

April 11, 2025

The Honorable Evan Glass

Councilmember and Committee Chair
Montgomery County Council
Transportation & Environment Committee
Stella B. Werner Council Office Building
100 Maryland Ave., Rockville, MD 20850

Dear Councilmember Glass:

On April 3, 2025, the Montgomery County Planning Board reviewed the Old Columbia Pike/Prosperity Drive Improvement project and voted 4-0 (Commissioner Pedoeem was present for the discussion but absent for the vote) to forward the following comments:

1. Advance Alternative 3 as the preferred alternative. This alternative includes a new two-lane bridge over Paint Branch, open to traffic, with continuous pedestrian and bicycle improvements between Stewart Lane and Cherry Hill Road.
 - a. Some Commissioners expressed concerns about Alternative 3's transportation benefits relative to its environmental impacts and suggested that more detailed analysis may be beneficial before advancing Alternative 3 to the next phase of design.
 - b. Alternative 2 has many of the same non-auto benefits as Alternative 3 but as it rehabilitates the existing bridge over Paint Branch rather than construct a new and wider bridge to accommodate automobiles, it would have lower costs and environmental impacts. After further analysis, should Alternative 3 prove to be unfeasible or not cost-effective, Alternative 2 would be an acceptable alternative to some Commissioners.
2. Provide a raised crossing for the proposed sidepath at the entrance to Stonehedge Park.
3. If Alternative 2 is selected as the preferred alternative, realign the crossing at Carriage House Drive to be as direct of a connection as possible to the side path that crosses the bridge.
4. Do not proceed with the intersection options as presented in the Project Prospectus for either the intersection of Old Columbia Pike/Industrial Parkway or the intersection of Old Columbia Pike/Prosperity Drive/Tech Road.
5. Turning movement restrictions from southbound Prosperity Drive to southbound Tech Road create a connectivity deficiency that results in unwanted cut-through traffic in the Westech Corner development. The intersection of Old Columbia Pike, Prosperity Drive, and Tech Road

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should allow left turns onto Tech Road and through movements onto Old Columbia Pike. These intersections should be signalized to accommodate these turning movements. The provision of a northbound through movement from Old Columbia Pike to Prosperity Drive should also be considered.

6. Creating separate space for pedestrians and bicyclists across the bridge is a necessary safety feature that must be included in any build alternative.
7. MCDOT must consult with the Maryland Historical Trust to ensure compliance with the Maryland Historical Trust Act of 1985 and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.
8. Coordinate with Montgomery Parks Department to:
 - a. Discuss avoidance and minimization of impacts through the Park Construction Permit review process.
 - b. Provide access to natural surface trails.
 - c. Provide a pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle trail crossing both at grade and beneath the bridge.
 - d. Develop an engineered trail link that would facilitate a future trail connection to the White Oak Recreation Center, to be constructed by the Parks Department at a future date.

The Planning Board appreciates the opportunity to review this project and continue coordinating with your staff on future projects. If you have questions, please contact Sofia Aldrich at 301-495-4528 or sofia.aldrich@montgomeryplanning.org.

Sincerely,



Artie L. Harris

Chair

cc: Chris Conklin, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Joe Moges, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Dan Sheridan, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Kevin Minn, Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Jason Sartori, Montgomery Planning
David Anspacher, Montgomery Planning
Richard Brockmyer, Montgomery Planning