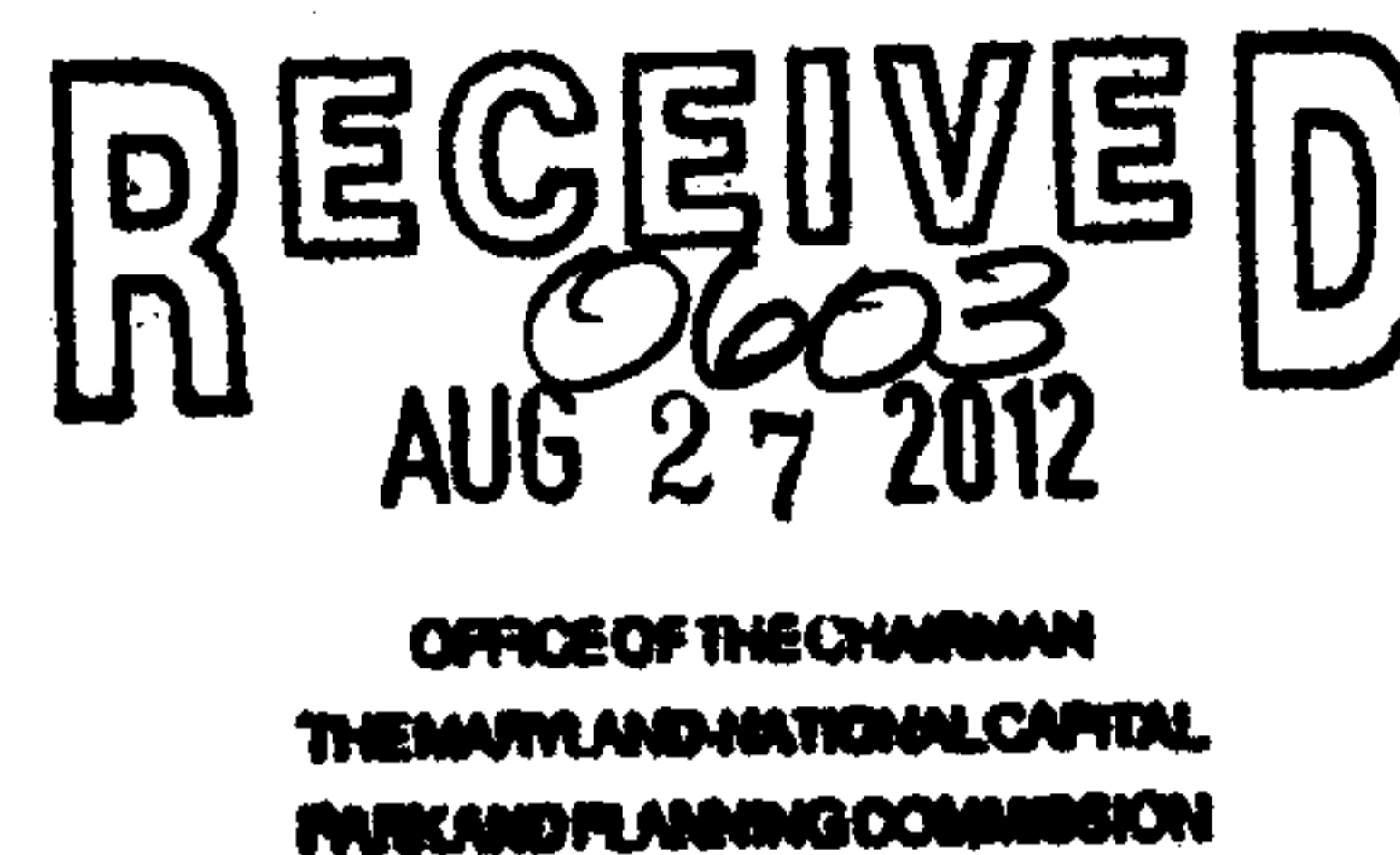


Martin O'Malley, Governor
Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Darrell B. Mobley, Acting Secretary
Melinda B. Peters, Administrator



August 21, 2012

Ms. Françoise M. Carrier
Chair
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Office of the Chairman
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring MD 20910

Dear Ms. Carrier:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Mandatory Referral Review for the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Intersection Improvement Project at MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and Jones Bridge Road/Kensington Parkway Phase 3. We have reviewed your conditions and comments for this project, and offer the following responses.

1. No disturbance will be permitted in the area of the Category I Conservation Easement until a plat of the revised easement has been submitted to the Planning Board, and approved. The mitigation for the approximately 11,357 square feet of impacts to the easement must include a minimum of 2,615 square feet of new Category I easement along the south side of the existing easement, and an additional area of approximately 20,099 square feet of Category II easement along the MD185 frontage of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) property, for a total of 2:1 easement mitigation.

Response: SHA agrees that a plat of the revised easement should be submitted to the Planning Board and approved prior to any disturbance in the area of the Category I Forest Conservation Easement. SHA will work with HHMI on the mitigation plan and plat record.

2. Maintain the existing median break at Spring Valley Road until the Planning Board has approved the Platt Ridge Drive Extension project.

Response: The Platt Ridge Drive Extension project is currently under preliminary engineering design by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT). The State Highway Administration's (SHA) understanding is that MCDOT will apply to the Planning Board for the approval on this project. SHA will maintain the existing temporary signal at the MD 185/Spring Valley Road intersection and keep the median open until the Platt Ridge Drive Extension is constructed.

My telephone number/toll-free number is 410-545-0400 or 1-800-206-0770
Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech 1.800.735.2258 Statewide Toll Free

Street Address: 707 North Calvert Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202 • Phone 410.545.0300 • www.roads.maryland.gov

3. Provide an update at the time of the submission of the revised Conservation Easement on the effectiveness of the temporary signal at Spring Valley Road.

Response: The temporary signal at Spring Valley Road was designed and constructed by MCDOT as an interim solution to concerns of the Chevy Chase Valley Community. The Platt Ridge Road Extension will provide the best solution, while minimizing impacts to the surrounding roadway network. As stated in SHA's response to your second comment, the Platt Ridge Road Extension project is currently under design by MCDOT. It will be MCDOT's responsibility to evaluate the temporary signal before implementing any traffic control changes at the Spring Valley Road intersection. SHA will follow up with MCDOT on the status of their evaluation when submitting the revised Conservation Easement.

4. Provide a median pedestrian refuge island on the west leg of Jones Bridge Road at Connecticut Avenue (MD185).

Response: Under the current SHA design, triple left-turn lanes are provided on the west leg of the intersection. The location of the median was designed to accommodate the tracks of the left-turn movements. Due to this reason, a median pedestrian refuge island cannot be safely accommodated. The amount of time provided by the pedestrian crossing signal is adequate for a pedestrian to fully cross the intersection.

5. Provide a two-foot-wide minimum offset from the curb for all proposed sidewalks wherever possible.

Response: Wherever feasible, SHA will provide a two-foot or wider buffer between the curb and sidewalk throughout the project limits.

6. Work with our staff to identify additional areas where trees can be planted in the right-of-way.

Response: The proposed design provides appropriate landscaping, where possible. Areas that are wide enough will receive turf grass, perennials, shrubs, flowering trees or street trees. Where it is not possible to provide trees, other appropriate types of plants will be provided. When determining the location and selection of plants, SHA will take into consideration issues such as sight distance, signs, overhead and underground utilities, and any other potential conflicts. SHA will also coordinate with your staff and consider their recommendations on the location and selection of plant materials.

7. Work with the Chevy Chase Park Home Owners Association (HOA) on how best to achieve an acceptable replacement for their boundary wall, fence, and trees.

Response: SHA has been in regular communication with the Chevy Chase Park HOA. SHA is evaluating several items brought up by the community, such as shifting the eastbound through lane at the intersection, removing an eastbound or westbound travel lane, and reviewing grading options to reduce impacts to the community (2:1 slope, 1:1 slope, or retaining wall). SHA will continue to seek resolution to the concerns of the community.

8. Coordinate with MCDOT on these recommended changes to the traffic-calming devices along Jones Bridge Road to ensure the safety of North Chevy Chase Elementary School students and other pedestrians:
 - a. Relocate the proposed median pedestrian refuge island to the east leg of the Montgomery Avenue intersection, in line with the existing sidewalk on Montgomery Avenue, and provide handicap ramps at this location.
 - b. Provide an ADA-accessible crossing of Jones Bridge Road at Montrose Driveway, including the use of a pedestrian refuge in the proposed traffic island.

Response: SHA will coordinate the recommended changes to the traffic-calming devices in front of North Chevy Chase Elementary School with MCDOT to ensure the safe crossing of students and other pedestrians.

9. Coordinate the design of the proposed improvements with area citizens associations, including the Coquelin Run Citizens Association.

Response: SHA is working with MCDOT and Coquelin Run Citizens Association to schedule a community meeting in early September.

10. Coordinate with the Village of North Chevy Chase on the proposed sidewalk improvements on the north side of Jones Bridge Road.

Response: SHA will coordinate the sidewalk improvements with the Village of North Chevy Chase.

11. Ensure that the home at the corner of Jones Bridge Road and Kensington Parkway will continue to have adequate driveway access.

Response: The driveway access at the corner of Jones Bridge Road and Kensington Parkway will be maintained; the proposed median will create a less direct access.

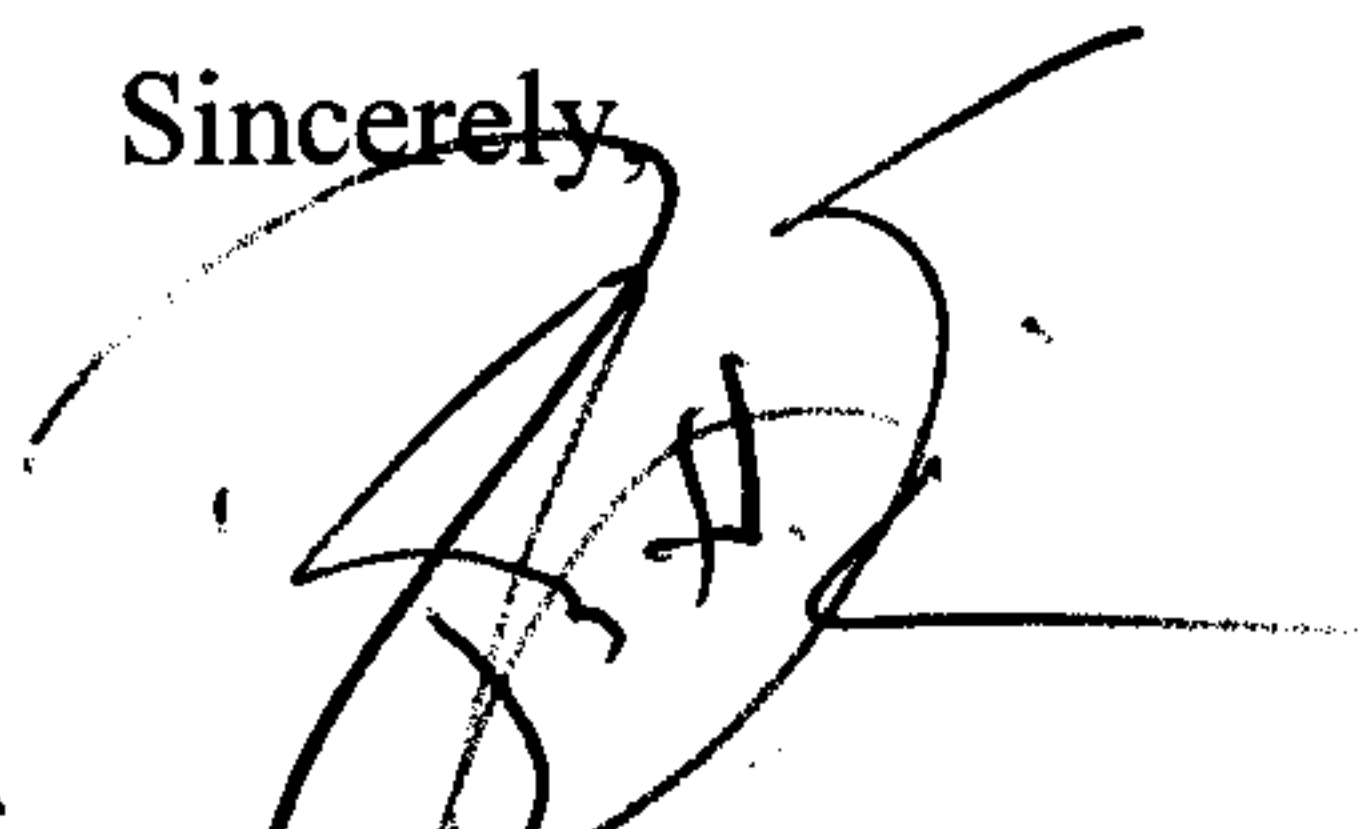
Ms. Françoise M. Carrier
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12. Provide an eight-foot-wide shared use path along Jones Bridge Road from the southeast corner of the intersection with MD185 to the eastern project limit:
- Consider the use of pervious concrete for the path.
 - The handicap ramps at intersecting driveways along this path should be eight feet wide to accommodate bike traffic.
 - Where the path is bordered by the future Chevy Chase Park HOA boundary wall and/or fence, the path should be separated from both the curb and the wall by a minimum of two feet.
 - East of the future Chevy Chase Park HOA boundary wall and/or fence, the landscaped offset of the path from the curb should be a minimum of five feet wide.

Response: SHA's current design does not include an eight-foot-wide shared-use path along eastbound Jones Bridge Road, west of MD 185. Between the curb and community wall and fence of the Chevy Chase Park HOA community, the proposed design will provide 12 feet, which includes a five-foot green buffer, a five-foot sidewalk, and two-foot offset to the community wall. The proposed design in front of the school will provide a five-foot green buffer and a five-foot sidewalk. SHA is evaluating the possibility of adding the shared-use path, including use of pervious concrete for the path. A decision has not been made. SHA is taking into consideration issues such as right-of-way impacts, overhead and underground utility, tree impacts, SHA's storm water management obligations, soil type, the community wall, embankment stability as well as the Planning Board's recommendation, and the master plan. The current design does not preclude widening the sidewalk to eight feet in the future. SHA will continue to coordinate with your staff as investigation of this option advances.

Thank you again for your letter. If you have additional questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Yuqiong Bai, Project Engineer, Highway Design Division, SHA at 410-545-8816, toll-free 1-888-228-5003 or via email at ybai@sha.state.md.us. She will be happy to assist you.

Sincerely,



Melinda B. Peters
Administrator

cc: Ms. Yuqiong Bai, Project Engineer, Highway Design Division, SHA
Mr. Brian Young, District Engineer, SHA