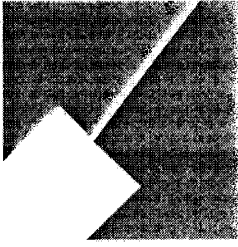


M-NCPPC



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760  
301-495-4500, www.mncppc.org

MCPB  
ITEM NO. 12  
06-17-2004

June 10, 2004

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief  
County-wide Planning Division

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

FROM: Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor (301) 495-4530 *DKH*  
Transportation Planning  
County-wide Planning Division

SUBJECT: Randolph Road Phase I Transportation Facility Planning Study  
Project Prospectus Recommendations

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

- 1) Alternative 2 of the Randolph Road Facility Planning Study (consisting of spot safety improvements) should be implemented as a short-term solution to the most immediate sight distance and safety concerns as a Capital Improvement Program project (CIP).
- 2) Alternative 3 of the Randolph Road Facility Planning Study (consisting of comprehensive improvements to implement wider travel lanes and bicycle lanes) should proceed to Phase II of the Facility Planning process as recommended in the March 2004 Final Project Prospectus to develop a detailed design for the master planned arterial roadway. Alternative 3 should not be funded for construction unless and until the County has committed to building Montrose Parkway East.

- 3) Continue coordination with the related State Highway Administration (SHA) project planning and DPWT facility planning studies, particularly regarding definition at the project termini to intersection geometric improvements being pursued at the Randolph Road intersections with Parklawn Drive and Randolph Road.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THIS REPORT**

This report contains four sections:

- **Purpose of this briefing**
- **Study context** including related study area projects
- **Project Description**, and
- **Public Outreach**

## **PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEFING**

The purpose of this briefing is to review the findings and recommendations of the Phase I Facility Planning study completed by the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation for Randolph Road between Parklawn Drive and Veirs Mill Road.

The Randolph Road study was initiated in late 2001. DPWT prepared a Final Project Prospectus in May 2004, based on technical studies conducted by an interagency, multi-disciplinary team, and incorporating comments received at several public meetings and discussions. The Final Project Prospectus recommends pursuit of a staged implementation plan consisting of immediate design of three spot safety improvements (Alternative 2) through the Capital Improvements Program and continuing design in Phase II of Facility Planning of a comprehensive improvements to implement wider travel lanes and bike lanes (Alternative 3).

Neither Alternative 2 nor Alternative 3 provides any additional vehicular capacity at study area intersections. The recommendation to pursue Alternative 3 presumes that the County will remain committed to implementing the adjacent Montrose Parkway East project. If the County chooses the No-Build alternative for Montrose Parkway, the needed improvements on Randolph Road would need to be revisited to consider how best to replace planned vehicular capacity and off-road bicycle connectivity, and address community access and safety concerns.

**Staff concurs with the Project Prospectus recommendation for the phased improvement program, pursuing Alternative 2 through the (CIP) and conducting Phase II facility planning for Alternative 3. The improvements recommended in Alternative 3 should not be implemented until the County has committed to building Montrose Parkway East.** The County Council's Transportation and Environment (T&E) Committee will be briefed on the study results at a session likely to be scheduled during July. Should the T&E Committee endorse the continuation of the project on its current schedule the study will proceed into Phase II of Facility Planning. The Planning Board would next review the project as a mandatory referral sometime during late 2005 or early 2006.

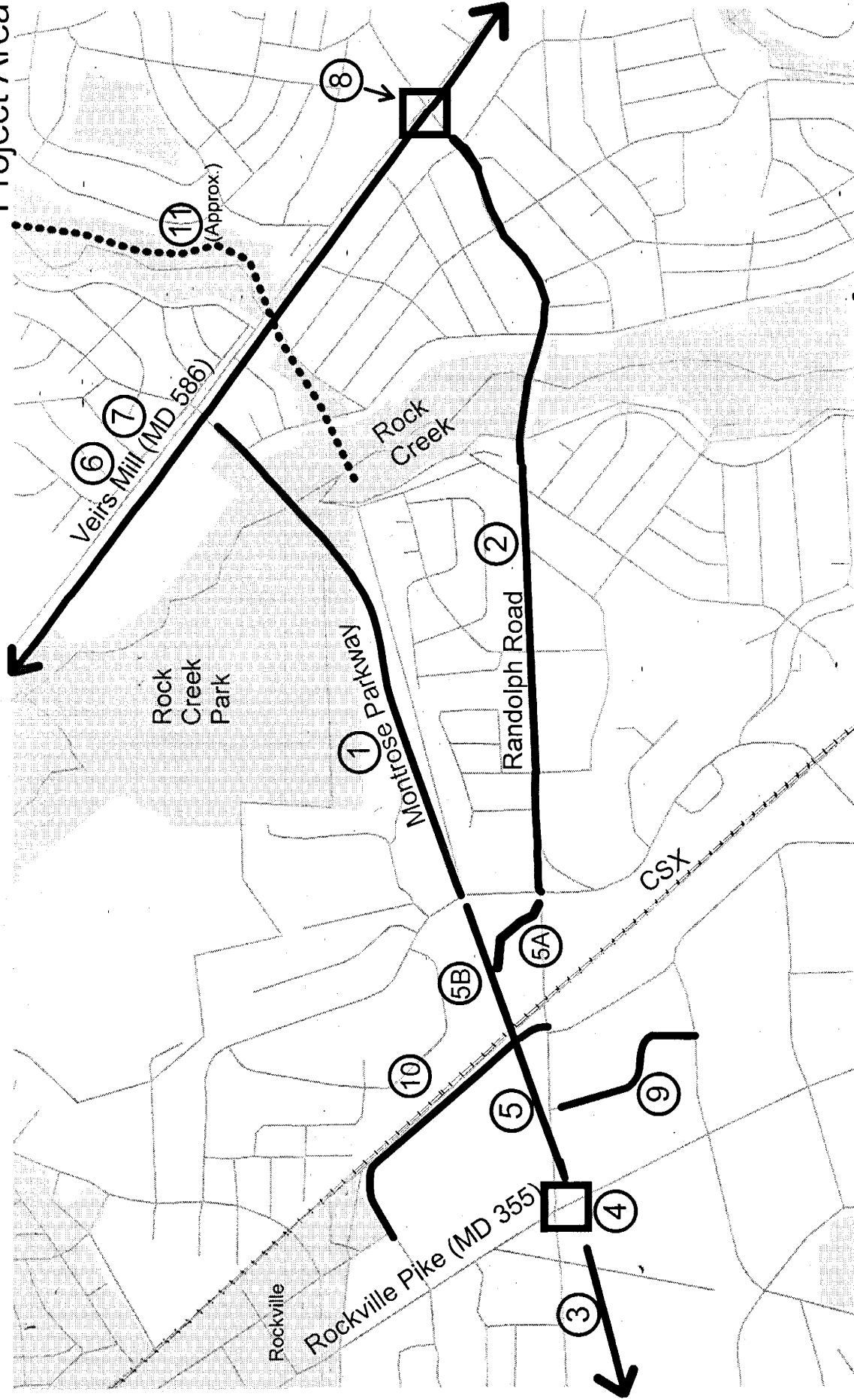
## STUDY CONTEXT

Randolph Road is an arterial roadway providing east-west connectivity within the North Bethesda/Garrett Park and Kensington/Wheaton Master Plan areas. The project is closely linked with several other projects in various stages of facility or project planning as summarized in Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2:

**Exhibit 1 – Related Transportation Projects**

Map Key	Project	Limits	Lead Implementing Agency	Status
1.	Montrose Parkway East	Parklawn Drive to Veirs Mill Road	DPWT	Phase I Facility Planning study completed spring 2004
2.	Randolph Road	Parklawn Drive to Veirs Mill Road	DPWT	Phase I Facility Planning commensurate with Montrose Parkway East
3.	Montrose Parkway West	I-270 to "old" Old Georgetown Road	DPWT	Construction expected to begin in early 2005
4.	MD 355 / Montrose / Randolph Road interchange	"Old" Old Georgetown Road to Maple/Chapman Avenues	SHA	Funded for final design
5. (Including either segment 5a or segment 5b)	Relocated Randolph Road bridge over CSX tracks	Maple/Chapman Avenues to Parklawn Drive	SHA	Awaiting funding for final design
6.	Veirs Mill Road Bus Rapid Transit	Rockville to Wheaton	DPWT	Phase I Facility Planning scheduled to be completed spring 2005
7.	Veirs Mill Road widening	Rockville to Randolph Road	SHA	Not scheduled but recommended by the County Council and the Executive as a priority for new project planning starts
8.	Randolph Road and Veirs Mill Road intersection improvement		M-NCPPC, SHA, and DPWT	Master Plan amendment for grade-separated interchange approved and adopted 2004, candidate DPWT Facility Planning study
9.	Chapman Avenue Extended	Randolph Road to Old Georgetown Road	DPWT	Phase I Facility Planning scheduled to be completed spring 2005
10.	Nebel Street Extended	Randolph Road to Bou Avenue	DPWT	Construction expected to begin in late 2005
11.	Matthew Henson Trail	Rock Creek Park to Northwest Branch Park	M-NCPPC	Facility planning completed April 2003

Project Area



See Exhibit 1 for explanation of referenced projects

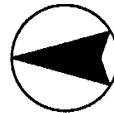


Exhibit 2  
Related Transportation Projects

The relationship between the Randolph Road project and the most pertinent related projects are summarized below:

### **Montrose Parkway**

DPWT has conducted a concurrent facility planning study for Montrose Parkway East between Parklawn Drive and Veirs Mill Road which is described in a separate staff memorandum prepared on the same date for a parallel June 17, 2004, Planning Board worksession. **The reader is referred to that Montrose Parkway East memorandum for additional details regarding existing and forecasted travel demand on both Randolph Road and Montrose Parkway.**

The recommendation for Randolph Road is based on the presumption that the recommended alternative for Montrose Parkway East will be implemented. If the Montrose Parkway is constructed, forecast year 2020 traffic conditions on Randolph Road between Parklawn Drive and Veirs Mill Road will be slightly improved over current conditions. However, if the Montrose Parkway East is not completed, the travel demand on Randolph Road would be approximately 23% higher than current levels.

Therefore, if Montrose Parkway East is not implemented, the recommendations for Randolph Road would need to be revisited to examine how to replace the planned capacity, from the perspectives of both the affected master plans and the DPWT facility planning process. **The pursuit of the Alternative 3 recommendation for wider travel lanes and bicycle lanes throughout the project length should therefore not be pursued unless, and until the County has committed to building Montrose Parkway East.**

### **Veirs Mill Road Improvements**

Three of the projects listed in Exhibit 1 and shown on Exhibit 2 address traffic and transit needs along Veirs Mill Road (MD 586):

- Grade separation at Randolph Road
- Widening from four lanes to six lanes between Twinbrook Parkway and Randolph Road
- Implementing bus-rapid transit (BRT) improvements between the Rockville Town Center and Wheaton.

All three of these projects along Veirs Mill Road are needed regardless of the status of Montrose Parkway East.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Randolph Road Facility Planning study was initiated to address deficient traffic operations, lack of consistent bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and safety concerns along the arterial roadway. During the three year period from January 1998 through December 2000, a total of 289 accidents were recorded in the corridor with the majority (200) occurring east of Rock Creek.

The Randolph Road Project Prospectus describes three alternatives:

- Alternative 1 is a No-Build alternative
- Alternative 2 is the Intersection Safety Improvements Alternative, and
- Alternative 3 is the Cross Section and Intersection Safety Improvements Alternative

The build alternatives are described in additional detail below:

### **Alternative 2: Intersection Safety Improvements Alternative**

Alternative 2 addresses the most critical spot safety concerns with minimal impact to the existing right-of-way. Alternative 2 includes the following improvements, listed from east to west:

- Realignment of the sharp horizontal curve between Dewey Road and Charles Road (a distance of approximately 1,100 feet) to meet a 40-MPH design speed and extension of the left turn lanes at Dewey Road
- Widening the roadway for approximately 500 feet between Rocking Horse Road and Galena Road to provide 11-foot wide travel lanes
- Widening the roadway for approximately 400 feet to the east of Putnam Road to provide 11 feet wide travel lanes

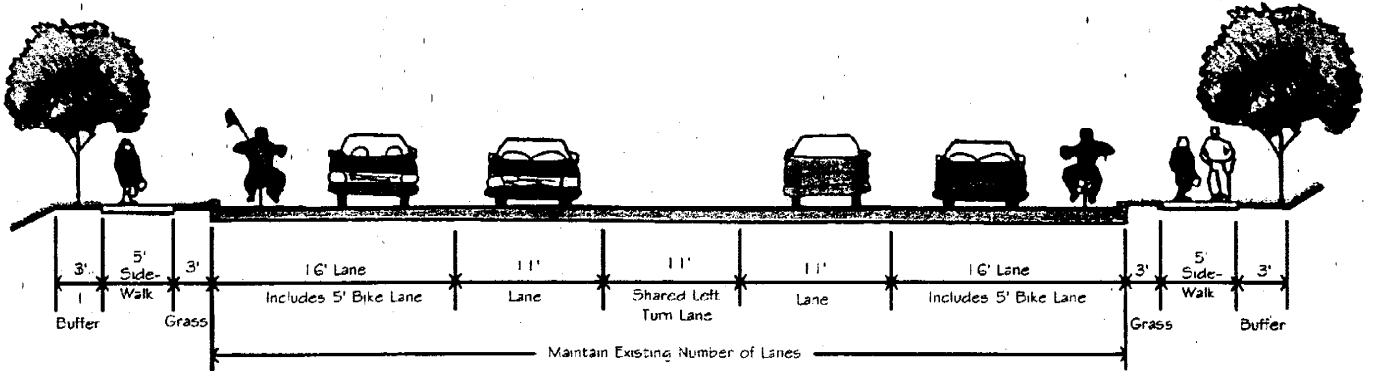
The first of these three improvements shifts the roadway slightly to the north, requiring acquisition of a total of 0.22 acres from nine affected residential properties. The second and third improvements can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way. All of the improvements will incorporate adequate sidewalk and tree panel widths per the County's design standards. The improvements will not, however, include the bike lanes considered in Alternative 3. None of the improvements have any impacts on natural environmental features.

### **Alternative 3**

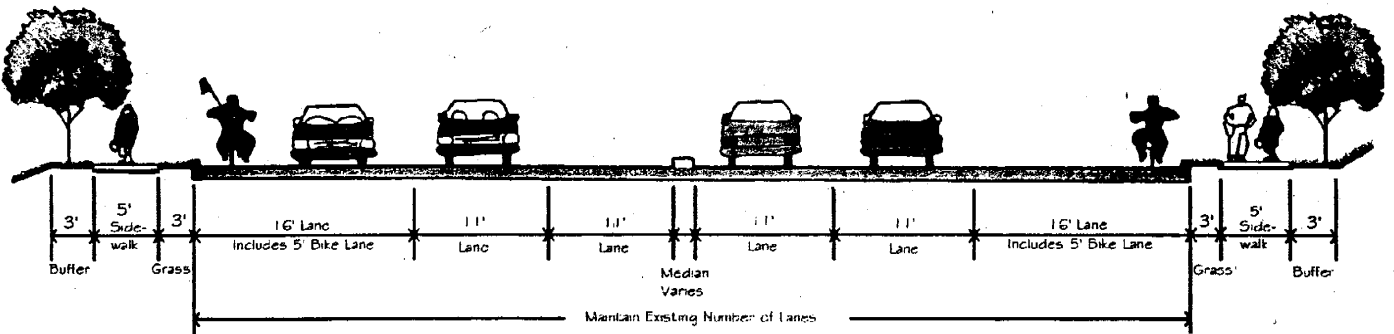
Alternative 3 consists of a comprehensive program of improvements to provide a consistent cross-section that incorporates 11-foot wide travel lanes and on-road (Class II) bike lanes as recommended in the North Bethesda/Garrett Park and Kensington/Wheaton Master Plans and confirmed as route BL-15 in the May 2004 Planning Board Draft of the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan. The alternative also includes gateway features such as landscaping treatments and signing in the vicinity of Rock Creek.

The recommended typical sections for Alternative 3 are shown in Exhibit 3. The respective area master plans both recommend retaining the basic number of lanes on Randolph Road. Therefore, the portion of the project west of Rock Creek retains the undivided typical section with four through travel lanes as recommended in the North Bethesda/Garrett Park Master Plan. The portion of the project east of Rock Creek retains the divided typical section with six through travel lanes as recommended in the Kensington/Wheaton Master Plan.

## TYPICAL SECTION - WESTERN PORTION OF STUDY AREA



## TYPICAL SECTION - EASTERN PORTION OF STUDY AREA



### RANDOLPH ROAD STUDY PROJECT PROSPECTUS

### TYPICAL SECTIONS



DATE:  
M.  
SCALE:

Exhibit 3

Alternative 3 provides the following benefits:

- Improved vehicular safety throughout the project length through application of a consistent cross-section with 11-foot wide travel lanes
- Improved bicyclist accessibility and safety
- Enhanced aesthetics and community gateway treatments

Alternative 3 has the following impacts:

- Requires a total of 1.4 acres of right-of-way from 59 affected properties
- Impacts areas of floodplain (0.37 acres) and parkland (0.21 acres).

The affected parkland parcels in Rock Creek Park were paid for by (as opposed to dedicated to) Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning (M-NCPPC), so DPWT will need to reimburse M-NCPPC for the required right-of-way per the agencies' 2000 Memorandum of Understanding.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

The DPWT study team held two public meetings during the Phase I Facility Planning process. The first meeting, on March 22, 2002, presented the study purpose and need for both the Randolph Road and parallel Montrose Parkway East projects. The study team held the second public meeting on October 17, 2002, to update the community on the project progress and to obtain community input and preferences for the project. Because the Randolph Road study is so closely related to the Montrose Parkway East study, the review schedules have been synchronized, explaining the time elapsed since the second public meeting on Randolph Road.

Approximately 35 citizens, mostly residents within the study area, attended the second public meeting. In general, comments received during, and after the second public meeting reflected a mix of support for all three alternatives.

DKH:gw

Cc: Uzair Asadullah  
Glenn Orlin  
Ed Stein

mmo to MCPB re Randolph Road Phase I