



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

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

December 2, 2010

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

Mr. Brian W. Young, District Engineer
Maryland State Highway Administration, District 3 Office
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt Maryland 20770

RE: Supporting Transportation Infrastructure Improvements in Vicinity of Josiah Henson
Special Park

Dear Mr. Holmes & Young:

We are writing to ask for your assistance to upgrade the transportation infrastructure to accommodate the anticipated pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic generated by visitors and staff to and from the referenced site. The Josiah Henson Special Park is the site where an internationally recognized historical figure lived – the basis for the “Uncle Tom” character of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel. The Josiah Henson Special Park is now proceeding as a master plan followed by a facility planning project and is anticipated to be completed in five years.

The referenced Special Park is located in North Bethesda on the west side of Old Georgetown Road (MD 187) south of the intersection with Nicholson Lane/Tilden Lane. The candidate transportation infrastructure improvements were developed through the Special Park master plan process, including the August 10, 2010 meeting with the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA). The minutes of the August 10 meeting are enclosed.

We look forward in partnering with your agencies to move forward in programming the most promising transportation infrastructure improvements identified to facilitate safe access to this Special Park project. We will be providing needed access improvements based on a traffic engineering study to be prepared during the upcoming facility planning project. We will look for opportunities to pursue other supporting improvements in both transportation

Messrs. Holmes and Young
December 2, 2010
Page Two

agency capital budgets and as possible offsite improvements associated with future nearby development projects.

Please feel free to contact Mr. Ed Axler in the Transportation Planning Division at 301-495-4536 if you have any questions regarding these transportation infrastructure improvements. If you have question regarding Parks Department's Special Park, please contact Rachel Newhouse in Park Planning and Stewardship at 301-495-4368 or Eileen Emmet in Park Development at 301-495-2550.

Sincerely,


Marye Wells-Harley
Vice Chair

Enclosure

**Meeting Minutes for
Transportation-Related Topics associated with Josiah Hensen Special Park
August 10, 2010 at MCDOT Gaithersburg Office**

- A. Meeting Purpose: To prepare for the next/2nd scheduled public meeting on August 24, 2010 by coordinating with MCDOT on traffic-related issues.

LIST OF ATTENDEES

Name	Phone Number	E-Mail	Agency - Role
Ed Axler	301-495-4536	ed.axler@mncpc-mc.org	MRO Transportation Planning APF
Tom Shoemaker	240-777-2161	tom.shoemaker@montgomerycountymd.gov	MCDOT- Street lighting
Fred Lees	240-777-2196	fred.lees@montgomerycountymd.gov	MCDOT- Operational Traffic Studies
Peggy Schwartz	301-770-8108	pschwartz@nbtmd.org	North Beth. TMD- Trip Mitigation
Stacy Coletta	240-777-5836	stacy.coletta@montgomerycountymd.gov	MCDOT, DTS - Ride-On Bus Stops
Youcef Hamroun	1-301-512-7481	YHamroun@sha.state.md.us	MD SHA District 3 Traffic
Brooke Farquhar	301-650-4388	brooke.farquhar@montgomeryparks.org	Parks- Planning & Trails Supervisor
Rachel Newhouse	301-650-4368	rachel.newhouse@montgomeryparks.org	Parks- Master Plan Project manager
Will Haynes	240-777-2132	william.haynes@montgomerycountymd.gov	MCDOT - Pedestrian Safety
Randy Paugh	240-777-7608	randy.paugh@montgomerycountymd.gov	MCDOT - Tilden Lane Project
Eileen Emmet	301-495-2550	eileen.emmet@mncpc-mc.org	Parks- Facility Planning Project Manager
Corren Giles	1-410-545-5595	Cgiles@sha.state.md.us	MD SHA Access Permits
Nkosi Yearwood	301-495-1332	nkosi.yearwood@mncpc-mc.org	MRO Planning - Master Plan Review
Shirl Spicer	301-650-4373	shirl.spicer@montgomeryparks.org	Parks Project's Museum Manager

B. Introduction to the Josiah Hensen Special Park

1. Project Manager of the Master Plan, Rachel Newhouse:
Project schedule: Next public meeting is scheduled on August 24th, followed by staff draft presentation to the PB in September, and a PB public hearing on October 28.
2. Project Manager of the Facility Planning Project, Eileen Emmet:
After the Master Plan process, the Facility Plan will follow by developing 30% design plans.

C. Safe pedestrian crossing of Old Georgetown Road at the intersection with Tilden Lane/Nicholson Lane.

1. Pedestrian Signal Timing-Citizen's concerns regarding inadequate time for pedestrians to cross Old Georgetown Road
 - a) Currently, the Tilden Lane/Nicholson Lane approaches operate as a split signal phasing (i.e., one approach has a green signal, while the other opposite approach has a red signal.
 - b) The SHA "controls" the signal timing and has final approval of any signal timing or geometric changes (Old Georgetown Road is State Route, MD 187).
 - c) The MCDOT operates the traffic signals as part of their countywide computerized traffic signal control system.
 - d) Suggested Improvements by Public agencies to address the citizen's concerns:
 - 1) Installation of pedestrian count-down signal heads:
Now being installed at most signalized intersections in the County.

**Meeting Minutes for
Transportation-Related Topics associated with Josiah Hensen Special Park
August 10, 2010 at MCDOT Gaithersburg Office**

- 2) Widen the Old Georgetown Road median to provide a pedestrian refuge median:
A refuge island in the middle of the intersection is not needed because pedestrian signal timing is set to provide enough time for pedestrians to walk between opposing curbs.
 - 3) Prohibit RTOR from southbound Old Georgetown Road to westbound Tilden Lane to prevent conflicts between free right-turning vehicles with pedestrians:
The “rules of the road” should require motorist to stop for pedestrians before turning right on red.
 - 4) Install signs to warn motorists turning left that conflicting pedestrian movements crossing Old Georgetown Road might be occurring:
Pedestrian crossing time would start after left turns (particularly from) from Nicholson Lane are stopped.
 - 5) Construct a pedestrian overpass over Old Georgetown Road:
An overpass is not warranted, its construction costs are too prohibited, and insufficient right-of-way is available for the long landing that is required to satisfy ADA’s grade requirements.
 - 6) Convert the intersection into a roundabout:
The existing right-of-way is Insufficient and, thus, would require “taking” the adjacent properties.
 - 7) Eliminate east-west or Nicholson Lane/Tilden Lane through traffic:
Not feasible because public interconnectivity to and from neighborhoods is essential and needed for school bus access to Luxmanor Elementary School.
- e) Other suggested improvement by SHA and MCDOT staff:
- 1) Will Haynes: Relocate the pedestrian push button to be at the starting point of crosswalks.
 - 2) Corren Giles: Realign the crosswalks to be perpendicular and the shortest path to cross the intersection.
 - 3) Fred Lees: Priority is given to improve “unsafe” pedestrian intersection crossings over improving the “undesirable” operational” conditions.
- D. Initiate improvements by the Project Manager, Rachel Newhouse:
1. Write to the SHA District 3’s Assistant Traffic Engineer, Anyesha Mookherjee, at Maryland SHA, 9300 Kenilworth Avenue, Greenbelt, MD 20770 or AMookherjee@SHA.state.md.us. She is currently on maternity leave and will return after Labor Day, but is checking her e-mails and will forward to the appropriate person.
 2. After SHA and MCDOT investigation, a detailed traffic engineering study is needed that would be prepared by the Facility Planning Project’s selected consultant. The study should include the existing traffic conditions and future build-out conditions.
- E. Any improvement would be funded and implemented by the “developer” or, in this case, the Parks Department.
Possible source of funded could be using North Bethesda developer’s PAMR (i.e., at \$11,300 per PAMR trip) payment directed towards improvements located in North Bethesda. MCDOT’s Gary Erenrich must approve the transfer of the PAMR funds to Parks Department and into an established Park’s CIP project.

**Meeting Minutes for
Transportation-Related Topics associated with Josiah Hensen Special Park
August 10, 2010 at MCDOT Gaithersburg Office**

- F. Suggested improvement of a mid-block crossing of Old Georgetown Road directly across from the Josiah Hensen Park site:
A mid-block crossing is unsafe for pedestrians to cross because drivers do not expect pedestrians to be present.
- G. Ride-on Bus Stops on Old Georgetown Road (lead by Stacy Collita):
1. Relocate the nearest bus stop at the southwest corner of Old Georgetown Road/Tilden Lane-Nicholson Lane intersection southward closer to the Josiah Hensen site:
MCDOT does not supported mid-block bus stops because they are more disrupted to the traffic flow and harder for bus to pull out from compared with the existing far side bus stop. In addition, the current spacing between bus stops is at the preferred 550 feet apart.
 2. Ride-On route 26 operates on Old Georgetown Road with service to/from the White Flint Metrorail Station and peak-hour scheduled 30-minutes between buses.
 - a) The largest current ridership is occurring at the southbound far side bus stop on Old Georgetown Road at intersection with Tilden Lane-Nicholson Lane with 65 boarding and 50 alighting.
 - b) Based on the current transit usage, the bus stop should be improved as follows:
 - 1) Move the bus stop 10 feet back from the curb.
 - 2) Improve the ADA accessibility.
 - 3) Install a bus shelter that would be one of the standard Clean Channel (with commercial ad space) design with the smallest footprint.
 - 4) SHA permits would be needed.
 3. The other bus stops on Old Georgetown Road have a fewer number of boarding and alighting.
 4. The existing right-of-way along the southbound/west side of Georgetown Road is sufficient to install bus shelters. However, the right-of-way along on the northbound/eastside of Old Georgetown Road is not sufficient to install a bus shelter.
- H. Site access from Old Georgetown Road:
1. SHA would require either combining the Josiah Hensen site and house curb cuts or permitting a one-way right-turn in/right-turn out combination.
 2. Any non-residential curb cut is considered to be "commercial".
 3. Parks Department must submit a concept plan for SHA approval.
- I. Bus access to/from Old Georgetown Road and on-site circulation:
1. Bus pull off lane along Old Georgetown Road was discussed.
 2. Minimum required setback from intersection with Tilden Lane/Nicholson Lane.

**Meeting Minutes for
Transportation-Related Topics associated with Josiah Hensen Special Park
August 10, 2010 at MCDOT Gaithersburg Office**

3. Depending on the proposed scheduled bus arrivals, may need to bays. Adequate distance from the intersection at Tilden Lane/Nicholson Lane is required to store one bay for a boarding/alighting and another bus waiting behind it.
 4. Consider alternate designs for right turn into the site, bus drop-off/pick-up, and right-turn out of the site.
 5. Master Plan to develop "sketch plan concept" drawings with dimension while the Facility Planning would develop the details.
- J. Off-site parking locations are under consideration at Luxmanor Elementary School, Tilden Middle School, and Wall Park.
- K. A visual buffer could be provided by planting trees in Old Georgetown right-of-way with SHA approval.
- L. Street Lighting (lead by Tom Shoemaker):
1. The "developer" (or Parks Department) would pay for the street lighting improvements.
 2. Currently wooden Pepco poles with street lighting fixtures are along the nearby segment of Old Georgetown Road (preferred spacing between lighting fixtures is between 150 and 200 feet).
 3. Project manager, Rachel Newhouse, should write to Emil Wolanin to request improvements.
 4. Prevent spill-over lighting by using cut-off flat lighting on the site.
- M. WMATA White Flint Metrorail Station way finder signs of nearby activity centers include maps, descriptions, and which bus route serves that site.
- N. North Bethesda Trail signs direct users to Josiah Hensen site.
- O. MCDOT's Tilden Lane Project is not related to the Josiah Hensen Project other than the public meeting being a forum for citizens to state their concerns about local traffic issues.
- P. Other traffic suggestion:
Reducing the speed limit to 35 mph on Old Georgetown Road is beyond the control of this project.

ADJOURN (20 minutes early)

Josiah Hensen Special Park-meeting minutes 8-10-20.doc

Josiah Henson Special Park

11420 Old Georgetown Road
North Bethesda, Maryland 20852

