



January 16, 2004

MEMORANDUM**TO:** Montgomery County Planning Board**VIA:** Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief
Countywide Planning DivisionRichard C. Hawthorne, Chief
Transportation Planning

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RCH', is written over the typed name of Richard C. Hawthorne.

FROM: Alex Hekimian: 301-495-4525, for the Park and Planning Department

Handwritten initials 'AH' in black ink, positioned to the right of the 'FROM' line.

SUBJECT: Worksession on Master Plan of Highways Amendment – Interchange at Intersection of Randolph Road and Veirs Mill Road

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Board endorse and transmit to the County Council a revised proposal to amend the Master Plan of Highways (Transportation) and the 1989 Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan to include a grade-separated interchange at the intersection of Veirs Mill Road and Randolph Road. Based upon previous feedback from the County Council and County Executive, and as a result of recent public testimony, staff recommends the following amendment to the Master Plans:

This revised amendment would add a graphic symbol of a future interchange at Randolph Road and Veirs Mill Road to the Master Plan of Highways map. It would also add some new text to the *Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton, 1989*, as follows.

On page 99 of the Kensington-Wheaton master plan, first column, a new sub-heading would be inserted after the Kenton Drive paragraph, as follows:

Randolph Road/Veirs Mill Road Intersection is recommended as a potential grade-separated interchange. The precise characteristics of a proposed interchange will be determined in a future engineering study, which will take into account access to affected properties, environmental constraints, and

appropriate road designs, among other factors. The interchange design should minimize right-of-way takings and ingress and egress impacts on adjacent properties while still achieving the project's objectives.

This interchange will expedite bus transit on both Randolph Road and Veirs Mill Road. The interchange should also be designed to accommodate continuous bikeways on both Veirs Mill and Randolph Roads.

For each leg of the intersection, the right-of-way width shall be a minimum of 150 feet within a 600-foot distance from the center of the intersection.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

The above recommended amendment for the proposed Veirs Mill Road/ Randolph Road interchange replaces the recommendation on page 8 of the attached *Planning Board Draft – An Amendment to the Master Plan of Highways (Transportation) Within Montgomery County*, which was prepared in April 2003. It accompanies a previously recommended amendment for high-occupancy vehicle lanes on the Capital Beltway (I-495) between the American Legion Bridge and the I-270 West Spur. The latter recommendation remains unchanged from the text shown in pages 5-7 of the Planning Board Draft.

Based on direction from the County Council, staff conducted a supplementary community outreach process and the Planning Board held a second public hearing on the Veirs Mill Road/Randolph Road interchange proposal. Exhibit A provides a summary of the testimony from the three people who spoke at the January 8, 2004 hearing as well as from one person who subsequently sent a letter before the public hearing record closed on January 14. Exhibit B is a compilation of the actual written testimony from the hearing and the aforementioned letter. Copies of the original Planning Board Draft are in the Planning Board members' packets only.

Having reviewed the testimony, staff has provided a response, where appropriate, for the major issues raised, and has adjusted the recommendation, as shown in Exhibit A.

After the Planning Board's upcoming worksession, the next step would be to transmit the Board's recommendations in a revised version of the Planning Board Draft to the County Council for approval.

AH:kcw
Attachments

EXHIBIT A

MASTER PLAN OF HIGHWAYS PUBLIC HEARING: JANUARY 8, 2004

Comments	Staff Response	Recommendation
RANDOLPH ROAD/VEIRS MILL ROAD INTERCHANGE PROJECT		
<p>We re-iterate our previous position in support of the interchange project. It is important for both east-west and north-south travel in the area.</p> <p>Dan Wilhelm, on behalf of Montgomery County Civic Federation*</p>		
<p>We re-iterate our previous position that a full revision to the 1953 Master Plan of Highways is needed, rather than just the proposed amendment, in order for the County to be in compliance with the County's General Plan.</p> <p>Jerry Garson, on behalf of Citizens for Better Potomac Roads*</p>	<p>A comprehensive review of the County's short- and long-range transportation needs was recently performed in the Transportation Policy Report. The Master Plan of Highways is a compilation of priority projects, such as this interchange project, from such transportation planning efforts and from adopted area master plans.</p>	
<p>We re-iterate our previous position in opposition to the interchange project. To relieve traffic on Randolph Road, resurrect the Rockville Facility.</p> <p>Royal Buyer, on behalf of Intercountry Connector Master Plan Advocates*</p>	<p>The western portion of the right-of-way for the previously proposed Rockville Facility is now proposed as the Montrose Parkway, but extending it to use the portion east of Veirs Mill Road would be inconsistent with the right-of-way designation as Matthew Henson State Park.</p>	
<p>As a representative of a shopping center near the proposed interchange, I am concerned that additional right-of-way and a grade-separated structure would cause changes to the physical structures and traffic patterns of the center. The proposed amendment should take these concerns into consideration.</p> <p>Karl W. Corby, IV, on behalf of The Rappaport Companies</p>	<p>Any interchange at this location should be sensitive to impacts on adjacent land uses. The interchange should have a very compact design in order to fit in as much as possible within the space available.</p>	<p>Add text in the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan to state that the interchange design should minimize right-of-way takings and ingress and egress impacts on adjacent properties while still achieving the project's objectives.</p>

* Spoke at the public hearing



Daniel L. Wilhelm
Vice President and Transportation Committee Chairman
904 Cannon Rd
Colesville, MD 20904

Montgomery County Planning Board
Attn: Derick P. Berlage, Chairman
8787 Georgia Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910

January 8, 2004

Re: Master Plan of Highways Amendment.

Dear Chairman Berlage:

MCCF voted in 2002 to support a large number of transportation projects, including making the intersection of Randolph Rd and Veirs Mill Road grade-separated.

Congestion on signal-controlled roads most often occurs when two four-lane or six-lane roads cross. Building interchanges at some of these congestion points will allow traffic to flow freely in both directions, at least until the next congested intersection. To be the most effective, a series of interchanges are needed along major roads. Along Veirs Mill Road, other interchanges are planned in Rockville. Interchanges along Randolph Road are planned at Georgia Ave (awaiting construction funding) and one is under construction at US29. Additional interchanges along Randolph are needed at Connecticut Ave and New Hampshire Ave. Much of the travel from Randolph Road west of Veirs Mill Road will use the planned Montrose Parkway and related interchange at MD 355, once they are built. Thus a grade separated interchange at Veirs Mill and Randolph is important for both east-west travel and north-south travel and therefore is justified for being added the Master Plan of Highways.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dan Wilhelm".

Dan Wilhelm

Citizens for Better Potomac Roads

8308 Raymond Lane
Potomac, MD 20854
301 765-9470

Testimony of Jerry Garson, Co-chair, Citizens for Better Potomac Roads To Maryland Park and Planning Commission, January 8, 2004

I am speaking about a proposed Amendment To The Master Plan Of Highways [Transportation] Within Montgomery County. The Master Plan of Highways was adopted in 1953. To the best of my knowledge the Master Plan of Highways has not been revised in its entirety since 1953. That was 53 years ago. In 1950 the population of Montgomery County was 194,182.

In fact most of the through roads in Montgomery County look very similar to those shown in the Atlas of Montgomery County Maryland Published by C. M. Hopkins in 1879 when the population was 20,563. That was 125 years ago. Viers Mill Road was known as Rockville Road in 1878 and the Grist Mill that Edward Vier owned at Rock Creek and Viers Mill Road is shown along with the intersection at what was then an unnamed road now known as Randolph Road. I guess Edward Vier would never have received permission to build his Mill in land that is now part of Rock Creek Park if the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission was in existence.

A map was issued in July 1992 titled Selected Transportation Elements including the Master Plan of Highways Montgomery County, Maryland. Note 1 to the map indicates "This map is the Master Plan of Highways (adopted in 1953) as amended by approved and adopted Area Master Plans, Sector Plans, and Functional Plans." This map is currently available at the information counter. There have been selected revisions to the Master Plan of Highways mostly deletions of roads and all the bridges across the Potomac River other than the American Legion Bridge. If these roads and bridges were built, they would have relieved a significant amount of the congestion that we have in our county. These deletions have been piecemeal and have been part of Individual Master Plans. They have not looked at the whole highway system and the needed roads required to comply with the General Plan.

The General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties was published in 1964. That was 39 Years ago, the document stated that "The principal goals in the 1957 General Plan for the Maryland-Washington Regional District are still valid and are supplemented rather than changed by the goals and regional policies stated above." Page 22. This projected a year 2000 population for Montgomery County of 995,000 Actual 873,341. This showed the current Beltway and an additional Outer Freeway with an additional bridge across the Potomac. The 1960 population was 340,928. This plan was updated in 1969 with the addition of such objectives as "Provide highway systems to carry required volume of vehicular traffic safely."

In 1993 the General Plan Refinement of the Goals & Objectives which contained such generalities as "Objective 5, Reduce traffic delays on the road system without eroding the quality of life in the surrounding communities." One strategy was "A. Provide a sufficient number of major highways, arterial roads, and primary streets to attract through traffic away form local streets."

This proposed amendment will only help traffic at one congested intersection Viers Mill & Randolph Road. If the Montrose Parkway East is built through to the ICC as originally proposed this intersection improvement is not needed.

Please explain to me why were are proposing only an amendment to the Master Plan of Highways rather than having a full revision to 1953 Master Plan of Highways. A full revision would provide a sufficient number of major highways, arterial roads, and primary streets to attract through traffic away form local streets, which our current General Plan requires.

Re-introduced into the record,
January 8, 2004

Testimony on February 20, 2003, to the Montgomery County Planning Board on
Revising the Master Plan for Highways

Good afternoon. I am Royal Buyer, President of the Intercounty Connector
Master Plan Advocates.

I am opposed to the Randolph/Viers Mill Road Interchange at this time. Incidentally, I am also opposed to the Randolph Road/Georgia Avenue \$40 million interchange now in the planning phase. Next there will be a request for an interchange at Randolph Road and Connecticut Avenue. These interchanges will turn Randolph Road into a major east-west road. We already have Route MD28/198 and will soon have the ICC. I wonder why a revision of the Master Plan of Highways is needed for the Viers Mill/Randolph Road Interchange when none was needed for the Randolph Road/Georgia Avenue Interchange now in the design phase. What is needed is to resurrect the Rockville Facility, F-10, on the Master Plan of Highways, thus providing a direct route from Montrose Road at Rockville Pike to the ICC in the vicinity of the Trolley Museum. This will relieve the heavy traffic on Randolph Road.

The State Highway Administration, in its enthusiasm for building interchanges, has responded in correspondence to my testimony objecting to the MD28/97 Interchange. My objection to this interchange, on the grounds among other reasons, is that this interchange is in violation of the Aspen Hill and Olney Master Plans. Their response noted that the affected Master Plans are quite old. Quite old? The Aspen Hill Master Plan was revised in 1994 and there is no assurance a revision of the Olney Master Plan will call for an interchange. The SHA's inability to prioritize the ICC/Georgia Avenue Interchange over the MD28/97 Interchange should be critically examined, as should be the previous council's disrespect for master plans.

Please do not spend money on the likes of these interchanges at this time or spend money on the SHA proposal to improve the Aspen Hill/Viers Mill Intersection Improvement which will improve nothing.

Thank you.



The Rappaport Companies
Developers & Managers of Retail Properties

VIA FIRST CLASS MAIL AND FACSIMILE

January 12, 2004

DIRECT DIAL: (571) 382-1243

E-Mail: kcobby@rappaportco.com

Mr. Alex Hekimian
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

RE: STONEYMILL SQUARE
Wheaton, MD
**AMENDMENTS TO THE KENSINGTON-WHEATON MASTER PLAN AND
THE MASTER PLAN OF HIGHWAYS**

Dear Mr. Hekimian:

As Property Manager of the Stonemill Square shopping center, located at the northwest corner of the Veirs Mill and Randolph Roads intersection, and as agent for the owner, C.B.S. Associates Limited Partnership, I am writing today to voice our concern with the proposed Amendment to the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan, and the Master Plan of Highways. While the proposed Amendment is a worthwhile concept and theory, there are some impacts to the shopping center and its tenants.

First, the issue of right-of-way is a major concern. The idea of taking land away from the shopping center, even though the owners would be compensated for it, will impact the overall functionality of the shopping center. The calculation of right-of-way, affects the entire shopping center, its parking facilities, and its flow of traffic. It may also affect the gasoline station situated on Randolph Road. The second concern is the access in and out of the shopping center. Constructing a grade-separated intersection will impact the ingress and egress of the property. Allowing for an elevated portion to run along the shopping center, on either Randolph or Veirs Mill Roads, will change the entrances and exits of the property. This will ultimately impact the overall productivity of the center.

Both the right-of-way and the traffic patterns of the center are concerns that we would like noted as part of the wording within the Amendment to the Master Plans. The shopping center has been present in the community for decades. To change major operational portions of the center would impact the tenants, the owners, and the community in general. Please take these concerns into consideration when wording the Amendment to the Master Plans.

If you would like to discuss these concerns further, or have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the direct dial number listed above. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Karl W. Corby IV
Property Manager

cc: Gary D. Rappaport; David A. Burnham; Scott W. Price; Larry M. Spott; SMS/SSC