

March 20, 2003

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief  
Transportation Planning  
County-wide Planning Division *RCH*

Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor *DKH*  
Transportation Planning  
County-wide Planning Division

John Carter, Chief *JAC*  
Community-Based Planning Division

FROM: Shahriar Etemadi, Planner/Coordinator (301) 495-2168  
Transportation Planning  
County-wide Planning Division *[Signature]*

SUBJECT: Woodglan Drive Extended, Nicholson Lane to Marinelli Road Phase I  
Facility Planning Study, Project Prospectus Recommendations

---

**RECOMMENDATION: Transmit the following comments to the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT):**

1. Select Alternative 4, which would provide a shared-use path as one segment of the North Bethesda Trail between Nicholson Lane and Marinelli Road for Phase II Facility Planning.
2. Modify Alternative 4 to widen the shared-use path from eight feet to ten feet in width, consistent with the design for the remainder of the North Bethesda Trail.
3. Retain the Master Plan right-of-way for a future roadway design, implemented commensurate with redevelopment of the adjacent property or after State

Highway Administration completes a Project Planning study for the Nicholson Lane at MD 355 interchange.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS BOARD ITEM**

The purpose of this item today is to apprise the Montgomery County Planning Board on the Phase I Facility Planning study completed by DPWT for the Woodglen Drive Extended project and to provide County DPWT with your comments on the study.

This project was initiated in January 2002. The Planning staff has participated in the study team activities on this project and concur with the conclusion of the study that the accident reports and the traffic forecast do not demonstrate a need for a stand-alone business district roadway connection at this time. We believe the value of the Woodglen Drive Extension lies in providing local circulation options to achieve White Flint development objectives.

Local improvements needed to facilitate LCOR site development and/or the planned Rockville Pike/Nicholson Lane grade separation are not yet known. Woodglen Drive Extended could serve both as a local street and a "jughandle" roadway to accommodate selected turn movements for the intersections of MD 355 with Marinelli Road and Nicholson Lane. This local street will provide a parallel road to MD 355 by which many of the left-turn movements at both intersections could be eliminated. It could also facilitate some of the right and left-turn movements onto Nicholson Lane or Marinelli Road without the need to be on MD 355. All the possibilities that this road could reduce congestion at the two intersections are good reasons to continue it as a master plan project for future use.

Currently, DPWT is constructing missing segments and upgrading substandard segments elsewhere along the North Bethesda Trail (PDF No. 509922). The existing service road for the Metro Pike Shopping Center and the driveway for the McDonald's restaurant serve as the de-facto North Bethesda Trail between Nicholson Lane and Marinelli Road.

The remaining portions of the North Bethesda Trail are being constructed as a ten-foot-wide shared-use path. The study team initially considered reducing the pathway width to eight feet to minimize adjacent property impacts associated with constructing the entire business district street. Staff recommends that since Alternative 4 would implement the bike path as a stand-alone facility, the width be increased to ten feet consistent with the other portions of the North Bethesda Trail.

Our recommended near-term action would be for the County to construct the shared-use path after the Phase II study is completed to formalize this segment of the North Bethesda Trail. This action would aid bicycle and pedestrian circulation, and would be integrated into the future roadway design.

## BACKGROUND

In November 1994, a Staging Amendment to the North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan was approved and adopted. This Amendment includes the extension of Woodglen Drive from Nicholson Lane to Marinelli Road (Figure 1, location map), with two travel lanes and a Class I bikeway (separate from the roadway) within a 70 to 80-foot-wide right-of-way. The bikeway is part of the North Bethesda Trail. The study area is generally developed. The Montgomery County Conference Center is located at the north end of Woodglen Drive Extended, across Marinelli Road.

The Phase I Facility Planning study was completed for Woodglen Drive Extended by DPWT. The purpose of this study was to determine and document the benefit, impacts, and cost of extending Woodglen Drive between Nicholson Lane and Marinelli Road.

The project team defined the purpose and need of the project to:

- Provide an alternative north-south route between Nicholson Lane and Marinelli Road
- Provide relief to MD 355, a heavily congested road with an accident rate twice that of similar type Maryland highways
- Provide a pedestrian and bicyclist-friendly corridor

Four alternatives were studied:

1. The No-Build Alternative would provide no new construction or change to the existing condition.
2. Alternative 2 would provide a 32-foot-wide roadway (44 feet at Nicholson Lane) with eight-foot-wide hiker-biker trail on the west side and five-foot-wide sidewalk on the east side between Nicholson Lane and Marinelli Road. This alternative will provide no access points on the west side of the roadway, while on the east side some parking would be eliminated and access points consolidated. See Attachment 1 for this alternative.
3. Alternative 3 would provide a new roadway for a distance of approximately 320 feet north of Nicholson Lane, with three lanes at Nicholson Lane as proposed under Alternative 2. This improvement would connect to the existing service road 320 feet north of Nicholson Lane, and no roadway improvements north of this would be provided. However, an 8-foot-wide trail would extend from Nicholson Lane to Marinelli Road. See Attachment 2 for this alternative.
4. Alternative 4 would provide an 8-foot-wide trail within the dedicated right-of-way between Nicholson Lane and Marinelli Road. See Attachment 3 for this alternative.

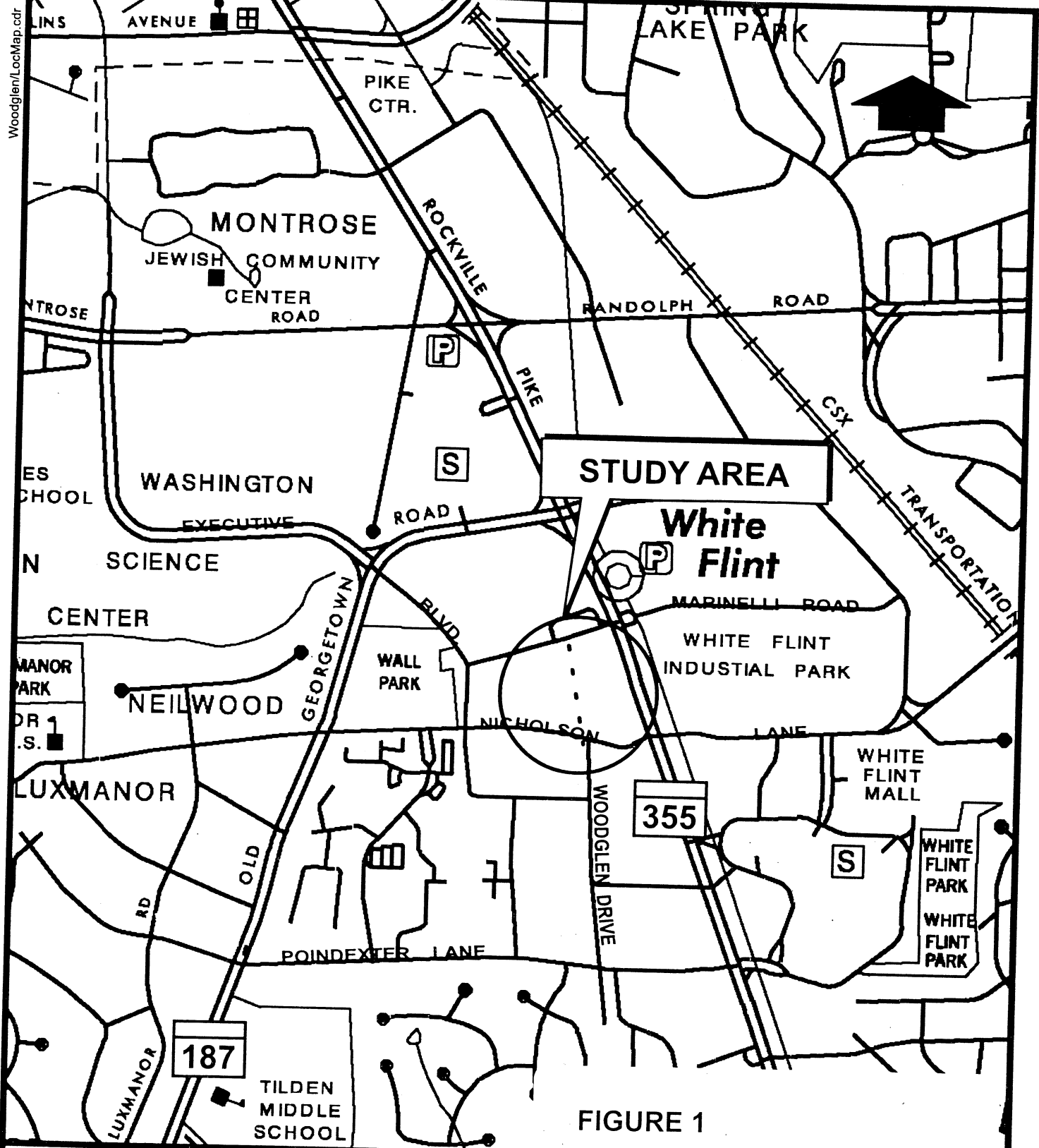
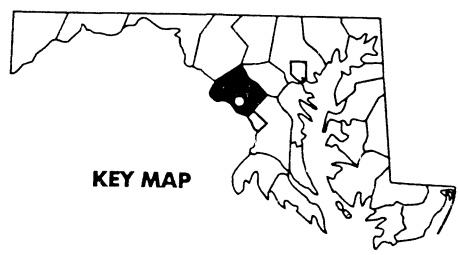


FIGURE 1



KEY MAP

MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTATION

**WOODGLEN DRIVE  
NICHOLSON LANE TO MARINELLI ROAD  
PHASE I FACILITY PLANNING STUDY**

**LOCATION MAP**

DATE  
JAN., 2003

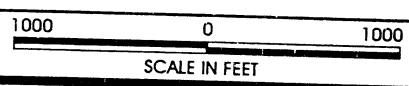


FIGURE NO.  
I-1

The total cost of each alternative, including construction, engineering and administration/inspection during construction, but excluding right-of-way, is as follows:

- Alternative 2: \$1,600,000
- Alternative 3: \$ 840,000
- Alternative 4: \$ 190,000

Implementation of Alternative 4 requires additional right-of-way. The Site Plan #8-86059A for Wisconsin Phase II in 1995 required the developer of The Grand to dedicate the western portion of the 70-foot right-of-way for Woodglen Drive Extended. This land has not been dedicated yet. DPWT and The Grand are negotiating how best the land will be conveyed to DPWT. Staff understands that upon conveyance of the land, there will be no right-of-way cost for Alternative 4.

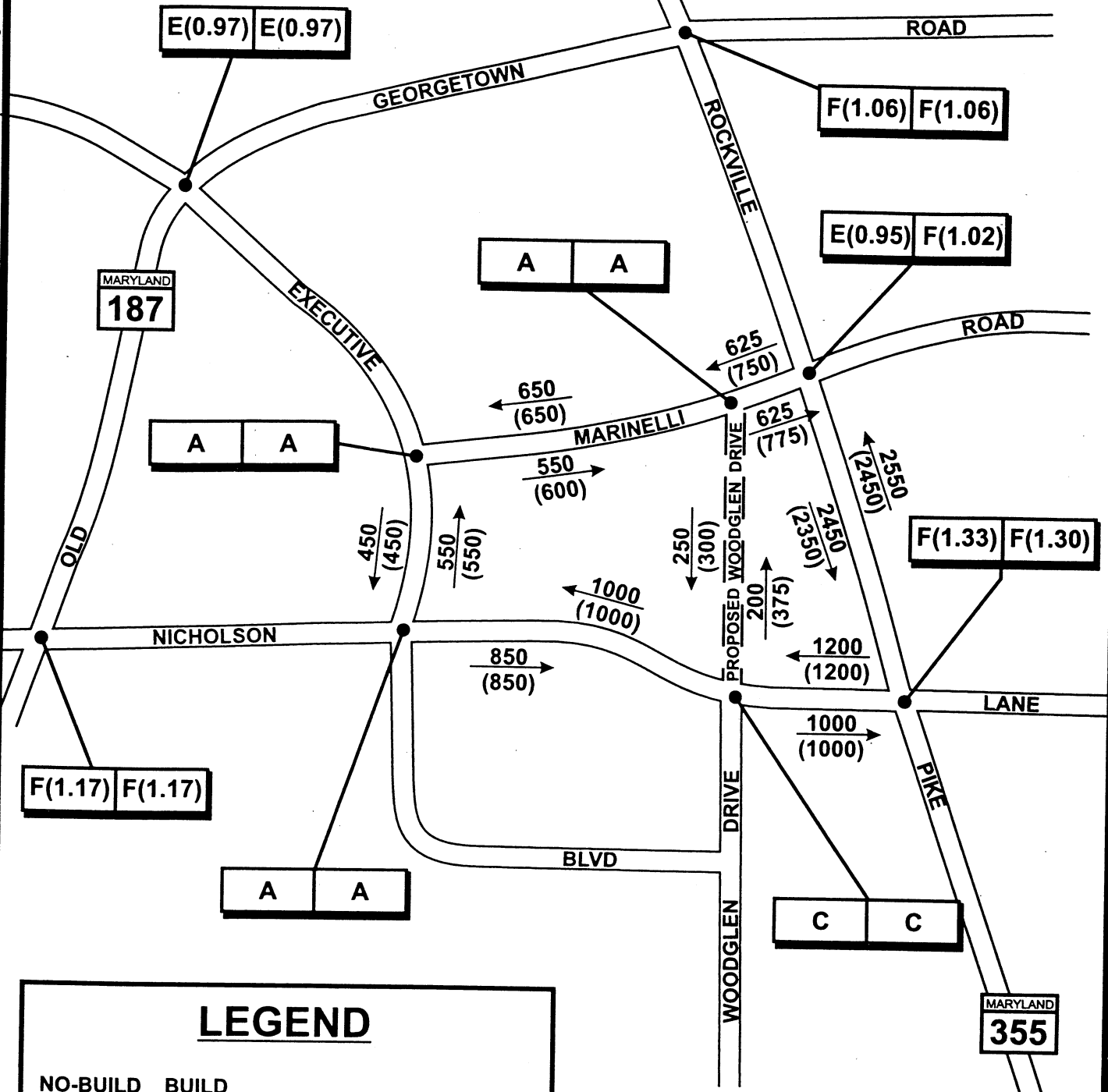
## DISCUSSION

**Considering impacts, benefits and costs, staff recommends that Alternative 4, a hiker-biker trail within the dedicated right-of-way be implemented. This is consistent with the recommendation of the project team that is reflected in the Final Project Prospectus.**

Staff concurs with the project team that there are two reasons why a full roadway connection as envisioned in Alternative 2 is not advisable at this time: the limited benefit for traffic operations and the impact on adjacent businesses along the east side of the right-of-way. Alternative 4 improves a substandard segment of the North Bethesda Trail while avoiding adverse environmental impacts, utility impacts, and capital costs at this time. The benefits of constructing a complete business district roadway may outweigh the costs at a later time based on future development or nearby roadway network improvements.

Under Alternatives 2 and 3, where Woodglen Drive is extended between Nicholson Lane and Marinelli Road, the traffic analysis indicates that there will be a slight increase in traffic volume on Woodglen Drive. Approximately 225 additional peak hour trips would use Woodglen Drive in the year 2025 (Figure 2). Traffic accidents in the area were also evaluated and the indication was that Woodglen Drive Extension would have little effect on reducing accidents in the area.

The project team evaluated the impact of Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 on adjoining properties, utilities, and the environment. The result was that Alternatives 2 and 3 will change the traffic pattern for adjoining parking circulation, parking spaces will be lost and landscaping will be altered. There are seven identified specimen trees that must be removed if Alternative 2 or 3 is implemented. The cost of Alternatives 2 and 3 are significantly higher than Alternative 4.



**LEGEND**

NO-BUILD	BUILD	
E(0.94)	E(0.94)	PM PEAK HOUR LEVEL OF SERVICE (VOLUME/CAPACITY RATIO)

575	→	NO-BUILD PEAK HOUR VOLUME
(650)		(BUILD PEAK HOUR VOLUME)

NOTE:  
 V/C ratios are shown when intersection is at LOS E or F to give a better idea of the degree of congestion. All Levels of Service shown are based on the Critical Lane Volume methodology. See the *Traffic Modeling and Analysis Study: Woodglen Drive Extended* for more detailed information.

**FIGURE 2**

MONTGOMERY COUNTY  
 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORTAION

**WOODGLEN DRIVE  
 NICHOLSON LANE TO MARINELLI ROAD  
 PHASE I FACILITY PLANNING STUDY**

**2025 TRAFFIC VOLUMES  
 AND LEVELS OF SERVICE**

DATE JAN., 2003	NO SCALE	FIGURE NO. I-6
--------------------	----------	-------------------

It is based on these evaluations that the project team recommended against building Woodglen Drive Extension as a business district street at this time. However, preserving the right-of-way for future road building and implementation of the North Bethesda Trail is needed.

SE/ct

#### Attachments

mno to mcpb re woodglen.DOC