

BETHESDA BRAC IMPROVEMENTS
BETHESDA TROLLEY TRAIL CONNECTIONS AND PASSENGER DROP-OFF LOOP

**A \$1,100,000 Grant Proposal to the Office of Economic Adjustment,
U.S. Department of Defense**

**Submitted by the Maryland State Highway Administration, Maryland, Department of
Transportation**

October 7, 2011

***RE: Federal Register Document 2011-184000: Volume 70, Number 140, July 21, 2011
Notice of Federal Funding Opportunity (FFO) for construction of Transportation Infrastructure
Improvements Associated with medical facilities related to recommendations of the 2005
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.***

A. POINT OF CONTACT:

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B. EXISTING OR PROJECTED TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUE:

- **Relocation of Walter Reed**

The Bethesda Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) improvement projects are intended to mitigate gridlock, improve pedestrian access and safety, and support multi-modal transportation systems around the new federally-mandated Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. One of the most noteworthy moves mandated by the 2005 BRAC law was the closure of the Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) in Washington, D.C., with the relocation of most of its functions and personnel to the campus of the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC) in Bethesda, Montgomery County, Maryland, establishing the joint service Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC). The intent of consolidating these two premier institutions was to establish the modern “crown jewel” of military medical care and research combining the best of Army, Navy and Air Force practices that could serve the needs of the American military facing new kinds of catastrophic injuries in the era following September 11, 2001.

The BRAC expansion will add 2,500 personnel to the 8,000 currently stationed at NNMCM, and the hospital visitor load will double to almost 1,000,000 visits annually. The road network around NNMCM is already at capacity and is at Level of Service (LOS) F – or failing, in common vernacular. If left unmitigated, this growth will create untenable gridlock – where the true Level of Service cannot even be measured beyond “F” -- that would negatively affect the ability of wounded warriors, doctors and emergency personnel to access the campus on a timely basis.

- **Impacts of BRAC on Bethesda’s Urban Transportation Infrastructure**

Bethesda is located in Montgomery County, MD which has a total population approaching 1,000,000. Bethesda is in the heart of the National Capital Region and draws employees and visitors to its thriving commercial district from across the Washington-Baltimore Metropolitan area of over 8,000,000 people. The area of Bethesda that is impacted by BRAC is a densely populated and highly developed community inside the Capital Beltway with approximately 56,000 residents and an employment base of 70,000. Bethesda has long-established residential neighborhoods and a thriving commercial district. Along with NNMCM, the BRAC-impacted area of Bethesda is home to the National Institutes of Health (NIH) which is the largest employer in Montgomery County with over 18,000 on-campus personnel, and Suburban-Johns Hopkins Hospital which is the region’s designated trauma center. The NNMCM, NIH and Suburban collaborate as the Bethesda Hospitals Emergency Preparedness Partnership.

Suburban-Johns Hopkins Hospital employs over 1,400 people, and has more than 13,000 admissions per year. The hospital also supports more than 40,000 emergency room visits and 90,000 outpatient visits per year.

The NNMCM is directly across from the NIH campus and currently employs 8,000 personnel. The hospital at NNMCM receives approximately 500,000 visits per year. By September 2011, BRAC will increase personnel at NNMCM by almost one-third to 10,200, and will double the Medical Center’s visitor load to approximately 1,000,000 per year. Despite Montgomery County’s sophisticated planning and projection process, the County did not anticipate this rapid level of growth. In most BRAC growth communities, roadway improvements are a common solution to BRAC-related increases in traffic.

The 2005 BRAC law committed billions of dollars to fund BRAC-related construction on the campuses of affected installations, but did not commit funds to help communities improve their transportation infrastructure to meet dramatic and rapid growth due to BRAC. The NNMCM was able to identify specific impacts of BRAC growth at NNMCM on Bethesda’s transportation network in its March 2008 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS): *For Activities to Implement 2005 Base Realignment and Closure Actions At National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Maryland*. In short, the major roadways and intersections that

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

serve NNMC are already at or approaching LOS F; the BRAC growth would make failing traffic even worse.

The transportation analysis that was part of the EIS identified that all four of the SHA intersections will operate above capacity during peak periods. Most other BRAC growth occurs in areas that are removed from urban population centers, and transportation solutions tend to call for additional highway capacity. However, NNMC's location in a settled and densely populated urban area dictates a combination of approaches. Potential traffic mitigations were identified that focus on roadway, transit, and pedestrian improvements.

- **Necessity of Federal Assistance for Project Completion**

Mitigating BRAC-related congestion will require a multi-modal approach to improve traffic and pedestrian movement and to increase the use of mass transit and other alternative means of transportation. The State of Maryland and Montgomery County are working aggressively to mitigate congestion caused by BRAC consolidation in Bethesda, but it is readily evident that neither the State nor the County has sufficient resources to implement all that is necessary.

This FFO proposal relates to a Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) project to provide multi-modal highway transportation improvements within a highly urbanized roadway network surrounding NNMC that is already plagued with regular congestion. It is important to note that this project is just one of several designed by the State and County Departments of Transportation to mitigate BRAC-related congestion.

The five major SHA improvement projects, in order of priority are:

1. MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and West Cedar Lane / Cedar Lane;
2. MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and Jones Bridge Road / Kensington Parkway;
3. MD 187 (Old Georgetown Road) and West Cedar Lane / Oakmont Avenue;
4. Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop, and;
5. MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and Jones Bridge Road / Center Drive.

This project, if funded, would be most effective if all the related projects being submitted by Montgomery County and the State of Maryland are funded. The full program of projects is the result of extensive collaboration with local, state and federal stakeholders in the BRAC actions at NNMC. Priority projects identified by stakeholders have been designed to complement each other, and collectively serve to foster an overall network that meets the considerable transportation challenges associated with BRAC actions in Bethesda. In total, the program will improve traffic operations, promote the use of alternative transportation including mass transit and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles and the demand for parking at the new Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. These projects, along with improvements to bicycle and pedestrian

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

facilities already undertaken by Montgomery County, will ensure greater access to WRNMMC for its patients and staff. But for funding from this Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) Federal Funding Opportunity, these projects cannot be completed.

- **Support from the Defense Department**

The Department of Defense supports these projects and has committed \$28.174 million through the Defense Access Roads program for implementation of the Maryland Route 355 Multimodal Crossing Project. The Navy has made very clear its support for the BRAC projects in development (please see Attachment A, a letter from Captain M. P. Malanoski and Rear Admiral A. L. Stocks), and recognizes the role that they stand to play in addressing the traffic considerations raised in the March 2008 EIS.

Additionally, the Department of Defense, through OEA, has demonstrated support of mitigation projects underway by providing \$450,000 to support design of the SHA intersection improvement program at NNMCC.

- **Road Improvements**

Many visitors and commuters to the military medical campus will arrive by car. The major roads serving NNMCC are mainly state highways. Capacity cannot be increased in this densely developed region without unacceptable community disruption, but relatively low-impact improvements can help facilitate increased traffic flow.

The SHA is engaged in intersection improvement projects that are supported by NNMCC's March 2008 EIS, and SHA anticipates maintaining the same or slightly improved LOS, even with increases of BRAC-related traffic. The SHA is coordinating these projects with traffic flow improvements the NNMCC is planning at its gates on MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and Jones Bridge Road. The SHA projects will also include upgrades to adjoining bicycle and pedestrian paths to accommodate those modes of urban commuting.

When all improvements are constructed, significant benefits will be provided to the entire transportation network. Based on analysis conducted using Synchro traffic simulation software, the intersection improvements are projected to reduce fuel consumption in the study area by approximately 1,300 gallons each day during the peak hours compared to the No-Build condition. Considering an average gas price of \$3.75 per gallon, that equates to a user cost savings of over \$3 million per year in fuel cost alone. Additionally, the proposed intersection improvements are projected to reduce emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NOx), and volatile oxygen compounds (VOC) by 43% during the AM peak hour and by 28% during the PM peak hour compared to the No-Build condition.

The SHA is submitting proposals to OEA for each BRAC improvement project listed above, and the locations can be seen in Figure 1.

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

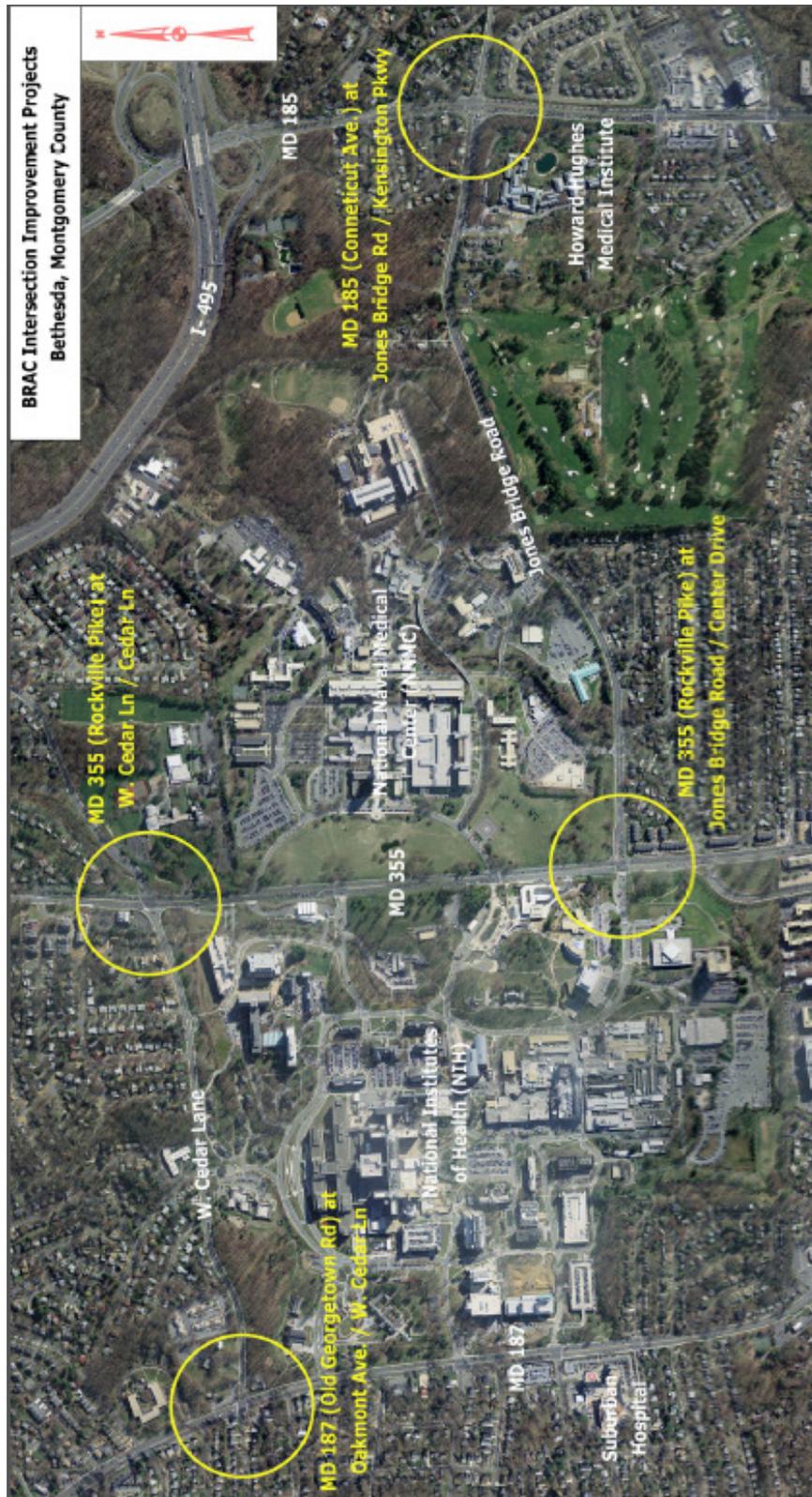


Figure 1: BRAC Improvement Locations

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

- **Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements**

BRAC-related growth requires that the State and County's robust bicycle and pedestrian trail network be improved. The SHA and the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) hope to encourage an increase in bicycle commuters and ridership, by connecting existing bike paths and sidewalks with new and expanded paths around NNMC. The NNMC campus is directly across from the campus of NIH, the world's supreme medical research institution and the largest employer in Montgomery County. Today, NIH has an active bicycle commuter club with over 700 members; NNMC will emulate this program as part of its BRAC-related Transportation Management Plan.

- **Commuter Bus Improvements**

State, county, and regional transportation authorities including the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) are working with NNMC and NIH to study ways to expand existing bus transit service to accommodate BRAC growth at NNMC and expected long-term growth at NIH. This may include expanding or realigning existing routes or establishing new routes utilizing outlying park-and-ride commuter lots. In addition, NNMC and NIH are collaborating to provide commercial commuter bus service from numerous points in the Washington-Baltimore region for their personnel.

C. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This Grant proposal, if accepted by OEA, would provide \$1.1 million for the Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections and Passenger Drop-Off Loop. This improvement is the fourth prioritized project near the NNMC to mitigate for additional traffic demand due to BRAC consolidations.

- **Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections**

The Bethesda Trolley Trail (BTT) is a dynamic urban greenway that provides the most direct link between Bethesda and Rockville, Maryland for bicyclists, runners and pedestrians. This trail provides connections to the Twinbrook and White Flint metro stations, Rock Creek and Capital Crescent trails, and most importantly, NIH. The BTT connections consist of two sections: BTT from Charles Street to Alta Vista Road and BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive & NIH passenger drop-off loop. Construction of these missing segments of the BTT around NIH in Bethesda would complete the southern $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of a 4.5 mile trail.

The BTT from Charles Street to Alta Vista Road portion of the project, a length of approximately 300 feet, consists of upgrading from a 5-foot concrete sidewalk to a 10-foot asphalt shared-use path. The BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive, a length of approximately 1900 feet, consists of constructing a 10-foot asphalt shared-use path. Adjacent to the BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive on the NIH campus, a passenger drop-off loop will be constructed just north of South Drive, similar to an existing drop-off

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

loop on West Cedar Lane, just west of MD 355 (Rockville Pike). The passenger drop-off area will allow vehicles the ability to progress northbound on MD 187, drop off employees in the morning, and continue northbound to their destination. This will eliminate some of the morning strain on MD 355 and the South Drive intersection where the Kiss n' Ride facility is located for NIH and the metro station.

These trail connections would provide critical safety and continuity improvements for cyclists using the BTT. For commuting pedestrians and joggers, it would provide welcome relief from high speed traffic on MD 187. Many people bicycle or walk to the NIH campus or Medical Center Metrorail station from surrounding neighborhoods. The BRAC driven expansion of NNMC across MD 355 from NIH will likely increase the number of commuters on these roads. A completed BTT would allow a much larger residential area to be accessible to employment destinations by biking or walking, and serve to increase these modes of transportation, and reduce traffic volumes. This project also provides improved access to both the Medical Center and Bethesda Metrorail stations.

D. PROJECT ENGINEERING INFORMATION:

During the Preliminary Engineering Design stage, SHA reduced the project scope to minimize the impacts to adjacent residential properties and environmental resources. The measures that have been taken by SHA to reduce impacts include use of narrow lane widths, tightening intersection geometrics, and evaluation of various lane configurations to reduce the typical section adjustments.

These changes have increased the technical feasibility of the project, which is depicted in a rendering of the project's footprint in Figures 2-4.

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

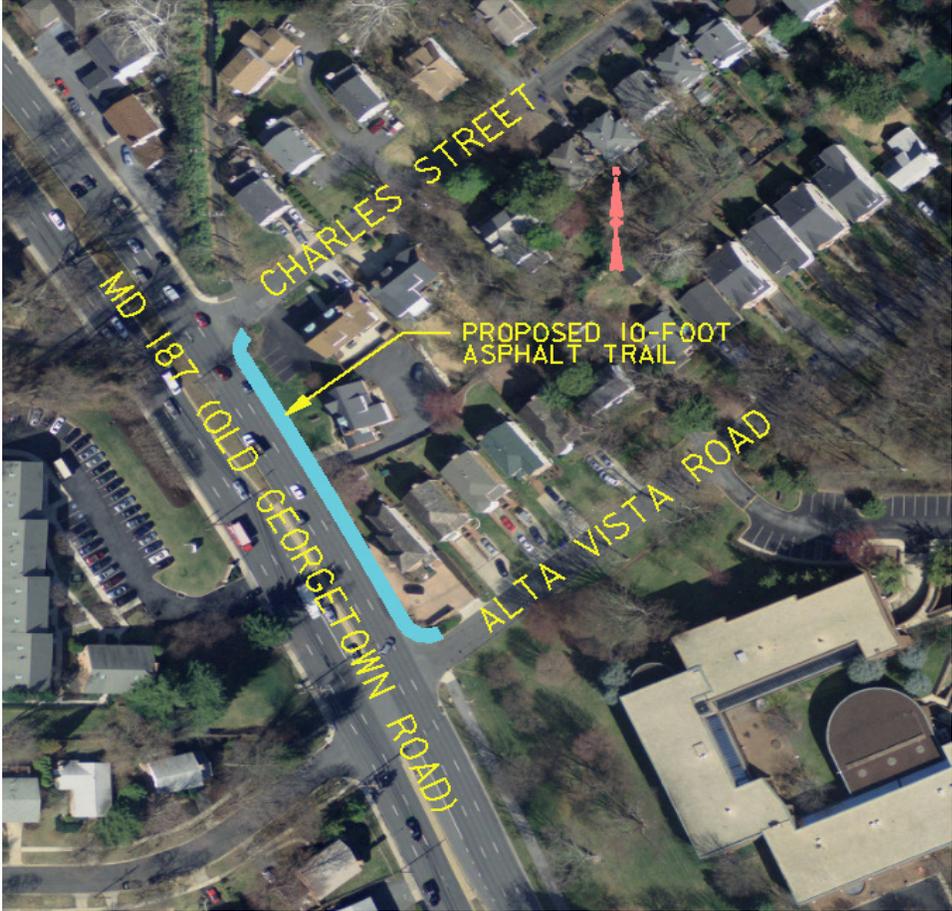


Figure 2: BTT from Charles Street to Alta Vista Road

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop



Figure 3: BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive & Passenger Drop-Off Loop (Cont'd in Figure 4)

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop



Figure 4: BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive & Passenger Drop-Off Loop (Cont'd from Figure 3)

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

E. PROJECT PARTIES:

- The following stakeholders were directly involved in the project development process:
 - Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
 - Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)
 - Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT)
 - Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
 - Maryland Transit Administration
 - Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)
 - Naval Support Activity-Bethesda
 - National Institutes of Health (NIH)
 - NIH Bike Club
 - Washington Area Bicycle Association (WABA)
 - Montgomery Bicycle Advocates
 - Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
 - National Capital Planning Commission

F. GRANT FUNDS AND OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDS:

The SHA currently has a funding level of approximately \$44 million for all five improvement projects. The sources of funding can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1: Current Sources of Funding

| Source | Funding |
|---------|--------------|
| OEA | \$450,000 |
| State | \$3,786,000 |
| Federal | \$39,796,000 |
| Total | \$44,032,000 |

Table 2: Cost Breakdown for Each Project

| Project | Total | Funded | Unfunded |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and W. Cedar Lane / Cedar Lane | \$50.2 M | \$31.2 M | \$19.0 M |
| MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and Jones Bridge Road / Kensington Parkway | \$29.7 M | \$11.4 M | \$18.3 M |
| MD 187 (Old Georgetown Road) and West Cedar Lane / Oakmont Avenue | \$8.0 M | \$0.7 M | \$7.3 M |
| MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and Jones Bridge Road / Center Drive | \$5.0 M | \$0.7 M | \$4.3 M |
| Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop | \$1.1 M | \$0.0 M | \$1.1 M |

Table 3: Unfunded Costs

| | | |
|--|----------|----------------|
| Current Funding Level | | \$0.0 M |
| Total Estimated Cost | | \$1.1 M |
| BTT from Charles Street to Alta Vista Road | \$0.5 M | |
| BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive & Passenger Drop-Off Loop | \$0.56 M | |
| Total Unfunded Costs for Proposed OEA Projects | | \$1.1 M |

G. USES OF CONSTRUCTION PROJECT FUNDS:

- BTT from Charles Street to Alta Vista Road
 - Preliminary and Final Engineering Design – \$0.25 million (Unfunded)
 - Land Acquisition – \$0.1 million (Unfunded)
 - Construction (including Utilities) - \$0.14 million (Unfunded)

- BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive & Passenger Drop-Off Loop
 - Preliminary and Final Engineering Design – \$0.3 million (Unfunded)
 - Land Acquisition – Federal Acquisitions only, \$0.0 million
 - Construction (including Utilities) - \$0.26 million (Unfunded)

Note: Project Administration / Inspection Costs are accounted for in above bulleted items

H. PROJECT SCHEDULE:

- BTT from Charles Street to Alta Vista Road
 - Preliminary and Final Engineering Design Complete – 16 months
 - NEPA- Environmental Compliance Approval – 9 months
 - Land Acquisition Complete – 15 months
 - Utility Relocation Complete – 18 months
 - Construction Start – 18 months
 - Construction Complete – 27 months

- BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive & Passenger Drop-Off Loop
 - Preliminary and Final Engineering Design Complete – 16 months
 - NEPA- Environmental Compliance Approval – 9 months
 - Land Acquisition Complete – 15 months
 - Utility Relocation Complete – 18 months
 - Construction Start – 19 months
 - Construction Complete – 27 months

Note: All time frames are from the date funding is received

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

I. ENVIRONMENTAL APPROVALS:

- BTT from Charles Street to Alta Vista Road Approvals
 - NEPA – 9 months
 - SWM, E&S – 18 months
 - Wetland Permit – 18 months

- BTT from Center Drive to Lincoln Drive & Passenger Drop-Off Loop Approvals
 - NEPA – 9 months
 - SWM, E&S – 18 months
 - Wetland Permit – 18 months

Note: All time frames are from the date funding is received

J. STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING:

- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB) is the designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Washington Metropolitan Area. The TPB approved the 2011-2016 TIP, a 6-year financial program that describes the schedule for obligating federal funds to state and local projects, on November 12, 2010. The TIP contains funding information for all modes of transportation in Suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia to include highways with High Occupancy Vehicles as well as transit capital and operating costs.

The TPB conducted a public comment period and a public forum on October 14, 2010 to go over the projects in the 2011-2016 TIP. The Air Quality Conformity Determination for the FY 2011-2016 TIP demonstrates that all required emissions tests are being met and conforms to all requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990.

The Bethesda BRAC intersection improvement projects appear in the Suburban Maryland portion under the SHA tab of the 2011 TIP, specifically page M-2, line 2. At this time, the description includes, as one line item, all four major intersections of the SHA Intersection Improvement project listed in Section B. However, as additional phases of these projects get funded, they will get split up accordingly and amended into the TIP as individual projects. The latest draft of the MDOT Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP) has MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and W. Cedar Lane / Cedar Lane and MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and Jones Bridge Road / Kensington Parkway listed as separate projects, since a portion of them are funded. In addition to the intersection projects, SHA will also be constructing as a separate project, a hiker/biker trail that provides a direct link between Bethesda and Rockville, Maryland, which will also be amended into the TIP as a stand alone project.

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The Fiscal Year 2011 Maryland STIP is a four-year, fiscally constrained, and prioritized set of transportation projects, compiled from statewide, local, and regional plans. In the case of the Bethesda BRAC intersection improvement projects, the STIP includes the approved 2011 TIP from the Washington Region.

A key component of the STIP process is the Annual Consultation Process, known as the Fall Tour, which is a process stipulated by State law requiring the Secretary of Transportation to visit with, and present to each of the State's county jurisdictions the annual draft of Maryland's six-year capital investment program known as the CTP. The Bethesda BRAC intersection improvement projects have been formally presented in the CTP since 2008.

Maryland's 2011 STIP, which has been approved by FHWA, includes the Bethesda BRAC intersection improvement projects because it is listed in the 2011 TIP for the Washington Region.

K. GRANTS MANAGEMENT:

The SHA successfully administers over \$600 million each year in federal funding which is made up of formula apportionments, allocated program funds, discretionary program funds (either Congressionally designated or awarded by FHWA), and other special federal funding, (e.g., Department of Defense OEA grants).

The Federal-aid Highway Program is a reimbursable program, and has been since the early part of the 20th Century. That means the Federal Government only reimburses States for costs actually incurred - in contrast to a pre-paid grant program. Projects are put under agreement with FHWA (approved), work is started with State dollars and then FHWA is invoiced for payment of pre-approved amounts.

Approximately 46% of the 2011-2016 MDOT CTP Capital Program (\$9.5 billion) is administered by SHA.

Two excellent examples of SHA's ability to oversee and deliver projects on time and on budget are the Woodrow Wilson Bridge (WWB) and the Intercounty Connector (ICC).

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

- Woodrow Wilson Bridge (WWB)

In October 2008 Maryland, along with Virginia, was awarded the 2008 *America's Transportation Award* Grand Prize by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The WWB was selected for being on-time, on budget and most importantly for its innovative management in areas of the environment, safety, construction management and financial planning. It was called a "premier example of innovative management," for its collaborative efforts to keep this \$2.47 billion project on time and on budget while coordinating four sponsoring agencies: FHWA, SHA, Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and the District of Columbia Department of Transportation. The award included \$10,000 for Maryland to use for transportation-related educational scholarships.

- Intercounty Connector (ICC)

The ICC has been selected to receive the 2011 AASHTO *President's Transportation Award for Highways*. This \$2.56 billion mega-project was selected for the innovative management approach undertaken by the *ICC Team* to deliver one of the first three all electronic toll (AET) highways on new alignment to open in the United States. The *ICC Team* kept the project on schedule, on budget, set precedents for handling sensitive environmental areas, exceeded goals for disadvantaged business enterprise participation, and executed a successful community outreach program, all critical to the project's success. As a transportation facility more than 50 years in the making, the ICC sets a national standard for both environmental protection/stewardship and the provision of a high quality and safe AET facility.

L. SUBMITTING OFFICIAL:

As Acting Administrator of the Maryland State Highway Administration, appointed by the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Transportation in July of 2011, I am pleased to submit the following five grant proposals for the Office of Economic Adjustment's (OEA) consideration in connection with its grant program for transportation projects in support of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) consolidations at military medical facilities. The five submissions include grant proposals for OEA funding for the following five transportation improvement projects:

1. MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and W. Cedar Lane / Cedar Lane;
2. MD 185 (Connecticut Avenue) and Jones Bridge Road / Kensington Parkway;
3. MD 187 (Old Georgetown Road) and West Cedar Lane / Oakmont Avenue;
4. Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop, and;
5. MD 355 (Rockville Pike) and Jones Bridge Road / Center Drive.

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

Together with additional critical improvements in development by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation as part of its Maryland Route 355 Multimodal Crossing Project, these projects will collectively serve to help mitigate the impacts of BRAC at the newly created Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and ensure that the transportation network at the Bethesda campus effectively supports the Installation's mission, and provides for safe, efficient travel, by automobile, bicycle, and on foot, for all members of the local community.

The priority projects detailed herein reflect the exhaustive collaboration of local, state and BRAC stakeholders in the region, and their shared commitment to developing multi-modal solutions for the transportation challenges associated with BRAC. I appreciate your consideration of our submission, and look forward to the expeditious implementation of these critical projects in the coming months and years.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Darrell B. Mobley
Acting Administrator
State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore MD 21202
410-545-0400
dmobley@mdot.state.md.us

Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

Attachment A:

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
WALTER REED NATIONAL MILITARY MEDICAL CENTER (20889-5600)
NAVAL SUPPORT ACTIVITY BETHESDA (20889-5600)
BETHESDA MARYLAND

IN REPLY REFER TO

NAVSUPPACT Bethesda
11000
Ser N00/0174
4 Oct 11

WRNMMC Bethesda
11000
Ser 00/2570
4 Oct 11

JOINT LETTER

Mr. Darrell B. Mobley
Acting Administrator
State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, MD 21202
Mail Stop: C-400

Dear Mr. Mobley:

As the Commander, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) and the Commanding Officer, Naval Support Activity Bethesda (NSAB) we provide this letter for Montgomery County and Maryland officials who are seeking funding for traffic projects that impact our organizations. Montgomery County is submitting a request to fund the design and construction of a Metro Crossing project that will provide direct access to the Medical Center Metro Station from the NSAB campus for commuters and visitors using rail, bus, and car or van pools, as well as bicyclists and pedestrians. This urgently needed project will help ease and seek to prevent untenable gridlock and provide timely access to the installation by enabling thousands of personnel and visitors who come to WRNMMC and NSAB every day to use transit and other alternatives instead of driving alone.

The State of Maryland is requesting funds for four separate major intersection improvement projects that serve WRNMMC and NSAB: MD 355 at Cedar Lane; MD 185 at Jones Bridge Road; MD 187 at West Cedar Lane; and MD 355 at Jones Bridge Road. These projects will improve traffic operations and pedestrian safety at these currently failing intersections, even with the increased volume of traffic that will be drawn to WRNMMC and NSAB. Furthermore, the State of Maryland will seek to improve MD 187 (Old Georgetown Road) by expanding a regional network of paths that are used by thousands of cycling and pedestrian commuters every day.

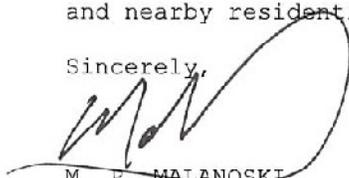
Bethesda Trolley Trail Connections And Passenger Drop-Off Loop

NAVSUPPACT Bethesda
11000
Ser N00/0174

WRNMMC Bethesda
11000
Ser 00/2570

Despite BRAC construction of three parking structures, there exists a parking shortfall of approximately 1,300 spaces for staff parking. Currently, a significant portion of parking in the new structures is reserved for patients and their visitors. WRNMMC is now the primary hospital that first receives all of our Nation's wounded, ill, and injured from overseas facilities. In addition, there will be a loss of approximately 750 additional parking spaces to support necessary construction. Given the lack of staff parking, there has been a significant increase in the number of staff members requiring the use of alternative modes of transportation to include mass transit, cycling, and walking. The proposed transportation infrastructure projects would provide comprehensive improvements to traffic operations while promoting pedestrian safety and greater use of these alternate modes of transportation. In addition, increased access to the existing network of bicycle and pedestrian paths will encourage greater use of alternative transportation modes and remove more vehicles from an already highly congested Medical Center area. In short, the proposed infrastructure projects would not only enable the staff at WRNMMC to successfully complete its mission, providing world-class medical care, but would also benefit the surrounding community, which includes the National Institutes of Health, the Bethesda Urban District, and nearby residential communities.

Sincerely,



M. P. MALANOSKI
Captain, Medical Corps
U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer
Naval Support Activity
Bethesda

Sincerely,



A. L. STOCKS
Rear Admiral, Medical Corps
U.S. Navy
Commander
Walter Reed National
Military Medical Center