



AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

November 29, 2017

Barry Fuss, Chief, Bridge Design
MCDOT, Transportation Engineering Division
100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

Dear Mr. Fuss: AAC Recommendations on Replacing the Zion
Road Bridge Number MO121

On behalf of the Montgomery County Agricultural Advisory Committee-AAC please accept this letter as our comments on replacing the Zion Road Bridge Number MO121.

On November 21, 2017, the AAC reviewed the letter from the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee dated September 15, 2017. The AAC believes that there are many farmers, bus drivers and residents that are not aware that the County DOT is requesting input on the replacement bridge and the Office of Agriculture would like to facilitate more opportunities to gather public input on the project details including the costs for replacing this bridge. The Office of Agriculture could host a public meeting here at the Agricultural History Park to help gain better input from the community and to help the County DOT in the process to plan for the new bridge.

There is a School located at 21515 Zion Road called the Community Services for Autistic Adults and Children, Inc. School Buses use Zion Road constantly to shuttle the students to and from the School each day. The AAC recommends that the Bus drivers that shuttle these students need to provide input on their experiences crossing this one lane bridge.

The AAC recommends the new Zion Road bridge should be two lanes wide to create a safer environment for motorists, school bus drivers and farmers that use this bridge daily. The current one lane bridge creates an unsafe environment as many motorists often race to cross the bridge first. Replacing the bridge with only one drive lane will also create a Liability Issue for the County Government due to potential litigation from future accidents. The width of the new bridge should be at least 25 feet wide just like many other bridges that currently exist along Howard Chapel Road M123 and M124.

It is important to know that most combines used by Montgomery County farmers are 18 feet wide and most planting drills used by Montgomery County farmers are 15.5 feet wide. The County DOT needs to take this information into consideration when they finalize the design and width of the new Zion Road Bridge.

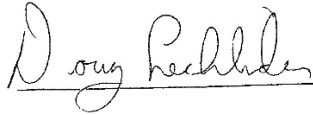


A two-lane replacement bridge may result in federal cost share funding which could reduce the total costs to Montgomery County tax payers for replacing the bridge. In light of the fiscal environment that Montgomery County currently is experiencing, we need to leverage all sources of available funds to stretch our County dollars as far as possible.

It is our understanding the County DOT had to repair the South-West side of the Zion Road bridge a few months ago because a school bus collided with the guard rail and the concrete side wall as the bus approached the bridge. The wooden barriers on both sides of the single lane bridge along White Ground Road at Schaeffer Road are constantly being hit by vehicles due to the 16-foot narrow width of the bridge. Replacing the Zion Road with two lanes totaling 25 feet will result in less accidents and ongoing costs to repair a single lane bridge.

The AAC would like to thank you for this opportunity to present our views on New Zion Road Bridge and please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Lechliden". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Doug Lechliden, Vice Chairman

Cc: Isiah Leggett, County Executive

Michael Knapp, Rustic Roads Advisory Committee