



MCPB February 17, 2005
Agenda Item B

January 28, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Chief, Park Development Division (PDD) *MFR*

FROM: Bette McKown, Coordinator, Capital Improvements Program (CIP), PDD *BMK*
Mitra Pedoeem, Chief of Construction, PDD *MP*

SUBJECT: Amendment to the FY05-10 CIP and FY06 Capital Budget For the
Resurfacing Park Roads and Bridge Improvements Project Description
Form (PDF) 868700

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Planning Board ask the County Council to eliminate future appropriations to the Resurfacing Park Roads and Bridge Improvements PDF 868700 and reprogram the work to the CIP administered by the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT), thereby shifting responsibility from M-NCPPC to DPWT for the planning, design, and construction of capital improvements on park roads and bridges beginning in FY06. The Resurfacing Park Roads and Bridge Improvements PDF 868700 would then become a Pending Closeout PDF.

Attachment A is the adopted PDF. Attachment B is the proposed amended PDF.

Background

The Resurfacing Park Roads and Bridge Improvements PDF 868700 provides for the rehabilitation and/or renovation of 14.5 miles of park roads and 13 associated vehicular bridges that serve as public transportation routes owned and maintained by M-NCPPC. See Attachment C for a list of the park roads segments and bridge locations that are included in the scope of work funded by PDF 868700.

The six-year program funding for PDF 868700 increased from \$2,549,000 in the FY03-08 CIP to \$3,449,000 in the FY05-10 CIP. This increase was based, in part, on an evaluation of park roads conducted in August and September 2003 using the Mainline Overlay Rating Form and Pavement Surface Condition Rating Manual provided by Montgomery County DPWT and DPWT's Biennial Bridge Survey report on the

condition of M-NCPPC bridges. In response to the bridge survey recommendations and in cooperation with DPWT, M-NCPPC is renovating the Little Falls Parkway Bridge (PDF 038704). Major bridge renovation or reconstruction projects, e.g. the Little Falls Parkway Bridge, are funded in stand-alone PDFs and often supported by federal transportation funds made available through the State of Maryland. (In fact, in the case of Little Falls Parkway Bridge, the regulations allowed only Montgomery County, and not M-NCPPC, to be the grantee of record, thus necessitating that M-NCPPC work through DPWT for grant management during design and construction of the project.)

When the Planning Board met with the County Executive to discuss the proposed FY05-10 CIP in December 2003, the County Executive expressed support of the Board's request for increased funding in PDF 868700, but asked why DPWT was not maintaining these park roads and bridges? Both Departments had discussed this issue on several occasions over the preceding decade, but as a result of his inquiry, Arthur Holmes, Director, DPWT, and Don Cochran, Deputy Director, Department of Park and Planning, met to explore the possibilities. The staff proposed CIP amendment is a result of these discussions.

Justification

Staff believes that the transfer of responsibility and budget to DPWT for capital improvements on the affected roads and bridges is justified for the following reasons:

1. Capital improvements to these roads and bridges are more consistent with DPWT's mission than with the mission of the Department of Park and Planning. DPWT is better suited to prioritize, plan, design, and implement these road and bridge projects as part of its countywide road and bridge program. In fact, DPWT already performs biennial inspections on our bridges using federal funds; these inspections provide condition ratings and recommend needed repairs.

DPWT has a unit whose sole purpose is designing and constructing roads and Bridges. DPWT has an in-house bridge crew and in-house structural engineers. The Park Development Division's (PDD) CIP work program includes playgrounds, tennis courts, ballfield lighting, roof replacement, trails, restoration of historic structures, and equestrian centers. As a result of the broad types of facilities encompassed in the Parks CIP and the relatively small size of the capital program in comparison to DPWT's capital program, no single staff person or unit has expertise or is assigned solely to park roads and bridges used for public transportation. PDD project managers are typically landscape architects and civil engineers, rather than structural engineers.

The philosophy underlying this recommendation is similar to that which resulted in M-NCPPC taking over the renovation and maintenance of selected Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) ballfields: the fields were not part of MCPS' core mission. Ballfield maintenance was an essential part of M-NCPPC's mission and could be implemented more efficiently and effectively, thereby improving service to users.

2. M-NCPPC's capital expenditures on the 14.5 miles of roadway and 13 bridges are miniscule compared to DPWT's overall six-year program for roads and bridges. The County is likely to make capital improvements more efficiently because they are able to enter into large quantity open-ended contracts for road and bridge work due to the size of their work program. See Attachment D.

3. The local fund source for capital improvements to park roads and bridges is the same local fund source that supports DPWT's road and bridge program: County general obligation bonds. In addition, the County is eligible for State aid for bridge repair and roadways; for example, DPWT's Bridge Renovation PDF 509753 programs \$227,000 in State aid per year for this purpose. Historically, M-NCPPC has not had access to these funds for roads and bridges that essentially serve the same purpose as those identified in DPWT's PDF. The County is also eligible to receive federal aid for bridge rehabilitation. M-NCPPC is not eligible to receive this aid. In the case of the Little Falls Bridge Rehabilitation currently funded in Parks' CIP, the grantee was actually DPWT and thus DPWT handles all aspects of grant compliance for our project.

4. This transfer of responsibility and budget assumes that capital improvements to park roadways and bridges would be implemented in accordance with the same criteria that the County applies to all roadways and bridges. Staff observes that County roads and bridges are maintained at least as well as M-NCPPC's.

5. It may be argued that Elmhirst Parkway, Garrett Park Road, and Carderock Springs Drive should not be in M-NCPPC's inventory because they are not located in park settings and serve as residential roads more than as park roads. These roadways came to M-NCPPC by default rather than intent for park use. Few users realize that these segments are park roads and not County roads. It is inefficient for M-NCPPC to maintain and improve these short segments of roadway that are part of the larger DPWT-maintained network of roads. (See Attachment E for maps of these three roadways.)

Operating Budget

There appears to be consensus for DPWT to take over the capital work and budget associated with the roads and bridges identified in Attachment C and possible agreement to take over M-NCPPC's routine operating/maintenance responsibilities in FY06, provided DPWT's operating budget can be adequately funded to accept the increase in responsibilities. The County's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) staff have asked DPWT to quantify that impact.

M-NCPPC staff believes that it is logical to transfer operating budget responsibilities along with capital responsibilities because the level of on-going routine maintenance is a major determinant of life-cycle capital costs for roads and bridges. DPWT is likely to provide a better level of on-going routine maintenance that M-NCPPC is able to offer since these roadways would be part of a larger countywide program. M-NCPPC does not have a specific line-item operating budget for on-going routine maintenance of these park roads and bridges.

Next Steps

Staff proposes that the Planning Board transmit this FY06 CIP amendment to the County Executive and County Council to ensure that this capital program transfer is discussed during County Council CIP work sessions in March and in conjunction with review of the M-NCPPC and DPWT operating budgets in April. DPWT may also need to submit a CIP amendment to expand the scopes of work described in its PDFs and to increase the six-year program expenditures. CIP amendments require public hearings, work sessions, and action by the County Council this spring, if they are to become effective on July 1.

Transfer of responsibility and budget will also entail development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DPWT and M-NCPPC to address the responsibilities of both parties regarding the scope of work for renovation/reconstruction projects, policing, permitting, road closures, tree trimming and removal, etc.

In the meantime, PDD will continue contracting out capital projects scheduled for park roads and bridges this spring. PDD will bid capital road and bridge work scheduled for the summer FY06 in order to be able to award the work in the event that the County Council disapproves or delays approval of this initiative.

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