



State Highway Administration

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

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley, Secretary | Neil J. Pedersen, Administrator

Maryland Department of Transportation

June 25, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Kirk G. McClelland, Director
Office of Highway Development
FROM: Mr. Eric Marabello
Chief, Highway Design Division
BY: Ms. Christina Lavoie
Project Manager
SUBJECT: Contract No. MO5935470
Project: MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and Jones Bridge Road - BRAC Intersection
RE: Bicycle Compatibility Waiver Request

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

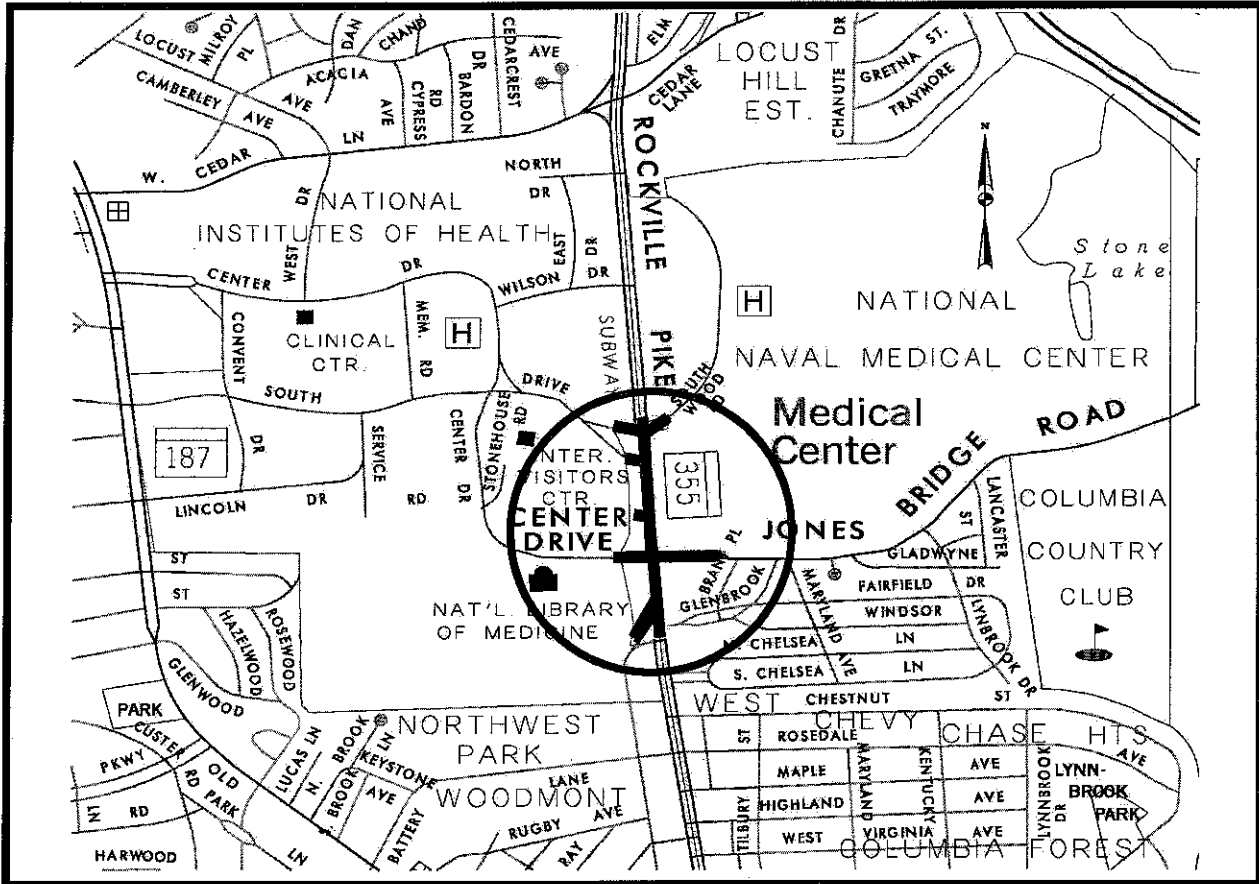
The subject project, located in Montgomery County, includes construction and implementation of a Dynamic Lane Control System for MD 355 (Rockville Pike) southbound roadway between Center Drive and South Drive to add a second left turn lane, in the PM peak movement, onto eastbound Jones Bridge Road. Center Drive, which is an entrance/exit to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is also being widened by approximately 6 feet, to allow an exclusive right turn onto southbound MD 355. The westbound entrance curve to Woodmont Avenue is being decreased, reconstructed, and roadway pavement narrowed to provide traffic calming and to provide a shorter distance for pedestrians to cross the roadway. Signals are being proposed at the intersections of MD 355 and Jones Bridge Road, MD 355 and South Drive and MD 355 and Woodmont Avenue. The purpose of this project is to improve the safety, capacity, and operations of the intersection due to the forecasted increase in volume of traffic to the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in conjunction with the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC).

The scope of this project includes grinding and resurfacing, median reconstruction, landscaping and restriping of lanes to a minimum of ten feet in width. Additionally, reconstruction of sidewalk ramps for compliance with SHA's Accessibility Policy and Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities along State Highways will occur within the project limits. The existing shared use path along southbound MD 355 in front of the NIH property will be upgraded to a width of 10 feet, unless physical constraints exist. An existing sidewalk along westbound Jones Bridge Road, in front of the NNMC has been upgraded by the County to a shared use path of 8 to 9 feet wide. SHA will tie into this facility with an 8 foot path.

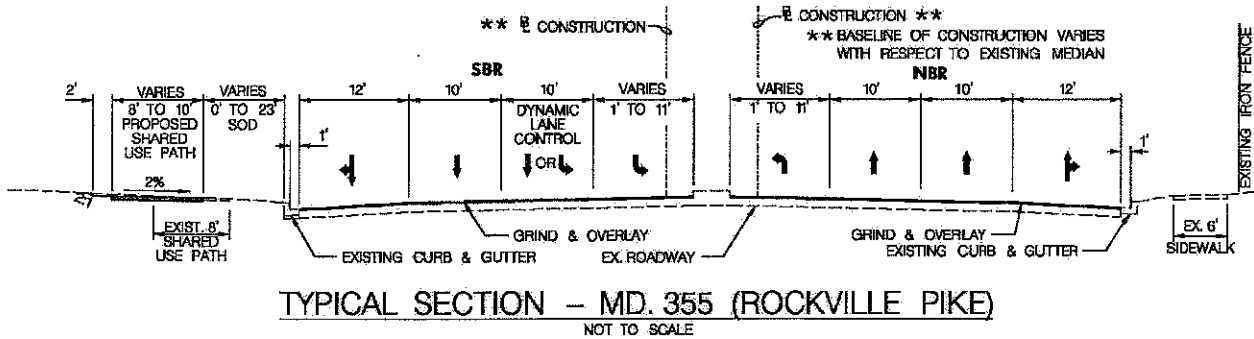
My telephone number/toll-free number is
Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech: 1.800.735.2258 Statewide Toll Free



LOCATION MAP:



MD 355 from south of Glenbrook Pkwy to north of South Wood Rd. and Jones Bridge Road from MD 355 to west of Brant Place.



MASTER PLAN:

The transportation portion from the Bethesda/Chevy Chase Master Plan (approved and adopted in 1990) endorses the expansion of pedestrian paths and bikeways to form a network linking residential neighborhoods with public facilities. Sidewalks should be provided along major highways, arterials, and primary streets. Where necessary, these sidewalks can be designed as bicycle paths, if appropriate width can be provided. This BRAC intersection improvement project in Bethesda proposes to upgrade all pedestrian facilities along MD 355 from Woodmont Avenue/South Drive to South Wood Road, designed to meet recreational and transportation needs.

OVERVIEW OF WAIVER REQUEST:

According to the *MD SHA Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidelines*, SHA shall make accommodations for bicycling and walking a routine and integral element of planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance activities as appropriate. Additionally, the *SHA Accessibility Policy and Guidelines for Pedestrian Facilities* along State Highways states that bicycle access shall be considered if the existing or proposed land use will support bicycling, bicycling lanes are included in the local Master Plan, or a bicycle lane would serve to connect other bicycle facilities.

The following location will require a bicycle compatibility design waiver request from the *MD SHA Bicycle and Pedestrian Design Guidelines*:



MD 355 northbound roadway north of Jones Bridge Road looking north towards South Wood Road/South Drive



**MD 355 southbound roadway at South Wood Road
Avenue looking south towards Jones Bridge Road**

Non-Compliance: Based on field survey, it was determined that the width of the existing roadway and travel lanes are not wide enough to accommodate bike lanes. The existing divided closed section roadway northbound and southbound is 44 foot wide from face-of-curb to face-of-curb, which will remain. The existing lane configuration is one 10 foot wide left turn lane, one 10 foot through lane, one 11 foot through lane and one 11 foot through/right turn lane with two one-foot offsets for each curb/median face. Outside widening is not being proposed due to limited right-of-way, utilities, security fences, walls, and large tree impacts, which would significantly increase construction cost and citizen concerns.

Bicycle Level of Comfort (BLOC):

Currently, there are no on-road bike facilities along MD 355 within the project limits. The Bicycle Level of Comfort Rating (BLOC) for the existing conditions on MD 355 is E (5.44). The BLOC for the proposed conditions on MD 355 is E (4.86). A slight improvement to the BLOC is due to wider curb lanes and improved pavement conditions, which will occur as a result of this project.

Mitigating Conditions: District 3 Traffic has agreed to reduce all lanes to a minimum of 10 foot, which will allow for a wider curb lane for bicyclists. Also, a meeting was held on May 19, 2009 at Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (MNCPPC) auditorium in Silver Spring, in which the following people attended:

Ms. Jialin Tian
Ms. Barb Solberg

SHA – Highway Design Division (HDD)
SHA – HDD

Ms. Christina Lavoie	SHA – HDD
Mr. Kirk McClelland	SHA – Office of Highway Development
Mr. Casey Anderson	Washington Area Bicyclist Association
Ms. Susan Hinton	NIH - Master Planner
Mr. Larry Cole	M-NCPPC
Mr. Andy Scott	Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Mr. Sean Massey	MDOT
Ms. Jenny Haliski	NIH Bicycle Commuter Club
Ms. Angela Atwood-Moore	NIH Bicycle Commuter Club
Mr. Richard Hoye	Montgomery County Council – Councilmember

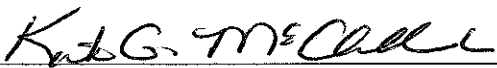
The following comments were made concerning on-street bicycle accommodations:


- SHA stated to the attendees, that they would be willing to reduce the outside lane width to widen the buffer area between pedestrians and roadway users
- Mr. Hoye stated that narrower lanes are better. It acts as a traffic-calming device and bicyclists are able to occupy the entire outside lane.
- Based on comments received at the meeting, SHA will proceed with a design of 10 foot through lanes and a 13 foot outside lane with gutter pan. The additional width gained by reducing the outside lane width will be added to the buffer, wherever feasible.

APPROVAL:

We are hereby requesting your approval for the design waiver.

Concurrence,


Kirk G. McClelland
Director, Office of Highway Development


Date