

COALITION OF MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER NEIGHBORS

June 30, 2010

Mr. Lawrence Cole
M-NCPPC Building
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Cole,

The members of the Coalition appreciate the opportunity to provide our input to you for the staff report that will be shared with members of the Planning Board for the mandatory referral of the State Highway Administration's intersection improvement projects scheduled for July 22, 2010. There are a number of issues coming before the Planning Board in the coming weeks that relate to these intersections and we trust that the projects will receive comprehensive consideration as to how they relate to each other and in their total impact on the surrounding communities.

From our inception in October 2007 through today, the goal of the Coalition has been to work toward the success of the new Walter Reed while preserving the quality of life and the economic success of the residential and business communities in the nearby vicinity. This will only be possible through coordinated and integrated improvements to the transportation infrastructure around the base.

In considering the SHA intersections, we do have some specific points to raise.

- 1) At key points in the area, both the State and the County have proposals on the table. At times the plans seem to overlap without coordination. This is particularly important in constricted spaces. The specific example cited is the county's bike path along Jones Bridge Road and SHA intersection improvements at Jones Bridge Road and Connecticut Avenue.
- 2) The phasing of the intersection projects is helpful in understanding the component parts, but there must be a commitment to complete these projects to realize the full potential of the improvements and to ensure that related improvements, such as the bike path on Jones Bridge, have true utility and connectivity.
- 3) As Congressman Van Hollen has stated in his letter of June 11 to NNMC, each stakeholder must be willing to participate in this process. To the extent that the Planning Board can reinforce this approach, it should be done.

- 4) The plans as conceived by SHA must take into account the changing nature of the surrounding area with the ongoing development in the Bethesda Central Business District, the recently approved sector plans at White Flint and Kensington, and the emerging plans for the Chevy Chase Lake area.
- 5) There are additional projects that impact the SHA plans including the Cedar Lane bridge improvements and the potential mitigation of the Chevy Chase Valley neighborhood ingress and egress. This is especially critical for the key component of the Route 355 crossing at the Medical Center metro area. That project must be integrated into the two intersections and the corridor that connects them.
- 6) We should not lose sight of the fact that small measures including but not limited to adequate signage, synchronization of lights, staging and queuing of vehicles will all impact the overall effectiveness of the physical improvements.
- 7) The Planning Board should ascertain and insist that all new work comply with present codes, regulations, governing design criteria and best engineering practices.

We appreciate your continued interest in the input by the communities that travel this area routinely and throughout the day. It is through a thorough understanding of where the challenges are and how we hope to accommodate the influx of staff, patients and visitors that we will be able to provide the necessary support to ensure that the mission of the new Walter Reed. Adequate mobility in the surrounding area will be essential both for ensuring Walter Reed's success and the quality of life in the surrounding area.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide input.

Sincerely,

Bailey Condrey, Parkwood Citizens Association
Lulu Gonella, Chevy Chase View
Ilaya Hopkins, East Bethesda Citizens Association
Ed Krauze, Bethesda Parkview Citizens Association
Marilyn Mazuzan, Town of Oakmont
Avice Meehan, Howard Hughes Medical Institute
Debbie Michaels, Glenbrook Village HOA
George Milne, Stone Ridge School
Paul Thaler, Locust Hill Estates Citizens Association
Bob Weesner, Village of North Chevy Chase