

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY
BRAC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

September 13, 2010

The Honorable Isiah Leggett
Montgomery County Executive
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

The Honorable Francoise Carrier
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park and
Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear County Executive Leggett and Chairwoman Carrier:

The BRAC Implementation Committee (BIC) has asked me to convey its support for mitigating an unintended consequence of the State Highway Administration's (SHA) Intersections Improvement project related to BRAC expansion at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda (NNMC). Specifically, the BIC urges you to work together, with State of Maryland transportation authorities and the impacted community to resolve any issues that may prevent the implementation of the most effective measures to ensure safe access to the Chevy Chase Valley community which is located at the northwest corner of the intersection of Connecticut Avenue (MD 185) and Jones Bridge Road.

The BIC appreciates SHA's efforts to work with impacted communities as it designs intersection improvements to facilitate vehicular and pedestrian movement in the area around NNMC. In particular, SHA has been working with residents of the Chevy Chase Valley community to address their concern that the proposed addition of a lane along Connecticut Avenue southbound from I-495 to a dedicated westbound turn onto Jones Bridge Road may impede safe access for Chevy Chase Valley residents and many users of recreation and educational facilities in the neighborhood.

Residents of Chevy Chase Valley believe the SHA proposal will generate faster and more continuous traffic flow along Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road that would merit the addition of a traffic signal for their neighborhood. Currently there is no traffic signal to control access at any of the roads into Chevy Chase Valley from either Connecticut Avenue or Jones Bridge Road.

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has completed a Chevy Chase Valley Traffic Access Study based on projected traffic patterns when BRAC expansion at NNMC is fully implemented by September 2011. Based on this study, both MCDOT and SHA concur that appropriate mitigation measures would best address the safety concerns raised by Chevy Chase Valley.

The BIC has noted that MCDOT and SHA believe the best solution is to utilize the signal that already exists on Jones Bridge Road at Platt Ridge Drive, which provides access to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute across from Chevy Chase Valley. MCDOT and SHA agree that Montrose Driveway in Chevy Chase Valley could be extended approximately 600 feet to the Jones Bridge Road/Platt Ridge Drive intersection.

MCDOT and SHA are aware that construction of this road extension prior to completion of BRAC consolidation at NNMC would pose considerable challenges. Both agencies agree that installing a signal on Jones Bridge Road at Spring Valley Road would be a **temporary** solution that could be implemented prior to September 2011 and provide access for Chevy Chase Valley until the extension to Platt Ridge Drive is completed.

It is important to note that both agencies believe the installation of a new traffic signal in the area is not warranted based on existing or projected traffic patterns for Chevy Chase Valley; however, it is urgent that the temporary solution be implemented to ensure the safety of drivers and pedestrians in Chevy Chase Valley. There are concerns that installing a new signal on Jones Bridge Road in close proximity to existing signals at Connecticut Avenue and Platt Ridge Drive would result in new impediments to mobility that the Intersections Improvement project is designed to prevent.

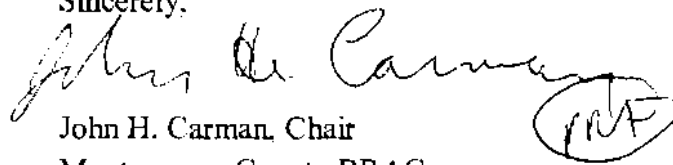
It also is important to note that the MNCPPC has yet to formulate a position on whether to approve the use of parkland at the edge of North Chevy Chase Park to resolve the access issues for Chevy Chase Valley, and that the residents of Chevy Chase Valley have yet to reach a neighborhood consensus on a preferred mitigation.

The BIC's primary interest is that safety and mobility concerns at Chevy Chase Valley are resolved. Therefore, the BIC urges Montgomery County and Planning Board officials to work together and with the State of Maryland and community stakeholders to quickly resolve any issues that may prevent implementation of the best solution for Chevy Chase Valley that promotes safe access for their neighborhood without undermining the mobility mitigation for which the SHA Intersections Improvement project is intended.

As always, the BIC appreciates your hard work in addressing the impacts of BRAC on the community so that the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda can fulfill its mission of providing world class health care to our nation's active, wounded and retired military.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input on this important matter.

Sincerely,


John H. Carman, Chair
Montgomery County BRAC
Implementation Committee