



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

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board Item #5

FROM: **Area 3 Team**
John Carter
Richard Weaver
Ki Kim
Molline Smith

SUBJECT: Supplemental Findings for Adequacy of Site Access, Safety and Efficiency
Montgomery College – Germantown for Holy Cross Hospital
Preliminary Plan No. 120110380
Site Plan No. 820110110

DATE: 10/20/11

Summary

The following supplemental findings are in addition to the findings for the transportation related Adequate Public Facilities review discussed in the preliminary plan staff report (pgs. 6-11) and site plan staff report (pgs. 20-24). They also expand on the Master Plan conformance findings in the preliminary plan staff report (pgs. 6-9) specifically those related to Master Plan transportation recommendations:

Discussion

The preliminary plan application submitted by Montgomery College - Germantown requests a single 24.48 lot on its 227 acre campus to allow issuance of building permit(s) for a 93 bed Hospital and associated medical office building of 237,200 square feet. As part of the College's planned expansion (Biosciences Center) on other portions of the campus, certain master planned roads are required to be built to provide adequate traffic capacity to serve that expansion, namely, the completion of Observation Drive from Goldenrod Lane to Middlebrook Road, which will provide a through connection from Middlebrook Road to Germantown Road (MD118). This section of Observation Drive is one of three Master Plan road projects envisioned to accommodate the full development potential of the College campus. The completion of this portion of Observation Drive as a 4 lane arterial road within an 80 foot wide publically dedicated right-of-way is to be built by the College. This road connection also satisfies much of the Hospital's Policy Area Mobility Review requirements as discussed in the staff

reports. The staff reports also made the necessary findings that access to the Hospital property at the two identified locations along future Observation Drive would be safe and efficient after review of site distance studies, turning radii and internal traffic and pedestrian circulation patterns. This supplemental report focuses on the safety and efficiency of access to the Hospital from the local road network that frames the College campus, specifically from Middlebrook Road and Germantown Road and points beyond.

Analysis

Adequacy of Observation Drive

The completion of the new arterial road, Observation Drive, as a four lane road with a 10 foot wide shared use path along its north and eastern edge provides sufficient traffic capacity for the College, the Biosciences Center, Hospital and Medical Office Building. This road is designed according to county road design standards which are required to operate safely and efficiently. All manner of drainage, road geometry and pedestrian safety has been reviewed and approved by staff and County transportation engineers. Observation Drive is currently under construction at its southernmost point on the College campus.

Intersection of Middlebrook Road and Observation Drive

To the south of the Hospital, the intersection of Observation Drive and Middlebrook Road is currently signalized and is constructed with left turn lanes with a left turn light to allow safe northbound turns onto Observation Drive from east bound Middlebrook Road. It will continue as a T-intersection; Observation Drive cannot continue further to the south. From Middlebrook Road, the Hospital will be clearly visible at its proposed location to the north on future Observation Drive. The applicant's traffic study suggests that 78% of the traffic coming to the Hospital facility will use this southern point of access. Given the nearby interchange access from northbound I-270 on to eastbound Middlebrook Road, the nearby intersection with MD 355 and the visibility that the facility will have at this intersection, it makes sense that most patrons would use this intersection. Way finding measures in the form of Hospital Signings will be placed at this intersection, and others, to alert motorists travelling on Middlebrook and MD 355 to the Hospital location. The applicant's traffic study indicates that this intersection will operate adequately as-built. Only modifications to signal timing will be required by the Department of Transportation to safely convey the increased traffic volumes using this new road. This intersection has been designed in accordance with County standards and needs no modifications to operate in a safe and efficient manner.

Intersection of Germantown Road and Goldenrod Lane/Seneca Meadow Parkway

From the north on Germantown Road (MD 118), access to the Hospital will be at southbound Goldenrod Lane which is currently stubbed at the campus property line but it is built to arterial standards with 48 feet of travel lane width that currently has accommodates on street parking along the curb. Like the intersection to the south at Middlebrook Road, this intersection is also signalized but operates as a four way movement with Seneca Meadows Parkway continuing to the north and eventually terminating at Observation Drive in the Seneca Meadow Corporate Park. This intersection also includes full signalization and left turn lanes on MD 118 that provide safe and efficient movements on to Goldenrod Lane and Seneca Meadow Parkway.

The traffic study suggests that 22% of those coming to the Hospital will use this northern point of access from Germantown Road to Goldenrod Lane/Observation Drive. 13% of them will come from the west (I-270 and Germantown West). The traffic study indicates that no modifications to this intersection are required for it to continue to operate efficiently with respect to critical lane volumes. The intersection has been designed in accordance with County and State standards and operationally, it will provide safe and efficient movements for those travelling to the Hospital.

Way finding measures will locate signings at this and other intersections to alert motorists to the most efficient route to the Hospital. Under the proposed plan, it is likely that Goldenrod Lane will transition to Observation Drive at the point where the two will eventually connect at the Goldenrod Lane stub. This is a temporary necessity until additional development in the College campus, whether public or private, spurs the need to build the ultimate connection of Observation Drive through the College ball fields, to connect with existing Observation Drive at Germantown Road.

Intersection of existing Observation Drive and Germantown Road

From an operational standpoint, the intersection of Goldenrod Lane with Germantown Road, provides the most efficient route to the Hospital for the majority of motorists coming to the Hospital from the north. This is in comparison to the future *additional* connection that the Master Plan recommends be aligned through the College's ball fields with existing Observation Drive. The Goldenrod Lane intersection provides a direct connection for Seneca Meadows Parkway, it is closer to I-270 for those approaching from the west as compared to the future connection at existing Observation Drive. When the connection through the College is built, the College will continue to use the new road as its main point of access and it is possible that this new road segment will not be the preferred route to the Hospital at times due to congestion from student and faculty drivers. But, this road connection will provide for the continuation of Observation Drive "straight through" to the Hospital. As such, it is likely the most efficient route to the Hospital for those approaching from the north on existing Observation Drive who would be able to cross Germantown Road perpendicularly and continue south on Observation Drive. 2% of those driving to the Hospital are coming from Observation Drive to the north. Until that connection is built, Way finding measures must give these drivers clear directions to the Hospital and discourage entrance into the College campus.

Findings and Recommendations

Staff finds that the local intersections discussed above will provide adequate, safe and efficient access to the Hospital. Way finding signings are one element that can assure motorists are directed to the most efficient route to the Hospital and to discourage indirect routes. Staff recommends that a way finding circulation plan be required prior to certification of the site plan and that the way finding circulation plan be included in the certified site plan drawings.