



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

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

November 19, 2009

Ms. Beverley Swaim-Staley, Secretary
Maryland Department of Transportation
7201 Corporate Center Drive
P.O. Box 548
Hanover, Maryland 21076

RE: Bethesda BRAC at NNMCM
Mandatory Referral Reviews for Transportation Improvements

Dear Ms. Swaim-Staley:

As you know, the State Highway Administration has been working on the design of the improvements to four intersections in the area of the National Naval Medical Center as part of MDOT's larger overall effort to prepare for the arrival of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. These intersection projects require a Mandatory Referral to the Montgomery County Planning Board and we request that the information outlined below be provided in conjunction with the plans submitted for review.

The Montgomery County BRAC Implementation Committee has expressed the need to create a comprehensive timeline of all the projects and actions that are required to make Walter Reed's move to NNMCM a successful one. As each project moves forward, it is important to be able to demonstrate to all stakeholders how it contributes to the comprehensive, multimodal vision for both addressing BRAC impacts and furthering implementation of the area master plan.

We request that MDOT help us further develop that knowledge base by providing a common set of project descriptions and evaluation measures that can be applied to each of the individual transportation projects. The four intersection projects currently under design by the State Highway Administration are scheduled to be the first in the BRAC program of offsite improvements to be reviewed by the Planning Board.

First, the submission materials for each improvement should incorporate the following information:

- A description of the purpose and need.

- A common, consistent set of baseline volumes for autos, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists, and growth factors that reflect the assumed background growth, BRAC actions, and proposed Transportation Management Programs.
- A description of how purpose and need is satisfied by improvements, with evaluation criteria such as Level of Service for traffic or Quality of Service for transit, bikes and pedestrians; person-throughput on the roadway system; or walking distances and times to station portals.

Second, each project submission should indicate current plans and responsibilities for phasing and funding; the four-tiered transportation investment priorities listing is a good starting point. The plans should show the work to be accomplished in each tier and should note where adjoining work will be constructed by others. The physical and procedural connections between the projects should be defined and their status monitored as each project moves forward. Information in the mandatory referral submission should clarify the following elements for decision-makers:

- The design of each project may need to preserve expansion potential to connect to or accommodate future projects on the priority list. For instance, the scope of future sidewalk and shared use path improvements in Tiers 1 through 3 should not be limited by adjacent roadway work being built first. We would also like to confirm that County pedestrian and bicycle projects implemented in response to BRAC will receive priority for state enhancement funding.
- Conversely, we should confirm the degree to which projects deferred until Tier 4 should be incorporated in the design of near-term projects.
- The State's BRAC website identifies MTA as the lead for the study for improvements at the Medical Center Metro Station. Please confirm that MDOT will remain the lead agency for this project and will consult with NCPC, MNCPPC, and BIC on the selection of the alternative to move forward to construction.

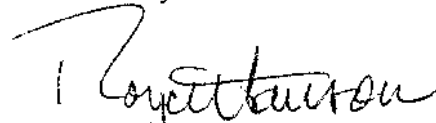
Finally, the mandatory referral review for the SHA intersection projects should address the following concerns:

- We understand that the on-road bike accommodation recommended in SHA's Bicycle & Pedestrian Design Guidelines will not be provided so that a larger buffer can be maintained between the shared use path and the curb. Please confirm that no other waivers will be needed.

- How will transit and/or HOV travel through these intersections be prioritized? How will this prioritization be increased or enhanced by the Tier 2 and Tier 3 improvements?
- What level of service (LOS) is the goal for drivers with the Tier 1 intersection improvements in the 2011 design year? What LOS would be achieved with the Tier 2 and Tier 3 improvements?

Thank you in advance for providing the above information. We look forward to continuing to work with you on these important projects. If you have any questions concerning our request, please call Larry Cole at 301-495-4528 or you may call me at 301-495-4605.

Sincerely,



Royce Hanson
Chairman

cc: District 16 Delegation
District 18 Delegation
Councilmember Roger Berliner
John Carman
Phil Alperson