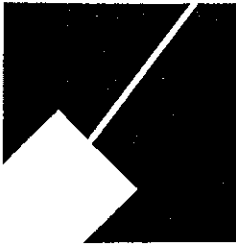


M-NCPPC



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARK AND PLANNING

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB
Item No. 9
11-01-2001

October 26, 2001

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief *JZ*
County-wide Planning Division

VIA: Richard C. Hawthorne, Chief *RCH*
Transportation Planning

FROM: Alex Hekimian, Coordinator *AH*
Transportation Planning

SUBJECT: Staff Recommendations on the Commuter Bikeway and Bus Priority
Lanes in the Plans and Designs for the US 29 Interchange Projects

This memorandum is a companion document to the Mandatory Referral Reviews for the proposed US 29 interchanges at Randolph Road and MD 198/Dustin Road. It provides staff recommendations on the Commuter Bikeway and Bus Priority Lanes in the plans and designs being prepared by the State Highway Administration (SHA).

The staff's bikeway and transit recommendations take into account the Planning Board's vision for US 29 – a multi-modal transportation artery that serves as a unifying element for the area and is built at a scale that is compatible with the surrounding communities. This is a vision that is consistent with the recommendations of the adopted Fairland Master Plan.

The focus of this memorandum is on two important issues: 1) minimizing conflicts between users of the Commuter Bikeway and motor vehicles at heavily-traveled cross streets and 2) completing both the Commuter Bikeway and the bus priority lanes in the inside shoulder of US 29 on a timely schedule.

I. STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff requests that the Planning Board endorse and transmit to SHA the recommendations below, which are discussed in greater detail in the following sections of this memorandum.

A. Commuter Bikeway

1. Construct a high-quality off-road, continuous, and community-friendly Commuter Bikeway between MD 198 and Industrial Parkway, parallel to and along the east side of US 29. The recommended alignment for the bikeway is shown on the map in Attachment 1.
2. Provide underpasses for the Commuter Bikeway at heavily traveled cross-streets in order to meet the Fairland Master Plan's objective of minimizing conflicts between bicyclists and vehicles at interchanges. At a minimum, install box culverts with rectangular openings of 12 feet x 10 feet for bikeway underpasses at the Randolph Road and Briggs Chaney Road interchanges.
3. Continue to coordinate with the staffs of M-NCPPC and the Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) on the Commuter Bikeway's design elements for all of the interchange projects. Use the recommended bikeway standards published by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation officials. Provide a paved width of 10 feet for the Commuter Bikeway, unless there is consensus among the staffs that unavoidable constraints require a width of 8 to 9 feet for a few short segments of the bikeway. Show the Commuter Bikeway, including drainage, lighting, signing, landscaping, and other bikeway-related amenities, in the individual designs of each of the interchanges.
4. With a goal of creating connected bikeway segments, by the time of Mandatory Referral Review for the Briggs Chaney Road interchange, prepare a schedule for constructing the remaining Commuter Bikeway segments that are beyond the project limits of the funded interchange projects. Identify sufficient funds so that construction of the entire length of the Commuter Bikeway is completed by approximately the time construction of the Briggs Chaney Road interchange is completed. At the same time, coordinate with the Montgomery County Public Schools, DPWT, and M-NCPPC staffs to determine the feasibility and funding options of a connection over US 29 between the Commuter Bikeway and the Paint Branch High School.

B. Bus Priority Lanes

- 1. Provide interim bus priority lanes on the paved outside shoulder of US 29 in the designs of the Randolph Road, Briggs Chaney Road, and MD 198 interchanges. Continue to coordinate with the staffs of M-NCPPC and DPWT to assure safe and effective design and operation of the interim bus priority lanes during and after construction of the three interchanges. Also include in each of the interchange designs 12-foot-wide paved inside shoulders, which would eventually be used as the bus priority lanes beyond the interim period. Where there will be a barrier or wall adjacent to the inside shoulders, make the shoulders 14 feet wide to provide safe clearance for the buses unless there is consensus among the staffs that unavoidable constraints require a width of 12 to 13 feet for a few short segments of the shoulders.**
- 2. By the time of mandatory referral review for the Briggs Chaney Road interchange, prepare a schedule for shifting the bus priority lanes from the outside shoulders to the inside shoulders of US 29, between MD 198 and Industrial Parkway. Identify sufficient funds so that the remaining segments of the inside shoulders that are beyond the project limits of the funded interchange projects can be constructed at approximately the same time that the Briggs Chaney Road interchange is constructed. The entire length of the bus priority lanes in the inside shoulders should be available to buses by approximately the time construction of the Briggs Chaney Road interchange is completed.**
- 3. If SHA indicates that the entire length of the bus priority lanes cannot be completed by the time the Briggs Chaney Road interchange is completed and that the interim bus priority lanes will continue beyond 2006, then include in the designs of the interchange projects reconstruction of the outside shoulders of US 29 to a width of at least 12 feet in order to safely accommodate buses over the extended period. Where there will be a barrier or wall adjacent to the outside shoulders, make the shoulders 14 feet wide to provide safe clearance for the buses unless there is consensus among the staffs that unavoidable constraints require a width of 12 to 13 feet for a few short segments of the shoulders.**

II. DISCUSSION

A. Rationale for Implementing the Commuter Bikeway

The adopted Fairland Master Plan recommends that a Commuter Bikeway, from Industrial Parkway to MD 198, be included in the design of the US 29 interchanges. SHA typically respects the County's master plans and includes

the construction of bikeways and sidewalks as part of their road projects, particularly if they are recommended in the master plans. Having worked closely with the State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) on this issue over the past year, staff is pleased that SHA has included segments of the Commuter Bikeway in the latest designs of the Randolph Road and MD 198 interchange projects. Furthermore, SHA is now indicating that a substantial segment of the Commuter Bikeway will also be part of the upcoming designs for the Briggs Chaney Road interchange.

The difference between our staff's recommended Commuter Bikeway alignment and SHA's proposed alignment are shown in Attachment 2. Our staff has agreed with SHA's proposed alignment in most respects, except for some short segments and the treatment at the major cross-streets. SHA staff currently prefers to have at-grade crossings for the Commuter Bikeway at signalized intersections, whereas our staff prefers bikeway underpasses through the elevated sections of the interchanges, especially at Cherry Hill Road and at Briggs Chaney Road.

Since SHA will be using federal funds to build the interchanges, these projects will need to be consistent with new federal laws and policies that emphasize increasing the use and improving the safety of bicycling and implementing bikeways as part of new federal-aid projects. The provisions of the federal *Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century* and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Guidance provide impetus for accommodating bicycling and walking as a routine part of planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance activities. States are now expected to be more pro-active in constructing bikeways in conjunction with new or reconstructed highways. FHWA Guidance documents indicate that construction projects for roads, such as US 29, that are on the National Highway System receive greater scrutiny from FHWA than would otherwise be the case.

There is a strong bicycling constituency in the eastern part of Montgomery County that considers this bikeway a very high priority for this part of the County. The bicycling community has been very active in supporting the Commuter Bikeway and pointing out its importance to the eastern part of the County. Some of the letters that we have received recently are in Attachment 3. The bicyclists have acknowledged that a small percentage of them are highly skilled and able to take the risks of continuing to ride on the US 29 shoulders, and SHA has agreed to allow them to continue to use the shoulders. However, they have been quick to point out that riding on those shoulders is much too dangerous for the vast majority of bicyclists, for whom it is essential to have an off-road Commuter Bikeway. Likewise, they have pointed out that forcing bicyclists to cross heavy movements of vehicular traffic at intersections would be inconsistent not only with the Fairland Master Plan but also previous governmental actions in building grade separations for bikeways in other parts of suburban Maryland.

B. The Need for a High Quality Commuter Bikeway

A very important remaining concern is SHA's current position of not providing underpasses for the Commuter Bikeway at the heavily traveled cross-streets of Briggs Chaney Road and Cherry Hill Road. SHA's current position is that bicyclists and pedestrians on the Commuter Bikeway should pass through the cross-streets at-grade and at signalized locations. Unfortunately, in most cases they would have to wait a long time before they could cross the street, and when they do cross, they would do so without a separate and protected demand-responsive or fixed-time bike/pedestrian signal phase. This would put them in conflict with heavy vehicular traffic movements and would be particularly hazardous for the less experienced users of the bikeway.

Bicyclists say that bikeway underpasses at those locations are justified because they would significantly increase safety as well as usage of the Commuter Bikeway. Furthermore, they point out that bikeway grade separations have been justified and provided at other locations in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties at cross-streets that have far less traffic volumes than those that intersect US 29. Some good examples of bikeway underpasses in other areas are shown in Attachment 4.

Staff would prefer to have grade separations at each of the cross-streets along the Commuter Bikeway, but is willing to recommend a compromise that would provide grade separations only at the most heavily traveled cross-streets. Staff agrees that at a minimum, underpasses for the Commuter Bikeway are warranted, at heavily traveled Briggs Chaney Road and at Cherry Hill Road. Since SHA already expects to rebuild those roads on fill to much higher elevations than they are today, underpasses at those locations would be easier to provide than they would otherwise be. A drawing of how a bikeway underpass at Cherry Hill Road could look is shown in Attachment 5.

SHA has cited concerns with underpass cost, safety, and usage as reasons for preferring at-grade crossings. While sensitive to these issues, we have reached a different conclusion using the reasoning below.

- 1. Bikeway underpasses are relatively inexpensive and affordable.** SHA staff estimates that each underpass would cost about \$250,00-400,000 and considers that amount unaffordable. However, when one considers that the cost of each interchange project will be, on the average, about \$50,000,000, the cost of building an underpass turns out to be a relatively modest amount. FHWA's Policy Statement in its Design Guidance document indicates that bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be provided in new construction and reconstruction projects, unless the cost of providing them is "excessively disproportionate," which is defined as exceeding 20% of the cost of the entire highway project. Since each underpass would cost less than 1% of total project costs, it cannot be ruled out because of cost.

It does not appear that finding funds for the underpasses is an obstacle, especially when one considers SHA's ability to change budgets to meet project needs. As the saying goes, "where there is a will, there is a way." In the most recent version of SHA's Consolidated Transportation Program, the budget for the Briggs Chaney Road interchange was increased by \$9,700,000, the MD 198/ Dustin Road interchange was increased by \$1,800,000, and the Randolph/Cherry Hill Road interchange was decreased by \$4,000,000. SHA was able to change the budgets to modify the construction of the projects on behalf of motorists. Given the magnitude of those changes, one would expect that SHA would be able to make a relatively small adjustment to the budget to provide the underpasses on behalf of bicyclists and pedestrians. It does not appear that provision of underpasses would break the budget of the interchange projects.

Ironically, SHA will be building an underpass for a highway ramp at the Randolph Road interchange. Yet, after it is built, this underpass will not be used for many years because it is dependent on a future connection to the Musgrove Road interchange, which has not been funded. Our staff has no objection to building that underpass, but it seems that if SHA can afford to build that underpass for the future needs of motorists, then SHA should be able to afford a bikeway underpass that could be used right away.

2. **Bikeway underpasses are safe.** SHA staff has questioned the safety of bikeway underpasses, however experience has shown that they are quite safe. The assumption is that the underpasses will be very long, dark, and susceptible to crime. On the contrary, the underpasses that staff is recommending will be less than 200 feet long, well-lit, and unlikely places for crime. What is needed for the Commuter Bikeway will not be long tunnels that were formerly used by trains but, instead, shorter, newly built underpasses.

It is important to note that, from a safety standpoint, even long bikeway tunnels have been found to be safe. The recent study, *Tunnels on Trails*, by the Rails to Trails Conservancy provides nationwide evidence from the experiences of 78 bikeway tunnels over the past 12 years that such tunnels are actually very safe and, despite some community concerns prior to their construction, they have proven to be very popular amenities and much appreciated by the residents living near the tunnels.

At a local level, Montgomery Village has considerable experience with its bicycle/pedestrian underpasses, some of which are about the same length as those recommended for the Commuter Bikeway. Montgomery Village Foundation officials have stated that they have had no problems with safety in the underpasses.

3. **Bikeway underpasses will increase usage of the Commuter Bikeway.** SHA staff has wondered whether there will be sufficient use of the

Commuter Bikeway. Our staff has the same concerns if users will be forced to compete with motor vehicles at every busy cross street they encounter. Many potential users would be deterred from using the bikeway if they knew that they would have to face such obstacles. The underpasses, however, would remove that strong disincentive to using the bikeway and promote greater usage.

According to the *Tunnels on Trails* study, grade separations for bicyclists make a big impact on usage. Citing a Davis, California experience, "There was, and continues to be much latent demand for bicycling facilities. As soon as you make it easy and safe for people, you witness a tremendous increase in use."

4. **Bikeway underpasses reduce accidents.** SHA would rather have bicyclists and pedestrians try to cross major streets at signalized intersections than spend a bit more to build underpasses. For example, SHA currently prefers to have potential users of the Commuter Bikeway cross at the signalized intersection of Cherry Hill Road and Prosperity Drive. Our staff has tried to see if an at-grade signalized crossing of the bikeway at that location would operate safely. After careful review, it is evident that the very heavy traffic on Cherry Hill Road, the resulting long bicyclist wait times at the signals, and potential conflicts caused by motorists turning into the path of bicyclists would put bicyclists at risk and are flaws in SHA's current proposal.

It appears that SHA has not given enough weight to the potential conflicts and accidents where the Commuter Bikeway intersects with the major cross-streets. The Fairland Master Plan, on the other hand, has recognized the potential problems that bicyclists would have at those locations. For that reason, the Master Plan calls for a Commuter Bikeway that "minimizes conflicts between bicyclists and vehicles at interchanges."

Members of the Fairland Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee advise our staff that, from their standpoint, the intent of the Master Plan has always been to provide grade separations between the Commuter Bikeway and the major cross-streets. The Committee's letter in Attachment 6 states that the designs for the interchange projects have to "be safely separating bicycle traffic from automobiles, buses, and trucks" and that there is a need for such safe passage "across the major interchanges in north-south as well as east-west directions." SHA's latest designs do provide separation from US 29 for bicyclists going in the east-west direction, but not for bicyclists on the Commuter Bikeway going in the north-south direction and crossing major intersecting streets.

5. **Construction of bikeway underpasses on the Commuter Bikeway is the sole responsibility of SHA.** From time to time, some SHA staff members have suggested that if Montgomery County wants underpasses on the Commuter Bikeway, then the County should pay for them. The

bikeway and sidewalk aspects are an integral part of the US 29 interchange projects, in accordance with FHWA policies. Therefore, staff would not expect SHA to treat them as optional items that are built only if local government provides the funding.

6. **Montgomery County Public Schools is interested in a pedestrian/bicyclist overpass over US 29 to connect Paint Branch High School with the Commuter Bikeway and the retail and residential community on the east side of US 29.** Staff is aware that, despite the fencing along US 29, students and others are still trying to dash across US 29 to get from one side of US 29 to the other. School officials have told staff that this is a continuing problem. They had previously sent the Planning Board a letter of interest and a possible location for the overpass. SHA has not ruled out such an overpass, but would prefer to make it a separate Enhancement Project rather than fold it into the US 29 interchange project at Briggs Chaney Road. Staff can agree to a separate and parallel planning, design, and funding track for the overpass as long as SHA describes its intentions for such an overpass by the time of Mandatory Referral Review for the Briggs Chaney Road interchange. At that time, SHA should identify the best location for a connection and make any necessary revisions to accommodate that connection in the future.

C. The Need for Prompt Construction of the Entire Commuter Bikeway

SHA needs to plan ahead for a companion project that would assure construction of the missing segments of the Commuter Bikeway within a reasonable and predictable time period. It appears that the most appropriate time for completion of this companion project would be in conjunction with completion of the third interchange currently funded for construction, at Briggs Chaney Road.

As stated in previous memorandums to the Planning Board, it is our staff's view, and the Board has agreed, that the multi-modal aspects of the US 29 project need to be completed in a timely manner. SHA's current position is that short segments of the Commuter Bikeway would likely be built as each interchange is built. Since only three of the proposed interchanges are funded for construction, there would still be long stretches of unbuilt segments for many years into the future until decisions are made to fund the construction of the rest of the proposed interchanges. It would not be acceptable to wait until some indeterminate future date when the very last interchange on US 29 is finally built before all of the missing segments of the Commuter Bikeway are built and the entire facility is useable. There is no guarantee, after all, that each and every one of the proposed US 29 interchanges will eventually proceed to construction.

D. The Importance of Continuing and Enhancing the Bus Priority Lanes

Bus priority lanes on US 29 are an existing amenity that needs to be continued and enhanced during and after the construction of the interchanges. The existing bus priority lanes on the outside shoulders of US 29 provide buses a time advantage over normal traffic and make buses a more attractive choice for commuters. Metrobus, Ride-On, and MTA express buses currently use the bus lanes during peak periods, and the demand for using them is anticipated to increase in future years. They are also essential for bus transit operators in adhering to their schedules. Letters we had previously received from MTA and Eyre Bus Service indicated how vital these priority lanes are and will continue to be for bus operations on US 29. The Action Committee for Transit has also been a strong advocate for the priority lanes on US 29.

Although the bus lanes in the outside shoulder work fairly well now, as the new interchanges are built the buses will encounter more and more problems. This will be due to the narrowness of the lanes and potential conflicts whenever a bus has to cross acceleration and deceleration ramps at the new interchanges. Every time a bus approaches a ramp, the driver would need to slow down to a crawl and most likely stop until there is a gap in the flow of traffic on the ramp, and then proceed carefully through the interchange area. These repeated delays obviously defeat the purpose of giving buses priority in traffic. The problem will get worse as the number of interchanges on US 29 increases.

One other option that SHA has considered is to require express buses to leave the outside shoulder to avoid conflicts at the ramps and merge into the general purpose traffic lanes in the vicinity of each new interchange after it is built. The problem that this causes is that by the time the third interchange is built, it would no longer be practical to use approximately 50% of the existing bus lanes in the outside shoulder. Attachment 7 shows the lengths of unusable outside shoulders and the conflict points at the ramps that buses would need to avoid. Buses, at a minimum, would be forced out of the bus lanes for extensive stretches between the various ramps, and, from an operational standpoint, for additional lengths upstream and downstream of the ramps, in anticipation of the merging traffic. By the time the Briggs Chaney Road interchange is built, a usable bus lane would, in effect, no longer exist. This would be clearly the point in time that SHA would need to transfer the bus lanes from the outside shoulder to the inside shoulder (next to the median). For that to happen, the remaining segments of the inside shoulder that are not already part of the first three interchange projects will need to be built.

Our staff recommends shifting the bus priority lanes to the inside shoulders by the time the Briggs Chaney Road interchange project is completed. SHA prefers to have express buses continue to operate in the outside shoulders of the interchanges, as they do today, for an indefinite

period into the future. SHA's current position is that short segments of 12 feet inside shoulders suitable for future bus use would likely be built as each interchange is built. However, since only three of the proposed interchanges are funded for construction, there would still be long stretches of unbuilt 12-foot inside shoulder segments for many years into the future until decisions are made to fund the construction of the rest of the proposed interchanges, if ever. This would leave the transition of the bus lanes to the inside shoulders pending for a long, long time.

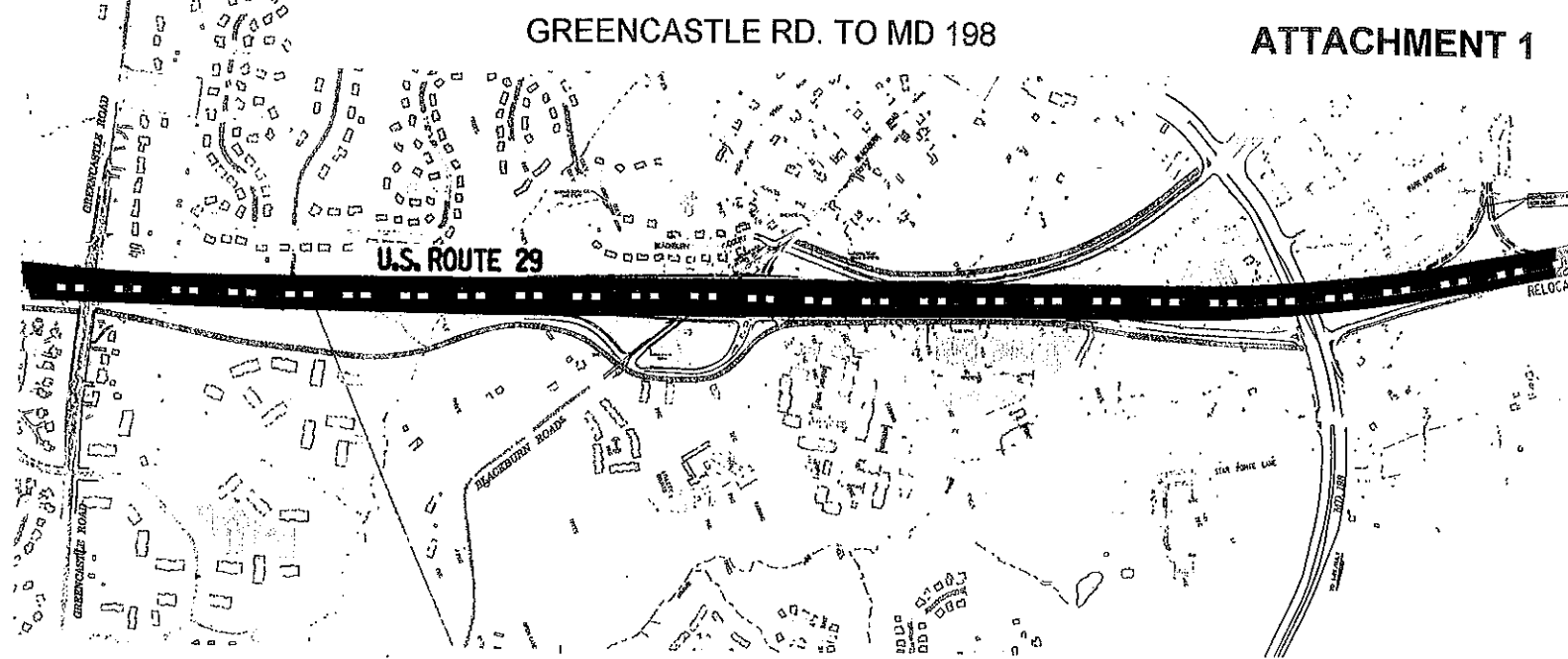
Staff recommends that the transition occur at the same time that the third of the first three interchanges is built. By that time, significant sections of the existing outside shoulders on US 29 would be interrupted by new ramps and weaving sections so as to make bus operations there slow and accident-prone. According to a recent consultant analysis, the optimum bus travel time savings would then occur in the inside shoulders. For the above reasons, our staff recommends that SHA fund a companion project for the third interchange (at Briggs Chaney Road), which would implement the remaining segments of the 12-foot-wide inside shoulders for the whole length of US 29 between Industrial Parkway and MD 198.

Equally important will be the ability of express buses to continue to use priority lanes during the construction phases of the new interchanges. Disruptions to normal traffic flow and the resulting traffic congestion during construction of the interchanges will cause auto commuters to seek other options. Bus transit that bypasses the traffic congestion would be a very attractive option for them. SHA has indicated that right-of-way constraints and costs would, in some locations, make continuation of these reserved bus lanes during construction difficult to provide. Nevertheless, SHA needs to show in its designs ways to preserve the continuity of the bus priority lanes, and if that is not possible at every interchange, to at least take a serious look at providing the express buses a way to be at the head of the traffic queues at the construction locations.

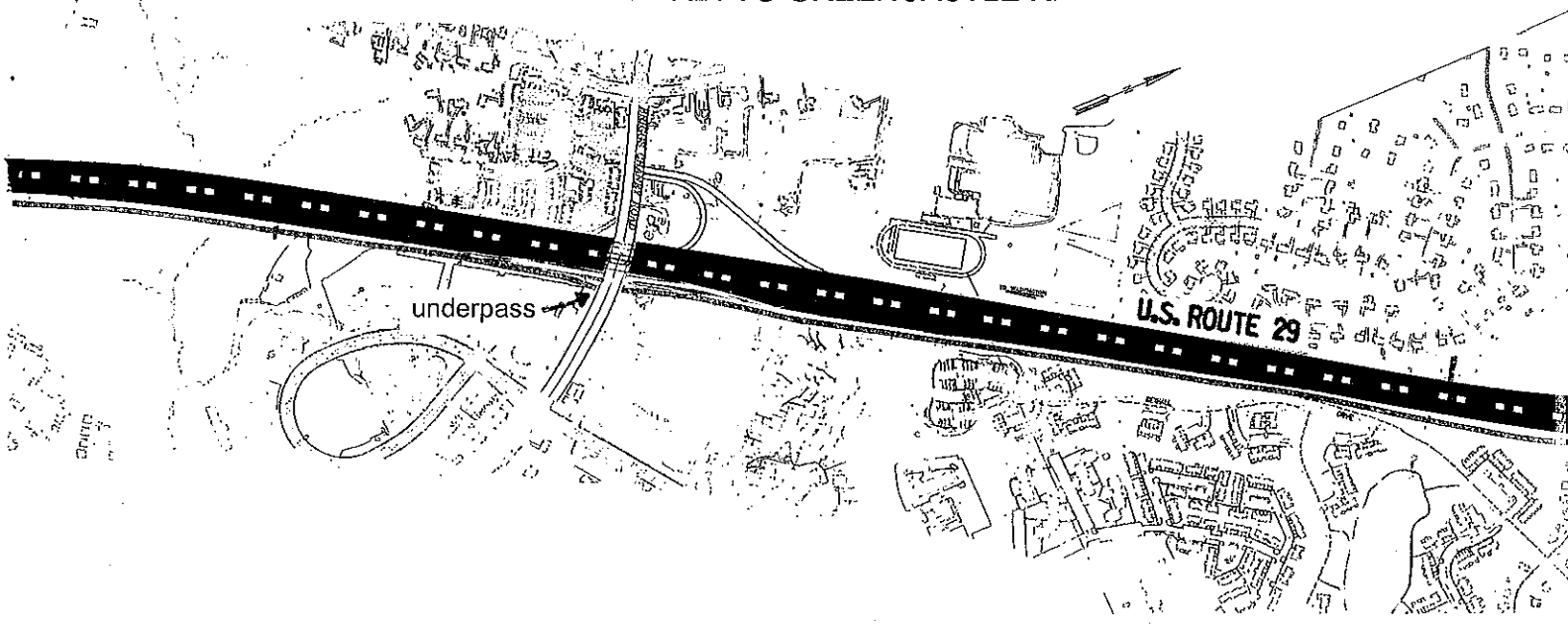
Replacement of the bus priority lanes to the inside shoulders in a timely manner is essential for SHA in its efforts to support the goal that Governor Glendening stated on December 7, 2000 -- "to make mass transit not just an option, but the first option for commuters, shoppers, and travelers." The staff recommendations are meant to support that State goal as well as carry out the recommendations of the Fairland Master Plan -- to assure that US 29 will function as a truly safe and efficient multi-modal transportation facility and meets the needs of the surrounding communities.

AH:cmd

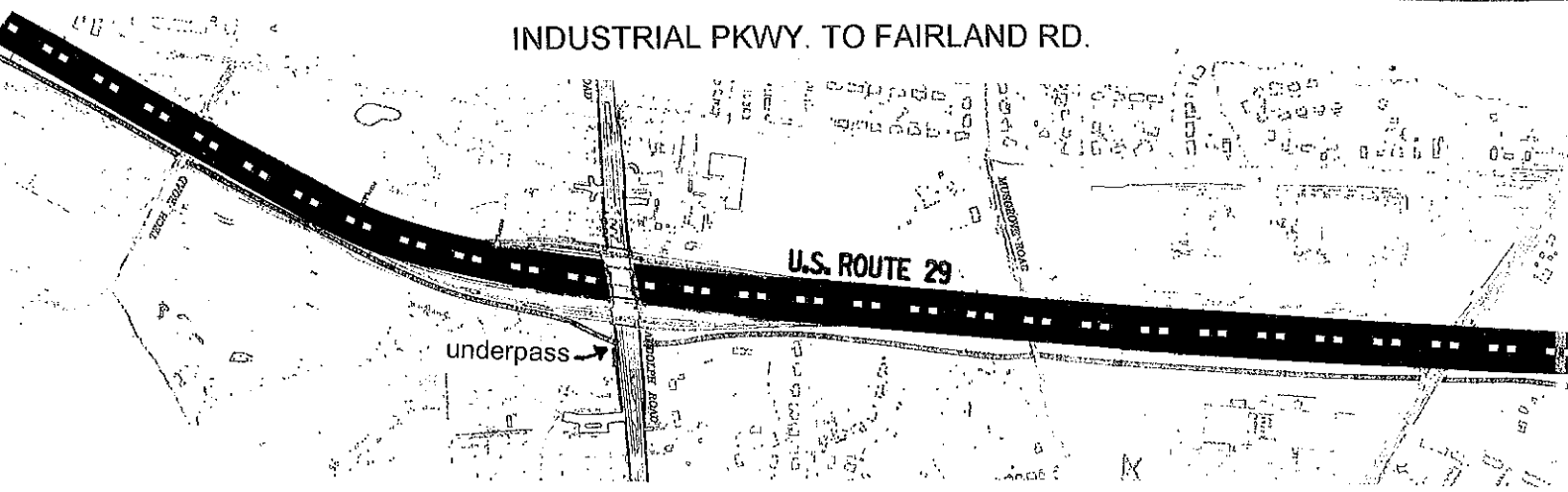
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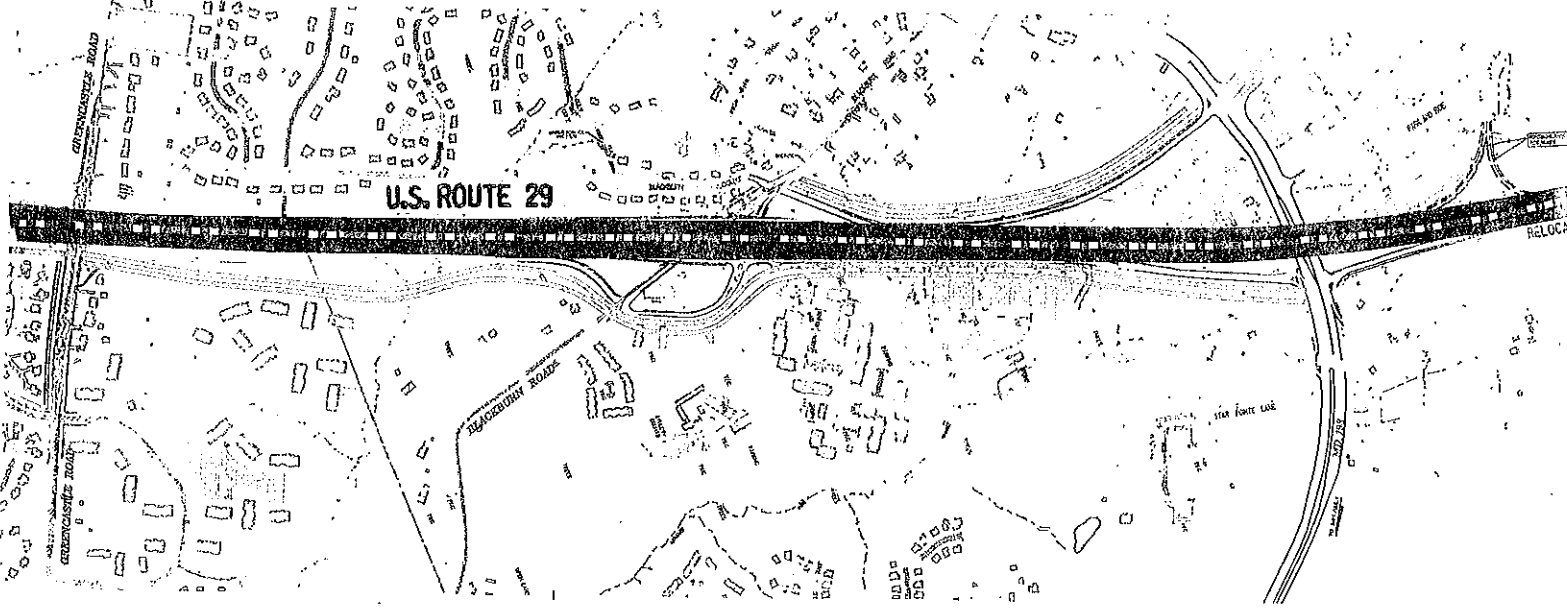


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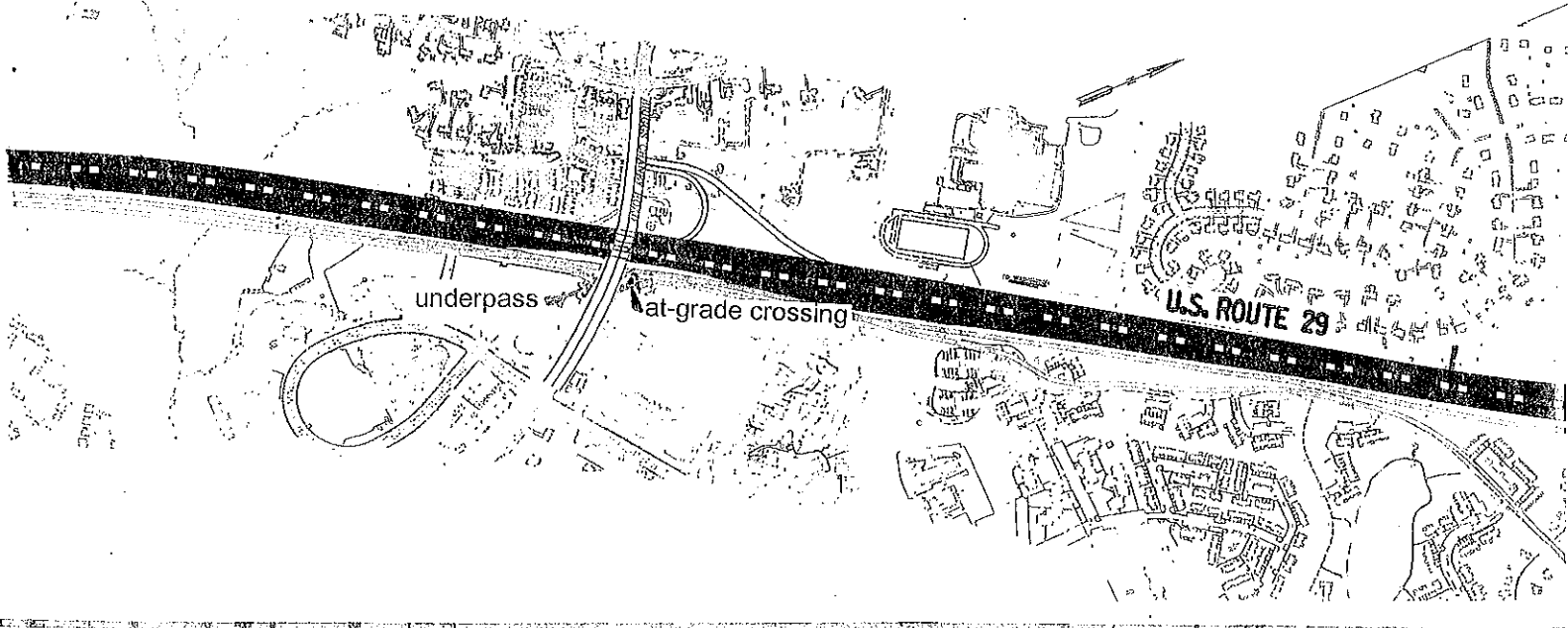


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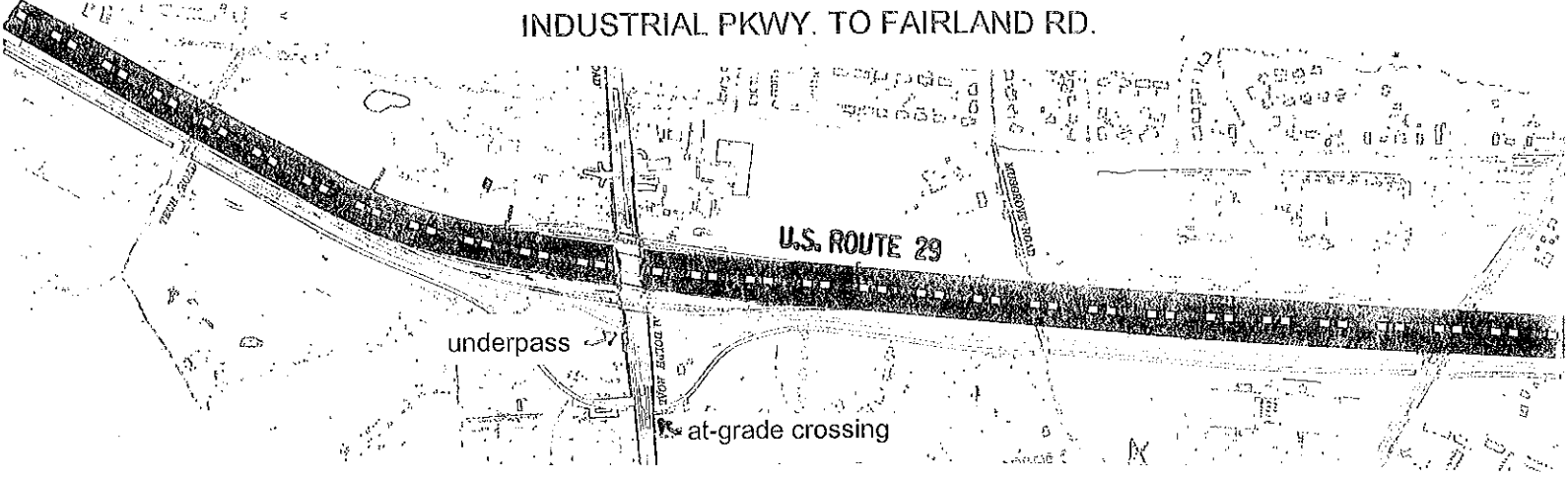




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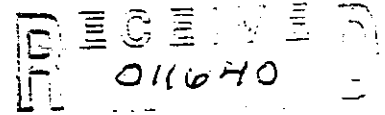
M-NCPPC recommended Commuter Bikeway alignment

SHA current proposal for Commuter Bikeway alignment

COMMUTER BIKEWAY



October 16, 2001



Mr. Arthur Holmes, Chair
 Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning Commission
 8787 Georgia Ave
 Silver Spring, MD 20910

OFFICE OF THE
 SECRETARY OF
 TRANSPORTATION

Dear Mr. Holmes

Subject: Support for Fairland Master Plan requiring separate bikeway on Rt. 29.

I am writing to ask that you support the Fairland Master Plan for a commuter bikeway along Rt. 29 with grade separation at intersections even if this requires an underpass.

Last year MNCPPC dedicated a 6 mile portion of the old WB&A Railroad that had been constructed with ISTEPA and MNCPPC funds. It has two underpasses built in an oval shape that give a light airy appearance that eliminates all feeling of insecurity. The oval form also enhances safety as it gives a clear view in many directions and significantly reduces the chances of being trapped inside.

The tunnel under Rt. 193 has been praised by several architectural organizations not only for the design but also for the method of construction that did not require the complete closing of this dual lane highway. Md. SHA was fully involved in both the design and construction of this underpass.

Montgomery County's bike trails such as the Capitol Crescent have added much to the health, transportation and tourist causes in our area and the completion of the Fairland Bikeways according to the master plan will certainly do the same. You are to be congratulated.

Sincerely

Morris Warren
 Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, PG County
 WB&A Recreation Commuter Trail Assoc, Chair

Attachment: News clipping of new bike tunnel under Md Rt 193

The Bowie Blade

A Capital-Gazette Newspaper

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2000

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CHERYL ALLISON
Staff Writer

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HAPPY TRAILS — The Maryland Park Mounted Police take their horses on a leisurely saunter through the new WB&A Trail's tunnel under Route 193. Last Saturday, the official opening of the trail was held at the Glenn Dale Community Center. Blade-News photo by Sharon Tazelaar

WB&A bike trail dedicated

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Jeffrey H. Marks
3736 Clarinth Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Arthur Holmes, Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, Md. 20910

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
AREA AND PLANNING COMMISSION

September 13, 2001

Dear Chair Holmes,

I appreciate the Montgomery County Planning Board's support in developing the US Route 29 Commuter Bikeway. Enclosed are copies of my letters to the State Highway Administrator supporting this commuter bikeway and also the pilot program allowing bicyclists to use certain controlled access highway shoulders.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey H. Marks

Jeffrey H. Marks

Jeffrey H. Marks
3736 Clarinth Road
Baltimore, Md. 21215

State Highway Administrator Parker Williams
707 N. Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

September 13, 2001

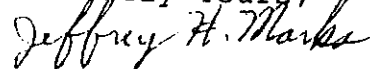
Dear Administrator Williams,

I congratulate the SHA for implementing a pilot program to officially open the shoulders of three controlled access highways (CAH) to bicyclists for a one year trial period. This pilot complements Maryland's improved bicycle program and places our state into the ranks of the more progressive eastern states, like Pa and NJ, that allow bicycles to use certain CAH shoulders. (When I bicycle in western states, I'm often permitted to use CAH shoulders). I look forward to utilizing these well designed Maryland highways, obeying the signs, and offering my input to your department.

This well designed pilot program builds on existing sections 21-313 and 21-1205 of the Maryland Vehicle Law Pertaining to Bicycles. I am pleased that this program will have signs letting motorists know that bicyclists may be present on these shoulders and signs that inform cyclists to only use the shoulder and where they must exit.

I also appreciate your department including cyclist need in highway improvements, such as Route 29. I thank Deputy Administrator Neil Pedersen and his staff in developing the US Route 29 Commuter Bikeway and including cyclists in this important corridor's traffic improvements.

Sincerely Yours,



Jeffrey H. Marks
(410)767-1529 W
(410)358-1321 H

cc: Neil Pederson
Arthur Holmes, Chair Montgomery Cty Planning Bd

Jeffrey H. Marks
3736 Clarinth Road
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Deputy Administrator Neil Pederson
Planning and Engineering, SHA
P.O. Box 717
Baltimore, Md. 21203-0717

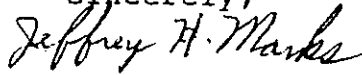
September 13, 2001

Dear Mr. Pederson,

I encourage your department to develop the regional Commuter Bikeway with grade-separated interchanges on par with what is being built for motor vehicles along US Route 29 today. This important facility will link and greatly improve bicycling in the region.

Enclosed is a copy of the letter I wrote to SHA Parker Williams supporting this grade separated commuter bikeway and also the pilot program allowing cyclists to use certain CAH shoulders.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey H. Marks

G. STANLEY DOORE

2913 Shanandale Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20904-1922-31
Tel.: 301.572.4939 Fax: 301.572.9165
E-mail: stan.doore@worldnet.att.net

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

2001 September 4

Arthur Holmes Jr, Chair ✓
Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring MD 20910-3760

Albert J Genetti Jr, Director
Montgomery County DPWT
101 Monroe Street
Rockville MD 20850

SUBJECT: US-29 and the Maryland 20-Year Bike-Ped Access Master Plan

The people want a commuter bike-scooter-pedestrian way parallel but separate from US-29 for safety and efficient commuter reasons. Fewer obstructions for commuting encourage use.

The US-29 commuter way should be grade separated and an integral part of making US-29 grade separated at intersections as US-29 and Cherry Hill, Fairland, Briggs Chaney, Blackburn roads and MD-198 etc. It will cost less to do it during the US-29 upgrade and while providing a useful facility to support the White Oak/FDA, the Westfarm Business Park development and the proposed White Oak Transportation Center. This was expressed strongly at a meeting which included members of your staffs and citizen representatives.

The safety issue for limited access roads was confirmed by consultants for the Maryland Department of Transportation 20-Year Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Master Plan at a meeting held in Baltimore on August 27, 2001. The consultant referred to the blast from trucks and large vehicles traveling at high speed on limited access roads as a safety issue. This is not only a local US-29 safety problem, but a state and national problem. Interstates don't allow bikes and pedestrians on them now. Why should Maryland and Montgomery County be different?

Attached is a letter printed in the Montgomery Journal about the US-29 issue. Also attached are pictures which show the Briggs Chaney Intersection and an elevated golf cart way built recently near Ocean City. The cartway shows how bike paths can be constructed using elevated end-on construction technology. It's not new technology. Why not use it?

Also, attached is another letter printed in the Journal about using scooters for commuting.

Let's start working together for an integrated transportation system - roads, rails and trails. Think out of the box!

You may wish to visit the mvmmi.org web site to view elevated monobeam rail for Maryland.

Regards,



Attachments

cc: John Porcari, Secretary, MD-DOT

Compromise needed on commuter bikeway

There is great interest in Montgomery County and the state to get single occupant commuter vehicles off roads and the drivers onto bikes, scooters and transit.

In a meeting with representatives of the county Department of Public Works and Transportation, Park and Planning and the US-29 Commuter Bikeway Task Force, agreement could not be reached on a commuter bikeway. Route 29 is being converted to a limited-access, high-speed road to move traffic more efficiently north and south and east and west. The disagreement is whether to put the bikeway on the shoulder of the road or to make it separate from the road.

A representative of the county executive stated that bikeways must be included in the planning and design of roads but they do not have to be built. Why plan and design for something that is recognized by the public as needed now to serve about two square miles of federal, business and commercial development if there is no plan to build a user friendly bike-pedestrian way?

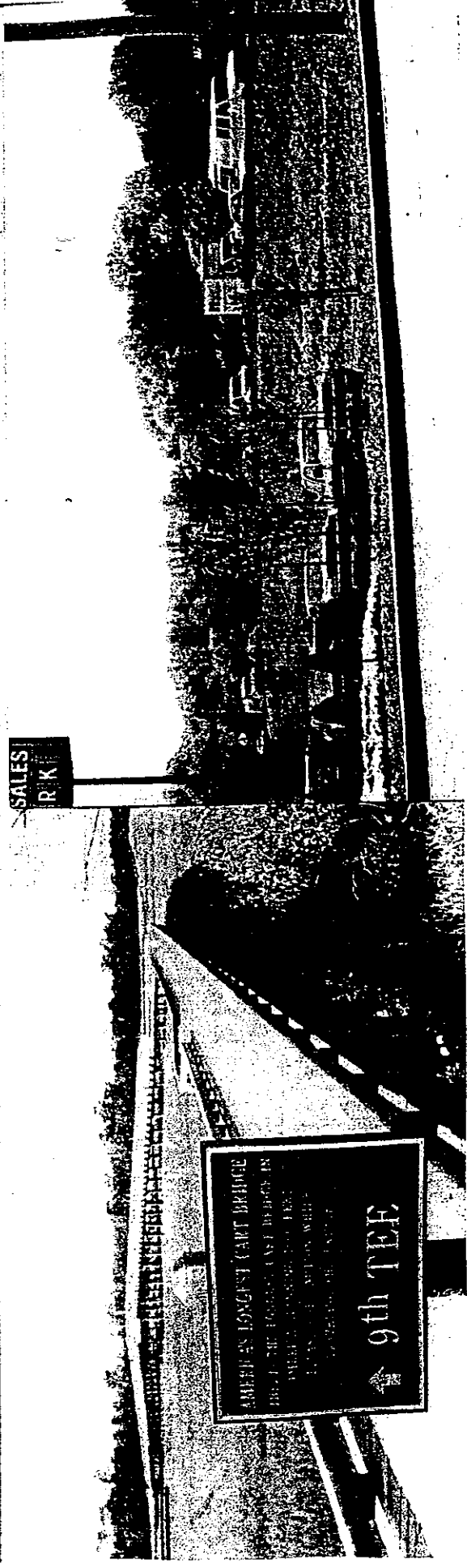
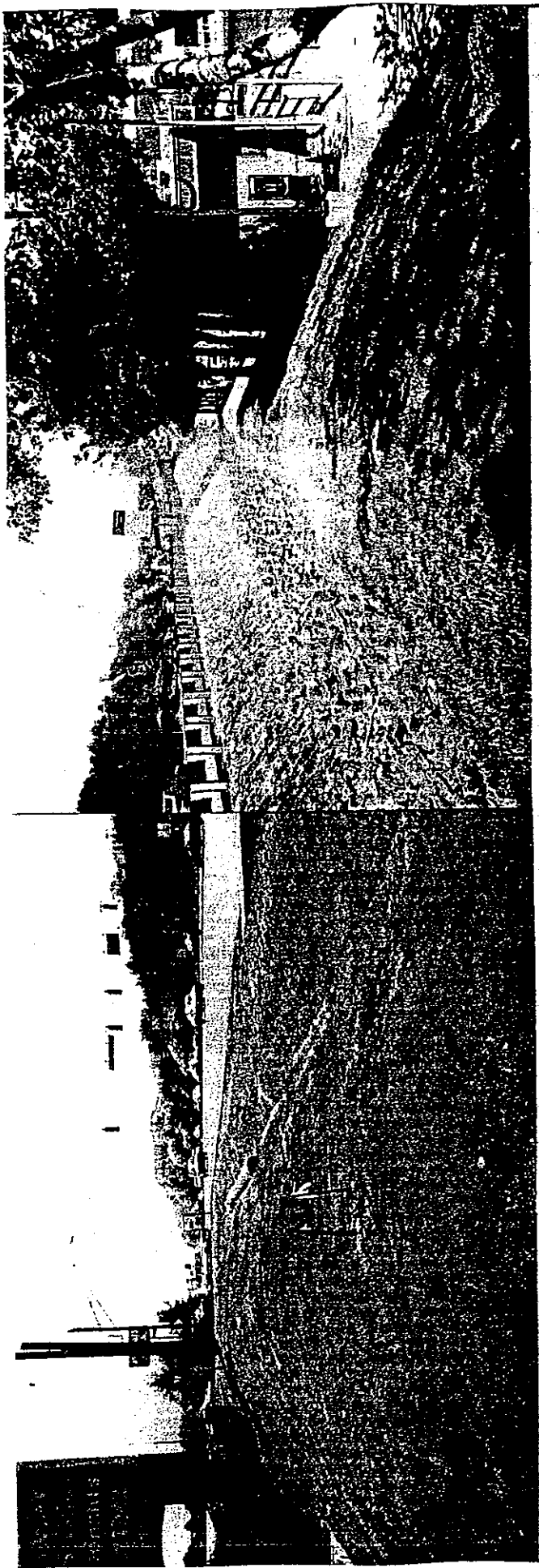
The planning board and the bike task force agree that a commuter bikeway must not be constructed on the shoulder of Route 29 for safety reasons. Many people have been killed

on Route 29. Planners agree that a commuter bikeway must be safe and easy to use. For Route 29, it means a straight bikeway parallel and next to Route 29 from Burtonsville to White Oak. It should not be for bikes alone since scooters, inline skates, walking and running are options for commuters and kids to use safely to get to schools, businesses, shopping centers, churches and recreation areas.

The DPWT and the county executive's representative are concerned about cost and not about getting people out of their cars to relieve congestion and to reduce emissions. Federal law requires that the cost of a project for bike and pedestrian ways cannot be used as a determining factor for federally supported projects, such as the upgrade of Route 29, when bike and pedestrian way components are less than 20 percent of the total project cost. Three interchanges on Route 29 now funded for planning, design or construction are estimated to cost \$140 million. It means 20 percent or up to \$28 million cannot be a determining factor. That's far more than enough needed to build a straight but separate commuter bike-pedestrian way next to Route 29.

It's time for Montgomery County and the state to do what they advocate — smart growth transportation. They should use common sense and get the most benefit and most effective use from taxpayers money. The public wants safe and east-to-use transportation. East Montgomery County has been the dumping ground for high density and it needs relief. The Route 29 corridor project could be a model to follow. Why not do it right the first time and do it now?

G. STANLEY DOORE
Silver Spring



How to provide a bikeway along US-29 - Use elevated end-on modular construction.

Photos taken by Stan Doore at the US-29/Briggs Chaney Intersection and an elevated golf cart bridge over wetlands near Ocean City

SCOOTERS could be ride of future

THE MONTGOMERY JOURNAL WEDNESDAY, JULY 11, 2001

Motorized scooters and bikes are now available to make commutes easier. Kids now use them for fun while some adults are beginning to use them, too. Kids could use them rather than bus or car to get to school, recreation areas and other activities if safe paths were available. These can help to reduce congestion and help to increase the use of transit. However, scooters create a safety problem on sidewalks and roads not designed for them.

The Maryland State Highway Administration has a policy to include five-foot bikeways (a national guideline) along the sides of new roads and to include them where possible on roads being upgraded. However, scooters and bikes are prohibited on limited access roads where Bus Rapid Transit can be used. Transit authorities — bus and rail — have changed their regulations and have modified some vehicles to provide for bikes and scooters. These need to be made more flexible to accommodate scooters.

Small, motorized scooters — gas and electric — make their use in

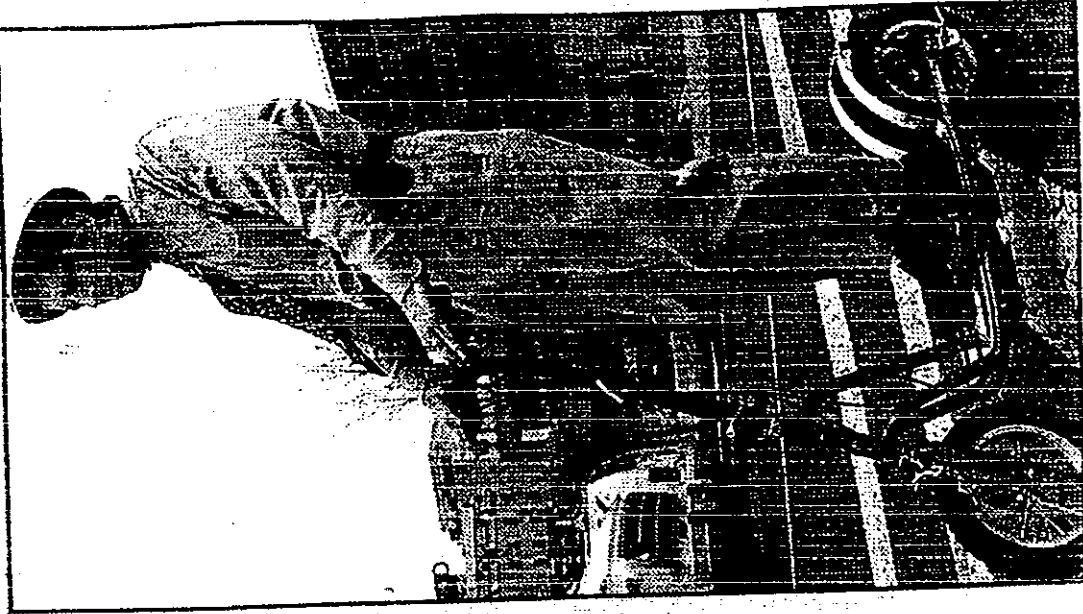
commuting practical because they are smaller and more compact than bikes; they are easy to pack and handle. Use of scooters could help to reduce congestion while providing mobility in very dense business and commercial areas. Scooters would be useful in low density residential areas for fun and transportation.

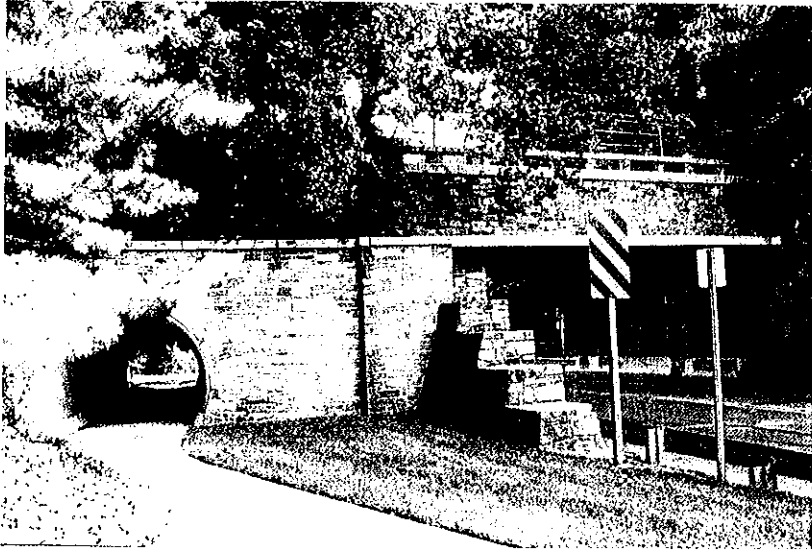
Kids find scooters — motorized and non-motorized — fun. They shouldn't be prohibited from using either type. In fact, this is an opportunity to help kids learn rules of the road and how to use scooters safely, for this generation of kids will be commuters of tomorrow. Encouraging kids to use scooters now will make scooters part of tomorrow's workers life.

Sensible and practical rules are needed rather than restrictions. Many now exist for bikes. No licensing is needed; however, education and scooter (bike) lanes and paths are needed on existing roads and streets to foster safety.

G. STANLEY DOORE

Silver Spring

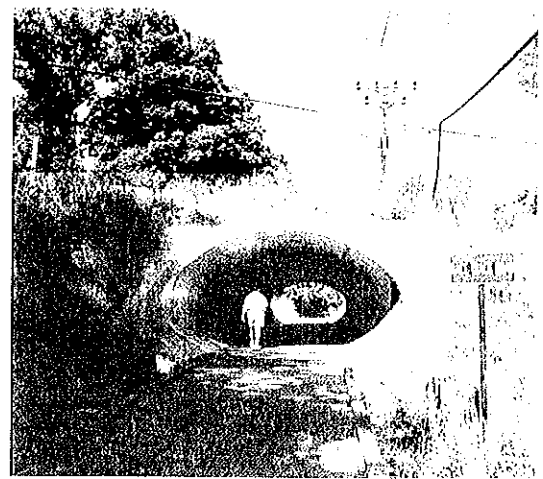




Capital Crescent Trail



Columbia Path Network



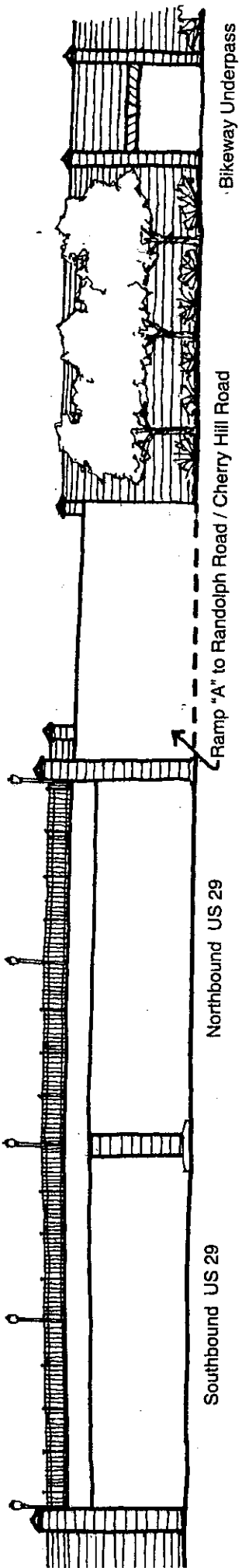
WB & A Trail



WB & A Trail

Examples of Bikeway
Underpasses
And Overpasses
in Montgomery,
Prince George's, and
Howard Counties

ILLUSTRATIVE – US 29 & RANDOLPH ROAD



FAIRLAND MASTER PLAN CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 28, 2001

Mr. Arthur Holmes, Jr.
 Chairman, Montgomery County Planning Board
 8787 Georgia Avenue
 Silver Spring MD 20910

RECEIVED
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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN
 THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL
 PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: US 29 BIKEWAY

Dear Chairman Holmes:

The Citizens Advisory Committee of the Fairland Master Plan continues to monitor the implementation of the 1997 Fairland Master Plan. Yet another issue currently before your staff is the design of a commuter bikeway parallel to Route 29 from Burtonsville to New Hampshire Avenue at White Oak. We believe it is important that the intent of the Master Plan with regard to this facility be given full consideration in the design process.

A primary goal of the Master Plan was to improve connections between Fairland's neighborhoods and unify Fairland as a community. The typical Fairland household, according to M-NCPPC demographic data, consists of a dual-income, college-educated, married couple between 25 and 35 years of age with a child under 10. This relatively young population will use a safely and thoughtfully constructed bicycle facility along the main spine of its commercial and community activities.

As we considered the Master Plan the CAC recognized that we had the opportunity to create a place where people could both live and work. As of 1995, when we were considering this plan, there were 16,000 jobs in the Fairland planning area. With regard to office employment alone an additional 4,800 jobs were projected in Fairland. The Verizon complex was in the middle of the planning area. We could anticipate continued job growth at the Westfarm, Montgomery, and Burtonsville Industrial Parks and could foresee a substantial increase in jobs at and in support of the FDA facility in White Oak. We wanted to build a bicycle commuter path that would allow our residents to get from homes to jobs in the US 29 area without ever getting into their automobiles.

Our goal in the Master Plan was to create a livable community along US 29 with strong connections for pedestrians and bicyclists between homes, employment centers, schools, recreational facilities, shopping, libraries, and public services. The commuter bikeway is the backbone of this connectivity. If the concept is to work the pieces of the US 29 network have to be continuous and connected. In the long range this bikeway could extend all the way to the Silver Spring Metro Station.

We hope to see a design for a facility that people will use safely and often. An element of that design has to be safely separating bicycle traffic from automobiles, buses, and trucks. There needs to be a safe passage, with adequate lines of sight and lighting across

the major interchanges in north-south as well as east-west directions. The design needs to solve the problems of conflicts arising from turning traffic from high-speed roads, while also addressing aesthetics and safety issues related to carrying the facility under or through interchanges.

The section of the Master Plan that is called "Plan Vision" defines our criteria for this bikeway:

"This Plan envisions physical alterations to Route 29 that will alleviate congestion, improve east-west travel and most importantly, allow bikes and pedestrians to cross US 29 safely to reach facilities and services on either side of the highway. Sidewalks, bikeways and hiking trails will link the communities of Fairland and provide access to recreation and public facilities. The pedestrian and bike system will connect communities with better defined local neighborhood retail and employment centers. Most of all, this Fairland of the future is a livable suburban community."

Thank you for considering the goals of the CAC as you implement the features of this Master Plan.

Sincerely,

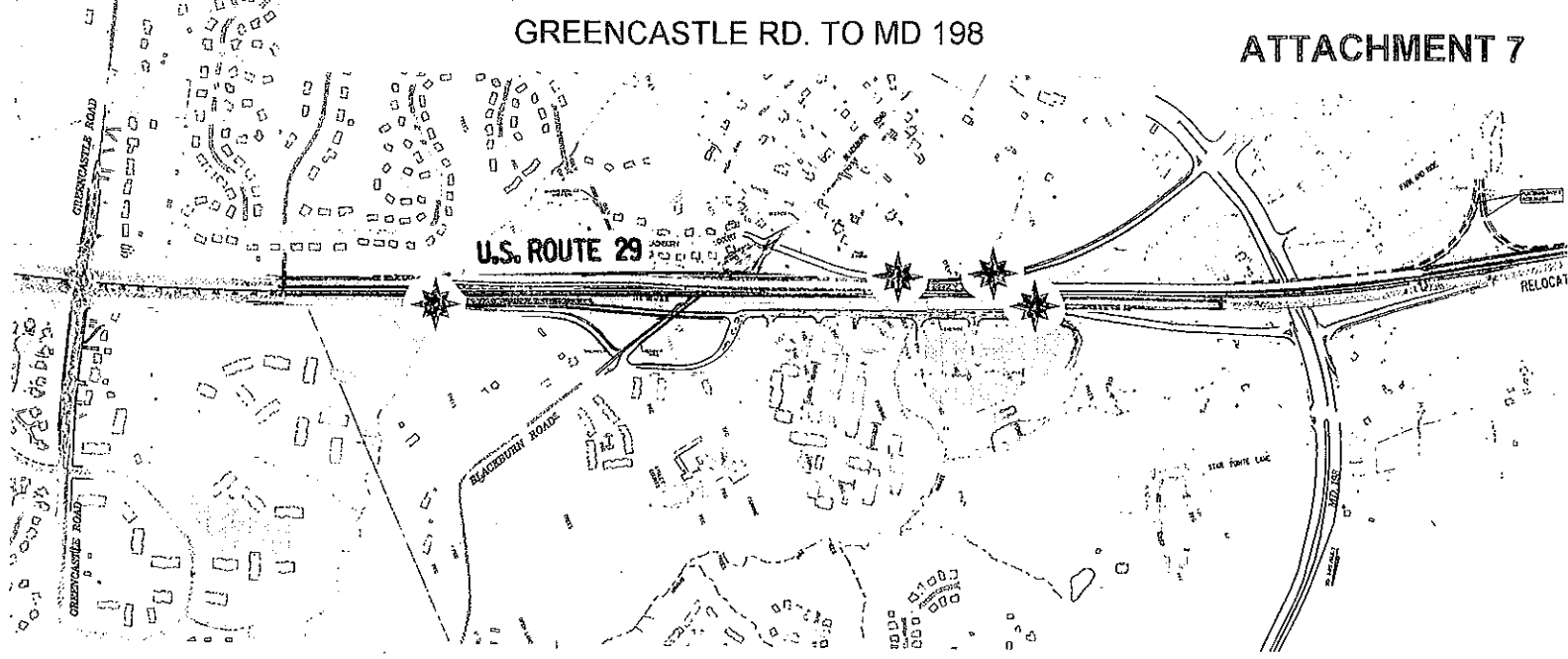


Donald J. Grace
for the Fairland Master Plan Committee

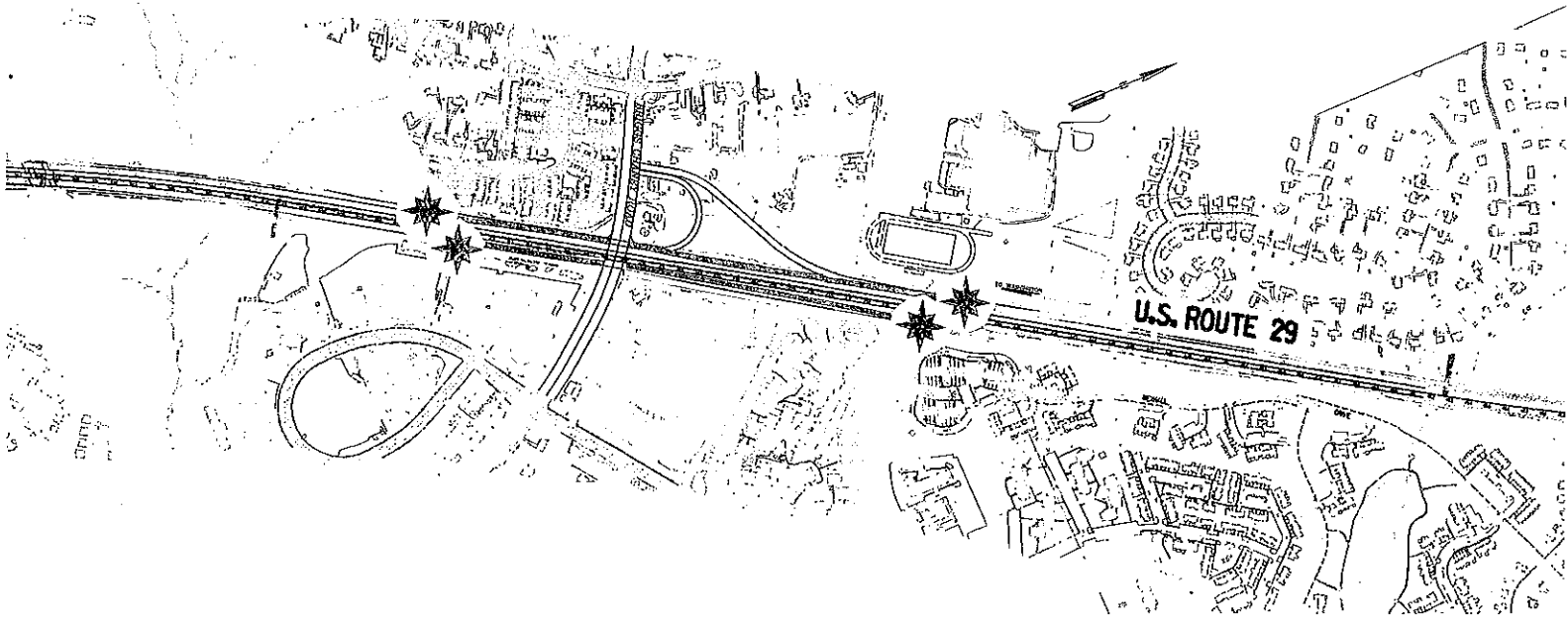


Stuart Rochester
Chairman

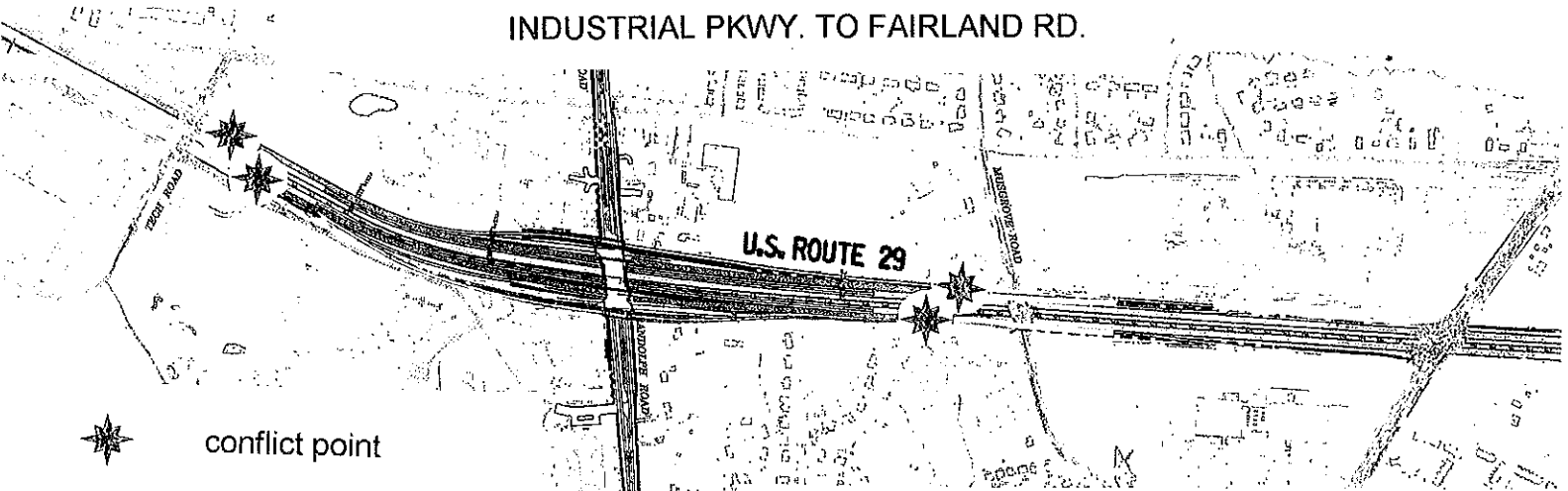
cc. Alex Hakemian



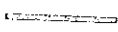
FAIRLAND RD. TO GREENCASTLE RD.



INDUSTRIAL PKWY. TO FAIRLAND RD.



conflict point



no bus lane zone

bus transition zone

**ZONES UNSUITABLE FOR BUS LANES
AFTER THIRD INTERCHANGE IS BUILT**

