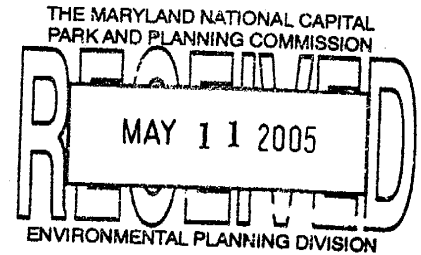


THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning



May 11, 2005

MEMORANDUM

TO: Jorge Valladares, Chief
Environmental Planning

FROM: Daniel K. Hardy, Supervisor *DKH*
Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Mandatory Referral No. 05002-DA-1
Washington Aqueduct Proposed Water Treatment Residuals Management Process
Bethesda/Chevy Chase Policy Area

This memorandum is Transportation Planning staff's review of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the referenced action.

RECOMMENDATION

Transportation Planning recommends transmittal of the following comments:

1. Multiple haul routes should be established and selected on a trip-by-trip basis depending upon the destination to minimize total truck travel. Trucks should only use haul routes in Montgomery County for travel to destinations either in Montgomery County or other Maryland jurisdictions north of Montgomery County.
2. Haul Route "C" is not recommended as a suitable route because the portion of Little Falls Parkway incorporated in the haul route has a posted restriction prohibiting commercial vehicle use.
3. Either Haul Route "A" or Haul Route "B" would be acceptable for trips traveling into Montgomery County.
4. Truck trips should be concentrated during off-peak travel times during weekdays between 9:30 AM and 4:00 PM.

DISCUSSION

The proposed action is expected to generate up to 40 truck trips per day (20 trips in each direction), far less than the 30 vehicle trips per hour threshold for a Local Area Transportation Review study. The DEIS indicates that most truck trips will occur during midday hours on weekdays, so that peak period traffic operations and congestion levels will not be materially affected.

The Dalecarlia Water Treatment Plant (WTP) is located on MacArthur Boulevard in northwest Washington, DC, adjacent to and partially within Montgomery County. Under the proposed action, residual materials will be transferred by truck to a variety of receiving sites, currently unspecified, that are generally accessible via the regional interstate highway system. Vehicular transfer of residual materials by any route will necessarily include some travel on arterial roadways serving sensitive residential, commercial, or institutional communities that lie between the Dalecarlia WTP and the interstate highway system. The DEIS therefore identifies eight potential truck haul routes that would connect the Dalecarlia WTP to the interstate highway system, notably the Capital Beltway (I-495) in Virginia and Maryland and the Southeast/Southwest Freeway (I-395) in Washington, DC.

The eight routes can be characterized in three groups, organized geographically as follows:

- Routes A, B, and C extend in a northwesterly direction toward the Capital Beltway in Montgomery County.
- Routes D, and E extend in a westerly direction toward the Capital Beltway in Fairfax County, Virginia.
- Routes F, G, and H extend in a southeasterly direction toward the Southeast/Southwest Freeway in Washington, DC.

Each of the route require travel on six to eight miles of local arterial roadway, so no one route or set of routes is clearly advantageous for all possible destinations. Staff finds that at least three haul routes should be established with one route selected from each of the three geographic groups described above. For each trip, the haul route chosen should be one that minimizes total travel distance to the destination. For destinations in Montgomery County, or Maryland jurisdictions north of Montgomery County, Haul Routes A and B would be suitable.

Staff finds that Haul Route C should not be recommended as a suitable route because it incorporates a portion of Little Falls Parkway between Massachusetts Avenue (MD 396) and River Road (MD 190) on which commercial vehicles are prohibited.

In Montgomery County, Haul Routes A and B consist of those portions of Wisconsin Avenue (MD 355) and River Road (MD 190) respectively, between the Capital Beltway and the District of Columbia. Staff finds that Haul Routes A and B are very similar in sharing the following characteristics:

- Approximately four miles in length between the Capital Beltway and the Washington DC boundary.
- Classified as multilane, divided, Major Highways in the County's Master Plan of Highways
- No prohibitions on truck traffic.
- Carry approximately 60,000 vehicles per day in the vicinity of the Capital Beltway.
- Congestion levels prompted the Planning Board to seek initiation of State Highway Administration Development and Evaluation studies based on the July 2004 Annual Development Approval and Congestion Report.

The differences between Wisconsin Avenue and River Road are primarily related to adjacent land uses, which have sensitivity to truck traffic for different reasons. Wisconsin Avenue serves the pedestrian-oriented central business districts of Friendship Heights and Bethesda. Based in part on the pedestrian activity, posted speed limits range from 25 MPH to 35 MPH. River Road serves lower density communities in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase planning area and is generally lined with residential and institutional uses, except the Westbard Sector Plan area. Posted speed limits range from 35 MPH to 45 MPH.

Staff finds that neither the pedestrian-oriented developments along Wisconsin Avenue nor the low-density residential communities along River Road to be clearly superior or inferior in determining the appropriateness of a haul route. Both routes carry in excess of 2,000 trucks per day near the Capital Beltway, so the effect of truck traffic anticipated by the proposed action (up to 40 vehicles per day on all haul routes combined) is not expected to be observable on either route. Staff therefore finds that either Haul Route A (Wisconsin Avenue) or Haul Route B (River Road) would be an appropriate designation.

Staff does not concur with the DEIS finding that Wisconsin Avenue and River Road operate at acceptable levels of service based on Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission standards. As described above, substandard congestion levels exist during peak periods along both candidate routes as identified in the July 2004 Annual Development and Congestion Report. Staff therefore recommends that the truck trips be scheduled to occur after the end of the morning peak period and before the beginning of the evening peak period. Based on the peak period definitions in the Planning Board's Local Area Transportation Review Guidelines, the truck travel should be scheduled to occur between 9:30 AM and 4:00 PM.

DKH:gw