

July 9, 2010

**Via Hand Delivery**

Hon. Francoise Carrier  
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Re: Howard Hughes Medical Institute  
Proposed Maryland State Highway Administration Road Improvements  
Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road, Bethesda, Maryland

Dear Ms. Carrier:

Our firm represents the Howard Hughes Medical Institute ("HHMI") regarding the Maryland State Highway Administration's ("SHA") proposed Base Realignment and Closure ("BRAC") road improvements at Connecticut Avenue and Jones Bridge Road in Chevy Chase, Maryland. HHMI is located directly adjacent to the proposed improvements on Jones Bridge Road, which will impact HHMI's entire frontage from Platt Ridge Drive to Connecticut Avenue. The Mandatory Referral review of these improvements has been deferred to a later date to allow for study and accommodation of proposed impacts to the Category I Conservation Easement on HHMI's campus. HHMI applauds the decision to omit the subject improvements from this Mandatory Referral and thanks both the SHA and the Montgomery County Planning Board staff for agreeing to address the Jones Bridge Road improvements only when they are ripe for discussion.

The Jones Bridge Road improvements involve an additional left-turn lane on eastbound Jones Bridge Road for vehicles turning onto northbound Connecticut Avenue. All land for the proposed left-turn lane would be taken from HHMI's campus. HHMI has been actively engaged in the BRAC public process since it began in November 2007 and has consistently indicated its willingness to constructively participate in necessary road improvements to accommodate the BRAC project. At the same time, HHMI has sought to minimize campus impacts as much as possible and to preserve the campus border along Jones Bridge Road, which is characterized by a Category I Conservation Easement and a series of decorative retaining walls. The retaining walls provide a tasteful introduction to the campus and enhance the pedestrian experience in the area outside the campus.

As the BRAC road improvement plans proceeded to Mandatory Referral, it became clear that the full impacts, including mitigation options, on the Category I Conservation Easement were not known. HHMI remains interested in accommodating the SHA plans, particularly if it is possible to identify a mutually agreeable approach that would minimize the

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disturbance of the Category I Conservation Easement, enable HHMI to maintain the easement going forward, and preserve the exterior character of its campus. To this end, HHMI is looking at a number of options, including the potential for accommodating the Category I Easement impacts on-site. It will take time to do this correctly.

HHMI appreciates the opportunity to work through the easement issues with SHA and remains confident that the final designs will be agreeable to all. Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,



Patrick L. O'Neil

cc: Neil Pedersen  
Barb Solberg  
Yuqiong Bai  
Lawrence Cole  
Josh Penn  
Avice Meehan  
Lauri Spiliotes, Esq