



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

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 21, 2010

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

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

FROM: David Anspacher: 301-495-2191, for the Planning Department *DA*

DISCUSSION: BRAC Roundtable: MD 355 / Rockville Pike Crossing Project

On Tuesday, July 20, 2010, planning staff attended a public open house for the MD 355/Rockville Pike Crossing Project (CIP No. 500522) that is being led by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). This project is one of several transportation studies and projects that are planned to mitigate the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) impacts in Bethesda. The purpose of this study as indicated in the Purpose and Need statement (see Appendix C-4 on the BRAC website), is to “improve the movement of the traveling public between the west and east sides of MD 355/Rockville Pike at its intersection with South Wood Road and South Drive in Bethesda, Maryland” and to:

- Enhance/improve access to mass transit facilities
- Improve the mobility and safety of pedestrians and bicyclists crossing MD 355/Rockville Pike
- Improve traffic operations at the existing intersection of South Wood Road/South Drive/MD 355

MC DOT staff and their consultants prepared a number of poster boards discussing the purpose and need of the project, the process, the alternatives under consideration, and the schedule. The poster boards from this presentation can be found in Appendix C-11 on our BRAC website. The evaluation originally considered 16 alternatives for the crossing project. A screening analysis was applied to reduce the alternatives to four, including the No Build alternative. The four remaining alternatives are:

- Alternative 1: No Build
Minor improvements to enhance access, safety, and traffic operations. Serves as the baseline from which the other alternatives are evaluated.

- Alternative 2A: Pedestrian/Bicycle Underpass and Transportation System Management (TSM) / Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Improvements

Provides a shallow tunnel beneath Rockville Pike to facilitate east-west movements for pedestrians and bicyclists.

- Alternative 2B: Pedestrian/Bicycle Underpass, TSM/TDM Improvements, and Deep Elevators

Also provides a shallow tunnel beneath Rockville Pike, as well as elevators from the metro station platform on the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) side of Rockville Pike to ground level, complementing the existing metro elevators on the NIH west side.

- Alternative 3: Grade Separation of MD 355 Under South Wood Road / South Drive
Submerges Rockville Pike beneath South Wood Road and South Drive.

Project costs will be posted on Appendix C-11 when received.

We anticipate that this project will be presented to the Planning Board in fall 2010.