



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB  
Item # 7  
3-17-2011

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 9, 2011

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Dan Hardy, Chief *DKH*  
Functional Planning and Policy Division

Rose Krasnow, Chief *RK*  
Area 1

Larry Cole, Master Planner *LC*  
Functional Planning and Policy Division/Multi-Modal Networks Unit

**FROM:** Cherian Eapen, Planner/Coordinator (301) 495-4539 *CE*  
Transportation Planning, Area 1

**PROJECT:** Seminary Road Intersection Improvements  
CIP Project No. 509337

**REVIEW TYPE:** Mandatory Referral No. MR2010813

**APPLICANT:** Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)

**APPLYING FOR:** Plan Approval

**TEAM AREA:** Area 1/North and West Silver Spring Master Plan

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Seminary Road Intersection Improvement project (see Attachment No. 1: Vicinity Map) is generally consistent with the alternative approved by the Planning Board in September 2008 during the review of the Phase I Facility Planning Study. One notable change is that the proposed project would retain the existing one-way southbound operation of Brookville Road between Linden Lane and Seminary Road rather than widen it to permit a two-way operation. Some area residents prefer the two-way operation, but we concur with MCDOT's decision to retain the one-way operation for this segment of Brookville Road.

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Planning Board approve the proposed project with the following comments:

1. Provide adequate street lighting per American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recommendations.
2. The realigned segment of Seminary Road between Linden Lane and Seminary Place should continue to be called Seminary Road to avoid segmentation of this road and to avoid re-addressing properties along the above section.
3. Coordinate with MNCPPC staff to determine the following:
  - a. The type of filler material to be used for the bio-retention beds.
  - b. The location and type of proposed street trees and trees within the bio-retention areas.
4. For Montgomery Hills Neighborhood Park:
  - a. Provide details on the extent of the temporary and permanent impacts from the roadway improvement project to the park. Coordinate with Department of Parks on any easements (not right-of-way dedication) and park permits required for the project.
  - b. Identify on the Plan all trees that are 6" DBH or above within and adjacent to the park that may be impacted by the project. The project must provide sufficient tree protection measures to avoid impacts to existing trees.
  - c. Maintain unrestricted access to the park throughout the construction period.
5. Resubmit the Tree Save Plan, signed by an ISA certified arborist, that includes details on proposed tree save measures, sediment control, and necessary permits as detailed in the staff memo for staff-level review and action.

## **PREVIOUS PLANNING BOARD ACTION**

The Planning Board comments on the Phase I Facility Planning Study were forwarded to MCDOT on September 25, 2008, (see Attachment No. 2). The Board's comments concerning the proposed roadway section and bike accommodation have been addressed in the proposed design. Comments on impacts to the Montgomery Hills Neighborhood Park are included in the staff recommendations. Additional comments concerning forest conservation are addressed elsewhere in this report.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The confluence of Seminary Road, Linden Lane, Brookville Road, Second Avenue, and Seminary Lane to the southwest of the Capital Beltway (I-495)/Georgia Avenue (MD 97) interchange forms a complex combination of intersections that accommodates a variety of travel movements. These intersections serve a combination of local and longer distance trips. Some traffic from Georgia Avenue uses the Seminary Road connection to reach Kensington, the Second Avenue connection to reach 16<sup>th</sup> Street, and the Brookville Road connection to reach the Walter Reed Annex and associated Brookville industrial complex (or continue to East-West Highway via Lyttonsville Place, Lyttonsville Road, and Grubb Road). Characteristic of this mix of intersecting roadways is the Seminary Road “sweep”, which crosses the other area roadways diagonally.

The existing condition is confusing to unfamiliar motorists and pedestrians since there is a mix of signal-controlled, sign-controlled, and uncontrolled intersections, intersections occurring at sharp angles, insufficient sight distance, and insufficient spacing between intersections. The purpose of this project is to simplify the vehicular movements and improve overall safety within the study area. The study area with the recommended intersection improvements is shown in Attachment No. 3. The recommended improvements would consolidate the number of intersections within the project limits from six to four and would include:

1. Eliminating the Seminary Road “sweep” between Second Avenue/Linden Lane and Seminary Place,
2. Providing a southbound left turn lane on Seminary Road at the Second Avenue/Linden Lane traffic signal,
3. Providing a four-way STOP-controlled intersection at the Linden Lane and Brookville Road intersection and improving sight distance at this intersection,
4. Retaining existing one-way southbound operation on the segment of Brookville Road between Linden Lane and Seminary Road with on-street parking and a proposed on-road bikeway, and
5. Providing an all-way STOP-controlled intersection at the Seminary Road/Seminary Place intersection.

The concept presented to the public also included STOP controls for the intersection of Seminary Road with Brookeville Road. Subsequent to the public meeting, MCDOT has determined that this intersection would operate better without the all-way stop control, a change that is now reflected in Attachment 3. Staff concurs with this revision as the two northern intersections are too closely spaced to function well if both are all-way stop controlled.

In addition, the project would:

1. Provide continuous on-street bicycle accommodation,
2. Provide continuous sidewalk facilities on all segments and marked crosswalks at intersections,
3. Provide landscaped panels to separate the roadway and sidewalks,

4. Incorporate landscaped micro bio-retention facilities, and
5. Improve sight distance at the nearby Seminary Place/Riley Place intersection.

Typical sections for the area roadways under the recommended improvements are shown in Attachment No. 4.

During the design phase, there was some discussion about what the realigned segment of Seminary Road between Linden Lane and Seminary Place should be called. While one alternative would be to rename it Second Avenue since it could be seen as a direct extension of that road, we recommend that it continue to be called Seminary Road to avoid segmentation of Seminary Road and to avoid re-addressing properties, all of whom now have Seminary Road addresses. This roadway section is therefore referred to as Seminary Road in this report and the attachments have been revised where necessary to reflect this name.

## **MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The design of this project was based on the August 2000 Approved and Adopted *North and West Silver Spring Master Plan* vision and objectives, public comment, and study team review. This project also takes into consideration existing and planned development in the study area.

The Seminary Road Intersection Improvements proposed by MCDOT are consistent with the recommendations in the Master Plan and 2005 Approved and Adopted *Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan*. The Master Plan recommended that this series of intersections “...be improved to eliminate potentially hazardous traffic and pedestrian conditions and ease traffic flow along Seminary Road” (Pg 56). An illustration of the base concept for consolidation of the intersections is included in the Master Plan on page 57 and included as Attachment No. 5.

The following is a summary of the Master Plan recommendations for the roads affected by this project:

Seminary Road is classified as an arterial road, with an 80-foot wide minimum right-of-way, two travel lanes and on-road bike accommodation.

Seminary Place is classified as an arterial road with an 80-foot wide minimum right-of-way, two travel lanes and on-road bike accommodation.

Linden Lane between Brookville Road and Second Avenue is classified as an arterial road with an 80-foot wide minimum right-of-way, four travel lanes and on-road bike accommodation. West of Brookville Road, Linden Lane is classified as a primary residential road with a 50-foot wide minimum right-of-way, two travel lanes and on-road bike accommodation.

Second Avenue is classified as an arterial road with an 80-foot wide minimum right-of-way, two travel lanes and on-road bike accommodation.

Brookville Road south of Linden Lane is classified as an arterial road, with an 80-foot wide minimum right-of-way, two travel lanes and on-road bike accommodation. Brookville Road between Seminary Road and Linden Lane is not classified.

**Staff finds that the Seminary Road Intersection Improvements project is consistent with the recommendations for the above roads in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan and the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan.** The segment of Brookville Road between Linden Lane and Seminary Road is not a Master Plan road but is shown on page 57 as being changed from one-way to two-way operation in conjunction with modifications to the Brookville Road/Linden Lane intersection. Neither change would be accomplished by this project, but staff concurs that the MCDOT proposal provides equally acceptable levels of access and circulation.

### **TREE SAVE PLAN**

Subsequent to the Phase I Facility Planning Study, MCDOT obtained an exemption for an NRI/FSD for the project from staff (see Attachment No. 6). Though the project does not require a Forest Conservation Plan, it is subject to the Forest Conservation Law, and a Tree Save Plan (TSP) is required. Our comments on the TSP included the following:

- a. The Tree Save Plan must be signed by an ISA-certified arborist and a qualified plan preparer in original non-black ink.
- b. Provide input from an ISA-certified arborist with additional details/specifications on the proposed tree save measures and confirm that the proposed tree save measures are realistic since the Tree Save Plan shows work adjacent to significant and specimen trees.
- c. Provide confirmation that modifications to sediment control are acceptable to Department of Permitting Services (DPS) since Note #2 on Sheet No. 3 includes references to modified sediment control devices if alternative or supplemental tree preservation measures are necessary. The sediment control measures are under the purview of DPS. Although it is understood that the modifications are to protect trees, the plan must not conflict with DPS regulations and DPS has expressly requested that M-NCPPC not approve any plan which specifies sediment control measures.
- d. Expand Note #1 on Sheet No. 3 to include a provision for the work near the trees to be performed under the direction of an arborist. Work must be performed in such a manner as to minimize disturbance to the trees. The arborist must submit a report documenting the work performed to the appropriate inspection staff upon completion of the project.
- e. Expand Note #1 on Sheet No. 3 to clarify whether or not any wetlands, streams or their associated buffers occur on or near the project site. Sheet No. 3 must also clarify whether or not any floodplains or associated building restriction lines occur within the study area.
- f. Identify on the Tree Save Plan the proposed tree removals with a bold "X".

- g. Clarify the purpose of the unidentified line parallel to the Limit of Disturbance (LOD) beyond the work area or delete as appropriate.
- h. Provide M-NCPPC with a copy of the DNR request letter and DNR response letter (related to Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species) and update Note #3 on Sheet No. 3 accordingly.
- i. Confirm the presence or absence of any trees in the study area which are County or State champions, or within 75% or more of the diameter of a current County or State champion.
- j. Revise notes on the detail sheet to include the approval of the M-NCPPC forest conservation inspector on decisions/actions related to tree care/preservation.
- k. Delete detail for blaze orange fence and replace with a detail for welded wire tree protection fence.
- l. Include a detail for tree protection signs.
- m. Revise the root pruning detail to show no disturbance (including trenching) beyond the LOD.

## **PUBLIC MEETING**

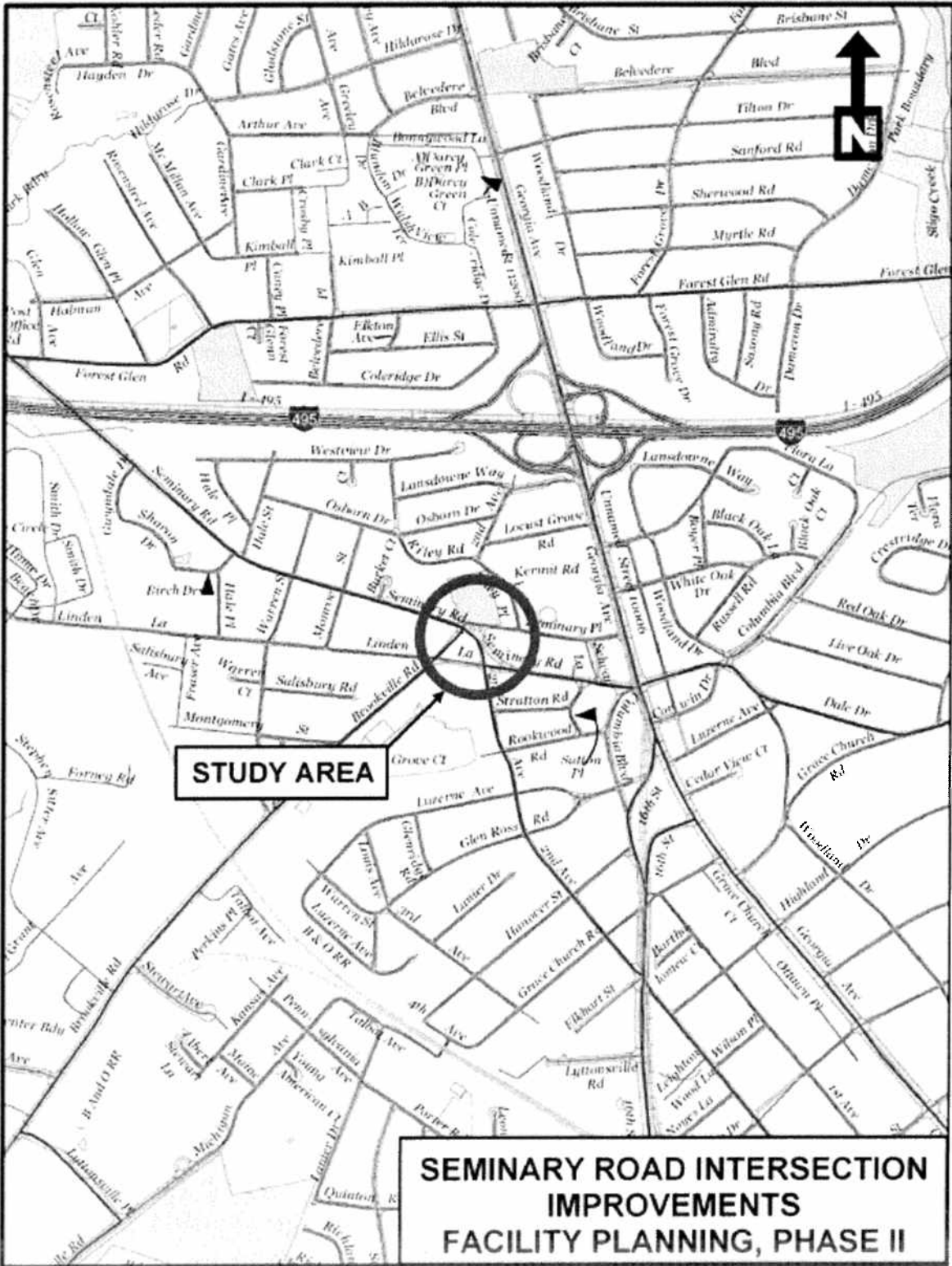
A public meeting for the Phase II Facility Planning Study was held on February 23, 2011, at the Woodlin Elementary School in Silver Spring. The meeting was attended by more than 45 citizens. Several of the comments/issues raised at the public meeting were regarding traffic circulation through the intersection, preferences for one-way or two-way operation along the section of Brookville Road between Linden Lane and Seminary Road, addition of a southbound lane on Second Avenue between Linden Lane and Seminary Place, the need to add a northbound left turn lane on the Second Avenue approach to Linden Lane, and neighborhood pedestrian safety.

Two public meetings, which were both well attended, were held for the project during Facility Planning Phase I on November 15, 2007 and March 18, 2008. A majority of the comments at these meetings were supportive of the project and the alternative that is now the subject of this mandatory referral.

## **SUMMARY**

This project would consolidate the number of intersections in the area from six to four, significantly simplifying the complex combination of vehicular movements and reducing the number of conflict points for turning vehicles. We concur that the proposed design achieves the master plan objectives and would provide a considerable improvement over the existing conditions.

CE:tc  
Attachments





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

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN**

September 25, 2008

Mr. Arthur Holmes, Jr., Director  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
101 Monroe Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Rockville, Maryland 20850


  
Dear Mr. Holmes:

The Planning Board reviewed the Seminary Road Intersection Improvements Prospectus at our meeting on September 22, 2008 and made the following recommendations:

1. The Seminary Road Intersection Improvement Facility Planning Study should proceed to Phase II of the Facility Planning process to develop a detailed design for the completion of the Recommended Alternative, with the modifications listed below:
  - a. The new road code dimensions for a 4 lane undivided arterial should be used for the section of Linden Lane between Brookville Road and Second Avenue.
  - b. Fourteen-foot-wide outside curb lanes should be used throughout the project to accommodate bikes on-road.
2. During the Phase II Facility Planning Study, MCDOT must submit a Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) for approval. The NRI/FSD will determine whether a full forest conservation plan will be required.
3. During the Phase II Facility Planning Study, MCDOT should confirm the need to obtain a park construction permit for any work resulting in park impacts.

The Board thanks you and your staff for working so closely with the residents in the vicinity of the proposed project and for providing us this opportunity to comment on the Phase I study. We look forward to continuing to work with you during the next study phase, our staff's memo is provided for your information.

Sincerely,

  
Royce Hanson  
Chairman

RH:DP:tc  
Enclosure

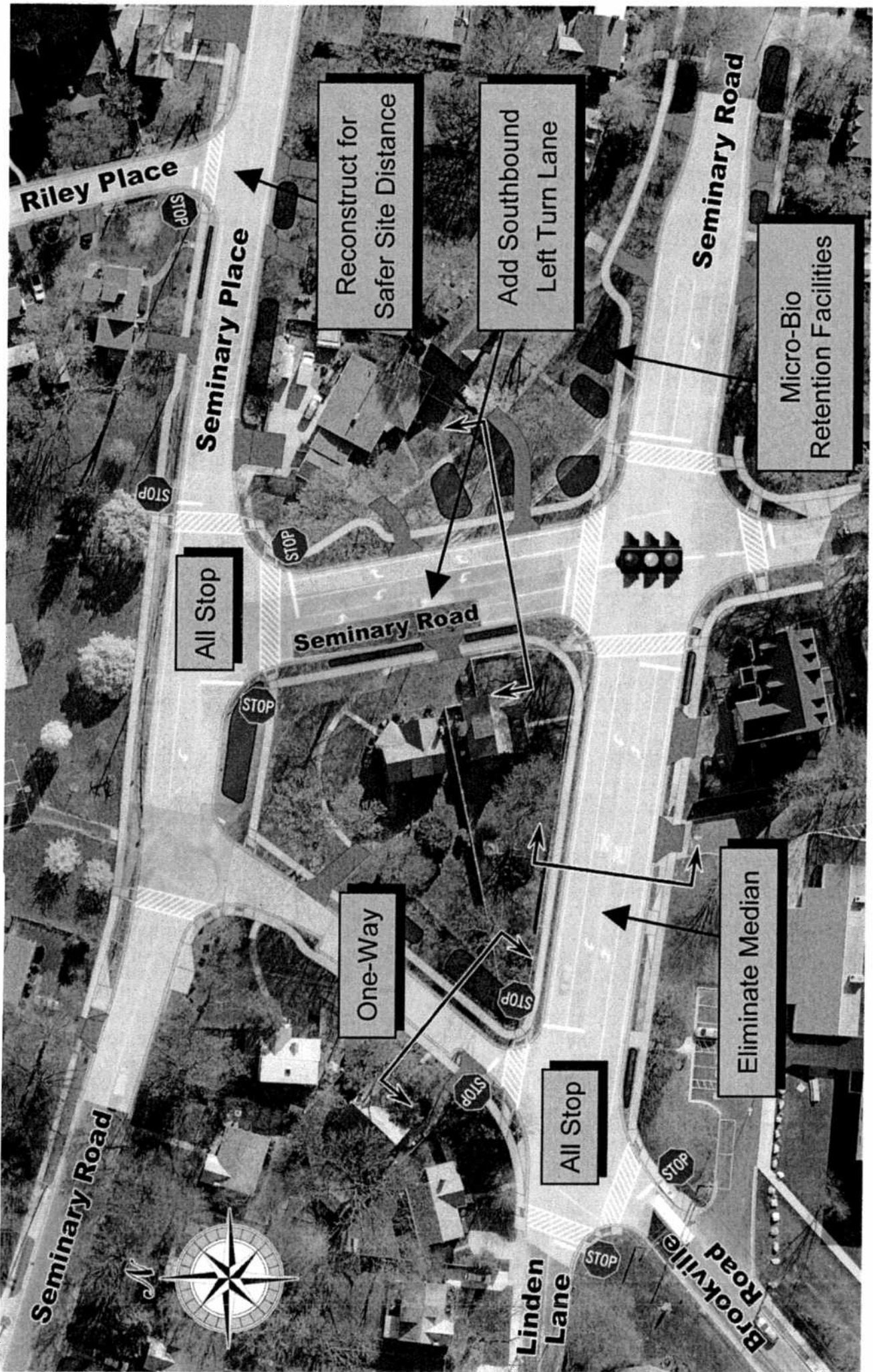
cc: Glenn Orlin

ltr to Holmes re Seminary Phase I study.doc

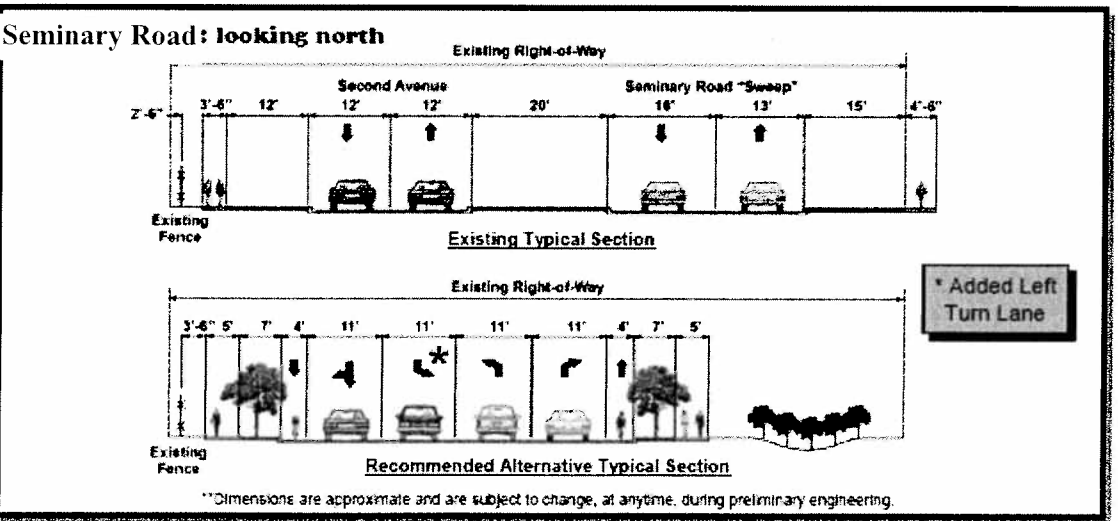
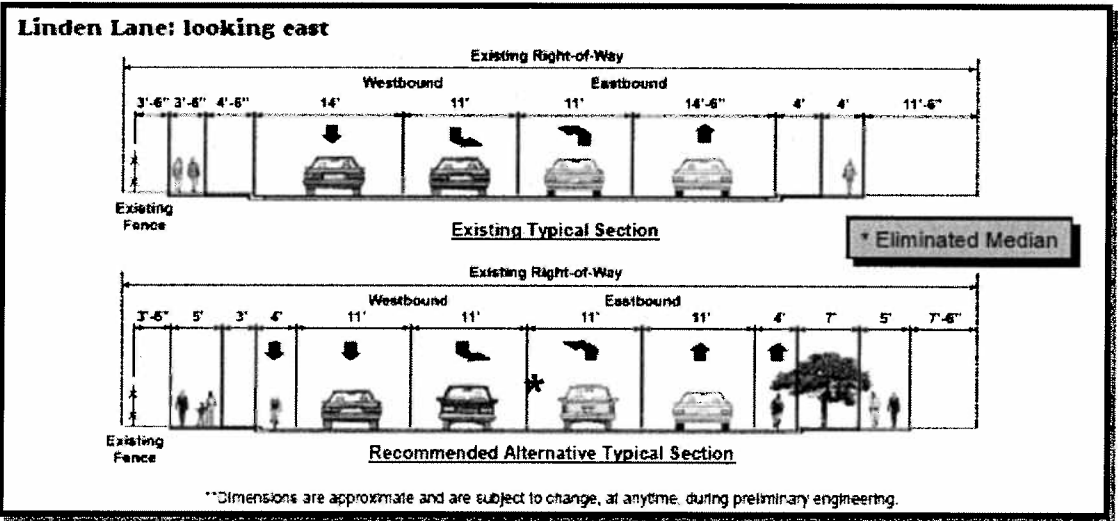
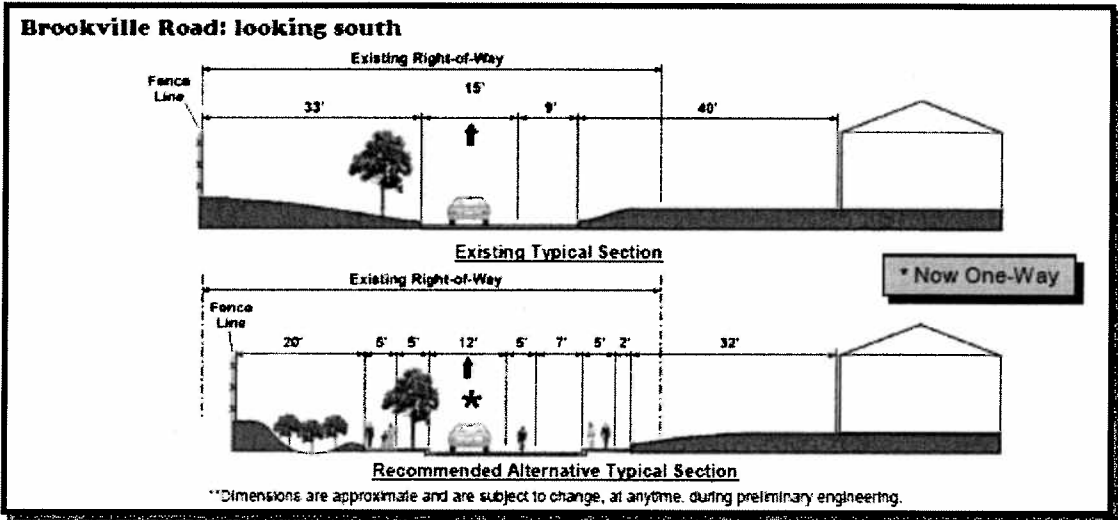


Note: This graphic has been revised from what MCDOT showed at the public meeting to reflect the elimination of All-Stop control at the Seminary Road/Brookville Road intersection.

ATTACHMENT 3



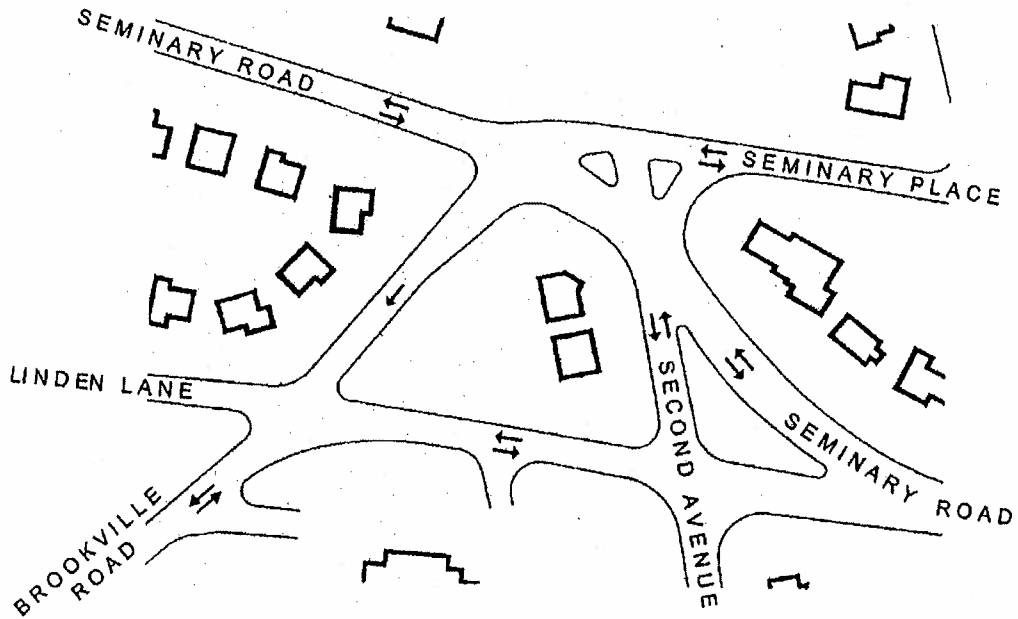
**Typical Sections: Concept 4C- REVISED Since June 2008**



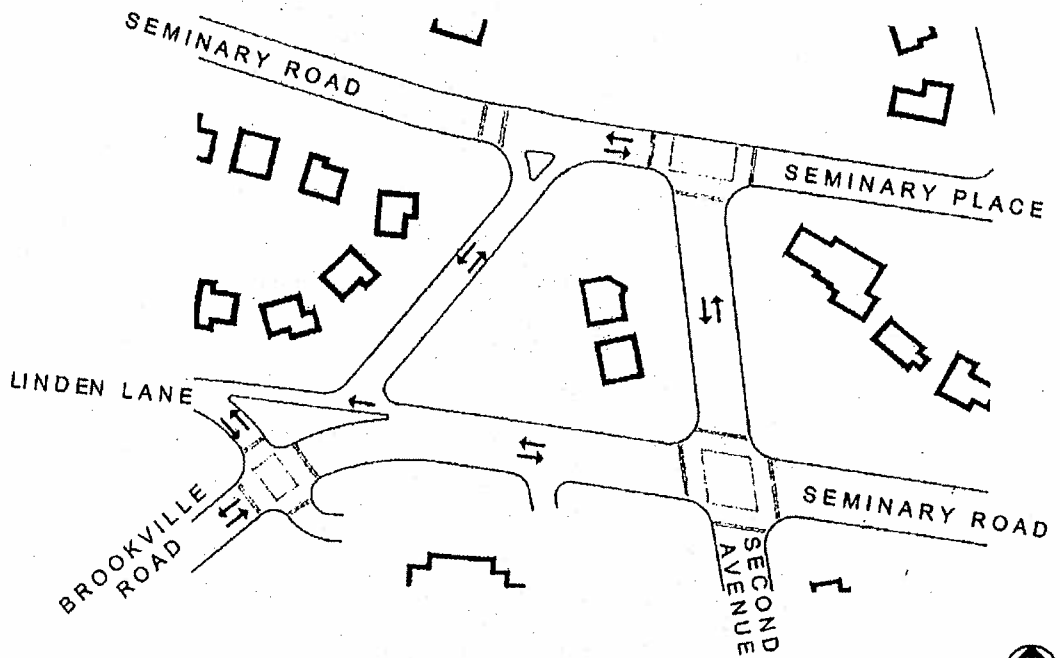
Seminary Road/Seminary Place/Second Avenue Illustrative Concept

Map 21

Existing Conditions



Proposed Conditions



NOT TO SCALE





**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

October 8, 2009

Mr. Bruce Johnston, P.E., Chief  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
100 Edison Park Drive, 4<sup>th</sup> floor  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

RE: Natural Resources Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) 42010013E -  
Seminary Road intersection improvements

Dear Mr. Johnston:

This letter is in response to your request for an exemption from submitting a forest conservation plan in 42010013E – Seminary Road intersection improvements. The exemption applied for to Chapter 22A-5(e) for a State or County highway construction activity is **confirmed**. The proposal is not subject to submittal of a Forest Conservation Plan; however, the site is subject to the Forest Conservation Law and a Tree Save Plan is required. The Tree Save Plan can now be submitted in conjunction with any application to which it is a necessary component (a Mandatory Referral).

Any changes from the approved exemption plan may constitute grounds to rescind or amend any approval actions taken and to take appropriate enforcement actions. If there are any subsequent modifications planned to the approved plan, a separate amendment must be submitted to M-NCPPC for review and approval prior to those activities occurring.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact me at 301-495-4551 or electronically at [lori.shirley@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:lori.shirley@mncppc-mc.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lori Shirley".

Lori Shirley  
Planner Coordinator  
Environmental Planning Division

Cc: Kenneth Kendall, P.E., Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
Romaine Kesecker, RLA, URS Corporation ✓  
NRI/FSD 42010013E – Seminary Road intersection improvements file

LS