

(Attachment F.)



RUSTIC ROADS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

April 5, 2011

The Honorable Valerie Ervin, President
Montgomery County Council
100 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Tree Trimming Along Rustic Roads

Dear County Executive Leggett and Councilwoman Ervin,

We, the members of the Montgomery County Rustic Roads Advisory Committee wish to express our support for an aggressive tree trimming campaign along our rustic roads. Having once again experienced a winter storm resulting in numerous power outages and road closures due to downed trees and limbs, we believe this issue has grown ever more urgent.

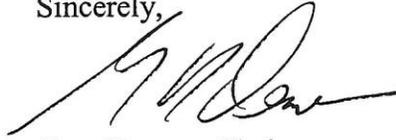
We request a specific line item in the budget that will provide for on-going maintenance along our rustic roads and that this maintenance is performed in accordance with the County's Forest Preservation Strategy. Our rustic roads are the backbone of the Agricultural Reserve and serve for many different users/functions: for farm machinery, school buses and emergency vehicles, as well as for pedestrians, bicyclists and equestrians. A steady amount of tree maintenance along these important roads will prevent the type of emergencies that we saw this winter, when maintenance must be undertaken on a crisis-management basis and at a higher expense.

We urge you to allocate funding and proceed promptly with tree trimming and tree removal as necessary to facilitate the safe usage of these wonderful roads for all in our county. Our staff coordinator will be contacting council members shortly to invite you to a field meeting to help understand the problems faced by the farmers in particular.

(F.)

We thank you both for your consideration of our request and for your support in maintaining the county's rustic roads.

Sincerely,



Greg Deaver, Chair
Rustic Roads Advisory Committee

Fred Lechliden Marc Miller
Robin Ziek Eric Spates
Robert Goldberg
Leslie Saville – Ex Officio member

cc: Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Arthur Holmes, Jr. - DOT
Jeremy Criss – DED

(F.)

Criss, Jeremy

From: Criss, Jeremy
Sent: Wednesday, January 21, 2009 5:42 PM
To: Navid, Sarah
Cc: Zawitoski, John; Fisher, Kristin
Subject: FW: Letter for Trimming Trees on Rustic Roads.

Sarah,

I have attached the most recent revision of the joint letter for trimming trees.
 I changed the date to February 9, 2009 and listed the new Chairman of the APAB.
 It is now addressed to Ike Leggett and I have copied Phil Andrews who is now the President of the County Council.
 Please remove the draft image on the document as part of your final review.
 Last night, the AAC suggested that the AAC/ APAB present the letter to Ike Leggett during their annual meeting on February 9, 2009.
 I appreciate you having James Arnoult sign the letter and then bring it to Derwood.
 I have also attached the most recent version of the suggested roads to be trimmed.
 I will forward to you the Draft CIP PDF this week for your review.
 Thanks and let me know if you have any questions.
 Jeremy

Jeremy V. Criss
 Agricultural Services Manager
 Department of Economic Development
 Agricultural Services Division
 18410 Muncaster Road
 Derwood, Maryland 20855
 301-590-2830
 301-590-2839 (Fax)
jeremy.criss@montgomerycountymd.gov
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/agsservices>

-----Original Message-----

From: Criss, Jeremy
Sent: Tuesday, October 28, 2008 11:20 AM
To: Navid, Sarah
Cc: Fisher, Kristin; Zawitoski, John
Subject: Letter for Trimming Trees on Rustic Roads.

Sarah,

I have attached the revised letter regarding tree trimming.
 Both the AAC and the APAB have reviewed this letter and their comments have been incorporated.
 Please let us know the comments you receive from the RRAC.
 Thanks Jeremy

Jeremy V. Criss
 Agricultural Services Manager
 Department of Economic Development
 Agricultural Services Division
 18410 Muncaster Road
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7/14/2011

(F.)

February 9, 2009

The Honorable Isiah Leggett, County Executive
Montgomery County Maryland
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Proposed CIP for Tree Trimming and Roadway Rehabilitation on Rustic and Country Roads

Dear Mr. Leggett:

The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC), the Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board (APAB), and the Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC) request that a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) be developed (See draft PDF attached) which will create an annual process to approve funding for a more proactive and regular tree trimming and rehabilitation program on country and rustic roads in Montgomery County. We believe this is necessary not only for the viability of agriculture in the Agricultural Reserve, but also for the safety of our citizens.

The AAC, APAB, and RRAC met with staff from the County's Department of Transportation on September 16, 2008 to discuss the need for tree trimming on rural and rustic roads in the County. Roads throughout the Agricultural Reserve have been allowed to become overgrown and are now difficult to navigate by the vehicles and machinery which are necessary for the maintenance of the agricultural landscape that so many citizens enjoy. In addition to this, lines of sight, passable width and height have become impaired to the point of creating safety hazards for the citizens, school buses, fire trucks, and other travelers of these roads. Please refer to the attached list of suggested roads in the Agricultural Reserve that are in need of tree trimming.

After extensive discussion on tree trimming policy in the County, we understand that current funding restricts this process to being request-driven: there is no proactive monitoring of tree growth along County roads. This has created a hazardous condition on roadways and impairs the ability of farmers to reach their crop fields with the machinery necessary for planting and harvesting. An annual process to systematically address tree trimming with a dedicated funding source is imperative for the safety and continued use of these roads and the ability of farmers to maintain their livelihood. We are confident that this can be achieved without jeopardizing the rural character which has resulted in the designation of some of these roads as "Rustic" and "Exceptionally Rustic". The following suggestions were outlined during the joint meeting of stakeholders:

- Coordinate the efforts of DOT contractors and utility companies to trim or remove trees along roadways in a manner which maintains the necessary clearance for utility lines without compromising movement of vehicles along the road.

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- Provide additional guidance for utility companies so that trimming practices intending to maintain vertical clearance for power lines do not result in compensatory tree growth horizontally into the roadway itself.
- Coordinate tree trimming services offered by DOT with clearing and grubbing services offered by regional Depot facilities to reduce the need for repeated minor trimming events on County roads. We need to evaluate the County's tree trimming policy which consists of repeatedly trimming the trees versus cutting the whole tree down. Selective removal may be more cost effective in the long run.
- Finalize design guidelines for tree trimming by DOT in rural areas which takes into account the proximity of farming operations along specific stretches of roads and the height and width requirements needed for the passage of farm machinery. These design guidelines should be consistent with the Depot policies for clearing and grubbing as well as the Rustic Roads Executive Regulations.
- Secure landowner permissions to trim trees along stretches of rural roads where no County right-of-way exists. Alternatively, legislation could be introduced to authorize the County a right of entry along all prescriptive and non-dedicated roads in the County for a minimum of 10 feet from edge of payment. This area for right of entry would be used exclusively for road safety improvements drainage and for tree trimming purposes.

Additionally, of increasing concern to the RRAC has been the worsening condition of the surface of some rustic roads to the point where routine maintenance is ineffective. In particular, it appears that the condition of the last two remaining concrete "ribbon" roads in the County (Martinsburg and Sugarland Road) has deteriorated beyond available maintenance resources. The gravel section of River Road between Whites Ferry Road and Elmer School Road has been cited by adjacent farmers as being particularly in need of surface rehabilitation to address dust, drainage and rutting problems. Creation of a CIP dedicated to rustic roads would allow DOT to begin to systematically address their unique infrastructure needs. Due to their lower traffic volumes, rustic roads are less likely to successfully compete for available operating funding.

We believe other agencies including Fire and Rescue Services and Montgomery County Public Schools as well as bicycling groups would support these initiatives. As coordinated efforts go forward to develop awareness of family farms, historic sites and upcounty development in Clarksburg, Germantown and Boyds, these roads and the safety issues they present as increased volumes of traffic utilize them for recreation and community travel are of increasing importance.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important issue.

Wade Butler, Chairman
Agricultural Advisory Committee, AAC

David O. Scott, Sr., Chairman
Agricultural Pres. Advisory Board, APAB

Kevin Foster, Chairman
Rustic Roads Advisory Committee, RRAC

cc: The Honorable Phil Andrews, Council President
Art Holmes, Director, DOT

Attachments:

List of suggested Roads in the Ag Reserve for tree trimming
Draft PDF for proposed Rustic Roads CIP

(F.)

**Roads Needing Tree Trimming/Foliage Maintenance
As Requested by Montgomery County Farmers Club**

West Willard Road	Rustic Road
Hughes Road	Rustic Road
Old Bucklodge Lane	Rustic Road
Montevideo Road	Exceptional Rustic Road
Cattail Road	Rustic Road
White Ground Road	Exceptional Rustic Road
Sugarland Road	Exceptional Rustic Road (MD 28-Sugarland Lane) Rustic (Sugarland Ln.- Hughes Rd.)
Martinsburg Road	Exceptional Rustic Road
Whites Store Road	Rustic Road
Whites Ferry Road	Rustic Road (River Road-Wasche Rd.) Country Arterial (Town of Poolesville-Wasche Rd.)
Brookeville Road	Rustic Road
Zion Road	Rustic Rd. (Sundown Rd.-Riggs Rd.) Country Rd.(Riggs Rd.-Bookeville Rd.)
Partnership Road	Country Arterial
Mullinix Mill Road	Not Classified
Bucklodge Road	State Rd. (MD 117) classified as Country Rd.
Rocky Road	Rustic Road
Hipsley Mill Road	Rustic Road
Howard Chapel Road	Rustic Road

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Big Woods Road

Rustic Road

Purdum Road

Exceptional Rustic Road

Elton Farm Road

Rustic Road

Griffith Road

Country Road

E:rdzneedingtreetrimming(08aac)

County Tree Trimming Program

(F.)

Category Conservation of Natural Resources
 Agency Department of Transportation
 Planning Area Countywide
 Relocation Impact None

Date Last Modified
 Previous PDF Page Number
 Required Adequate Public Facility NO

Expenditure Schedule (\$000)

Cost Element	Total	Thru FY07	Estimate FY08	Total 6 years	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	Beyond 6 years
Planning, Design and Supervision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Site Improvements and Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Construction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Funding Schedule (\$000)

	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0									

Description

This project will provide a dedicated source of funding for trimming of trees on County roads. The DOT will be responsible for the administration of the program in cooperation with the independent contractors that provide tree trimming services for the County. The schedule of roads to be trimmed will be determined by the DOT on a first come first serve basis unless a specific safety issue takes place. The funding for this project is not intended to be used for other highway maintenance services unless the service is being done in conjunction with tree trimming, clearing and grubbing.

COST CHANGE

JUSTIFICATION

The trimming of trees is needed on many of the county roads to ensure the roads are safe and that they meet the needs of the County residents.

OTHER

FISCAL NOTE

APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA	COORDINATION	MAP
Date of First Appropriation	Department of Transportation	
FY89 (\$000)		
First Cost Estimate		
Current Scope		
FY07 0		
Last FY's Cost Estimate		
0		
Appropriation Request		
FY09 0		
Appropriation Request		
FY10 0		
Transfer		
Cumulative Appropriation		
0		
Expenditures/		
Encumbrances		
0		
Unencumbered Balance		
0		
Partial Closeout thru		
FY06 0		
Total Partial Closeout		
0		