



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

December 22, 2006

MEMORANDUM

To: Montgomery County Planning Board

Via: Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief *ACH*
Transportation Planning

Daniel Hardy, Supervisor *DxH*
Transportation Planning

From: Charles S. Kines, 301-495-2184 for the Planning Department *CK*

Subject: Bikeways Implementation Strategy for Intercounty Connector

This memorandum offers **sketch-level** recommendations for prioritizing both 1) a master plan amendment to consider the full-length master-planned ICC bike path (**bike path**), and 2) implementation of the State's Multi-modal Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (**bike plan**) for the ICC project. It also recommends a number of community connector bikeways and trails to maximize access to these facilities. The Planning Board described this analysis to Montgomery Bicycle Advocates, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and One Less Car in the attached letter dated December 14, 2005, after the State announced that their preferred alternative for the ICC would include only 7 of the 18 miles of the full-length master planned bike path – SP-40 in the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan (CBFMP).

The purpose of having this briefing now is to inform the Planning Board's deliberations on the County's Capital Improvements Program (CIP and/or 10-year transportation plan) and the State's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). This analysis is not intended to replace or replicate a facility planning study nor recommend particular amendments to master plans. Rather the intent is to simply influence decisions regarding future funding of bicycle, pedestrian and trail facilities in the ICC corridor. In FY 08, the Planning Department will study and recommend a comprehensive master plan amendment package for the ICC, including changes to the ICC bike path alignment/limits and related bicycle and pedestrian elements.

ACTION REQUESTED: Forward recommendations to the County Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Establish a funding mechanism in the CTP and/or CIP (10-year transportation plan) to implement those segments needed to complete the master planned ICC **bike path** along the highway ROW/Corridor for the segment between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue.
2. Establish a funding mechanism in the CTP to implement those segments needed to complete the State's **bike plan** (with a continuous east-west off-road shared use path), with the following high to moderate priority segments (west to east):
 - a) Shared Use Path along south/east side of Needwood Road, ICC to Redland Road
 - b) Bicycle and pedestrian safety enhancements at Emory Lane/Georgia Avenue intersection
 - c) Bike lanes along Layhill Road, ICC to Longmead Crossing Drive
 - d) Shared use path along east side of Layhill Road, ICC to Bonifant Road
 - e) Shared use path south side of Bonifant Road, Layhill Road to Alderton Road
 - f) Crossing Northwest Branch main stem from Matthew Henson Trail to Notley Road, either as part of the highway bridge (cantilevered or suspended) or a separate trail bridge in parkland
 - g) Shared use path along east side of New Hampshire Avenue, ICC to E. Randolph Road
 - h) Shared use path along north side of E. Randolph Road and south side of Fairland Road to and through the US 29/Fairland Road interchange project
3. Confirm the Planning Board's work program element to initiate an ICC master plan amendment during FY 08, primarily to address any needed changes to the master planned ICC **bike path** (SP-40), with a focus on the following segments:
 - a) I-370 to Needwood Road
 - b) Layhill Road to Notley Road (Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and vicinity)
 - c) New Hampshire Avenue to Old Columbia Pike (Paint Branch Stream Valley Park and vicinity)
 - d) Across the US 29 interchange
4. Further study the following community connectors to the ICC bike path, west to east
 - a) Shared use path along east side of Needwood Road, ICC to Muncaster Mill Road (and Magruder HS)

- b) Shared use path along east/south side of Emory Lane, ICC to Muncaster Mill Road, as well as related shared use path along south side of Muncaster Mill Road, Emory Lane to Meadowside Lane
- c) Filling in gaps in US 29 Commuter Bikeway, Greencastle Road to Briggs Chaney Road; and Fairland Road to Musgrove Road (shared use path along east side of US 29)

BACKGROUND

Before continuing, it is important to distinguish between the County master-planned bike **path** and the ICC Selected Alternative bike **plan**. For the purposes of this discussion, the term bike **path** refers to the master planned shared use path along the ICC as recommended in numerous master plans, including the CBFMP and the Countywide Park Trails Plan. The term bike **plan** refers to the segments of existing or proposed bicycle facilities the State recommends as part of its alternative strategy to connect those segments of the bike path they are building as part of the ICC project.

Please see Attachment 2, which is a slightly modified version of Figure 3 from the ICC ROD, titled “ICC’s Multi-modal Connectivity of Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.”

- The **bike path** refers to the *red* segments on the map; these are portions of the master planned bike path that the State will build as part of the ICC project. However, the bike path also refers to the segments of the highway marked A, B, C, D and E on the map. These are the bike path segments not included in the ICC project (a.k.a. bike path “gaps”), but which are still listed in the master plan as part of SP-40 and may remain County policy and priorities for future implementation.
- The *blue* and *yellow* segments highlight those portions of the State’s proposed **bike plan** that are not provided along the ICC right-of-way; these are facilities that the State promised to implement in the future in partnership with the County.
 - The *blue* segments are existing bikeways the State includes in its plan to highlight their assessment of current bicycle and pedestrian mobility along the ICC corridor.
 - The *yellow* segments are proposed bikeways along County or State roads that the ICC ROD identified as integral to multimodal connectivity for the ICC project. The State has indicated that they would help implement these segments using funding resources other than the ICC project.

Staff notes that three broad bikeway implementation opportunities need to be considered throughout the ICC corridor:

- Potential participation by the private sector through the Local Area Transportation Review process in cases where subdivision activities are near the ICC bike plan.

- Potential retention of construction access roadways for use as future pedestrian connectors. Any such opportunities will require careful consideration regarding natural resource restoration commitments.
- Preservation of future ability to implement those portions of the ICC bike path not being built as part of the ICC project (referred to as the “no regrets” design by Montgomery Bicycle Advocates).

Because the implementation of the bike plan and bike path are intertwined, this memorandum is organized geographically to highlight and analyze the current and proposed conditions for bicycle and pedestrian mobility for distinct areas along the ICC Corridor, and further subdivided by issue areas (bike path, SHA plan, community connectors). Please refer to Attachment 2 for a broad overview map of the areas, as well as Attachments 3 through 7 for detailed maps of each area depicting more precise locations for proposed improvements/facilities:

- A. Needwood Road Vicinity
- B. Emory Lane/Georgia Avenue Vicinity
- C. Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity
- D. Paint Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity
- E. US 29 Corridor

Each area presents unique opportunities and challenges for fulfilling and implementing the master planned vision for bicycle and pedestrian mobility and access. A more detailed discussion of each geographic area follows.

Both DPWT and M-NCPPC staff agree that the **bike plan** as proposed by the State is an insufficient cross-county substitute for the master planned bike path, because the State’s plan substitutes on-road bike lanes for the path along segments of Layhill Road, Bonifant Road, New Hampshire Avenue, and Fairland Road. In those segments, the State’s Plan does not accommodate pedestrians or average/novice bicyclists who would prefer a facility separate from the roadway so as to not mix with motorized traffic. The staff recommendations regarding the State’s **bike plan** include providing continuous shared-use path connections.

NEEDWOOD ROAD VICINITY

Key Issues, Opportunities and Proposed Priorities

- Bike Path – Continuing the path along the master planned ICC ROW westward to I-370; connecting the proposed ICC bike path terminus with Shady Grove Road and MidCounty Highway (Moderate)
- SHA Plan – Connecting the ICC bike path with Beach Drive and Rock Creek Park via a new shared use path along Needwood Road (High); continuing the shared use path westward along Needwood Road to connect to Redland Road (Moderate)
- Community Connectors –Link to Magruder High School and Bowie Mill Estates (Moderate)

Discussion

The ICC project will terminate the ICC bike path at Needwood Road. The State's bike plan identifies a future path along Needwood Road to connect the ICC with Shady Grove Metrorail station. The bike accommodations in the ICC project present three issues.

- First, Needwood Road currently does not feature any continuous bicycle or pedestrian facilities, and therefore, without any concurrent **bike plan** implementation, ICC bike path users would need to mix with traffic when heading in either direction from the Needwood Road trailhead/trail terminus.
- Second, the master plan vision for the path extends to Shady Grove Road (to connect to the upcounty bikeway system via Midcounty Highway), so the County must decide whether the **bike path** will ultimately continue along the master planned ICC ROW or, more likely, navigate an alternative route, perhaps via Muncaster Mill Road and Shady Grove Road.
- And third, the plan does not provide connections to nearby community destinations. Staff proposes a path connection to Magruder High School and Bowie Mill Estates, a proposed community that will be required through the subdivision process to implement a critical segment of the Rock Creek Trail.

Recommendations

Providing connections to the western terminus of the ICC project shared use path are high priorities, to improve both safety and mobility for all travel modes. To remedy the first issue above – which is the most pressing concern – a new-shared use path should be funded and constructed along the south/east side of Needwood Road between the ICC bike path and Beach Drive. The Beach Drive connection to the Rock Creek Park trail system would enable trail users and residents of nearby communities to safely access the ICC bike path. This path should be built concurrently with the ICC bike path that is being constructed as part of ICC Contract A.

To enable access to the Shady Grove Metro Station, it is recommended that the County DPWT initiate and fund (with SHA partnership requested) a new shared use path along the south side of Needwood Road between Beach Drive and Redland Road. This new path would connect to recent improvements by the County at the Needwood Road/Redland Road intersection, which includes a new shared use path along the west side of Redland Road to connect to the metro station access road. When all path segments are implemented, it will be possible to travel off-road by bicycling or walking from the ICC bike path to the metro station. These two projects are among the highest priorities for funding and implementation.

The third issue necessitates a reevaluation of the feasibility of constructing the ICC bike path in the master-planned ROW between Needwood Road and Shady Grove Road. In 2005, the Planning Board and County Council did not recommend this segment for implementation as part of the ICC project. From a legislative perspective, this segment remains a recommended future facility in our master plans. The amendment process in our proposed FY 08 work program is needed to determine whether the plan should now

be changed to reflect the Planning Board and County Council sentiments expressed in 2005.

If this ROW is deemed unsuitable for a future shared use path, due to environmental or community impacts, a master plan amendment would be required and several projects might be recommended instead to enable upcounty residents to access the ICC bike path. These projects include:

- A new shared use path along the east/south side of Needwood Road between Muncaster Mill Road and the ICC bike path;
- A new shared use path along the south side of Muncaster Mill Road between Needwood Road and Shady Grove Road; and
- A new-shared use path along Shady Grove Road between Muncaster Mill Road and Midcounty Highway.

Except for Needwood Road, these paths are not currently recommended in master plans. Therefore, a master plan amendment will be necessary to make these road segments dual bikeways. This action would ensure that the currently master planned bike lanes along Muncaster Mill Road and Shady Grove Road (intended for experienced bicyclists) would not be precluded or replaced by the new-shared use paths (intended for novice cyclists and pedestrians). Staff believes both facilities along both roads are needed.

EMORY LANE/GEORGIA AVENUE VICINITY

Key Issues, Opportunities and Proposed Priorities

- Bike Path – Filling in a relatively simple gap; connecting to existing shared use path along Georgia Avenue (Moderate)
- SHA Plan – Improving bicycle and pedestrian safety at Georgia Avenue/Emory Lane intersection (High)
- Community Connectors – Filling in significant gap of Rock Creek Trail system, linking ICC bike path with Meadowside Nature Center and new shared use path along MD 115 west of Meadowside Lane (High)

Discussion and Recommendations

The State's **bike plan** offers a suitable alternative route to the master planned bike path in the short term, providing a valuable and needed connection to the Olney Manor Recreational Park which is the only major travel destination in this portion of the ICC corridor. Modest improvements to the Georgia Avenue/Emory Lane intersection – such as pedestrian countdown signals, more visible crosswalk pavement markings, a new median refuge island, wider curb ramps and enhanced signage/wayfinding – are highly desirable to make this intersection friendlier and safer to pedestrians and bicyclists.

In the long term the master planned bike path alignment should be implemented to provide a more direct connection between ICC bike path segments as well as better connect to major countywide bikeways such as the shared use path along Georgia

Avenue. Implementing both the master planned bike path as well as the State's plan will greatly enhance bicycle/pedestrian mobility along the Georgia Avenue corridor between the MD 28/Norbeck Road commercial area and Olney communities.

In addition, the master planned alignment for the Rock Creek Trail in this area takes it along Emory Lane (SP-32 in the CBFMP) between the ICC and MD 115 then along MD 115 between Emory Lane and Meadowside Lane. Implementing these facilities will not only complete a gap in the regional trail network, but also ensure community access to the nature center and Rock Creek Regional Park as well as the ICC bike path.

Recommendations

In coordination with requirements of nearby developments and concurrent with construction of the ICC highway as it approaches Georgia Avenue from the west (Contract A), improvements to the Georgia Avenue/Emory Lane intersection should be initiated and funded.

The segment of the ICC bike path between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue should be included in the CTP. The alignment for the path could utilize and/or be coordinated with the existing parallel HOA pathway in the Brooke Manor community. Concurrent with this improvement should be a signalized bicycle/pedestrian crossing at the interchange.

SP-32 between the ICC and Muncaster Mill Road is recommended to be included as a high priority in a near-future CIP. In addition, to complete the gap in the Rock Creek Trail system, a new-shared use path should be implemented along the south side of Muncaster Mill Road from Emory Lane to Meadowside Lane since this path travels along a State highway. These improvements also should be implemented concurrently with the construction of the ICC bike path as part of Contract A, and State partnership is requested for both improvements.

NORTHWEST BRANCH PARK AND VICINITY

Key Issues, Opportunities and Proposed Priorities

- Bike Path – Connection to and through Layhill Local Park and the National Capital Trolley Museum (Moderate); connection to Matthew Henson Trail from the west
- SHA Plan – Connection to Matthew Henson Trail from the east via a new trail bridge over main stem of Northwest Branch (high); improving bicycle and pedestrian access to local commercial center (Moderate); implement the master planned bike lanes along Layhill Road (High)
- Community Connectors – None

Discussion

This area offers the greatest opportunities for bicycle, pedestrian and trails connectivity. Staff considers the confluence of the Matthew Henson Trail, the ICC bike path and the Rachel Carson Greenway as the major trail and bikeway interchange for this portion of

the County. However, it also presents the greatest challenges, not the least of which is the trail bridge over the Northwest Branch main stem.

As indicated in Neil Pedersen's November 6 letter to Chairman Hanson responding to the Planning Board's ICC mandatory referral comments, the State neither supports nor rejects the possibility of a trail bridge cantilevered or suspended from the ICC highway bridge. Whether along the highway or on a separate bridge in parkland, the Northwest Branch crossing stands out as the largest challenge to providing continuous bicycle and pedestrian access in Northwest Branch Park.

Connecting to and through the Layhill Local Park and the National Capital Trolley Museum also affords connectivity opportunities. Implementing the master planned ICC bike path through this area not only serves regional bikeway/trail needs, but also provides important local/community access to the local park and the regionally significant trolley museum.

Finally, several improvements are needed in order to make the State's plan fully accessible to all potential trail users, particularly novice cyclists and pedestrians. The State's plan utilizes Alderton Road as part of the east-west route, which County staff determine is suitable due to low traffic volumes and an existing sidewalk along the road's east side to help novice bicyclists and pedestrians climb the hill up to Alderton Court. The State's plan also identifies Bonifant Road and Layhill Road (both with existing on-road bike lanes) as the alternative bike/pedestrian route. As stated earlier, bike lanes do not accommodate novice cyclists or pedestrians, so improvements are needed along these roads.

Recommendations

Staff will be seeking partnership from both the State and County during the master plan amendment process to determine:

- The feasibility of implementing the continuous **bike path** as planned to connect Layhill Local Park and the National Capital Trolley Museum and provide safe and effective crossings of both the Northwest Branch and Bonifant Road.
- The desirability of alternatives to the master planned bike path, including the Northwest Branch trail crossing and connection to Notley Road in the State's **bike plan**.

In the interim, to better accommodate novice cyclists and pedestrians as part of SHA's plan, several projects are recommended to be added to the CTP, including:

- 1) A new shared use path along the east side of Layhill Road between the ICC and Bonifant Road; and
- 2) A new-shared use path along the south side of Bonifant Road between Layhill Road and Alderton Road.

Concurrent with Contract B, the State should also reconstruct Layhill Road between the ICC and Longmead Crossing Drive to include the master planned bike lanes.

PAINT BRANCH STREAM VALLEY PARK AND VICINITY

Key Issues, Opportunities and Proposed Priorities

- Bike Path – Fulfilling the master plan vision by constructing a new shared use path between New Hampshire Avenue and Old Columbia Pike, either along the highway ROW or through parkland (Moderate)
- SHA Plan – A shared use path (possibly a wider sidewalk) along the east side of New Hampshire Avenue between the ICC and Randolph Road; a new sidewalk or shared use path along the south side of Fairland Road between East Randolph Road and the Fairland Road/US 29 interchange project. (High)
- Community Connectors – Several are possible, depending on the ultimate path alignment.

Discussion

With some pedestrian/sidewalk improvements recommended below, the State's plan offers a suitable alternative route to bypass the environmentally sensitive stream valley in the short-term. For the long term, the master planned bike path through this area is highly desirable. During the review of the ICC Draft Environmental Impact Statement in February 2005, the Planning Board recommended against the construction of a paved bike path through the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area, based primarily on the desire to minimize impervious surface. In March 2005, the County Council supported the bike path along the ICC through the SPA. The County and State need to further study the feasibility of constructing the master plan alignment either along the highway ROW or through parkland.

Recommendations

The master plan amendment process will evaluate possible alignments for the master planned bike path in the highway ROW or through parkland. Include in the CTP:

- 1) A new project to widen from 5' to 8' the east side sidewalk along MD 650 (effectively converting it to a shared use path) between the ICC and East Randolph Road; and
- 2) A new project to construct a shared use path along the south side of Fairland Road between East Randolph Road and Old Columbia Pike (and connecting to Paint Branch Trail).

US 29 CORRIDOR & BRIGGS CHANEY ROAD

Key Issues, Opportunities and Proposed Priorities

- Bike Path – A new shared use path between US 29/Fairland Road and Briggs Chaney Road (High); A new shared use path within the ICC ROW from Old Columbia Pike and through the US 29 interchange to connect to the US 29 Commuter Bikeway (Moderate)
- SHA Plan – None
- Community Connectors – Fulfilling the State’s commitment to construct the US 29 Commuter Bikeway (shared use path on east side) between Greencastle Road and Musgrove Road (High) to connect all the commercial and retail centers in the US 29 corridor.

Discussion

The details of bikeway projects in this area hinge largely on the feasibility of constructing a new shared use path through the Paint Branch Stream Valley. A different package of improvements would be recommended depending on whether the County pursues the master planned bike path alignment or not. Regardless connecting the US 29 Corridor with the Matthew Henson Trail is a major goal for regional bike/trail connectivity, which could be accomplished well with a path through the US 29 interchange and the Paint Branch Stream Valley Park, and satisfactorily (albeit not ideal) via the State’s plan plus the County related recommended facilities along Fairland Road and New Hampshire Avenue to improve access and mobility for pedestrians and novice bicyclists.

Staff believes the potential exists to provide a bikeway connection generally along the south side of the ICC between Fairland Road and Briggs Chaney Road. Due to physical constraints along the ICC alignment, an alternative alignment connection via the Fairland View community, Stravinsky Drive, and Tanglewood Local Park may be more feasible and should be examined during the master plan amendment process.

Recommendations

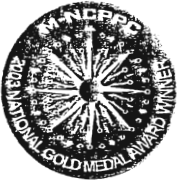
Staff will require substantial support from both the State and County during the master plan amendment process to determine the feasibility of:

- 1) Constructing a continuous bike path between Fairland Road and Briggs Chaney Road either along the ICC or via Stravinsky Drive and Tanglewood Local Park.
- 2) Completing the master planned ICC bike path connection across the US 29 interchange.

The CTP should include a new project to construct additional key segments of the US 29 Commuter Bikeway, including between Greencastle Road and Briggs Chaney and between Fairland Road and East Randolph Road/Cherry Hill Road.

CK:ba

Attachments



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Office of the Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board

December 14, 2005

Mr. Jack Cochrane
Montgomery Bicycle Advocates
7121 Thomas Branch Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

Dear Mr. Cochrane:

Thank you for your October 10, 2005, correspondence regarding the master planned hiker-biker trail for the Intercounty Connector (ICC). I share your concern regarding completion of a continuous ICC hiker-biker trail as recommended in our master plan. Implementation of the complete path will require not only the sketch-level planning you have described, but also the rigorous alternatives analysis required to secure both environmental permitting and funding. I have directed my staff to schedule a briefing to the Planning Board after the state completes the environmental impact statement process to summarize the bike path implementation status and recommend next steps on which local and state agencies should partner.

As you are aware, our staff and Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) staff are working collaboratively with the state on the ICC environmental impact statement. You correctly note that Montgomery County's formal position, as summarized in Council President Tom Perez's March 1, 2005, correspondence to the state, is that we support state construction of a continuous bike path in the ICC right-of-way from Needwood Road to the Prince George's County line. Our staff, working through interagency efforts, intends to ensure compliance with the master plan vision of a continuous trail. In other words, where the state's preferred alternative does not include construction of the adjacent trail, it also should not preclude future trail completion. The accommodation of planned future trails is one of the elements of our 1989 ICC Memorandum of Understanding with the state.

The state's proposed ICC Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan proposes to provide east-west connectivity using sections of parallel roadways, including portions of Emory Lane, Bonifant Road, Fairland Road, and Briggs Chaney Road. The County will need to establish priorities regarding whether construction of the state's conceptual network of shared-use paths along these roads should be pursued with greater or lesser urgency than completing the remaining gaps in the ICC hiker-biker trail.

Mr. Jack Cochrane
December 14, 2005
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The next steps in ICC hiker-biker trail implementation, therefore, are as much procedural as technical. The ICC Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) is expected to indicate the state's commitment to building portions of the hiker-biker trail and demonstrate that the future trail can be accommodated.

The Federal Record of Decision (ROD), expected early in 2006, will determine whether the state can pursue the preferred alternative described in the FEIS. The ROD will confirm the starting point on which hiker-biker trail completion alternatives can be based. After the ROD is issued it will be prudent for the county and state to revisit the hiker-biker trail planning and implementation process. Our staff, after consultation with DPWT staff, recommends that process begin with a briefing to the Planning Board that includes the sketch-level planning you have requested in addition to procedural recommendations for planning, design, and funding for the gaps in the master planned hiker-biker trail. Our staff will present sketch-level concepts for public review and comment and we will invite DPWT and SHA to partner with our staff on design and funding proposals.

I very much appreciate the continued efforts of the Montgomery Bicycle Advocates, the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, and One Less Car in promoting the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle facilities on the ICC as well as throughout Montgomery County.

Sincerely,



Derick P. Berlage
Chairman

DPB:DKH:gw

cc: Eric Gilliland
Jim Hudnall
Tom Perez
Elizabeth Hewitt
Doug Duncan
Art Holmes
Edgar Gonzalez
Neil Pedersen

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

October 10, 2005

Derick P. Berlage, Chairman
Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Avenue,
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Chairman Berlage,

We are writing to ask the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning to conduct an analysis of the latest proposed design for the Intercounty Connector (ICC) to determine its impacts on the feasibility of completing the master-planned ICC hiker-biker trail after the ICC is built.

We remain committed to the concept of a *continuous, parallel, end-to-end* ICC trail that is designed and built as an integral part of the overall facility. This goal matches the Montgomery County Council's March 1, 2005 resolution calling for the trail to be built within the ICC right-of-way from Needwood Road to the county line. But the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) has decided to build only about 40% of the trail next to the highway and leave the rest of the trail unbuilt.

In response, we and others have proposed a "staged" trail solution that entails designing the ICC to allow the missing sections of trail to be built after the ICC is built. The effort of finishing the trail would then presumably be shared by various jurisdictions and spread out over several years. Such a strategy should ease the State's concerns relating to cost, schedule, and EIS complexity and allow trail funding to come from a wider array of sources including federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds.

If we ever want to complete the ICC trail, in staged fashion or otherwise, it is critically important that we design the ICC so as not to preclude future parallel trail construction. All of us should oppose any ICC design that blocks construction of a master-planned transportation facility, especially when that facility has received such widespread support as this trail has. Designing the ICC to allow a future trail should in fact require only modest design changes. Obstacles such as retaining walls, noise walls, bridge abutments, and stormwater management ponds generally must be positioned to leave room for the trail. Interchanges should be designed in a way that makes the trail easier to build later.

In order for everyone to better understand the design issues, we would like M-NCPPC to examine the latest draft ICC design to identify potential impacts on the feasibility of completing the full trail in the future – specifically the trail called for by the County Council located in the ICC right-of-way. Such an analysis would be fully consistent with M-NCPPC's role as master plan steward and planning resource for the County Council. Moreover, M-NCPPC Staff has the skills and resources to perform this analysis. The analysis is vital because it would allow Council members and citizens to intelligently assess the ICC's impact on future trail plans. Without such an "obstacle analysis", it would be difficult to know what to even ask for from SHA or whether any design changes that SHA might offer would address the problem.

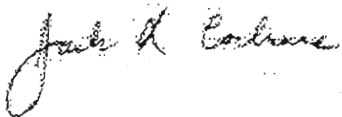
The analysis doesn't need to be a detailed study lasting several months and costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. In fact there isn't time for a long study because the ICC Final Environmental Impact Statement is due out by November 2005. What's needed is a thorough qualitative analysis that can be completed in a matter of weeks by M-NCPPC Staff, perhaps with support from Montgomery County DPWT, without requiring dedicated study funds to be allocated by the County Council (though we will urge the Council to aid the analysis any way it can). The analysis should attempt to identify all specific elements of the ICC

design that may interfere with the trail. The analysis should recommend various design alternatives to address each problem and should gauge the feasibility of dealing with each problem after the ICC is built.

We conducted our own brief analysis of what ICC design changes may be needed to accommodate a future trail, which we provided to SHA on May 11, 2005. This may serve as a good starting point for your own analysis.

We believe that such an analysis is necessary in order for policy-makers to ensure that the ICC does not forever prevent construction of the trail they voted to support. We appreciate all that you've done thus far to support the trail, and we hope that you will consider our request. Thank you.

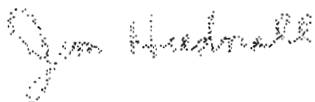
Sincerely,



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



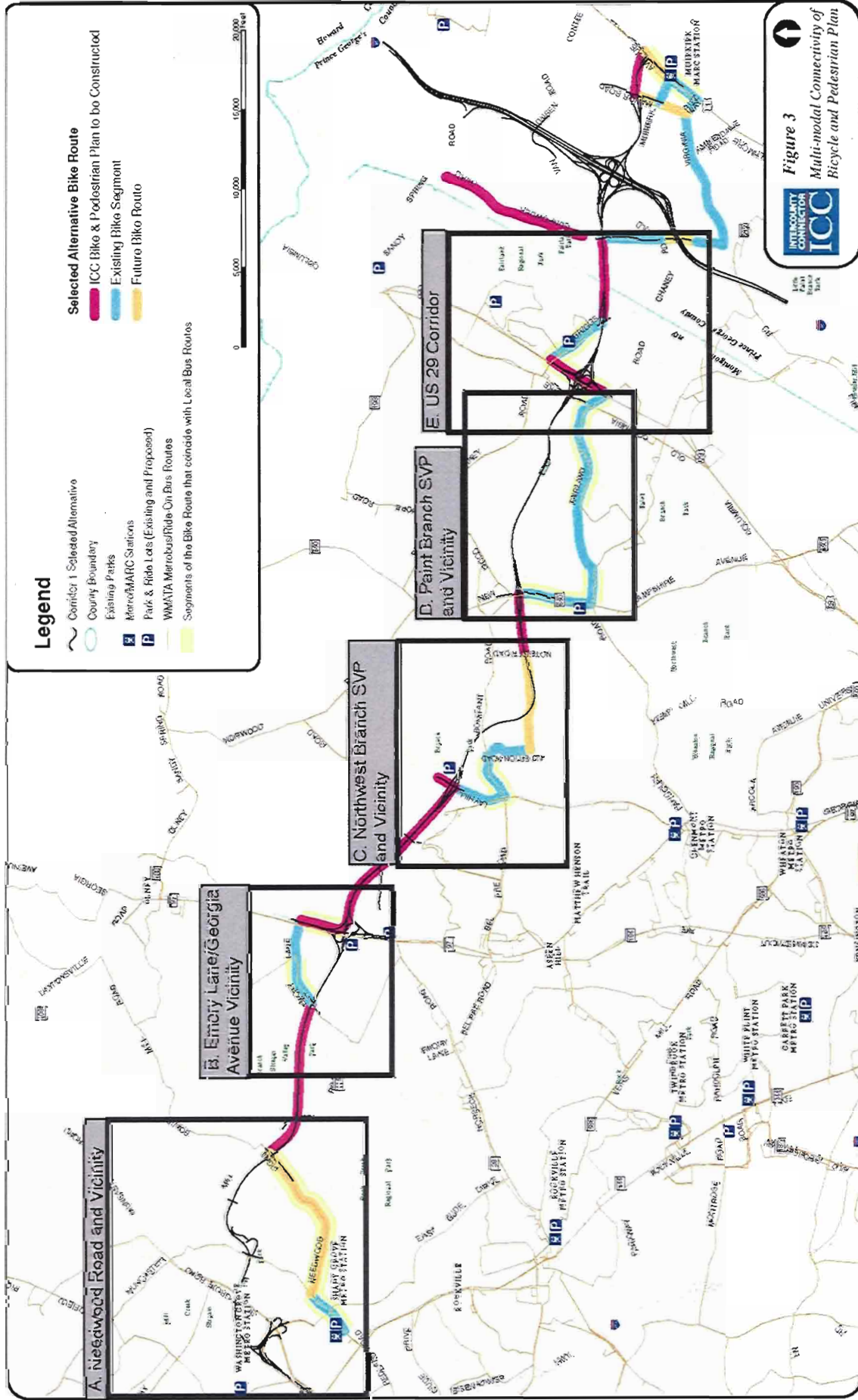
Eric Gilliland
Washington Area Bicyclist Association
733 15th Street N.W., Suite 1030
Washington, D.C. 20005-2112



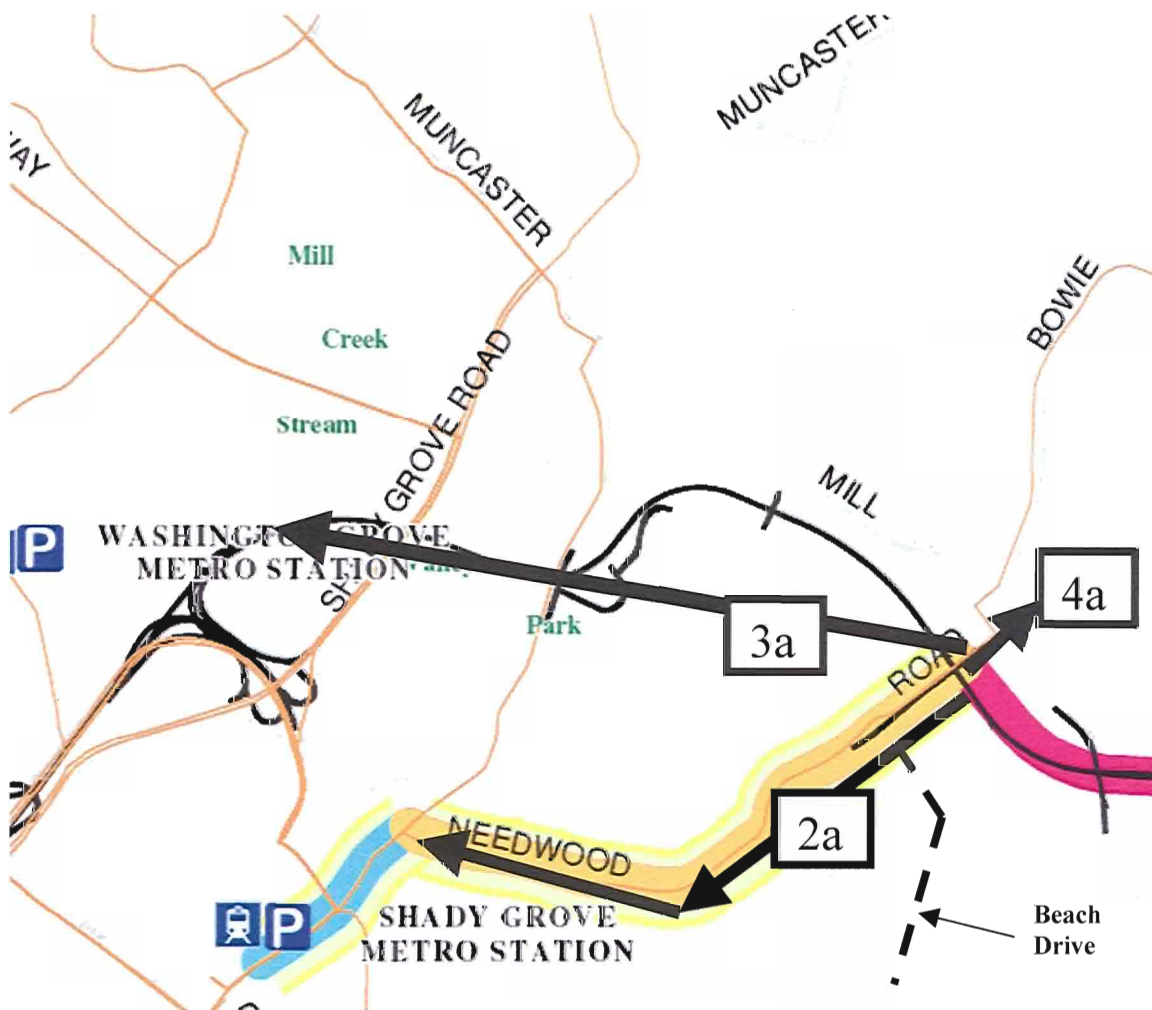
Jim Hudnall
One Less Car, Maryland Campaign for Biking and Walking
P.O. Box 1870, Pasadena, Maryland 21123

cc: Montgomery County Council, Tom Perez, President
Mr. Douglas Duncan, Montgomery County Executive
Mr. Art Holmes, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation
Mr. Edgar Gonzalez, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation
Elizabeth Hewlett, Prince George's County Planning Board Chairman

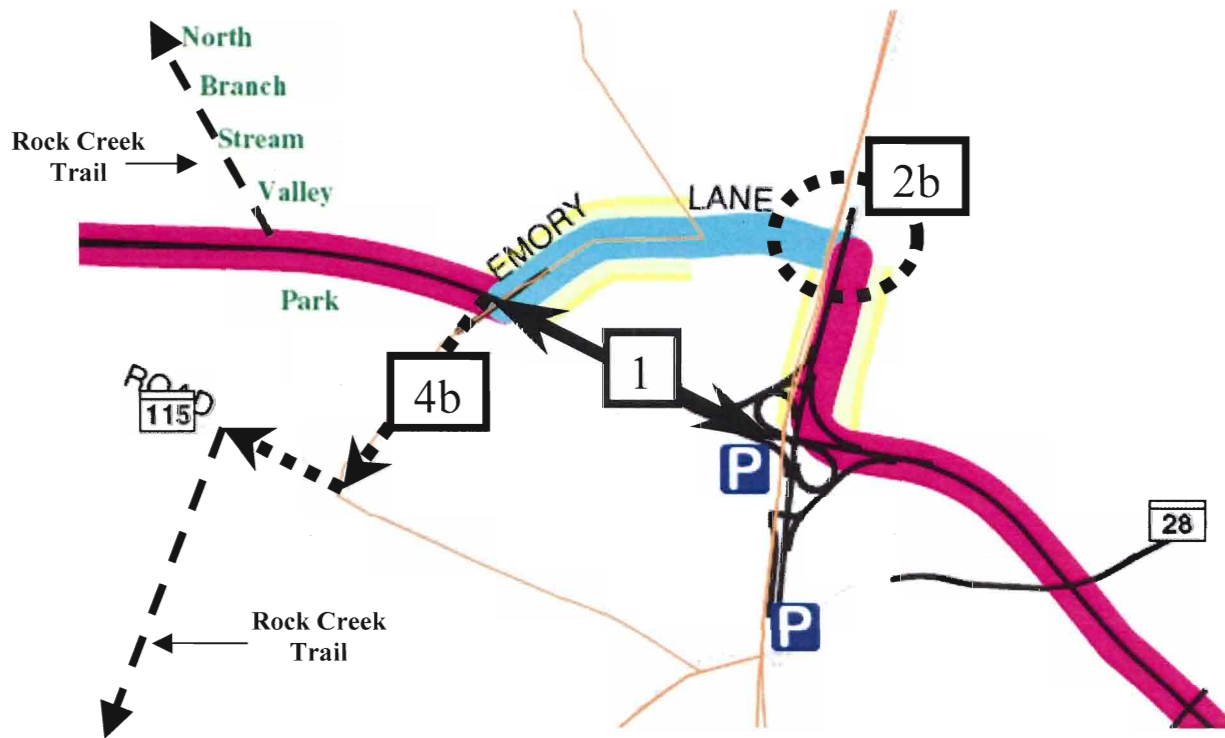
Attachment #2 ICC Bikeway Implementation Strategy Issue Areas



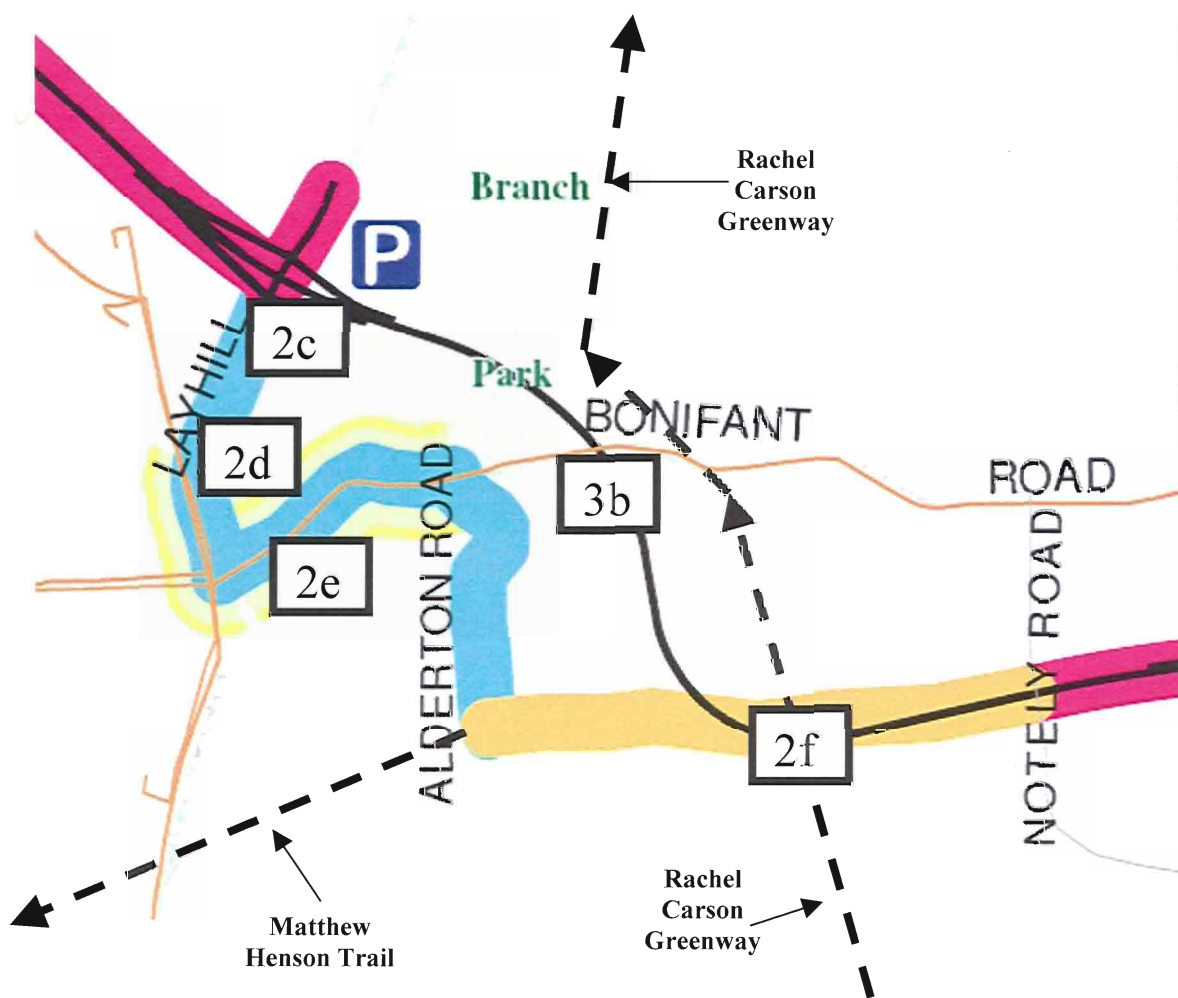
ATTACHMENT #3
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS, NEEDWOOD ROAD VICINITY



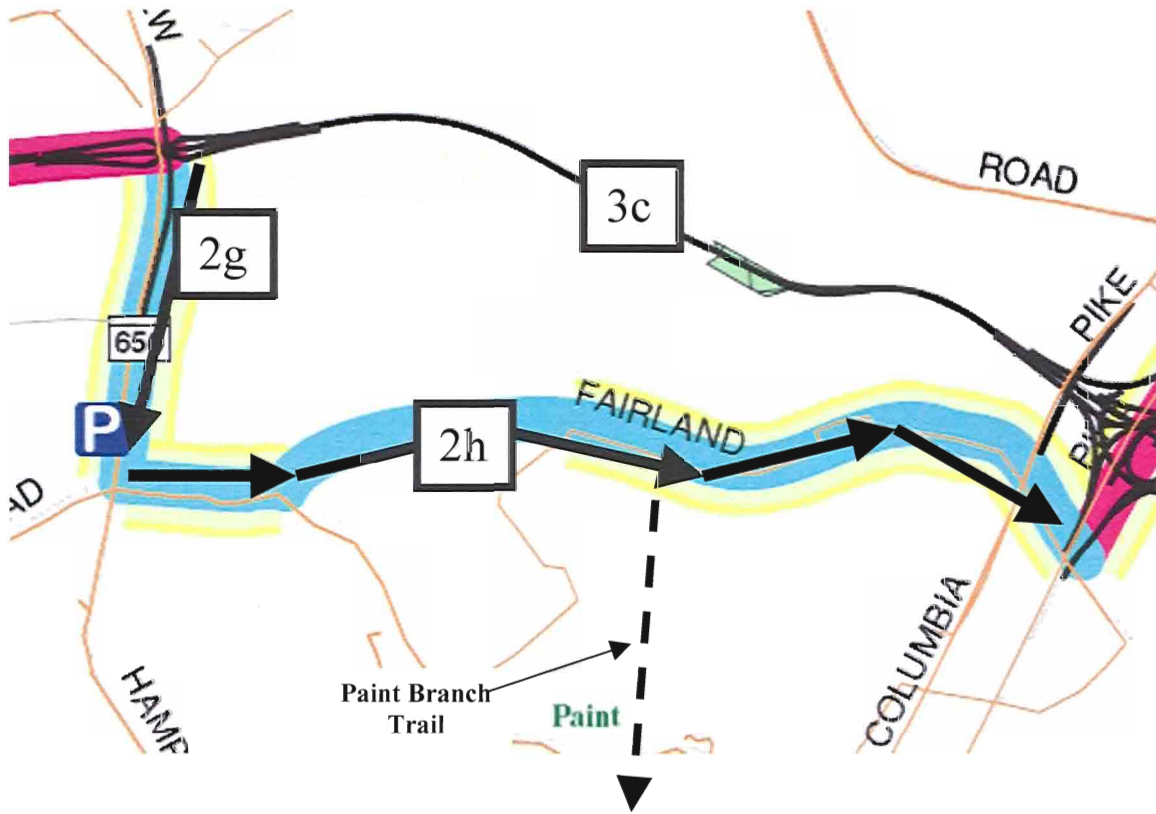
ATTACHMENT #4
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS, EMORY LANE/
GEORGIA AVENUE VICINITY



ATTACHMENT #5
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS, NORTHWEST BRANCH
STREAM VALLEY PARK AND VICINITY



ATTACHMENT #6
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS, PAINT BRANCH
STREAM VALLEY PARK AND VICINITY



ATTACHMENT #7
PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS, US 29 CORRIDOR

