DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892
Office of Research Facilities

April 8, 2009

Ms. Barbara Solberg
Assistant Division Chief
Office of Highway Development
Maryland State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Ms. Solberg:

NIH has reviewed the proposed BRAC-related road improvement projects surrounding the NIH Bethesda campus that were displayed at the public meeting held on April 2, 2009. As we have previously stated to your staff, there are aspects of the proposed design that adversely impact NIH's mission. For example, the proposed Rockville Pike right-of-way is shown cutting through two of our newest security structures: the Gateway Center's Multilevel Parking Structure and the Commercial Vehicle Inspection Facility. We request that you explore options that require minimal, if any, use of NIH property. One such approach could involve slightly shifting the alignment of Rockville Pike between West Cedar Lane and Center Drive to hold the right-of-way in its existing location on the west, while widening to the east.

For the portion of Rockville Pike that is south of Jones Bridge Road and Center Drive, we understand from the public meeting that the close proximity of several residential units dictates that widening occur to the west, into the NIH property. Given the alignment shift discussed above, we believe we can accommodate this need conceptually and are willing to meet with you at your convenience to discuss the details. In other words, in the area south of Center Drive, widening 355 to the west is satisfactory to NIH, whereas in the area north of Center Drive, widening 355 to the west creates major impacts. My staff is evaluating specific alternative road alignments for Rockville Pike that accomplish the above stated goals, and would like to share the results with you in the next few weeks.

We are encouraged to see that two of the four stormwater management ponds previously shown within the NIH campus have been removed. However, we continue to be concerned with the locations of the remaining two stormwater management ponds. Placing new ponds within the forested buffer areas that are known to have high potential for archeological resources would be inconsistent with our approved Master Plan. To help accommodate the need to manage increased stormwater runoff, we have offered to investigate the possibility of directing some stormwater into Stoney Creek Pond, which will be a regional stormwater management facility located on the NIH campus. The final design plans for Stoney Creek Pond were sent to your office in January 2009 for coordination purposes. Construction of Stoney Creek Pond will begin soon and is expected to be completed by the fall of 2009. Again, we would be pleased to meet with you to discuss these issues if you are interested.

Sincerely,

Daniel Wheeland, P.E.
Director, Office of Research Facilities

Cc: Ms. Colleen Barros, DDM
Dr. Alfred Johnson, Director, ORS
Mr. Phil Alperson
Mr. John Carmen
Mr. Andy Scott