

CHRIS VAN HOLLEN  
8TH DISTRICT, MARYLAND

COMMITTEE ON  
WAYS AND MEANS

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
GOVERNMENT REFORM

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

June 11, 2010

1707 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-5341

DISTRICT OFFICES:  
51 MONROE STREET, #507  
ROCKVILLE, MD 20850  
(301) 424-3501

SUITE C-201  
6475 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE  
HYATTSVILLE, MD 20783  
(301) 891-6982

[www.vanhollen.house.gov](http://www.vanhollen.house.gov)

Rear Admiral Matthew L. Nathan  
Commander, National Naval Medical Center  
8901 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, MD 20889-5600

Dear Rear Admiral Nathan:

As we prepare for the opening of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in September 2011, it is essential that all interested stakeholders continue to work together to devise solutions to the transportation challenges that we will face. As you know, many community groups, organizations, and agencies have devoted time and resources over the past several years in anticipation of welcoming the expanded Walter Reed to our community, and have placed special focus on improving access to the facility while reducing traffic congestion. The plans developed by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) will have direct impacts on several residential properties and on institutional properties, including the Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission, and National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The willingness of these entities to provide land for transportation projects to facilitate the BRAC-related expansion must be matched with an equal degree of cooperation and collaboration by the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC). Towards that end, I encourage you to fully participate in the efforts of SHA and MCDOT as they work to reduce traffic congestion and improve connectivity for residents, visitors, and employees. At this point in the process, I believe that it is essential for NNMC to take a leadership role in providing the land that is needed to implement these projects.

The multimodal project that is being developed for Rockville Pike, South Drive, and South Wood Road has the potential to reduce traffic delays along Rockville Pike, while providing improved safety for bicyclists and pedestrians and improved vehicular access to WRNMMC and NIH. The alternatives that include a grade-separation for vehicular traffic between NIH and WRNMMC will also provide a direct connection between these two federal medical facilities that could be invaluable in emergency situations when the ability to transfer patients between facilities is required. This will support the goals of the Bethesda Hospitals' Emergency Preparedness Partnership, with which we have all been engaged for many years and for which substantial federal funding has been provided. Many of the alternatives under consideration will need to use small portions of federal land for road construction, and NNMC representatives, I am advised, have indicated a strong reluctance to consider these alternatives. That position is inconsistent with the commitment contained in the Navy's Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision for this relocation, which promises to provide land needed to facilitate road construction projects. This is an important commitment that I know

Rear Admiral Matthew L. Nathan  
June 11, 2010  
Page 2

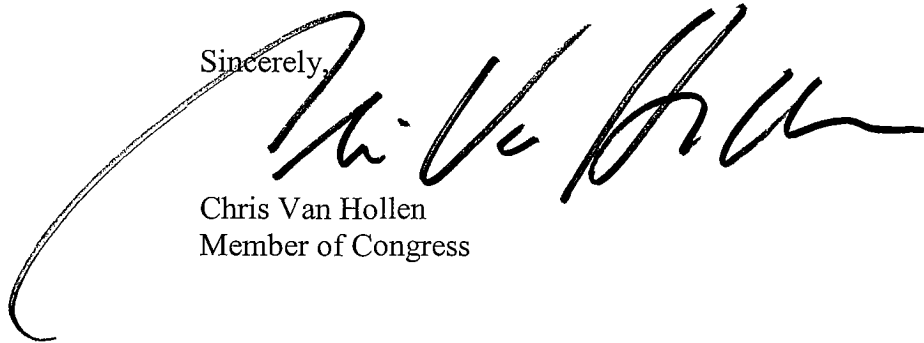
you will want to honor, as yielding a modest amount of land in support of our Wounded Warriors appears both feasible and appropriate.

Additionally, greater usage of the NNMC gates along Jones Bridge Road will help to better distribute WRNMMC patients, visitors, and staff throughout the local road network. This could significantly reduce delays at the intersection of Rockville Pike and Cedar Lane that are caused by the heavy reliance on the left-turn movement at North Wood Gate. The current designs for the gate improvements along Jones Bridge Road will make these gates more attractive and useful. I urge you to continue to work with the transportation agencies to resolve the location and timing of traffic signals with the goal of reducing traffic delays as vehicles enter and exit WRNMMC.

With respect to the gates on Rockville Pike, however, both the SHA and MCDOT have expressed concern with the NNMC's proposals because of the limited queuing space that will be available for vehicles waiting to clear the security check points. Inadequate queuing space will cause major delays extending through and beyond the intersection of Rockville Pike and Cedar Lane. I encourage you to develop physical gate improvements and gate utilization strategies that work in tandem to eliminate the spillover of entrance gate queues on the public road network.

I am delighted at how supportive the greater Bethesda community has been for this BRAC relocation, despite the very difficult challenges that it creates. I join our community in looking forward to the opening of the WRNMMC in 2011 and to the transportation network improvements that will provide more convenient access for your patients, visitors, and staff, and for the community at large.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Chris Van Hollen". The signature is written over the word "Sincerely," and extends across the right side of the page.

Chris Van Hollen  
Member of Congress

cc: Vice Admiral Michael C. Vitale, United States Navy  
Commander, Navy Installations Command  
716 Sicard Street, S.E.  
Suite 1000  
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374-5140

Captain Mike Malanoski  
Medical Corps  
Commanding Officer, Naval Support Bethesda  
Bethesda, MD 20889-5600