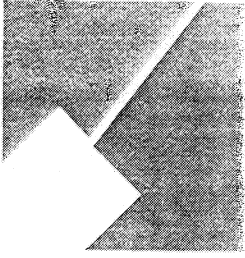


M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK & PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB  
ITEM NO. 5  
4-24-2003

April 18, 2003

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief  
County-wide Planning Division

Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief *RCH*  
Transportation Planning

John Carter, Chief *JC*  
Community-Based Planning

**FROM:** Larry Cole: 301-495-4528, for the Park and Planning Department *LC*

**PROJECT:** Citadel Avenue Extended  
Between Marinelli Road and Nicholson Lane  
CIP No. 509337

**REVIEW TYPE:** Mandatory Referral No. MR#03805-DPW&T-1

**APPLICANT:** Montgomery County Department of  
Public Works and Transportation

**APPLYING FOR:** Plan Approval

**COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING TEAM AREA:** North Bethesda-Garrett Park

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**RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL WITH COMMENTS TO DPWT**

Staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed project (see Attachment 1: Vicinity Map) with the following comments to the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT):

1. Construct a sidewalk along east side of Citadel Avenue between the right-of-way line and the curb, seven feet minimum from face of wall to face of curb. In order to provide the space to accomplish this:
  - a. Construct the proposed retaining wall on the east side of Citadel Avenue so that the face of the wall is at the right-of-way line.
  - b. Relocate the existing curb line and/or modify the existing retaining wall on the east side of Citadel Avenue.
2. Construct the proposed retaining walls on the west side of Citadel Avenue so that the face of the walls is at the right-of-way line. The face of all new retaining walls visible from Citadel Avenue should have an aesthetic treatment consistent with being in a Metro Station area.
3. Where the sidewalk on the west side of Citadel Avenue would be adjacent to the proposed retaining walls, it should be six feet minimum in width. A sidewalk should preferably be offset from a retaining wall by half the height of the retaining wall.
4. Provide a continuous seven-foot wide (min.) landscape panel along the west side of Citadel Avenue with shade trees.
5. Reduce the roadway width to 32 feet where necessary to achieve the above objectives.
6. Consider planting trailing vines at the top of retaining walls that would be above the level of the sidewalk.
7. Evaluate the intersection of Citadel Avenue and Marinelli Road for the installation of a traffic signal as part of this project.
8. Construct dual handicap ramps at the southeast and southwest corners of the Marinelli Road intersection and construct handicap ramps on the north side of the intersection. Consider striping the crosswalks at this intersection.
9. To the extent possible, the proposed sidewalks in the northeast and northwest quadrants of the Nicholson Lane intersection should be constructed to be offset from the curb line and outside the existing and proposed handicap ramps.
10. Construct dual handicap ramps in the southwest quadrant of the Nicholson Lane intersection.

**PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION:** None

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project would extend Citadel Avenue from its present terminus 300 feet south of Marinelli Road to Nicholson Lane. The road is classified as B-4, one of the recommended Industrial & Business Streets (see Attachment 2). ***(The road is noted as Chapman Avenue in the table and throughout the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan.)*** A 40-foot roadway would be constructed in a 60-foot right-of-way. There would be one travel lane in each direction and a left-turn lane to eastbound Nicholson Lane at the intersection. A five-foot wide sidewalk would also be constructed on the west side of Citadel Avenue.

## SUMMARY

This project would implement the recommendations of the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan by completing a one-block segment of Citadel Avenue next to the White Flint Metro Station, providing a local circulation benefit for the North Bethesda area (see Attachment 3). Expanding the network of local roads by projects such as this one will help relieve the major intersections in the area as the North Bethesda area continues to develop.

The right-of-way for this block is the narrowest of any segment of Citadel Avenue and one whose effective width would be further reduced by the location of the proposed retaining walls. To ensure that an adequate pedestrian space and landscaping can be accommodated, staff recommends that the proposed pavement width be reduced.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

DPWT proposes to extend the existing typical section of the roadway, which is 40 feet curb-to-curb in a 60-foot right-of-way (see Section A-A, Attachment 4). (The location of Section A-A is shown on Attachment 5.) This differs from the Montgomery County standard, which has only a 32-foot roadway (see Attachment 6). The additional space would be taken from the pedestrian and landscape areas. While the table in the Master Plan calls for four lanes, the text states that this should be two travel lanes and two parking lanes (see Attachment 7). Only two through lanes are proposed and staff believes that only two are feasible, given the narrow right-of-way and extraordinarily steep topography.

The on-street parking originally anticipated in the Master Plan would not be beneficial through much of the length of this project since the adjacent properties would be separated from the street by high retaining walls.

***Staff believes that the proposed roadway should be reduced to the standard 32 feet where turn lanes are not needed and where parking would not be needed, and that the proposed retaining walls should be moved back so that the pedestrian space is not unnecessarily reduced.***

## WSSC

A major impediment to constructing this project has been the presence of a 66-inch WSSC water main that is above the proposed roadway grade (see Attachment 8). However, WSSC will be lowering this pipe prior to construction.

## Retaining Walls and Pedestrian Accommodation

### East Side

There is a 275-foot-long retaining wall along the east side of the existing segment of Citadel Avenue, the face of which is three feet from the curb line. The location of the wall removes four useable feet of space from an already narrow right-of-way. This project would extend the wall another 300 feet. While the wall is needed to accommodate the grade difference between Citadel Avenue and the lower WMATA bus garage parking lot, 17 to 18 feet below the level of Citadel Avenue, having only three feet between the face of the wall and the curb, as proposed, would leave no room for a sidewalk.

Presently, there are no major pedestrian generators on the east side of Citadel Avenue. The only other businesses are a bus garage and a plumbing and heating supply store. However, the location is only one block from the White Flint Metro Station. The Master Plan recommends improving the sidewalk network in the Metro station area and a better sidewalk network would support redevelopment of the area. The HOC apartment building at the northwest corner of Citadel and Marinelli is an example of the level of development that is anticipated. As noted above, much of this segment would be encumbered by retaining walls, but pedestrians to the east of Citadel Avenue along Nicholson Lane would be able to use these sidewalks to gain quicker access to Metro, compared to going up to Rockville Pike.

In addition, there are ten existing metered parking spaces on the east side of Citadel Avenue, a number that may grow when the road is extended. Currently, because there is no sidewalk adjacent to these spaces, drivers are forced to cross the road mid-block, raising a safety concern when this becomes a through street.

While the existing retaining wall could be rebuilt or modified to place the face of the proposed wall at the property line to create the room needed for the sidewalk, it would be an expensive proposition because of the great height of the wall. Instead, **staff recommends that the existing roadway be narrowed by four feet to provide an adequate sidewalk.** The resulting seven-foot width between the right-of-way line and the curb will provide an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant sidewalk to be provided with space for traffic signs, and for parking meters if they remain. The 36-foot roadway width that would remain after the narrowing would still be sufficient to maintain its current use as two travel lanes and a parking lane, and would accommodate a conversion to two travel lanes and a turn lane. If DPWT determines

that it is feasible, the top of the existing retaining wall could be modified to provide an additional four feet for the sidewalk.

### West Side

The roadway would be lower than the adjacent properties on the west side of Citadel Avenue. Two segments of retaining wall are proposed to manage the grade difference, the northern segment being up to five feet two inches and the southern segment being up to nine feet tall. The face of the retaining walls is proposed to be one foot inside the right-of-way for most of the length.

In the northern segment, staff believes that the face of the wall should be constructed at the property line so that the sidewalk may be widened to six feet to provide pedestrians a one-foot shy distance to compensate for the lateral obstruction. A two-foot shy distance is preferred however.

In the southern segment, the roadway would be widened slightly and the center would be striped out to create a left turn lane to Nicholson Lane (see Attachment 8). Accommodating the corner of the Meineke parking in this location would reduce the landscape panel to two feet, leaving pedestrians in a seven-foot space between the nine-foot tall wall and the curb. Staff believes that this is an inefficient use of space and one that would create a very uncomfortable environment for pedestrians.

***Staff recommends that the proposed roadway width be reduced to 32 feet where necessary to achieve a continuous seven-foot wide landscape panel and provide a sidewalk that is six-foot wide minimum where adjacent to the retaining wall.*** The end of the retaining wall in this area should also be pulled farther away from the sidewalk where there is more right-of-way available to improve the pedestrian environment.

### **Traffic**

#### Marinelli Road

There is a stop sign on Citadel Avenue at Marinelli Road and no traffic signal is planned as part of this project, however, staff believes that this should be reviewed. The purpose of the project is to provide better local circulation. As such, the road will likely attract traffic that now uses other routes in the area. There are not many traffic generators in this block, but it is only one block from the White Flint Metro Station. ***Staff recommends that the intersection of Citadel Avenue and Marinelli Road be evaluated for the installation of a traffic signal as part of this project.***

In addition, the Marinelli Road intersection requires modifications so that it will accommodate pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The center turn lane striping should be removed through the intersection area. Dual handicap ramps should be installed on the southeast and southwest corners to meet ADA Best Practices recommendations and

handicap ramps should be installed on the north side of the intersection. Consideration should be given to striping the crosswalks.

### Nicholson Lane

There is an existing traffic signal at the intersection of Nicholson Lane and Huff Court that will be modified as part of this project.

The proposed curb at the northwest corner of the intersection has a 35-foot radius and has angle points in the curb line that offset the radius curb three feet from the extended curb lines of each road. This geometry would make it easier for trucks and buses to turn right onto Nicholson Lane but would also make the pedestrian crossing distances longer (see Attachment 9). **Staff recommends that dual handicap ramps be installed in the southwest quadrant** to shorten the pedestrian crossing distance by ten to twelve feet on the west leg of the intersection. Dual ramps are recommended by the U.S. Access Board to provide the shortest, directional pedestrian crossings.

To the extent possible, the proposed sidewalks in the northeast and northwest quadrants of the Nicholson Lane intersection should be constructed to be offset from the curb line and outside the existing and proposed handicap ramps. An offset location will keep pedestrians farther away from traffic and eliminate the need for pedestrians to traverse the slopes of the ramp and driveway areas unnecessarily.

### **Bicyclist Accommodation**

No bicyclist accommodation along the subject segment of Citadel Avenue is recommended in the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan.

### **Nearby Development**

A number of large projects are in various stages of development in the area of the proposed project. This project would mitigate the traffic impacts of these developments, but is being undertaken at this time to support the Montgomery County Conference Center.

As noted above, the proposed LCOR/White Flint East development is immediately north of the subject project. The developer's rezoning request to accommodate this development was recommended to be approved by the Planning Board on November 7, 2002. The zoning request is currently being considered by the hearing examiner. There is a related Zoning Text Amendment scheduled for consideration for the Board on the same date as the subject Mandatory Referral.

The LCOR/White Flint East development, while not yet approved, would affect the future of Citadel Avenue in two ways. Rather than connect the two segments of Citadel Avenue north of Old Georgetown Road and south of Marinelli Road with a jog in the roadway as shown in the Master Plan (see Attachment 10), the development would

build two parallel roads, creating a discontinuity in Citadel Avenue. Each one of these roads would be one lane in each direction with a roadway median. Staff believes that this will provide adequate circulation and create a good pedestrian environment.

## **Environmental**

The proposed construction is exempt from Forest Conservation.

## **SUMMARY**

While the proposed project would provide a significant traffic circulation benefit, it would not do so in a way that would promote redevelopment of the Metro Station area. Staff believes that the design of the segments of Citadel Avenue that have already been built and the constraints posed by topography and existing structures strongly indicate that the roadway width should be narrowed to allow more space to be allotted to pedestrians and landscaping. A narrower roadway would still adequately accommodate local traffic.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

DPWT held a public meeting on this project on October 16, 2000, which was attended by 23 people. The Garrett Park Estates-White Flint Park Citizens' Association has written a letter to the Board in support of the project (see Attachment 11).

## **BACKGROUND**

The extension of Citadel Avenue is recommended in the 1994 North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan, in which the road is called Chapman Avenue, B-4, one of the Industrial & Business Streets. Segments of the road presently exist and are variously called Chapman Avenue, Maple Avenue, Citadel Avenue, and Huff Court. The segment from Marinelli Road to Nicholson Lane is recommended to have a 60-foot right-of-way. All other segments are recommended to have either a 70-foot or 80-foot right-of-way. As noted above, the Master Plan recommends that the subject segment of roadway have two travel lanes and two parking lanes.

LC:ct

mno to mcpb re citadel ave. extended.doc