



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

July 12, 2012

Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Director
Office of Economic Adjustment
U.S. Department of Defense
2231 Crystal Drive, Suite 520
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

I am writing to urge the Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to release urgently needed funding for Phases 1-3 of the Intersection Improvement project at MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and West Cedar Lane/Cedar Lane to improve access for patients and personnel to the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) in Bethesda.

I appreciate the efforts of our congressional delegation to secure the appropriation for transportation infrastructure improvements near BRAC-impacted military medical facilities and OEA's assistance of Maryland and Montgomery County transportation agencies to make these funds available for projects to mitigate BRAC-related congestion.

The project at MD 355 and Cedar Lane would make improvements to the most congested intersection affecting access to WRNMMC. The State Highway Administration (SHA) proposal approved by OEA last year requested \$19 million in federal funding to help complete this project which has been designed in four phases. The State of Maryland has already committed substantial resources to this project and is nearing completion of advance utilities relocation so that construction can commence on "Phases 1-3" of the project south of Cedar Lane.

SHA can provide 80 percent of the construction costs for Phases 1-3 and would derive the remaining 20 percent from the \$19 million OEA project funds for the entire intersection project. However, SHA cannot proceed with construction until OEA makes these funds available.

I understand that questions are outstanding about "Phase 4" of the project north of Cedar Lane, which would be funded entirely from the \$19 million approved by OEA last year. SHA is currently conducting environmental analysis for Phase 4 and consulting with local stakeholders regarding design considerations. Analysis centered on the planned disposition of a temporary traffic signal on MD 355 at North Wood Drive south of Cedar Lane, in the evening peak hours, will also affect plans related to Phase 4. Pending the outcome of SHA's ongoing due diligence and design, SHA hopes to proceed with Phase 4 next year. I understand that OEA will not release funding for Phase 4 until the status of that phase of the project is resolved.

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My concern – which is shared by every stakeholder in this matter – is that withholding the entire \$19 million until the Phase 4 issues are resolved will prevent any improvements from being implemented at this key intersection. While some questions remain about Phase 4 and the traffic signal at North Wood, I can say with confidence that every federal, state, and local stakeholder that helped design these intersection projects – including the residents of the most impacted adjacent neighborhoods – are unanimous in their support for moving forward with constructing Phases 1-3, and doing so as expeditiously as possible.

I urge OEA to do the right thing and release funding for Phases 1-3 of the MD 355/Cedar Lane intersection project. No good purpose is served by waiting and access to WRNMMC continues to suffer.

Thank you for your continued support and consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Isiah Leggett', written in a cursive style.

Isiah Leggett
County Executive