

MEMORANDUM

January 29, 2007

TO: Transportation and Environment Committee  
FROM: Glenn Orlin, Deputy Council Staff Director  
SUBJECT: State transportation projects priority lists

For each of the past few years the County Council and County Executive have transmitted to State officials a joint letter enumerating the County's funding priorities for State transportation projects. The last such letter, dated November 2, 2005 is on ©1-3. This update is particularly significant, for three reasons:

1. It would represent the priorities of the new Executive and Council.
2. For the first time in 15 years there is a good prospect that the General Assembly will enact a major revenue measure for transportation, which—depending upon its magnitude—should result in several of the County's high priority State projects to be funded in the Maryland Department of Transportation's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).
3. The letter is now the basis for County negotiations with the State over cost-sharing to plan, design, and build State projects under the State Transportation Participation CIP project.

The letter addresses the State projects that are *not* currently funded or fully funded in the CTP. The form the letter has taken in recent years includes five parts:

1. The first part notes the mega-projects of statewide importance that lie entirely or partly within Montgomery County.
2. The second part notes projects currently programmed in the CTP, but for which some construction funds are lacking or not programmed soon enough.
3. The third part is the list of projects (except mega-projects) included the Development & Evaluation (D&E) program of the CTP for planning, design, and even some right-of-way acquisition in some cases, but for which no construction funds have been programmed.
4. The fourth part is the list of candidate project planning studies that are not currently included in the State Highway Administration's D&E Program.
5. The fifth part is the list of candidate project planning studies that are not currently included in the Maryland Transit Administration's or the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's D&E Program.

**Public input.** The Council held a forum on transportation priorities on January 25. All the speakers advocated for or against specific projects, although few (if any) commented on where their projects specifically should sit vis-à-vis other projects in the priority list. Many of the comments at the forum, while of use to the Council generally, have little or nothing to do with these priority lists. The Intercounty Connector is already fully funded, so it will not appear on the construction priority list. If built, the extension of M-83 from Montgomery Village to Clarksburg would not be a State highway but a County road, so it, too, will not appear on the list. Remarks regarding the need for more buses, more bus service, sidewalks, and safety improvements are also not part of this list; while needed, these are requested as part of the State's operating budget or its Systems Preservation Minor Projects Program, another part of the CTP.

Among the municipalities, the Council has received input from Rockville (©4-5), Gaithersburg (©6-7), and Brookeville (©8-9). The District 18 Delegation has written in support of a tunnel under Georgia Avenue connecting to the Forest Glen Metro Station (©10-11).

To date the only countywide examination of these lists has been that conducted by the Planning Board. The Board's comments are on ©12-14, and how it would change the priority lists is on ©15-16. (The Planning staff's analysis leading to the Board's recommendations is on ©17-34.) In a related matter, the Board revisited the issue of the Intercounty Connector Bike Trail and transmitted recommendations on it as well (©35-37).

What follows is an analysis of proposals by the Planning Board, municipalities, elected officials, and others, following the order of the lists in the November 2005 letter. Council staff's recommendations are in **bold print**. The Executive has not yet announced his recommendations; if they are transmitted before the T&E meeting they will be included as an addendum to this packet.

**Part 1: Mega-projects.** Several organizations and individuals registered support for the Purple Line and/or the Corridor Cities Transitway. There were no comments received regarding the other two mega-projects: widening I-270 north of Shady Grove and I-495 west of the I-270 West Spur for high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) or high-occupancy-toll (HOT) lanes.

Three of these four projects—all but the Beltway widening—will reach the end of their planning stage later this year when Environmental Impact Statements are published and public hearings are held. At that time the Council and Executive will want to weigh in on these projects and their respective priorities. For now, however, they should continue to be lumped together until the data from the Environmental Impact Statements can be analyzed and the public response can be gauged.

**Council staff recommendation:** As in the 2005 letter, include all four of these projects without indicating a priority ranking of them.

**Part 2: Programmed projects lacking funding or not scheduled in a timely fashion.** The November 2005 letter noted two projects in this category: the MD355/Montrose interchange and the Silver Spring Transit Center.

*MD 355/Montrose interchange.* The Draft CTP now (as it did in November 2005) shows SHA completing design and land acquisition for the MD355/Montrose interchange in FY07 and a two-year funding gap until construction occurs in FYs10-12. The County has repeatedly asked MDOT to accelerate the funding for this project so it could be completed in FY10, to close the time-frame between this project and the County's Montrose Parkway West project, which is under construction.

Late last year MDOT and the Department of Public Works and Transportation reached an agreement that if the County forward-funded about \$14.4 million for construction in FYs08-10, then the State would build the project on the accelerated schedule and reimburse the \$14.4 million in FYs11-12. Council staff's understanding is that both the new Governor and the new County Executive are willing to proceed with this agreement. The Executive's FY08 Capital Budget recommendation for the State Transportation Participation project requests enough appropriation authority for this forward funding; in addition, Council staff believes a CIP amendment would be appropriate to show the details of this appropriation as well as the State's reimbursement in FYs11-12. If the Council generally concurs with this agreement, then the reference to the MD355/Montrose interchange should be dropped from the letter.

*Silver Spring Transit Center.* The November 2005 letter noted a shortfall of \$5.26 million to fund the 20% match to the Federal aid included in the Federal authorization approved at that time. Since then the State has programmed these funds, so the reference to the Transit Center should also be dropped from the letter.

**Council staff recommendation: Replace the references to these two projects with a reminder to State officials of the County's new effort to use some of its own resources to keep certain high-priority State road and transit projects on schedule.** Particular notice should be mentioned of the Council's recent appropriation of funds for the Glenmont Metro Garage, the MD97/Randolph Road interchange, the southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station (which will serve as the western terminus to the Purple Line), and the I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended interchange.

**Part 3: D&E projects not funded for construction.** The November 2005 list enumerated 15 projects in the D&E program, for which the State had spent \$43 million for planning, design, and/or right-of-way acquisition, but for which the State needed another \$820 million to build. Based on MDOT's latest cost estimates, it has now spent about \$46 million on these projects, but with land and construction cost inflation it now needs just over \$1 billion to complete them.

Below are the comments from the Planning Board and others about the projects on this list, in the order that they were ranked in the November 2005 letter:

*Glenmont Metro Garage (#1).* The November 2005 letter requested \$6 million in State aid to complete the funding for a second garage at the Glenmont Metro Station. Since then, however, the County has decided to provide the balance of funding in order to have the garage open as soon as possible. **Council staff concurs with the Planning Board that this project should thus be removed from the list.**

*Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road interchange (#2).* This project is in the land acquisition stage, and the County has already appropriated \$8,239,000 in FY07—without a State match—to keep it on schedule. MDOT and DPWT have agreed in principle that the County should provide another \$6.1 million in FY08—with an equal State match—to keep it on schedule through FY08 as well. **Council staff concurs with the Planning Board that this interchange should move up to #1 on this list.**

*I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended interchange (#3).* This project is in the design stage, and the County has already appropriated \$2,400,000 in FY07—without a State match—to keep it on schedule. Furthermore, the Council recently programmed over \$8 million in partnership with the City of Gaithersburg and BP Realty to fund construction of the approach roads for Watkins Mill Road Extended to either side of the interchange, simultaneously securing land for the planned 6<sup>th</sup> District Police Station. **Council staff concurs with the Planning Board that this interchange should move up to #2 on this list.**

In passing, it should be noted that the unfunded cost of the full interchange has grown to \$124 million. The agreement with Gaithersburg and BP Realty would make the land in all four quadrants of the new interchange available to the State free of charge, likely reducing the cost closer to \$100 million. But this is still a large amount. State and County officials should consider staging this project by building the bridge over I-270 first—connecting the two segments to be built by BP Realty—and then building the ramps connecting to and from I-270 at a later time. Constructing the bridge will provide some instant relief to the Frederick Avenue/Montgomery Village Avenue and Quince Orchard Road/Clopper Road intersections, and provide better access to the Metropolitan Branch MARC Station for Montgomery Village residents. But if it is staged, the second stage should follow only a few years later: the connecting ramps will be needed to provide greater relief to the two aforementioned intersections as well as regional access to the likely interim terminus of the Corridor Cities Transitway.

*Needwood Road Bike Path (not ranked).* The Planning Board recommends that the part of ICC bike trail system identified in the Federally approved Record of Decision (ROD) that is *not* being built as part of the ICC project should be included on the D&E priority list (more on that later). However, the Board believes the segment of the system planned along Needwood Road between the ICC right-of-way and the Beach Drive Bike Path is an urgent concern and should be a high construction priority.

**Council staff believes that this short segment of bike path should not be included in the State's construction priority list.** First of all, the bike trail is not part of the current D&E Program, and it is doubtful that the State could build the project without a new environmental document and securing Federal approvals. Second, this project is very small and out of scale with other requests on the priority list. Third, the bike path would be along a County road in County right-of-way, so the State is not likely to concur that it is a State responsibility, at least not separate from the entire ICC Bike Trail system.

The more appropriate way to move this segment forward is for it to be planned and built as a *County-funded* project. Depending on its cost, it could either be a subproject under the

umbrella Annual Bikeways Program project, or as a stand-alone project. In either case, it would first need to proceed through a facility planning stage. If the Planning Board wishes to propose a CIP amendment to include facility planning funds for the Needwood Road bike trail, then the Council should consider it.

*Woodfield Road widening from Midcounty Highway to Snouffer School Road (#4), Georgia Avenue bypass around Brookeville (#5), and Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road interchange (#6).* The Planning Board recommends reordering these projects so that the Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road interchange is higher than the other two. It points out that the Georgia/Norbeck intersection is currently one of the most congested in the County. Congestion could be even worse for the period between 2009-2011: after the ICC's western segment is opened to Georgia Avenue but before the balance of the ICC is opened in 2011. The Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) calls for the interchange to be the top priority on the list, stating that it should be built prior to the ICC. GOCA also notes that the Brookeville Bypass should a top priority, as does the Town of Brookeville.

However, even if the Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road interchange were accelerated, it could not be completed before 2009, or even before 2011, so the opportunity to provide relief during these years has already been missed—unless the ICC itself were delayed several years, which would have much more negative congestion implications for other roads in the corridor. In fact, after the full ICC opens, this intersection should experience substantial congestion relief for many years, since most of the longer east-west trips using Muncaster Mill Road and eastern Norbeck Road will use the ICC to bypass it altogether, as will much of the traffic to and from Olney now using these two roads.

Rearranging the order could harm the chance to accelerate the widening of the Woodfield Road segment between Midcounty Highway and Snouffer School Road. This segment will be experiencing more congestion in the next few years as the area northeast of Gaithersburg builds out. It is a relatively simple and inexpensive project, and the right-of-way is almost entirely available now, which means it could be built expeditiously if funds were available.

It could also hurt the opportunity for the Brookeville Bypass to be built soon. Admittedly the Brookeville Bypass does little to address regional congestion. Nor is it as far along in the project development process as other projects ranked this high: final design has not yet begun. But if ever a project deserved a higher priority because of longevity, this one is it. Of State projects in Montgomery County, no project—with exception of the ICC itself—has languished in the State's program as long. The residents of Brookeville finally settled its battle over the location of the bypass several years ago, and it is time to finally build the project.

**Council staff recommendation: Retain the same order for these projects, which would raise the Woodfield Road widening from Midcounty Highway to Snouffer School Road up to #3, the Georgia Avenue bypass around Brookeville up to #4, and the Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road interchange up to #5.**

*Clopper Road widening (#7), Spencerville Road widening within Burtonsville (#8), and Norbeck Road widening between Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road (#9).* Among these three

projects the Planning Board recommends retaining the current priority order. The Fairland Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee notes that the Spencerville Road widening in Burtonsville is the highest priority in Fairland.

**Council staff recommendation: Retain the same order for these projects, which would raise the Clopper Road widening up to #6, the Spencerville Road widening through Burtonsville up to #7, and the Norbeck Road widening between Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road up to #8.**

*US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road interchange (#10) and Rockville Pike/Montrose (Phase 2) bridge over CSX (#11).* As currently described in the CTP, Phase 2 of the Rockville Pike/Montrose interchange would connect from the east end of the Phase 1 project (discussed in Part 2, above) to the intersection of Randolph Road and Parklawn Drive. However, the County's master plan calls for it to connect to Montrose Parkway East instead, a new road largely in the old 300'-wide Outer Beltway right-of-way from Parklawn Drive to Veirs Mill Road. This latter connection makes more sense from the standpoint of regional traffic flow. Also, the current scope will cost \$109 million more in State funding, \$40 million of which is right-of-way cost, most attributed to takings near the Randolph/Parklawn intersection. These costs would be avoided by following the master plan route instead.

Since 2005 the County's Montrose Parkway East project has proceeded through facility planning, and last spring the Council appropriated nearly \$2.3 million for its final design, beginning in FY07. To keep the State's project roughly in sync with the County's, its priority should be raised. The US 29/Fairland/Musgrove interchange is also important, but with the relief to US 29 afforded by the Randolph Road interchange (completed) and the Briggs Chaney Road interchange (nearly completed), it could be dropped behind the Randolph Road/Montrose (Phase 2) project in the priority list.

**Council staff recommendation: Exchange the order of these two projects, raising the Randolph Road/Montrose (Phase 2) project up to #9 and placing the US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road interchange at #10.**

*I-270/Newcut Road interchange (#12), Woodfield Road widening from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road (#13), MD 28/198 widening from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike (#14), and Veirs Mill Road/First Street interchange (#15).* The Planning Board recommends dropping the MD28/198 widening altogether, due to the congestion relief afforded by the ICC. The Board is right that the need for this widening is diminished in the near- and mid-term, but the project already has a low spot on the priority list, so it will likely not be built for several years. It is even possible that projects not yet in the D&E program (discussed below) may pass it in the construction priority list in the future, but taking the project off the list entirely will unnecessarily retard its progress towards gaining Federal NEPA approvals.

During the past year the Mayor and Council of the City of Rockville have come out against all the current alternatives that have been developed by SHA for the Veirs Mill Road/First Street improvement. In its letter last fall they no longer mention this project as a

priority, but note that it prefers a more general study of all the intersections in the area, including this one. But a project planning study is the vehicle for the State to devote significant resources to study options thoroughly; unless the City and the County wishes for any significant improvement to be delayed indefinitely, the better course is to retain the current project planning study and re-focus it.

**Council staff recommendation: Retain the same order for these projects, which would raise the I-270/Newcut Road interchange up to #11, the Woodfield Road widening from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road up to #12, the MD 28/198 widening from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike up to #13, and a re-focused Rockville Town Center improvements to #14.**

In summary, Council staff's recommendations differ from the November 2005 list in only three ways: (1) deleting the Glenmont Metro Garage (since it is now County-funded) and generally moving the others up a spot each; (2) exchanging the order of the MD 355/Montrose (Phase 2) interchange and the US 29/Fairland/Musgrove interchange; and (3) redefining the scope of the Veirs Mill Road/First Street interchange to a study of improvements in the Rockville Town Center. **Council staff's proposed list, with updated 'unfunded' costs (totaling \$1.009 billion) is:**

1	Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$58M
2.	I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended (Phase 1): build grade-separated interchange*	\$124M
3.	Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Hwy to Snouffer School Road**	\$65M
4.	Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville	\$21M
5.	Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$87M
6.	Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park	\$42M
7.	Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes from Old Columbia Pike to US 29	\$35M
8.	Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road	\$94M
9.	Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway (Phase 2): build bridge over CSX Railroad***	\$109M
10.	US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$78M
11.	I-270/Newcut Road: build grade separated interchange	\$77M
12.	Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road**	(see #3)
13.	MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Rd to Old Columbia Pike	\$134M
14.	Rockville Town Center improvements	\$85M

\* Significant savings may be obtained by dedication of right-of-way by new development.

\*\* The total cost of #3 and #12 is \$65M. Segmented cost estimates are not yet available.

\*\*\* Significant savings may be obtained by coordination with the County's Montrose Parkway East project.

There are a couple of reasons for keeping this basic order. First, there has been considerable 'buy-in' to the current list from State and local elected officials and their constituencies: whenever one project is elevated in priority, one or more others are lowered, with attendant consequences. Second, in most cases the highest priority projects are the furthest along: if they are funded in the next revenue increase, they will be providing benefits to the traveling public that much sooner.

**Part 4: Candidates for the SHA D&E Program.** The November 2005 letter included 12 rank-ordered candidate project planning studies. The comments received about each of these studies, and others, are summarized and analyzed below:

- The Planning staff intimates that the candidate Georgia Avenue/Montgomery Hills study (priority #1 in 2005) should be extended north of the Forest Glen Road intersection. **Council staff concurs with the Planning staff.**
- Given the expansion of the National Naval Medical Center resulting from the BRAC decisions, the Planning Board recommends expanding the scope of the MD 355/Cedar Lane interchange study (priority #2 in 2005) to include other potential improvements on Rockville Pike between Woodmont Avenue and the Capital Beltway. **Council staff concurs with the Planning Board.**
- The Planning Board recommends that the unfunded ICC Bike Trail system described in the Record of Decision (ROD) be the subject of a project planning study, and that it be ranked as #3 on the D&E priority list. However, the Council's position to date is that the bike trail should be built along the ICC *along its entire length* east of Rock Creek Park, so any study should start from that position. By the nature of the NEPA process other alternatives will be evaluated, including the system described in the ROD. Also the bike trail study should supercede neither the study for the ICC's connection to Midcounty Highway nor the study for the MD355/Gude Drive interchange (one of Rockville's priorities), both of which are key to the implementation of the Shady Grove Sector Plan. **Council staff recommends placing an "ICC Master Plan Bike Trail" study as the #5 priority on SHA's D&E list.**
- The Planning Board recommends deleting the MD355/Nicholson Lane interchange from the list, noting that current congestion is not high, and that other improvements in the area (the completion of Citadel and Chapman Avenues and Nebel Street Extended) will relieve some of the future congestion. The Garrett Park Estates – White Flint Park Citizens' Association (GPEWFPCA) disagrees, citing the large amount of traffic that will be generated by development in the pipeline. **Council concurs with GPEWFPCA that this interchange should remain on the priority list, and it should remain in its relative position vis-à-vis the others.** The interchange will not only be needed for congestion relief, but if designed as an urban interchange, it could actually improve walkability in the burgeoning urban center that is White Flint.
- The Planning Board also recommends deleting the Veirs Mill Road/Randolph Road interchange from the list given the lack of current congestion due to recent improvements there. **Council staff disagrees; this interchange should also remain on the priority list, and it should remain in its relative position vis-à-vis the others.** Once Montrose Parkway East is completed through to Veirs Mill Road, this intersection could have considerably more turning traffic than now. An interchange will also improve the bus service on Veirs Mill Road and the walkability in this community retail area.

- The City of Rockville and the West End Citizens Association both support a project planning study for I-270/Gude Drive as part of a larger plan to divert east-west through traffic out of the middle of Rockville. The Neighbors for Better Montgomery oppose this study, believing it will cost too much and overwhelm nearby neighborhoods. But that is why studies are done: to find out what the benefits, costs and impacts are going to be. Remember that the ‘no-build’ option is always on the table, up to the very end. **Council staff recommends keeping this interchange on the priority list, retaining its relative position vis-à-vis the others.**
- The Planning Board advocates a study of safety improvements at the MD355/Shady Grove Road intersection. **Council staff does not believe this study should appear on the priority list.** There are certainly safety issues at the intersection, but the types of improvements suggested—pedestrian safety improvements, better street lighting, and a complete streets approach to design—can be handled within SHA’s System Preservation Minor Project Program.

In summary, Council staff’s recommendations differ from the November 2005 SHA D&E list in only three ways: (1) expanding the scope of the Georgia Avenue/Montgomery Hills study to north of Forest Glen Road; (2) expanding the scope of the MD355/Cedar Lane study to include an analysis of other potential improvements on Rockville Pike between Woodmont Avenue and the Beltway; and (3) inserting a new ‘ICC Master Plan Bike Trail’ study at #5, and dropping each lower priority studies down a spot. **Council staff’s proposed list is:**

1. **Georgia Avenue (MD 97): reconstruction in Montgomery Hills, from 16<sup>th</sup> Street to north of Forest Glen Road**
2. **Rockville Pike (MD 355): improvement from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including a grade separated interchange at Cedar Lane**
3. **Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road**
4. **Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange**
5. **Intercounty Connector Master Plan Bike Trail: Shady Grove to Prince George’s County**
6. **Great Seneca Highway (MD 119): flyover at Sam Eig Highway**
7. **Frederick Road (MD 355): widening from 2000’ south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass**
8. **Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Nicholson Lane: grade-separated interchange**
9. **Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg**
10. **Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade-separated interchange**
11. **Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road**
12. **I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange**
13. **MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville**

**Part 5: Candidates for the MTA or WMATA D&E Program.** The November 2005 letter included four rank-ordered candidate project planning studies. The comments received about each of these studies, and others, are summarized and analyzed below:

- **Council staff recommends that the Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study remain the County’s #1 priority on this list.** This BRT route between Wheaton and Rockville serves a large low-to-moderate income population which relies heavily on the

Veirs Mill Road bus service. This service can be bettered significantly by several queue jumper lanes and other modest improvements.

- The Forest Estates Community Association, the Mid-County Citizens Advisory Board, the District 18 Delegation and others support a pedestrian tunnel beneath Georgia Avenue connecting to the Forest Glen Metro Station. WMATA completed a concept study about a year ago, estimating the cost of the tunnel to be \$10-11 million, not including design and land acquisition costs. The Planning Board did not mention this as a candidate during its discussion of transit project planning studies. **Council staff recommends inserting this study as the #2 priority below only the Veirs Mill Road BRT in the new priority list.** The need for the current #2 study—the Georgia Avenue Busway—is lessened to a degree by the County’s having funded a second Metro Garage at Glenmont. The need to connect Langley Park to Wheaton with a University Boulevard BRT (currently priority #3) will be served—albeit less directly—by the Red Line and the Purple Line connection between Langley Park and Silver Spring.
- The Planning Board recommends deleting from the list the Purple Line Connector from Langley Park to White Oak. Together with the North Bethesda Transitway, it comprised the #4 priority in the last list. **Council staff concurs.** The White Oak Connector is not included in the County master plan and so it is premature to request the State to study it.

In summary, Council staff’s recommendations differ from the November 2005 transit D&E list in only two ways: (1) inserting the Forest Glen Metro tunnel under Georgia Avenue as the #2 priority and dropping each lower priority studies down a spot; and (2) deleting the White Oak Connector as part of the priority list. **Council staff’s proposed list is:**

1. **Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) Bus Rapid Transit: Rockville to Wheaton**
2. **Forest Glen Metro Station pedestrian tunnel under Georgia Avenue**
3. **Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Busway: Glenmont to Olney**
4. **University Blvd. (MD 193) Bus Rapid Transit: Wheaton to Langley Park**
5. **North Bethesda Transitway: Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall**

**Next step: Show us the money!** This priority-setting exercise is important, but it will amount to little more than rearranging the deck chairs unless the State and local elected officials roll up their collective sleeves and enact substantial revenue increases for transportation. Typically such increases are tied to the promise to complete a set of specific projects. This set of projects, however, should also include a few project planning starts (i.e., the top priorities in Parts 4 and 5) so that progress can begin on those as well. Project planning is the ‘gatekeeper’ for future capital projects.



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Douglas M. Duncan  
County Executive

November 2, 2005

The Honorable Ida Ruben, Chair  
Montgomery County Senate Delegation  
422 Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Charles Barkley, Chair  
Montgomery County House Delegation  
222 Lowe Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Ruben and Delegate Barkley:

We have recently revised the State transportation priorities we transmitted to you on November 4, 2004, based on recent announcements by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) and on a review of the Planning Board's new Highway Mobility Report. This letter describes our updated sets of priorities for currently unfunded State transportation projects and planning studies.

We appreciate the State having fully funded the Intercounty Connector for completion by 2010. However, there are four other projects of regional and statewide significance that are most critical and should proceed to completion as quickly as possible. In alphabetical order, they are: the Bi-County Transitway; the Corridor Cities Transitway; the I-270 widening for high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) or high-occupancy-toll (HOT) lanes north of Shady Grove; and the I-495 widening for HOV or HOT lanes between the I-270 West Spur and Virginia. While there are issues to be worked out on important aspects of some of these projects, decisions must be made and funding must be identified promptly to move them forward to completion.

There are also two projects of local importance which require significant changes from what is shown in the Draft 2006-2011 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). These are high priority projects that have been previously identified by the Executive and Council to the State and/or Federal Delegations. They are:

1. Accelerate the start of construction of the interchange of Rockville Pike (MD 355) with Montrose Parkway by two years—from FY 2010 (as shown in the Draft) to FY 2008—in order to permit the most seamless coordination with the County's Montrose Parkway West project, and to cause the least disruption to area residents. Montrose Parkway West is currently under construction; the full cost of this \$68.2 million project is being funded entirely by the County.
2. Provide \$5.26 million in additional funding for the Silver Spring Transit Center to fully fund the 20% match for Federal aid that has been included in the recently approved Federal transportation authorization. This project has undergone a significant increase in scope which is not reflected in the \$41 million funding level as shown in the Draft.



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The Honorable Ida Ruben  
The Honorable Charles Barkley  
November 2, 2005  
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Our priority rankings for projects that will be ready for construction funding during the next six years and are currently in the design or project-planning stages are listed below. The funding to be programmed to complete each project is also indicated as well.

1. Glenmont Metro Garage: State contribution to build a second garage	\$6M
2. Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$48M
3. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended (Phase 1): build grade-separated interchange*	\$103M
4. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Hwy to Snouffer School Road**	\$60M
5. Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville	\$17M
6. Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$75M
7. Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park	\$39M
8. Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes with a median from Old Columbia Pike to US 29	\$30M
9. Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road	\$80M
10. US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange	\$67M
11. Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway (Phase 2): build bridge over CSX Railroad***	\$62M
12. I-270/Newcut Road: build grade separated interchange	\$64M
13. Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road**	(see #4)
14. MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Rd to Old Columbia Pike	\$115M
15. Veirs Mill Rd/First St: build grade-separated interchange	\$54M

\* Significant savings may be obtained by dedication of right-of-way by new development.

\*\* The total cost of #4 and #13 is \$60M. Segmented cost estimates are not yet available.

\*\*\* Significant savings may be obtained by coordination with the County's Montrose Parkway East project.

The total funding that needs to be programmed to complete these 15 projects is \$820 million. MDOT is already investing over \$43 million to plan, design, and buy land for these projects.

Our priority rankings for highway projects to be added to the Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program are:

1. Georgia Avenue (MD 97): reconstruction in Montgomery Hills
2. Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Cedar Lane: grade-separated interchange
3. Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road
4. Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
5. Great Seneca Highway (MD 119): flyover at Sam Eig Highway
6. Frederick Road (MD 355): widening from 2000' south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass
7. Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Nicholson Lane: grade-separated interchange
8. Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg
9. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade-separated interchange
10. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road
11. I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
12. MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville

The Honorable Ida Ruben  
The Honorable Charles Barkley  
November 2, 2005  
Page Three

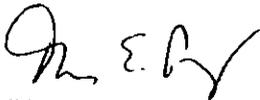
Our priority rankings for transit projects to be added to the D&E Program are:

1. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) Bus Rapid Transit: Rockville to Wheaton
2. Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Busway: Glenmont to Olney
3. University Blvd. (MD 193) Bus Rapid Transit: Wheaton to Langley Park
4. North Bethesda Transitway: Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall and White Oak Connector from Bi-County Transitway

Studies #1-3 in this list would be coordinated between the State Highway Administration and the Maryland Transit Administration. For these studies we also request that a continuous bikeway be planned throughout their entire lengths.

If you need any clarifications about our recommendations, please contact us.

Sincerely,



Thomas E. Perez, President  
County Council



Douglas M. Duncan  
County Executive

DMD:TEP:go

cc: The Honorable Robert L. Ehrlich, Governor, State of Maryland  
Robert L. Flanagan, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation  
Derick Berlage, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board



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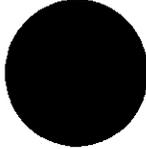
September 26, 2006

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City of Rockville  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland  
20850-2364  
www.rockvillemd.gov

The Honorable Douglas M. Duncan  
County Executive  
Executive Office Building  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

024980



Mayor & Council  
240-314-8280  
TTY 240-314-8137  
FAX 240-314-8289

The Honorable George L. Leventhal  
President, Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) Priorities

Dear Messrs. Duncan and ~~Leventhal~~: *Doug + George,*

This letter provides the City of Rockville's transportation priorities for funding by the Maryland Department of Transportation's Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The City of Rockville respectfully requests the following projects be included in the County's CTP priorities:

- (1) A grade separated interchange at I-270 and West Gude Drive. By providing another access to I-270, this project would relieve congestion at the MD 28 interchange, as well as on MD 28 between the City Town Center to the east and Hurley Avenue to the west. This project also will allow Gude Drive to act as a bypass of the Rockville Town Center. This project was ranked 11th in last year's County CTP priorities for the Development and Evaluation (D&E) Program.
- (2) A grade-separated intersection at MD 355 and Gude Drive. This project would be a companion to the I-270/Gude Drive interchange to provide an effective bypass of the Rockville Town Center for across-city traffic. In conjunction with these two projects, the MD28 designation should be transferred from West Montgomery Avenue/Jefferson Street to West and East Gude Drive.
- (3) A new planning project study to effectively improve traffic operations east of the Town Center. This study should adopt a corridor approach and include

MAYOR  
Larry Giannino

COUNCIL  
Robert E. Dorsey  
Susan R. Hoffmann  
Phyllis Marcuccio  
Anne M. Robbins

CITY MANAGER  
Scott Ollery

CITY CLERK  
Claire F. Funkhouser

CITY ATTORNEY  
Paul T. Glasgow

4

The Honorable Douglas M. Duncan  
The Honorable George Leventhal  
City of Rockville Consolidated Transportation Program Priorities  
09/26/2006  
Page two

the following intersections:

- a) MD 355/MD 911/Wootton Parkway
- b) MD 28/MD 586/ MD 911
- c) MD 28/MD 355
- d) MD355/East Middle Lane/Park Road

Your favorable consideration of the City of Rockville's requests for inclusion in the County's CTP priorities will be greatly appreciated. We look forward to working with you to advocate for these essential projects. Please contact me if you need any clarification about these recommendations.

Sincerely,

*LARRY GIAMMO*

Larry Giammo  
Mayor

cc: City Council  
Phil Andrews, Montgomery County Councilmember  
Art Holmes, Jr., Director, Montgomery County Department of Public Works  
Scott Ullery, City Manager, City of Rockville  
Craig Simoneau, Director of Public Works, City of Rockville  
Emad Elshafei, Chief, Traffic and Transportation Division, City of Rockville

(5)

TESTIMONY OF THE CITY OF GAITHERSBURG AT THE MONTGOMERY  
COUNTY COUNCIL'S PUBLIC FORUM ON MONTGOMERY COUNTY'S  
TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

January 25, 2007

Good evening. My name is Sidney Katz, and I have the honor of being the Mayor of the City of Gaithersburg. I am joined this evening by Assistant City Manager Fred Felton to outline the City of Gaithersburg's key transportation priorities.

The first project we would like to discuss is the Intercounty Connector (ICC). We are extremely appreciative of Montgomery County's ongoing support of this critical transportation improvement, and are very pleased that the project is moving forward. We are hopeful that by splitting the project into numerous segments and awarding separate contracts, the State can meet its proposed 2011 completion schedule.

A major transportation priority of the City of Gaithersburg is construction of the Watkins Mill Road Interchange. This interchange is critical to reduce congestion at the intersection of MD 124 and MD 355 as well as for economic development purposes. Additionally, it will provide direct highway access to the County's future 6<sup>th</sup> District police station. The City and the County have been working closely with a number of developers to get Watkins Mill Road Extended built, and the City, the County, and a developer are in the final stages of approving a Road Participation Agreement that would provide for the build out of the road in two years. We would like to publicly thank the County Council for appropriating 8.5 million dollars to make this road a reality. We are pleased to report that the City of Gaithersburg's Department of Planning and Code Administration will be issuing permits for the western segment of Watkins Mill Road Extended this week.

Now that a plan is in place to provide for the construction of Watkins Mill Road in the short term, it is critical that the State move forward with construction of the Watkins Mill Road Interchange as expeditiously as possible. The interchange project is now in the engineering phase, but only \$800,000 has been included in the proposed FY 08 Consolidated Transportation Plan, and the Department of Transportation notes that an additional 7.8 million dollars is needed to complete engineering. We are very supportive of the County's efforts to work with State Highway Administration to expedite funding of this project. With respect to the City's efforts, we are pleased to report that we have already secured approximately 65% of the right-of-way needed for this interchange at no cost to the State, and we are working to secure the remaining property.

Mayor Katz's Testimony

Page 2

January 25, 2007

Another key transportation priority for the City of Gaithersburg is the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT). The concept for the Corridor Cities Transitway dates back to the 1964 General Plan for Montgomery County. The entire right-of-way throughout the City of Gaithersburg is available for construction, and the land for the transit stations has been set aside. As you know, we have been working with a coalition of officials from the County Council, the General Assembly, and the City of Rockville to highlight the need for this transitway. As our coalition has stated, the CCT is good to go and we would hope that it will be the region's next transit project.

Pedestrian safety remains a major concern, and we would like to emphasize the critical need for pedestrian improvements to State roads throughout the City of Gaithersburg. The retrofitting of countdown pedestrian signals at all existing traffic signals in the City should be a priority as well as ensuring that all crosswalks are marked and maintained properly and can be easily seen by motorists. Improving pedestrian access along the undivided portion of MD 355 and other State roads in the City should also be a priority.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify this evening. We would be pleased to address any questions.

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE BROOKEVILLE BYPASS PROJECT (MD 97)**  
**RICHARD S. ALLAN**  
**MAYOR**  
**TOWN OF BROOKEVILLE**  
**JANUARY 25, 2007**

Madame President and members of the County Council:

I welcome this opportunity tonight to testify on behalf of the Town Commissioners and the residents of the Town of Brookeville to strongly urge your support to move the Brookeville Bypass forward with partial funding assistance for project design, engineering, and right-of-way acquisition antecedent to full State funding for construction.

For those new Council members who may not be completely familiar with Brookeville, the Town is located just north of Olney. Founded in 1794 and incorporated in 1808, Brookeville is in its entirety a Historic District under the County's Historic Preservation Ordinance, is part of Heritage Montgomery's Heritage Tourism Alliance, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. Known as the United States Capital for a Day, Brookeville and its residents provided safe haven to President James Madison and Attorney General Richard Rush and their party in the late summer of 1814 following the British burning of the White House during the War of 1812.

We in Brookeville have been aggressive in our work to preserve our historic town and its built and natural environment for the benefit of present and future generations. The Town has restored and adapted the early nineteenth century Brookeville Academy for use as a community center and is just finishing the restoration of a one-room schoolhouse. We have been staunch proponents of the importance of historic preservation countywide. We are proud of these endeavors and the collaborative efforts that made them possible, including significant County support for which we are appreciative. In my view, these kinds of creative municipal government initiatives play an important role in making Montgomery County the vital and dynamic place that it is.

That said, I am here tonight as are many Brookeville residents to ask you - the County Council - to write in effect the next and perhaps the most important chapter in Brookeville's rich history - moving the Brookeville Bypass forward toward construction.

Here is a road project that has been in the Olney Master Plan and County Master Plan of Highways literally almost forever. The reason that the Brookeville Georgia Avenue Bypass was there in these early plans was simple - it was a matter of good planning. It was recognized that this Bypass was going to be needed - that it was going to provide essential infrastructure to support the "smart" growth - one might say, of the Olney-Brookeville area. Land was even surveyed and set aside for future Bypass use. There was also some awareness in the planning equation that the Bypass would be beneficial to the health, safety, and protection of this traditional crossroads town and its residents - many of whom have houses no more than a few feet from this heavily traveled two-lane highway that has little to no right-of-way. These residents have been eating and

breathing the noxiousness of exhaust, dirt, and toxic dust all this time and have lived and raised kids amid the unrelenting noise of endless commuter and truck traffic. There has also been collateral damage done to the integrity of the historic houses along the road - not to mention the number of appalling accidents many of us have witnessed and the daily occurrence of near misses - often involving school buses. This is the history, of course, that many of us are still living and we want you to take the leadership role and bring this part of our history to a happy conclusion.

The Brookeville Bypass project has been exhaustively vetted. There have been countless meetings and focus groups, special studies, environmental impact statements, consultants, bus and walking tours involving a parade of State Highway Administrators, District Engineers, State Delegates and various members of the County Council, and in one instance even a Governor. The media interviews, a special video, letters-to-editors, in-your face lobbying, and Brookeville-GOCA (Greater Olney Civic Association) strategy sessions in the more than twenty-three years I have been involved as an elected official could generate content for a lengthy book. All Secretaries of Transportation have supported the Bypass. It has risen to a number one County priority on several occasions over the years. And, as you all are aware, the State Highway Administration has fully completed the project planning study and has received design approval of all the relevant Federal regulatory agencies to move forward. This is a project ready to go and whose time has come.

In our post 9-11 world, MD 97 - Georgia Avenue, is now one of 14 evacuation corridors identified in the District of Columbia Homeland Security Plan (2002). It is certainly one of the major north-south "escape" routes that would be a road of choice for many residents of Washington and adjoining communities in Montgomery County. Given the gridlock we already see almost every day at rush-hour, the havoc that our Brookeville bottleneck intersection would cause in an emergency is self-evident. So we have one more compelling reason as to why the Brookeville Bypass should not only be in the priority category it now has but should get the ticket forward to receive funding assistance from Montgomery County so that the State can finally build this project.

In conclusion, I urge you all to become a positive part of Brookeville's history by preserving its future. Please take the unusual opportunity you have here to dramatically mitigate for the long term a serious transportation problem that will only get worse and at the same time give a town back to its residents - a town once again safe and healthy and enjoyable to live in.

Thank you.



THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1991

January 26, 2007

Councilmember Nancy Floreen  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Councilmember Floreen:

We are writing you to support the addition of a new entrance to the Forest Glen Metro station to this year's state transportation priorities list. This is an essential step toward resolving the growing pedestrian safety problem at the intersection of MD 97 (Georgia Avenue) and Forest Glen Road.

The residents of the Forest Estates neighborhood have made great efforts to let all of us know about the situation at this intersection, the most congested in the county. Station entrances for Metro riders are only on the west side of the intersection. As a result, residents living east of Georgia Avenue must cross nine lanes of traffic in order to reach the Metro station, as must Holy Cross Hospital staff and visitors. Pedestrians do not have enough time to cross the intersection safely, and they risk getting hit by vehicles every time they cross the street. Previous studies have indicated that changing the timing of the traffic signals to help pedestrians would cause unacceptable traffic backups on Georgia Avenue.

As a result, a number of residents who live only three or four blocks away from the Metro station nevertheless drive there instead of walking, because they are afraid to cross the street on foot. For the same reason, others bypass the station altogether and commute by car. We end up with frightened pedestrians on the street and more cars on the road.

Fortunately, the state and the county can work together to resolve this problem with the construction of a new Metro entrance on the east side of Georgia Avenue, going underneath the intersection and connecting to the station's existing underground facilities. As you know, WMATA has already completed a feasibility study, showing that this project can be completed for \$10.6 million.

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Councilmember Nancy Floreen  
Montgomery County Council  
January 26, 2007  
Page Two

Completion of an additional entrance and the resultant reduction of people walking in the intersection will both enhance pedestrian safety and facilitate greater vehicular traffic flow at Montgomery County's most congested intersection.

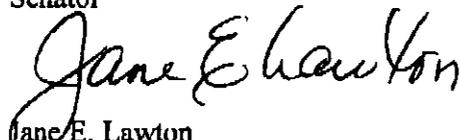
We hope that the Council will add this project to this year's state transportation priorities list.

Sincerely,

The District 18 Delegation



Richard S. Madaleno, Jr.  
Senator



Jane E. Lawton  
Delegate



Ana Sol Gutiérrez  
Delegate



Jeffrey D. Waldstreicher  
Delegate

cc: Marilyn Praisner  
Isiah Leggett  
Melanie Wenger

(11)

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**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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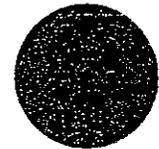
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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

January 17, 2007

The Honorable Marilyn Praisner  
Chair, Management and Fiscal Policy Committee  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

026268



RE: State Transportation Priorities and the County's 10-Year Transportation Program

Dear Council President Praisner:

At our regularly scheduled meeting on January 4, 2007, the Planning Board voted to adopt the following comments on the County's priority list for State projects, the next group of projects to be funded under the County's State participation program, and the County's 10-Year Transportation Program.

**Priority List of State Projects**

We recommend the following changes to the current priority list of State projects, as reflected in the letter dated November 2, 2005, jointly signed by the County Executive and the Council President:

1. The Glenmont Parking Garage is now fully funded and should be deleted from the list.
2. The Needwood Road Bike Path, from the ICC to Beach Drive/Rock Creek Park should be added as a high priority for construction.
3. The Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Norbeck Road (MD28) interchange should replace Phase II of the Woodfield Road (MD124) widening project as the County's next construction priority after the I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended interchange.
4. The Spencerville Road (MD198) widening from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike should be deleted from the priority list. This segment does not have high forecast traffic congestion in the near term since the ICC will take some of the traffic pressure off this road, and it is outside the State's Priority Funding Area. The project is also in the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area and a portion of it goes through the Spencerville Historic District, so it will require a significant effort to get this project designed and funded for construction, an effort that we believe should be put off until a later date.

(12)

5. The description of the County's #2 priority for new starts under the State's Development and Evaluation (D&E) program, Rockville Pike (MD355)/Cedar Lane interchange, should be expanded to encompass the segment of MD355 between Woodmont Avenue and the Capital Beltway (I-495) to reflect the general high level of congestion throughout this segment of MD355, its importance as an evacuation route from Washington to the Beltway, to reflect access changes at NIH, and to accommodate the BRAC-related relocation of employees from Walter Reed to the National Naval Medical Center.
6. The Rockville Pike (MD355)/Nicholson Lane interchange should be deleted from the priority list as it is not one of the most congested intersections and network improvements that are expected to be provided by developers in the near future will likely reduce the need for an interchange.
7. The Veirs Mill Road (MD586)/Randolph Road interchange should be deleted from the D&E priority list given the lack of current congestion following the recent at-grade improvements.
8. The scope of two D&E priorities--Veirs Mill Road (MD586) Bus Rapid Transit, Rockville to Wheaton, and University Boulevard (MD193) Bus Rapid Transit, Wheaton to Langley Park--should be increased to encompass pedestrian improvements along these routes, including enhanced lighting, to ensure safe access for transit patrons.
9. The Bi-County Transitway Spur, Langley Park to White Oak should be deleted from the list of priorities until it is approved as part of a Master Plan Amendment to incorporate the mainline of the Bi-County Transitway. The Council has not yet directed us to study this as part of the proposed Amendment.
10. Safety improvements should be made as soon as possible to the Rockville Pike (MD355)/Shady Grove Road intersection to reduce the high level of crashes that have been occurring the last three years.

Enclosure 1 is the recommended list of priorities reflecting the above Board comments.

### **State Transportation Participation**

We recommend that the following candidates be funded as part of the County's State Transportation Participation program (in order of priority):

1. Rockville Pike (MD355)/Montrose Parkway interchange (Construction)
2. Needwood Road Bike Path, as part of ICC Bike Path (Construction)
3. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Montgomery Hills reconstruction study (Development and Evaluation)

4. Full ICC Record of Decision (ROD) Bike Plan Implementation (Development and Evaluation)
5. Veirs Mill Road (MD586) Bus Rapid Transit and Pedestrian and Lighting Improvements, Rockville to Wheaton (Development and Evaluation)
6. University Boulevard (MD193) Bus Rapid Transit and Pedestrian and Lighting Improvements, Wheaton to Langley Park (Development and Evaluation)
7. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Norbeck Road (MD28) interchange (Construction)
8. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Brookeville Bypass (Construction)

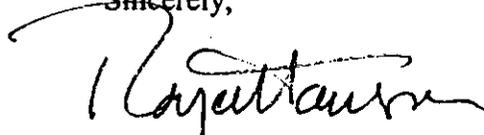
### **The County's 10-year Transportation Program**

The Planning Board recommends that all of the projects on the list of joint priorities that is sent to the State Delegation also be listed in the County's 10-year transportation program. We also recommend that the following projects be added to the County's 10-year transportation program (no priority noted):

1. Full implementation of the 2007 recommendations of Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee (shown as Enclosure 2)
2. Continuous Lighting on State Highways in Urban Areas
3. Implementation of an "Every Light, Every Night" Policy for better streetlight operations in the county (shown as Enclosure 3)
4. Implementation of Access 2000 Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Improvements at Metro and MARC Stations
5. Full ICC Record of Decision Bike Plan Implementation
6. Sidewalk Retrofit Program on Major Highways and Arterials in Urban Areas
7. Enhanced Bus Shelters on Major Transit Routes

The Board appreciates the Council's consideration of our comments in your deliberations on the County's transportation priorities. If you have any questions about the Board's recommendations, please feel free to call me at 301-495-4605.

Sincerely,



Royce Hanson  
Chairman

**Enclosure 1**

**STATE PRIORITY LIST**

As recommended by the Planning Board on 1/4/07

**Construction – Safety**

1. Rockville Pike (MD355)/Shady Grove Road intersection

**Construction**

1. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Randolph Road interchange
2. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended interchange
3. Needwood Road Bike Path, from the ICC to Beach Drive/Rock Creek Park
4. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Norbeck Road (MD28)
5. Brookeville Bypass (MD97)
6. Spencerville Road (MD198) Widening from Old Columbia Pike to US29
7. Norbeck Road (MD28) Widening from Georgia Avenue (MD97) to Layhill Road (MD182)
8. US29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road interchange
9. Rockville Pike (MD355)/Montrose Parkway (Phase II) – CSX Grade Separation
10. Clopper Road (MD117) Widening from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park
11. Woodfield Road (MD124) Widening (Phase II), from Midcounty Highway to South of Airpark Road
12. Woodfield Road (MD124) Widening from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Field Crest Road to Warfield Road
13. First Street (MD 28)/Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Wooton Parkway interchange

### **Development and Evaluation - Highway**

1. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Montgomery Hills reconstruction
2. Rockville Pike (MD355) from Woodmont Avenue and the Capital Beltway (I-495)
3. Full ICC ROD Bike Plan
4. Midcounty Highway Extended, from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road
5. Frederick Road (MD355)/Gude Drive interchange
6. Great Seneca Highway (MD119) flyover at Sam Eig Highway
7. Frederick Road (MD355) widening from 2,000 feet south of Brink Road to the future Clarksburg Bypass
8. Frederick Road (MD355) reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg
9. Veirs Mill Road widening from Randolph Road to Twinbrook Parkway
10. I-270/Gude Drive
11. Laytonsville Bypass (MD108)

### **Development and Evaluation – Transit**

1. Veirs Mill Road (MD586) Bus Rapid Transit and Pedestrian and Lighting Improvements, Rockville to Wheaton
2. Georgia Avenue (MD97) Busway, Glenmont to Olney
3. University Boulevard (MD193) Bus Rapid Transit and Pedestrian and Lighting Improvements, Wheaton to Langley Park
4. North Bethesda Transitway, Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

December 28, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Gwen Wright, Acting Chief  
County-wide Planning Division

Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief  
Transportation Planning

**FROM:** Larry Cole: 301-495-4528, for the Montgomery County Planning Department *LC*

**DISCUSSION:** Transportation Priorities: The Montgomery County 10-Year  
Transportation Program and the State Transportation Priority List

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This memorandum contains in Attachment 1 the status of all the projects in the County's current 10-year transportation program, as requested by the Planning Board as part of your discussion on the CTP on October 26, 2006.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends that the Board forward the following comments to the County Council, with a new priority list reflecting these changes (see Attachment 2):

**General**

We recommend that all of the projects on the list of joint priorities that is sent to the State Delegation also be listed in the County's 10-year transportation program.

**Priority List of State Projects**

We recommend the following changes to the current priority list of State projects, as reflected in the letter dated November 2, 2005, jointly signed by the County Executive and the Council President:

1. The Glenmont Parking Garage is now fully funded and should be deleted from the list.
2. The Needwood Road Bike Path, from the ICC to Beach Drive/Rock Creek Park should be added as a high priority for construction.
3. The Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Norbeck Road (MD28) interchange should replace Phase II of the Woodfield Road (MD124) widening project as the County's next construction priority after the I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended interchange.

(17)

4. The Spencerville Road (MD198) widening from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike should be deleted from the priority list. This segment does not have high forecast traffic congestion in the near term since the ICC will take some of the traffic pressure off this road, and it is outside the State's Priority Funding Area. The project is also in the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area and a portion of it goes through the Spencerville Historic District, so it will require a significant effort to get this project designed and funded for construction, an effort that we believe should be put off until a later date.
5. The description of the County's #2 priority for new starts under the State's Development and Evaluation (D&E) program, Rockville Pike (MD355)/Cedar Lane interchange, should be expanded to encompass the segment of MD355 between Woodmont Avenue and the Capital Beltway (I-495) to reflect the general high level of congestion throughout this segment of MD355, its importance as an evacuation route from Washington to the Beltway, to reflect access changes at NIH, and to accommodate the BRAC-related relocation of employees from Walter Reed to the National Naval Medical Center.
6. The Rockville Pike (MD355)/Nicholson Lane interchange should be deleted from the priority list as it is not one of the most congested intersections and network improvements that are expected to be provided by developers in the near future will likely reduce the need for an interchange.
7. The Veirs Mill Road (MD586)/Randolph Road interchange should be deleted from the D&E priority list given the lack of current congestion following the recent at-grade improvements.
8. The scope of two D&E priorities - Veirs Mill Road (MD586) Bus Rapid Transit, Rockville to Wheaton, and University Boulevard (MD193) Bus Rapid Transit, Wheaton to Langley Park - should be increased to encompass pedestrian improvements along these routes, including enhanced lighting, to ensure safe access for transit patrons.
9. The Bi-County Transitway Spur, Langley Park to White Oak should be deleted from the list of priorities until it is approved as part of a Master Plan Amendment to incorporate the mainline of the Bi-County Transitway. The Council has not yet directed us to study this as part of the proposed Amendment.
10. Safety improvements should be made as soon as possible to the Rockville Pike (MD355)/Shady Grove Road intersection to reduce the high level of crashes that have been occurring the last three years.

#### **State Transportation Participation**

We recommend that the following candidates be funded as part of the County's State Transportation Participation program (in order of priority):

1. Rockville Pike (MD355)/Montrose Parkway interchange (Construction)
2. Needwood Road Bike Path, as part of ICC Bike Path (Construction)

3. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Montgomery Hills reconstruction study (Development and Evaluation) <
4. Full ICC Record of Decision (ROD) Bike Plan Implementation (Development and Evaluation)
5. Veirs Mill Road (MD586) Bus Rapid Transit and Pedestrian and Lighting Improvements, Rockville to Wheaton (Development and Evaluation)
6. University Boulevard (MD193) Bus Rapid Transit and Pedestrian and Lighting Improvements, Wheaton to Langley Park (Development and Evaluation)
7. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Norbeck Road (MD28) interchange (Construction)
8. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Brookeville Bypass (Construction)

#### **The County's 10-year Transportation Program**

The Planning Board recommends that the following projects be added to the County's 10-year transportation program (no priority noted):

1. Full implementation of the 2007 recommendations of Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee
2. Continuous Lighting on State Highways in Urban Areas
3. Implementation of an "Every Light, Every Night" Policy for better streetlight operations in the county
4. Implementation of Access 2000 Pedestrian and Bicycle Access Improvements at Metro and MARC Stations
5. Full ICC ROD Bike Plan Implementation
6. Sidewalk Retrofit Program on Major Highways and Arterials in Urban Areas
7. Enhanced Bus Shelters on Major Transit Routes

*(Staff makes no recommendation for prioritization of the projects in the 10-year program at this time. Most will become CIP projects and can be ranked as part of the CIP review process.)*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Planning Board reviewed the draft FY2007-FY2012 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) on October 26, 2006 and provided comments to the County Council in advance of the CTP Tour meeting and the Delegation hearing on the CTP (see Attachment 3).

Staff is recommending in this memo that some changes and additions be made to the County's priority list for State projects, the update of which the County Council's Transportation and Environment Committee is anticipated to discuss in January or early February, followed by a full Council discussion. The County's official list of priorities for State projects will then be forwarded in a letter to the Montgomery County Delegation, jointly signed by the Council and the Executive. The last joint letter was sent on November 2, 2005 and is shown as Attachment 4.

Two years ago, the County's list of transportation priorities for new starts on State projects was expanded into the County's 10-year transportation program to encompass many County projects also. Attachment 1 shows the County's current 10-year transportation plan, dated Summer 2006, noting the current status of each of these projects, and where appropriate, their priority in the joint letter on State priorities. While the 10-year plan was intended to comprise the whole program for major transportation projects in the county, there are several projects in the 11/2/05 joint letter that do not appear in the Summer 2006 10-year plan. For clarity purposes in this discussion, staff has amended the list to include those projects also for the purpose of this discussion. However, *staff believes that the Board should recommend to the Council that these two lists be reconciled, with all of the State priorities being selected from the 10-year plan.*

While staff is in agreement with most of the current State priorities, we believe that a general reassessment of the County's 10-year Transportation program is needed to ensure that it accurately reflects the County's needs and priorities, not just in transportation, but in furthering the County's overall planning goals.

Because of the large number of locations under discussion and the types of information to be considered, staff's presentation at the Board's meeting will rely on a graphic depiction that shows the candidate projects on countywide maps using our GOS platform. It is not feasible to produce these maps in a legible form in this memo.

## TRANSPORTATION POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Before discussing individual projects, staff offers the following policy issues for consideration in the affirmation or deletion of the projects on the current priority list and in the selection of new candidates for the list.

For the past few years, much of the discussion of transportation priorities on Montgomery County's roadways has been focused on improving the vehicular level of service during peak periods. Discussed less are other concerns such as the level of service for other users, safety, and how these roads operate during off-peak periods.

Several states and Federal agencies are evaluating alternative means to quantify and qualify Multi-modal Level of Service. Montgomery County has addressed the issue in part by allowing higher congestion levels in densely developed areas with good transit service, areas where pedestrian volumes and needs are highest.

Staff has considered the following topics in our priority recommendations to the Board and will be continuing to discuss how best to incorporate these considerations during our work on the County's Growth Policy in Spring 2007.

### Congestion

With the advent of the Highway Mobility Report (HMR), we have a good tool to measure congestion, a tool that will be refined to a greater degree each year as our database of traffic data increases. The list of congested intersections exceeding the County's policy area standards is dynamic however with changes from one year to the next due to variations in traffic volumes, implementation of traffic signal timing changes, and other improvements. While it gives a good snapshot of what is happening on the ground, the variability means that one cannot use a single year's data to determine the priority of transportation projects. What staff has used is the current list, with consideration of which intersections have appeared on previous lists, in addition to traffic forecasts.

The current list of congested intersections exceeding the County's policy area standards is shown as Attachment 5, and now comprises 63 intersections. The list has been updated since the Board reviewed the HMR to reflect completed improvements at intersections and to reflect data received from SHA in their study of the effects of the interchange construction on US29. For those intersections that are also listed on the State's 2005 High Accident Location list (Attachment 6), the accident rate is also shown on Attachment 5 for ease in cross-referencing.

Staff will present a map at the Board's meeting showing the level of congestion for those intersections that are near or over the allowable CLV for the applicable area, as well as the relative traffic volumes for the intersections.

### Traffic Forecasts

While current congestion is a significant consideration in the prioritization of projects, traffic forecasts are an essential tool for determining which facilities will continue to have problems as well as in determining which will need improvements before problems occur.

### Network Connectivity

While developers are responsible for making individual transportation improvements in growing areas, government will continue to be responsible for ensuring that a sufficient transportation network is provided. As was seen in Clarksburg as an example, even where developers have been required to build substantial portions of the transportation infrastructure, the timing of those improvements can become a concern. A coordinated implementation is needed to ensure that they are done in a timely manner, with the County or State providing the higher-level facilities in many instances supported by developer fees. Improvements in how the County ensures that this will happen, whether by impact taxes, the establishment of development districts, or by other means, will be part of our Growth Policy discussions next Spring.

### Base Realignment and Closures (BRAC)

Whereas developers can be required to mitigate the transportation impacts caused by their projects, the County and State have no regulatory power over the Federal Government. On earlier projects such as the Food and Drug Administration's consolidation in White Oak, their general stance has been that the additional jobs created are a benefit and that any necessary

transportation improvements should be locally funded. Therefore, staff believes that a greater weight needs to be given to transportation projects that would support employment expected at these Federal facilities.

The proposed BRAC-related personnel transfers from Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC to the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda and to the Walter Reed Annex on Brookville Road in Silver Spring are also sizeable employee influxes that will have to be accommodated on existing roads, with no announced contribution from the Federal Government to support the transportation infrastructure. Between 1,000 and 2,500 additional personnel are anticipated at NNMC (1,889 are noted in the official BRAC report), as well as an additional approximately half a million patients and visitors per year. The effects of BRAC on the Walter Reed Annex are unclear.

### Crash History

Safety data has not been considered to the same degree as congestion in determining the County's transportation priorities in the past. It is also important to note that collision data only represents those accidents that were reported to the police, which many collisions involving only property damage are not. The 2005 list of high accident locations on State highways is shown as Attachment 6. This data will be reflected in the displays at the Board's meeting. As with the traffic data however, the high accident locations vary significantly from year to year. Part of this may be due to roadway improvements being made, but all of the reasons are not clear at this time. Staff will be working on this issue, although we caution that accident statistics require a complex analysis that is only possible on a general basis with our current staffing.

The Montgomery County Police Department's report on pedestrian collisions is also shown as Attachment 7. This report notes that of the top ten roads in the county for pedestrian collisions, all are State roads, except for #9, Randolph Road.

### Intersection Widening and Safety

The intersection of Rockville Pike at Shady Grove Road was widened a few years ago as part of SHA's Congestion Relief Study (CRS) to provide the desired number of turn and auxiliary lanes. Following the improvements however, the intersection has become a high-accident location with 62 reported crashes in 2004 and 55 in 2005, significantly higher than any other intersection in the county. The crash rate and crash severity rate for 2005 were triple that of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and University Boulevard, by comparison. To compare, all four roads at these two intersections have six through lanes and have comparable traffic volumes, about 40,000 vehicles per day. But the Wheaton intersection is only half the size of the Shady Grove intersection (see Attachments 8 and 9, which are at the same plan scale). One significant difference between the two locations is that Wheaton has a grid of streets that accommodates some of the turning movements at the intersection that are prohibited at the intersection. Shady Grove does not have such a grid, and accommodating the turning movements requires longer crossing distances for pedestrians, more conflicts, and the absence of a crosswalk on the south leg of Rockville Pike. The majority of the crashes are noted as being left-turn-related.

Rockville Pike (MD355) at Shady Grove Road is noted as the intersection with the second highest accident rate for 2005 on Attachment 6. Staff also notes that two intersections on

Muncaster Mill Road (MD115), #6 at Shady Grove Road/Airpark Road and #8 at Muncaster Road/Redland Road, are also intersections where widenings were also completed in the last couple of years as part of the CRS program.

Staff believes that the presence of so many recently "improved" intersections on the high accident location list is a cause for concern and that further study is needed to determine the reason for the apparent correlation between decreased congestion and an increase in crashes. The results of such a study could affect the prioritization of future projects, or reveal design flaws that should be modified.

#### Emergency Preparedness

The main radial routes from the District of Columbia serve as evacuation routes in the event of an emergency. There are severe congestion problems on some of these routes, most notably Georgia Avenue, Rockville Pike, and Colesville Road inside the Beltway. Staff believes that a higher priority needs to be given to these routes, particularly those segments inside the Beltway, to ensure that they will be able to operate well in the event of an emergency.

#### Smart Growth

The State's Priority Funding Areas were created in response to Smart Growth concerns and the State will not fund improvements outside those areas except for reasons of safety. Staff recommends that the County adopt a similar policy as one strategy to limit growth in the Agricultural Reserve. While the purpose of today's discussion is to discuss transportation priorities, staff notes that several new public schools are proposed outside the PFA and that other parts of the County's budget might need to be modified to respond to a broad application of such a policy.

### **REASSESSING AND UPDATING PRIORITIES**

When we go beyond the initial list of four projects, staff recommends that the County's 10-year transportation plan and priority list be reassessed. The current 10-year transportation plan is heavily weighted toward highway projects that would increase capacity and reduce congestion.

The improvements under the current 10-year plan would enable the share of rush hour transit work trips to grow from 15.2% of all work trips to 17.4%. In whole numbers, the rush hour transit work trips would grow by 26,000 additional riders by 2015, but non-transit rush hour trips would grow twice as fast. Despite the large increase in non-transit trips, rush hour congestion would be reduced from 39.6% to 32.6% by the implementation of the roadway projects in the 10-year plan in its current form.

Even with the transportation improvements that the Board requires of developers as a condition of approval, relief of existing congestion problems and additional capacity to accommodate new development will continue to be significant priorities and responsibilities for the County. But *staff believes that the current 10-year plan targets should more broadly encompass project and programs designed specifically to address safety, transit, pedestrian, and bicyclist needs as the County's growth orientation shifts from suburban development to urban redevelopment.*

## How should we use the County's funds to leverage State funds

The initial list of State projects to be partially funded with County funds has focused on roadway construction projects in the pipeline. In rethinking the County's priorities however, the question should also be asked: Rather than target capacity projects that SHA would pursue if it had sufficient funds, should we incentivize those projects that SHA has not expressed a great interest in doing on their own?

## COMMENTS ON THE CURRENT STATE PRIORITY LIST

### Construction

1. Glenmont Metro Garage: Fully funded.
2. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Randolph Road interchange: Staff believes that the Council should advance the funds needed for the accelerated construction schedule.
3. I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended interchange: This project would be a breakout from the I-270/US15 study. Developers are currently constructing the road and will provide almost all of the right-of-way. This project would alleviate congestion at three nearby intersections that also are high accident locations.
4. Woodfield Road (MD124) Widening (Phase II), from Midcounty Highway to South of Airpark Road: This segment does not have any intersections exceeding their congestion standard on the current list, although forecast traffic volumes show that it will be needed. *Staff recommends that this project be made a lesser priority and that it should not be funded with State Transportation participation funds at this time. (Phase I of the Woodfield Road widening project, from South of Airpark Road to Fieldcrest Road, which is already funded for construction, includes the Fieldcrest intersection which is listed as #27 on the list of most congested intersections. The latter project is anticipated by the Board to be reviewed as a Mandatory Referral on 2/1/07.)*
5. Brookeville Bypass (MD97): This project is on the DPWT's list of the next four candidate projects that could be partially funded by the County.
6. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Norbeck Road (MD28): This project has been skipped as the next priority for County funding in favor of the two Woodfield Road projects on the construction list, #4 and #13. This intersection is listed as the fifth most congested intersection. *Staff recommends that this project replace Phase II of the Woodfield Road widening as the #4 construction priority and that it be considered for funding with State Transportation participation funds.*
7. Clopper Road (MD117) Widening from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park: Improvements to Clopper Road between I-270 and Firstfield Road were completed a year or so ago. Phases II and III are in design but are not yet funded for construction. "Production" advertisement dates are as follows: Phase II - 12/07; Phase III - 7/08. No intersections on Clopper Road currently appear on the list of the 63 intersections now exceeding their congestion standards (see Attachment 5), but Great Seneca Highway, which was

constructed in part as the relief road for Clopper Road has three: at Muddy Branch Road (#1), at Quince Orchard Road (#29), and at Kentlands Boulevard (#60). The Clopper Road project has been dormant for some time, but was recently restarted. Improvements along this road, which are almost ready for construction, could relieve traffic on Great Seneca Highway.

8. Spencerville Road (MD198) Widening from Old Columbia Pike to US29: While this is a widening project, it would also have safety benefits and commercial revitalization benefits.
9. Norbeck Road (MD28) Widening from Georgia Avenue (MD97) to Layhill Road (MD182): This project would address capacity problems in this segment of MD28.
10. US29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road interchange: The Fairland Master Plan requires that an assessment be done of the traffic impacts of each interchange along US29 before proceeding with construction of the next. The construction of two interchanges is now complete and the third will be in the next few months. Staff has incorporated the study data provided by SHA so far into the list of congested intersections, which shows the Fairland Road intersection as #17. The intersection is also listed as #28 on the list of high accident locations.
11. Rockville Pike (MD355)/Montrose Parkway (Phase II) – CSX Grade Separation: This project is a needed safety and congestion project, however it would require the acquisition of approximately \$10 million in property and businesses if it is not constructed with the Montrose parkway East project, a County project that is currently not funded for construction. The latter project is anticipated to be reviewed by the Planning Board in the next few months.
12. I-270/Newcut Road: Staff believes that the level of developer-funding that might be sought for this project should be addressed as part of the Growth Policy discussions.
13. Woodfield Road (MD124) Widening from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Field Crest Road to Warfield Road: *Staff recommends that this project be moved to a lesser priority and not be funded with State Transportation participation funds at this time.*
14. Spencerville Road (MD198) from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike: SHA's MD28/MD198 Study is broken into three projects that are listed separately on the current priority list for construction funding, #'s 8, 9, and 14, for a total cost of \$225 M. The Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road interchange (#6) is an associated project that would cost an additional \$75M. Staff believes that the ranking of these projects for the MD28/MD198 corridor is correct, and in particular that the interchange should move forward.

The construction of the ICC appears imminent and the ICC study shows that there will be a reduction in the future traffic increase on this segment of MD198, which is estimated to cost \$115M and is outside the Priority Funding Area (PFA). The project is also in the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area and a portion of it goes through the

Spencerville Historic District. Any State-funded improvements along MD198 in this segment would probably be limited to safety improvements only, consistent with MD's Smart Growth legislation. *Staff recommends that this project be dropped from the priority list.*

15. First Street (MD 28)/Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Wooton Parkway interchange: This intersection is #13 on the list of most congested intersections. The City of Rockville has expressed a desire to pursue a study in conjunction with interchanges at Hungerford Drive (MD 355)/Middle Lane and at Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Veirs Mill Road (MD 28) rather than design this one first.

#### **Development and Evaluation (Planning) - Highway**

1. Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Montgomery Hills reconstruction: The Georgia Avenue (MD97) reconstruction in Montgomery Hills has been at the top of the County's priority list to enter the State's Development and Evaluation program since 1999, but no planning or design work has been done. It would be a difficult project with lots of coordination needed with property and business owners and utility relocation, but it is one of the highest volume non-interstate roads in the state and the beltway interchange is one of the highest volume interchanges in the state. While the project is listed as a County priority for commercial revitalization, there are significant congestion problems, including one of the county's most congested intersections at Forest Glen Road. (The intersection is shown as #3 on the latest list, but recent traffic signal phasing changes should improve conditions a bit.). That intersection was also one of highest in the State's 2004 list of high accident locations. There have also been recent requests from the public for a tunnel under Georgia Avenue at this intersection. There are a number of issues that need to be addressed here that the State has so far been unwilling to tackle in a comprehensive way, but has instead implemented smaller projects that have sometimes had inadvertent adverse impacts. This project should be listed as a BRAC project given the fact that staff are proposed to be moved from the main campus of Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) to the Walter Reed Annex on Brookville Road. It is also an important evacuation route from Washington, DC. *Staff recommends that the much-needed comprehensive study and design of the Georgia Avenue/Montgomery Hills project be funded as part of the Council's new initiative.*
2. Rockville Pike (MD355)/Cedar Lane interchange: This intersection is currently listed as the fourth most congested intersection in the county. This intersection would have a BRAC impact from the relocation of employees from WRAMC to the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC); it is adjacent to another major federal facility, the National Institutes of Health, which has had changes in driveway access because of security concerns; and Rockville Pike is an important evacuation route from Washington, DC. While improvements are needed at this location, staff notes that two nearby intersections on the Pike are also high on the list of congested intersections, South Drive/Wood Road entrances to NNMC (#6) and Pooks Hill Road near the Beltway (#10). Rather than study the Cedar Lane intersection in isolation, *staff recommends the County's #2 priority for the D&E program be expanded to encompass the segment of Rockville Pike (MD355) between Woodmont Avenue and the Capital Beltway (I-495).*

3. Midcounty Highway Extended, from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road: This project would provide a better connection between Upper Montgomery County and the ICC and would alleviate congestion that would otherwise occur on Shady Grove Road and other area roads with the construction of the ICC.
4. Frederick Road (MD355)/Gude Drive interchange: This project appears as #30 on the list of congested intersections, but has also appeared on the list previously.
5. Great Seneca Highway (MD119) flyover at Sam Eij Highway: This intersection is not currently listed as being over its congestion standard, but three other intersections on MD119 are. Given the growth of employment in this area, staff believes that this project should remain on the candidate list.
6. Frederick Road (MD355) widening from 2,000 feet south of Brink Road to the future Clarksburg Bypass: A significant segment of the proposed study is now underway by developers, and it is possible that more of the road will end up being designed and constructed by developers also. Travel time runs have revealed that there is a significant traffic bottleneck in this segment of MD355, as discussed in the 2006 HMR.
7. Rockville Pike (MD355)/Nicholson Lane interchange: This project does not appear as on the list of the 63 most congested intersections. The extension of Executive Boulevard south to tie into Rockville Pike will likely occur as part of development in the near future and should reduce the traffic load on this intersection. Staff believes that this is not a high priority and that network improvements would be the preferred solution in the near-term. The White Flint Sector Plan update will consider whether this project is needed in the long-term. **Staff recommends that this interchange be deleted from the priority list.**
8. Frederick Road (MD355) reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg: This project would consist of streetscaping and pedestrian improvements. Staff believes that the priority seems appropriate but is not recommending a Board comment since the City of Gaithersburg has its own planning responsibility.
9. Veirs Mill Road (MD586)/Randolph Road interchange: This intersection does not appear on the current list of 63 intersections exceeding their congestion standard. **Staff recommends that it be deleted from the priority list.**
10. Veirs Mill Road widening from Randolph Road to Twinbrook Parkway: The need for this project will be much greater if the Montrose Parkway East project is built. Staff recommends that this project be retained on the list until a decision is made on the Montrose Parkway East project
11. I-270/Gude Drive: This interchange is in the City of Rockville Master Plan. The construction of this interchange could increase the need for improvements at the MD355/Gude Drive intersection (D&E priority #4 above).
12. Laytonsville Bypass (MD108): The Laytonsville Bypass project would be similar to the Brookeville Bypass (MD97) in that it is intended to remove through traffic from the center of one of the county's historic towns. Because the Brookeville Bypass would be

outside the PFA, the County had to agree to several conditions in order to keep the planning for the project on track. The Town of Laytonsville has recently created a new alignment for the proposed Laytonsville Bypass that is wholly within the town limits to conform to the funding constraints of the State's Smart Growth legislation. The northern half of this roadway would be within an area that was recently annexed to the Town, although staff is unsure whether some mechanism is needed to amend the PFA limits to encompass this annexed area. The congestion at the Laytonsville Road (MD108)/Brink Road/Sundown Road is fairly minor at present, so the real issue is one of community and historic preservation. Staff does not believe that this is a high priority, but is not recommending a Board comment since the Town of Laytonsville has its own planning responsibility and it is currently the last on the list in this category.

**Development and Evaluation (Planning) – Transit**

With the exception of the Bi-County Transitway Spur noted as part of #4 on the Council's current list, which has not been evaluated yet, staff believes that all of the transit projects on the list below are valuable and needed projects. Since cost data for these projects have been developed at different times and to different levels of accuracy, staff does not have sufficient information to change the ranking of these projects.

1. Veirs Mill Road (MD586) Bus Rapid Transit, Rockville to Wheaton: Staff concurs that this is the highest priority but notes that Veirs Mill Road has a very high occurrence of pedestrian collisions. The road is listed as having the third highest number of pedestrian collisions in the county in 2005, despite the fact that it is far shorter than the #1 and #2 roads (see Attachment 7, page 4).

<b>Review of Pedestrian Collision Data:</b> Since the rankings used in the report are strictly on a "by road" basis, staff has calculated the pedestrian collisions per mile of road for the top five roads:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rockville Pike/Frederick Road (MD355): 33 collisions on a 26.83-mile road equals a rate of 1.2 pedestrian collisions per mile.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Georgia Avenue (MD97): 18 collisions on an 18.22-mile road equals a rate of one pedestrian collision per mile.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Veirs Mill Road (MD586): 17 collisions on a 5.78-mile road equals a rate of 2.9 pedestrian collisions per mile.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• University Boulevard (MD193): 16 collisions on a 6.7-mile road equals a rate of 2.4 pedestrian collisions per mile.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecticut Avenue (MD185): 11 collisions on an 8.3-mile road equals a rate of 1.3 pedestrian collisions per mile.</li> </ul>

Staff notes that the pedestrian collision rates for Veirs Mill Road and for University Boulevard, currently the #3 priority below, are double those of the other three roads in the top five. Both roads have also been the location of pedestrian fatalities in the last few years (see Attachment 7, page 7).

Safe pedestrian access is a critical component of public safety and necessary to accommodate and promote the use of transit. *Staff recommends that the scope of this study be expanded to encompass pedestrian safety improvements, including street lighting, along this roadway, and*

*to take more of Complete Streets approach to design.* This approach will be discussed in greater detail in the memo to the Board on the Road Code update, scheduled to be discussed at the January 4, 2006 meeting also.

2. Georgia Avenue (MD97) Busway, Glenmont to Olney: Staff notes that there has been pressure to widen the Georgia Avenue (MD97) intersections with Connecticut Avenue (MD185) and with Old Baltimore Road, widenings that would have adversely affected the ability of the busway to be constructed in the future. Rather than acquire more right-of-way, SHA decided to drop the proposed improvements, but this issue may arise again, as it already has for a second time at the Old Baltimore Road intersection.
3. University Boulevard (MD193) Bus Rapid Transit, Wheaton to Langley Park: This project appears very cost-effective and could be implemented incrementally. It would link to the Takoma-Langley Park Transit Center now programmed for construction. Enhanced J4 bus service is anticipated to begin shortly. A full planning study and rapid implementation would support that effort. As with the University Boulevard BRT study, staff recommends that this project be expanded to encompass pedestrian safety and street lighting improvements. Staff is concerned that there may be more of an immediate need for these improvements rather than for the Georgia Avenue Busway, but that more data and a more significant technical effort are required before we can recommend a change in these priorities.
4. North Bethesda Transitway, Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall; and Bi-County Transitway Spur, Langley Park to White Oak: These two studies are not contiguous and should be split into separate priorities. However, staff believes that the latter study should be dropped in favor of a recommendation to the study team for the Bi-County Transitway to consider this possible connection in the future. Staff notes that while the mainline of the Bi-County Transitway is under study by the State, it is not a Master Plan facility. The spur should be considered in the context of any Master Plan Amendment to incorporate a Bi-County Transitway alignment. Until then, staff believes that it should not be funded for planning given limited resources.

#### **NEW ADDITIONS TO THE STATE PRIORITY LIST**

As part of the Board's discussion in December, the Board should consider recommending that the Council add the study the implementation of the full ICC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan to the County's list of priorities for new starts under SHA's Construction and Development and Evaluation Programs.

#### **ICC Bike Path (Development and Evaluation)**

A bike path along the ICC's entire length is recommended in both the 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan and the 1998 Countywide Park Trails Plan. As part of the ICC Record of Decision (ROD), the State Highway Administration has committed to construct only 7.7 miles of the path adjacent to the highway. The SHA has also promised to work with the County to implement the ICC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan included in the ROD, intended to serve the same function as the full-length bike path along the entire highway.

To date, the State has not committed any funding assistance to help implement the ICC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, nor has the State conducted a feasibility analysis to be sure the pieces of the plan not being built as part of the highway project can be implemented. For example, several segments of the plan recommend an on-road bike route to serve as the alternative to the bike path. Planning Department staff's position is that the plan must accommodate all potential trail users and ability levels. On-road bike lanes or shared travel lanes do not accommodate average/beginner/child bicyclists or pedestrians. Therefore, segments of the Plan that recommend on-road bike facilities also require off-road facilities (sidewalks or shared use paths) so that all trail user groups and abilities are adequately accommodated.

The Planning Board is scheduled to receive a briefing on the ICC ROD Bike Plan on the same day as this item. *Staff recommends that the ICC ROD Bike Plan be added to the State priority list and that it be partially funded under the County's State Transportation Participation program.*

#### Needwood Road Bike Path (Construction)

Planning for the rest of the ICC Bike Plan is recommended above, but the construction of the path along Needwood Road, from the ICC to Beach Drive/Rock Creek Park needs to be advanced, not only for accessibility, but for safety reasons also. This issue will be discussed in greater detail during the Board's ICC Bike Plan discussion.

#### Rockville Pike (MD355)/Shady Grove Road (Construction - Safety)

Safety improvements should be made to the Rockville Pike (MD355)/Shady Grove Road intersection to reduce the high level of crashes that have been occurring the last couple of years, as discussed above. While staff believes that these improvements should be made as soon as possible, we are not recommending the priority for the Construction projects be changed. This project should be done, as a separate, immediate safety need.

### **NEW CANDIDATES FOR THE COUNTY'S 10-YEAR TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM**

#### Full implementation of the 2007 recommendations of Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee

The County's Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian and Traffic Safety was created in response to a significant rise in pedestrian fatalities and issued its final report in January 2002. While the Panel's goal was to reduce the number of pedestrian fatalities by January 2005, the number has actually risen to seventeen for 2006, as of the date of this memo.

The Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee has recommended to the new County Executive and Council that twenty steps be taken in 2007 to address the need for greater safety (see Attachment 10). Many of these recommendations were in the original 2002 report but never implemented. Staff recommend that full implementation of the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Pedestrian Safety be adopted as one of the County's priorities, not just for the ten-year plan, but to be implemented in the coming year.

Trips on the county's Ride On buses have increased by 2 million over the past two years, and ridership has increased more than 50 percent in the last ten years. Beyond the need to make the needed improvements for safety's sake, pedestrian improvements are also needed to support transit usage, keeping transit patrons safe traveling to and from bus stops.

### Every Light, Every Night

Many streetlights across the county are out on any given day and many are out for long periods of time. DPWT has no staff permanently assigned to monitoring street light outages and relies on reports from citizens, either by telephone or by e-mail on their website. Staff in the Urban Districts do have this responsibility but the same problems occur in these areas also.

DPWT owns the streetlights that are on their own poles and is responsible for their maintenance. Pepco is responsible for the maintenance of lights that are on utility poles. Even after the outages are reported to Pepco, it often takes months for the lights to be fixed or replaced. One possible reason for this is that Pepco is paid for each light on a monthly basis whether or not the light is working. Functioning streetlights are a critical safety component of the transportation system, particularly for pedestrians who typically do not have their own illumination devices, unlike drivers and even many bicyclists. Poor roadway lighting has been indicated as a contributing factor in a high percentage of the county's pedestrian fatalities. The lack of a fully functioning system is a public safety problem.

The City of Philadelphia has an "Every Light, Every Night" policy, intended to keep all streetlights functioning at all times. Their success rate is greater than 99% (see Attachment 11). Staff recommends that the County institute such a program and that it be made one of the County's priorities in the 10-year transportation program.

### Continuous Lighting on State Highways in Urban Areas

As discussed as part of the recent Mandatory Referral of the project to construct an interchange at Rockville Pike (MD355) and Montrose Parkway, SHA's lighting policy is not to provide continuous lighting along State highways, but to provide lighting only at intersections and generally only signalized intersections.

SHA's lighting policy is at odds with the safety needs of the general public, particularly so in urban areas. Most of the Montgomery County's pedestrian fatalities occur on State highways. A significant percentage of those fatalities have occurred during the early morning and evening hours in areas when the low level of lighting was indicated as a factor.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is the agency that provides policy guidance to its members, including the State of Maryland. AASHTO published the latest edition of its Roadway Lighting Design Guide in October 2005. To quote from its guidance on "streets and highways other than freeways (including walkways and bicycle ways)":

*"The literature is replete with data demonstrating the value of fixed lighting for facilities without access control and the resulting benefits to the public. Some of the elements that warrant the lighting of urban streets and highways are traffic volumes (both vehicles and pedestrians), at-*

*grade intersections, turning movements, signalization, and varying geometrics. The need for street and highways lighting in areas with frequent inclement weather should be considered. In addition to its safety benefits, lighting may serve as a crime deterrent, may aid law enforcement agencies, may contribute to user comfort, and often contributes to community pride. These benefits may serve as a basis for the local government agency to pay an appreciable percentage of the cost of, or wholly finance, the installation, maintenance, and operation of the lighting facilities.*" AASHTO recommends continuous lighting for commercial areas, and higher levels than normal are recommended to be considered.

Staff recommends that the County institute a program of providing retrofit lighting along State highways in urban areas. Staff believes that SHA is concerned with the cost of providing continuous lighting and is wary of consenting to providing such lighting even when it is requested by Montgomery County for fear of the cost implications statewide. But it is the right thing to do.

The Board recommended as part of the MD355/Montrose Parkway interchange project that SHA's lighting policy be revised to meet the latest AASHTO guidance on the best lighting levels for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. The Board also endorsed the statement that if the cost impact of implementing such a policy would be too great for the State to bear, SHA should consider instituting a standard cost-sharing formula with local government similar to that for noise barriers. Even in the absence of such a standard policy being instituted, staff recommends that the County begin a retrofit program for lighting on State highways.

#### Access 2000 – Pedestrian and Bicyclist Improvements

SHA undertook a study of the pedestrian and bicycle improvements that were needed to improve access to rail stations in response to a law passed in 1995 by the State Legislature. Staff worked closely with SHA to determine the needed improvements at each Metro and MARC Station. Very little of the proposed improvements were implemented before the funding was deleted however. Given the competition for State funding, *staff recommends that the Access 2000 program be revived as a County project and added to the 10-year transportation program.*

Staff notes that the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan recommends a focus on improving bike access to transit, and WMATA has a current program to improve pedestrian and bicyclist access to transit. The latter's program will likely be more localized than the Access 2000 program was intended to be.

#### Other Sidewalk Retrofits on Major Highways and Arterials in Urban Areas

The following table of State highways in urban areas of Montgomery County shows SHA's ratings of the Bicycle Level of Service (BLOC) and the percentage of these roadway centerline miles that have sidewalks.

<b>Table A: Bicycle and Pedestrian Access</b>							
Bicycle/Pedestrian Measures	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006 (Actual)	2006 (Target)	Target Date
% of State owned roadway centerline miles with a BLOC grade "D" or better	77%	78%	81%	80%	79%	80%	7/07
Centerline mileage of State-owned highways with designated bicycle lanes/routes	8 miles	40.6 miles	186 miles	455.4 miles	680 miles	700 miles	7/07
% of State owned roadway centerline miles within urban areas that have sidewalks	20%	24.60%	26%	28.60%	NA	30%	12/06

The sidewalk percentage on the above chart is not intended to reflect the percentage of roads that sidewalks on both sides, so some of the roads have a sidewalk only on one side. This is a concern when the topic is State highways in urban areas when the roads are often wide with high traffic volumes.

Staff would also like to emphasize that SHA's goal is only to have sidewalks on 30% of the State roads in urban areas of Montgomery County. Staff believes that the goal is inadequate, does not reflect a need to improve pedestrian safety in densely developed urban areas, and does not serve to promote the goal of transit use, since most State highways serve as transit routes.

While the County has a sidewalk retrofit program already, **staff recommends that priority be given to constructing sidewalk retrofits on Major Highways and Arterials in urban areas and that this be added to the County's 10-year transportation plan.**

#### Enhanced Bus Shelters on Major Transit Routes

Enhanced bus shelters are needed to provide better service to transit patrons and to attract new patrons. Metro is moving ahead with its real-time information program and Arlington County has had a program in the Columbia Pike corridor for some time. Network infrastructure deficiencies however are preventing the wide-scale deployment of "real time" transit signs at bus stops in Montgomery County. Because of these deficiencies, DPWT has refused to accept bus shelters that are equipped to give patrons real-time information, and have also refused to accept heated bus shelters, even though developers have agreed to provide them as part of their trip mitigation efforts.

**Staff recommends that the County establish a program for enhanced bus shelters on major transit routes as one of its priority programs to ensure that established county policies to reduce the reliance on single-occupant vehicles are supported.** DPWT may not be able to support these facilities with their current budget and staffing but these associated costs need to be identified so that the County can best leverage private investment.

Another example of where more trip mitigation support is needed is the issue of the scarcity of light industrial areas where shuttle contractors can store and service vehicles. In this case, our

master planning, facility planning and design and programming efforts of our public facilities (e.g., county service parks for maintaining vehicles) may want to more proactively consider possible ways (in this through shared space) to support shuttle services. Staff will continue our work on this issue and provide more information to the Board at a later date.

## BACKGROUND

### Council action on the CTP earlier in 2006

In 2006, the Council voted to add \$160 million in funding to accelerate State and WMATA capital projects that will add road or transit capacity. Except for the first four projects appropriated for FY07 (see below), none of these funds will be spent unless there is a cost-sharing agreement with the State – i.e., the County will not appropriate funds unless there is a suitable match of newly programmed money from the State. ***Only projects in the most recent Council/Executive joint priority letter will be eligible for such funding.***

The Council appropriated \$19,555,000 for FY07 for the four projects, even without the promise of a State match. By the time the proposal was put together the state's FY07 budget was already set, and the Council did not want these projects to slip. The four projects are:

- Construction of the second garage at the Glenmont Metro Station
- Final design and right-of-way for the Georgia Avenue/Randolph Road interchange
- Final design for the I-270/Watkins Mill Road interchange
- Final design for the southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station

By putting additional funds on the table for State projects, the County has created the opportunity for the State to get more bang for the buck by doing these projects, an approach that Howard County has also been using.

The other State projects that have been identified by DPWT for the next group to be funded under the State Participation program are:

- Rockville Pike (MD355)/Montrose Parkway interchange
- Woodfield Road (MD124) Widening Phase 2
- Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Brookeville Bypass
- Clopper Road (MD117) Widening Phases 2 and 3

Although the Georgia Avenue (MD97)/Norbeck Road (MD28) interchange is higher on the construction priority list than Clopper Road Widening, the former would cost about twice as much as the latter and there appears to be insufficient funds for both.

Staff does not believe that these recommendations have been officially submitted by DPWT to the Council. As discussed above, staff recommends that a different set of projects and studies to be funded by the County.

LC:ba  
Attachment

Trans



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION



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**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN**

January 11, 2007

The Honorable Marilyn Praisner  
President, Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

2007 JAN 16 11:10:39

MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
COUNCIL

Dear Council President Praisner:

At its regular weekly meeting on January 4, 2007, the Planning Board held a worksession on the ICC Bikeways Implementation Strategy during which planning staff presented sketch-level recommendations for prioritizing both (1) a master plan amendment to consider the full-length master-planned ICC bike path (bike path), and (2) implementation of the State's Multi-modal Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (bike plan) for the ICC project. Staff also recommended a number of community connector bikeways and trails to maximize access to these facilities. The Planning Board endorsed all staff recommendations below and hereby forwards them to you for consideration during the County Council's deliberations on the Planning Board's concurrent recommended changes to the Council's 10-year transportation plan and State Transportation Priority List.

Our recommendations are not intended to replace or replicate a facility planning study nor to recommend particular amendments to master plans. Rather our intent is to simply inform the Council's decisions regarding future funding of bicycle, pedestrian and trail facilities in the ICC corridor. In FY 08, the Planning Department with your approval will study and recommend a comprehensive master plan amendment package for the ICC, including changes to the ICC bike path alignment/limits and related bicycle and pedestrian elements.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Establish a funding mechanism in the CTP and/or CIP (10-year transportation plan) to implement those segments needed to complete the master planned ICC bike path along the highway ROW/Corridor for the segment between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue.
2. Establish a funding mechanism in the CTP to implement those segments needed to complete the State's bike plan (with a continuous east-west off-road shared use path), with the following high to moderate priority segments (west to east):

35

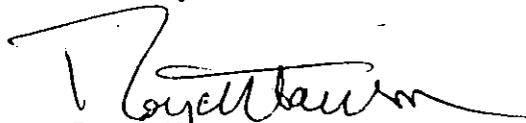
- (a) Shared Use Path along south/east side of Needwood Road, ICC to Redland Road
  - (b) Bicycle and pedestrian safety enhancements at Emory Lane/Georgia Avenue intersection
  - (c) Bike lanes along Layhill Road, ICC to Longmead Crossing Drive
  - (d) Shared use path along east side of Layhill Road, ICC to Bonifant Road
  - (e) Shared use path south side of Bonifant Road, Layhill Road to Alderton Road
  - (f) Crossing Northwest Branch main stem from Matthew Henson Trail to Notley Road, either as part of the highway bridge (cantilevered or suspended) or a separate trail bridge in parkland
  - (g) Shared use path along east side of New Hampshire Avenue, ICC to E. Randolph Road
  - (h) Shared use path along north side of E. Randolph Road and south side of Fairland Road to and through the US 29/Fairland Road interchange project
3. Confirm the Planning Board's work program element to initiate an ICC master plan amendment during FY 08, primarily to address any needed changes to the master planned ICC **bike path** (SP-40), with a focus on the following segments:
- (a) I-370 to Needwood Road
  - (b) Layhill Road to Notley Road (Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and vicinity)
  - (c) New Hampshire Avenue to Old Columbia Pike (Paint Branch Stream Valley Park and vicinity)
  - (d) Across the US 29 interchange
4. Further study the following community connectors to the ICC bike path, west to east:
- (a) Shared use path along east side of Needwood Road, ICC to Muncaster Mill Road (and Magruder HS)
  - (b) Shared use path along east/south side of Emory Lane, ICC to Muncaster Mill Road, as well as related shared use path along south side of Muncaster Mill Road, Emory Lane to Meadowside Lane
  - (c) Filling in gaps in US 29 Commuter Bikeway, Greencastle Road to Briggs Chaney Road; and Fairland Road to Musgrove Road (shared use path along east side of US 29)

The Planning Board also endorses the staff conclusion that the **bike plan** as proposed by the State is an insufficient cross-county substitute for the master planned bike path, because the State's plan substitutes on-road bike lanes for the path along segments of Layhill

Road, Bonifant Road, New Hampshire Avenue, and Fairland Road. In those segments, the State's Plan does not accommodate pedestrians or average/novice bicyclists who would prefer a facility separate from the roadway so as to not mix with motorized traffic. Therefore, our recommendations regarding the State's bike plan include providing continuous shared-use path connections along the roadways in the State's plan.

The Planning Board and its staff will be available during Council worksessions on the Transportation Priorities to answer any questions about our recommendations. In the meantime, please call Dan Hardy, Transportation Planning Supervisor, with any questions or comments at 301-495-4530.

Sincerely,



Royce Hanson  
Chairman

cc: Arthur Holmes, Jr, Director, DPWT  
Neil Pedersen, Administrator, SHA