



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
December 12, 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: John A. Carter, Chief *JAC*
Community-Based Planning Division

Khalid Afzal, Team Leader, Georgia Avenue Planning Team
Community-Based Planning Division *KA*

FROM: Dan Hardy, Transportation Supervisor *DKH*
Countywide Planning Division (301) 495-4530

Frederick Vernon Boyd, Community Planner *FVB*
Georgia Avenue Planning Team (301) 495-4654

SUBJECT: Planning Board Worksession #3 on the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan – Transportation

RECOMMENDATION: *Discussion* of information and analysis requested by the Planning Board and *approval* of overall Transportation Chapter recommendations.

Discussion

The third worksession on the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan seeks the Planning Board's approval of the overall transportation recommendations described in the Transportation Chapter of the Master Plan.

This packet contains the following materials:

- This memorandum, which summarizes the staff responses to the issues described in the public hearing testimony, organized by issue;
- A summary table of public hearing testimony and staff response organized by testimony source (Attachment 1);
- County Council resolution number 15-09 supporting the Intercounty Connector (Attachment 2);
- Response to Commissioner Robinson's request for information from Dan Wilhelm, representing the Montgomery County Civic Federation (Attachment 3);
- The Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) design standard for an open-section arterial roadway (Attachment 4); and
- Decision matrix for transportation recommendations (Attachment 5).

Issue #1: East-West Transportation

The primary background materials for the transportation worksession are contained in the Staff Draft of the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan and the Appendix materials covering the *Muncaster Mill Road Corridor Study* and the *Transportation Policy Report*. The following paragraphs describe:

- **Prior Planning Board actions and Department processes**, to document why staff believes the recommendations regarding east-west transportation in the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan are procedurally appropriate.
- **Retention of Two-Lane Muncaster Mill Road Recommendation**, to respond to testimony recommending the widening of Muncaster Mill Road.
- **Suitability of Western Connector as Interim Facility in the Intercountry Connector (ICC) Right-of-Way**, to address testimony that the *Transportation Policy Report* Option 1 or Option 2 is inconsistent with the Master Plan recommendation for the Intercountry Connector.
- **Forecast Conditions at Georgia Avenue**, to address concerns raised in testimony and preview staff recommendations likely to be included in the Staff Draft of the Olney Master Plan.

Prior Planning Board Actions and Department Processes

Public testimony expressed concerns about the relationship between the *Muncaster Mill Road Corridor Study*, the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan, and the *Transportation Policy Report*. The following paragraphs explain the purpose of each effort and provide a chronology of the decision making process for the recommendations on east-west transportation in the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan.

The *Muncaster Mill Road Corridor Study* was conducted during autumn of 2000 and winter and early spring of 2001. Briefings of study status and findings were presented to the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan Advisory Group in November 2000, December 2000, and January 2001. The technical study findings were presented at a public meeting on March 15, 2001. The technical study findings supported selection of Alternate C, consisting of construction of roadway on a new alignment between Shady Grove Road and Norbeck Road within the Midcounty Highway (M-83) and Intercountry Connector (F-9) rights-of-way. The findings presented March 15, 2001, recognized that formal public comment had not yet been incorporated into the study. Subsequent public comment included the concern that a Planning Board or County Council decision on the *Muncaster Mill Road Corridor Study* would unfairly influence subsequent *Transportation Policy Report* analyses or findings. Based on that concern, staff deferred additional analysis on east-west transportation in the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan pending *Transportation Policy Report* findings.

The *Transportation Policy Report* included extensive public outreach, including ten public workshops in Bethesda, Burtonsville, Gaithersburg, Germantown, Potomac, and Silver Spring during autumn 2001. Public testimony on the *Transportation Policy Report*

was taken at Planning Board public hearings in December 2001. The Planning Board's findings and recommendations were published in the January 15, 2002 *Planning Board's Transportation Policy Report*. The County Council held public forums on the Planning Board's report in spring 2002.

Based on review of the *Transportation Policy Report*, in July 2002 the County Council directed Planning Board staff to prepare an independent Master Plan of Highways amendment to add two facilities to the Master Plan of Highways; HOV lanes on the Capital Beltway (I-495) between the American Legion Bridge and the I-270 West Spur, and a grade-separated interchange at the junction of Randolph Road and Veirs Mill Road (MD 586). At that time, the County Council did not recommend any changes to the Master Plans regarding the Intercounty Connector.

The 15th County Council was inaugurated on December 2, 2002. On December 3, 2002, the County Council adopted a resolution supporting construction of the Intercounty Connector built along the master plan alignment, as shown in Attachment 2.

To summarize:

- The current Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan contains both a six-lane freeway (F-9) and Midcounty Highway Extended (M-83).
- Three studies between 1997 and 2002 - the state's *Intercounty Connector Draft Environmental Impact Statement*, the Department's *Muncaster Mill Road Corridor Study* and the *Transportation Policy Report* – all documented the need for additional roadway capacity in the corridor.
- The Planning Board established a position on east-west transportation in the January 2002 *Transportation Policy Report*.
- No new technical information has been produced since January 2002 that should change the Planning Board's *Transportation Policy Report* recommendation.
- The prior County Council did not provide policy direction suggesting the *Transportation Policy Report* recommendations on the Intercounty Connector and Western Connector were inappropriate.

Retention of Two-Lane Muncaster Mill Road Recommendation

Substantial testimony was received that the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan should recommend that Muncaster Mill Road be widened. Staff believes the Master Plan recommendation to retain Muncaster Mill Road as a two-lane facility remains appropriate for both technical and procedural reasons:

- **Technical:** The *Muncaster Mill Road Corridor Study* and the *Transportation Policy Report* documented that widening Muncaster Mill Road to four lanes provides less transportation capacity, less improvement in highway safety, and more community disruption than building a new roadway in rights-of-way already preserved for transportation use.

- **Procedural:** As described above, the Planning Board has already expressed a position in the January 2002 *Transportation Policy Report* and staff finds no compelling subsequent evidence that the Planning Board's position should be changed.

At the October 3 public hearing, Dan Wilhelm testified on behalf of the Montgomery County Civic Federation position in support of the *Transportation Policy Report* Option 3 (widening Muncaster Mill Road). Commissioner Robinson requested that Mr. Wilhelm provide a probability analysis of the risks that, if Muncaster Mill Road were widened to four lanes, it might eventually have to be widened to six lanes to meet the long-term demand. Mr. Wilhelm's response is included as Attachment 3.

Suitability of Western Connector as Interim Facility in ICC Right-of-Way

Master Plans often recommend partial, or staged, implementation of the overall master plan of highways network. An example of a recommendation similar to the Western Connector occurs in the Fairland Master Plan. The Fairland Master Plan ultimately recommends conversion of US 29 to a facility that has only grade separated interchanges between New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) and the Howard County line. If this master plan recommendation is implemented, then US 29 will operate as a limited access freeway without traffic signals for approximately 25 miles between New Hampshire Avenue and I-70 in Howard County.

The Fairland Master Plan recommends that the interchanges along US 29 be implemented in stages and that the results of each interchange on the transportation system monitored, as "monitoring may change the priorities, the cost-effectiveness of the improvements, or whether other grade-separations should be constructed at all" (p. 90). In summary, the Fairland Master Plan recognizes that the end-state condition may be a partial, interim implementation of master plan recommendations, much as the Western Connector could be considered a partial implementation of the Intercounty Connector.

The Executive recommended that the Plan recommendations for east-west transportation be worded so as to not preclude any other possible state-recommended alternatives that might result from the state studies. Staff agrees that a state study will, according to federal regulations, need to analyze multiple alternates and some of those alternates will likely be inconsistent with the Master Plan. The Plan should be prescriptive, rather than silent, regarding a locally preferred alternate or alternates. As is the case with any state study (such as for the Georgia Avenue/Norbeck Road interchange), if the study shows conclusively that an alternate is superior to the Master Plan recommendation, then a master plan amendment should be undertaken.

Forecast Conditions at Georgia Avenue

Public testimony also raised the concern that an at-grade Western Connector would create congestion along Georgia Avenue or reduce the effectiveness of the current plans to build a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Georgia Avenue (MD 97) and Norbeck Road (MD 28). These issues are being addressed in greater detail in

the Olney Master Plan. The Staff Draft of the Olney Master Plan, to be released in January 2003, may recommend:

- A grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Road, and
- Retention of the master-planned grade-separated interchange at the junction of Georgia Avenue and the ICC, with consideration given to both at-grade and grade-separated options if the Western Connector is studied independent of the ICC.

The grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Road is a recommendation from the *Transportation Policy Report*. The recommendation is based on both in-house analysis and the concurrent SHA project planning study of the interchange. Federal, state and local officials have all concurred that the purpose and need for this interchange is independent of the need for or implementation of the Intercounty Connector. The planning study culminated in the publication of an October 2002 Environmental Assessment. A Location and Design Public Hearing for the project was held on December 9, 2002. The planning and design of this interchange will not preclude future design of an interchange at Georgia Avenue and either the Intercounty Connector or the Western Connector.

The staff recommendation to consider both an at-grade intersection and a grade-separated interchange at Georgia Avenue in any future Western Connector study is based on three basic considerations. First, forecasts for the Olney Master Plan suggest that a "standard" at-grade intersection between two high capacity arterial roads, with dual left turn lanes and exclusive right turn lanes, would exceed the Olney congestion standard of a Critical Lane Volume (CLV) below 1525 during the AM peak period (although operate within the congestion standard during the PM peak period analyzed during the *Transportation Policy Report*). Second, while additional auxiliary through or turning lanes could be added to achieve the congestion standard with an at-grade intersection, such an expanded intersection would be "pedestrian unfriendly." Third, intersection or interchange design must facilitate implementation of the Georgia Avenue Busway. Therefore, even dual left turn lanes would require shifting the mainline lanes of Georgia Avenue toward the outside of the right-of-way, further complicating at-grade intersection design.

Analyses prepared for the Olney Master Plan indicate that an at-grade intersection of Norbeck Road with the Western Connector will operate within the congestion standard.

Issue #2: Cherry Valley Drive Extended

Substantial testimony was received in favor of removing Cherry Valley Drive Extended from the Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan. The Executive requested additional information documenting the technical basis for the recommendation. Staff met with Executive staff on November 12, 2002, and provided additional information developed for Master Plan Advisory Group meetings in late 2000. We understand that the Executive staff now supports the removal of Cherry Valley Drive Extended from the Master Plan.

Issue #3: Redland Road

The staff draft recommends that Redland Road, from Crabbs Branch Way to Muncaster Mill Road, be reclassified from a primary residential street to an arterial, consistent with its current function. The Plan recommends a two-lane design for the segment between Muncaster Mill Road and Needwood Road and a maximum of four through travel lanes between Needwood Road and Crabbs Branch Way. A Class II or Class III (both on-road) bikeway is recommended.

The only testimony regarding this recommendation came from the Executive, who recommends that the recommended 70' right-of-way be increased to 80'. Staff concurs with the Executive's point that the 70' right-of-way is substandard for arterial roadway design. Staff response to this request is different for the two portions of Redland Road on either side of Needwood Road:

Between Crabbs Branch Way and Needwood Road

The portion of Redland Road between Crabbs Branch Way and Needwood Road (approximately 1,500 feet in length) is currently under study by the DPWT (CIP Project #500010), with a mandatory referral date anticipated in early 2003. Staff proposes three changes to clarify the recommendations for this portion of Redland Road:

- Establish a recommended 80' right-of-way between Crabbs Branch Way and Needwood Road. The estimated right-of-way for the DPWT project varies, but is generally greater than 70', as additional through lane capacity is required to improve access to the Shady Grove Metrorail station.
- Modify the Street and Highway Classification Table to identify this portion of Redland Road (A-102) as a separate line-item with an 80' right-of-way and a maximum of 4 through travel lanes.
- Remove the references to the potential for reversible lane operations at the request of Executive staff.

Between Needwood Road and Muncaster Mill Road (MD 115)

The portion of Redland Road between Needwood Road and Muncaster Mill Road is approximately 9,000 feet in length. Staff maintains that the 80' right-of-way standard for arterial roadways is inappropriate for this portion of Redland Road because the Master Plan recommends a maximum of two travel lanes and many of the adjacent properties are already subdivided along the 70' right-of-way lines currently in the Master Plan.

Staff considered the several benefits of an 80' right-of-way recommendation, including:

- Future ability to incorporate desired elements such as sidewalks and street trees not currently envisioned in the Staff Draft recommendation.
- Advance notice to community that improvements might exceed the 70' right-of-way.
- Ability to acquire property by dedication prior to an implementation project.
- Consistency with County Code and current DPWT design standards.

However, staff feels that the 70' right-of-way remains an appropriate recommendation, because:

- Staff finds that the two-lane, open-section arterial can “fit” within the 70' right-of-way, as the design standard for an open section arterial road within an 80' right-of-way (Standard No. MC-213.02, included as Attachment 4) includes seven to nine feet of side slope grading on each side of the road outside of the hinge point (which is typically the property line on more urban roadway sections). The recommended typical section for Brookeville Bypass, reviewed by the Planning Board at its September 19, 2001 worksession, provides an example of such a fit.
- An increase to 80' right-of-way might create community concerns regarding neighborhood stability. This concern has been addressed recently by the Planning Board and County Council in the adoption of the East Silver Spring and Takoma Park Master Plans in 2000. Those two master plans substantially *reduced* master planned rights-of-way to better enhance and preserve communities. Staff recommends that, for this portion of Redland Road, the same sensitivity be applied to *maintain*, rather than *increase*, the current 70' master plan right-of-way recommendation.
- Even if an 80' right-of-way were established, environmental and parkland constraints primarily associated with the Mill Creek stream valley would likely result in design of a narrower cross-section for approximately 3,000 feet, or about one-third of the segment length.

Staff finds that the reasons for retaining the 70' right-of-way are more compelling than the arguments to increase the right-of-way to 80'.

Issue #4: Transit Priority Improvements

Staff concurs with the comments made by the Executive that further studies should be conducted regarding transit priority treatments, such as “queue jumper” lanes that would make transit more effective. DPWT is currently conducting studies of such priority treatments along Randolph Road and portions of Veirs Mill Road. Improving transit effectiveness, thereby influencing mode share, would help the region achieve air quality conformance goals, as suggested in testimony regarding the Environmental Plan. Staff proposes to add a statement to the Plan text (page 67) supporting further study of bus priority treatments, such as auxiliary “queue jumper” lanes at intersections, that might require additional right-of-way than indicated in the Street and Highway Classification Table.

Issue #5: Bowie Mill Road Relocated

In response to both Executive staff testimony and citizen concerns, staff proposes to change the last paragraph and recommendations regarding Bowie Mill Road Relocated (page 56) to indicate:

- That while the Plan does not recommend a proactive realignment plan, should a subsequent public agency or subdivision activity proposal satisfy both transportation and environmental objectives by relocating Bowie Mill Road to meet Needwood Road, such a proposal could be considered consistent with the Plan.
- Support for a subsequent SHA study of operational improvements along Muncaster Mill Road between Bowie Mill Road and Magruder High School.

Issue #6: Other Technical Comments from the Executive and Executive Staff

Staff concurs with three additional substantive recommendations made by the Executive staff and proposes to amend the Plan accordingly, including:

- Adding a statement recommending study of additional pedestrian safety improvements in the vicinity of Muncaster Mill Road and Redland Road.
- Revising the discussion of two-lane roadways (page 52) to both clarify that safety and operational improvements are not to be precluded and reference the Street and Highway Classification Table for specific recommendations on the maximum number of through lanes on each master planned roadway segment.
- Clarifying that while the Plan recommends removing the substantial realignment of Muncaster Mill Road and Avery Road (page 55), the Plan supports the needed, but more minor, realignment of Muncaster Mill Road at Avery Road currently being designed by SHA as part of its \$10M safety improvement project (STIP Reference #154340).

Staff will also incorporate comments received regarding typographical errors into the Planning Board Draft.

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Attachments

Attachment 1
Summaries of Public Hearing Testimony

*Summary of Public Hearing Testimony—Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan
East-West Transportation*

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Staff Response</i>
Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive	Seeks assurance that master plan recommendations do not preclude either option 1 or option 2 or any other state-recommended alternatives that result from state studies	The Master Plan must provide guidance for local decisions such as facility planning and subdivision cases, and in fact such local guidance has been repeatedly requested by SHA. Per recent experience on project such as the MD 97/MD 28 intersection and the Capital Beltway HOV, where state studies demonstrate that transportation alternates exist that are superior to the Master Plan, the Master Plan should subsequently be amended.
Dan Wilhelm, Montgomery Civic Federation	MCCF supports widening Muncaster Mill Road Environmental impacts are less; At grade intersection on Georgia Avenue negates MD 28/Georgia Avenue grade separation; Lack of congestion suggests that Muncaster Mill Road need not be widened beyond four lanes.	Staff and Planning Board position on east-west transportation, developed as part of the Transportation Policy Report, is that either Option 1 or Option 2 should be pursued pending completion of the ICC EIS.
Terry Newendorp and Kathryn Lindquist	Oppose option 1 (ICC master plan alignment) and option 2 (extension of M83 using part of ICC master plan alignment); support option 3 (widening of MD 115)	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Daniel Solomon	Opposes construction of ICC, widening of Muncaster Mill Road; supports inner purple line, expansion of Metro to Frederick; expansion of Ride-On service	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Linda Kuserk, Sequoyah Elementary School PTA	Concerned about increasing traffic on Muncaster Mill and Bowie Mill roads, which affects Sequoyah, Redland Middle School and Magruder High School	Please see response to Wilhelm above. Construction of new roadways will divert traffic from local roads that serve the schools.
Paul F. Piccone, individual	Excessive traffic, school congestion and dangerous road conditions result from the lack of adequate traffic systems	Please see response to Wilhelm above. The Plan recommends a transportation network in balance with the land use recommendations.
Francis P. Barletta, individual	Supports construction of ICC as best way to resolve traffic problems quickly; local roads are not equipped to handle commuter traffic avoiding I-270 and MD 355	Please see response to Wilhelm above.

*Summary of Public Hearing Testimony—Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan
East-West Transportation*

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Staff Response</i>
Charles M. Keyserling, individual	Supports widening Muncaster Mill Road as best way to increase capacity without causing gridlock; At-grade intersections on new roads will cause congestion at four locations; no new intersections are needed on Muncaster Mill Road; cut-through traffic in existing neighborhoods will increase as well	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
John Parrish, Maryland Native Plant Society	Delete ICC and Mid-County Highway extended from master plan	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Karen Ehrlich, North Granby Woods Civic Association	Widen Muncaster Mill Road to three or four lanes between Shady Grove and Norbeck roads; no divided highway is necessary	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Jerome D. Miller, Cypress Homeowners Association	Mid-County Highway extension is inconsistent with Planning Act of 1992 because of the number of at-grade intersections	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Art Diem, individual	Supports construction of Intercounty Connector because failing to build infrastructure is an ineffective way to control growth	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Robert D. Foss	Plan recommends road widenings and retains possibility of constructing ICC and Mid-County Highway extended	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Jean Sommerville, Sycamore Acres Citizens' Association	Opposes use of ICC right-of-way for Western Connector; supports widening of Muncaster Mill Road	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Art Brodsky, Greater Olney Civic Association	All transportation options adversely affect Sycamore Acres community New roads will exacerbate problems entering and leaving neighborhood. Opposes four-lane arterial connecting I-370 and Georgia Avenue; supports widening Muncaster Mill Road	Please see response to Wilhelm above.

*Summary of Public Hearing Testimony—Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan
East-West Transportation*

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Staff Response</i>
R.G. Steinman, Montgomery Intercounty Connector Coalition	Supports sensitively designed Muncaster Mill Road—not four lane divided highway	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Lori Keeseey, individual	Suggests that ongoing road construction in the hope of ending gridlock will create more traffic, encourage more growth and spoil Residential Wedge	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Thirty-three homeowners in Brooke Manor Estates	Oppose options 1 and 2 because they do significant environmental damage; suggest that widening Muncaster Mill Road is a more appropriate approach to improving east-west traffic flow	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Steven J. Wernick, Brooke Manor Estates Home Owners Association	Association opposes any use of ICC right-of-way between Emory Lane and Georgia Avenue At-grade intersection of new road and Georgia Avenue diminishes impact of grade separation of Georgia Avenue and Norbeck Road intersection	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
Robert H. Wilson II, individual	Supports widening of Muncaster Mill Road to four lanes between Shady Grove Road and MD 28 Suggests improvements to major intersections; better public transit options; promotion of carpooling and telecommuting	Please see response to Wilhelm above.
William Hendry, landowner and Master Plan Advisory Group member	Infrastructure little changed over past 30 years Asks that implementation of road projects consider impacts on local residents and on streams; Asks that road projects be coordinated; Asks that permanent solution to east-west traffic flow problem be sought.	Staff concurs

*Summary of Public Hearing Testimony—Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan
East-West Transportation*

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Staff Response</i>
<p>Bob Kostecka, Winters Run Civic Association</p>	<p>Opposes extension of MidCounty Highway through Winters Run neighborhood Asserts that road would be at-grade though community, which would bisect neighborhoods and make walking to local schools difficult Notes that construction would encourage further development, which is inconsistent with State Planning Act or local plans</p>	<p>Please see response to Wilhelm above. While further State study of the Intercountry Connector has not been scoped, past studies suggest that alternates that avoid Winters Run may be developed.</p>
<p>Doug Rosenfeld, Winters Run Civic Association</p>	<p>Asserts that Transportation Policy Report effort constituted an unadvertised amendment to Master Plan of Highways whose results are therefore not legal No discussion of roadway issues in master plan; instead, master plan work on transportation issues was deferred in favor of TPR, which, in turn, appears to have decided transportation issues</p>	<p>In Upper Rock Creek, Transportation Policy Report efforts essentially confirmed current Master Plans. In areas where Transportation Policy Report recommends amendments to Master Plans, such amendments are proceeding through the legal amendment process.</p>

*Summary of Public Hearing Testimony—Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan
Cherry Valley Drive and other Transportation Issues*

<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Staff Response</i>
Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive	Generally supports deletion of Cherry Valley Drive from Plan, but seeks thorough analysis of impacts on road network of forecasted trips for deleted segment and discussion of alternative for those trips Recommends 80-foot right-of-way for Redland Road Recommends deletion of recommendations on traffic operations Supports recommendations for safe walking routes to local destinations	Additional information on Cherry Valley Drive extended provided to Executive staff and included in packet. Redland Road currently serves an arterial function, yet an 80' right-of-way would be unnecessarily disruptive. Any safety or operational improvements should be designed to minimize property and environmental impacts.
R. James Wasilak, City of Rockville	Recommends addition of connections from City to county trail facilities at locations along East Gude Drive at Southlawn Lane and through Gude Recreational Park	This issue will be discussed as part of the worksession on park trails recommendations
Jane McDonough	Opposes extension of Cherry Valley Drive across North Branch stream valley because it would degrade important wetlands, destroy parkland and destroy significant interior forest	The Plan proposes to remove the extension of Cherry Valley Drive from the master plan
Walter G. McDonough	Opposes extension of Cherry Valley Drive across North Branch stream valley because extending street will damage established community. In addition, extension does not appear on previous Olney master plans.	
Susan Petrocci, Norbeck Meadows Civic Association	Opposes extension of Cherry Valley Drive across North Branch stream valley because it would degrade important wetlands, destroy parkland and destroy significant interior forest	
Aer Diem, individual	Public transit service should be improved by increasing safety, comfort and convenience to increase ridership	
Art Brodsky, Greater Olney Civic Association	Supports deletion of Cherry Valley Drive from master plan	Staff agrees

Attachment 2
County Council Resolution 15-09 on the Intercounty Connector

Resolution No.: 15-09
Introduced: December 3, 2002
Adopted: December 3, 2002

COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND

By: Councilmembers Subin, Denis, Floreen, Knapp, and Silverman

SUBJECT: Resolution in support of State action to re-start the Intercounty Connector (ICC) Environmental Impact Statement process.

Background

1. Montgomery County has experienced the largest growth in the State over the last 20 years and has the largest population of any jurisdiction in the State. The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, in coordination with the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, estimates that by 2025 the number of households in the County will grow by 27 percent and employment will increase by 26 percent. The amount of travel in the metropolitan area is expected to increase by 46 percent in the same time period, from a daily 116 million vehicle-miles traveled (VMT) in 2000 to 169 million VMT in 2025.
2. The concept of a transportation corridor north of the Capital Beltway has appeared in numerous County master plans for over four decades. An "Inter-County Belt Freeway" first appeared on an adopted County master plan in the 1950's. The "Outer Beltway" concept along the current ICC alignment first appeared on master plans thirty years ago. The ICC in its current alignment first appeared in master plans in 1975 to provide a critical east-west connection between the I-270 and I-95 corridors.
3. The completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required by the National Environmental Policy Act to evaluate environmental impacts and weigh all reasonable alternatives. The most recent ICC EIS process began in 1991.
4. A signed Draft EIS was issued in March 1997. The Draft EIS found that in 2020 the ICC will significantly reduce future congestion on local roads. For example, Muncaster Mill Road (north of MD 28) will have 21% more traffic without the ICC. Briggs Chaney Road (east of Good Hope Road) will have 33% more traffic. Randolph Road (east of Georgia Road) will have 26% more traffic.
5. A majority of the Transportation Policy Task Force has recommended pursuing a full ICC on the Master Plan alignment. The Task Force majority found that traffic modeling indicated the ICC had more impact in improving travel speeds, reducing volume/capacity ratios, and improving accessibility and mobility countywide and particularly between I-270 and I-95 corridors than any other project or set of policy changes the Task Force studied.

6. The ICC is necessary to support the land-use decisions of the last thirty years and the development that has already occurred in the region's two primary planned development corridors. The areas the ICC was designed to serve already have been developed in accordance with our approved master plans, now we must implement the appropriate transportation facilities.
7. Construction of the ICC with modern mitigation techniques such as end-on construction, limited tunneling, and advanced storm drainage filtration and collection would minimize the adverse impacts on the natural environment.
8. Federal law requires that an environmental impact statement examine alternatives. Nevertheless, the Council's clear preference is that the ICC be built on an alignment consistent with the County's master plan.

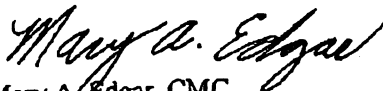
Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The County Council amends the County's 10-year program of transportation improvements to include the Intercounty Connector.

The County Council supports actions which may be taken by the Governor, the General Assembly, and the Federal Highway Administration to re-start the Intercounty Connector Environmental Impact Statement process as soon as possible, and to explore means for expediting the completion of this process.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Mary A. Edgar, CMC
Clerk of the Council

Attachment 3
Correspondence from Dan Wilhelm
Montgomery County Civic Federation

904 Cannon Road
Colesville, MD 20904
December 10, 2002

Planning Board
Attn: Derick Berlage, Chairman
8787 Georgia Ave
Silver Spring, MD

Re: Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan – Western Connector

Dear Chairman Berlage

I am writing to respond to Commissioner Robinson's request for a probability analysis on the Western Parkway alternatives. His request was made during the question period after my testimony for MCCF supporting Alternative 3 (widen Muncaster Mill Road).

It is possible that Commissioner Robinson was concerned that I was disagreeing with the data provided by the staff. Let me start by assuring you that I was not disagreeing with the staff's modeling results. My testimony also relied upon staff produced model results. Staff has at least two sets of results, with each set based upon different assumptions of transportation improvements. One set was used by staff in March 2001 and included the CLRP projects. The other set is from TPR, which included more background projects than just CLRP. Staff relied more on the results obtained from the first model run, while I relied more on the TPR model run results. With the actions taken by the Planning Board, Council, and Executive, I feel the list of projects found in TPR are more likely to be built by 2025 and afterward than just the CLRP list of projects.

As the staff and Planning Board found with the TPR effort, people place different values on factors that go into the decision process. The result is that they reach different conclusions based upon the same set of data. From a pure transportation perspective, Alternatives 1 or 2 would be better than Alternative 3 since it will handle higher traffic volumes. However, the additional transportation benefit from these two Alternatives does not in my opinion overcome the much greater environmental impact that also accompanies them. I also feel that if the bus system is improved as envisioned in TPR that fewer people will drive, thus reducing the need to widen roads, including Muncaster Mill (more than four lanes).

I believe that Commission Roberson was asking for a probably analysis of the question - if Montgomery County selected Alternative 3 and widened Muncaster Mill to four lanes, what is the probability that the County will return in the future to widen it to 6 lanes?" Some might think this question has been overtaken by the election results. I still think it is a valid question. Let me give you my personal prediction of what I believe will happen at this point.

1. I think there is a 100% probability that the ICC EIS will be completed. This is based upon the election results and recent Council actions.
2. I think that the EIS results will be essentially the same as in the last draft EIS. I think there's a 75% likelihood that the Federal agencies will not approve the ICC being built between Georgia and US29 in the Master Plan right of way. It is possible that Congress will write a special law exempting the ICC from existing environmental laws, which would then allow the road to be funded by Congress and built. I think that the likelihood of Congress writing such a law is below 10%.
3. I think that decisions will finally be made and people will come to realize that there are two major east-west "corridors" within Montgomery County north of the Beltway: MD 198-MD 28 and Eastern Connector-Randolph-Montrose. MD198-MD 28 will be widened to four lanes and grade-separated interchanges constructed where two major roads cross. In a like manner, grade separated interchanges will be built on Randolph where two major roads cross east of Georgia. The

Montrose Parkway will be built that connects Veirs Mill to I-270. The Eastern Connector will be built between US 29 and US1 to complete a corridor from I-95 to I-270 that operates as a major road with limited number of traffic signals and congestion points.

4. Assuming the ICC EIS is not approved, I think that the probability that the Western Connector Alternative 1 (ICC ROW) could be approved is 80% and M83 Extension could be approved is 90%. I think that the probability that either Alternative 3 or 4 could be approved is 100%.

Let me now focus on the question I believe Commissioner Robinson was asking.

The TPR data for 2050 shows that whichever Western Alternative is selected that the traffic volumes on nearby roads will be essentially the same. Needless to say, the traffic volumes on Muncaster Mill for Alternatives 3 and 4 will be higher than those of Alternatives 1 or 2. The traffic volume under either Alternative 3 or 4 is twice that of either Alternative 1 or 2, but Alternatives 3 and 4 also have twice as many lanes. Therefore, based upon the TPR model results, congestion on Muncaster Mill will be essentially the same with all Alternatives.

The v/c for Muncaster Mill from the TPR data is approximately 0.9 for all Alternatives, which is congested. If the goal is to eliminate congestion on Muncaster Mill, it will need to be widened even if Alternative 1 or 2 were selected. Based upon the model data, Muncaster Mill would need to be widened more than four lanes if Alternative 3 were selected and the requirement is to eliminate congestion on the road. However, the worse bottleneck for all Alternatives is not Muncaster Mill but MD 28 between Muncaster Mill and Georgia. The data shows that with any of the four Alternatives, congestion will still be severe at that location.

Recall that one conclusion from TPR is that congestion will be worse in the future than today, no matter what set of improvements are made. Taking this into account, one approach might be to even out the degree of congestion. Under this approach, Muncaster Mill could be widened to four lanes and more lanes added on MD 28 between Muncaster Mill and Georgia.

Let me make several recommendations.

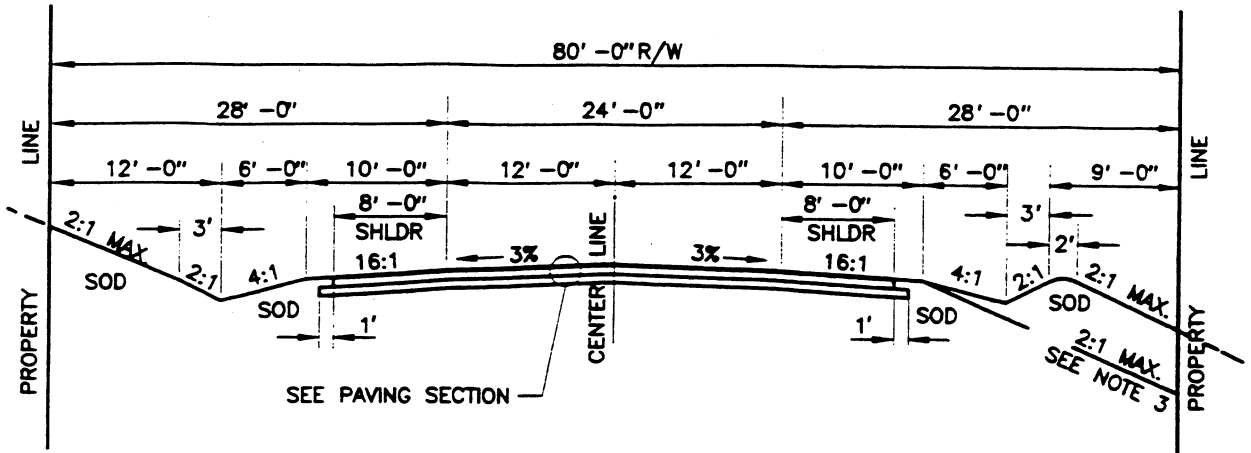
- a. Independent of the Alternative selected, MD 28 should be widened to at least six lanes between Georgia and Muncaster Mill, since this is a bottleneck. Note that the SHA study for MD 28-MD97 has included six lanes at this point.
- b. If Alternatives 1 or 2 are selected the intersection with Georgia should grade separated to minimize congestion on Georgia.
- c. If Alternatives 1 or 2 are selected, Georgia should be widened to six lanes from MD 28 to where the selected alternative crosses Georgia to minimize congestion on Georgia.

I hope the above answers Commissioner Robinson's question and I hope it will give other Commissioners insight that is useful in developing the Planning Board's position.

Sincerely

Dan Wilhelm
Daniel L. Wilhelm

Attachment 4
DPWT Design Standard for Open Section Arterial Roadway



TYPICAL ROAD SECTION
(OUTSIDE SUBURBAN DISTRICT)

3" BITUMINOUS CONCRETE SURFACE COURSE IN 2 - 1 1/2 "LAYERS
5" BITUMINOUS CONCRETE BASE COURSE
8" GRADED AGGREGATE BASE COURSE IN 2 - 4" LAYERS
*
APPROVED SUBGRADE

PREFERRED

3" BITUMINOUS CONCRETE SURFACE COURSE IN 2 - 1 1/2 "LAYERS
9" BITUMINOUS CONCRETE BASE COURSE IN 2 - 4 1/2" LAYERS
*
APPROVED SUBGRADE

ALTERNATE

* SUBGRADE DRAINS REQUIRED
SEE MC-525.01

ALTERNATE PAVING SECTIONS

GENERAL NOTES

1. REFER TO MARYLAND STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION SPECIFICATIONS FOR MATERIALS AND METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION.
2. SEE STANDARD NO. MC-811.01 - METHODS OF GRADING SIDE SLOPES.
3. THE SIDE DITCH IN FILL SLOPES MAY BE ELIMINATED IN AREAS NOT MASTER PLANNED FOR DEVELOPMENT ONLY AFTER OVERLAND FLOW PATH AND EROSION POTENTIAL ARE CONSIDERED.

P:\DOT\STD\MC21302 6-24-94 807/15 ON EST

APPROVED JAN 5/96
DATE

[Signature]
DIRECTOR, DEPT. OF TRANS.

[Signature]
CHIEF, DIV. OF ENG. SERVICES

REVISED

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ARTERIAL ROAD
OPEN SECTION

STANDARD NO. MC-213.02

Attachment 5
Recommendation Matrix

Recommendations for East-West Transportation (Issue 1)

Public Hearing Draft	Public Testimony	Recommendation
Maintain classification, right-of-way and section for Muncaster Mill Road; no widening to increase capacity	Civic groups and most individuals support widening Muncaster Mill Road, reducing environmental impacts and focusing improvements on local needs	Approve Public Hearing Draft recommendation
Maintain classification, right-of-way and section for ICC and Mid-County Highway	Civic groups and some individuals oppose a road in the ICC right-of-way for environmental and quality of life reasons; others oppose extension of Mid-County Highway for similar reasons; several individuals support ICC	Approve Public Hearing Draft recommendation
Begin project planning studies for Option 1 or Option 2 as described in Transportation Policy Report	Civic groups and some individuals oppose either option, asserting that either would be environmentally damaging and would diminish quality of life	Approve Public Hearing Draft recommendation

Recommendations for Cherry Valley Drive (Issue 2)

Public Hearing Draft	Public Testimony	Recommendation
Remove extension of Cherry Valley Drive from master plan street and highway network	Civic groups and individuals oppose extension of Cherry Valley Drive	Approve Public Hearing Draft recommendation

Recommendations for Redland Road (Issue 3)

Public Hearing Draft	Public Testimony	Recommendation
Reclassify Redland Road as arterial with 70-foot right-of-way; two travel lanes between Needwood Road and Muncaster Mill Road; a maximum of four lanes between Crabbs Branch Way and Needwood Road, with consideration of reversible lanes	Executive recommends 80-foot right-of-way	Revise Public Hearing Draft recommendation to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend 80-foot ROW between Crabbs Branch Way and Needwood Road • Clarify Street and Highway Classification Table • Remove references to reversible lanes

Recommendations for Other Transportation Issues

Public Hearing Draft	Public Testimony	Recommendation
Transit priority improvements (Issue 4)	Individual testimony supported studies of minor transit-priority projects	Revise Public Hearing Draft to include support for studies of minor transit-priority projects
Retain existing configuration of the intersections of Bowie Mill and Muncaster Mill roads and of Muncaster Mill and Needwood roads (Issue 5)	No testimony, but concerns expressed by some residents seeking congestion relief at existing intersection complex	Approve Public Hearing Draft recommendation with support for SHA study of operational improvements and understanding that an operationally and environmentally appropriate relocation at a future date would be consistent with Plan
Remove realignment of Muncaster Mill Road near Avery Road (Issue 6)	No testimony	Approve Public Hearing Draft recommendation and note support for minor realignment included in ongoing safety improvements