

M-NCPPC



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING**

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

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MCPB  
Item No. 2  
2-16-06

February 2, 2006

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Richard Hawthorne, Chief  
Transportation Planning  
Countywide Planning Division

*ACH*

Sue Edwards, I-270 Team Leader  
Community-Based Planning Division

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FROM: David Paine, Planner/Coordinator (301) 495-2191  
Transportation Planning  
Countywide Planning Division

*DP*

SUBJECT: Redland Road Sidewalk 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. The Redland Road Sidewalk Facility Planning Study should proceed to Phase II of the Facility Planning process to develop a detailed design for the completion of the Recommended Alternative for the pedestrian facility.
2. Within the Mill Creek Stream Valley Park, the sidewalk location should be shifted slightly toward the roadway edge to minimize parkland impacts. More detailed design is needed to refine the sidewalk location, but the M-NCPPC objectives for this section of the project are to:
  - a. Minimize the impact of the project to the natural environment.
  - b. Provide an Americans for Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant pedestrian facility, and
  - c. Separate the pedestrian facility from travel lanes by a safe and comfortable buffer, with a desired width of six feet and a minimum of three feet.
3. At the beginning of the Phase II Facility Planning Study, DPWT should obtain staff approval for a Natural Resource Inventory and Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) and a Forest Conservation Plan (FCP).
4. During Phase II, DPWT should obtain a park construction permit for work within Mill Creek Stream Valley Park and Redland Community Park.

## **PURPOSE OF THIS BRIEFING**

The Purpose of this briefing is to present findings of the Draft Project Prospectus of the Redland Road Phase I Facility Planning Study to the Montgomery County Planning Board and to solicit comments. These comments will be considered by DPWT in preparation of the Final Project Prospectus. The Redland Road study area is shown in Figure 1. New sidewalk from the project extends approximately 4,000 feet between Briardale Road and Redland Local Park. In Phase II additional repairs will be made to the sidewalk between Baederwood Lane and Muncaster Mill Road.

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT**

The Recommended Alternative includes a five-foot wide sidewalk sufficiently offset from the roadway to allow for future master planned bike lanes and a tree-planted landscape panel. The Recommended Alternative for a pedestrian facility along Redland Road in the Shady Grove Sector Plan area and Upper Rock Creek Master Plan area was developed based on the Sector Plan and Master Plan vision and objectives, public comment, and study team review. The recommendation takes into consideration existing and planned development, as well as current public agency transportation projects in the study area.

Typical sections for the Recommended Alternative are shown in Figure 2. The sidewalk is designed to be separated from the travel lanes by a drainage swale. Outside the Mill Creek Stream Valley Park, the typical section locates the sidewalk approximately 11 feet from the

current edge of pavement. This location provides an adequate buffer from the current edge of the travel lanes and is designed to facilitate implementation of the master planned bike lanes with a curb-and-gutter section including a landscape panel wide enough to support street trees. Within the Mill Creek Stream Valley Park the typical section appears wider, reflecting the fact that the sidewalk elevation will need to be independent of the adjacent roadway elevation depending upon surrounding terrain and ADA grade requirements. Within the park area, the design incorporates the use of retaining walls to minimize grading and associated environmental impacts.

**PUBLIC OUTREACH**

A public meeting was held for the project at the Executive Office Building on September 13, 2005, to introduce the project alternatives, process, schedule, background, and receive community input and answer questions. Staff characterizes the majority of responses at the meeting as supportive of the project alternatives presented. The one resident voicing opposition to the project at the meeting had concerns of personal liability relating to the County’s snow clearing ordinance.

**MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The Redland Road Sidewalk Facility Plan proposed by DPWT is consistent with the recommendations in the recently approved Shady Grove Sector Plan (2006) and the approved and adopted Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan (2004). The study area along Redland Road is the boundary between the Shady Grove Sector Plan Area to the west and the Upper Rock Creek Master Plan area to the east. Redland Road is designated a primary residential road, with a 70-foot wide right-of-way with a maximum of two travel lanes, as well as on-street bike lanes from Needwood Road to Muncaster Mill Road. The appropriateness of planned bike lanes along Redland Road was also confirmed as an element of the Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan, approved and adopted in 2005.

The Pedestrian Network map in the Shady Grove Sector Plan depicts a proposed sidewalk along the west side of Redland Road. This sidewalk is part of a network of pedestrian facilities that connect residential communities to the Shady Grove Metrorail station. The Sector Plan also recommends placing sidewalks back sufficiently from curbs and travel lanes to separate pedestrians from moving traffic and improving pedestrian access from neighborhoods to bus stops.

**Staff finds that the Recommended Alternative for the Redland Road Sidewalk is consistent with the intent of the Shady Grove Sector Plan and Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan.**

## **SUMMARY OF PROJECT PROSPECTUS STUDY FINDINGS**

### **Benefits**

The Recommended Alternative addresses the immediate need for pedestrian accommodation on Redland Road by providing a pedestrian facility separate from lanes of traffic, space for planned bike lanes in the future, and a landscape panel with streetscape fitting for the primarily residential area. These infrastructure improvements will support pedestrian and transit activity identified in the Shady Grove Sector Plan. The roadway improvements will greatly increase pedestrian safety and access, serving transit and local destinations including Redland Park, houses of worship, and commercial destinations to the north and south.

### **Impacts**

The Project Prospectus identifies environmental impacts of the Recommended Alternative; including impacts to approximately 53 trees of various sizes. Additionally, significant earthwork will be required to provide an ADA compliant grade in the hilly terrain of Mill Creek Stream Valley Park. It is understood that the actual location of the sidewalk will likely be refined during Phase II as more detailed surveys are obtained.

The Project Prospectus identifies approximately ten properties that may experience right-of-way or easement impacts, two of which are Park properties.

No rare, threatened, or endangered species are located within the study area. Less than an acre of wetlands in the Mill Creek Stream Valley Park may be impacted by the recommended alternative. DPWT will need to document these impacts through submission of a NRI/FSD and a FCP during Phase II activities. DPWT will also need to seek a park construction permit during Phase II.

### **Coordination Regarding Historic Resources**

The Redland Road Bridge over Mill Creek is registered as historic. The sidewalk project, as proposed, will construct a new span over Mill Creek for the sidewalk only and will therefore not impact the historic resource.

### **Coordination Regarding the Intercounty Connector**

The preferred alternative alignment for the Intercounty Connector (ICC) crosses under Redland Road directly north of the Mill Creek Stream Valley Park. The ICC Final Environmental Impact Statement indicates that approximately 1,000 feet of Redland Road will be reconstructed to provide an overpass of the ICC. DPWT will continue coordination with the state regarding ICC facility design and implementation so that the sidewalk project ties into the state construction project.

## ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Phase I study evaluated several alternatives. The DPWT study team presented three alternatives to the public:

- Alternative I proposes sidewalk located approximately six feet from the edge of the roadway outside park property and adjacent to the roadway with a curb-and-gutter section within park property. This alignment minimizes residential property impacts but precludes bike lanes without major reconstruction of either the sidewalk or the roadway.
- Alternative II proposes sidewalk located approximately eight feet from the edge of roadway outside park property and eighteen feet from the edge of roadway within park property. This alternative requires 14-foot high retaining walls in the park. This alternative accommodates future bike lanes, minimizes residential property impacts, and uses the ultimate master plan right-of-way through Mill Creek Stream Valley Park.
- Alternative III proposes sidewalk in the ultimate master plan right-of-way location, eighteen feet from the edge of pavement through the length of the project. This alternative increases environmental and private property impacts.

All three alternatives have similar capital costs, with construction costs expected to be in the \$1M to \$2M range.

Staff worked extensively during the Phase I studies to examine alternatives that would minimize impacts to the natural environment, including:

- Constructing an eight feet wide shared-use path rather than a five feet wide sidewalk and removing the master planned bike lanes, and
- Constructing the sidewalk on the east side of Redland Road through Mill Creek Stream Valley Park, to minimize slope impacts.

The benefit of constructing a shared-use path in lieu of a sidewalk and future bike lanes is that if bike lanes were removed from the master plan, the sidewalk could be located closer to the existing roadway, minimizing the typical section width. However, three consecutive master plans have confirmed that on-road bike accommodations are needed along Redland Road, particularly for commuters riding to and from the Shady Grove Metro.

The benefit of constructing the sidewalk on the east side of Redland Road is that the adjacent terrain is less hilly so that grading impacts could be minimized. However, a continuous sidewalk is more appropriate on the west side of the roadway than the east side of the roadway based upon prevailing development densities. The study team also considered a concept with sidewalk construction on the east side only between Briardale Road and Founders Mill Court. This alternative would require pedestrians traversing Mill Creek Stream Valley Park to cross Redland Road twice, resulting in an undesirable design.

Ultimately, the Review Team chose an alternative that provides a balance of environmental impact mitigation, pedestrian safety, and compliance with national guidelines for persons with disabilities. Staff looks forward to a more thorough evaluation of impacts and mitigation strategies during the Phase II study.

The Recommended Alternative is derived from Alternative II, but locates the sidewalk two feet closer to the roadway to lessen slope and tree impact in the park area. This is the closest the sidewalk can be moved toward the road in an attempt to mitigate environmental impacts while providing an ADA compliant sidewalk and accommodating room for future bike lanes and landscape panel with street trees. To the extent that further refinements are made to the sidewalk location in parkland during Phase II, **staff recommends the objectives defined in comment #2, minimizing impacts to the natural environment while providing ADA compatibility and separating pedestrians from adjacent travel lanes.**

DP:gw  
Attachments

mmo to mcpb re Redland Road Sidewalk

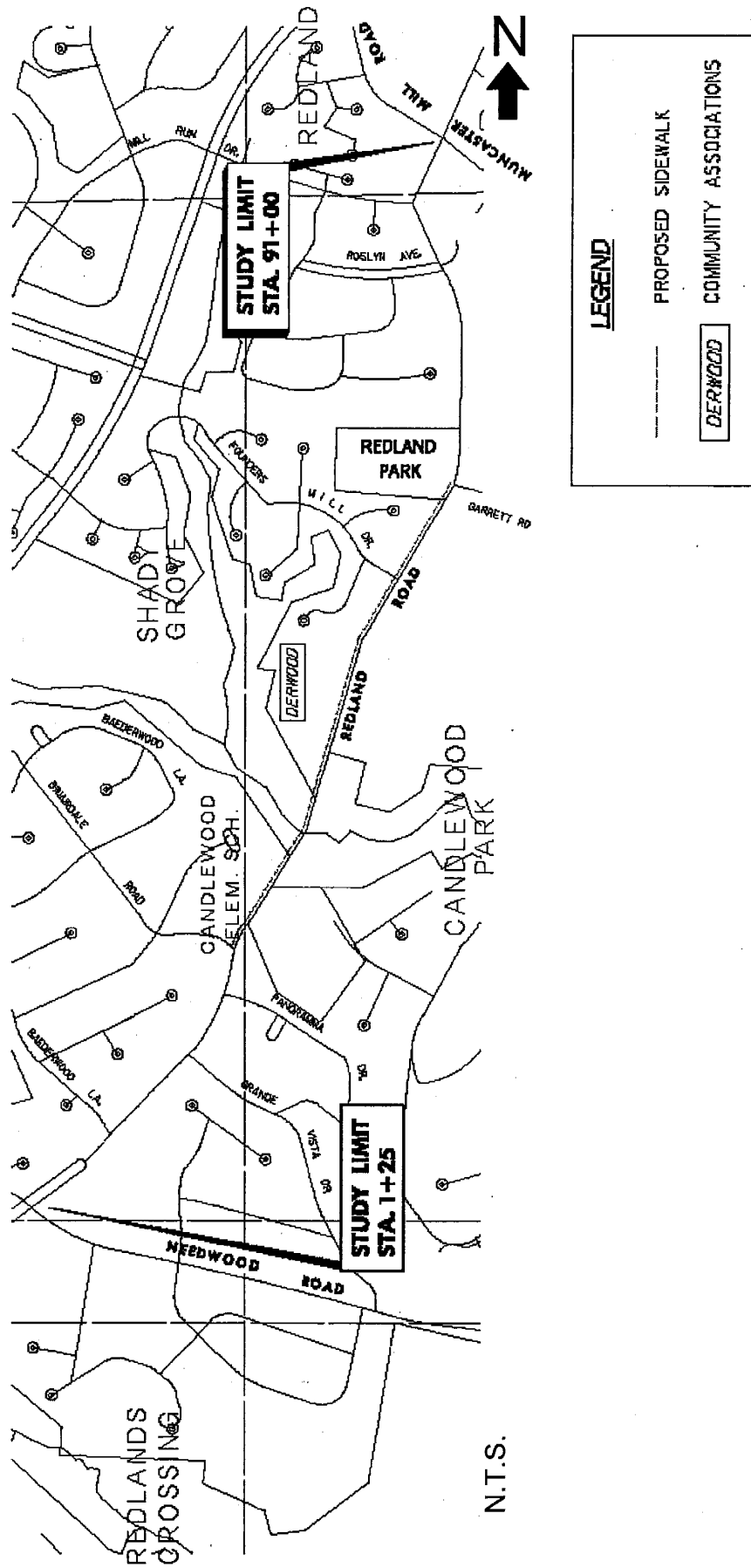
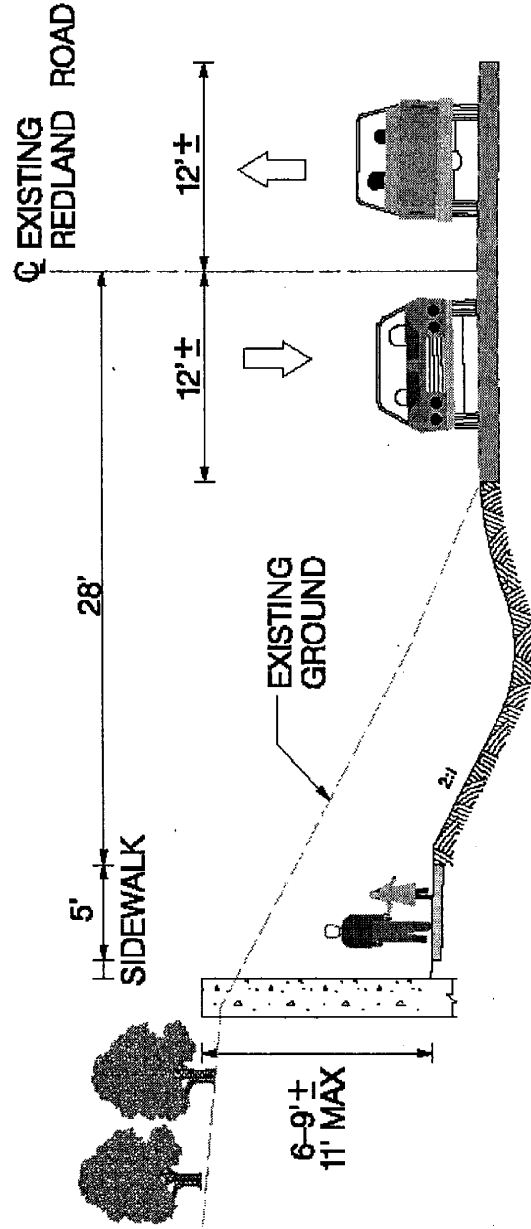
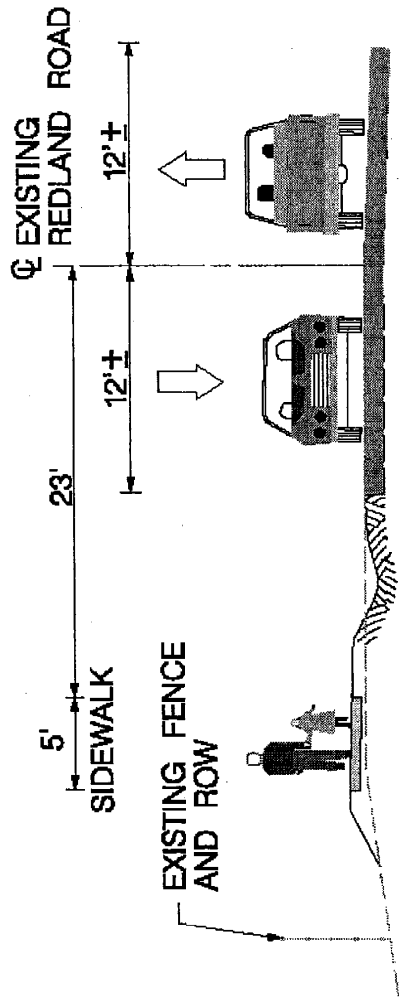


Figure 1. Study Area



**RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE**

Figure 2. Typical Sections