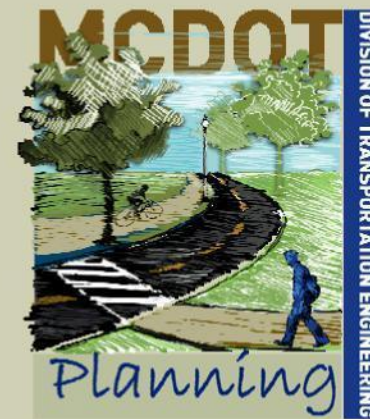




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The Plan Ahead is a project
 newsletter published by
 MCDOT to encourage
 community participation.

THE PLAN AHEAD

ARTHUR HOLMES, JR. - Director, Department of Transportation

OAK DRIVE/RIDGE ROAD (MD 27) SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

The Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is concluding the Phase I Facility Planning for the Oak Drive/Ridge Road (MD 27) Sidewalk Improvement Project located in Damascus, Maryland.

The purpose of this newsletter is to summarize the project's history, present the study team's technical Recommended Alternative, convey the next steps of the evaluation process, and continue to solicit your comments on the Oak Drive/MD 27 Sidewalk Improvement Project.

BACKGROUND

MCDOT received a request for safe pedestrian access along Oak Drive and MD 27 in 2005 from concerned citizens and the Damascus Recreation Center. The request was placed on a waiting list for consideration as a future candidate project under Facility Planning-Transportation (CIP 509337). Facility Planning is an evaluation process that results in design plans which are approximately 35% complete. This evaluation allows decision makers, the public, and elected officials to assess project benefits and costs as it competes for funding with other needed transportation projects in the County.

In Spring 2009, the Oak Drive/MD 27 Sidewalk Improvement Project was initiated. The study team conducted field visits, gathered data, and developed preliminary concepts.

On December 8, 2009 a public meeting was held at the Damascus Elementary School. An overview of the project, its purpose and need, preliminary findings and several preliminary concepts were presented to the public. A public comment period was provided to encourage you and the community to share your concerns and provide written comments.



Project Limits: Oak Drive/MD 27 Sidewalk Improvement Project

PUBLIC COMMENTS

MCDOT received comments from sixty-seven individuals, including adjacent property owners and the community-at-large. Thirty-eight comments were received regarding sidewalk improvements along Oak Drive, of which twenty-four expressed support for the improvements. There were no comments received in opposition to proposed improvements along Ridge Road. Please refer to the newsletter insert for responses to ten of the most frequently asked questions and/ or comments MCDOT received from interested citizens.

Oak Drive/MD 27 Sidewalk (MD 27-Bethesda Church Road) Improvement Project Facility Planning, Phase I

Before and After Photo Renderings of the proposed improvements can be viewed on the project website

Please log onto

www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/index.html and scroll to
 Oak Drive/MD 27 Sidewalk Study



MCDOT WANTS YOUR FEEDBACK

The MCDOT encourages you to provide your concerns on the postage-paid Public Comments Form included with this newsletter. If you have access to the internet, you may e-mail your comments directly to the project manager at:

patricia.shepherd@montgomerycountymd.gov

Planning

Montgomery County Department of Transportation

For more information, please contact Ms. Patricia Shepherd - Project Manager
 Phone: 240. 777. 7231 Email: patricia.shepherd@montgomerycountymd.gov
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/index.html>

OAK DRIVE/RIDGE ROAD (MD 27) SIDEWALK IMPROVEMENT PROJECT - RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

General concerns included the impacts the proposed improvements would have on existing trees, landscaping, drainage, and natural resources. Based on concerns we received, County and independent arborists evaluated the condition of the trees and identified methods to potentially preserve the specimen trees (i.e., trees approximately 24" or greater in diameter).

STUDY AREA

Within a one mile radius of Oak Drive there are approximately 284 residences and pedestrian attractions including John Haines Neighborhood Park, John T. Baker Middle School, Oak Drive Conservation Park, and Damascus Community Center. In 2009, approximately 70,000 people visited the Community Center.

Within a 1.5 mile radius of MD 27, pedestrian destinations include St. Anne's Episcopal Church, Veterinary Hospital, Damascus High and Elementary Schools, Ridgeview Shopping Center, 17 Public Transit stops, Ride On Bus #90 which provides access to the Damascus Park and Ride lot, Senior Center, and Library just north of study area.

Consideration of sidewalk improvements is consistent with local, state and national initiatives to support Smart Growth, promote transit connectivity and reduce automobile dependency. In general, sidewalk improvements are intended to provide vital pedestrian links to community facilities.

RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVE

Based on public comments received, input from agency stakeholders, and MCDOT's efforts to promote Smart Growth initiatives, the study team recommends proceeding with a build alternative for both Oak Drive and MD 27.

Alternative #3-Modified Master Plan Alternative has been selected as the Recommended Alternative to advance to Facility Planning, Phase II.

The Recommended Alternative proposes sidewalk along:

1. West side of Oak Drive from MD 27 (south intersection) to MD 27 (north signalized intersection). Existing open section roadway will allow drainage to proceed to existing drainage channels and mitigation measures will be implemented to potentially preserve specimen trees. To minimize impacts to adjacent properties, pervious pavement is being considered to address new stormwater management (SWM) requirements.

2. East side of MD 27 from Oak Drive (south intersection) to Bethesda Church Road. Proposed open section roadway will allow drainage to proceed to existing roadside swales.

1. South side of Kingstead Road from Oak Drive to the John Haines Neighborhood Park.

Environmental Site Design (ESD) or Low Impact Development (LID) techniques will be considered in Phase II (35% design) to meet new Stormwater Management (SWM) Requirements.

NEXT STEPS

The following are the next steps that will conclude the Oak Drive/MD 27 Sidewalk Improvement Project:

1. The Recommended Alternative may be further refined based on the public comments received.
2. The Project Prospectus will be finalized, which summarizes Facility Planning, Phase I and include all public comments received. The Prospectus will be available on our website and will be reviewed by the M-NCPPC Planning Board, elected officials,

and the MCDOT Director.

3. A project briefing will be scheduled with the M-NCPPC Planning Board. Formal public testimony will be permitted. Date to be determined. For more information, please contact M-NCPPC at 301-495-4605 or log onto:

<http://www.montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda/index.shtml>

1. The project will be presented to Montgomery County Council's Transportation, Infrastructure, Energy & Environment Committee (T&E) for concurrence. Date to be determined. For more information, call 240-777-7900 or log onto:

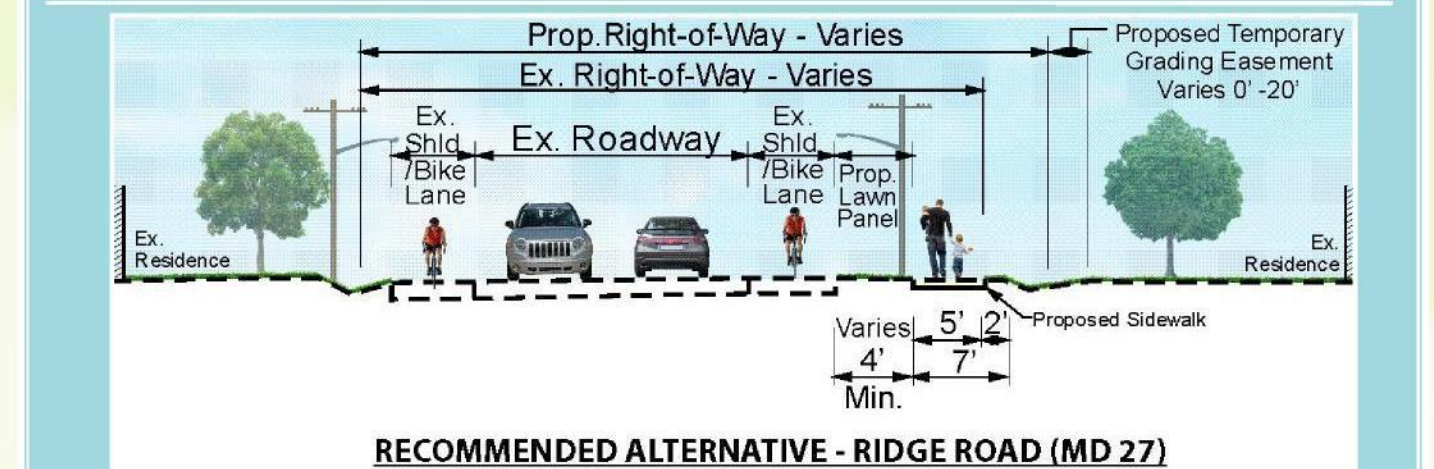
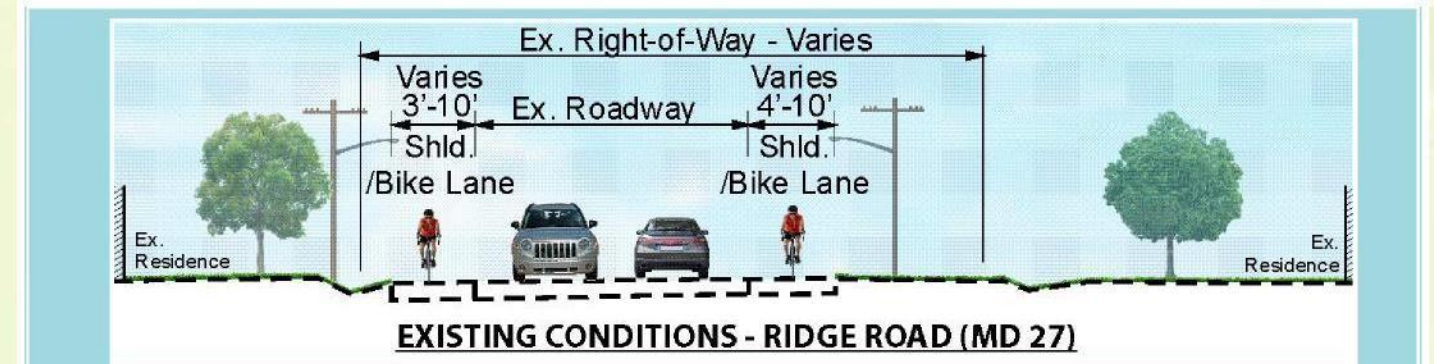
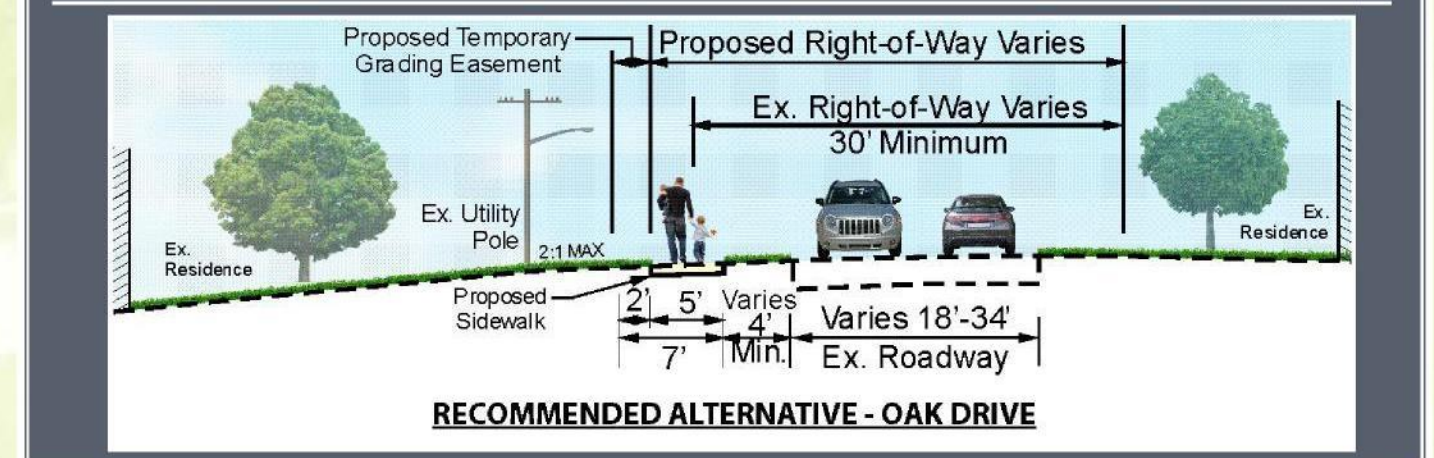
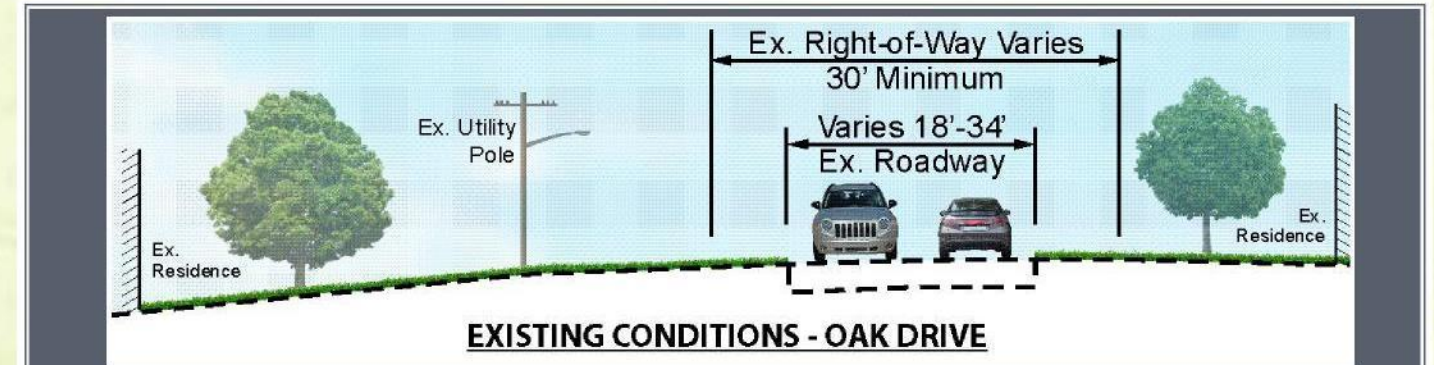
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council>

1. The MCDOT Director will evaluate the Final Project Prospectus and the Recommended Alternative

1. If concurrence is received on the Recommended Alternative, the Oak Drive/MD 27 Sidewalk Improvement Project will advance to Facility Planning, Phase II. Phase II is commonly referred to as preliminary engineering (35% design), where impacts are identified, and a cost estimate and project schedule are developed. Phase II may take up to 15 months to complete.

1. At the conclusion of Phase II, the public, MCDOT Director, and elected officials will assess the benefits of the Oak Drive/MD 27 Improvement Project. If the project merits a need, it will be included as part of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to receive funding for final design and construction. Final design and construction may take up to three years.

Should this project advance to design and construction, MCDOT will meet with adjacent property owners to address individual concerns.



To minimize impacts, retaining walls are proposed along (1) Oak Drive in the vicinity of the John T. Baker Middle School; (2) MD 27 near Bloom Drive; (3) Oak Drive/MD 27 north intersection. The measurements above are based on planning level analysis and may be subject to change during 35% design.