

Item #2



City of Rockville  
111 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland  
20850-2364  
www.ci.rockville.md.us

Community Planning and  
Development Services  
240-314-8200  
TTY 240-314-8137  
FAX 240-314-8210

Inspection Services  
240-314-8240

Planning and Zoning Division  
240-314-8220

Landlord Tenant  
240-314-8219

June 24, 2003

Mr. Derick Berlage  
Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: City of Rockville Comments on Preliminary Plan 1-03029 (Fortune Parc)

Dear Mr. Berlage:

City of Rockville staff has reviewed the preliminary plan for Fortune Parc and believe that it is premature for the Planning Board to approve the preliminary plan since the traffic study is incomplete and underestimates the levels of congestion. Additional roadway improvements may be required as a result of revisions to the study. The City of Rockville requests that you defer action on the application until a revised traffic study is submitted and the City has an opportunity to review it.

### Transportation

City staff has reviewed the revised traffic study (May 2, 2003) and find that while the revised study addresses a number of issues raised in our letter to Jeff Price dated February 7, 2003 (attached), there still remain a number of insufficiencies in the study that need to be addressed. We believe that the necessary revisions will result in greater congestion levels than shown in the current study.

One of the primary reasons is the difference in how the Tower Oaks development is treated during Local Area Transportation Review (LATR). Tower Oaks is an approved comprehensive planned development (CPD) in the City of Rockville. The approved concept plan required the developer to provide substantial roadway improvements and established the maximum permitted development. As such, the City of Rockville includes all of its remaining development in the pipeline for traffic studies. However, the May 2003 Fortune Parc traffic study only includes the portion of the development that has received detailed application approval (detailed site plan approval).

Approximately 1,568,400 square feet of space remains to be constructed. Approximately 600,000 s.f. of the remaining space has been approved through a detailed application (detailed site plan approval). Only the detailed application approvals have been included in the May 2003 study. The impact of the omission of almost 1 million square feet is substantial and underestimates future congestion levels.

#### MAYOR

Larry Giammo

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The omission of the remaining development is inconsistent with the Annual Growth Policy's (AGP) treatment of Tower Oaks since it was approved. The Staging Ceilings in the AGP have always included the entire development in the pipeline of approved development. However, Park and Planning staff has indicated that the entire development has not been included in the pipeline for Local Area Transportation Review (LATR).

The omission of the remainder of the development, while consistent with past administrative practice is inconsistent with the *Approved and Adopted Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines*, which states:

"The traffic study for the proposed development under consideration must include in background traffic all developments approved by the Planning Board or other public body (i.e., the Board of Appeals, the cities of Rockville or Gaithersburg) prior to the submission of a preliminary plan application or complete traffic study..." (emphasis added)

Since the Tower Oaks development (and other CPDs) will not have to go through an additional transportation impact evaluation and the associated road improvements have been constructed, the full development should be included in the Fortune Parc traffic impact study.

The specific issues that were identified in our review include:

1. 600,000 sq. ft. of office and 22,000 sq. ft. of high-turnover restaurant traffic from the approved Tower Oaks development were included in the May 2, 2003 revised study. This is less development than was included in the previous study and omits the remainder of the development (968,400 sq. ft.). As a result, the congestion levels are underestimated and are shown as being lower than the January 2003 report. City staff recommends that the traffic impact study be revised to include all of the approved development.
2. In order to determine whether a traffic signal is warranted at the intersection of Seven Locks Road/Twin Oaks Drive a signal warrant study must be submitted for the intersection. The information provided in the queue analysis and the delay analysis was not sufficient to determine the need for a traffic signal. In addition, City staff had requested a gap analysis that was not provided in the revised study. City staff recommends that the Planning Board require the applicant submit a signal warrant study and a gap analysis and be required to design and build the signal if authorized by the City of Rockville.
3. The applicant is connecting Fortune Parc to Fortune Terrace in the City of Rockville. Staff does not object to this connection to a City street from a

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traffic perspective, however, the City of Rockville will require the following improvements be made to Fortune Terrace in order to safely accommodate the increased vehicular, truck, pedestrian and bicycle traffic on Fortune Terrace:

- a. Fortune Terrace is classified as a Primary Industrial Road, which requires a 44-foot cross section. Currently the road is sub-standard, with a 36-foot cross section that tapers down to a 30-foot cross section. The City will require the applicant to upgrade the road to a Primary Residential cross section (36-feet) and a Primary Industrial pavement section for the entire length of Fortune Terrace within the existing right-of-way. The reduced cross section is recommended in light of the limited area being served by the road.
- b. The City of Rockville will require the applicant to provide an 8-foot asphalt path along the north side of Fortune Terrace to safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.

### **Miscellaneous**

Given the proximity of the Fortune Parc development to the Potomac Springs neighborhood, the City urges the Planning Board to place conditions limiting the signage along Seven Locks Road and for the signs on the western and northern buildings facades.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

The City of Rockville requests that you defer action on the application until a revised traffic study is submitted and the City has an opportunity to review it. If the application is not deferred, then the City recommends that the Planning Board add the following conditions:

1. Require the applicant submit a signal warrant study and a gap analysis and be required to design and build the signal if authorized by the City of Rockville.
2. Require the applicant to upgrade the road to a Primary Residential cross section (36-feet) and a Primary Industrial pavement section for the entire length of Fortune Terrace.
3. Require the applicant to provide an 8-foot asphalt path along the north side of Fortune Terrace to safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians.
4. Limit the signage along Seven Locks Road and for the signs on the western and northern buildings facades.

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Please let us know if you would like additional information or if you have any questions. Bob Spalding may be reached at 240-314-8222 and Larry Marcus may be reached at 240-314-8505.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Spalding, AICP  
Chief of Planning



Larry Marcus  
Chief of Transportation

Attachments

February 7 letter to Jeff Price  
Construction details

cc: Malcolm Shaneman, M-NCPPC  
Ed Axler, M-NCPPC  
Ron Welke, M-NCPPC  
Jeff Price  
Bill Landfair, M-NCPPC  
Greg Leck, MC-DPWT  
Greg Cook, MD SHA  
Wes Guckert, The Traffic Group  
Art Chambers  
Hal Cranor  
Sandra Marks



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February 7, 2003

Mr. Jeff Price  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Re: City of Rockville Initial Comments on the Fortune Parc Traffic Study

Dear Mr. Price:

City of Rockville staff have reviewed the revised traffic study (January 6, 2003) and find that the study has a number of insufficiencies that need to be corrected before a complete analysis of the impacts of the proposed project can be made. However, it is clear that the revisions will result in a greater level of impact and will exceed the County's standards and not pass Local Area Transportation Review unless more substantial improvements are proposed.

Some of the major concerns include the omission of 968,000 s.f. of office space from Tower Oaks (even though the primary reason for the revision was to include Tower Oaks traffic), unexplained reductions in Background and Total Critical Lane Volumes when a portion of Tower Oaks traffic was added, omission of an analysis of the impacts of Montrose Parkway which is budgeted for completion during the projected six-year build-out of this project, and no communication from the applicant to the City regarding their proposals to modify a City-maintained intersection and to access a City-maintained road.

We will submit final comments following the necessary revisions. In addition to these comments, the City of Rockville will provide comprehensive comments on the entire project at a later date.

The issues that we found in our review include:

1. Traffic from the approved Tower Oaks development has not been accurately included in the study. This results in lower levels of background traffic than will occur and underestimates the level of congestion that will result from Fortune Parc. Corrections that must be made prior to the Planning Board's evaluation of the proposed development include:
  - a. All approved development from Tower Oaks (968,400 s.f. of office and 75,000 s.f. health & recreation facility) that are not shown in the traffic study must be included in the analysis. The January 6 study only included 600,000 s.f. of office. This is a flawed assumption on several levels as summarized below:

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- i. Because no further traffic studies are required for Tower Oaks development, the entire remainder of the development (1,568,400 s.f.) should be included in background levels.
  - ii. Tower Oaks has 620,000 s.f. of office approved in detailed site plans that only require building permits before construction can begin. Another 280,000 s.f. of office space will be submitted for detailed site plan approval in the next month.
  - iii. Fortune Parc assumes that they will construct 141,667 s.f. of office per year for 6 years, while they assume that Tower Oaks will only construct 100,000 s.f. per year. This is assumed even though Tower Oaks has current detailed site plan approvals that exceed that rate and Fortune Parc has no approvals. In addition, since it will be at least 2 years before an office building is occupied in Fortune Parc, this brings their assumed absorption rate to 212,500 s.f. per year for the remaining 4 years. The logic in these assumptions is not consistent and underestimate the impact of Fortune Parc.
  - iv. The study assumes that 50% of the restaurant trips are pass-by. Our experience with Clyde's *The Lodge at Tower Oaks* shows that it is not attracting pass-by traffic because most of the traffic on Preserve Parkway is going to or from the restaurant. It has become a destination restaurant that draws vehicles to the area at a much greater level than a normal restaurant. Therefore no pass-by trips should be assumed for the restaurant.
  - v. The traffic from Tower Oaks assigned to the road network was not consistent with the approved traffic study for Tower Oaks. The correct assignment (not adjusted for occupied development) is attached. These volumes should serve as the base for the trip assignments in the revision of the traffic study. The result will be a dramatic increase in the congestion levels at the Montrose Road/Tower Oaks Intersection which will show that Fortune Parc will exceed the County's LATR standards, even with the proposed improvement.
2. Although the January 6 traffic study was revised to add traffic from Tower Oaks, staff noted other changes in the results that are not explained and underestimate total traffic volumes at intersections including:
- a. The Critical Lane Volume for Background traffic at Montrose Road and Tower Oaks Boulevard was reduced from LOS E (1551) to LOS D (1365) in the AM Peak Hour for Background, and the CLV for Total Traffic was reduced from LOS E (1581) to LOS (1454), between the

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December and January study. The traffic from Tower Oaks should have increased the CLVs. They should not have decreased by 12% and 8%.

- b. The PM Peak Hour Background and Total Traffic CLVs also decreased at the Seven Locks and Tuckerman Lane intersection between the 2 studies. Both cases result in Fortune Parc's impacts being underestimated at the two intersections where failing conditions exist.
3. Even with the dramatic understatement of traffic from Tower Oaks, the intersection of Montrose Road and Tower Oaks Boulevard is forecasted to operate at unacceptable levels of service based on the County and City standards.
4. Although the traffic study proposes a six-year build-out for its project, it does not include funded road projects in the study area. Montrose Parkway is scheduled for 100% of its construction funding by FY2008. The completion of Montrose Parkway will increase the traffic volumes on Montrose Road at Tower Oaks Boulevard because traffic from the Parkway and Montrose Road converge east of this intersection and the level of service will be worse than shown in the study.
5. City of Rockville staff has not been contacted by the applicant to discuss the feasibility, desirability, and acceptability of the proposed changes to the City-maintained Tower Oaks Boulevard. In the December draft the applicant proposed restriping southbound Tower Oaks Boulevard from two lefts and one right turn lane and in the January draft one left, one shared left/right, and one right were proposed.
6. City of Rockville staff has not been contacted by the applicant to discuss the impacts of a connection to City-maintained Fortune Terrace.
7. We are concerned about the impacts on the unsignalized intersection of Seven Locks Road and Twin Oaks Drive and the ability of Rockville residents to exit their neighborhood. We request that an analysis of this intersection be performed to determine if sufficient gaps will remain to allow left turns out of the neighborhood.

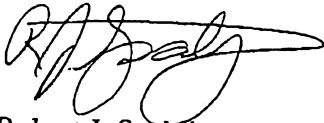
We are particularly troubled by the continued pattern of the study ignoring the traffic generated by the approved Tower Oaks development. The December 18, 2002 study omitted 1,568,400 s.f. of approved office space. The January 6, 2003 study omitted 968,000 s.f. of approved office space and improperly assigned trips from 600,000 s.f. in a manner that resulted in the underestimation of Fortune Parc's impacts.

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Overall, we are very concerned about the lack of improvements proposed for a development of this size in an area that experiences the current levels of congestion.

Please let me know if you would like additional information or if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Spalding, AICP  
Chief of Planning

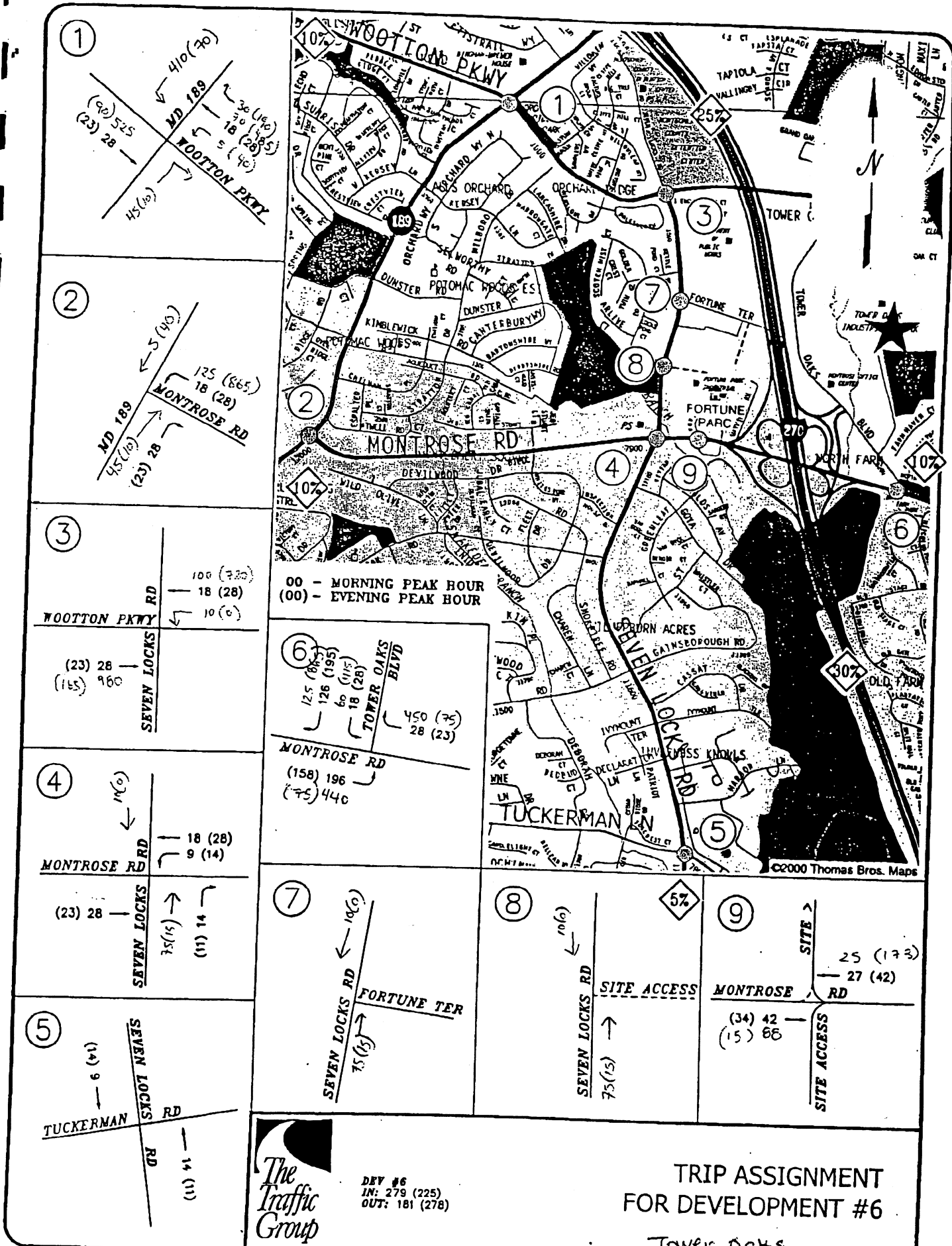


Larry Marcus  
Chief of Transportation

Attachments

- cc: Malcolm Shaneman, M-NCPPC
- Ed Axler, M-NCPPC
- Ron Welke, M-NCPPC
- Bill Landfair, M-NCPPC
- Greg Leck, MC-DPWT
- Greg Cook, MD SHA
- Wes Guckert, The Traffic Group
- Art Chambers
- Hal Cranor





**The Traffic Group**  
 DEV #6  
 IN: 279 (225)  
 OUT: 181 (278)

**TRIP ASSIGNMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT #6**

Tower Oaks

FROM APPROVED TRAFFIC STUDY

# Montrose Parkway West - No. 500311

Category: Transportation  
 Agency: Public Works & Transportation  
 Planning Area: Rockville  
 Relocation Impact: Five residences.

Date Last Modified: March 21, 2002  
 Previous PDF Page Number: NONE  
 Required Adequate Public Facility: YES

## EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000)

Cost Element	Total	Thru FY01	Estimate FY02	Total 6 Years	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	Beyond 6 Years
Planning, Design and Supervision	3,517	0	0	3,517	620	620	142	854	914	367	0
Land	27,444	0	0	27,444	6,600	12,600	3,138	0	5,106	0	0
Site Improvements and Utilities	4,310	0	0	4,310	0	0	0	200	2,450	1,660	0
Construction	22,184	0	0	22,184	0	0	2,700	6,880	8,720	3,884	0
Other	145	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>57,455</b>	<b>7,220</b>	<b>13,220</b>	<b>5,980</b>	<b>7,934</b>	<b>17,180</b>	<b>5,911</b>	<b>145</b>

## FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000)

EDAET	3,654	0	0	3,654	0	0	1,340	2,314	0	0	0
G.O. Bonds	24,448	0	0	24,303	5,880	6,702	0	0	9,650	71	145
Impact Tax	29,498	0	0	29,498	1,340	4,518	4,640	5,620	7,540	5,840	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>57,455</b>	<b>7,220</b>	<b>13,220</b>	<b>5,980</b>	<b>7,934</b>	<b>17,180</b>	<b>5,911</b>	<b>145</b>

## ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (\$000)

### DESCRIPTION

This project provides for construction of a new four-lane divided road from Montrose Road (starting 200 feet east of Tildenwood Drive) travelling east to 'old' Old Georgetown Road (approximately 5,700 feet) in the undeveloped land formerly reserved for the Rockville facility. The typical section for the Parkway will be a closed section road with 12-foot wide lanes and a 20 to 30 foot wide median. A 10-foot bikeway will run along the north side of the Parkway east of Old Farm Creek, and a 5-foot sidewalk will run along the south side. In addition to the new Parkway, Montrose Road will be widened to six lanes with a median, and a 5-foot sidewalk on the north side, from Tower Oaks Boulevard, east to the new Parkway. Other improvements include extending Hitching Post Lane to Farm Haven Drive, and providing a new four-way signalized intersection with pedestrian phasing at the new Hitching Post Lane/Farm Haven Drive/Montrose Road intersection.

**Service Area:**  
 North Bethesda-Garrett Park

**Capacity:**  
 By 2020, the average daily traffic volume for Montrose Road between Tildenwood Lane and East Jefferson Street is estimated to exceed 74,000 vehicles. Without this project, several intersections will reach peak-hour Critical Lane Volumes that exceed 1,800.

**JUSTIFICATION:**  
 This project is a Required Adequate Public Facility. The North Bethesda Master Plan allows for 21,000 additional jobs and 9,000 additional residences (beyond 1999), and this project is one of the master-planned transportation facilities needed to accommodate the master-planned growth. In addition, the project will provide congestion relief on Montrose Road, safe turning movements onto and off of Montrose Road, safe places for pedestrians to cross Montrose Road, and reduced cut-through traffic in neighborhoods abutting Montrose Road.

**Plans and Studies:**  
 M-NCPPC North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan, 1992; M-NCPPC Master Plan of Highways.

**Specific Data:**  
 This project is the western portion of the master-planned Montrose Parkway. The eastern portion (east of MD 355) is currently in Facility Planning Phase I, and will be ready for final design in FY07. The Randolph Road/MD 355/Montrose Road intersection is in the planning stage by the Maryland State Highway Administration (MSHA). Schedules for both Montrose Parkway West and the MSHA are running concurrently.

**STATUS:**  
 Preliminary engineering design complete.

**OTHER:**  
 The scope and schedule are new for FY03. The project warrants noise abatement measures and these will be funded under the new Highway Noise Abatement project, in accordance with the Highway Noise Abatement Policy. In coordination with M-NCPPC's recommendations for the Wigus East development, the alignment of the Parkway east of East Jefferson Street has been shifted to the south. This allows for a greater distance between the Parkway and the residential development to the north. The project cost assumes acquisition of approximately 8.7 acres of the 16.7 acre Armstrong tract, the necessary portion of the MSHA's right-of-way, and approximately 130 feet of right-of-way on the Wigus tract. Consistent with M-NCPPC's staff recommendation for the Wigus East development, the project assumes dedication of a 130 foot wide portion of the Wigus Parcel N231. Impact Tax funds programmed are consistent with the new legislation.

### APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA

Date First Appropriation	FY03	(\$000)
Initial Cost Estimate		57,600
Final Cost Estimate		
Current Scope	FY03	57,600
Last FY's Cost Estimate		0
Present Cost Estimate		57,600
Appropriation Request	FY03	7,703
Appropriation Request Est.	FY04	20,981
Supplemental		
Appropriation Request	FY02	0
Transfer		0
Cumulative Appropriation		0
Expenditures/		
Encumbrances		0
Unencumbered Balance		0
Partial Closeout Thru	FY00	0
New Partial Closeout	FY01	0
Total Partial Closeout		0

### COORDINATION

Specific recommendations and design criteria have been developed in close coordination with the:  
 County Council  
 M-NCPPC  
 Maryland State Highway Administration  
 Maryland Department of Environment  
 Maryland Department of Natural Resources  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 Department of Permitting Services  
 City of Rockville  
 Affected communities  
 Special Projects Legislation is scheduled for Council action on June XX, 2002 (Bill No. X/XX).

### MAP

See Map on Next Page