

September 2008

# Intercounty Connector Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment

## BIKEWAYS AND INTERCHANGES

### PLANNING BOARD DRAFT



M-NCPPC



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## BIKEWAYS AND INTERCHANGES

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

Prepared by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

Approved by the Montgomery County Council  
Date

Adopted by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Date

# 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

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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.

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A plan provides comprehensive recommendations for the use of publicly and privately owned land. Each plan reflects a vision of the future that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of a countywide perspective.

Together with relevant policies, plans should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when making land use decisions.

## THE PLAN PROCESS

The PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT PLAN is the formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony, after which they hold public worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Public Hearing Draft Plan as appropriate. When the Planning Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board Draft Plan.

The PLANNING BOARD DRAFT PLAN is the Board's recommended Plan and reflects their revisions to the Public Hearing Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit a sector plan to the County Council with copies to the County Executive who must, within sixty days, prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the County Council other comments and recommendations.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council holds a public hearing to receive public testimony. After the hearing record is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing, and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public worksessions to review the testimony and makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board Draft Plan, as revised.

After Council approval the plan is forwarded to the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the plan officially amends the master plans, functional plans, and sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

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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?

Figure 1 ICC Corridor Study Area

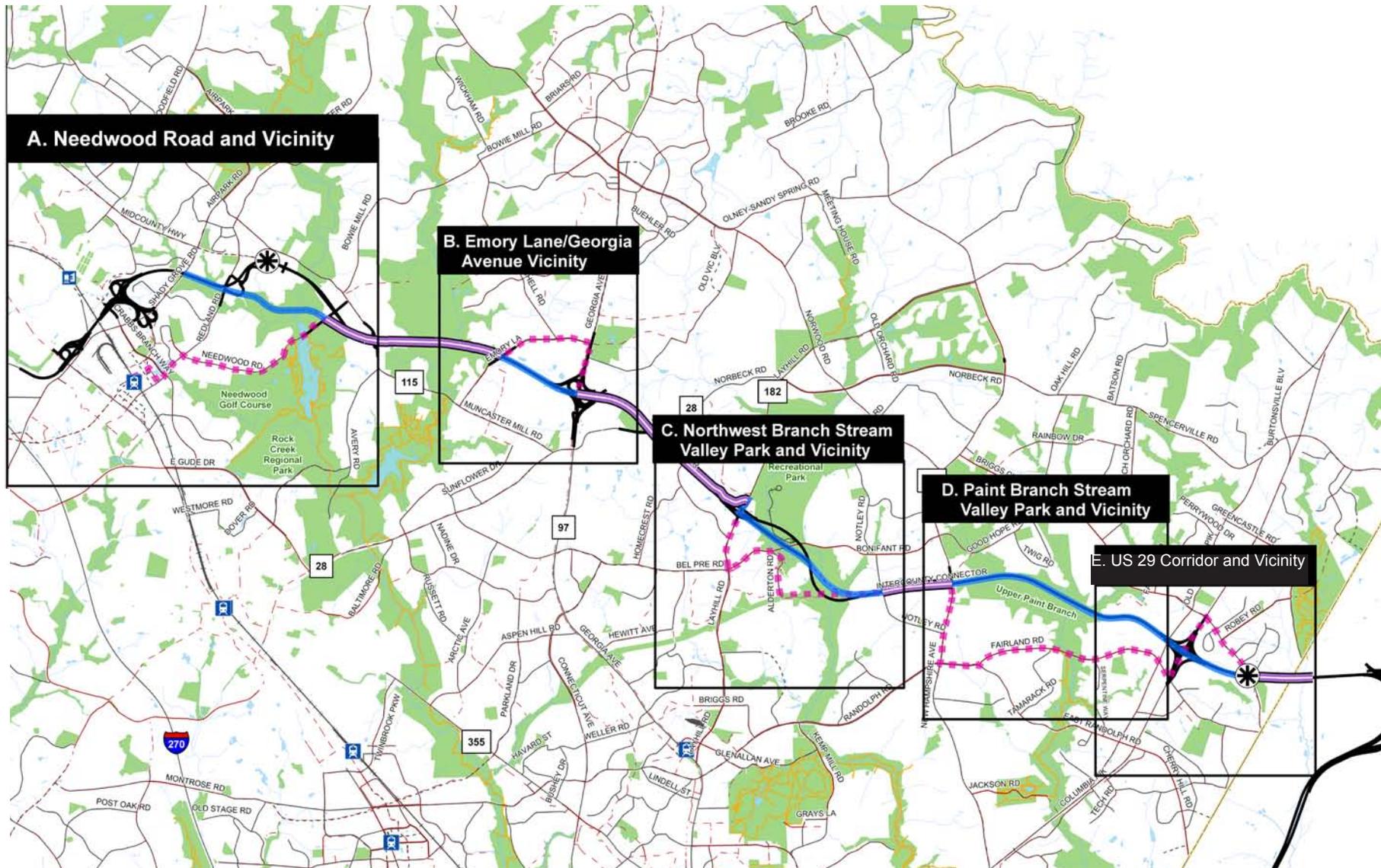
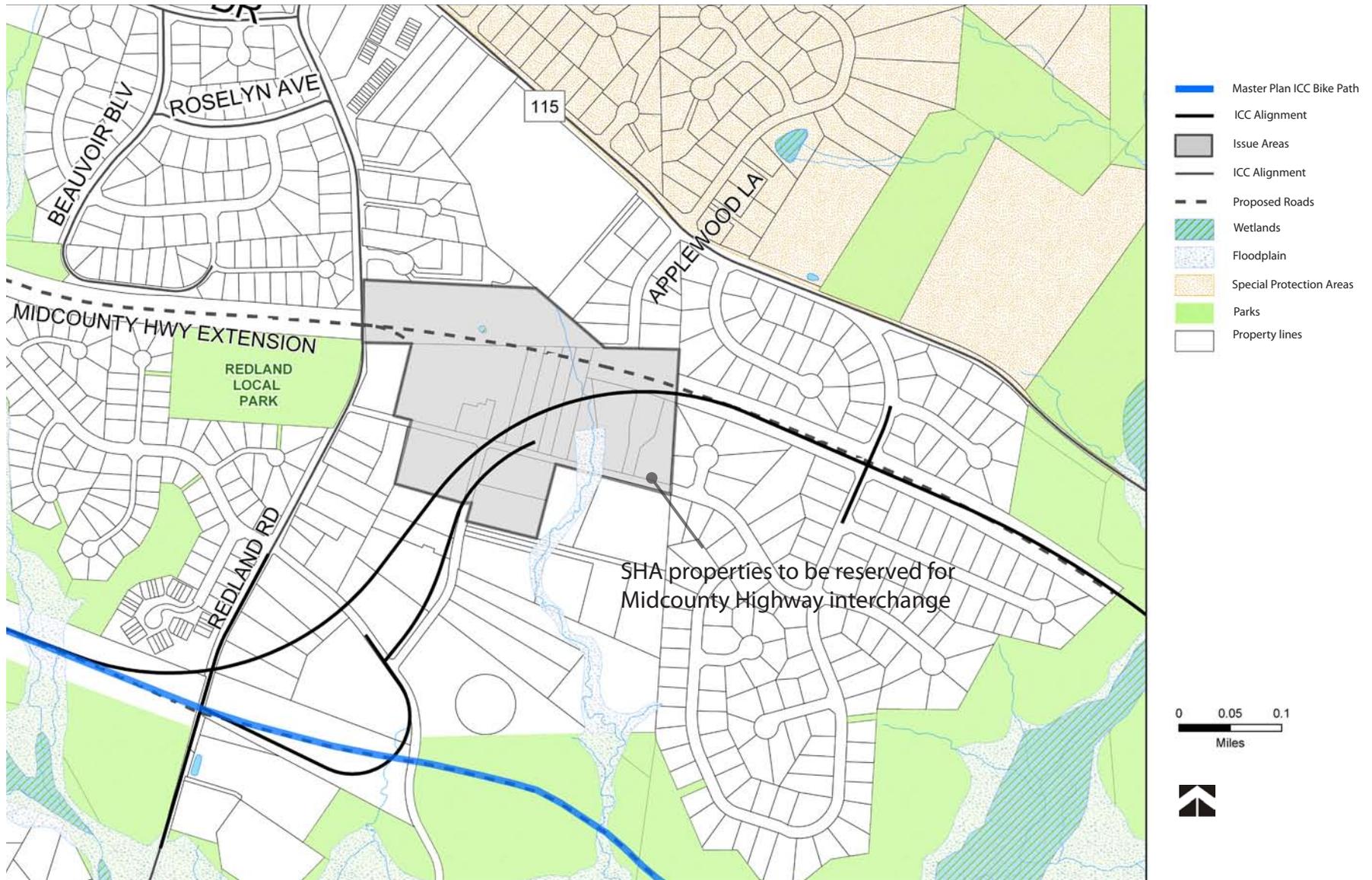


Figure 2 Midcounty Highway Interchange



## ISSUES, ANALYSIS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Highway Elements

This amendment adopts the three roadway options to the master plan alternative that were analyzed in the DEIS and included in the ROD:

- Rock Creek Option C
- Northwest Branch Option A
- Briggs Chaney Road interchange

The Planning Board supported these options in their review of the DEIS in February 2005, as described below.

#### ROCK CREEK OPTION C

The DEIS compared two alignments within Rock Creek Stream Valley Park. One alignment followed the Mill Creek tributary to Rock Creek. The second, called Option C, followed a route several hundred feet to the north and uses a portion of the highway right-of-way reserved for the future Midcounty Highway (M-83) connection to the ICC. Option C was selected to minimize impacts to the sensitive environmental areas.

The proposed southern extension of M-83 provides a direct connection between existing Midcounty Highway at Shady Grove Road and points east along the ICC. In 1985 and 2004, the Upper Rock Creek Area master plan identified two alignments for the portion of M-83 between Redland Road and the ICC. Rock Creek Option C also reduces the length of the unbuilt portion of M-83 extended.

This amendment preserves right-of-way options for future M-83 ramp connections to the ICC. Figure 2, excerpted from the ICC Contract A Request for Proposals identifies a conceptual extension of M-83 to the ICC and identifies the residential property displacements associated with Rock Creek Option C. These properties are now owned by the State of Maryland. The alignment of the eastbound M-83 ramp shown in figure 2 would likely require three additional residential property displacements on Garrett Court in the Olde Mill Run community.

This plan recommends:

- developing an alternative ramp alignment that avoids additional property displacements.
- that all properties owned by the State be considered part of the M-83 alignment right-of-way and subject to property reservation policies pending completion of the alternative ramp design.

#### NORTHWEST BRANCH OPTION A

The ICC DEIS compared two alignments within Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park. Even though Option B (the master planned alignment) is shorter and straighter, Option A, which is more curvilinear and requires more designated parkland, was chosen to minimize impacts on environmental resources.

## BRIGGS CHANEY ROAD INTERCHANGE

The ROD includes a partial interchange at Briggs Chaney Road, which is not included in the Fairland Master Plan. This interchange includes ramps to and from the east along the ICC. A Briggs Chaney Road interchange is needed to provide local business access to and from the east on the ICC because close interchange spacing precludes these connections from occurring via US 29.

### **Bikeway Elements**

In master plans, the Countywide Bike Path is defined as a shared-use, off-road bicycle facility in the highway right-of-way. The SHA Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan defines existing or proposed bicycle facilities—both off-road and on road—that are recommended as alternatives to the Countywide Bike Path to avoid environmentally sensitive areas and parkland impacts. Recognizing that the alternative doesn't implement the master planned facility in the highway right-of-way, the State has committed to work with the local governments to accelerate construction portions of the SHA Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in County master plans. This amendment's revisions to the SHA Plan are expected to provide a continuous shared-use path that meets the needs of novice and experienced bicyclists and pedestrians.

For bikeway issues, the ICCLFMPA subdivided the study area into five subareas:

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

### **Study Area A: Needwood Road and Vicinity (Figures 3 and 4)**

#### ISSUES

- Connecting the ICC pathway west-terminus at Needwood Road with Midcounty Highway:
  - o along the current master plan route via the old ICC right-of-way through the park; or
  - o via new, shared-use paths along Needwood, Muncaster Mill and Shady Grove Roads, perhaps using Applewood Lane to connect Muncaster Mill Road with the future ICC/Midcounty Highway interchange.
- Deciding whether to eliminate the master planned alignment through the park in favor of a parallel route to the master planned highway alignment not selected in the ROD.

#### DISCUSSION

This CBP segment provides a critical pathway connection between the I-270 Corridor and Georgia Avenue communities. The selected alternative highway alignment for this area—Rock Creek Option C—avoids sensitive natural resources but does not accommodate the trail connection, primarily because the highway was designed with

a small footprint to avoid impacts to the Mill Creek communities. A bikeway connection across the Rock Creek Main Stem is needed to link the up-County and down-County bikeway/pathway systems. An independent hard surface trail within the old master plan alignment would add cost and cause the same environmental impacts as the highway and should not be built. As a result, the County must find an alternative route to connect the ICC pathway terminus at Needwood Road with the future shared use path along Midcounty Highway (A on figure 3). Several alternative alignments were studied, including the options shown on figure 4 and described below:

**OPTION 1** is a newly planned shared-use path along the east side of Needwood Road between the ICC and Muncaster Mill Road and along the south side of Muncaster Mill Road between Needwood Road and Shady Grove and Airpark Roads (Applewood Lane to Shady Grove Road currently exists). This option provides access to Montgomery Village via the shared use path SP-55 along Airpark Road that terminates at Muncaster Mill Road.

**OPTION 2** is a newly planned shared-use path along Muncaster Mill Road (briefly following the Option 1 alignment), but connects to Midcounty Highway via an on-road bike route along Applewood Lane, leading to the future location of the ICC/Midcounty Highway interchange, then along the future Midcounty Highway alignment (path SP-70) to Shady Grove Road. This option provides access to Montgomery Village and points north along Midcounty Highway.

**OPTION 3** is a newly planned shared-use path along the new ICC right-of-way between Needwood Road and the eastern Rock Creek Regional Park boundary that connects through the park (and through wetland or along steep slopes) to Muncaster Mill Road and following Options 1 or 2 above. This option would offer trail users a more park like experience by briefly following the new highway alignment to and through Rock Creek Park.

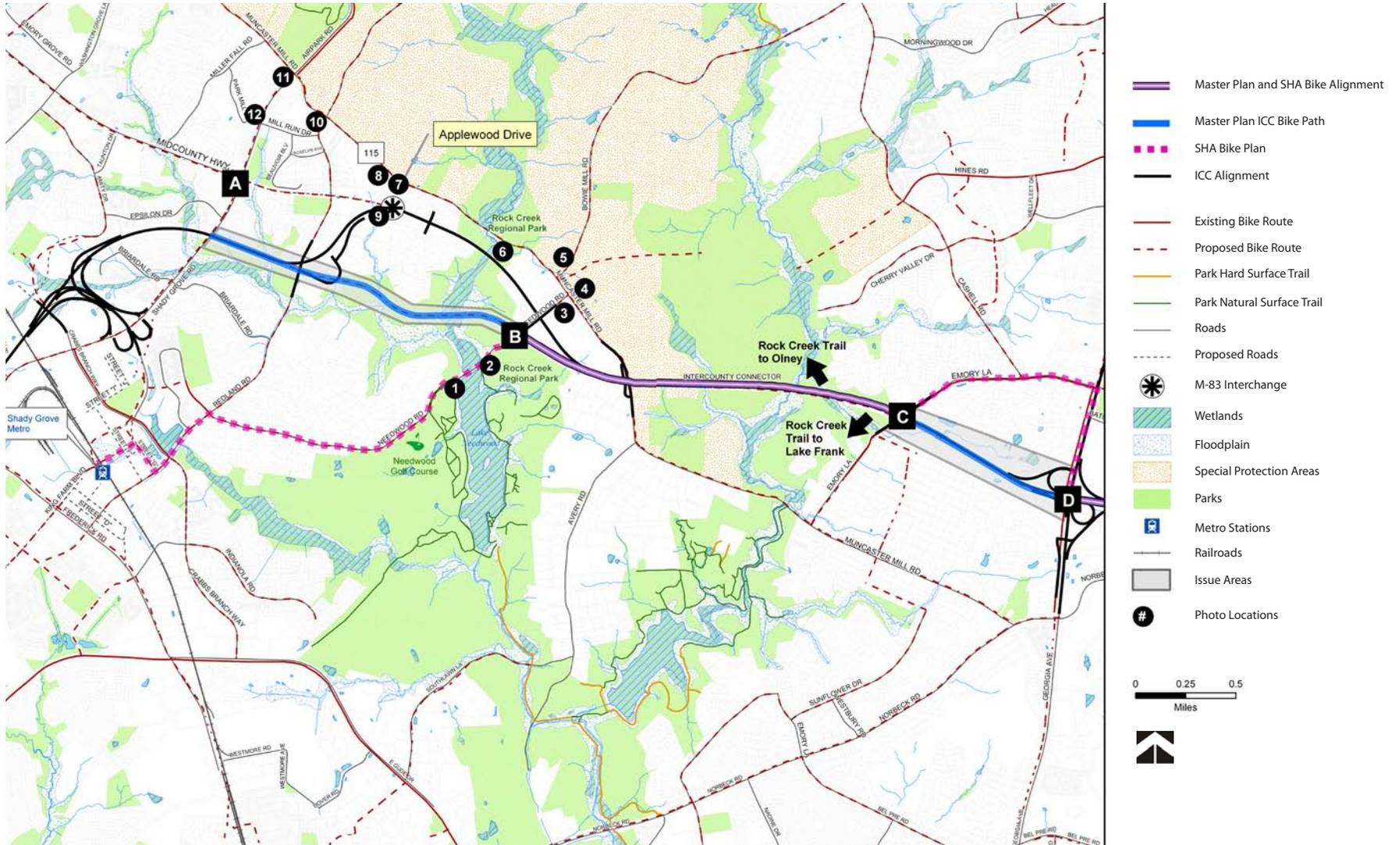
#### ANALYSIS

**OPTION 1** offers the most immediate connection since available right-of-way exists along most of these roads to make this connection possible. Option 2 is desirable, but requires coordination with the location, design, and timing of the future Midcounty Highway extension from Shady Grove Road to the ICC. Option 3 affords too few benefits at the expense of environmental resources and capital costs.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Option 1 is recommended as the new alignment for SP-40.
- Option 2 along Applewood Lane is recommended as a new designation—SP40A.

Figure 3 Needwood Road and Vicinity

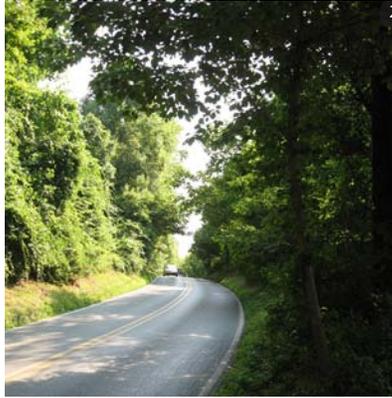


# Photographs of Needwood Road and Vicinity

Needwood Road looking east toward Lake Needwood



Needwood Road between ICC and Beach Drive



Needwood Road looking south from Muncaster Mill Road



Muncaster Mill Road looking east from Needwood Road



Muncaster Mill road looking northwest from Needwood Road



Muncaster Mill Road through Rock Creek Park



Muncaster Mill Road looking east from Applewood Lane



Muncaster Mill Road looking west from Applewood Lane



Applewood Lane terminus



Muncaster Mill Road looking east toward Redland Road



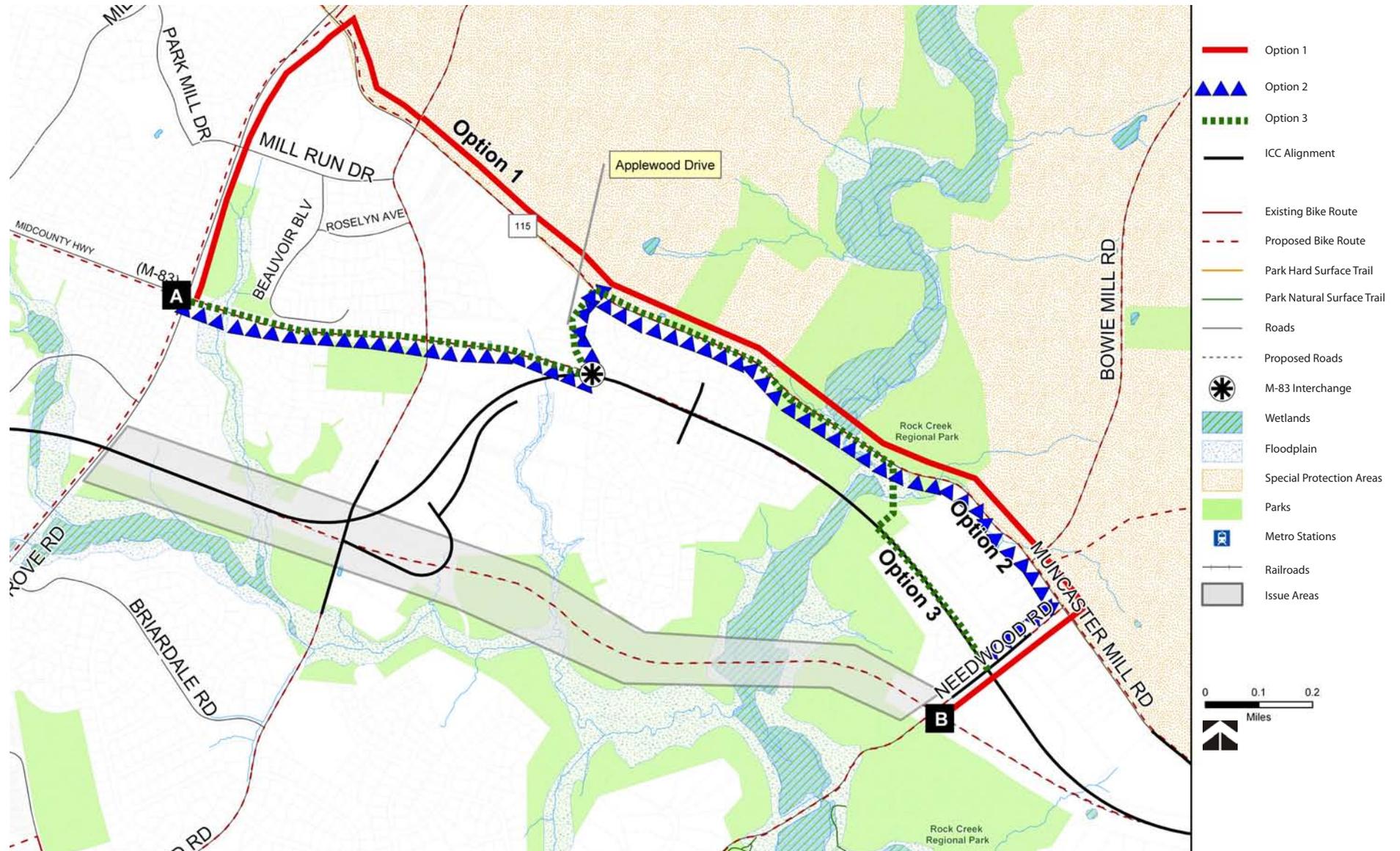
Shady Grove Road looking south from Muncaster Mill Road



Muncaster Mill Road looking west from Applewood Lane



Figure 4 Needwood Road Options



#### PRIOR DECISIONS

In reviewing the DEIS, the Planning Board and the County Council recommended ending the CBP at Needwood Road, routing the pathway along Needwood, Muncaster Mill, and Shady Grove Roads to connect to the master planned Midcounty Highway path. They also recommended enhancements along Needwood Road to connect the CBP terminus at Needwood Road with the Shady Grove Metrorail Station.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Remove the CBP alignment along the old ICC right-of-way between Needwood Road and Shady Grove Road from master plans.
- Pursue Option 1 to connect the CBP with the up-County trail system and connections to the Shady Grove Metro Station via Needwood Road.

#### ROADWAY ANALYSIS

##### NEEDWOOD ROAD (ICC TO MUNCASTER MILL ROAD)

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Residential Primary, 70-foot right-of-way, two lanes. Shared use path and/or sidewalk exists in short segments along south side from Redland Road to Needwood Mansion.

**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The 2004 Upper Rock Creek Master Plan calls for a shared use path and on-road bikeway. The CBFMP recommends a dual bikeway, with both bike lanes and a shared use path (DB-14).

**DISCUSSION:** This segment of Needwood Road connects the CBP with Magruder High School and the future community of Bowie Mill Estates. And because the CBP is no longer planned to continue west through the park, it now also must be part of the bike route that links with the Midcounty Highway path, leading to up-County communities east of I-270. Contract A of the ICC highway project will construct the path along the road within the highway right-of-way only.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Identify the segment between the ICC and Muncaster Mill Road for inclusion in the County's Annual Bikeway Program, and request matching funding from the State for the short connector. Ensure that the crossing of Muncaster Mill Road to the high school meets AASHTO standards for a shared use path.

MUNCASTER MILL ROAD (NEEDWOOD ROAD TO SHADY GROVE ROAD)

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Arterial (A-93), 80 to 100-foot right-of-way, two-four lanes. Shared use path and/or sidewalk exists in short segments along both sides, but SHA most recently constructed a shared use path along the south side near Redland Middle School and near the Redland Road intersection.

**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The Upper Rock Creek Master Plan calls for an on-road bikeway. The CBFMP recommends bike lanes (BL-35) for this segment of Muncaster Mill Road.

**DISCUSSION:** This segment of Muncaster Mill Road connects the Needwood Road path with a future path along Shady Grove Road leading to Midcounty Highway, which is master planned to have a shared use path along its south side. In 2005, SHA reconstructed sections of the road, some with a shared use path and some without, including where the road passes through the park. Therefore, constructing a path through the park will need to be a separate project. The road was a major discussion point during the County Council review of the CBFMP, and ultimately the Council voted for only bike lanes and not the shared use path recommended in the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan. Therefore, receiving County funding for the path may prove difficult without a master plan amendment.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Amend the CBFMP to identify the road as a dual bikeway with both bike lanes and a shared use path along the south side, between Needwood Road and Shady Grove Road.

- Short-term: Pursue the shared use path between Needwood Road and Applewood Lane in a future Capital Improvement Program.
- Long-term: Link to the future Midcounty Highway path via a signed, shared roadway connection along Applewood Lane, immediately after the interchange is built. Ensure the interchange design and the related Midcounty Highway extension to Shady Grove Road includes a shared use path.

SHADY GROVE ROAD (MUNCASTER MILL ROAD TO MIDCOUNTY HIGHWAY)

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Major highway (M-42), 120 to 150-foot right-of-way, six lanes divided. Existing five to six foot sidewalk along the entire south side and existing bike lanes.

**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The 2004 Upper Rock Creek Master Plan doesn't recommend any changes to this configuration. Along with the 2006 Shady Grove Sector Plan and the CBFMP, it recommends bike lanes (BL-30).

**DISCUSSION:** A shared use path would meet the needs of all potential users, but with only 120-feet of right-of-way nearest to Muncaster Mill Road, implementing the path without impacting the bike lanes will be extremely difficult. Implementing the shared use path as part of the future Midcounty Highway connection to the ICC interchange (SP-70) is more likely, connecting via Applewood Lane to the future path and bike lanes along Muncaster Mill Road.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Do not amend the master plans to add a shared use path along the road. Instead, pursue the path connection along Midcounty Highway and through the interchange to Applewood Lane.

## **Study Area B: Emory Lane/Georgia Avenue and Vicinity (Figure 3, C and D)**

### ISSUES

- Providing a connection between CBP terminus at Emory Lane with Lake Frank and the Rock Creek Trail system down-County, including a new shared use path along Emory Lane between the ICC and Muncaster Mill Road, as well as along Muncaster Mill Road between Emory Lane and Meadowside Lane.
- Deciding whether to retain the master planned CBP segment along the ICC right-of-way between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue.

### DISCUSSION

The connector between the CBP and Lake Frank is technically part of the master planned Rock Creek North Branch Trail. The portion south of Muncaster Mill Road and also north of the ICC in the park is being studied during the Department of Parks' Upper Rock Creek Trail Corridor Master Plan. A portion of the park trail north of the ICC will be built by the developer of Bowie Mill Estates.

A shared use path is planned for the segment along Emory Lane, and a segment has been constructed between Georgia Avenue and Holly Ridge Lane. The remaining segment between Holly Ridge Road and Muncaster Mill Road is unplanned. Bike lanes are master planned for Muncaster Mill Road in this area, so the trail connector along this road between Emory Lane and Meadowside Lane would be a new master plan recommendation, which is assumed to be part of the planned Rock Creek Trail.

The CBP within the ICC right-of-way between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue was not included in the ICC ROD, but this amendment recommends retaining it in County master plans. Because the highway was not designed with the pathway in this area, the ICC/Georgia Avenue interchange is not designed to provide a grade-separated crossing of Georgia Avenue connecting to the trail on the east side of Georgia Avenue. In the short-term, a controlled crossing is available at Emory Lane. Examining a new crossing is beyond the scope of this master plan amendment and should be the subject of the facility planning study. Even without the grade-separated crossing of Georgia Avenue, the path is valuable. It connects the future shared use path (SP-29) along the Georgia Avenue busway with the Rock Creek Trail system and the CBP heading west. The current shared use path and shared roadway along MD 655 on the west side of Georgia Avenue will be preserved and enhanced as part of ICC Contract A.

### PRIOR DECISIONS

Both the Planning Board and the County Council recommended constructing the CBP with the highway between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue. There have been no decisions or discussions about how to implement the Rock Creek North Branch Trail between Lake Frank and the ICC Trail.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Retain the CBP between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue in County master plans, recognizing it may be built within or outside the highway right-of-way. Study the grade-separated crossing of Georgia Avenue in a CIP facility planning study.

- Study the Rock Creek Trail segments north of the ICC and south of Muncaster Mill Road in the Department of Parks CIP.
- Include the park trail connector along Emory Lane and Muncaster Mill Road in a CIP facility planning study to be led by DPWT. Consider coordinating this effort with the park trail connector study identified above. Examine connections to the Meadows Lane and the WSSC access road along the east side of the stream, south of Muncaster Mill. Minimize impacts to the historic mill site adjacent to the stream and south of Muncaster Mill Road.

### **Study Area C: Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity (Figures 5 and 6)**

#### ISSUES

- Connecting the CBP terminus at Notley Road (B on figure 5) with the Matthew Henson Trail through the park, as well as with the CBP terminus at Layhill Road (A on figure 5) through the park or along parallel roads.
- Deciding whether to remove a new trail/bikeway (since it was not built with the highway) parallel to the highway between Notley Road and Alderton Road from County master plans.
- Deciding whether to remove the CBP parallel to the highway—adjoining the Bonifant Woods community—between the future Matthew Henson Trail connector and Bonifant Road (figure 5) from County master plans .
- Studying a new park trail connector that would double as the modified alignment for SP-40 between Bonifant and Layhill roads to and/or through the Trolley Museum site and the future developed park area surrounding it.
- Deciding whether to accept the State’s plan to route the path along parallel roads in conjunction with improvements to these roads that accommodate all user groups.

#### DISCUSSION

The ROD did not include the master planned CBP along the ICC right-of-way between Notley Road and Layhill Road. SHA’s Bike Plan instead recommended an on-road route via existing bikeways along Alderton, Bonifant, and Layhill roads to connect the Matthew Henson Trail with the ICC trail terminus at Layhill Road. It also recommended a future trail connection between Notley Road and Alderton Road (and thus the Matthew Henson Trail heading west) as an area for which the County could partner with the State to study and implement, separate from the highway project.

The bicycle and pedestrian routes along the roadway alternatives are adequate for experienced cyclists, but offer an incomplete, discontinuous, or inadequate route for users of other ability levels, most notably the family cyclist. Therefore, this plan evaluates bicycle and pedestrian accommodation along these roads and recommends master plan amendments.

A new alignment for SP-40 through the Northwest Branch Park between Layhill Road and Bonifant Road, connecting to and through the Trolley Museum site will be studied in more detail during the Northwest Branch Park Master Plan Update. The primary concern about a shared use path in the Northwest Branch and Vicinity are the sensitive environmental resources south of Bonifant Road, particularly between the Matthew Henson Trail and Notley Road. A path through this area should avoid bisecting the biodiversity area and contiguous forest.

Figure 6 summarizes connection options. The primary objective for the ICCLFMPA is how to connect points A and B along the ICC. A secondary concern is how to connect point C; the eastern terminus of the built portion of the Matthew Henson Trail, to the ICC shared-use path at point B.

Staff considered two options for connecting points A and B that do not go through point C.

**OPTION 1** From point A, construct a new shared-use path connecting Layhill Local Park to the relocated Trolley Museum via a new trail bridge across the Northwest Branch. Use the Trolley Museum driveway to access Bonifant Road, and then construct a new shared-use path on the south side of Bonifant Road between the Trolley Museum Driveway and Notley Road and a new shared use path on the west side of Notley Road between Bonifant Road and the ICC path at point B.

- Option 1 is recommended as the new alignment for SP-40.

**OPTION 2** From point A, construct a new shared-use path along Layhill Road south to Bonifant Road and a new shared-use path along Bonifant Road between Layhill Road to the Trolley Museum.

Staff considered three more options for connecting points B and C, some of which could also be part of a connection between points A and B:

**OPTION 3** From point A, construct a new shared-use path northward along the east side of Alderton Road to Alderton Lane and use the existing shared use path along Alderton Road between Alderton Lane and Bonifant Road. From this point, the remainder of Option 3 is the same as the portion of Option 2 east of Alderton Road.

- The portion of Option 3 west of the Trolley Museum driveway is recommended as a new path—SP 40B—to connect Matthew Henson Trail to SP-40.

**OPTION 4** Between points C and B, construct a new shared-use path along the edge of the park property, including a new trail crossing of Northwest Branch south of the proposed ICC crossing. While this alignment is essentially the same as proposed in the 2005 CBFMP, the park's topographic and natural resource constraints make construction challenging. However, SHA is building the ICC between the park boundary and Notley Road to reserve space that will accommodate a future trail and this option remains possible as long as the trail alignment is retained in master plans. Implementing the trail then becomes a matter of funding, timing, and minimizing impacts to sensitive resources.

**OPTION 5** Between points C and B use existing, low-volume residential roadways—Alderton Drive, Atwood Road, and Foggy Glen Court—to connect to the Poplar Run development's proposed shared-use path system that includes a new crossing of Northwest Branch to the Rachel Carson Greenway (RCG) trail. Use Vierling Drive, another low-volume, residential road, to access Notley Road near the ICC. As currently designed, neither of these routes

is suitable for road bikes. And because the RCG prohibits bicycles, this routing would offer Riders a connection to Notley Road through the park and along local streets through the Drumeldra Hills neighborhood on the east side, but prohibit them from accessing the RCG. It is unlikely that the Department of Park scan effectively enforce this prohibition, and so this route is not preferred because.

Connections between points A and C are the least important in this area, and can be made either via Layhill Road and the Matthew Henson Trail or by a combination of Option 2 (west of the Bonifant Road/Alderton Road intersection) and Option 3 (south of the Bonifant Road/Alderton Road intersection).

In late 2007, the Department of Parks initiated a master plan amendment for Northwest Branch Park north of Bonifant Road. Preliminary recommendations would create a regional park with ballfields, a mountain bike challenge course, and an adventure playground that would complement the Trolley Museum site, connected by a hard surface trail. The Department will study a CBP connection—between Layhill Road and Bonifant Road—parallel to the ICC that could help implement the CBP through this area. The remaining east-west gap would be along Bonifant Road and Notley Road, consistent with Option 3.

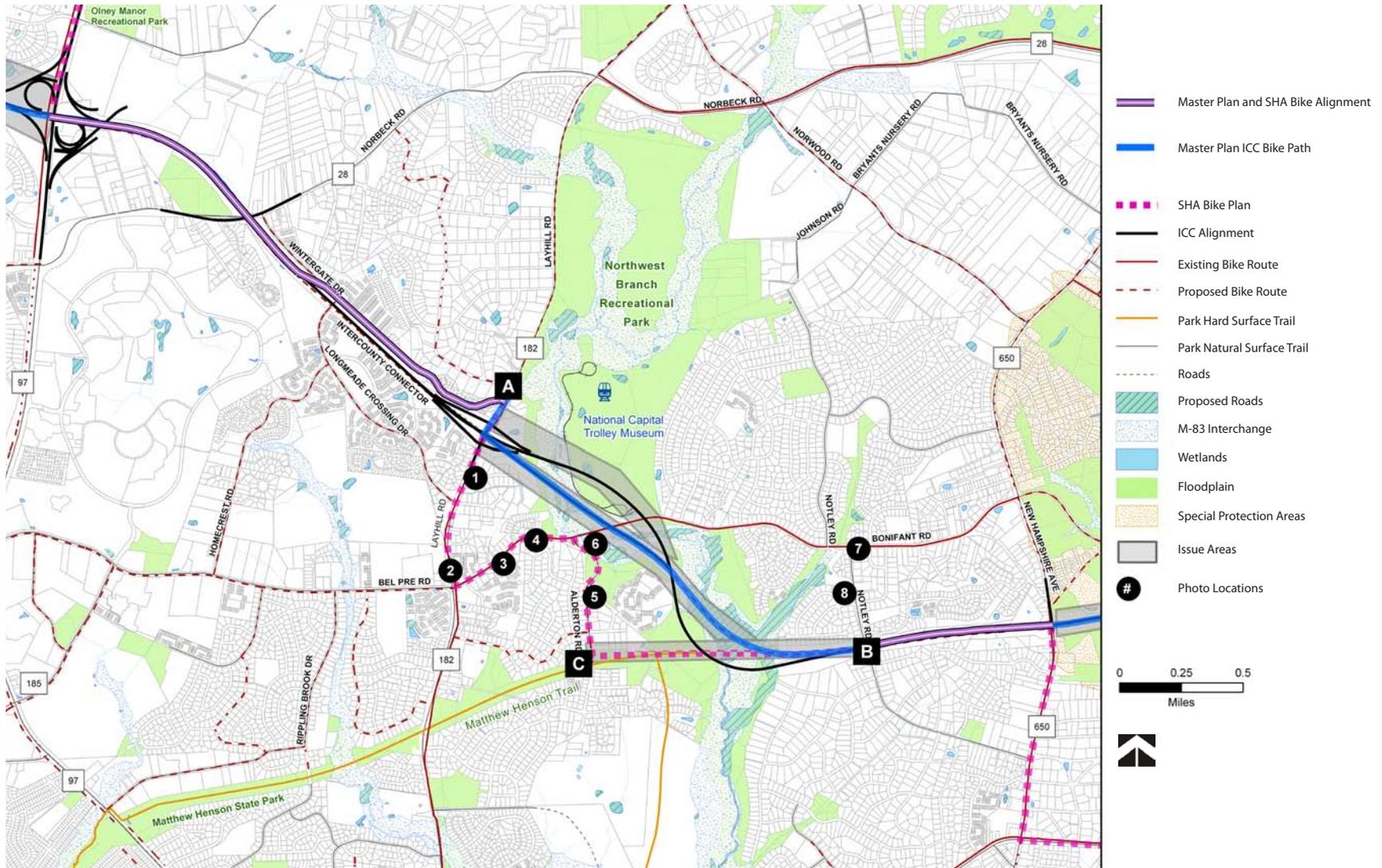
#### PRIOR DECISIONS

The Planning Board supported the detour along Alderton Road, Bonifant Road, and Layhill Road during its review of the highway's FEIS, but stopped short of recommending that the segment of the CBP passing through the park be removed from County master plans. The County Council recommended the CBP parallel to the highway, but did not address how to accomplish this alignment if the trail was not included in the highway right-of-way.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Include the connector between Notley Road and Alderton Road in a CIP to be led by the Department of Parks. Request State funding assistance for this study since SHA committed to helping implement this connector in the ROD. Areas requiring detailed environmental study include:
  - Routing a hard surface trail along the current master planned route making a direct connection between Alderton and Notley Roads through the park.
  - Routing a new shared use path by widening the existing sidewalk along both Alderton Road and Bonifant Road and then along Notley Road and by building a new shared use path to connect the sidewalk with CBP (Option 3 above and SP-40B on figure 4).
  - Routing the trail south through Indian Spring/Poplar Run, then over the stream and through the Drumeldra Hills neighborhood as described in Option 5 above.
- Make recommendations for the bikeway and trail connector between Layhill and Bonifant Roads as part of the Northwest Park Master Plan. This new route is part of the CBP's revised alignment between Layhill and Notley Road (Option 1).
- Do not further study any park trails directly along the old or selected ICC master plan highway alignments.

Figure 5 Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity



# Photographs of Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity

Layhill Road looking north from Norvale Road



Layhill Road looking north from Bonifant Road



Bonifant Road looking west near Layhill Valley Court



Bonifant Road looking east near Morton Hall Road



Alderton Road/Woodwell Road south view



Alderton Road south view



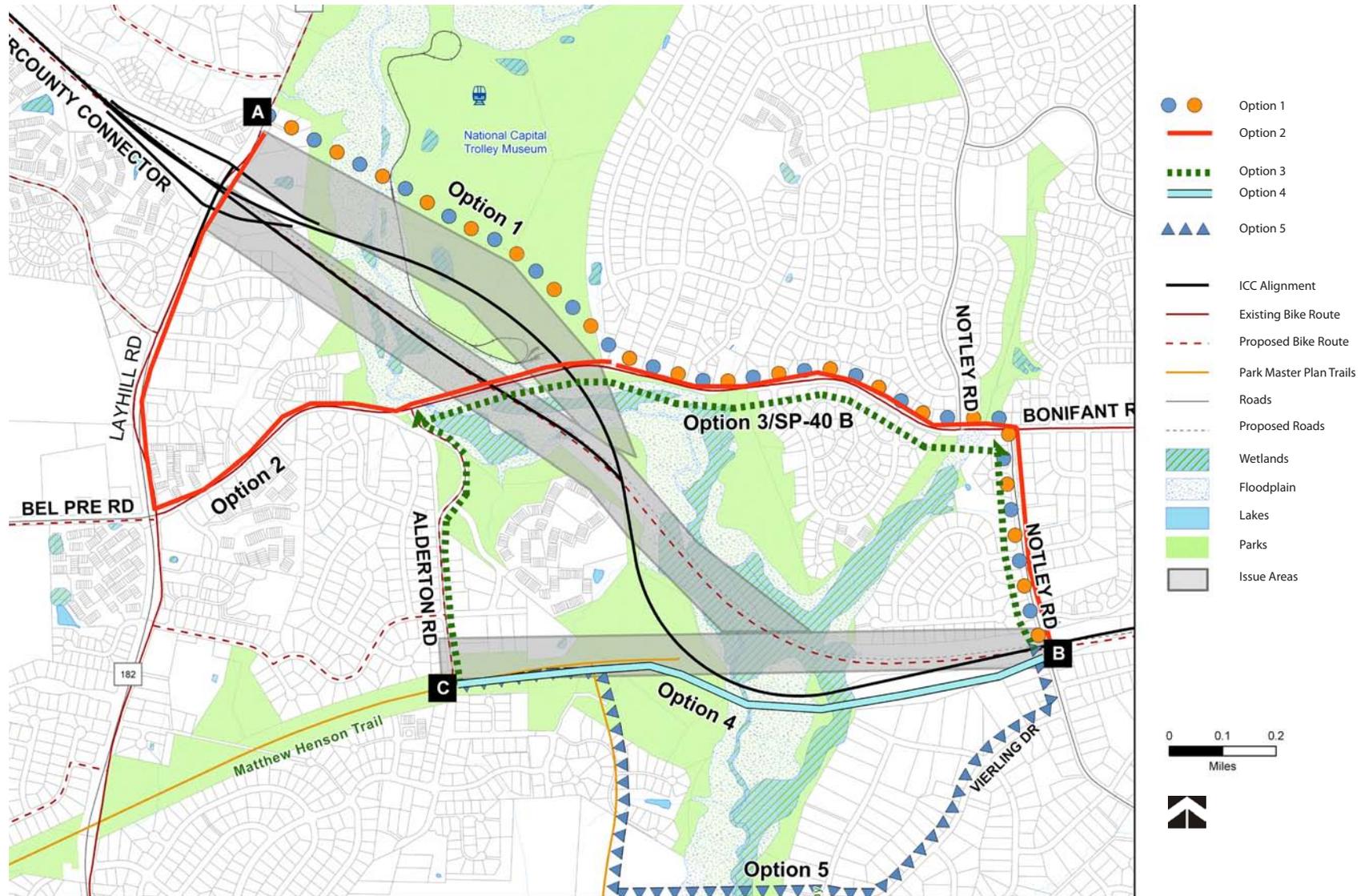
Bonifant Road looking west from Notley Road



Notley Road looking north from Northwyn Drive



Figure 6 Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park Options



**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan recommends no changes to the current configuration and recommends the road be signed as a shared roadway.

**DISCUSSION:** The roadway features a four-foot sidewalk on the east side from Bonifant Road to about 250 feet south of Alderton Court that can accommodate light bicycle and pedestrian travel, but if and when the park trail connector is built through the park between the current MHT terminus and Notley Road, bicycle and pedestrian traffic will increase and a wider sidewalk or shared use path will be needed particularly for child, novice, and intermediate cyclists. Ample space exists north of Alderton Court to widen the existing sidewalk without causing excessive impact. However, extending a wider sidewalk or path to the south will have to minimize impacts to street trees.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Amend master plans to include a shared use path along the east side between Bonifant Road and the MHT that will function as part of SP-40B, between MHT and Notley (C to B on Figure 6).
- Include the project as a CIP facility planning study concurrently with the construction of the park trail connector through the park between Notley Road and the MHT.

**BONIFANT ROAD (ALDERTON ROAD TO LAYHILL ROAD)**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Arterial (A-40) 2 lanes, 80-foot right-of-way. Open section roadway, except curb and gutter with sidewalk and landscape buffer between Catoctin Drive and Layhill Road. Short sidewalk segments (asphalt or concrete) intermittently along both sides, conditions are poor except near Layhill Road. A six to eight-foot shoulder on both sides functions as the master planned bike lanes.

**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan recommends no changes to the current configuration. CBFMP recommend bike lanes (BL-17), but not a shared use path.

**DISCUSSION:** The bike lanes accommodate experienced cyclists traveling from Layhill Road to Alderton, however there is no consistent sidewalk or shared use path along either side to accommodate less experienced cyclists or pedestrians. Implementing a shared use path on the property side of the roadway swales is problematic. The road's 80-foot open section right-of-way has wide drainage swales. Implementing the path on either side of the swales would impact the property owners or possibly eliminating the existing master planned bike lanes. A shared-use path along the south side would be unlikely unless the road is reconstructed with a closed section. Removing the drainage swales would permit space for the shared use path, but reconstructing the road with closed section is unlikely since the County's new road code recommends reducing the need for stormwater management structures.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Designate the roadway as a dual bikeway that includes a shared use path along the south side between Layhill and Notley roads.
- Implement the path between Layhill Road and Alderton Road only when the County reconstructs the roadway with curb and gutter, eliminating the drainage swales.
- Include the segment between Alderton Road and Notley Road as a future CIP facility planning study.

#### LAYHILL ROAD (BONIFANT TO ICC)

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Major highway (M-16), four-lanes divided from Bonifant Road to Longmead Crossing Drive, two lanes approaching the ICC. 150-foot right-of-way master planned, but only 120' exists in short segments. Closed section roadway with open section approaching the ICC north of Longmead Crossing. The four to five-foot sidewalks along both sides are in good condition. Bike lanes from Bonifant Road to just north of Longmead Crossing Drive.

**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The 1994 Aspen Hill Master Plan recommends Layhill Road as four-lanes divided from MD 28 to southern plan boundary (south of Bonifant Road). Both the Aspen Hill Master Plan and CBFMP recommend bike lanes.

**DISCUSSION:** The existing bike lanes accommodate experienced cyclists and the sidewalks accommodate pedestrians, but they don't accommodate child or intermediate bicyclists. Within the planned 150-foot right-of-way, widening the sidewalk to shared use path standards would be relatively easy. The east side has fewer obstructions and would improve bicycle and pedestrian access to Layhill Local Park. In addition, SHA will be constructing 2,000 linear feet of shared use path along the east side near Park Vista Drive north to the entrance of Layhill Local Park as an ICC highway community stewardship project.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Designate the roadway as a dual bikeway to include a shared use path along the east side.
- Add the shared use path (widened sidewalk) as a CIP facility planning study to connect Bonifant Road with the community stewardship project.

### **Study Area D: Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity (Figure 7)**

#### ISSUES

- Deciding whether to remove from County master plans the CBP through the park between Old Columbia Pike and New Hampshire Avenue.
- Deciding whether to accept the State Bike Plan recommendation to route the trail along parallel roads.
- Recommending road improvements that accommodate all potential trail user groups and ability levels.

#### DISCUSSION

The ROD didn't include the master planned trail along this highway segment. SHA's Plan instead routes the trail along parallel roads to bypass the park's environmentally sensitive resources. Likewise, the Department of Parks doesn't support putting the CBP through the park due to environmental concerns, including impervious cover impacts in the Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area. Efforts to reduce the highway's footprint make it unlikely the CBP could be built within the highway right-of-way. Therefore, the path would need to be constructed parallel to the highway through parkland to maintain the off-road connection.

In their first worksession, the Board decided—after considerable testimony in favor—that the hard surface park trail through Paint Branch SVP recommended in the Countywide Park Trails Plan could serve as a suitable alternative to the current master planned CBP. Staff proposed a possible alignment for this park trail during the worksession (the green dotted line on figure 7) that connects Cape May Road and Countryside Lane/Park, and to the existing

bike lanes along Briggs Chaney Road that lead to the US 29 Corridor and beyond. The ultimate location and design for this future park trail would be studied by the Department of Parks as part of a Trail Corridor Study.

#### PRIOR DECISIONS

The Planning Board supported the SHA route during its review of the highway's FEIS and suggested removing SP-40 through the park from County master plans. The County Council did not support the SHA route and recommended the parallel trail CBP along the highway but within the right-of-way. The Council did not comment on routing the trail through the park and parallel to the highway.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Remove the CBP through the park from County master plans.
- Identify Fairland Road, Randolph Road, and New Hampshire Avenue as the bikeway/trail connector between US 29 Corridor and the ICC trail heading west.
- Pursue the CPTP recommendation to identify a park trail connection through the park parallel to the ICC.
- Request the Department of Parks study this park trail connector as a high priority Trail Corridor Study, and evaluate the general alignment shown on figure 7 of this plan as the preferred option.

#### FAIRLAND ROAD (US 29 TO EAST RANDOLPH ROAD)

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Two-lane arterial (A-75), eight-foot shoulder both sides that function as bike lanes. Master planned right-of-way is 80 feet, existing right-of-way varies. Sidewalk along south side largely exists between East Randolph Road and just west of US 29 in fair to poor condition. Pavement is mostly four-foot asphalt, sometimes three feet changing to five-foot concrete about 900 feet west of Old Columbia Pike. Pathway merges with shoulder briefly where road crosses Paint Branch, and then disappears heading west; pedestrians can use the Paint Branch Trail extension along the road, but the two facilities aren't connected.

**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** CBFMP identifies existing bike lanes (BL-13), 1997 Fairland Master Plan identifies existing sidewalk along segment as well as existing bike lanes (EB-6).

**DISCUSSION:** Only one major destination exists along the road—the Paint Branch Trail—and widening the path to a dual bikeway is difficult to justify given the anticipated low demand.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Modify master plans to support widening the existing south side sidewalk to shared use path standards, thus making the road a dual bikeway.
- If the road is widened or reconstructed, include a shared use path and a bridge over the Paint Branch in the roadway design.
- If road is not widened, add this project to the CIP as a facility planning study to widen the sidewalk to shared use path standards.

**EAST RANDOLPH ROAD (FAIRLAND ROAD TO NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE)**

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Major highway (M-75), six-lanes divided. Eight-foot concrete shared use path on the north side, narrowed in places due to overgrowth, but generally in fair to good condition. Four-foot landscape buffer between the McDonalds property and Fairland Road. No buffer from the McDonalds property to New Hampshire Avenue.

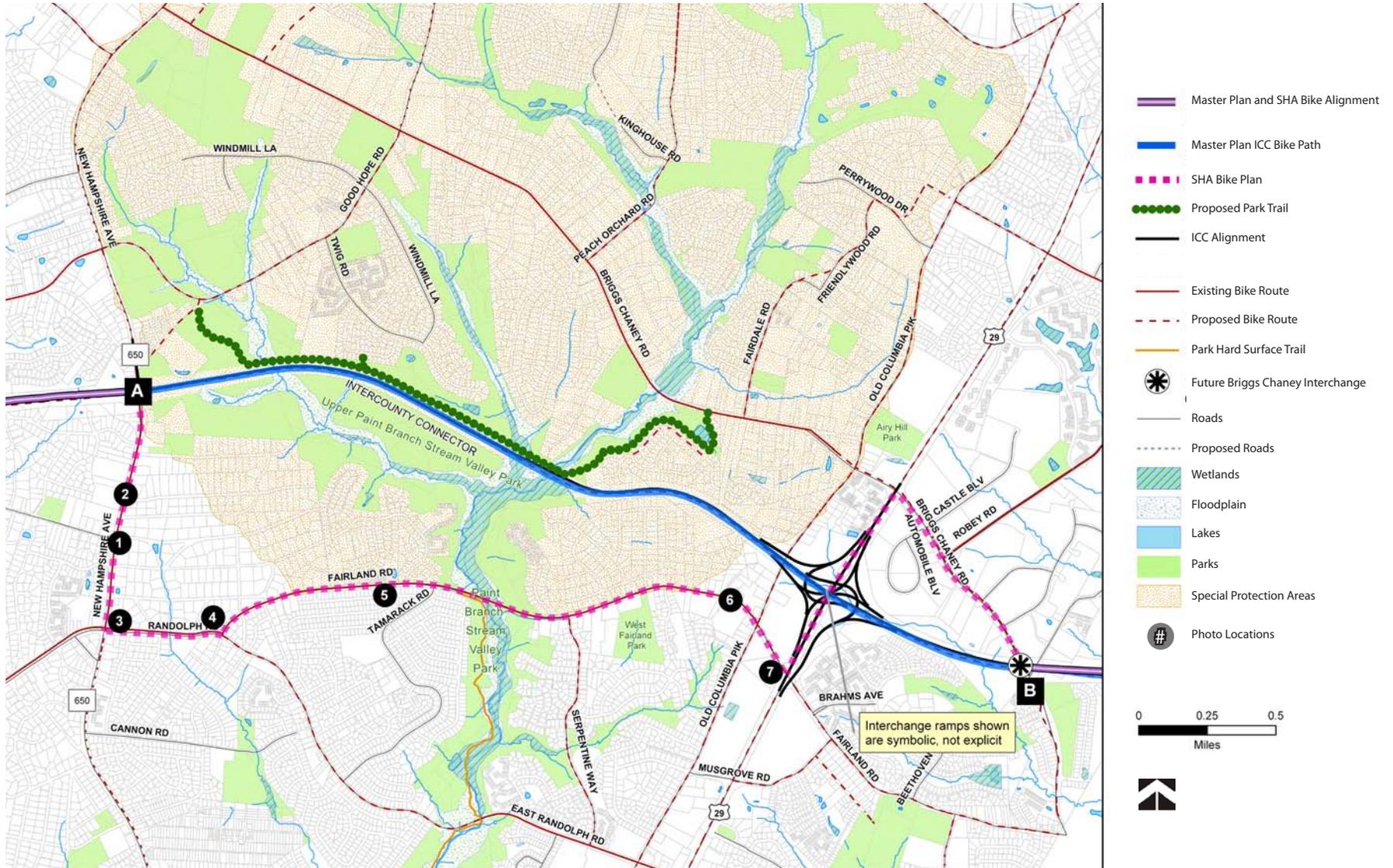
**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The 1997 White Oak Master Plan calls for a Class I bikeway (EB-5). The CBFMP recommends a shared use path (SP-17).

**DISCUSSION:** Generally, this segment meets the needs of all user groups. However, several small changes would greatly enhance safety, aesthetics, and mobility. A landscape buffer is recommended between the McDonalds property and New Hampshire Avenue.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Implement improvements when the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue/East Randolph Road is reconstructed.
- Relocate the path closer to property lines and where appropriate, install a landscape buffer with street trees between the trail and roadway.

Figure 7 Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park and Vicinity



# Upper Paint Branch Stream Valley Park/US 29 and Vicinity

New Hampshire Avenue/Colesville Road south view



New Hampshire Avenue/Orchard Way north view



East Randolph Road east view



East Randolph Road west view



Fairland Road looking west near Old Columbia Pike



Fairland Road looking west from near US 29



Fairland Road looking west from near US 29



Fairland Road/Partridge Road west view

## NEW HAMPSHIRE AVENUE (RANDOLPH ROAD TO ICC)

**EXISTING CONDITIONS:** Major highway (M-12), six-lanes divided, 120-foot right-of-way. Existing sidewalk both sides in generally fair to good condition with no landscape buffer and adjacent to the curb. Bike lanes exist north of Midland Road.

**MASTER PLAN GUIDANCE:** The 1997 White Oak Master Plan calls for a Class II bikeway (PB-23) CBFMP recommends bike lanes (BL-11).

**DISCUSSION:** Except for the bike lane gap between Midland Road and Randolph Road, this road segment serves all user groups. It's not ideal, however. A shared use path or wider sidewalk along one side would be desirable to better accommodate novice cyclists. But within the constrained right-of-way a wider sidewalk is unlikely unless the median is unlikely unless the roadway is shifted, or additional right-of-way is acquired. Many buildings are located close to the right-of-way line, making land acquisition difficult.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- When the New Hampshire Avenue/Randolph Road intersection is reconstructed, ensure the bike lanes along both sides of MD 650 up to Midland Road and the northern MD 650 crosswalk are improved for bicycle travel (eight-foot ramps at both the northwest and northeast corners of the intersection).
- Designate the road's west side as a shared use path to widen the sidewalk to eight feet, recognizing that additional right-of-way would be required and that the improvement is a low priority and may take a decade or longer to realize.
- Maintain existing sidewalk along east side.

## Study Area E: US 29 and Vicinity (Figure 7)

### ISSUES

- Whether to retain the CBP through the US 29 interchange in County master plans.
- Whether to retain the segment of CBP between US 29 and Briggs Chaney Road in County master plans

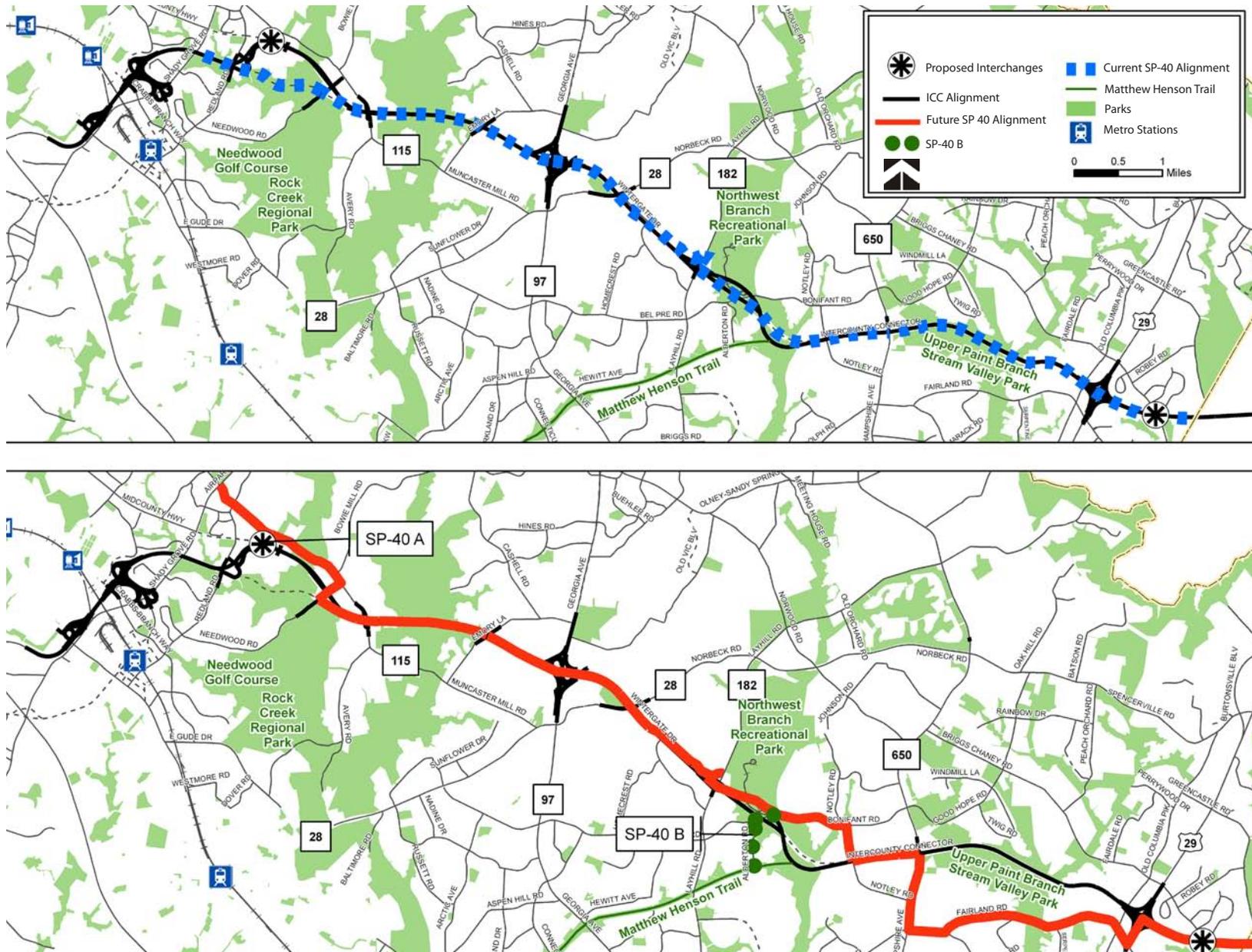
### DISCUSSION

The ROD didn't include the CBP through either area. SHA's Bike Plan instead routes the path along US 29 (part of the US 29 commuter bikeway) and then along a shared use path on Briggs Chaney Road heading east into Prince George's County. Weaving the trail east-west through the US 29 interchange (going over US 29) was cost prohibitive, while the segment between US 29 and Briggs Chaney Road was a simple cost saving measure since the path along Briggs Chaney Road exists.

## Summary of Recommendations Affecting SP-40

Segment	ICCLFMPA recommendation
Midcounty Highway terminus at Shady Grove Road to CBP trail terminus at Needwood Road	<p>SP-40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing shared use path along south side of Muncaster Mill Road from Shady Grove Road to Applewood Lane</li> <li>- New shared use path along south side of Muncaster Mill road between Applewood Lane and Needwood Road</li> <li>- New shared use path along east side of Needwood Road to ICC</li> </ul> <p>SP-40 A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared roadway connection along Applewood Land from Muncaster Mill Road (SP-40) to future Midcounty Highway shared use path (SP-70)</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Plan amendment needed to add shared use path to Muncaster Mill Road, and bike route along Applewood Lane.</i></b></p>
Emory Lane to Georgia Avenue	Retain existing master plan alignment along ICC ROW
Layhill Road to Notley Road	<p>SP-40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New shared use path through Northwest Branch park, connecting Layhill Local Park with National Capital Trolley Museum Site</li> <li>- New shared use paths along south side of Bonifant Road east of Trolley Museum and west side of Notley Road</li> <li>- New shared use paths along east side of Alderton Road between MHT and Bonifant Road and along Bonifant Road between Alderton Road and the Trolley Museum driveway</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Plan amendment needed to add shared use path to Bonifant Road and Notley Road, as well as along Alderton Road to provide side-connection to MHT (SP-40B) as well as SP-40 through Northwest Branch Park north of Bonifant Road.</i></b></p>
New Hampshire Avenue to US 29	<p><b><i>SP-40</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing bike lanes and a new shared use path along west side of New Hampshire Avenue, from ICC to East Randolph Road</li> <li>- Existing shared use path along north side of East Randolph Road, from New Hampshire Avenue to Fairland Road</li> <li>- Existing bike lanes and a new shared use path along south side of Fairland Road from E. Randolph Road to US 29</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Park Trail</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New sanctioned east-west park trail between park boundaries, connecting Cape May Road to Countryside Lane</li> </ul>
US 29 to Briggs Chaney Road	<b><i>Retain current master plan recommendation for CBP within or along the ICC ROW; if along ICC ROW, possible through Tabnglewood community and Tanglewood Park.</i></b>

Figure 8 SP-40 Before and After



Staff agrees with the State’s decision not to pursue the path through the interchange. Because the segment of CBP through Paint Branch Stream Valley Park is unlikely to happen, weaving a grade-separated trail-bridge through the interchange cannot be economically justified. Likewise, the segment of master planned path between Briggs Chaney Road and US 29 would be redundant and offer few benefits to justify its cost. But there is no reason to remove it from County master plans now and the County shouldn’t preclude options for bicycle and pedestrian connections in this area, including a possible connection to or along the ICC right-of-way through the Tanglewood community and the new parkland adjoining Tanglewood Park acquired by the County as part of the ICC highway project.

SHA’s design for the path along the east side of US 29 is adequate and the shared use path along Briggs Chaney Road is a suitable connection to the Prince George’s County bikeways and trails network. The only question is ensuring a safe connection with a future path along Fairland Road. This should be studied in detail when SHA designs the Fairland Road/US 29 interchange project.

#### PRIOR DECISIONS

The Planning Board supported the SHA Bike Plan during its review of the highway’s FEIS but stopped short of recommending its removal from County master plans. The County Council did not support the SHA Bike Plan and recommended the CBP along the highway, within the right-of-way, and through the US 29 interchange to the Prince George’s County line.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Remove the CBP through the interchange from County master plans.
- Retain the segment of the CBP between Briggs Chaney Road and US 29 in County master plans.
- Examine the connection between the future shared use path along the south side of Fairland Road with the path along the east side of US 29 as part of the proposed Fairland/US 29 interchange study.

### **County Bike Path—Before and After**

This master plan amendment can be summarized by describing what happens to the CBP (SP-40) as a result of the various recommendations. All prior master plans, including the CBFMP, envisioned a pathway or trail within the highway right-of-way from Shady Grove Road to the Prince George’s County Line. This amendment recommends retaining the previously master planned alignment in two areas and routing it along major roads in others, generally consistent with the SHA’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The table below describes how SP-40 would function end to end under this amendment, from west to east (see figure 8).

## **Park Trails—Before and After**

This plan amendment affects a number of park trail alignments, and thus also the CPTP, which has specific connections with the trail along the highway.

**MATTHEW HENSON TRAIL** (see figure 5). The County Bike Path was intended to intersect with the MHT within Northwest Branch Stream Valley Park south of Bonifant Road, where the MHT-reserved land intersects with the ICC right-of-way. When the State decided not to include the trail through the park along the highway, the location of the trail-intersection changed significantly. With the CBP no longer passing through the park south of Bonifant Road (blue line), the connection between MHT and Alderton Road now must be implemented as a park trail, not a transportation bikeway. Therefore the connection between Alderton Road (C on figure 5) and Notley Road (B on figure 5) becomes a park trail connector, an extension of the Matthew Henson Trail, to be evaluated by the Department of Parks as a future facility planning study (looking at options for both natural surface and hard surface trail users). This connection will be the subject of a future facility planning study led by the Department of Parks, with SHA funding assistance requested.

**PAINT BRANCH STREAM VALLEY PARK** (see figure 7). The CBP is proposed to be removed from the park due to environmental impacts. Hard surface trail users will be expected to follow the SHA Bike/Pedestrian Plan (Fairland Road, East Randolph Road, and New Hampshire Avenue). The Department of Parks will initiate a Trail Corridor Study to determine the type (hard surface or natural), location, and design of a future trail through the park connecting Cape May Road with Countryside Park, consistent with the recommendations in the CPTP.

## APPENDIX

### **A: Planning Process and Public Participation**

The outreach strategy engaged stakeholders in this amendment's issues and included bicycle transportation advocates, pedestrian/walking advocates, park and trail (recreation) advocates, and environmental advocates. Due to the limited scope of the issues studied, staff established an informal working group consisting primarily of the groups most interested in the outcomes of this planning process:

- Bicycle transportation advocates
- Pedestrian advocates
- Park and recreation advocates
- Environmental advocates

In addition, staff developed an interagency technical working group of representatives from the County Executive, including the Department of Public Works and Transportation and the State, including the Maryland Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration.

To engage residents and the general public staff held two public information meetings, on March 19 and April 2, 2008, to obtain comments and reactions to preliminary recommendations. This general approach was consistent with how we conducted the master plan process for the CBFMP in 2004-2005.

### **B: Themes**

Several broad themes emerged during the planning process that shaped the analysis and staff recommendations and will influence the review of this amendment's options by decision makers and the public.

- **SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS VERSUS LONG-TERM VISION** The planning process must not merely react to the approved highway design with quick fixes, but must offer long-term vision, 20-30 years in the future, that anticipates needs generated by local, regional, and global environmental and societal challenges.
- **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION VERSUS MOBILITY AND ACCESS** Bikeways, like any land development—including ballfields and playgrounds—cause some environmental harm, such as tree loss, disrupted drainage patterns, adverse impacts to natural habitat, and damaged water quality from increased runoff. However, bikeways and trails also offer significant environmental and health benefits that are difficult to quantify. A commuting cyclist using a path or bike route equates to one less car on the road, which in turn means less air and water pollution. This conflict was, and remains, at the heart of the debate about a full-length ICC Bike Path as well as debates about bikeways and trails throughout the County.
- **TRANSPORTATION FUNCTION VERSUS A RECREATIONAL, AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE** Transportation cyclists often prefer the shortest and most direct connection. Recreational cyclists and other pathway users want an aesthetic, park-like experience for which a meandering pathway is appropriate.

These conflicting desires merge in this amendment because the most direct connection between future ICC Bike Path segments would pass through parkland, offering the best of both worlds. However, these direct connections sometimes travel through sensitive environmental resources. Moving the trail to parallel roadways keeps the transportation function high, but the aesthetic, park-like experience is low or non-existent. This amendment offers a choice between enhancing transportation function while reducing recreational value or selecting a path alignment that enhances recreational and transportation value while affecting environmental resources. In reality, both affect environmental resources; the former is indirect and diluted while the latter is direct and visible.

- **DIFFERENT ROUTES FOR DIFFERENT USERS** From the beginning this plan process sought to identify one route that accommodates all user groups—cyclists of all levels, hikers, walkers, and others. It became apparent during public meetings that one route would not satisfy all groups. Some wanted a hard surface trail, some did not want any facilities along roadways, and others wanted a natural surface trail (only hard surface was evaluated during the ICC Final Environmental Impact Statement [FEIS]). Some bicyclists value the most direct route, while others value on a park-like experience .
- **CHOICE TRAILS VERSUS SANCTIONED TRAILS** Choice trails result where connections are needed, and sanctioned trails are not planned. As a result, choice trails—typically created by residents—can damage sensitive natural resources. To prevent this, many user groups (particularly of natural surface trails) are asking the County to designate trail routes along the ICC corridor that would allow unsanctioned trails to revert to a natural state.
- **BICYCLE USE ON A LIMITED ACCESS HIGHWAY** Many transportation cyclists are asking the County and state to allow bicycles travel along the ICC shoulders. Current State law prohibits bicycle use on highways with speed limits 50 mph or higher, particularly those managed by the Maryland Transportation Authority (MdTA). Recent legislation authorizes the Transportation Authority chairperson to approve bicycle use of MdTA facilities. This law will be effect by the time this amendment is approved and adopted and it should be considered and reflected in any recommendations. However, the ICC is a co-sponsored by the MdTA and SHA and it will most likely be signed to prohibit bicycle access by on all highway approaches to minimize potential confusion with where cycling is permitted on the pathway within the highway right-of-way.
- **USE OF HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION ACCESS ROADS FOR RECREATION** Trail user groups have asked staff to consider converting ICC construction roads to pathways after SHA contractors are done. Staff studied this option, but rejected it for two reasons. First, most of the roadway will be built within the highway footprint and not require access roads. Second, where access roads are being built, they must be environmentally restored per commitments in the ROD.
- **CRITICAL CONNECTIONS FOR EASTERN COUNTY RESIDENTS**  
There was strong sentiment in public meetings for preserving critical connections that allow County residents living east of New Hampshire Avenue to enjoy park trails. Of particular concern is that eliminating hard surface trails through parkland and along the ICC in the Paint Branch and Northwest Branch stream valley parks, would block eastern County communities from safe and enjoyably links with the County trail system. Families are unlikely to use this amendment's alternative routes along parallel roads, particularly to reach the major park trails further west.

## **C: Acronyms and Definitions**

CBFMP	Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan
CBP	County Bike Path (master planned route of SP-40 in CBFMP)
CPTP	Countywide Park Trails Plan
CIP	Capital Improvement Program
CTP	Consolidated Transportation Program
DEIS	Draft Environmental Impact Statement
DPWT	Department of Public Works and Transportation
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FY	fiscal year (per M-NCPPC calendar)
HOA	homeowners association
ICC	Intercounty Connector
ICCLFMPA	Intercounty Connector Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment
M-83	Midcounty Highway (M-83 is the master plan identification)
MOU	memorandum of understanding
ROD	federal Record of Decision
SHA Plan	SHA's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (approved as part of the ICC Record of Decision and functioning as the State's alternative to the master planned County Bike Path)
SHA	State Highway Administration
SP	shared-use path
SWM	stormwater management
WSSC	Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

## **D: Master Plan Amendment Schedule**

### **OCTOBER 2007**

Planning Board reviews and approves the Purpose and Outreach Strategy report

### **NOVEMBER-JANUARY 2007**

An intergovernmental technical committee is established and the committee members chosen. Staff conducts research, collects and analyzes data, and develops initial recommendations with the technical committee. The technical committee obtains feedback on the initial recommendations from the advisory committee

### **MARCH 2008**

Preliminary recommendations are drafted for comment at two public meetings

### **MARCH-APRIL 2008**

Two public meetings: March 19 in Spencerville and April 2 in Derwood

MAY 2008

Staff Draft Plan Amendment is presented to the Planning Board

JUNE 2008

Planning Board holds public hearing

JULY and SEPTEMBER 2008

Planning Board worksessions

SEPTEMBER 2008

Transmit Planning Board Draft Amendment to the County Council

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**Intercountry Connector Limited Functional Master Plan Amendment**  
BIKEWAYS AND INTERCHANGES  
**PLANNING BOARD DRAFT**

**Montgomery County Planning Department**  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

