



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

Al R. Roshdieh
Acting Director

November 30, 2015

Mr. Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: White Flint West Transportation, Phase 2
CIP No. 501116
Mandatory Referral No. 2015029

Dear Mr. Anderson:

Thank you for the review and comments on the White Flint West Transportation Phase 2 Mandatory Referral on September 10th. As requested at the hearing and in your letter, Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) staff coordinated a meeting with Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and Maryland- National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). The meeting was held on October 26, 2015 at SHA District 3 offices. MCDOT continues to coordinate with SHA on potential reductions on speed limit, lane widths and curb height on SHA roads in the White Flint West Transportation project limits.

In addition, the following comments were received from M-NCPPC in your letter dated September 16, 2015. MCDOT responses to the Mandatory Referral comments are included.

1. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT): The North Bethesda Transitway has an alternative alignment that runs along both legs of Old Georgetown Road within the limits of this project, as well as a planned station at the East Jefferson Street/Hoya Street intersection. A determination should be made as to the space requirements of that transitway and those requirements should be reflected in the design before proceeding with construction of this project.

Response: MCDOT will continue to work with M-NCPPC staff to develop the space requirements for the proposed North Bethesda Transitway through the project limits. The most updated plan for the North Bethesda Transitway indicates that the transitway will be accommodated within the 150 feet right of way along Old Georgetown Road.

Office of the Director

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2. General:

- a) The Capital Improvements Program Project Description Form for this project should be modified to reflect any and all variances from the requirements of Chapter 49 of the County Code -- including travel lane width, curb radii, curb extensions, and target speeds -- and submitted to the County Council for approval.

Response: *MCDOT concurs and will comply for County maintained roads.*

- b) The maximum target speed for the roads to be constructed or reconstructed under this project should be 25 mph, per the 2014 Urban Road Code bill and the White Flint Sector Plan. Also in accordance with this bill, reduce travel lane widths to ten feet; reduce curb radii to fifteen feet unless a greater radius is needed to accommodate the design vehicle; and provide curb extensions at intersections on streets with parking lanes.

Response: *Market Street and Executive Boulevard Extended will both be posted at 25 mph. For East Jefferson Street, MCDOT's design will tie into the existing conditions; however, MCDOT will work with our Traffic Engineering Division to consider re-posting East Jefferson to 25 mph. For the SHA portions of the project along Old Georgetown Road (east and south legs) and Hoya Street, MCDOT coordinated the proposed design with SHA to verify if 10-foot lanes and a lower posted speed limit would be acceptable.*

- c) Use six-inch-high, rather than eight-inch-high curbs on this project to avoid unnecessarily reducing the usable width of the sidewalk, lengthening the pedestrian crossing distance in the allowed traffic signal cycle, and requiring more effort by handicapped persons to cross the street.

Response: *MCDOT is proposing to use six-inch curbs on all County-owned roads. MCDOT met with SHA and M-NCPPC. SHA is verifying if six-inch curbs can be provided on the SHA owned roadways.*

- d) Construct sidewalks and paths behind handicap ramps wherever possible rather than have the ramps in the main travel path around the corner.

Response: *MCDOT concurs and will comply.*

- e) Widen all handicap ramps that accommodate bicyclists on shared use paths to ten feet wide.

Response: *MCDOT concurs and will comply.*

- f) Provide dual, directional handicap ramps at all intersections and provide median pedestrian refuges on all legs of divided roadways at intersections.

Response: *MCDOT concurs and will comply wherever possible.*

- g) Medians of six feet in width or greater should be landscaped and medians of ten feet in width or wider should be planted with trees. Concrete medians narrower than six feet should be constructed with an ashlar slate formwork surface.

Response: *MCDOT concurs and will comply. MCDOT will ensure that all medians six feet or wider are grass, landscaped medians. MCDOT will also plant trees in medians larger than 10 feet wide. MCDOT will coordinate with SHA to verify that ashlar slate formwork surface will be acceptable.*

3. Market Street:

- a) Provide curb extensions on Market Street at Old Georgetown Road to meet the requirements of the recent Urban Road Code changes and provide handicap ramps to cross all four legs of the Executive Boulevard/Market Street intersections. Locate the proposed handicap ramps to minimize pedestrian crossing distances.

Response: *MCDOT will provide curb bump outs and adjust the size/location of the handicap ramps along Market Street at Old Georgetown Road. The sidewalk and bikepath along Market Street will terminate at the bikepath along Old Georgetown Road. Therefore, no handicap ramps will be provided to cross Old Georgetown Road. The handicap ramps along Old Georgetown Road will be sized and located to minimize pedestrian crossing distances across Market Street.*

- b) Provide handicap ramps, a marked crosswalk, a median refuge, and a traffic signal on the south leg of Old Georgetown Road at Market Street.

Response: *During the meeting with SHA on October 26th, MCDOT re-visited the M-NCPPC suggestion for a pedestrian traffic signal at the intersection of Old Georgetown Road and Market Street.*

- c) The intersection of Executive Boulevard and Market Street should either be fully stop sign-controlled or traffic signal-controlled to ensure pedestrian safety.

Response: *MCDOT agrees that the traffic control at this location needs to be considered carefully. The need for a multi-way stop or signal controlled intersection should be determined by an engineering study after the intersection is operational. In preparation for a potential future traffic signal, underground conduit will be installed at this intersection.*

4. East Jefferson Street:

- a) Provide separated bike lanes on East Jefferson Street.

Response: *MCDOT will provide the master plan-recommended bike lanes along East Jefferson Street within the current Limits of Work for the project.*

- b) Consider reducing the number of turn lanes on East Jefferson Street.

Response: *The need for a westbound right turn lane along East Jefferson Street was evaluated and eliminated.*

- c) Eliminate the proposed free-right turn lane in the southwest quadrant of the Old Georgetown Road intersection or modify it to improve pedestrian safety.

Response: *MCDOT designers and traffic engineers will reconsider the free right turn lane to determine if it can be modified. If not, MCDOT will work to provide advance signage to improve the safety of the pedestrian crossing.*

- d) Provide a marked crosswalk with handicap ramps and a median pedestrian refuge on the east leg of East Jefferson Street 450 feet west of Hoya Street at the traffic signal controlling driveways on the north and south sides of the street. Provide a median pedestrian refuge on the west leg also.

Response: *A crosswalk will be added at this location. MCDOT designers and traffic engineers will determine the necessary modifications in the final design phase. To extend the median nose and provide a median pedestrian refuge area, MCDOT will review the driveway offsets for turning movements.*

5. Old Georgetown Road – south leg:

- a) Provide two-way separated bike lanes on the east side of Old Georgetown Road from Nicholson Lane to East Jefferson Street with a pavement width of eleven feet.

Response: *The current design exceeds the Master Plan requirements by including on road bike lanes in accordance with SHA policy, in addition to a shared use path. MCDOT coordinated with SHA and M-NCPPC staff. One way bike lanes will be provided in each direction. If the lanes are narrowed then a buffer will be provided for the bike lanes. Prolongation of this section north onto Hoya Street is complicated by the fact that the east curb is already constructed by the Pike and Rose development.*

- b) Work with SHA to narrow the proposed lane widths to ten feet.

Response: *MCDOT is coordinating the proposed design with SHA to verify if 10-foot lanes and a lower posted speed limit would be acceptable. MCDOT has not yet received a response from SHA.*

- c) Where a curb-attached sidewalk is proposed, offset the sidewalk on the west side of Old Georgetown Road from the curb by a minimum five-foot-wide landscape panel with street trees.

Response: The transition from the existing to the proposed conditions along the west side of Old Georgetown Road at the southern end of the project does not have sufficient right-of-way available to provide the minimum five-foot-wide tree panel. The approved PDF establishes the project limits and budget.

- d) Minimize the length of landscaped median to be removed and replaced by unused, striped-out pavement.

Response: MCDOT concurs. The designers will review the proposed improvements to, where possible, reduce impacts to the landscaped median. It may be possible to construct a landscaped median, even if only temporary, at the new location.

6. Old Georgetown Road – east leg:

- a) Reduce the curb-to-curb roadway width of the segment between Hoya Street and Executive Boulevard to 76 feet by removing the proposed eastbound right turn lane. Work with SHA to narrow the proposed lane widths to ten feet.

Response: MCDOT concurs. An additional traffic analysis determined that the eastbound right turn lane along Old Georgetown Road (east leg) at Executive Boulevard Extended can be eliminated. Once the right turn lane is removed, the width of the proposed roadway will be 76 feet. MCDOT is coordinating with SHA to verify if 10-foot lanes will be acceptable.

- b) Separated bike lanes would provide a better accommodation than the planned on-road bike lanes and a shared-use path without requiring any additional space.

Response: MCDOT will consider separated bike lanes in the final design, depending upon SHA concurrence with 10' travel lanes. The wide shared-use paths along Old Georgetown Road (east leg) are necessary to accommodate heavy pedestrian traffic around Pike & Rose and the future development on the south side. The on-road bike lanes as designed are consistent with the Sector Plan and were part of the previously approved (by M-NCPPC and SHA) typical road section for this segment. The on-road bike lanes also provide consistency with the rest of the proposed on-road bike lanes within the project limits.

- c) Provide dual directional handicap ramps in the southwest corner of the Executive Boulevard Extended/Grand Park Avenue intersection and a median pedestrian refuge should be provided on all four legs of the intersection.

Response: MCDOT will look at the possibility of adding a median pedestrian refuge area on the west approach and providing dual directional handicap ramps in the southwest corner.

However, there are no medians proposed on the north and south approaches of the intersection. MCDOT will consider, based on projected traffic volumes, constructing a temporary median with a single northbound left turn lane in the south approach in lieu of dual left turn lanes until such time that traffic demands require the construction of the second left turn lane.

7. Executive Boulevard Extended – Reconsider building separated bike lanes on Executive Boulevard Extended from 300 feet south of Marinelli Road to Old Georgetown Road (east leg) in the context of providing a comprehensive bicycle facility network for White Flint. This could be accomplished by eliminating the proposed center turn lane, as well as reducing the width of the travel lanes to ten feet. If the center turn lane cannot be eliminated, consider other modifications to the typical section to achieve the separated bike lanes.

Response: MCDOT responded to earlier requests from the Implementation Committee to add a Shared Use Path along Executive Boulevard that was not included in the Sector Plan, since there was a concern about children riding to the park and aquatic center.

The Executive Boulevard improvements start just north of Nicholson Lane and carry through to Old Georgetown Road. The project will tie to the existing five lane section north of Nicholson Lane. This five-lane section is required to accommodate the anticipated traffic volumes. There is insufficient pavement to restripe this section for bike lanes without widening the road. The northbound approach of Executive Boulevard at Old Georgetown Road requires a five-lane section to provide for a northbound double left turn. This volume in the heaviest peak period (2042 Build Out) is 537 vehicles. With the entire length of Executive Boulevard being approximately 1,400 feet once the appropriate turn lanes, tapers and off-peak street parking lanes are incorporated into the design, there is approximately 500 feet or less of Executive Boulevard remaining to stripe for separated bike lanes.

8. Hoya Street:

- a) Widen the median on the south leg of Hoya Street at Montrose Parkway to six feet and provide a median refuge.

Response: MCDOT will consider widening the median to six-feet wide. However, doing so will cause a seven-foot lane shift for traffic coming through the intersection from the north. SHA and MCDOT traffic engineers will review the proposed condition and determine whether a seven-foot lane shift is acceptable.

- b) Convert the shared use path to two-way separated bike lanes on the east side of Hoya Street with a pavement width of eleven feet.

Response: The current design exceeds the Master Plan requirements by including on road bike lanes in accordance with SHA policy, in addition to a shared use path. MCDOT in

coordination with SHA and M-NCPPC staff will consider providing separated one way bike lanes on both sides of Hoya Street.

c) Work with SHA to narrow the proposed lane widths to ten feet.

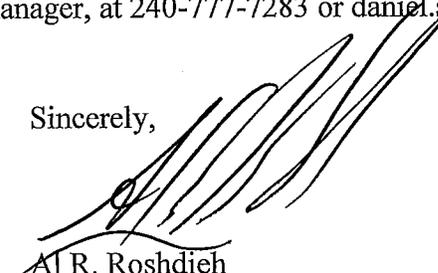
Response: On October 26th MCDOT met with SHA and M-NCPPC to discuss reducing the allowable lane widths along SHA roads within the White Flint master plan area.

9. Obtain a new Forest Conservation Exemption for Phase II to include proposed roadway modifications.

Response: MCDOT concurs and will comply.

Thank you for your time for your review and approval of the White Flint Transportation, Phase 2 project for Mandatory Referral. If you have any questions regarding the responses in this letter, please contact Dan Sheridan, Project Manager, at 240-777-7283 or daniel.sheridan@montgomerycountymd.gov.

Sincerely,



Al R. Roshdiah
Acting Director

ARR:gl

cc: Bruce Johnston, Chief, DOT-DTE

