



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

MCPB
ITEM NO. 8
1-27-11

MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 20, 2011

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Dan Hardy, Chief *DKH*
Functional Policy and Planning Division

FROM: Larry Cole: 301-495-4528, for the Montgomery County Planning
Department *LC*

DISCUSSION: State Transportation Priority List

BACKGROUND: Periodically, the County Executive and County Council jointly transmit a letter to the Montgomery County Delegation outlining the County's priorities for State transportation projects. (Attachment 1 is the last joint letter, dated July 16, 2008.)

The Council and the County Executive are expected to update this letter in the next couple of weeks for the Delegation's consideration, during their current legislative session, of the draft Consolidated Transportation Program for FY11-FY16 that was released last fall. The T&E Committee Meeting on this topic is scheduled for February 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This memorandum contains our recommendations for State transportation priorities in Montgomery County, to be considered for adoption by the Planning Board to forward as comments to the Council.

To ensure that the State continues to hear a consistent message from the County, we have minimized the recommended changes to the existing priority list, making changes only where prompted by updates to area Master Plans, or by changes in the studies or projects themselves. Note that as State funding for transportation projects has receded over the last several years, Montgomery County dedicated approximately \$286 million to design, acquire land for, and/or build many projects that are or should be the State's responsibility.

Our recommendation for the new priority list, which we have coordinated with Executive and Council staffs, is shown as Attachment 2. The summary of the changes and staff's rationale are shown below.

Overall County Priorities

No changes.

Construction Program

The only change to the 2008 ranking was to eliminate the #2 project - Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway (Phase 2) – since this project is now funded by Montgomery County.

Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program for Transit Projects

The first three studies in the 2008 ranking are proposed to be deleted since they are being pursued by Montgomery County. The #1 and #3 projects – Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Georgia Avenue Busway – are now being studied as part of the countywide BRT study. Funding for the #2 study – the Forest Glen Metro Station tunnel under Georgia Avenue – has now been provided by the County.

We expect that there may be interest by either the Planning Board or County Council members in identifying additional bus rapid transit projects. The reconstruction of Rockville Pike within the White Flint Sector Plan area will be funded through the White Flint Special Taxing District. We therefore believe this effort is worth noting in the joint Council/Executive transmittal letter but that the project itself need not be added to the priority list as it will not be competing for state CTP funding. Additional transitway projects may be prioritized pending completion of the countywide BRT study (and potentially subsequent Master Plan of Highways amendments per our FY 12 work program). At this time, we believe our transit priorities, namely the Corridor Cities Transitway and Purple Line, followed by Veirs Mill Road, Georgia Avenue, University Boulevard, the North Bethesda Transitway, and the Purple Line Connector, are apt.

We note that the #6 study on the 2008 list - Purple Line Connector, Langley Park to White Oak – is now reflected in the Planning Board Draft of the Takoma Langley Crossroads Sector Plan: *“Study the feasibility of a Purple Line spur that will connect the Transit Center with the White Oak Transit Center serving FDA Headquarters site via New Hampshire Avenue.”*

Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program for Non-Transit Projects

Two studies in the 2008 ranking are proposed to be deleted - Rockville Town Center Improvements, on which some construction work has recently taken place, and the Rockville Pike (MD355)/Nicholson Lane interchange, the recommendation for which was removed in the 2010 White Flint Sector Plan Amendment. In addition, we recommend the following changes:

- The #1 project in 2008 – Rockville Pike (MD355) from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including an interchange at Cedar Lane – is proposed to be moved down to #6 since at-grade improvements are proposed along MD355 at Cedar Lane and at Jones Bridge Road as part of the State’s response to the BRAC move of Walter Reed to the National Naval Medical Center.

- The #3 project in 2008 – Frederick Road (MD355)/Gude Drive interchange – is proposed to be moved up to #1 to support growth in the recently approved Shady Grove Sector Plan area.
- The #9 and #10 projects on Veirs Mill Road, which would provide additional roadway capacity to support development in the recently approved White Flint Sector Plan area is proposed to be moved above the #8 project in 2008 – Frederick Road (MD355) reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg.

The #11 project in 2008 - I-270/Gude Drive interchange - is in the City of Rockville's Master Plan and was added to the priority list at their request. The change in leadership in Rockville in the November 2010 election has resulted in a request by the City to drop the study from the priority list. Our 2030 transportation analysis for the Great Seneca Science Corridor assumed that this interchange would be built and we believe that it should be retained on the priority list until the interchange is removed from the City's Master Plan.

The adoption of the Great Seneca Science Corridor Master Plan in 2010 included substantial discussion of transportation infrastructure needs, particularly in the vicinity of the Great Seneca Highway intersection with Sam Eig Highway, where the previously planned flyover ramp was #5 on the 2008 D&E priority list for non-transit projects and has moved to #4 on the proposed list in Attachment 2. Given the renewed interest in accommodating economic growth in the Life Sciences area, it is logical to ask whether this project should be moved higher on the priorities list. Staff finds that the proposed priorities in Attachment 2 remain appropriate. The top priority is an element required to begin Stage 2 of the Shady Grove Sector Plan and completion of ICC-related connectivity, both in the form of Midcounty Highway access (priority #2) and bike path completion (priority #3) were important in 2008 and will be of increased visibility when the roadway opens this spring. On September 23, 2010, the Planning Board approved an extension of the Johns Hopkins Belward Farm APF approval (original granted at the time of the 1996 preliminary plan approval) for an additional 12 years. Therefore, while project planning is definitely needed for the Sam Eig Highway / Great Seneca Science Corridor to begin addressing the issue of context-sensitive solutions in the Great Seneca Science Corridor plan, staff finds that the level of urgency does not warrant changing priorities at this time.



Montgomery County Government

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850

July 16, 2008

The Honorable Rona E. Kramer, Chair
Montgomery County Senate Delegation
214 James Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Montgomery County House Delegation
223 House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Senator Kramer and Delegate Feldman:

In light of the Approved FY2008-2013 Consolidated Transportation Program we have updated the State transportation priorities we transmitted to you on February 6, 2007. This letter describes our latest sets of priorities for currently unfunded State transportation projects and studies.

With respect to the unfunded projects of regional and statewide significance, Montgomery County is guided by its commitment to sustainable development and smart growth. Accordingly, the two major transitways (listed alphabetically), the Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) from Shady Grove to Clarksburg, and the Purple Line from Bethesda to Langley Park, extending east in Prince George's County to New Carrollton, receive our highest priority.

Other regionally significant projects with high priority are: the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) transportation improvements for the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda and the rehabilitation of the Metrorail system, as well as the I-270 widening for high-occupancy-toll (HOT) or high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lanes north of Shady Grove; and the I-495 widening for HOT or HOV lanes between the I-270 West Spur and Virginia. (Funding of these road projects must not delay these urgently needed mass transit projects, however.) While there are issues to be worked out on important aspects of some of these priorities, decisions must be made and funding must be identified promptly to move them forward to completion.

There are many projects of local importance which require significant changes from what is shown in the FY2008-2013 Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). These are high priority projects that have been previously identified by the Executive and Council to the State and/or Federal Delegations. We have already taken the unusual step of dedicating millions of dollars in County funds to keep several of these projects on schedule, including:

- \$22,375,000 in FY07 thru FY09 to construct a 1,200-space garage at the Glenmont Metro Station.
- \$8,239,000 in FY07 towards design and right-of-way acquisition for the Georgia Avenue (MD 97)/Randolph Road grade-separated interchange. Furthermore, we expect to act in the next several weeks to approve another \$6,123,000 in FY09 towards the cost of this interchange.
- \$2,400,000 in FY07 towards the design of the I-270/Watkins Mill Road interchange.
- \$60,000,000 in FYs 08-14 towards the design and construction of a new southern entrance to the Bethesda Metro Station at the western terminus of the Purple Line.
- \$14,463,000 in FYs08-09 to forward fund the MD 355/Montrose interchange (to be reimbursed by the State in FY11 and FY12).

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For some of these projects, the County is ready to provide funding to the State, upon completion of MOU's. We have additional County funds which may be used for cost-sharing with the State to accelerate projects on our priority list.

Our priority rankings for projects that will be ready for construction funding during the next six years and are currently in the design or project-planning stages are listed below. The funding to be programmed to complete each project is indicated as well.

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: build bridge over I-270 | (Note 1) |
| 2. | Rockville Pike/Montrose Parkway (Phase 2): build segment from Chapman Ave. to Parklawn Drive, including a new bridge over CSX Railroad | \$53M |
| 3. | Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Hwy to Snouffer School Road | (Note 2) |
| 4. | Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville | \$21M |
| 5. | Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange | \$91M |
| 6. | Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park | \$41M |
| 7 | I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: complete interchange | (Note 1) |
| 8. | Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes from Old Columbia Pike to US 29 | \$30M |
| 9. | Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road | \$95M |
| 10. | I-270/Newcut Road: build grade separated interchange | \$88M |
| 11. | Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road | (Note 2) |
| 12. | US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange | \$68M |
| 13. | MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Rd to Old Columbia Pike | \$135M |

Note 1: The total cost of #1 and #7 is \$140M. Segmented cost estimates are not yet available.

Note 2: The total cost of #3 and #11 is \$63M. Segmented cost estimates are not yet available.

The total funding that needs to be programmed to complete these 13 projects is \$825 million. MDOT is already investing over \$42 million to plan, design and buy land for these projects.

Our priority rankings for transit projects to be added to the Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program are:

1. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586) Bus Rapid Transit: Rockville to Wheaton
2. Forest Glen Metro Station pedestrian tunnel under Georgia Avenue
3. Georgia Avenue (MD 97) Busway: Glenmont to Olney
4. University Blvd. (MD 193) Bus Rapid Transit: Wheaton to Langley Park
5. North Bethesda Transitway: Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall
6. Purple Line Connector: Langley Park to White Oak

Studies #1, #3 and #4 in this list would be coordinated between the State Highway Administration and the Maryland Transit Administration. For these studies, we also request that a continuous bikeway be planned throughout their entire lengths.


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Our priority rankings for highway and bikeway projects to be added to the D&E Program are:

1. Rockville Pike (MD 355): improvement from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including a grade separated interchange at Cedar Lane
2. Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road
3. Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
4. Intercounty Connector Hiker-Biker Trail: Shady Grove to Prince George's County
5. Great Seneca Highway (MD 119): flyover at Sam Eig Highway
6. Rockville Town Center intersection improvements
7. Frederick Road (MD 355): widening from 2000' south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass
8. Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction in Old Town Gaithersburg
9. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade-separated interchange
10. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road
11. I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
12. MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville
13. Rockville Pike (MD 355)/Nicholson Lane: grade separated interchange

If you need any clarifications about our recommendations, please contact us.

Sincerely,



Isiah Leggett
County Executive



Michael J. Knapp, President
County Council

IL:MJK:go

cc: The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor, State of Maryland
John Porcari, Secretary, Maryland Department of Transportation
Royce Hanson, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

ATTACHMENT 2

STAFF- RECOMMENDED STATE PRIORITY LIST For the Planning Board's consideration on 1/27/11

Overall County Priorities

1. Corridor Cities Transitway
2. Purple Line from Bethesda to Langley Park
3. I-270 Widening north of Shady Grove
4. I-270 & I-495 Widening from the I-270 West Spur to Virginia
5. BRAC
6. WMATA funding

Construction Program

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| 1 | I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: build bridge over I-270 | (Note 1) |
| 2. | Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes, Midcounty Highway to Snouffer School Road | \$47M |
| 3. | Georgia Avenue: build 2-lane bypass around Brookeville | \$22M |
| 4. | Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road: build grade-separated interchange | \$142M |
| 5. | Clopper Road: improve intersections from I-270 to Seneca Creek State Park | \$56M |
| 6 | I-270/Watkins Mill Road Extended: complete grade-separated interchange | (Note 1) |
| 7. | Spencerville Road: widen to 4 lanes from Old Columbia Pike to US 29 | \$31M |
| 8. | Norbeck Road: widen to 4 lanes from Georgia Avenue to Layhill Road | \$135M |
| 9. | I-270/Newcut Road: build grade-separated interchange | \$138M |
| 10. | Woodfield Road: widen to 6 lanes from Snouffer School Road to Airpark Road and from Fieldcrest Road to Warfield Road | \$54M |
| 11. | US 29/Fairland Road/Musgrove Road: build grade-separated interchange | \$148M |
| 12 | MD 28/198: widen to 4 lanes from Layhill Road to Old Columbia Pike | \$183M |

Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program for Transit Projects

1. University Boulevard (MD 193) Bus Rapid Transit: Wheaton to Langley Park
2. North Bethesda Transitway: Grosvenor to Montgomery Mall
3. Purple Line Connector: Langley Park to White Oak

Development & Evaluation (D&E) Program for Non-Transit Projects

1. Frederick Road (MD 355)/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
2. Midcounty Highway Extended: construction from Intercounty Connector to Shady Grove Road
3. Intercounty Connector Hiker-Biker Trail: Shady Grove to Prince George's County
4. Great Seneca Highway (MD 119): grade-separated interchange at Sam Eig Highway
5. Frederick Road (MD 355): widening from 2000' south of Brink Road to future Frederick Road/Clarksburg Bypass
6. Rockville Pike (MD 355): improvement from Woodmont Avenue to I-495, including a grade separated interchange at Cedar Lane

7. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)/Randolph Road: grade-separated interchange
8. Veirs Mill Road (MD 586): widening from Twinbrook Parkway to Randolph Road
9. Frederick Road (MD 355): reconstruction north of Old Town Gaithersburg
10. I-270/Gude Drive: grade-separated interchange
11. MD 108 Bypass around Laytonsville