

Piney Meetinghouse Road Bridge No. M-0022 Replacement, Mandatory Referral No. 2010811

- LC Larry Cole, Master Planner – FP&P, larry.cole@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4528
- PD Pamela Dunn, Acting Chief – FP&P, pamela.dunn@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-650-5649
- JP Josh Penn, Planner-Coordinator – Area 3, joshua.penn@montgomeryplanning.org, 301-495-4546
- Jai Cole, Natural Resource Manager – PPSD, jai.cole@montgomeryparks.org, 301-650-4366
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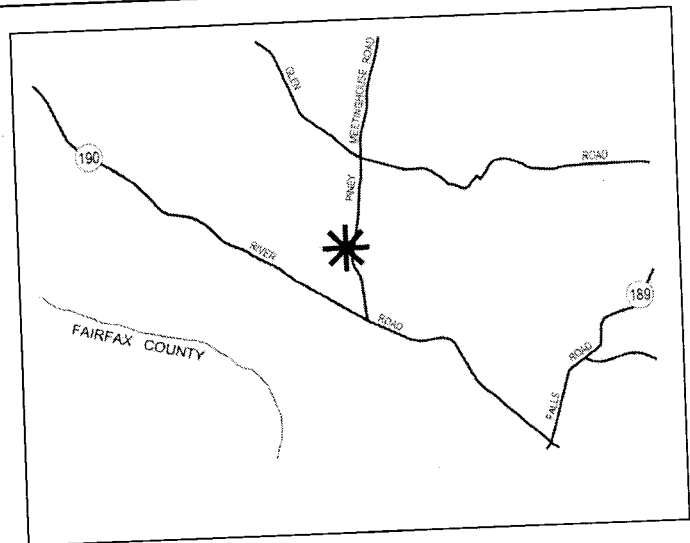
Completed: 03/5/15

Description

Mandatory Referral approval is requested for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation's (MCDOT's) project to replace the Piney Meetinghouse Road bridge over Watts Branch, which is structurally deficient and has significant stream bank erosion.

The project limits extend from approximately 113 feet south of the bridge to 63 feet north of the bridge. The bridge would be widened to provide bike lanes.

The project is located within the Potomac Master Plan area. See Vicinity Map to the right.



Summary

We recommend that the Board approve this project with the following comments to MCDOT:

1. MCDOT shall obtain a Park Construction Permit from the Department of Parks prior to commencement of any construction activities on parkland.
2. MCDOT shall coordinate with WSSC on the design and on the construction of this project with WSSC's sewer repair project.

Previous Board action

No direct action, however the Board recommended to the County Council that they include the master plan-recommended shared use path in the PDF for this project as part of the review of the CIP on February 6, 2014. The Council however declined to make this change.

Site Context

The Piney Meetinghouse Road bridge spans Watts Branch and is located within Watts Branch Stream Valley Park (SVU1). Piney Meetinghouse Road outside the park is bordered by single-family homes on lots with RE-2 zoning.

Analysis

Pedestrian and Bicyclist Accommodation

Piney Meetinghouse Road is classified as a two-lane Arterial roadway in an eighty-foot right-of-way in the Potomac Master Plan. The subject segment of Piney Meetinghouse Road forms part of the border between the Rural and Suburban areas per the Montgomery County Road Code.

The Potomac Master Plan also recommends a dual bikeway (DB-23) – a shared use path and a signed shared roadway – on Piney Meetinghouse Road between River Road (MD190) and Darnestown Road. The proposed typical section for the bridge includes two eleven-foot travel lanes and five-foot-wide bike lanes, which provide a better on-road accommodation than the recommended signed shared roadway and could also be used by pedestrians in this lightly populated area. A railing consisting of three horizontal tubes would be installed on the bridge, providing an adequate barrier for bicyclists' safety.

The master plan-recommended shared-use path would not be provided. As noted above, the County Council decided against including the master plan-recommended path in this project after listening to MCDOT's testimony that it was not possible to know which side of Piney Meetinghouse Road a future path would be located without a study. The need for a path would likely be reassessed in a future Countywide Master Plan of Bikeways update but in the meantime, use of the bike guidance that the Planning Board reviewed last year shows that the bike lanes may be marginally acceptable on their own for most adults. Therefore, we do not believe that a shared-use path must be included in this project.

Environmental

Environmental Guidelines

The project area contains environmental buffers, streams, other sensitive features including forested areas. The property is within the Watts Branch watershed, a USE I-P designation. The Countywide Stream Protection Strategy rates water quality in this watershed as fair condition.

The project proposes the removal of 0.44 acres of forest and has 0.91 acres of Stream Valley Buffer (SVB) impacts. The SVB impacts are necessary and unavoidable to achieve the design standards of creating the new bridge, and those impacts have been minimized to the greatest extent possible.

Forest Conservation

The project is exempt from submission of a forest conservation plan. A forest conservation exemption (#42015121E) was granted under the provisions of Section 22A-5(e) as "a state or county highway project". The exemption was confirmed on January 12, 2015. While the project is exempt, the applicant is still required to minimize forest cutting, clearing and loss of specimen trees under section 22A-9 of the County code. The applicant has minimized the limits of disturbance to limit the amount of forest clearing and impacts to large and specimen trees.

The applicant has submitted a tree save plan (TSP) in conjunction with the Mandatory Referral process to show how the impacts have been minimized and what stress reduction methods are being used to further minimize impacts on trees.

Tree Save

Eleven (11) significant and specimen trees are impacted by this project, five (5) of which are specimen size. The proposed tree save plan proposes the removal of one (1) specimen tree (>30" DBH), SP-9 which is a 51" American Sycamore and two significant trees (24"-30" DBH) SP-8 a 26" American Sycamore and SP-10 a 29" Boxelder.

SP-9 the 51" American Sycamore is directly adjacent to the crossing and would have approximately 93% CRZ impact and could not be retained.

The Applicant is providing mitigation for tree SP-9 at a 1:1 ratio or 51" of caliper for the 51" of DBH removed. The applicant is proposing to plant twenty-six (26) 2" caliper trees on-site and adjacent to the existing trail and stream.

Maintenance of Traffic During Construction

During construction, the bridge would be closed for about two-and-a-half months in the summer of 2016 and traffic would be detoured via Darnestown Road, Dufief Mill Road, Travilah Road and River Road.

Park Impacts

To ensure long-term stability of the stream and protect the new bridge abutments, stream grade control and bank protection revetments will be included in this project. The stream portion of the project should begin upstream of the bridge at the confluence with the unnamed tributary to Watts Branch and end just downstream of the sewer line crossing west of the bridge. Throughout the stream reach there are proposed to be grade control structures, aquatic habitat enhancements (i.e. root wads, scour pools, etc.) as well as bank protection measures.

WSSC is under a consent decree to inspect and repair deteriorated pipes and has a plan in place to repair the sewer lines in this area. Parks is currently working with WSSC on this project and they have been provided plans for this project. If the WSSC project isn't completed prior to this project, MCDOT should coordinate the timing of construction with WSSC to ensure that stream revetments associated with MCDOT's project both ensure stream stability as well as adequate cover over existing WSSC sewer lines.

MCDOT has provided a preliminary planting plan to Parks that will be reviewed through the Park Permit review process. Parks will require the plan include native grasses, shrubs, and trees in both the upland and stream bank/riparian areas.

MCDOT is currently discharging untreated stormwater runoff onto parkland. As a holder of an NPDES MS4 permit, it is important to show that stormwater management (SWM) is being provided to the maximum extent practicable for all new projects and redevelopments discharging on to parkland. Parks believes there are opportunities to treat some stormwater within the ROW and on parkland that should be incorporated into this project – specifically downstream of the bridge on the East side of Piney Meetinghouse Road south of Big Piney Way. There was a large tree in this opening that is no longer there, providing an opportunity for treatment.

Parks staff will work with MCDOT during detail design and Park Permit review process to coordinate the incorporation of stormwater management treatment, finalize the instream design, reduce grading in areas to limit impacts to trees, review and approve the planting plan to include native trees, scrubs and grasses in both the upland and stream buffer/riparian areas, and to approve any additional construction access and staging areas.

Outreach

A notice of the Mandatory Referral was sent to area citizens associations. In addition, MCDOT has conducted the following public outreach:

Public Information Meeting	June 9 th 2009
HOA subcommittee to select Bridge Cross-section	October 14, 2010
Newsletter	March 2011
Public Hearing	October 15, 2014