



**E. Mandatory Referral MR2013019: Stringtown Road**

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Completed: 2/21/13

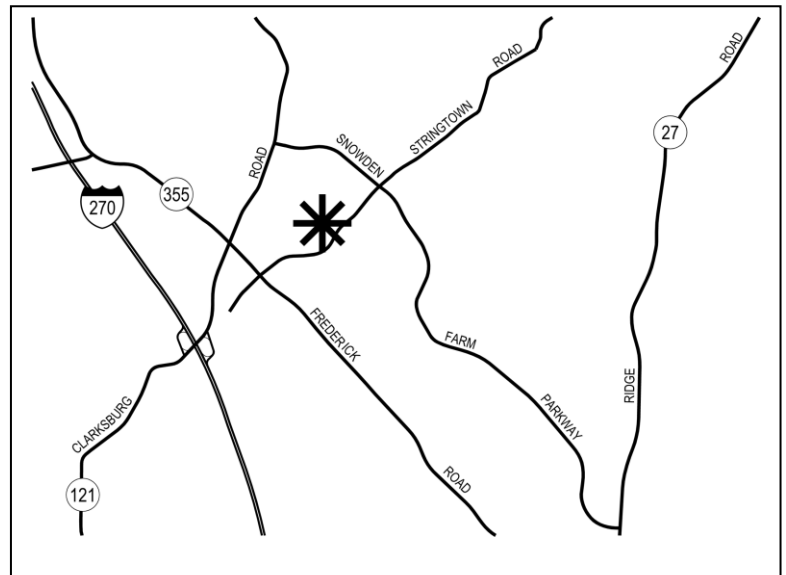
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**Description**

**E. Mandatory Referral MR2013019: Stringtown Road**

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation will reconstruct the existing ¾ mile, two-lane section of Stringtown Road as a four-lane divided roadway between Saint Clair Road/Overlook Park Drive and to a point 500 feet east of Snowden Farm Parkway

*Staff Recommendation: Approval and Transmit Comments to MCDOT*



**Summary**

- Completion of the improvements to widen Stringtown Road will fulfill an off-site transportation requirement of the Clarksburg Village development in Clarksburg.
- Major portions of the road were approved by the Planning Board as part of the review of the Preliminary Plan and Site Plans for Clarksburg Village.
- A portion of this road will cross an existing stream.
- Concurrent approvals of a Final Water Quality Plan, a Forest Conservation Plan (FCP), and revisions of two existing FCPs are covered in a separate staff report.

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

1. Provide five-foot-wide shoulders throughout the four-lane section of the project to provide a consistent accommodation for on-road bicyclists.
2. Minimize the change to the vertical alignment to protect the significant feature of the Rustic Road located east of Snowden Farm Parkway by reducing the length of the vertical curve. Minimize or modify the drainage features in this section and reduce the length of roadway reconstruction to the greatest extent possible.
3. As requested by the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee, any modifications to the Rustic Road section should be done with a paving material that matches the existing material to the extent possible. Provide a brown Stringtown Road sign for the Rustic Road portion of the road.
4. Install the proposed guardrail near the face of curb on both sides of the roadway in the vicinity of the proposed culvert that crosses an existing stream.
5. The full eight-foot width of the proposed shared use path should be provided behind the handicap ramp at the southeast corner of St. Clair Road.
6. The proposed driveway flares at the access point to the existing Stringtown Road should be removed so that a straight and level crossing for the shared use path may be provided.
7. Coordinate with the Parks Department and address the following issues at the time of application for the required Park Permit:
  - a. The Clarksburg Greenway Hiker-Biker Trail - Part of the road project is to connect the developer built hiker-biker trail to the path system along Stringtown Road. The plans need to be further developed to show how the proposed trail will connect into the existing trail past the proposed sand filter. Design elevations need to be revised to show greater detail of the relationship between the Sand Filter grading and the proposed trail to ensure that proper drainage is provided, and no future erosion problems occur. The proposed fence details, mow strips, and fence locations need to be based on park details, and the fence termination point shall be determined in the field at the time of construction.
  - b. Stream Restoration Design - The applicant is responsible for the stream restoration design from the culvert to the WSSC sewer crossing. The design information shown is not adequate to determine resulting stream stability, and Parks will provide additional comments after a follow-up site visit.
  - c. Temporary and permanent tree protection measures shall be incorporated in the design to increase survival rates of existing trees on parkland.
  - d. Reforestation trees to be planted on parkland shall meet the M-NCPPC Planting Requirements.

## **DISCUSSION**

The review of the Mandatory Referral for Stringtown Road was required by the Planning Board as a condition of approval of Preliminary Plan No. 12001030 and Site Plan No. 820030020 for the Clarksburg Village development in Clarksburg. Concurrent approvals requested for a new Forest Conservation Plan (FCP) and revisions of two existing FCPs are covered in a separate staff report. The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is the applicant for the Mandatory Referral as the agency designing the project. Elm Street Development will construct the Stringtown Road improvements. The project is recommended in the Clarksburg Master Plan area.

### **Site Description**

The first 700 feet at the western end of the project is bordered by Clarksburg Greenway Park on the south side of Stringtown Road and by Clarksburg LLC-owned open space on the north side. The next 700 feet of the north side of the road is bordered by five single-family homes. The rest of the roadway frontage along Snowden Farm Parkway is currently undeveloped, but Stringtown Road will be constructed at the same time as the adjacent townhouses and single-family detached homes as part of the Clarksburg Village development.

### **Project Description**

This project will reconstruct the existing, two-lane Stringtown Road as a four-lane divided roadway between Overlook Park Drive to Snowden Farm Parkway (a distance of approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile). The proposed section consists of two, 25-foot-wide roadways separated by a 16-foot-wide landscaped median. The project includes storm drain and stormwater management facilities located in easements that are proposed to be located on park property.

### **Rustic Road**

The Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan (RRFMP) and the Clarksburg Master Plan designated the portion of Stringtown Road located east of Snowden Farm Parkway as a Rustic Road. This project would widen Stringtown Road from a four lane divided arterial located west of Snowden Farm Parkway to a two lane Rustic Road located east of Snowden Farm Parkway and the nearby Piedmont Road. These improvements to the intersection of Stringtown Road and Piedmont Road near Snowden Farm Parkway are recommended for reconstruction in the Rustic Road Functional Master Plan (148 and 149) and the Clarksburg Master Plan (page 113). The vertical alignment of the rustic section of Stringtown Road would be lowered more than five feet, and new drainage swales will be included on both sides.

## **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **Master Plan Consistency**

#### **Roadway**

The Clarksburg Master Plan classifies Stringtown Road between I-270 and Snowden Farm Parkway (A-305) as a four-lane arterial road in a 120-foot right-of-way. The proposed typical section is consistent with the Master Plan (page 116). The proposed project would complete one segment of the planned roadway network in Clarksburg and would provide regional access to I-270. The proposed typical

section is consistent with the Master Plan. The new road standards that were approved in 2008 do not require such a wide right-of-way, but they were intended to maximize stormwater infiltration. Since the applicant proposes to use the additional right-of-way to meet current stormwater management requirements with vegetated swales, staff finds that the proposed typical section meets both the Master Plan and Road Code objectives. Staff is in agreement with the general design of the road for the portion located west of the intersection with Snowden Farm Parkway.

Guardrail is proposed on both sides of the road in the vicinity of the culvert or stream crossing to protect drivers from the adjacent slopes. Staff recommends that the guardrail be located near at the face of curb on both sides of the roadway.

### **Bikeway**

The Clarksburg Master Plan recommends a shared use path along Stringtown Road. Bicyclists would be accommodated on the proposed off-road shared use path on the north side of Stringtown Road. Approximately 450 feet of the shared use path would be extended from the western project limit to just east of the proposed culvert and another 350 feet to tie into an existing trail in Clarksburg Greenway Park.

At the southeast corner of St. Clair Road, the width of the proposed shared use path tapers. The full width should be provided behind the handicap ramp.

Bicyclists would also be accommodated on-road by a mix of bike-accessible, 14-foot-wide curb lanes, four-foot-wide shoulders, and five-foot-wide shoulders. Staff recommends that consideration be given to providing five-foot-wide shoulders throughout the project length to provide a consistent accommodation for on-road bicyclists.

### **Pedestrian Access**

Handicap ramps are proposed at all intersections within the project limits, as required by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA). They should be located to provide pedestrian refuge areas in the wide median of Stringtown Road. Staff recommends that median pedestrian refuge areas be aligned with the handicap ramps.

### **Park Impacts**

Clarksburg Greenway Park is located on the south side of Stringtown Road in the western end of the project. The proposed storm drain and stormwater management easements are to be located in the Clarksburg Greenway Park property. The Park Development Division of the Montgomery County Parks Department has reviewed the road design plans and recommends that several issues be addressed at the time of applying for the Park Permit. The Parks Department's memorandum dated February 7, 2013 is attached.

### **Consistent with the Rustic Road Functional Plan**

Modifications to the Mandatory Referral are needed to establish consistency with the Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan (RRFMP) and the Clarksburg Master Plan. The proposed widening of the portion of Stringtown Road located east of Snowden Farm Parkway should be modified. The Rustic Roads Functional Plan provides the following guidance:

- On safety improvements, the Plan states - “The rustic road designation is not intended... to prevent needed improvements ... to the roads” (RRFMP, p. 5).
- On drainage, the Plan states - “The single, most distinctive feature in the character of rural roads is the way drainage is handled. Most roads do not have drainage facilities. The water flows from the road into vegetation adjacent to the edge of the road. An accompanying feature of the appearance of the roads in the Agricultural Reserve Area is the way the road flows into the landscape with features coming right to the roadway edge...” (p. 28).
- On Stringtown Road, the first Significant Feature listed - “Road follows terrain” (RRFMP, p. 148).

Executive Regulation 21-96, Rustic Roads (COMCOR 49.79.01), also provides guidance:

Modification of Road Pavement and Related Structures - “The width, alignment and road surface of rustic roads may only be altered to provide adequate safety, to reduce maintenance problems, to provide reasonable improvements to allow for adequate vertical or horizontal clearance or roadway pull off areas for farm equipment, or for other reasons that the Director of the Department of Public Works and Transportation or Department of Permitting Services may consider of overriding importance. Should the width, alignment or road surface of a rustic road be altered, all work shall be done in a manner as to protect the significant features which made the road eligible for its rustic designation, and design techniques and materials used shall be compatible with unaltered portions of the road” (Sec. 4.II.B.1).

The length of the proposed vertical curve should be reduced to the minimum needed to achieve an adequate stopping sight distance at a 25-30 mph design speed. Using a more appropriate lower design speed would greatly reduce the need to change the roadway elevation, as well as reduce the need for drainage swales, and reduce the required length of reconstruction, minimizing any negative impacts to the rustic character of Stringtown Road.

## **OUTREACH**

A notice of this Planning Board meeting was sent by staff to area community associations. MCDOT presented the proposal to the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) on November 13, 2012. A letter has not been received, but staff reports that the RRAC does not oppose needed safety improvements. The RRAC requested that the modified pavement match the existing pavement to the extent possible, and that a brown “Stringtown Road” sign (indicating the rustic designation) be provided. DOT staff indicated that these requests could be accommodated.

## **CONCLUSION**

The staff recommends approval of this important road project with the comments to reduce the impact on the existing Rustic Road portion. The comments located in the beginning of the staff report should be transmitted to MCDOT.

## **Attachment:**

- Parks Department memorandum dated February 7, 2013

G: Boone/MR Stringtown Road Final



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

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 7<sup>th</sup> 2013

**TO:** Katherine Nelson, Planner Coordinator, Planning Area 3

**VIA:** Mitra Pedoeem, Chief, Park Development Division *MTP 2/8/13*  
Andrew Frank, Environmental Engineering Supervisor, Park Development Division *(AF)*

**FROM:** Brian Lewandowski, Engineer, Park Development Division *BLL*

**SUBJECT:** Mandatory Referral for the reconstruction of Stringtown Road from Overlook Park Drive to Snowden Farm Parkway

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Staff from the Park Development Division of the Montgomery County Parks Department has reviewed the road design plans and recommends the following conditions:

A Park Permit must be obtained before starting any construction work on parkland. All plans, details, and specification must meet Park Standards. As part of this review, a number of issues will need to be resolved.

1. The Clarksburg Greenway Hiker-Biker Trail – Part of the road project is to connect the developer built hiker-biker trail to the path system along Stringtown Road. The plans need to be further developed to show how the proposed trail will connect into the existing trail past the proposed sand filter. Design elevations need to be revised to show greater detail of the relationship between the Sand Filter grading and the proposed trail to ensure that proper drainage is provided, and no future erosion problems occur. The proposed fence details, mow strips, and fence locations need to be based on park details, and the fence termination point shall be determined in the field at the time of construction.
2. Stream Restoration Design - The applicant is responsible for the stream restoration design from the culvert to the WSSC sewer crossing. The design information shown is not adequate to determine resulting stream stability, and Parks will provide additional comments after a follow-up site visit.
3. Temporary and permanent tree protection measures shall be incorporated in the design to increase survival rates of existing trees on Parkland.
4. Reforestation trees to be planted on parkland shall meet M-NCPPC Planting Requirements.
5. All structures must be completely removed from Parklands.