



MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 4, 2013

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Mary Bradford, Director of Parks *M Bradford*
Michael F. Riley, Deputy Director, Administration

FROM: Dr. John E. Hench, Ph.D., Chief, Park Planning and Stewardship Division (PPSD) *JEHench*

SUBJECT: Assessment of M-83 project impacts to M-NCPPC parkland

Staff Recommendation: Discussion

The Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (MCDOT) is performing a Phase I Facility Planning Study to determine the need for transportation improvements within a study area between the communities of Washington Grove and Clarksburg, east of I-270, in Montgomery County, Maryland. The area includes a mix of residential communities, commercial land uses, and parkland serving employment areas in Washington, D.C., Gaithersburg, Rockville, and the I-270 corridor.

MCDOT's proposed project potentially affects a number of M-NCPPC park units within study area, most especially North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park.

Park staff will provide a POWERPOINT presentation that includes:

1. The results of a GIS-based analysis of M-83 project impacts on M-NCPPC parkland;
 - a. Inside the Limits of Disturbance – natural resources, cultural resources, recreational facilities and recreational experiences;
 - b. Outside the Limits of Disturbance- water quality, wildlife passage, forest fragmentation, trail connectivity, park access, natural resources based recreation;
2. An overview of MCDOT's suggestions for mitigating M-83 related park impacts;
 - a. Bethel Church Property;
 - b. Wilson Property;
 - c. Snow Property;
3. Park staff's assessment of impacts from the worst case project alternative compared to resources gained from MCDOT's proposed mitigation sites;

4. Park staff's proposed alternative mitigation sites;
 - a. River Road Shale Barrens;
 - b. Hyattstown Forest;
 - c. Limestone Corridor;
 - d. Broad Run Stream Valley;
5. Future considerations, i.e., "what we don't know;"
 - a. Exact limits of disturbance;
 - b. The additional "footprint" of higher and longer bridges;
 - c. Access roads for bridge, pier, and abutment construction;
 - d. Construction staging areas;
 - e. Sediment control and stormwater management; and
 - f. Results of Phase I, II, and III archaeological assessments.

Background

Major transportation projects in MCDOT's work program have three distinct phases: Phase I Facility Planning, Phase II Facility Planning, and Final Design and Construction. The M-83 project is currently in Phase I Facility Planning. Phase I studies include the following elements: collection of background data, *e.g.*, traffic and environmental inventory; master plan review; public outreach; development of concept plans; selection of preferred alternative and establishment of design guidelines; briefing the Montgomery County Planning Board; obtaining concurrence from the Montgomery County Council's Transportation and Environment Committee; final approval from MCDOT; and advancement to Phase II.

M-83 was first listed in Montgomery County's Master Plan of Highways in the 1960s and was planned to extend from Ridge Road (MD Route 27) in Clarksburg to Redland Road in Derwood as an 8.7 mile-long, controlled access four to six lane, major highway. Over the years, the first three miles of the highway have been constructed between Shady Grove Road and Montgomery Village Avenue. The project is supported by a number of previous planning efforts including: the *Gaithersburg Vicinity Master Plan* (1985, 1988, 1990); the *Germantown Master Plan* (1989); and the *Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area* (1994).

M-83 project alternatives currently under consideration include:

1. Alternative 1, No Build;
2. Alternative 2, Transportation Systems Management/Demand Management;
3. Alternative 4 Modified, Improvements to Brink-Wightman-Goshen-Snuffer School-Muncaster Mill Roads;
4. Alternative 5, MD 355 with Service Roads;
5. Alternative 8, Master Plan Alignment Truncated at Watkins Mill Road;
Three Northern Terminus Options have been proposed at the north end of the Master Plan Alignment:
Option A – follows the Master Plan Alignment;
Option B – incorporates existing Brink Road and Ridge Road; and
Option D – traverses the Agricultural Reserve but avoids some sensitive resources in North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park.
6. Alternative 9, Master Plan Alignment – including the three Northern Terminus Options described in Alternative 8.

Pc: John Nissel, Deputy Director, Operations
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