



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


MCPB
ITEM NO. **7**
7-01-10

June 22, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Dan Hardy, Chief *DKH*
Move/Transportation Planning Division

Bill Barron, Team Leader 
Vision/Community-Based Planning

FROM: Larry Cole: 301-495-4528, for Transportation Planning *LC*

PROJECT: Brookville Road Walkway Improvements
From Irving Street to Quincy Street

REVIEW TYPE: Mandatory Referral No. MR2010801

APPLICANT: Chevy Chase Village

APPLYING FOR: Plan Approval

COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING TEAM AREA:

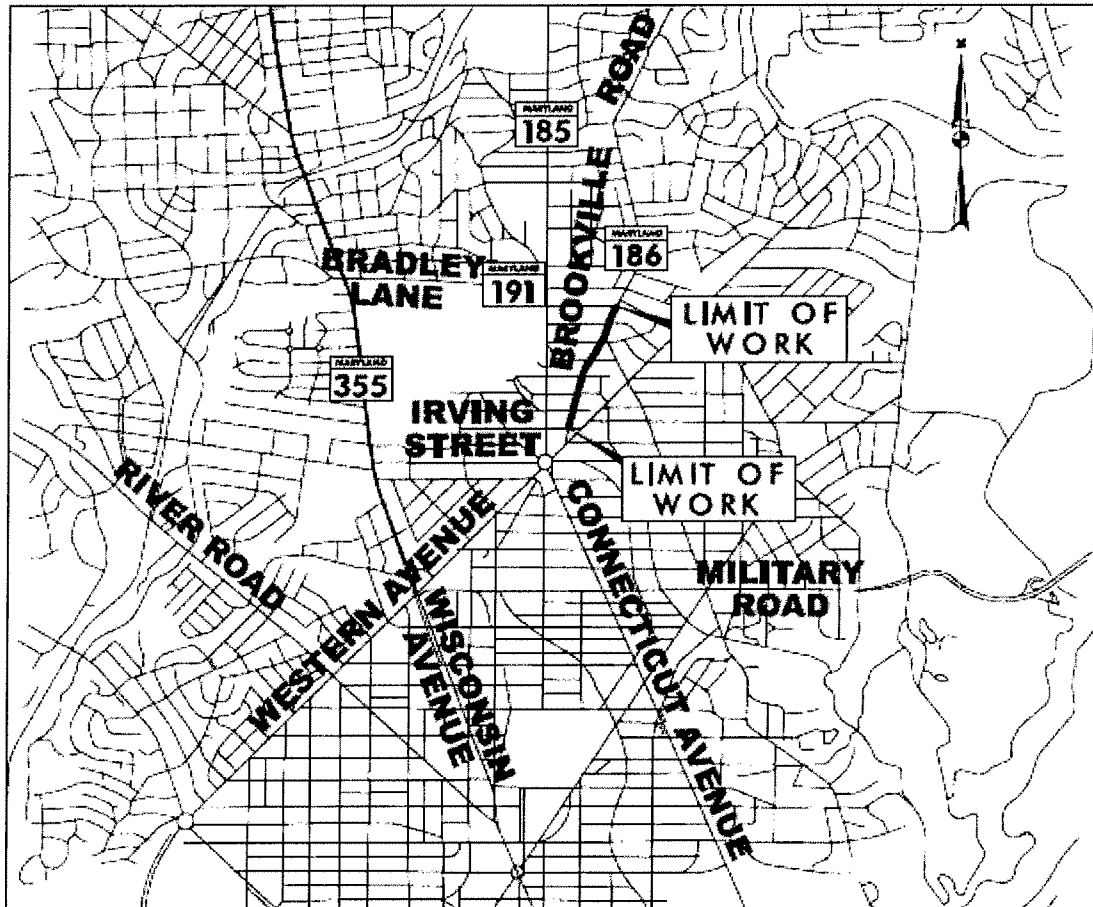
RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends that the Board **approve** the proposed project.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION: None

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project would construct a three- to five-foot-wide gravel walkway along the east side of Brookville Road from Irving Street to Quincy Street, a distance of about a half-mile. Short retaining walls would be constructed and fences would be replaced where necessary. Handicap

ramps on the west side of Brookville Road would be brought up to current standards. (See Vicinity Map, below.)



Vicinity Map

FINDINGS

Master Plan

The proposed gravel walkway is consistent with the recommendations of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan for improved pedestrian access.

Road Code and Associated Executive Regulations

No County Standard exists for a gravel walkway, but the proposed walkway is consistent with the 1990 Bethesda Chevy Chase Master Plan, which recommends the “expansion of pedestrian paths and bikeways to form a network linking residential neighborhood with public facilities” (p.102).

STAFF ANALYSIS

Pedestrian Accommodation

Brookville Road has no dedicated pedestrian accommodation and it is very difficult to walk along the narrow roadway, which generally has no shoulder and where fences and hedges often abut the road. Worn “people’s choice” paths exist in some areas; these provide a less than desirable accommodation, even along this low-speed road, which has a 25 mph posted speed. This is in contrast to the side streets that have brick sidewalks that are well offset from the road.

The proposed project would link the existing brick sidewalk south of Irving Street to the existing concrete sidewalk north of Quincy Street to create a continuous pedestrian facility on the east side of Brookville Road.

The width of the proposed walkway varies from three to five feet wide. Three feet wide is the minimum width per ADA and is acceptable as long as five-foot-wide passing spaces are provided every two hundred feet, which is the case with this project. The minimum width would be provided in areas with the greatest constraints; a wider walkway is proposed to be provided where possible.

Using concrete for the proposed sidewalk would have required that a drainage system be installed on Brookville Road and that the stormwater runoff from the additional impervious area be treated. In addition, the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) was reluctant to permit the impacts of this construction. Therefore, gravel was chosen as the material for the proposed sidewalk, avoiding the need for a drainage system since it is permeable.

A product called Gravelpave is proposed to be used to provide a stable surface via gravel in a plastic grid fused to a geotextile fabric over a base course of gravel or crushed stone. The proposed sidewalk would be far stronger and more stable than a simple gravel sidewalk. This system was used recently at the Pentagon Memorial and has been determined to meet ADA requirements.

Historic Preservation

The entire project is within the Chevy Chase Village Historic District.

The HPC approved the Historic Area Work Permit (HAWP) application for walkway installation, tree removal, fencing installation, and other alterations along Brookville Road on April 28, 2010. The HAWP was approved with the following five conditions of approval:

1. The wrought iron fencing and stone pillars at 102 East Kirke will be reinstalled using existing materials to match existing conditions including spacing but relocated behind walkway.
2. The applicants receive the required forest conservation variance from the Planning Board and provide copy to staff.
3. The applicants receive the required tree removal approval from Chevy Chase Village and provide copy to staff.

4. The applicants provide staff a tree replacement plan per the Chevy Chase Village requirements.
5. Tree protection measures are in place prior to construction per the Environmental Planning requirements related to the phasing of the project.

Environmental Guidelines

The project area does not contain environmental buffers, 100-year floodplain or other sensitive features including forested areas. The property is within the Lower Rock Creek watershed, a Use I-P designation. The proposed walkway will be constructed of a pervious gravel system which will also provide some storm water management benefits.

Forest Conservation

A Natural Resource Inventory/ Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) #420100980 was approved on February 22, 2010. The NRI/FSD identified approximately 43 significant and specimen trees with the study area.

The property is subject to the Chapter 22A Montgomery County Forest Conservation Law because the highway construction activity exemption under the provisions of Section 22A-5(e) only applies to “a state or county highway project” (rather than a municipality such as Chevy Chase Village). Furthermore the net tract area exceeds 40,000 square feet (as defined under *linear projects*). The Forest Conservation Plan for this project is recommended for approval in a separate memo to the Planning Board.

Variance Requirements & Tree Save

In order to complete the project as proposed, the applicant is required to obtain approval of a variance for the impacts to specimen trees.

The variance request includes the removal of 3 significant trees and removal of 44 other trees ranging from 1” to 21” DBH (47 trees in total). Impacts are proposed for 122 trees ranging from 2” to 50” DBH. A majority of the proposed impacts to critical root zones of save trees are minor.

The County Arborist responded on May 27, 2010 with a favorable recommendation for the variance request. In accordance with Section 22A-21(e), Environmental Planning staff recommends a finding by the Planning Board that the Applicant has met all criteria required to grant the variance.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Attachment B in the Forest Conservation Plan memo includes a letter from Chevy Chase Village discussing the level of public support they have achieved from residents, as well as letters of support from the Village of Martin’s Additions and Section 3 of the Village of Chevy Chase.