




**MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**  
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION


MCPB  
ITEM NOS. 14a, 14b  
11-01-2007



October 26, 2007



**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board

**VIA:** Mary Dolan, Acting Chief   
Countywide Planning Division

Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief   
Transportation Planning

Judy Daniel, Team ~~Leader~~  for North Bethesda-Garrett Park and  
Khalid Afzal, Team Leader for Georgia Avenue   
Community-Based Planning

**FROM:** Marion Clark: 301-495-1328, Environmental Planning and   
Larry Cole: 301-495-4528, Transportation Planning 

**PROJECT:** Montrose Parkway East  
From Parklawn Drive to Veirs Mill Road (MD 586)  
CIP No. 509337

**REVIEW TYPE:** Forest Conservation Plan and Mandatory Referral No. 06811-DPW&T-1

**APPLICANT:** Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation

**APPLYING FOR:** Plan Approval

**COMMUNITY-BASED PLANNING TEAM AREAS:** Bethesda/North Bethesda-Garrett Park  
and Georgia Avenue

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This combined staff report provides recommendations on the Forest Conservation Plan and Mandatory Referral for the Montrose Parkway East Project.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Staff recommends that the Board approve the Forest Conservation Plan for the proposed project with the following conditions:

1. Narrow the parkway median width where necessary to preserve areas of high-quality forest and specimen trees. A width of fifteen feet minimum shall be maintained in these areas. The full thirty-foot-width may be maintained where stormwater management will be accomplished in the median.
2. Use retaining walls or other extraordinary measures to reduce the loss of specimen and significant trees.
3. Reduce the amount of “designed landscapes” that are adjacent to forested areas and provide as much reforestation on site as possible.
4. Reconcile or explain the difference in location of the floodplain and stream valley buffer shown on the Natural Resource Inventory/Forest Stand Delineation (NRI/FSD) with what is shown on the Forest Conservation Plan.

Staff recommends that the Board approve the Mandatory Referral of the proposed project with the following comments to DPWT:

### **Project Scope and Schedule**

1. Incorporate the SHA-approved design of the Matthew Henson Trail crossing of Veirs Mill Road into the project plans. The safety of the pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit patrons using this crossing must not be adversely affected in any way by this project. If this cannot be avoided with the current project scope, the project should be expanded to include the replacement of the existing culvert carrying Turkey Branch under Veirs Mill Road with a bridge that accommodates an underpass for Matthew Henson Trail.
2. The issues of the ultimate roadway width of Veirs Mill Road and the accommodation of Bus Rapid Transit along Veirs Mill Road do not appear to have been fully addressed. This project need not construct the ultimate intersection configuration, but all of the County’s needs – driver, transit, pedestrian, bicyclist, and aesthetic/landscaping - must be addressed in the final design of this project.
3. The CIP project description form should include the restriction that the Montrose Parkway East project must not begin construction until SHA’s Montrose Parkway/CSX grade-separation project is fully funded. It should also list where waivers would be needed from the requirements of the Road Code.

## Proposed Design

4. Revise the Parklawn Drive intersection as follows:
  - a. Provide eight-foot-wide landscape panels with street trees to separate the sidewalks from the roadway. Obtain any additional right-of-way outside the Montrose Parkway needed to accomplish this.
  - b. Reduce the radii of the corner curbs from fifty feet to thirty feet.
  - c. Provide a median pedestrian refuge on the parkway.
  
5. Revise the Montrose Parkway East/Veirs Mill Road intersection as follows:
  - a. Reduce the number of left-turn lanes on westbound Veirs Mill Road from three to two.
  - b. Eliminate the auxiliary receiving lane on westbound Montrose Parkway at the Veirs Mill Road intersection.
  - c. Eliminate the eastbound right-turn lane on Veirs Mill Road and convert the rightmost through-lane to a peak-hour through-right lane. In off-peak hours, this lane should be used as a right turn lane, with only buses being allowed to use the lane as a through lane.
  - d. Widen the median of Parkland Drive to eight feet and provide a pedestrian refuge. Eliminate one northbound travel lane and reduce the northbound roadway width to twenty-two feet.
  - e. Construct a traffic island between the left-turn and right-turn lanes at the terminus of Montrose Parkway.
  - f. Provide a striped crosswalk with a pedestrian-actuated traffic signal on the east leg of the intersection and provide six-foot-wide (min.) median pedestrian refuges on the Veirs Mill Road medians.
  
6. Improve pedestrian accommodation along Veirs Mill Road as follows:
  - a. Construct a sidewalk along the service road on eastbound Veirs Mill Road east of the Montrose Parkway East/Parkland Drive intersection.
  - b. Provide dual handicap ramps on the southeast corner of the Robindale Drive intersection and provide a six-foot-wide (min.) median refuge on the east leg of Veirs Mill Road at this intersection.
  
7. The noise walls required because of the parkway construction should not be subject to competition for funding with retrofit projects. They should be included in the scope of this project and the design of the walls be referred to staff for comment.
  
8. Avoid locating stormwater manholes in the proposed sidewalk along the parkway wherever possible.

9. At Dewey Road:

- a. Provide an ADA-accessible crossing of the west leg of Montrose Parkway East including a median pedestrian refuge to maintain safe pedestrian access at the legal crosswalk at this intersection.
- b. Provide a right-turn island to reduce the unprotected pedestrian crossing distance.
- c. Consider providing a traffic island to ensure that the prohibition on left turns from Dewey Road is obeyed.
- d. Consider shortening the length of the right-turn bay.

10. Improve the landscaping as follows:

- a. Along the north side of Veirs Mill Road where retaining walls are proposed, reduce the width of the proposed sidewalk to six feet and provide a five-foot-wide (min.) landscape panel with street trees between the sidewalk and the curb. Provide a ten-foot wide landscape panel beyond the proposed retaining walls where no additional right-of-way would be required.
- b. Along the south side of Veirs Mill Road, provide a five-foot-wide (minimum) landscape panel with street trees between the sidewalk and the curb west of the Montrose Parkway East/Parkland Drive intersection.
- c. Along the parkway between Dewey Road and Veirs Mill Road, provide landscape panels with street trees between the trail and curb on the north side (8' wide (min.)) and between the curb and sidewalk on the south side (5' wide (min.)).
- d. Increase the width of the median on the east leg of Veirs Mill Road to twelve feet and provide street trees.
- e. The spacing of all street trees along Veirs Mill Road shall be forty feet on center, as recommended in the Aspen Hill Master Plan.
- f. Consider chamfering the end of the retaining wall at the northeast corner of Parkland Drive. Provide a unified landscaping treatment of the retaining walls and median at Parkland Drive to reflect its status as a gateway to the Rock Creek Terrace neighborhood.
- g. Install street trees along Montrose Parkway East between the proposed sidewalk/shared use path and curb. The street tree spacing between Rock Creek Park and Veirs Mill Road shall be forty feet on center.

11. Implement the turn prohibitions necessary to minimize non-local traffic in the Rock Creek Terrace neighborhood. Consider what other neighborhoods will likely become subject to such traffic and monitor these areas after construction.

12. Provide lighting that meets the recommendations of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) for all public streets and intersections within the project area.

13. The bridge over Rock Creek:

- a. Consider studying an approximately 535-foot-long bridge alternative that would span the entire Rock Creek floodplain, with a vertical clearance of 15 feet, to create additional wetland areas and sustain existing biodiversity.
- b. Increase the width of the parkway trail to twelve feet and provide a barrier to separate the trail from the roadway.
- c. Increase the width of the sidewalk to eight feet and consider providing a similar barrier for the sidewalk on the south side of the bridge.
- d. The color of the bridge railing should match that of the Rock Creek Trail Bridge.

14. Please involve our staff in the determination of alternatives to be studied, and the selection of the preferred alternative, for all future bridge projects.

15. In Rock Creek Park:

- a. Any parkland in the ownership of M-NCPPC required by the project will need to be approved by the full Commission with appropriate compensation to the Commission.
- b. Provide a smoother tie-in to Rock Creek Trail at the north end of the proposed trail bridge.
- c. The landings on the relocated segment of Rock Creek trail should be constructed every 200' to comply with ADA Best Practices.
- d. All retaining walls facing parkland will need the detail drawings of the aesthetic treatment approved at Park Permit. Consider providing a lesser treatment for those areas that will not be visible from either the parkway or Rock Creek Trail.
- e. The railing along Rock Creek Trail retaining wall shall be decorative and approved at Park Permit.
- f. All swales on parkland must have a 1' flat bottom width. All storm drain outfalls and access within parkland must provide safe conveyance of stormwater and minimize natural resource impacts, and must be approved at Park Permit.
- g. Reforestation on parkland must comply with the document "Re-Vegetation Requirements Following Disturbance of M-NCPPC Montgomery County Parkland".
- h. No storage of material and equipment will be allowed on Park property without prior consent from the Park Manager or Park Inspector. All requirements of the Park permit must be met.

16. The connection between the Wetland area 1 on the north side and Wetland Area 3 on the south side of the parkway east of Rock Creek, and between the wetlands and the mainstem of the creek, should be re-established.

17. The stormwater concept for this project is approved.

**PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION:** The Planning Board reviewed the Facility Planning Project Prospectus for this project on June 17, 2004.

**ISSUE FOR THE BOARD:** Recommendation 13a reflects Environmental Planning's desire to have the proposed bridge span the entire Rock Creek floodplain. Bridges that span the floodplain of each stream are always better for the environment, but with large floodplains such as Rock Creek, it can be costly to do so. After considering six alternatives, DPWT selected a 350 foot long option. Environmental Planning recommends that DPWT study a 535 foot long bridge option. Transportation Planning believes that DPWT's proposed bridge option meets the county's requirements.

## **RELATED PROJECTS**

- The Montrose Parkway West project, from 200 feet east of Tildenwood Drive to Old Old Georgetown Road, is under construction and is scheduled to be completed by May 2008.
- Bids have been received for the Montrose Parkway/Rockville Pike (MD355) interchange and should be opened shortly. Advance utility relocation has already been performed for this project, but construction will not begin immediately since this is a design-build project.
- Preliminary design has been done for the Montrose Parkway/CSX Grade Separation project, which includes a grade-separated interchange at Parklawn Drive. It is the County's #9 construction priority for State projects but it is on hold for lack of funding. The design of the subject project does not reflect the interchange but would include only an interim at-grade intersection with Parklawn Drive. Funding for the State's project appears to be dependent on funding for the Montrose Parkway East project.
- The widening of Randolph Road was studied in Facility Planning jointly with the subject project since they have partially overlapping purposes. The segment from Rock Creek to Charles Road is scheduled to be submitted for Mandatory Referral in the near future.
- BRT along Veirs Mill Road was studied by DPWT and the Project Prospectus was reviewed by the Board in September 2005. The study was undertaken to provide a jump-start to a project that is seen as a State responsibility since Veirs Mill Road is a State highway, and the final design of this project is the County's #1 priority for Development and Evaluation program new starts for transit studies.
- The design of the planned Veirs Mill Road/Randolph Road interchange could be affected by the ultimate design of the subject project.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project would construct a new 1.1 mile-long, four-lane divided roadway from Parklawn Drive to Veirs Mill Road (MD586) at Parkland Drive (see Vicinity Map, Attachment 1). Intersection improvements would be constructed at each end of the project, with more extensive widening along Veirs Mill Road that would extend into the crossing of the Matthew Henson Trail project now being constructed by the Parks Department.

A new bridge would be built to carry the parkway over Rock Creek and a segment of Rock Creek Trail would be relocated to a new bridge over the parkway.

A ten-foot-wide shared use path and a sidewalk would be built along the proposed parkway. A sidewalk would be built along the north side of Veirs Mill Road. On-road bike lanes would be built along Veirs Mill Road.

## **BACKGROUND AND MASTER PLAN CONSISTENCY**

The Planning Board reviewed the Project Prospectus for Montrose Parkway East in June 2004. The design of the project is generally consistent with the approved Project Prospectus, although staff has some significant concerns with the design of the Veirs Mill Road intersection, which is not consistent with the area Master Plan. As part of that review, the Board also recommended that DPWT coordinate the design of this project with the Master Planned widening of Veirs Mill Road to six through lanes (at least south of Montrose Parkway) and with the proposal for Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) along this road.

During the preliminary design phase, DPWT revised the design of the intersection improvements on Veirs Mill Road to be compatible with the two BRT options identified for further study by the Maryland Department of Transportation. The ultimate cross-section of Veirs Mill Road at the parkway intersection, to accommodate the widening recommended in the Aspen Hill Master Plan and to accommodate dedicated BRT lanes, has not yet been determined however.

We have based our comments on the project that was presented to us for review but believe that these issues **must** be addressed before constructing this project. If any additional widening is needed along Veirs Mill Road, a substantial redesign effort may be needed that would require review by Planning staff and perhaps by the Board.

### **Master Plan Consistency**

The project is consistent with the North Bethesda-Garrett Park, Aspen Hill, and Kensington-Wheaton Master Plans for the number of through-lanes proposed on the major roads: Montrose Parkway East, Parklawn Drive, and Veirs Mill Drive.

Auxiliary lanes are not normally specifically recommended in area Master Plans, but the Aspen Hill Master Plan recommends specific improvements at the Veirs Mill Road intersection (Table 3, Page 98):

- In the westbound direction, the main body of text calls for one left-turn lane, but the Appendix (Page 243) calls for two; therefore is an internal conflict in the Master Plan. Three left-turn lanes are proposed by DPWT; we recommend that the number of proposed westbound left-turn lanes be reduced from three to two.
- In the eastbound direction, one additional approach lane is recommended, but two are proposed.
- In the westbound direction, one additional approach lane is recommended, but none are proposed.

## Green Corridors Policy

The Aspen Hill Master Plan (Page 112) recommends that Veirs Mill Road be widened within the context of a “green corridor”, providing *“additional capacity for projected traffic growth with the additional street trees and other aspects to enhance its appearance”*. The design of the intersection improvements “should provide a buffer for the benefit of the residential community to the south of the proposed Montrose Parkway”. Page 117 of the Master Plan also states,

*“Large scale trees are greatly needed to shade major highways, to mitigate heat build-up and glare, to provide a comfortable place to walk and to provide a sense of scale...Street trees along State highways in Montgomery County should be spaced at a maximum of 40 feet on center, as on Norbeck Road, to create an attractive sense of scale and provide more shade. A wider, taller mass of vegetation and canopy is needed to have an impact on a wide roadway...Sidewalks should be provided on both sides of State highways, where possible, to get to transit or neighborhood destinations. **They should be given as high a priority as road widenings or intersection improvements.** Sufficient spacing should be provided between curb and sidewalk to allow for the planting of street trees.”* Staff notes that the recommended landscape panels are also needed to provide a storage place for snow plowed from the widened roadway that would otherwise end up on the sidewalk serving pedestrians along this important transit corridor.

While the Master Plan places a high importance on having sidewalks separated from Veirs Mill Road by landscape panels with large shade trees, these landscaped buffers would not be provided in the proposed design. The proposed sidewalks on Veirs Mill Road would be directly adjacent to the curb, and the one on the north side would also be next to a seven-foot-tall retaining wall. The additional space needed for the landscape panels has instead been used to provide auxiliary lanes in excess of those recommended in the Master Plan. The Master Plan recommendation for a Green Corridor would not be met.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

The Montrose Parkway East project would complete the County’s work toward creating a continuous parkway from just east of I-270 to Veirs Mill Road. The project is at the 35% design stage and has not been funded for construction. The Board’s comments will be considered by the County Council in their decision on whether to fund the project for construction and what design constraints should be included in the Project Description Form (PDF) in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

We believe that the design contains a number of serious flaws. While the design of the Veirs Mill Road intersection is consistent with the approved Project Prospectus, we have concerns about the design’s safety provisions for both drivers and pedestrians and believe that the project would diminish the attractiveness of this area.

The proposed project would provide a roadway that meets the County’s vehicular mobility goals but does not meet other important County goals such as neighborhood compatibility, the Green Corridors Policy, and the increasing attention given to pedestrian and bicyclist safety and accessibility. Staff believes that a much better balance between these objectives is needed.



## **Montrose Parkway East/ Veirs Mill Road intersection**

### The Deletion of the Rockville Facility and the Planning of Montrose Parkway

We normally build transportation facilities with sufficient capacity to accommodate projected traffic volumes within the Critical Lane Volume (CLV) goal set for an area, but this is not a normal facility. The original Rockville Facility would have extended from I-270 along the Montrose Parkway alignment to cross Veirs Mill Road at Turkey Branch, and would have continued to the ICC. The segment from Veirs Mill Road to the ICC was dropped from the Master Plan in 1994 and was replaced by the planned Matthew Henson Trail.

The eastern end of the remaining proposed roadway was realigned to use the Gaynor Road right-of-way and intersect Veirs Mill Road opposite Parkland Drive, but the Master Plan recommends that through traffic not be allowed between Montrose Parkway and Parkland Drive, even though this is an obvious major desire line for drivers in this area. Therefore all traffic on these two roads would have to turn left or right at Veirs Mill Road. This facility was planned to provide additional east-west travel capacity but because of the desire to protect the residential neighborhood north of Veirs Mill Road from through-traffic, has built-in inefficiencies.

### Long-Term Traffic Demand at the Intersection should be met by the Planned Partial Interchange

The proposed design of the Montrose Parkway/Veirs Mill Road intersection tries to overcome the restriction on through-traffic and meet the long-term forecast traffic demand at the County's traffic level of service standard for this area, but would do so at the cost of not achieving the other significant County goals the Master Plan sets forth. We believe that a focus on achieving the long-term traffic goals with an at-grade solution that was intended only for the short- to mid-term has forced a bad intersection design in almost every other respect. It is a very large intersection that would be daunting for pedestrians to cross and would have negative visual impacts to the surrounding properties, rather than providing the buffer called for in the Master Plan.

The Aspen Hill Master Plan Appendix C (Page 244) states that long-term traffic demand at the Veirs Mill Road/Montrose Parkway intersection should be accommodated via the construction of a grade-separated partial interchange (a tunnel) that provides a free-flow of traffic between westbound Veirs Mill Road and westbound Montrose Parkway, with the eastbound-to-eastbound traffic flow remaining at-grade. Thus, *the intersection improvements associated with the parkway construction project were never intended to accommodate all future westbound traffic demand at-grade.*

### Design Concerns

The eastbound parkway would terminate at Veirs Mill Road with two left-turn lanes and two right-turn lanes. Because of the skew of the intersection, the left turn angle would be about 100 degrees rather than 90 degrees, making turns a bit more difficult for drivers and requiring the ends of the roadway medians to be cut back more than they normally would. With the requirements posed by the proposed three left-turn lanes from westbound Veirs Mill Road, there

would be no median at the crosswalk on the parkway, leaving pedestrians without a refuge at this busy intersection. The existing legal crosswalk on the east leg of Veirs Mill Road that was reflected in the Prospectus has been eliminated from the proposed design to improve the vehicular capacity of the intersection, and the Matthew Henson Trail crossing of Veirs Mill Road at Turkey Branch approved by the Maryland State Highway Administration would be adversely affected and its safety compromised.

The presence of the third left turn lane on westbound Veirs Mill Road would also require a third receiving lane on Montrose Parkway East, which otherwise would require only two westbound through lanes. Triple left-turn lanes are fairly rare, although their use is increasing in response to rising congestion levels. On one recent intersection project, triple left turns were instituted at a location that has far more favorable topography and a better alignment than the Montrose Parkway/Veirs Mill Road intersection, but in the two years following the construction, the number of collisions doubled and the intersection became a High Accident Location. In addition to its being beyond what was recommended in the Master Plan, we are concerned that the proposed triple left turn lane operation at this intersection might pose a potential safety hazard.

Another safety concern is off-peak speeding. We work toward alleviating intolerable levels of congestion, but the additional lanes needed to do so are often little-used in the off-peak and lead to an increased speeding problem. This is a particular concern on Veirs Mill Road, which has one of the greatest clusters of pedestrian fatalities in the county. Minimizing excess capacity would help to keep vehicular speeds lower in this heavily-used transit corridor, an important safety consideration where many transit patrons are crossing to and from bus stops at unsignalized intersections.

#### Accommodating BRT and a Future Widening of the Veirs Mill Road

The Project Prospectus for BRT along Veirs Mill Road reviewed by the Board in September 2005 identified two construction alternatives at the parkway intersection. One alternative included an additional continuous bus-only lane in the eastbound direction; the other had a bus-only lane west of the intersection and used the service road east of the intersection. Both alternatives included an additional continuous bus-only lane in the westbound direction.

The original design of the Montrose Parkway East/Veirs Mill Road intersection has been revised to accommodate through-movements by buses in the right turn lanes, but the dedicated lanes included in two BRT alternatives are not included in the current design of this project. To the extent that the existing shoulder is used by buses now, the Montrose Parkway East project might adversely affect current bus operations along Veirs Mill Road.

The widening of Veirs Mill Road to six through lanes is recommended in the Aspen Hill Master Plan, which also states however that the widening north of the planned Montrose Parkway may not be needed if the parkway is built.

The design of this project needs to reflect the County's ultimate vision for Veirs Mill Road, including BRT. We must avoid constructing retaining walls that may need to be demolished and replaced in the future to accommodate a wider road, and avoid impacting homeowners twice

along Veirs Mill Road. These uncertainties must be resolved before constructing this project. Our recommendations for changes at this intersection, shown below, are based on the requirements to meet the needs of the Montrose Parkway East project.

***Staff recommends that one lane be dropped from each leg of the proposed Montrose Parkway East/Veirs Mill Road/Parkland Drive intersection in favor of achieving the Master Plan's other goals for pedestrians, aesthetics, the environment, and the community.*** We believe that these goals can be achieved without increasing the impact on adjacent properties.

**East leg of Veirs Mill Road:** We recommend that one of the three proposed westbound left-turn lanes be eliminated.

**West leg of Veirs Mill Road:** We recommend that the eastbound right-turn lane on Veirs Mill Road be eliminated and that the rightmost through-lane be converted to a peak-hour through-right lane. In off-peak hours, this lane should be used as a right turn lane, with only buses being allowed to use the lane as a through lane. Note that a final resolution on this issue depends on DPWT's response to the overall issue of how BRT will be accommodated at this intersection.

**Montrose Parkway:** We recommend that the auxiliary receiving lane on westbound Montrose Parkway be eliminated. We also recommend that a traffic island be constructed to separate right-turning and left turning traffic from Montrose Parkway East (see Attachment 2). The island would make left turns easier for drivers and would provide a substantial refuge for pedestrians. It would also make it much easier to accommodate a crosswalk on the east leg of the intersection.

**Parkland Drive:** There are two existing northbound lanes on Parkland Drive, but only one is needed since it can be accessed only by the single right-turn lane on westbound Veirs Mill Road or the single left-turn lane on eastbound Veirs Mill Road. We recommend that the median of Parkland Drive be widened to eight feet, eliminating one northbound travel lane and reducing the northbound roadway width to twenty-two feet.

## **Other Roadway Issues**

### **Montrose Parkway East/Parklawn Drive Intersection**

The Montrose Parkway East project would begin at Parklawn Drive. The ultimate western terminus of the project is not known at this time since close coordination is needed with SHA's project to construct a segment of the parkway over the CSX tracks. While SHA's current plans show the parkway tying into Randolph Road at-grade just west of Parklawn Drive, this intersection would require the taking of businesses and buildings. If SHA's project and the Montrose Parkway East project were built at the same time with a grade-separated interchange at Parklawn Drive, there would be a savings of approximately \$10M and far less disruption.

SHA's project is not currently funded for construction. We believe that it would not be desirable to build the Montrose Parkway East project without SHA's going forward. SHA's senior management recently confirmed that their project would not be funded without an assurance that the County's funding of this project is in place. A Memorandum of Understanding is likely

needed between SHA and DPWT to determine the limits of responsibility for construction and funding of the interchange.

We recommend that the CIP project description form for Montrose Parkway East include the restriction that this project must not begin construction until SHA's Montrose Parkway/CSX grade-separation project is funded. A similar restriction was placed on the Montrose Parkway West project where construction of the segment between Executive Boulevard and Old Old Georgetown Road was contingent on the State funding the MD355 interchange, which did occur prior to construction of the County's project.

The North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan recommends that Parklawn Drive be built as a four-lane roadway in an 80-foot-wide right-of-way. The project proposes to construct a five-lane roadway in a 75-foot-wide ROW, a wider roadway in a narrower ROW, which would eliminate the landscape panels and force the five-foot-wide sidewalks to be immediately adjacent to the curb. This very tight section is used even through the parkway area where the right-of-way is laterally unconstrained, and fairly minimal additional ROW would be needed just outside the parkway ROW. Staff recommends that eight-foot-wide landscape panels be provided to separate the sidewalks from the roadway and that sufficient right-of-way be obtained to accomplish this.

The large fifty-foot radius curbs that have been proposed at the corners of Parklawn Drive intersection are not needed since large trucks will be prohibited from using the parkway, and should be reduced to thirty feet. The parkway median should also be extended closer to Parklawn Drive so that a pedestrian refuge can be provided.

### Veirs Mill Road

#### Matthew Henson Trail Crossing

The design of Veirs Mill Road through the Montrose Parkway intersection is unusual in that two eastbound auxiliary through-lanes would be added (to both the outside and inside lanes) rather than one. At the southern tie-in of the project on Veirs Mill Road, the four eastbound lanes would be reduced to two lanes by means of lane tapers, one of which would extend through the area of the Veirs Mill Road crossing of Matthew Henson Trail, now under construction.

Staff has worked with SHA over the last couple of years to agree on a design for the crossing that all parties considered workable and safe. The steep downgrade of Veirs Mill Road on each approach of the proposed trail crossing was a significant concern for their staff and they hired a human factors consultant as well as a design consultant to assist them in coming to a resolution. The design that has received their preliminary approval has such innovations as rough surface pavements on the approaches to the trail to warn drivers and pedestrian-actuated warning lights that also have an overhead light that shines on the trail user waiting at the push button location.

SHA's design for the trail crossing also includes a narrowing of the roadway to shorten the crossing distance for trail users. Their design reflects the existing condition, since this is to be constructed soon, and would narrow the roadway by taking out the rightmost westbound lane. When the parkway project is built, it would likely be preferable to shift the roadway to the north

so that the median refuge is wider. Such a move would also offset the median narrowing that would be required by the proposed eastbound lane taper. We recommend that DPWT reflect the current SHA design of this trail crossing and consider the narrower roadway of Veirs Mill Road approved by SHA in the final design of this project.

DPWT has tried to limit the roadway widening on Veirs Mill Road to only what is needed to accommodate the parkway intersection. However, the lane taper on eastbound Veirs Mill Road is proposed to extend through the area of the trail crossing and the culvert carrying Turkey Branch under the roadway. This would create a potential safety hazard when drivers may be competing for the use of one lane right where trail users would be crossing Veirs Mill Road.

The Turkey Branch culvert is undersized by current standards and at some point will require replacement, whether because of a flooding problem, a structural problem, or because Veirs Mill Road is being widened to its ultimate six-lane section per the Master Plan. The existing culvert cannot accommodate a trail crossing under the road, and we believe that the replacement for the culvert should be a bridge that would accommodate a grade-separated crossing for Matthew Henson Trail.

If the roadway widening on Veirs Mill Road cannot be pulled back to eliminate the impact on the trail crossing, *staff believes that the culvert carrying Veirs Mill Road over Turkey Branch and Matthew Henson Trail should be replaced with a bridge as part of this project.* The bridge construction would require raising a portion of Veirs Mill Road and would cost millions of dollars, constituting a significant portion of the construction cost of even as large a project as Montrose Parkway East. The time to design the bridge would also require a longer design schedule for this project.

#### Sidewalk on the north side on Veirs Mill Road

A seven-foot-high retaining wall is proposed for much of the north side of Veirs Mill Road to reduce the impacts to adjacent private property and would be topped by an ornamental fence. The proposed impact is about five feet greater than was originally anticipated because a sidewalk was not included in the design shown in the Project Prospectus. An eight-foot-wide sidewalk is proposed at the bottom of the wall to mitigate the impact of both the lateral presence of the wall and the tendency of pedestrians to shy away from it, as well as from the roadway since the sidewalk would be directly adjacent to the curb. The proposed four-foot-wide bike lane would buffer pedestrians from being directly adjacent to traffic and the wider sidewalk would provide pedestrians a shy distance from these lateral constraints, however the cumulative effect would be a fairly inhospitable environment for pedestrians and a harsh aspect for the community, unrelieved by any landscaping.

Staff recommends that five-foot-wide (min.) landscape panels with street trees be provided as a buffer for pedestrians and for the community, and to achieve the landscaping, environmental, and aesthetic goals of the Aspen Hill Master Plan. These street trees might also serve to mitigate any “looming” effect on pedestrians caused by the retaining wall since the trunks would serve as a friendlier vertical element to balance the wall and the branches would stretch toward the fence atop the wall, creating a canopy over the sidewalk. Since the lowest branch height for street trees

is normally seven feet, which in this case is the retaining wall height, the view from the backyards of the homes would be of the crown of the tree rather than the roadway.

Where the retaining wall is not needed and where there is sufficient right-of-way to offset the sidewalk from the curb, the sidewalk width may be reduced to six feet. A ten-foot-wide landscape panel should be provided to accommodate street trees between the curb and sidewalk where no retaining wall is proposed and no additional right-of-way would be required.

#### Sidewalk on the south side on Veirs Mill Road

No sidewalk exists along the service road along the south side of Veirs Mill Road, but staff believes that one should be constructed as part of this project between the parkway and Edgebrook Road, just past Turkey Branch and Matthew Henson Trail. There is sufficient right-of-way to construct a sidewalk, although some private landscaping in the public right-of-way will likely need to be displaced. As Veirs Mill Road is one of the county's most important transit routes, staff believes that it should be pedestrian-accessible throughout its length.

#### Dewey Road

The segment of Gaynor Road between Dewey Road and Veirs Mill Road would be replaced the proposed Montrose Parkway East; the existing intersection of Dewey Road and Gaynor Road would become the intersection of Dewey and the parkway. The existing legal crosswalk at this intersection must be maintained and designed to safely accommodate a pedestrian crossing from the neighborhood on the south side of the parkway to the shared use trail on the north side. We recommend that a right turn island be considered for the eastbound right turn lane so that the unprotected pedestrian crossing distance can be minimized. A crosswalk should be constructed through this island as well as through the median on the west leg of this intersection. The landscaping east along the parkway east of Dewey Road should be modified to have street trees between the curb and sidewalk, rather than behind the sidewalk, to alert eastbound drivers on the parkway to the fact that they are entering an area with intersections and pedestrian crossings.

Traffic exiting Dewey Road is only permitted to turn right but a traffic island is probably needed to ensure that this prohibition is obeyed. DPWT should consider shortening the eastbound right turn lane on the parkway to reduce impacts and the possibility that this lane could be used by traffic bound for Veirs Mill Road, reducing the safety of the pedestrian crossing.

#### **Traffic Impacts**

The construction of Montrose Parkway East would provide additional traffic capacity and a significant connection between North Bethesda and the communities east of Rock Creek. The Table 1 below was discussed during the Board's review of the Project Prospectus in 2004.

**TABLE 1**

Roadway	2001 ADT	2020 ADT without Montrose Parkway	2020 ADT with Montrose Parkway
Twinbrook Parkway, west of Veirs Mill Road	33,900	42,200	32,300
Montrose Parkway at Rock Creek	N/A	N/A	42,800
Randolph Road at Rock Creek	51,200	62,900	37,500

The table shows that Montrose Parkway would accommodate a significant amount of traffic and would negate a growth in traffic along Twinbrook Parkway. It also shows however that it would *remove* more than 14,000 cars a day from Randolph Road. While it is desirable to alleviate congestion on Randolph Road, we need to balance these benefits with the costs, both financial and physical.

A large proportion of the vehicles that would be diverted from Randolph Road to Montrose Parkway would travel a longer distance to do so: traveling from the Randolph Road/Veirs Mill Road intersection to MD355 via the parkway would be about 1,000 feet longer than just staying on Randolph Road. The trip would be shorter time-wise but not distance-wise. All of the diverted traffic that would normally pass through the Randolph Road/Veirs Mill Road intersection would be forced to turn left at the new parkway intersection on Veirs Mill Road.

The proposed triple left-turn is designed to accommodate this demand. The resulting undesirable design of the intersection is discussed above. If the third northbound left turn lane and westbound receiving lane on Montrose Parkway are not built, the traffic passing through the Randolph Road/Veirs Mill Road intersection will stay using Randolph Road as they do now.

Rather than accommodate all the demand that may want to travel on the new parkway, we should optimize the County's investment in transportation projects, ensure that all modes are accommodated, and consider the community impacts the new facility will have. We believe that the third left turn lane would provide little benefit at a high cost.

#### Non-Local Traffic in Adjacent Neighborhoods

As with the terminus of the parkway, no through traffic would be allowed at the Veirs Mill Road intersection from Parkland Drive. Drivers will likely try to circumvent these restrictions and we recommend that DPWT be pro-active in anticipating the possible non-local detour routes in the Rock Creek Terrace neighborhood. In the morning rush hour, westbound drivers on Parkland Drive could circumvent the restriction by one of two routes.

- By taking a right turn on one of a number of residential streets to Robindale Drive, then taking a left on Robindale and a left on Veirs Mill Road and right on the parkway to continue their trip. Prohibiting left turns from Robindale Drive could prevent this problem.
- By taking a left turn on one of a number of streets to Turkey Branch Parkway, taking a right then another right on Veirs Mill Road to turn left onto Montrose Parkway.

Prohibiting left turns from Parkland Drive in the morning rush hour could prevent this problem.

In the afternoon rush hour, eastbound drivers could turn left from Montrose Parkway to westbound Veirs Mill Road, then turn right on Robindale Drive to access Parkland Drive. A westbound right turn prohibition at Veirs Mill Road/Robindale Drive could prevent this problem.

We also believe that there may be additional areas of concern. To avoid congestion at Randolph Road, drivers on Connecticut Avenue may choose to go through the Connecticut Avenue Park and Stoneybrook Estates neighborhoods on streets such as Littleton and Havard Streets, or through Wheaton Woods on Independence Street and Turkey Branch Parkway to access the parkway. We recommend that DPWT consider this issue prior to construction and monitor the situation after construction.

### **Bicyclist Accommodation**

On Montrose Parkway East, bicyclists would be accommodated via the shared use trail on the north side of the road. Barrier separation for the trail should be provided on the bridge over Rock Creek and the trail width should be increased to 12' to meet AASHTO guidelines.

The existing Rock Creek Trail would be shifted to the west and would be carried over the parkway via a new trail bridge, which is discussed in greater detail below in Park Impacts.

Veirs Mill Road bicyclists would be accommodated on-road via four-foot-wide bike lanes (plus a one-foot-wide gutter pan), except for the segment southeast of the intersection where eastbound bicyclists would use the existing service road.

### **Pedestrian Accommodation**

Sidewalks would be provided along both sides of Parklawn Drive, the south side of the Montrose Parkway, and the north side of Veirs Mill Road. Pedestrian accommodation at intersections and the importance of providing a landscaped buffer between the sidewalk and the roadway is discussed elsewhere in this memo.

There are many proposed stormwater manholes that intrude on the alignment of the proposed sidewalk along the parkway despite the wide right-of-way. Staff recommends that these structures be moved into the landscape panel or behind the sidewalk wherever possible.

The sidewalk width should be increased to 8' on the bridge over Rock Creek. We recommend that DPWT consider barrier separation of the sidewalk from the roadway on the bridge.

### **Landscaping**

As noted above, the landscaping of Veirs Mill Road is mostly non-existent. We recommend that it be improved as follows:



- Along the north side of Veirs Mill Road, the width of the proposed sidewalk may be reduced to six feet and a five-foot-wide landscape panel with street trees should be provided between the sidewalk and the curb. A ten-foot wide landscape panel should be provided where no additional right-of-way would be required.
- Along the south side of Veirs Mill Road, a five-foot-wide landscape panel with street trees should be provided between the sidewalk and the curb.
- The width of the median should be increased to twelve feet and be planted with street trees.
- The spacing of all street trees along Veirs Mill Road should be forty feet on center.

Along Montrose Parkway East, street trees should be planted between the proposed sidewalk and curb. The street tree spacing between Rock Creek Park and Veirs Mill Road should be forty feet on center, per the Aspen Hill Master Plan.

### **Lighting**

Continuous lighting would be provided along the parkway by the proposed project. The County's lighting policy is currently being evaluated for conformance with the recommendations of the American Association of State Highway and transportation Officials (AASHTO) and to address concerns about trespass lighting on adjacent properties as well as wasted upward lighting. The latter issue is currently scheduled to be discussed by the Council on November 15, 2007.

We recommend that the lighting installed under this project meet AASHTO's recommendations for all public streets and intersections within the project area. As Rock Creek Trail is one of our park facilities, which are normally closed after dark, no lighting is recommended for the trail.

### **Noise Walls**

A preliminary noise analysis report was completed during Phase I Facility Planning. Since the County's Noise Policy requires that projects complete Phase II Facility Planning (this project's current phase) before the noise analysis is conducted, no additional analysis has been conducted and no noise abatement measures have been designed. The preliminary noise analysis report indicated a need for three noise walls: one along Veirs Mill on the north east corner of the parkway intersection for a distance of 250 feet and two along the south side of the parkway at its eastern end that are adjacent to houses that would have right-of-way taken for the project. A full noise analysis will be performed during final design when the alignment and roadway width are set.

Once the analysis is completed, the County's noise wall policy requires that this project compete against all other County noise projects for money to fund whatever noise mitigation measures are required. This policy was waived for the Montrose Parkway West project however, a move that the Board had advocated for, and we recommend that it be waived for this project also because of the significant increase in noise that this project would create. Most of the projects that the necessary noise walls would have to compete with are mitigation for existing problems. If we know that there will be a problem caused by this project, we should fix it before this occurs.

We recommend that the noise walls required because of the parkway construction be included in the scope of this project and that the design of the walls be referred to staff for comment.

### **Environmental/Forest Conservation**

There are two significant environmental issues remaining with the mandatory referral proposal for Montrose Parkway East. The first is that the Forest Conservation Plan must go farther in preserving highest priority forest and reforestation on site. The second is that the best bridge option for the environment is both longer and higher than the option proposed.

### **Bridge Design Options**

Goals to achieve clean water have been set by state legislature in HB1141, the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, and locally by the Clean Water Task Force who issued a recent long-term goal agreed upon by the County Council to "Improve the quality of impaired waters and protect healthy waters in the County through short-term actions and long-term commitments for enhanced stormwater management and water resources protection." These goals are met by tailoring projects to protect and enhance the existing environmental resources at each site.

Protecting and preserving forest surrounding the Rock Creek mainstem and enhancing wildlife biodiversity by protecting habitat in the stream valley is important since the Lower Rock Creek, where this project is located, is one of the most degraded watersheds in the county. It is classified as a Use I stream by the Maryland Department of the Environment. And subwatershed streams surrounding the project have poor habitat and stream quality conditions according to the Countywide Stream Protection Strategy.

The Wetlands Coordinating Committee reviewed the original design of the Montrose Parkway bridge over Rock Creek, which had an opening of 60 feet and a vertical clearance of 13 feet. The committee commented that additional alternatives should be considered, including those with a height of 15 to 20 feet.

DPWT subsequently considered six options for the bridge. The options were: a bridge opening of 60, 300, 350, or 600 feet wide with a vertical clearance of 13 feet. Both the 300' and 600' wide bridges are aligned at a point beginning approximately 75' east of the stream valley buffer on the western side. The 350' span ends 100' short of the floodplain on the eastern side and the 600' bridge ends 150' beyond the floodplain. Neither of these bridges correlates to a meaningful environmental bench mark. The other bridge openings studied are 450' and 700' feet wide with a vertical clearance of 20 feet. Both of these bridges begin before the stream valley buffer on the western side. The 450' bridge ends 100' short of the floodplain on the east side and the 700' bridge extends 150' beyond the floodplain. Although the beginning point for both of these bridges corresponds to the stream valley buffer on the west, neither correspond to an environmental bench mark on the east. The 60-foot bridge was eliminated from consideration because it raised the flood level at the bridge 0.32' vs. 0.10' allowed.

The 20' options (450' and 700') would allow more sunlight under the bridge, enhancing wildlife habitat and allowing plant growth under the bridge that would protect steep sideslopes without

riprap, but would require that Rock Creek Trail be routed under the bridge, an accommodation that is less desirable because of the flooding and maintenance problems experienced by Parks staff at similar trail crossings.

DPWT's proposed bridge design has a 350' opening with a 13' vertical clearance. On the west side the bridge begins approximately 60' from the top of the stream bank and the slope to the stream is 25% or greater. The area available for wildlife passage under the proposed bridge would be approximately 35 feet, ten feet greater than what the Board recommended during the Project Prospectus review. Wildlife passages along the stream are important to ensure biodiversity by providing a free exchange of genetic and species diversity between the north and south sides of the bridge.

Environmental Planning staff recommends that an additional alternative be studied, a 535-foot-long (minimum) bridge with a vertical clearance of 15 feet, so that the entire floodplain and stream valley buffer can be spanned. A longer bridge span would allow greater natural stream channel meandering for the length of the Rock Creek mainstem, would require less fill in the floodplain (approximately 0.1 acre), and would provide an even greater area for wildlife passage – 75 feet – on the west side of Rock Creek, more desirable for protecting existing biodiversity of vegetation and providing better wildlife movement because the size, width, age of forest and stratified vegetation is greater on the western side of the mainstem.

Extending the bridge on the eastern side of the mainstem would also allow the re-establishment of additional wetlands. On the eastern side of the mainstem there are two wetlands and an ephemeral seep that flows into the wetlands. The two wetlands were joined and stood historically as one wetland in a natural state. It was divided when a section of fill about 200' long was brought in to extend Gaynor Road. A longer bridge that spans the floodplain opens the possibility of removing the extra fill (approximately 1/2 acres), and joining the existing wetlands to recreate the original wetlands. The connection between the wetlands areas and the mainstem of the creek should be re-established at the same time.

While we do not have firm data and cost estimates since it has not yet been studied, the option recommended by Environmental Planning, when compared to DPWT's selected 350-foot bridge alternative, would require 1/3 acre less forest removal, 0.1 acre less fill in the floodplain, and 1/2 acre less disturbance on park property than DPWT's selected option. Approximately 1/2 additional acre of wetlands could be created.

### Forest Conservation Plan

This roadway is aligned through highest priority forest, as defined by the size of the forest, the presence of significant and specimen trees, and a forested floodplain. The Forest Conservation Law states in (22A-12(b) (1) that the primary objective of the Forest Conservation Plan should be to retain existing forest and trees and avoid reforestation. Development plans must make maximum use of any available site planning techniques to gain the greatest possible forest retention. To meet that requirement, we have worked with DPWT to minimize forest clearing on and off park property for stormwater management, including providing infiltration within the proposed median to meet the goals of the newly passed Road Code update.

There are 20.5 acres of highest priority forest within the Montrose Parkway East right-of-way. Of this, 18.88 acres (92%) is within the limits of disturbance and will be cleared. DPWT is responsible for replacing forest on the basis of one acre provided for one acre lost, regardless of forest quality. Out of the 18.9 acres required to be reforested, the Forest Conservation Plan indicates 81% or 15.26 acres to be provided off-site and 3.18 acres provided on site. The remainder will be provided through a credit of 20% (of required reforestation) or 3.62 acres for “designed landscapes” or tree planting in non-forested areas. An additional 1.27 acres of reforestation could occur on-site if the “designed landscapes” adjacent to forested areas were minimized. Replacing these landscapes with reforestation extends the forest interior providing a greater amount of habitat. Reducing the area of designed landscapes should also reduce long-term maintenance costs and the use of chemicals needed to maintain it.

Environmental Planning staff recommends that the proposed parkway median be narrowed where possible from the thirty feet recommended in the Master Plan to fifteen feet to reduce forest loss and preserve specimen trees. This excludes areas where stormwater management is located in the median. In addition the Tree Save element of the Final forest conservation plan must illustrate the use of retaining walls or other extraordinary measures to save specimen trees near the limits of disturbance.

An NRI/FSD is approved for the subject site, which is not within a Special Protection Area or Primary Management Area. A Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan was submitted as part of the mandatory referral. Standard details for tree protection fencing and notes for construction sequencing and tree maintenance must be submitted on the Final Forest Conservation Plan. One area of reforestation in the southwest corner of Dewey Road and the proposed parkway does not meet the required 50' width. The Final Forest Conservation Plan must be approved prior to issuance of sediment and erosion control permits.

The floodplain and stream valley buffer are indicated at 300' from the western bank of the Rock Creek main stem on the approved NRI/FSD. But the floodplain is shown at 60' from the western bank of the stream on the Forest Conservation Plan. This discrepancy should be explained or reconciled on the Final Forest Conservation Plan.

### Stormwater Management

DPWT delayed the Mandatory Referral submission so that the stormwater requirements of the new Road Code could be reviewed and possibly incorporated. While all of the goals could not be achieved on this project, considerable additional forest was saved by revising the grading around the stormwater management ponds.

### **Consistency with the Recent Road Code Update**

The recent Road Code update included a design element table and a requirement to infiltrate two inches of stormwater runoff in the suburban area of the county, in which the subject project is located. Because these requirements are in the uncodified section of the law, they will only

become effective if the roadway standards are not updated by the middle of next year. Staff is providing the information below as a consistency check.

**Travel Lanes:** The proposed travel lanes on both Montrose Parkway East and Veirs Mill Road are eleven feet wide and are consistent with what is shown in the design element table.

**Bicyclists:** Four-foot-wide bike lanes would be provided on Veirs Mill Road, which are one foot shorter than what is shown in the table.

No bike lanes would be provided on Montrose Parkway East and staff believes that bicyclists are better and more safely accommodated on the shared use trail.

**Pedestrians:** The proposed curbside width of 8'-8" (from face of curb to back of sidewalk) along Veirs Mill Road falls far short of the 15 feet shown in the table. The staff-recommended landscape panels would correct this deficiency.

The proposed curbside width on Montrose Parkway East varies but is fairly consistent with the 15 feet shown in the table.

The requirement that two inches of stormwater runoff be infiltrated in the roadway right-of-way would be accomplished in the Montrose Parkway East right-of-way, but would not be accomplished along Veirs Mill Road.

### **Property Impacts**

Twenty-eight properties would be impacted by the proposed project.

- One residential property has been already purchased by the County and six additional residential properties would be purchased in their entirety.
- Right-of-way would be purchased from fourteen properties, which would also have additional temporary construction impacts.
- Seven properties would only require a temporary construction impacts.

### **Park Impacts**

Montrose Parkway East would cross the Rock Creek stream valley and have the following impacts to Rock Creek Park, totaling 5.5 acres:

- 2.36 acres of fee simple right-of-way taking
- 1.51 acres of permanent easement
- 1.63 acres of temporary easement

The project includes a bridge carrying Montrose Parkway over Rock Creek and another bridge carrying Rock Creek Trail over the parkway. We suggested to DPWT at the start of the preliminary design process that they consider working with an artist on these bridges, and they agreed to do this since they had had a good experience working with an artist on the Forest Glen

Pedestrian Bridge. They subsequently selected Ms. Vicki Scuri after presentations from three candidates.

Under a contract with the Public Arts Trust, Ms. Scuri has created a design concept for the trail bridge, and during final design, she will be under contract to DPWT's design consultant as part of the design team. The design concept is thematically related to the Rock Creek Trail Bridge over Veirs Mill Road at Aspen Hill Road, which she worked on with the Parks Department and which is scheduled to be advertised for construction at the end of October. These two Rock Creek Trail bridges will be about one mile apart and will be a significant aesthetic enhancement of the trail.

The realigned Rock Creek Trail would be raised to pass over the parkway. DPWT has designed the trail to have landings every 300 feet, which meets AASHTO recommendations. Parks staff recommends that these landings be constructed every 200' to comply with ADA Best Practices.

Parks staff recommends the following additional recommendations:

- Any parkland in the ownership of M-NCPPC required by the project will need to be approved by the full Commission with appropriate compensation to the Commission.
- All swales on parkland must have a 1' flat bottom width.
- Reforestation on parkland must comply with the document "Re-Vegetation Requirements Following Disturbance of M-NCPPC Montgomery County Parkland".
- All retaining walls facing parkland will need the detail drawings of the aesthetic treatment approved at Park Permit. Consider providing a lesser treatment for those areas that will not be visible from either the parkway or Rock Creek Trail.
- The railing along Rock Creek Trail retaining wall shall be decorative and approved at Park Permit.
- All storm drain outfalls and access within parkland must provide safe conveyance of stormwater and minimize natural resource impacts, and must be approved at park permit.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

Public meetings for this project were held during Phase I Facility Planning on March 22, 2002 and February 4, 2004. Another public meeting during Phase II Facility Planning (35% design) was held on March 29, 2006. The project was also discussed during a public meeting held for SHA's MD 355/Randolph Road Interchange on December 6, 2006. In addition, presentations were also made to the following citizens groups:

North Bethesda Transportation Management District – January 26, 2005

Bethesda Park Condominiums – May 16, 2005 and October 18, 2006

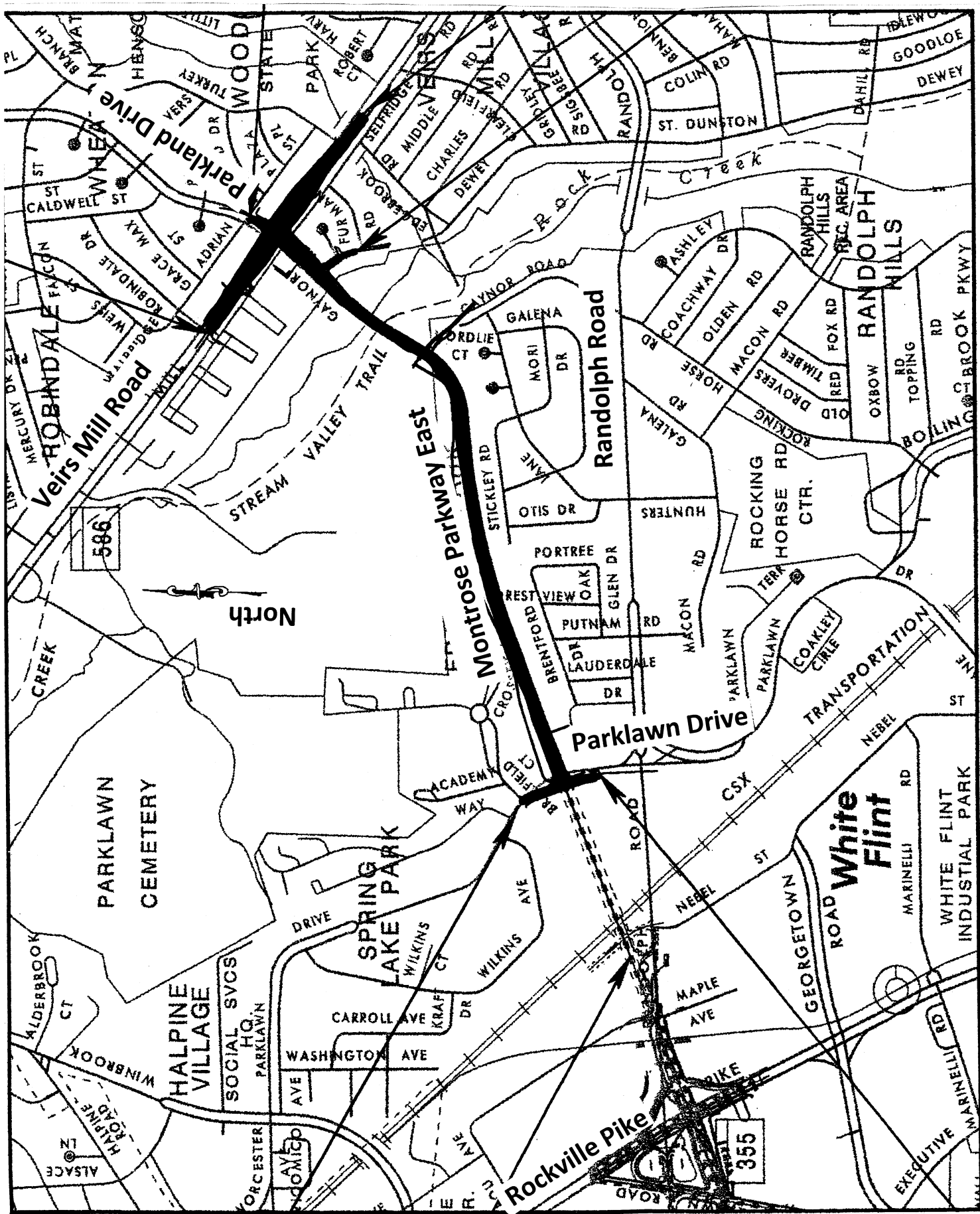
Citizens Advisory Board – March 21, 2006

The Public Hearing for this project has not yet been scheduled.

Public notices of the Planning Board's review of this project were sent to property owners who would be impacted by this construction, citizens associations within 1.5 miles of either end of the project, and to countywide groups.

## **SCHEDULE**

The funds for the preliminary design of this project have been exhausted, but funds for final design have already been approved. Funding for right-of-way acquisition, utility relocation, and construction is anticipated to be included in the County Executive's draft CIP for FY09-14, to be released in about three months.



PROJECT LENGTH = 1.1 mi.

VICINITY MAP



