

MEMORANDUM

February 20, 2009

TO: County Council

FROM: Glenn Orlin, ^{GO}Deputy Council Staff Director

SUBJECT: **Worksession**—Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment for the Intercounty Connector (ICC): Bikeways and Interchanges

The entire ICC within Montgomery County is now under construction. The notice to proceed for the last segment—Contract B between Georgia Avenue and US 29—was issued on January 16, 2009. This plan amendment is not about the project itself. Instead, this amendment:

- determines appropriate uses for master planned right-of-way not used by the highway project, with a particular focus on evaluating parkland for future bikeways or trails;
- proposes new alignment(s) for the master planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the ICC Corridor; and
- reconciles approved highway design elements with master plan guidance for interchange locations.

The Planning Board transmitted its Final Draft of this plan to the Council on September 22, 2008. The plan's abstract is on ©1, the background section is on ©2-3, and maps displaying the plan's recommendations are on ©4-11. The draft plan has been circulated to all Councilmembers under separate cover; it can also be reviewed at:

<http://www.mcparkandplanning.org/planning/viewer.shtml#http://mcparkandplanning.org/Transportation/icc/documents/ReducedEntirePlan9908.pdf>. The analysis of capital costs from the Executive's Fiscal Impact Statement is on ©12.

Hearing testimony and correspondence. The Council held a public hearing on the plan on January 15, 2009. All those who testified at the hearing, as well as all those who have corresponded with the Council subsequently, advocate leaving the location of the master planned bikeway largely as is: along the route of the ICC itself. Representative examples of the testimony and correspondence are those of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (©13) and Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (©14-17). The County Department of Transportation (DOT) has also submitted detailed comments (©18-21).

Bikeways. When the prior Council transmitted its detailed comments on the ICC Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on March 1, 2005, it stated:

We support construction of a 10'-wide shared use path in the ICC right-of-way from Prince George's County to its junction with the right-of-way of M-83 Alternate A. At that point it should follow the M-83 Alternate A alignment west to Needwood Road, and then along Needwood Road to the County-programmed shared use path at Redland Road. The ICC right-of-way is a valuable public resource; this project should include a multi-modal approach which would be maximized by the highway, transit service (the bus service proposed in the DEIS), and the shared use path.

The State, however, did not concur. It ultimately decided to build, as part of the ICC project, segments along the ICC between Needwood Road and Emory Lane, between Georgia Avenue and Layhill Road, between Notley Road and New Hampshire Avenue, and east of Briggs Chaney Road into Prince George's County. The gaps between these sections are to be filled eventually by shared use paths (hiker-biker trails) parallel to other roads in the corridor. None of these gap-filling trails are programmed for construction currently by the State or County.

The Planning Board recommends amending the master plan to recognize the segments to be built by SHA as part of the ICC, as well as to identify a continuous route for the trail (SP-40) that follows:

- largely along Muncaster Mill Road from Shady Grove Road to Needwood Road;
- along the ICC between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue;
- along the ICC route between Layhill and Bonifant Roads;
- along segments of Bonifant and Notley Roads to avoid a segment through part of Northwest Branch Park;
- along segments of New Hampshire Avenue, Randolph Road, Fairland Road, and US 29 to avoid crossing Paint Branch Stream Valley Park and Special Protection Area; and
- along the ICC route between US 29 and Briggs Chaney Road.

The Board also recommends planning for shared use trails and dual bikeways (both shared use trails and bike lanes) along several other roads in the vicinity of the ICC.

Planning staff generated a very rough cost estimate for unprogrammed portions of SP-40: if it follows the ICC right-of-way the route would be 13.03 miles long at an additional cost of \$31.5 million; if it follows the Final Draft's recommended alignment it would be 14.17 miles long at an additional cost of \$19.2 million (©22). The costs are in 2008 dollars. However, Council staff believes the cost estimates are too low, but they are probably reflective of the relative costs of the two routes.

The sum of the Board's recommendations represent a realistic assessment of what bikeways might be built in this corridor during the next ten or twenty years (in addition to the SHA-built segments, which will be completed in the next couple of years). The three segments the Board does not recommend along the ICC pose severe challenges. Each is addressed below:

West of Needwood Road. Here the ICC runs not within its currently master-planned 300'-wide right-of-way, but in the former 150'-wide Midcounty Highway (M-83) right-of-way. The full width of the ICC barely fits within this narrower strip of land. There is literally no space for a bikeway along the ICC in this segment.

The Board recommends carrying the shared use trail along Needwood Road northeast to Muncaster Mill Road, and from there west along the south side of Muncaster Mill Road to Applewood Lane, where it would connect with the existing shared use path extending west to Shady Grove Road. This is Option 1 on ©7 (page 18 of the Final Draft). The Board also recommends a shared signed roadway (a Class III bike route) be designated on Applewood Lane connecting to a future shared use trail west along the M-83 right-of-way. This is Option 2, and is the preference of DOT as well.

T&E Committee (and Council staff) recommendation (3-0): Concur with the Final Draft.

Northwest Branch. The Board recommends a new trail along the ICC between Layhill and Bonifant Roads near the relocated National Trolley Museum. From that point a shared use trail would be planned along the south side of Bonifant Road east to Notley Road and along the west side of Notley Road back to the ICC right-of-way. This is Option 1 on ©9 (page 27). It also recommends extending the Bonifant Road trail west to Alderton Lane and widening the east-side sidewalk on Alderton Lane to a trail, connecting to the eastern terminus of the Matthew Henson Trail (Option 3).

The Board further proposes a connection between the eastern terminus of the Matthew Henson Trail and Notley Road, following either Option 3, Option 4 (a more direct route across the park), or Option 5 detouring south through Indian Spring/Poplar Run and the Drumeldra Hills neighborhood. The route would be based on a detailed environmental study conducted by the Parks Department.

DOT recommends including in the plan the portion of Option 1 between Layhill and Bonifant Roads, the portion of Option 3 west on Bonifant Road and south on Alderton Lane, plus Option 4 connecting across Northwest Branch from the eastern terminus of the Matthew Henson Trail to Notley Road.

T&E Committee (and Council staff) recommendation (3-0): Include Options 1, 3 and 4 in the plan. The Bonifant/Notley route is the most direct between the eastern and western segments of SP-40. Option 3 is the most direct feasible route between the Henson Trail and the western segment of SP-40. Finally, Option 4 is the best connection between the Henson Trail and the eastern segment of SP-40.

Neither the Board nor DOT recommends building a trail alongside the ICC roadway from Bonifant to Notley Roads because of the severe topography, wetlands, and other significant environmental impacts. The right-of-way is certainly wide enough to accommodate the trail, but it would come at a prohibitive cost. This is not warranted because Options 1, 3 and 4 are fairly direct connections and are thus good alternative routes.

Paint Branch Park and US 29. Most of the testimony opposes the Final Plan's recommendation to drop the segment between New Hampshire Avenue to east of US 29, and DOT concurs with that position. However, the conditions on the ground do not guarantee a satisfactory solution. The route traverses wide portions of Paint Branch's headwaters and the breadth of the Paint Branch Special Protection Area. A trail along the ICC would require two long bridges: the ICC highway bridge over the Good Hope tributary is about 600' long, and the span over Paint Branch itself is about 1,300' long. At the east end of this segment is the planned US 29/ICC grade separated interchange, a three-level design that will present a virtual barrier to an east-west trail bridge over US 29 at that location. Therefore, even if the funds were ever solicited for a trail along the ICC through Paint Branch, its crossing of US 29 would have to pass south or north of the interchange.

The Board's recommendation is to create a shared use trail along major highways and arterials with heavy traffic—New Hampshire Avenue, Randolph Road, and Fairland Road—to reach US 29. In addition, it would study a potential park trail north of the ICC between Cape May Road and Countryside Park, but that trail might or might not be a hard surface trail.

In summary, while there may be room for a trail in this segment of the ICC right-of-way, it is reasonable to assume that it will never be built because of the extraordinary topographical and environmental challenges it poses. The question should be asked then: should it be designated as a bikeway anyway, so as not to close out the possibility of its being built, no matter how miniscule?

What is the meaning of putting a transportation facility in a master plan? Other than the most obvious—that the public should anticipate the facility being built in the long-term future—there are two other tangible implications. First of all, if the planned facility is on private property, then the Planning Board would use its powers to protect the land through reservations and/or by requiring dedications if the property were to redevelop. That will not be the case with this portion of the trail, however, since it would be in what is already public right-of-way. Secondly, the existence of a transportation facility in a master plan may influence the result of the adequate public facilities test for re-zoning. Again, that would not apply in this case, since the presence of a trail would not have an effect on the transportation capacity needed to serve new development. Therefore, other than perhaps raising misleading expectations in the public, there would be no harm in designating a planned trail in this segment.

Council staff recommendation: Designate SP-40 along the ICC alignment through Paint Branch and across US 29, but also designate the New Hampshire/Randolph/Fairland shared use trail route. While the need for this segment of the trail does not now outweigh its cost and environmental challenges, it is plausible that the scales might tip the other way in the very long term, and the master plan should not stand in the way should that happen. In the meantime, some safe off-road connection should be built that also connects to the future Paint Branch hard-surface trail. Either the park trail (if it is a hard surface trail) and/or the New Hampshire/Randolph/Fairland trail are the only likely trails to be built in this part of the corridor during the next ten to twenty years.

T&E Committee recommendation (3-0): Designate SP-40 along the ICC alignment through Paint Branch and across US 29, but do not designate the New Hampshire/Randolph/Fairland route as a shared use trail route. There are existing bikeways—primarily on-road bike lanes—along the New Hampshire/Randolph/Fairland route that will suffice until an ICC bike trail is completed.

The T&E Committee (and Council staff) recommendation (3-0): Concur with the Final Draft's other recommendations regarding the bikeway.

Roadway and interchanges. The Draft Plan confirms the two major alignment shifts incorporated in the ICC's Record of Decision: the alignment through Cashell Estates rather than a broad segment of Rock Creek Park (unanimously opposed by the Council in 2005), and a more curvilinear alignment through Northwest Branch Park to reduce environmental impacts (supported by the Council in 2005). The Plan also recognizes the relocation of the ICC/M-83 interchange (not to be built as part of the ICC project) and the partial interchange at Briggs Chaney Road to and from the east (to be built as part of the project).

The T&E Committee (and Council staff) recommendation (2-0): Councilmembers Floreen and Berliner concur with the Final Draft's recommendations regarding the roadway alignment and interchange locations.

Parcels. Certain parcels now in the existing master plan right-of-way would no longer be in the route. Parcels on either side of Needwood Road and a parcel west of Muncaster Mill Road in the existing M-83 alignment all have underlying zoning of RE-2. South of Bonifant Road there is a parcel with an underlying zoning of R-200, although it may already have been transferred to the Department of Parks.

The map on ©23 (page 12 in the Final Draft) shows several parcels that would comprise the area to be reserved by M-NCPPC for a future ICC/M-83 interchange. This interchange is part of the master-planned extension of Midcounty Highway from Shady Grove Road east to Redland Road and the ICC. The extension is ranked #2 among road project planning priorities in the most recent joint Executive/Council State transportation priorities letter.

The Council has received a letter from the owner of the parcel at the southwest corner of Garrett and Overhill Roads asking that part of the parcel be excised from the area to be reserved, as well as the adjacent portion of Garrett Road's right-of-way (©24). The diagram on ©25 shows the area that the Planning Board recommends for reservation (speckled area) and the area the property owner wishes not to be included in the reservation (hatched area).

The T&E Committee did not have enough information available at its worksession to make a recommendation about this parcel. Subsequently, Council staff received a map showing the boundaries of the area the property owner asks not to be placed in reservation. After reviewing this map, DOT staff reports that while the ramps of the planned interchange would not likely be built within the hatched area, it is possible that the area may still be needed for stormwater management, buffer, or some other ancillary feature. Therefore, DOT concurs with the Final Draft's recommendation. *Council staff recommendation: Concur with the Final Draft.*

Technical changes. DOT staff has noted some technical corrections that should be made to the document (©21). Furthermore, DOT staff pointed out that a section of text appeared to be missing from the Final Draft. M-NCPPC staff agrees, noting that the following text was inadvertently deleted from the top of page 28 during the editing and layout of the final printed version of the Final Draft:

ALDERTON ROAD (BONIFANT ROAD TO MATTHEW HENSON TRAIL)

EXISTING CONDITIONS: Residential Primary (P-15), two lanes, 70-foot right-of-way, four-foot sidewalk and 10-foot buffer with street trees along the east side from Bonifant to 250 feet south of Alderton Court.

The T&E Committee (and Council staff) recommendation (2-0): Councilmembers Floreen and Berliner concur with these technical changes.

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PLANNING BOARD DRAFT OF THE INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR LIMITED FUNCTIONAL MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

BIKEWAYS AND INTERCHANGES

An Amendment to the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan and the Master Plan of Highways

ABSTRACT

The text and maps of this amendment are intended to make agreed upon solutions consistent with the County's relevant master plans. It is a comprehensive amendment to the approved and adopted Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, and the approved and adopted 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan. It also amends the approved and adopted 1998 Countywide Park Trails Plan, as well as On Wedges and Corridors, the General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties, as amended.

This Plan Amendment recommends select changes to the shared-use path identified as SP-40 in the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan (CBFMP) by recommending changes to the ICC roadway alignment and interchanges to reflect the selected highway alternative now under construction. The proposed amendments to the CBFMP delete certain sections of SP-40 through the most environmentally sensitive portions of stream valley parks and the US 29 interchange. The amendment also proposes changes to the Countywide Park Trails Plan to provide connections that serve recreational and transportation purposes, including hiking and equestrian uses, in the Northwest Branch and Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Parks. Amendments to the Master Plan of Highways include adding a partial interchange at Briggs Chaney Road, revising limits of Midcounty Highway and its interchange with the ICC, and revising the ICC alignment to reflect Rock Creek Option C (with Olde Mill Run Grade Separation) and to reflect Northwest Branch Option A.

SOURCE OF COPIES

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority extends to the great majority of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties; the Maryland-Washington Regional District (M-NCPPC planning jurisdiction) comprises 1,001 square miles, while the Metropolitan District (parks) comprises 919 square miles, in the two counties.

The Commission is charged with preparing, adopting, and amending or extending On Wedges and Corridors, the general plan for the physical development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District.

The Commission operates in each county through Planning Boards appointed by the county government. The Boards are responsible for all local plans, zoning amendments, subdivision regulations, and administration of parks.

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BACKGROUND

In May 2006, the Federal Highway Administration approved the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Intercounty Connector (ICC), which established the highway's alignment and interchange locations, and identified impacts and mitigation measures. The ROD also recommended related master plan elements that would be implemented along with the highway project, including parks, bikeways and sidewalks, particularly the seven miles of master planned ICC shared use path (SP-40 in the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan).

However, certain alignment and implementation decisions in the ROD are inconsistent with master plan guidance. This ICC Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment (ICCLFMPA) amends County master plans to reflect the ROD decisions. It also evaluates alternative alignments for the County bike path (CBP) along the ICC, in the context of County agencies' affirmation of Planning Board recommendations to remove the path from sensitive environmental areas. The amendment analyzes the State's alternative path routes along parallel roads and recommends changes to master plans needed to upgrade or enhance the routes to meet the needs of all users.

Why A Limited Plan Amendment?

The ICCLFMPA will reconcile the ROD's highway, bicycle, pedestrian, and pathway facilities with the related elements in the County's master plans. This report describes the history, vision, and prior master plan guidance for the highway and path, including past decisions by the Planning Board, the County Council, and the Maryland Department of Transportation that were incorporated in the ROD.

This amendment updates the Master Plan of Highways to modify the ICC alignment to reflect the ROD and to establish interchange locations at Briggs Chaney Road and Midcounty Highway. It also evaluates cross-County bicycle and trails in the ICC corridor to connect to destinations and fill in gaps, timing portions of the path to be built with the highway project.

The interchange at Briggs Chaney Road is procedural. The ROD identified the interchange location and this amendment affirms prior decisions. The interchange at Midcounty Highway must be studied further because the selected ICC alignment used portions of the right-of-way intended for Midcounty Highway, and thus shifted the location of a future interchange further north and west.

Purposes

THIS AMENDMENT:

- determines appropriate uses for master planned right-of-way not used by the highway project, with a particular focus on evaluating parkland for future bikeways or trails
- proposes new alignment(s) for the master planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the ICC Corridor
- reconciles approved highway design elements with master plan guidance for interchange locations.

The ICCLFMPA examines the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan (CBFMP) and the Countywide Park Trails Plan (CPTP) to clarify the County's vision for bicycle and pedestrian mobility and access in the corridor, consistent with the Planning Board request when planning staff presented the ICC Bikeways Implementation Strategy in January 2007.

Key Plan Objectives

HIGHWAY DESIGN AND ALIGNMENT

- Modify the Master Plan of Highways to identify the ROD's selected alternative as the highway's official master plan alignment.
- Guide the design of the Midcounty Highway interchange (see figure 2) and the related connection to Shady Grove Road.
- Affirm the Planning Board's decision for no paved trails in sensitive environmental areas in parkland, particularly
 - Rock Creek Option A (see figures 3 and 4)
 - Northwest Branch Option B (see figures 5 and 6).
- Consider removing bikeway/trail alignment through Paint Branch Stream Valley Park from the master plan (see figure 7).
- Identify Briggs Chaney Road as an ICC interchange (see figure 7).
- Establish the new master planned alignment of the CBP (see figure 8).

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESS AND MOBILITY

- Recommend policy changes to implement the State Highway Administration's (SHA) Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (SHA Bike Plan) (see figure 1), to accommodate novice and family bicyclists, pedestrians, and other users along the route's full length.
- Recommend policy changes to implement the CBP (SP-40) as a full-length, master planned shared-use path in the highway right-of-way (see figures 1 and 8), or an equivalent alternative route of new paths or wide sidewalks along parallel highways, arterials, and neighborhood streets that avoid environmentally sensitive areas, particularly in stream valley parks.
- Modify the CBFMP and the CPTP to ensure safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian access to the SHA Bike Plan routes.

OTHER ISSUES

- Identify a funding mechanism through the Local Area Transportation Review that would permit private sector participation in funding trail and path routes.
- Determine the feasibility of interim use by mountain bikers and equestrians of route segments adjacent to highway right-of-way where the CBP will eventually be built.

Refined Objectives

The specific objectives above were shaped by four questions that emerged through community discussion during public meetings in March and April 2008.

- Does the County agree with the State's recommendations for routing the CBP along existing bikeways, sidewalks, and paths as recommended in the SHA Bike Plan?
- What improvements are needed along these roads to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians, and address the needs of all potential user groups?
- Should trail routes through environmentally sensitive areas in parkland be removed from master plans?
- What related master plan amendments are required to achieve recommendations that result from the above questions?

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Figure 1 ICC Corridor Study Area



Figure 2 Midcounty Highway Interchange



- Master Plan ICC Bike Path
- ICC Alignment
- Issue Areas
- ICC Alignment
- Proposed Roads
- Wetlands
- Floodplain
- Special Protection Areas
- Parks
- Property Lines

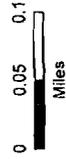


Figure 3 Needwood Road and Vicinity

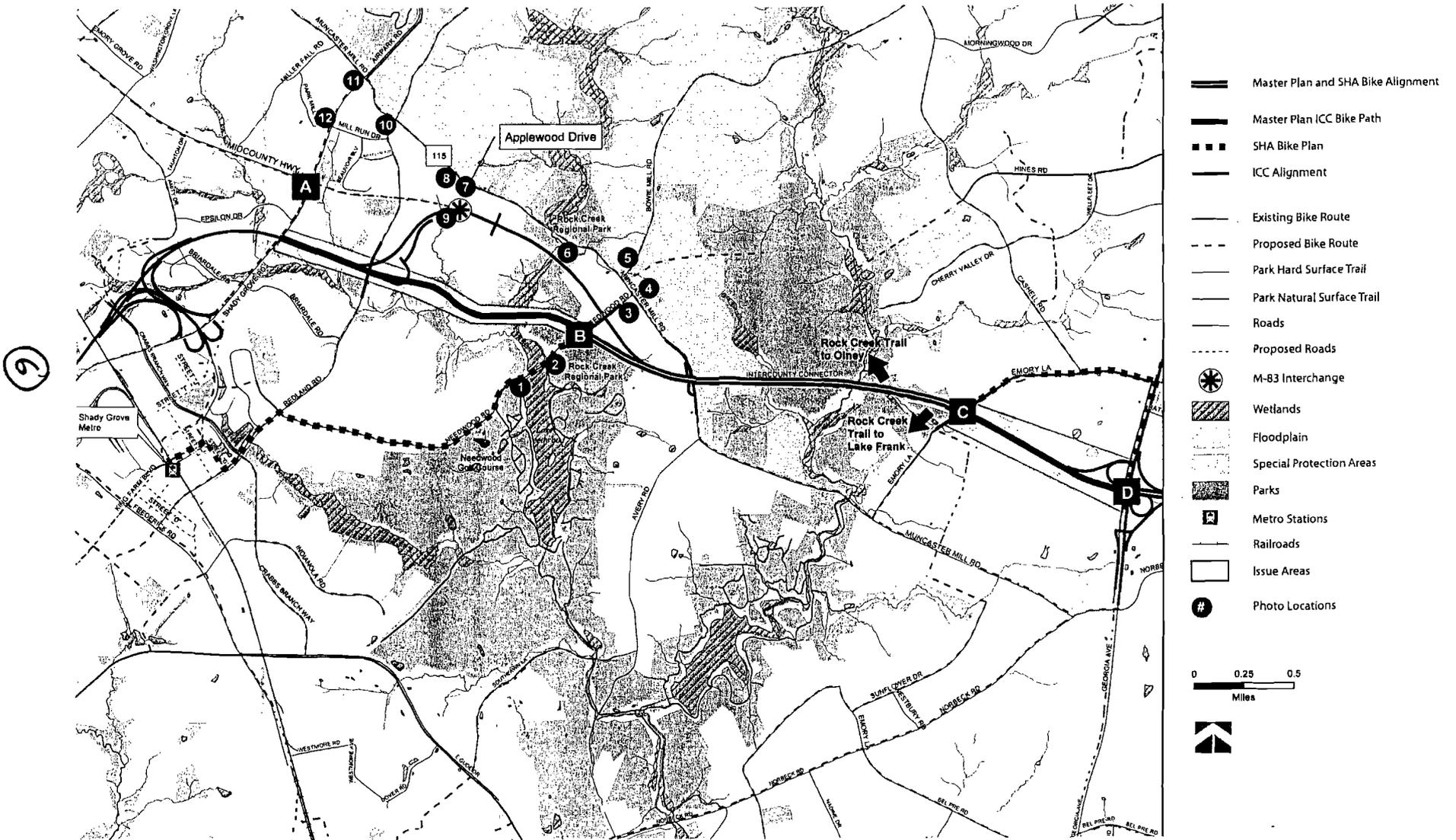


Figure 4 Needwood Road Options

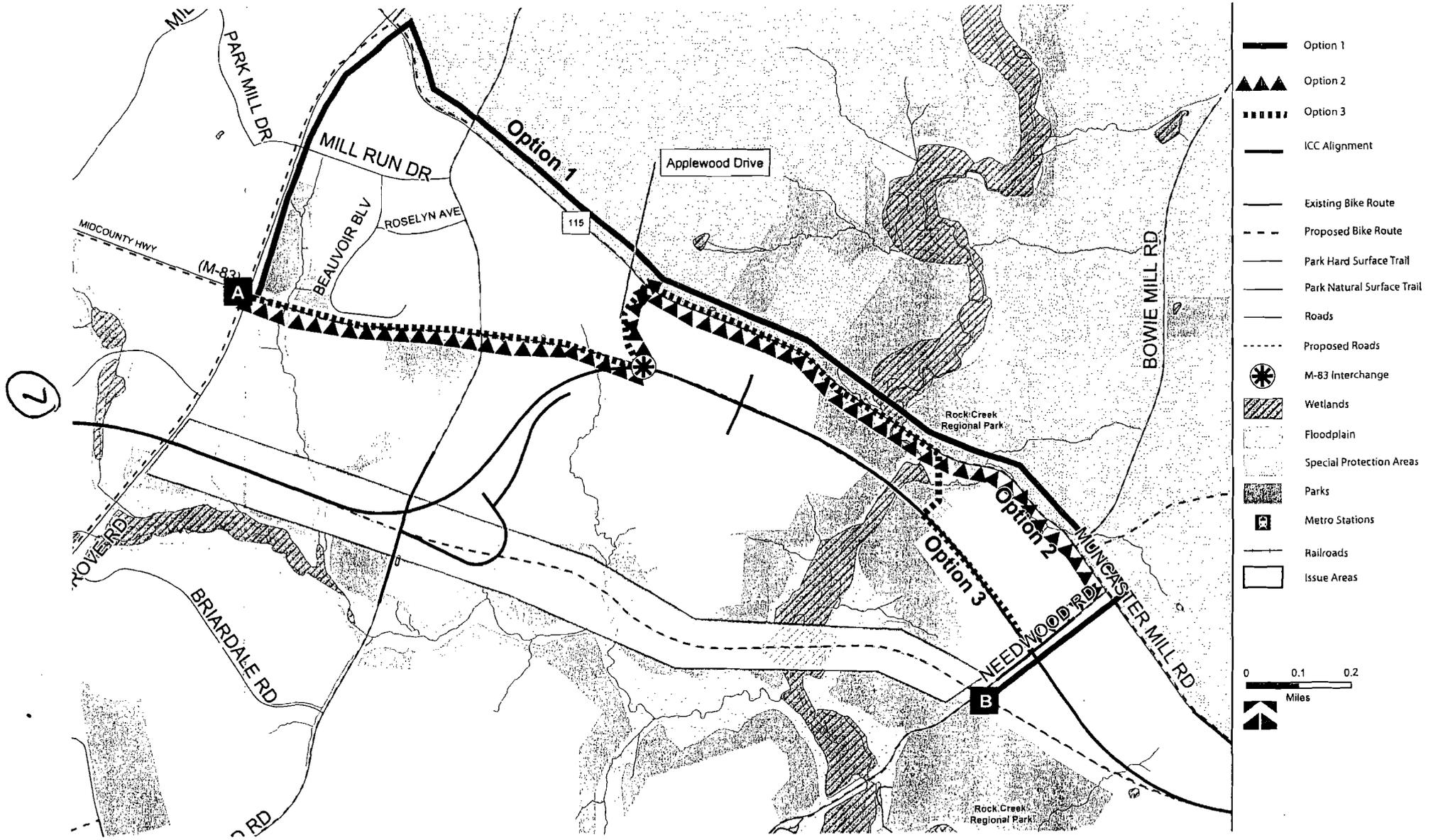


Figure 5 Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity

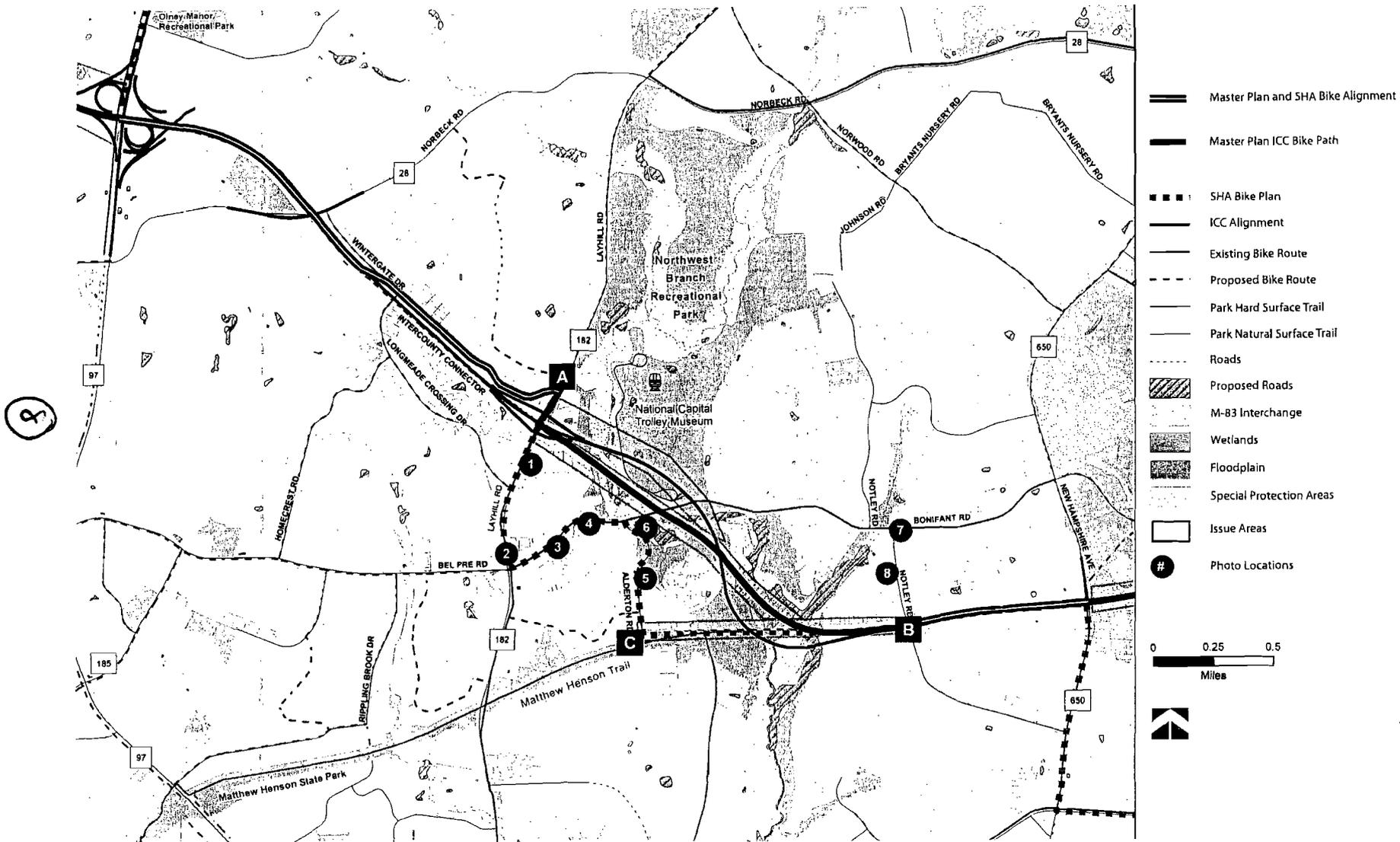


Figure 6 Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park Options

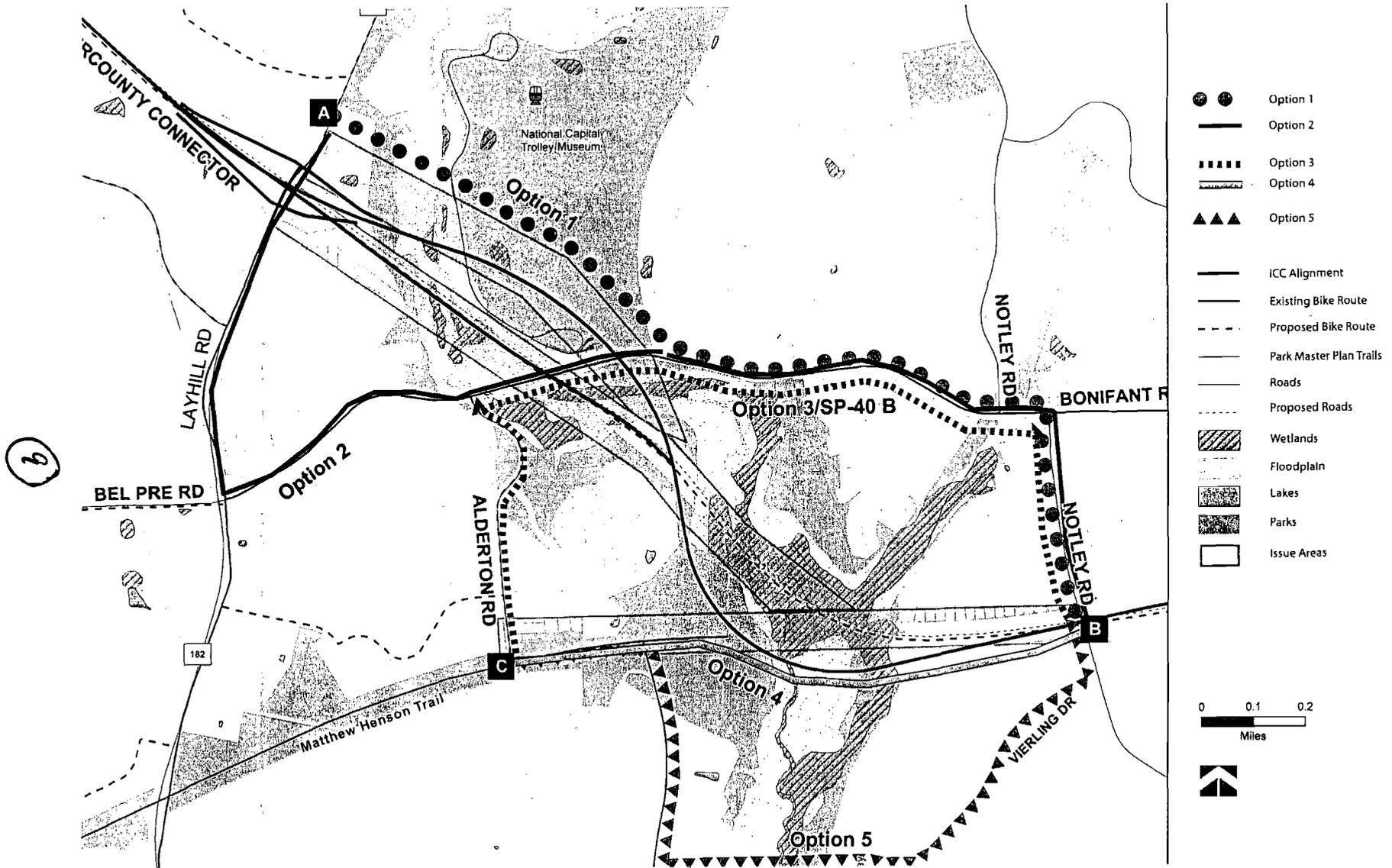


Figure 7 Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity

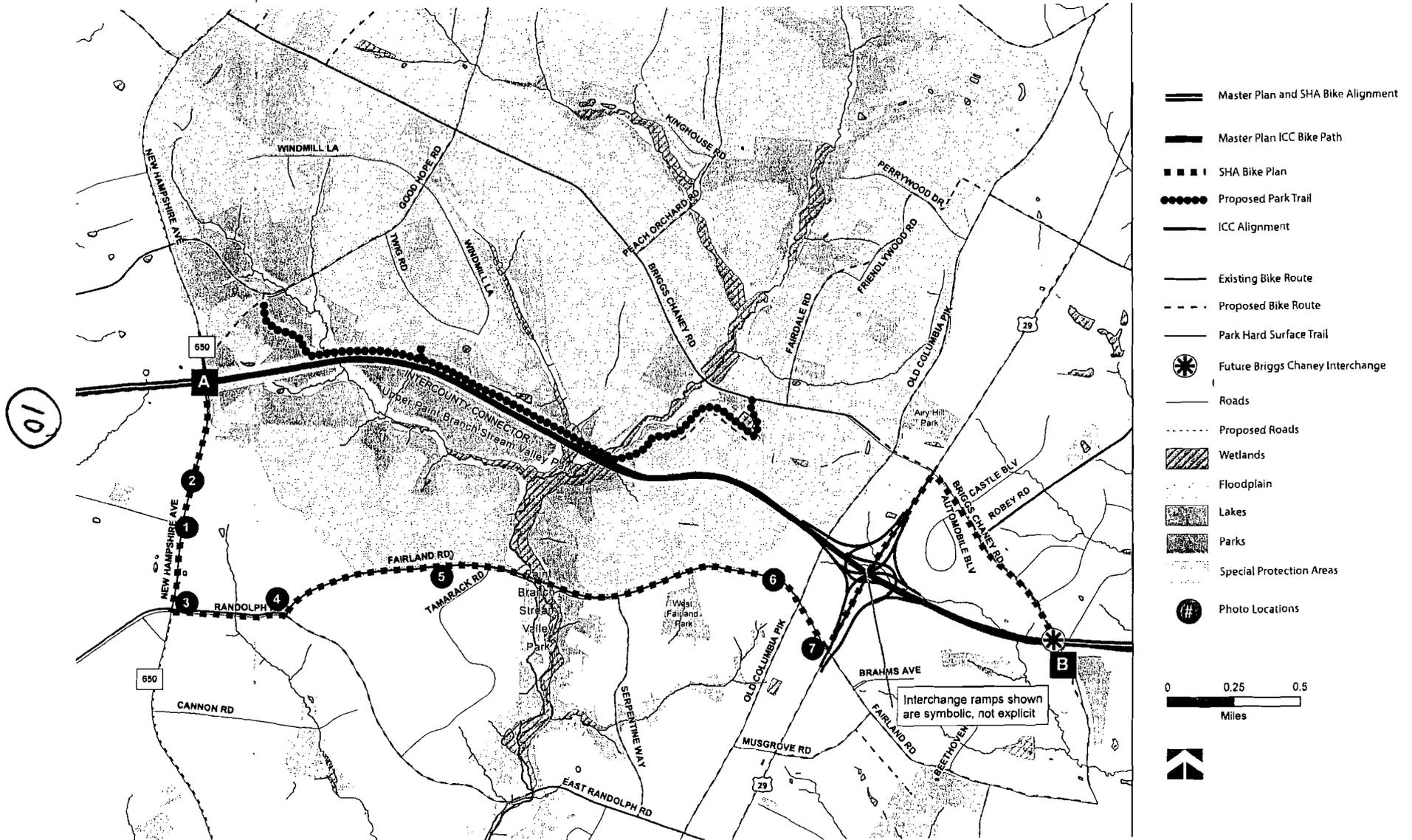
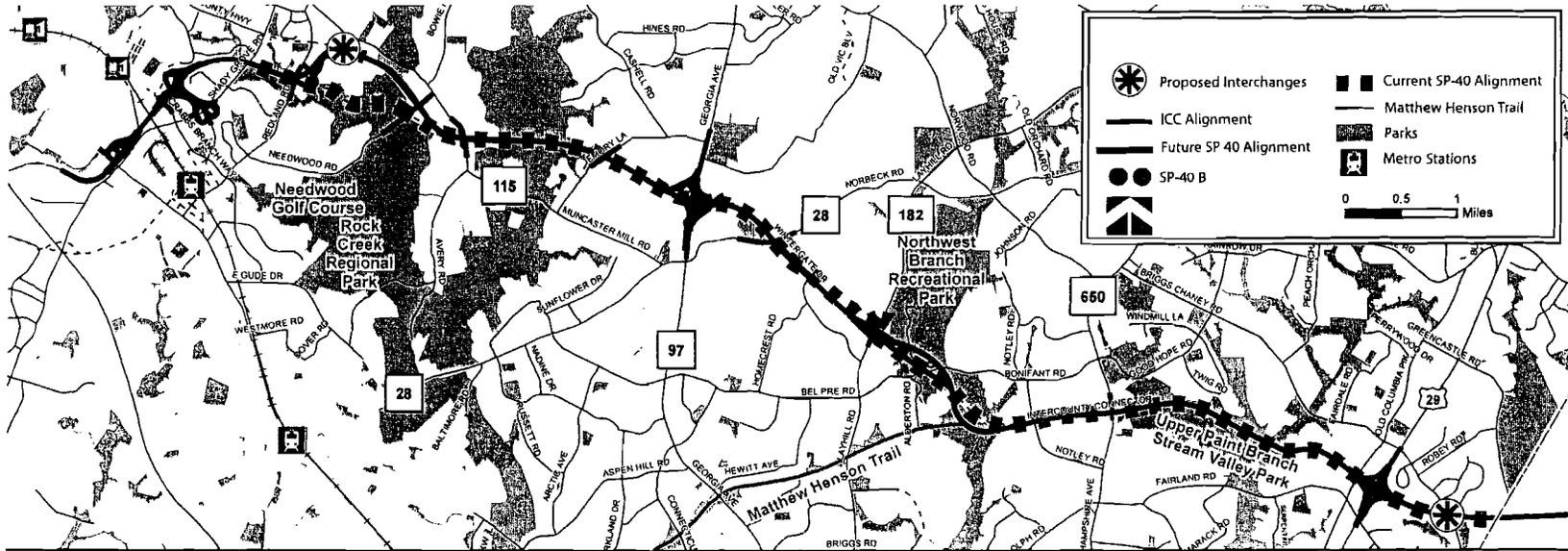
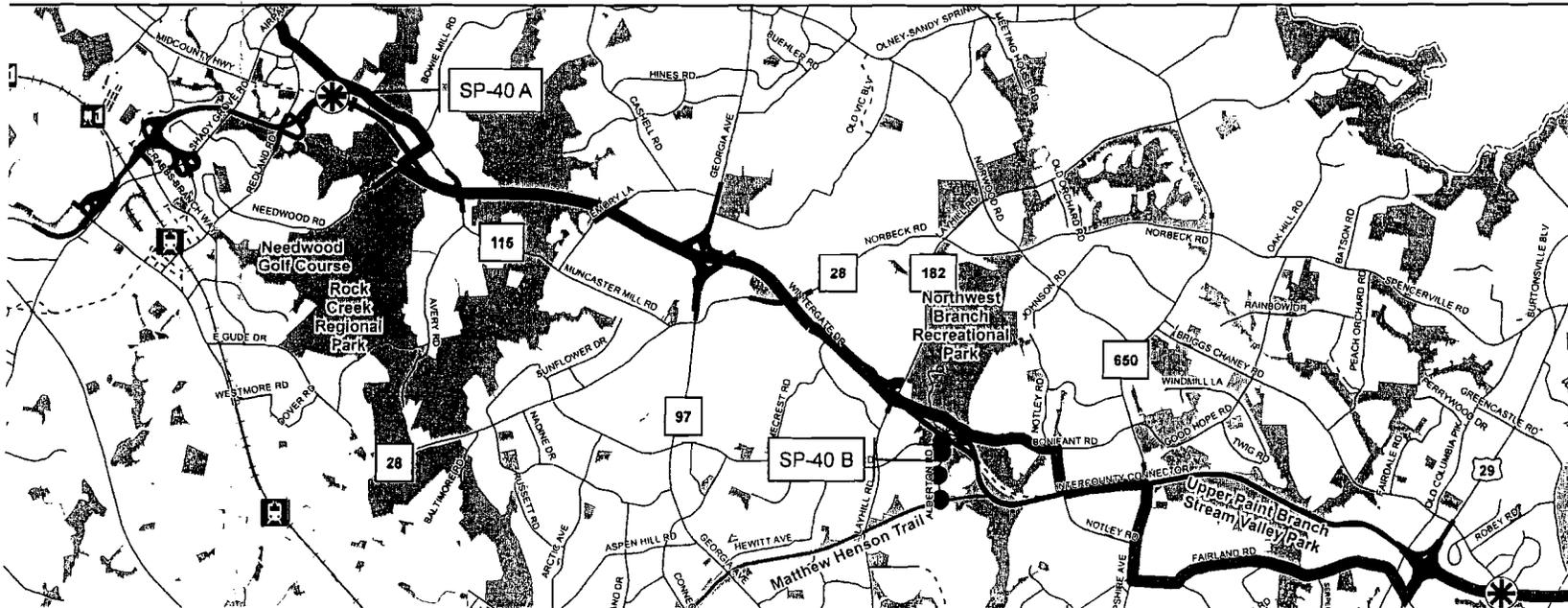


Figure 8 SP-40 Before and After



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**Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Fiscal Analysis of
Planning Board (Final) Draft Intercounty Connector Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment**

Plan Draft Page #	Facility	Location	Limits	Length (Linear Feet)	Est. Unit Cost (\$/Linear Foot)	Est. Total Construction Cost (\$)
20	Shared use path	Muncaster Mill Road	Applewood Ln – Needwood Rd	7,300	260	1,898,000
28	Shared use path	Alderton Road	Bonifant Rd – Matthew Henson Trail	3,000	260	780,000
28	Shared use path	Bonifant Road	Layhill Rd – Notley Rd	8,500	260	2,210,000
28	Shared use path	Notley Road	Bonifant Rd - ICC	2,300	260	598,000
29	Shared use path	Layhill Road	ICC – Bonifant Rd	3,500	260	910,000
31	Shared use path	Fairland Road	East Randolph Rd – US 29	12,300	260	3,198,000
34	Shared use path	New Hampshire Avenue	ICC – East Randolph Rd	4,400	260	1,144,000
			TOTAL			10,738,000

(12)

Note: This analysis includes seven segments of “shared use path” along transportation right-of-way. It includes only those shared use path segments newly proposed by this plan draft amendment; it does not include segments of the ICC shared use path previously proposed in other plans (since fiscal analyses were already done for those plans, nor does it include newly proposed park trail segments, which would be the responsibility of M-NCPPC).

Contact: (202) 487-0877

**Testimony of Casey Anderson
on behalf of the
Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)**

ICC Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment -- Hiker-Biker Trail

The Washington Area Bicyclist Association strongly opposes the Planning Board's proposal to amend the ICC functional master plan to put large chunks of the hiker-biker trail on the roads instead of through parks.

- The Council has already considered -- and flatly rejected -- the changes to the master planned hiker-biker trail that are now before you for a second time.
- As the draft notes (on page 13), "the Planning Board supported these options in their review of the [ICC] DEIS in February 2005." What the draft neglects to mention is that the Council voted unanimously to reject them.
- The proposed amendments before you tonight are essentially an attempt to take another bite at the apple, and they should be rejected out of hand.
- The Planning Board says the situation has changed because the state has since decided that the hiker-biker path cannot actually be in the ICC ROW in the parks. This, however, is a distinction without a difference. Nothing has happened to prevent the county from putting the trail next to the ROW.
- On the merits, the claim that a six lane highway is environmentally acceptable but a 10 foot bike path is too harmful to the environment simply makes no sense.
- The decision to exclude the trail from the ROW over parkland was driven by the legal fiction that any pavement in the ROW -- whether part of the highway or not -- would make it harder for the ICC to pass environmental muster.
- The Park Department did not conduct any analysis to demonstrate that any particular routing of the trail would cause serious environmental harm to the parks. Instead, they have simply noted that these parks are sensitive.
- Only after they received more than 200 e-mails and more than 25 witnesses testified against the staff proposal did the Planning Board even agree to direct its staff to evaluate park routing options. The Planning Board's vague promise to study whether some parts of the path could be built in the parks for a master planned facility that has been promised for years as part of the ICC project is not enough. The Planning Board should study path alignments in the parks first and then propose modifications if they find serious problems instead of erasing master planned facilities.

Montgomery Bicycle Advocates
Montgomery County, Maryland

February 4, 2009

Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Intercounty Connector (ICC) Limited Master Plan Amendment: Bikeways and Interchanges

Members of the County Council,

Please accept this written testimony from Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (MoBike) regarding the *ICC Limited Master Plan Amendment: Bikeways and Interchanges*.

MoBike asks you to **oppose** the amendment as written because it would eliminate key sections of the ICC hiker-biker trail and severely compromise the trail's transportation value and suitability for users of all types.

Removing any sections of the trail from the master plan would likely make it forever impossible to build the trail as a continuous facility. Even if the trail cannot be built right away, we must keep the entire route in the master plan. Only the master planned route meets the original intent of this trail – to provide a high quality, safe and direct east-west route for bicyclists of all types.

The Planning Board has cited environmental grounds for detouring the trail around park areas such as Upper Paint Branch Park. Yet the ICC highway would plow through the same parks. The Board made the same recommendation in 2005 and you overruled it then (by an 8-0 vote). Please do so again. I'll quote former Councilmember Marilyn Praisner because she had extensive knowledge of the ICC and cared deeply about parks in her district. In voting for the full trail in 2005, she said, "*Where the line is drawn as far as environmental impacts is almost laughable when you start to look at a bike path as being a problem and not the whole road itself... the bike path should be part of the equation and should be part of what one responds to environmentally, not that you look at the bike path and say oop, we can't do it because of environmental problems... It doesn't pass the laugh test.*".

The master plan amendment calls for trail sections in park areas and certain other locations to be replaced by detours consisting of sidewalk-type paths along arterial roads including Muncaster Mill Road, Bonifant Road, Notley Road, New Hampshire Avenue, East

Randolph Road, Fairland Road and Briggs Chaney Road. This route is wholly unacceptable for a trail of this type because it forces trail users to cross at a minimum 100 streets and driveways. These include major signalized intersections, busy shopping center entrances, service station driveways and fast food restaurant entrances.

If you take away one point from this discussion, it should be that there is an enormous difference, in terms of mobility and safety, between a trail that has few at-grade crossings and one that is full of them. Frequent at-grade crossings – places where the trail crosses side streets and driveways – make roadside trails *slow* and *hazardous*. Commercial driveways such as shopping center entrances are especially dangerous. Drivers pulling out across the trail often do not look for bicyclists approaching from their right. Drivers may turn into these driveways without looking for bicyclists at all. Safe bicyclists must slow down at each crossing and stop for drivers who may not see them. Pedestrians will not be expecting cyclists on what is essentially a wide sidewalk. The essential flaw of the proposed detour routes is the high number of at-grade crossings they present.

Out of the 13.5 miles of planned ICC trail in Montgomery County, the amendment as written would replace 5 or 6 miles of master-planned trail with 6 or 7 miles of detour. This would result in a trail that is 40 to 50% sidepath detours. Attached as an addendum is a detailed discussion of these detours one by one.

To its credit, the Planning Board has offered to put the Upper Paint Branch Park segment of the trail into its internal Countywide Park Trails Plan for future study. But that does not represent a commitment. The Board has stated that it could still decide not to pave the trail depending on future study results, and in any case it could remove the trail from the Countywide Park Trails Plan in the future without Council consent. Moreover the Board's proposal for that segment takes it only as far as Nees Lane. The full trail must remain in the master plan at this time.

This is not a stand-alone trail. It is intended to serve as the east-west backbone of the countywide trail network and link several north-south trails into a coherent network. It will flow directly into the future Midcounty Highway Trail to create a direct trail all the way to Clarksburg.

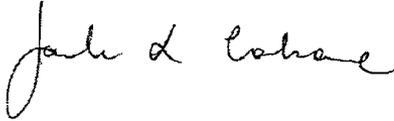
We certainly do not oppose construction of the many detour trails, because they would enhance connectivity and even the weakest of them would serve bicyclists and pedestrians trying to reach destinations in commercial areas or travel on certain axes. The detour routes can play an important interim role as well. But they are no substitute for the original trail alignment near the ICC.

Matthew Henson Trail

We support the Planning Board's proposal to create a critical continuous connection between the Matthew Henson Trail and the ICC trail. The Board has offered to add this connection to the Countywide Park Trails Plan. But in recognition of this connection's importance, we ask that the master plan be amended to include it.

Thank you for considering this input.

Sincerely,



Jack Cochran
Chair, Montgomery Bicycle Advocates
7121 Thomas Branch Drive
Bethesda, MD 20817

Addendum 1: Detour-specific Discussion

Following are MoBike's comments specific to each detour section proposed for the ICC trail by the *ICC Limited Master Plan Amendment: Bikeways and Interchanges*.

Upper Paint Branch Park Detour

By far the most objectionable detour for a trail of this type is the four mile detour around Upper Paint Branch Park. This detour is little more than an 8' to 10' wide sidewalk and adds the highest number (roughly 70) and most dangerous crossings to the trail, because it follows along a busy commercial road – New Hampshire Avenue – as well as East Randolph and Fairland roads.

A path route there that implements the master plan in our opinion would be the route the Planning Board has offered to include in the Countywide Park Trails Plan, which would follow (as sidepath) along Cape May Drive, then pass through Upper Paint Branch Park, then follow an existing park path to Nees Lane. At that point our route diverges from the Planning Board route if at all possible, utilizing undeveloped land between Nees Lane and Old Columbia Pike to at least reach the ICC or Old Columbia Pike, then cross U.S. 29 and pass behind the auto park to return to the state's trail route along the ICC proper. A series of backup options exist (using Briggs Chaney Road east of Old Columbia Pike for example) that merit consideration in order of preference – but the master plan should not be amended until preferable solutions are exhausted.

Northwest Branch Park Detour

The detour to avoid Northwest Branch Park south of Bonifant Road follows along that road and Notley Road. It does not add length but adds some number of residential driveway crossings and a few street crossings. Any sidepath built along Bonifant (useful in its own right) must absolutely be located on the south side of the street (crossing at

Pebblestone Drive) to avoid the much greater number of driveways on the north side. The original route through the park must remain in the master plan until it has at least been the subject of a facility design study.

Rock Creek Park Detour

The Planning Board has identified three different options for detouring around the original path alignment through Rock Creek Park. The worst of these, which follows Muncaster Mill Road all the way to Shady Grove Road, is quite unacceptable for a trail of this type. The master plan amendment does not appear to commit to any particular option, and must be opposed.

Addendum 2: Counts of Street and Driveway Crossings

The following table quantifies street and driveway crossings for the bulk of the proposed ICC trail detour route around Upper Paint Branch Park. This is one of the detour routes proposed by the ICC master plan amendment which MoBike opposes as written. The other detours have similar crossing profiles based on adjacent land use type (residential, commercial, etc.).

Road name	Length (miles)	Side of street	Likely side of street?	Side street crossings	Commercial driveway crossings	Residential driveway crossings	Commercial driveway concerns
New Hampshire Ave (MD 650)	0.9	SB	Yes	4	7	8	2 at shopping center, 2 at gas station; also a church, realtor, and an office building
		NB	No	5	10	5	6 shopping center entrances; 2 at school; 2 churches
East Randolph Road	0.4	EB	No	2	4	2	2 entrances to gas station, small office building, apartments
		WB	Yes	1	5	3	Shopping center and McDonalds entrances
Fairland Road (west of U.S. 29)	2.2	EB	Yes	7	7	25	2 gas station entrances; also church, nursing home, schools, and office entrances (mostly at eastern end)
		WB	No	6	4	20	2 gas station entrances; also church and tennis club entrances
Total (likely side of the street)	3.5			12	19	36	

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Arthur Holmes, Jr.
Director

MEMORANDUM

January 30, 2009

TO: Phil Andrews, President
Montgomery County Council

FROM: Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director *Arthur Holmes, Jr.*
Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: Planning Board (Final) Draft of the InterCounty Connector (ICC) Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation is pleased to provide comments to the County Council on the InterCounty Connector (ICC) Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment. The Planning Board and its staff have put significant effort into this draft Master Plan. However, we have some concerns that we think should be addressed. Our comments are set out below.

General Concerns

1. The stated three purposes of the amendment are:
 - To determine appropriate uses for master planned right-of-way (ROW) not used by the approved ICC highway project
 - To reconcile approved highway design elements with master planned guidance regarding certain interchange locations
 - To propose new alignments for the master planned bicycle and pedestrian facilities along the ICC Corridor

For the first issue, regarding master planned ROW not used by the ICC, the plan draft needs more work. Since this is an amendment to existing plans a discussion is needed of which sections of the ICC (master planned road "F-9") ROW as shown in existing master plans are being deleted, which sections are being newly created, and which sections are being overlaid atop the former M-83 ROW. Also, the amendment needs to spell out which sections of the M-83 ROW are being deleted, including examination of both Alternates A and B for M-83 as shown in the current *Upper Rock Creek Master Plan*, and which sections of either Alternate A or B are being retained/confirmed. Further, the amendment needs to clearly indicate where the ROW minimum width for the ICC is being reduced from 300' (such as the area through the Winters Run neighborhood) and specify that the new minimum ROW is 150'. Finally, (for any non-parkland areas of the deleted sections of ROW) what land use, and zoning, is being proposed? We request that a consistent set of text, figures, and tables be introduced to the plan amendment showing this information.

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Office of the Director

2. For the Highway Design section, figures should be included which graphically show the extent of the newly master planned Briggs Chaney Road interchange ROW, and the parcels it will impact; similar to the way in which the revised Midcounty Highway/M-83 interchange is treated in the amendment.
3. With regard to the third issue of proposed new alignments for the master planned bicycle and pedestrian alignments, our comments are arranged according to the five study area segments evaluated in the amendment. Overall the comments are guided by the fact that the ICC is envisioned as a multi-modal transportation facility and should include accommodation of as many modes as possible within its ROW. We also note that the existing condition today, as currently master planned, is to have a separate, hard-surface, shared use path (Class I bikeway) along the ICC highway alignment.
4. For Needwood Road and Vicinity (Study Area A), we support Option 2, primarily because it follows the ICC alignment more closely than Option 1 and appears to have less negative impacts on the natural environment than Option 3.
5. For Emory Lane/Georgia Avenue and Vicinity (Study Area B), we support retention of the bikeway alignment within the ICC ROW.
6. For Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity (Study Area C), we support the alignment which combines Option 1 from Layhill Road to Bonifant Road via the ICC, Option 3 from the ICC to Alderton Road via Bonifant Road and then from Bonifant Road to the Matthew Henson Trail via Alderton Road, and Option 4 from Alderton Road to Notley Road via the Matthew Henson Trail. This alignment follows less heavily traveled roads than Option 1 alone, or Option 2. It is also more closely follows the ICC alignment, and is less circuitous than Option 5.
7. For Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley and Vicinity (Study Area D), we support retention of the bikeway along the ICC alignment. We do not agree with the draft amendment's recommendation to reroute the ICC bikeway via New Hampshire Avenue, East Randolph Road, Fairland Road, and the US 29 Commuter Bikeway, and to delete the ICC bikeway alignment through the park. Doing this would result in a net loss to the master planned bikeway system. New Hampshire Avenue, East Randolph Road, Fairland Road, and US 29 already have their own master planned bikeways. So the recommendation does not add to the bikeway system, but rather subtracts from it. Furthermore, it detracts from the multi-modal nature of the ICC, and sends a signal that bicyclists and pedestrians will not be able to use the ICC Corridor in the same way as users of other modes of travel. We believe this sends the wrong signal, and therefore, support locating the bikeway along the ICC alignment.

8. For US 29 and Vicinity (Study Area E), we support retention of the bikeway alignment within the ICC ROW.
9. We believe the document needs to be carefully proofread to ensure that it is correct, consistent, and complete. As an example of its incompleteness, there appears to be text missing between pages 24 and 28. At least part of the Alderton Road description is missing, and there might be other text also missing. With regard to inconsistencies, one example is the treatment of the bikeway along Muncaster Mill Road on page 20. In the second paragraph it is described as an "on-road bikeway" but in the very next paragraph it is called a "shared use path." Other examples are shown on the Specific Comments attachment.
10. Specific technical and editorial comments are also shown on the attachment.

cc: Diane Schwartz Jones, ACAO
Royce Hansen, Chairman, MCPB
Rollin Stanley, Planning Director, MCPB

Attachment

Attachment

Specific Comments

- p.10 change the first bullet under “Key Plan Objectives” into two separate bullets; the first for Highway Alignment and the second for Highway Design to have consistency with the stated Purpose
correct spelling of “were” in the bottom paragraph
- p. 13 add more text, tables, and figures to specifically show how the individual master plans are being amended with regard to the ICC highway elements
- p. 16 correct spelling of Applewood Lane
- p. 18 it is inconsistent to show any of “Option 1” along Shady Grove Road; this is not what the text indicated
- p. 20 correct inconsistency in descriptions of Muncaster Mill Road bikeway
- p. 22 delete reference to “DPWT”
- p. 28 text appears to be missing about Alderton Road at the top of the page; there may be text missing about other topics as well
- p. 31 correct spelling of “the” in the Discussion paragraph
- p. 33 a photo appears to be missing from this page
- p. 35 correct spelling of “shared” in third segment
- correct spelling of “Tanglewood” in fifth segment

Exhibit 5. Estimated construction costs

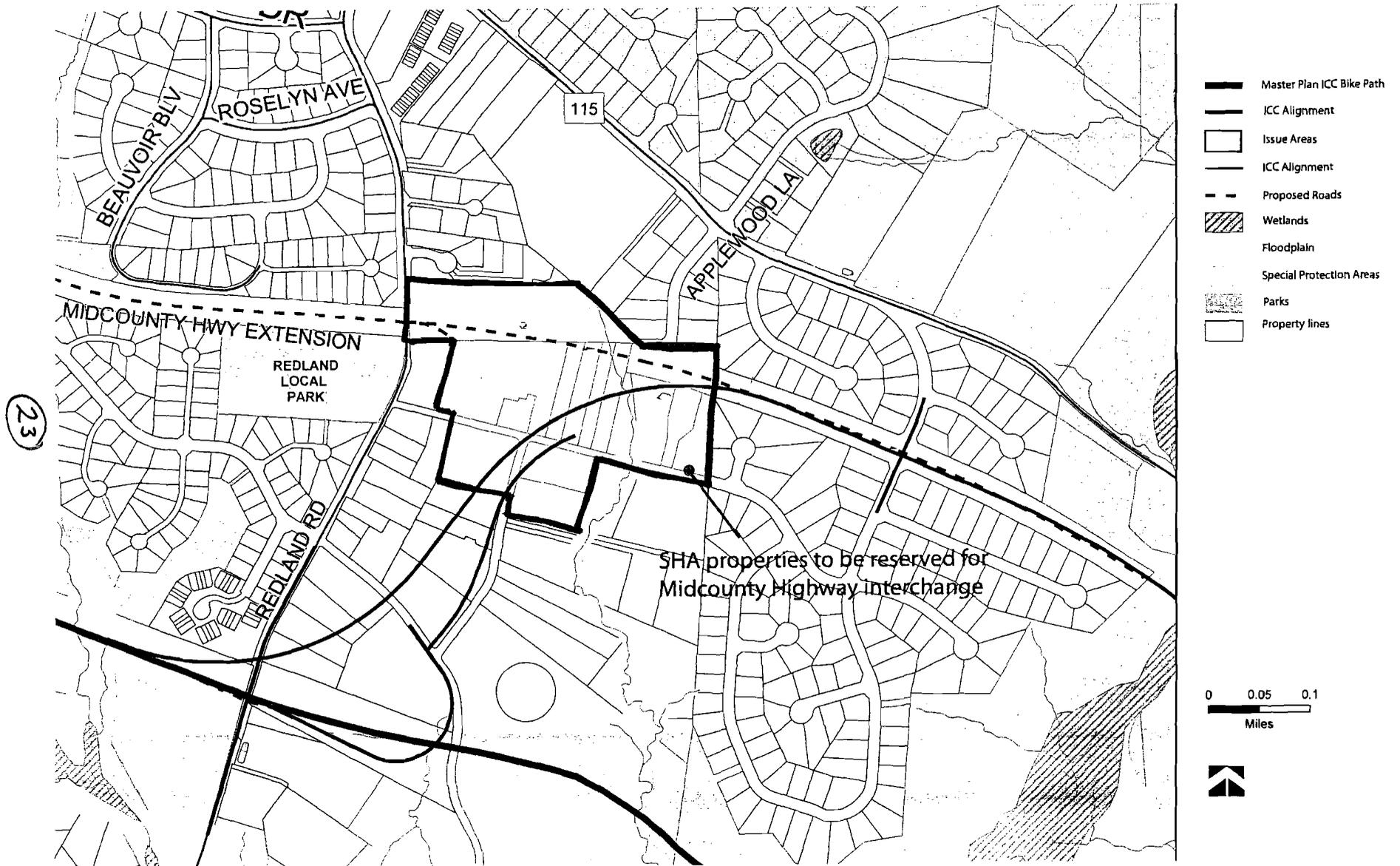
SP-40 - Existing Plan

Section	Roadside	From	To	Side of road	Length		Difficulty	Unit Cost	Total Cost
					(mi)	Existing			
1	ICC	Shady Grove Road	Nedham Road	south	0.70	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 2.1
2	ICC	Nedham Road	Needwood Road	south	0.85	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 4.3
3	ICC	Needwood Road	Emory Lane	south	1.95	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
4	Emory Lane	ICC trail	ICC bridge	east	0.04	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
5	ICC	ICC bridge	MD 97	north	0.09	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 0.3
6	ICC	MD 97	MD 182	north	2.22	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
7	ICC	MD 182	East side Northwest Branch Park	south	1.69	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 8.4
8	ICC	Branch Park	Notley Road	south	0.36	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.4
9	Notley Road	ICC bridge	ICC bridge	west	0.09	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 0.3
10	ICC	Notley Road	MD 650	north	0.76	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
11	ICC	MD 650	Batchellors Drive	north	2.08	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 10.4
12	ICC	Batchellors Drive	Old Columbia Pike	north	0.44	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.4
13	Old Columbia Pike	ICC bridge	ICC bridge	west	0.09	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 0.3
14	ICC	Old Columbia Pike	Trebleclef Lane	south	0.45	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 2.3
15	ICC	Trebleclef Lane	Briggs Chaney Road	south	0.76	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 2.3
16	ICC	Briggs Chaney Road	Prince George's County line	south	0.45	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS					13.03				\$ 31.5

SP-40 - Proposed Plan

Section	Roadside	From	To	Side of road	Length		Difficulty	Unit Cost	Total Cost (\$M)
					(mi)	Existing			
1	MD 115	Airpark Road	Redland Road	south	0.31	Yes	0	\$ -	\$ -
2	MD 115	Redland Road	Applewood Lane	south	0.45	Yes	0	\$ -	\$ -
3	MD 115	Applewood Lane	Rock Creek Park west boundary	south	0.38	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.4
4	MD 115	Rock Creek Park west boundary	Muncaster Road	south	0.60	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 3.0
5	MD 115	Muncaster Road	Needwood Road	south	0.10	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 0.3
6	Needwood Road	MD 115	ICC bridge	east	0.19	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.2
7	Needwood Road	ICC bridge	ICC trail	south	0.09	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
8	ICC	Needwood Road	Emory Lane	south	1.95	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
9	Emory Lane	ICC trail	ICC bridge	east	0.04	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
10	ICC	ICC bridge	MD 97	north	0.09	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 0.3
11	ICC	MD 97	MD 182	north	2.22	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
12	New park alignment	MD 182	Trolley Museum	north	0.38	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 1.9
13	Trolley Museum	Museum site west side	Bonifant Road	unknown	0.38	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.4
14	Bonifant Road	Trolley Museum	Notley Road	south	0.78	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 2.3
15	Notley Road	Bonifant Road	ICC	west	0.40	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 1.2
16	ICC	Notley Road	MD 650	north	0.76	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
17	MD 650	ICC	Notley Road	west	0.56	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.6
18	MD 650	Notley Road	Randolph Road	west	0.30	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 0.9
19	Randolph Road	MD 650	Fairland Road	north	0.43	Yes, substandard	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.4
20	Fairland Road	Randolph Road	Tamarack Road	south	0.83	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.8
21	Fairland Road	Tamarack Road	Cedar Creek Lane	south	0.44	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 2.2
22	Fairland Road	Cedar Creek Lane	Old Columbia Pike	south	0.83	No	1	\$ 1.0	\$ 0.8
23	Fairland Road	Old Columbia Pike	U5 29/ICC bikeway	south	0.25	No	3	\$ 5.0	\$ 1.2
24	US 29	Fairland Road	Trebleclef Lane	east	0.21	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
25	ICC	Trebleclef Lane	Briggs Chaney Road	south	0.76	No	2	\$ 3.0	\$ 2.3
26	ICC	Briggs Chaney Road	Prince George's County line	south	0.45	Programmed	0	\$ -	\$ -
TOTALS					14.17				\$ 19.2

Figure 2 Midcounty Highway Interchange



January 30, 2009

The Honorable Phil Andrews, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Md 20850

Re: Intercounty Connector Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment

Dear Mr. Andrews:

I am writing to submit testimony into the public hearing record for the above-referenced plan. I am the owner of lot 4, block A at the southwest corner of Garrett and Overhill Roads. On Figure 2 (page 12) of the Planning Board Draft my property is shown as one of the "SHA properties to be reserved for Midcounty Highway Interchange."

At the time the plan was prepared the State did not own my property but rather had initiated condemnation proceedings. This case was recently settled out of court. The State has agreed that it does not need my entire property and, in fact, as part of the settlement is transferring some of the property it owned on the north side of Garrett Road to me (see enclosed drawing).

I am requesting that Figure 2 be revised to show the new boundaries agreed to by the State. Our future plans for redevelopment could be placed in jeopardy if the property is shown as being recommended for reservation. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


Monte P. Asbury

cc: Glenn Orlin
Dan Hardy

Figure 2 Midcounty Highway Interchange

