the area. Echoing comments about the inconsistent definition of neighborhoods in the area, the audience clearly expressed an interest in the signage showing neighborhoods. Community facilities such as schools, community centers, and libraries were also of greater priority. Signage to transit facilities, including the future Maryland Purple Line stations were also important. Other facilities not listed in the poll but identified by the audience included trails, athletic facilities, Lewisdale duck ponds, and historic landmarks.

What navigation methods would you use to get to your destination? (select all that apply)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Signage on street or path / Señales en las calles o caminos	30.36%	17
Paper map / Mapa de Papel	5.36%	3
Online map / Mapa en línea	23.21%	13
Mobile app / Aplicación móvil	41.07%	23
Totals	100%	56

What type of map would be useful to highlight Northern Gateway destinations? (select all that apply)

	Responses	
	Percent	Count
Paper map / Mapa de Papel	6.98%	3
Booklet of neighborhoods / Libreto de los barrios	23.26%	10
Online map / Mapa en línea	25.58%	11
Mobile app / Aplicación móvil	44.19%	19
Totals	100%	43

These two questions helped to inform the project team on what type, or types, of map(s) may be most useful to the public to complement a wayfinding signage system in the Northern Gateway. Most attendees reported that they feel comfortable using a mobile app, and this option was the most popular choice in both polling questions. One audience member indicated a mobile map allows the user to quickly use GPS to identify their current location, compared to having to find a location on a static map. Another member of the audience recommended digital wayfinding kiosks, which could use electronic touchscreens and audio narration to provide interactive maps or other information. Electronic pedestrian kiosks could also provide multilingual information by enabling the public to switch languages. These kiosks could be located in areas with high expected pedestrian activity, such as denser commercial areas, libraries, and transit stops, and trail entrances. Another audience member suggested kiosks could also have the functionality as electric vehicle charging stations. This is an example of tying multiple County programs into a single activity. Kiosks could include other County investments such as improved lighting and surveillance, micromobility, or car sharing. These mobility hubs are an efficient use of curb space and becoming more common in cities across the country.

Mapping Exercise

At the conclusion of the polling questions and the presentation, audience members were invited to mark up large scale versions of the Northern Gateway community map to indicate key neighborhood destinations, locations of signage, walking and bicycling paths they normally traverse, and any key locations of concern. The information gathered from these maps help to inform the content of the wayfinding program template for the area, particularly types of places for signage.

Next Steps

The VHB team will work with M-NCPPC to determine what additional meetings County staff will host to collect additional public input on wayfinding experiences. These additional meetings may be in the form of pop-ups at other community events. One approach to consider for additional public input would be to display maps of the area in public spaces such as libraries for the public to mark key destinations and routes. Library staff could be briefed by

County staff on how to facilitate the community mapping exercise with patrons or youth groups. Another approach is to provide an online map or a questionnaire on the County's website for the public to indicate their key landmarks and to answer the same polling questions as in the Community Meeting. The County will investigate the possibility of hosting these public input tools on their website. The amount of time needed to gather additional input will depend on the chosen methods and therefore will influence the scheduling of Community Meeting #2, which will feature options for proposed wayfinding signage.

Commented [RK1]: County staff or M-NCPPC staff.

Commented [RK2]: County?

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