



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Isiah Leggett
County Executive

March 20, 2018

Al R. Roshdich
Director

Christopher H. Marston, Chair
Rustic Roads Advisory Committee (RRAC)
C/O Michael Knapp, Staff Coordinator RRAC
Department of Permitting Services
255 Rockville Pike, 2nd Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

RE: Zion Road Bridge Replacement

Dear Mr. Marston:

Thank you for your September 15, 2017 letter of support for the replacement of Zion Road Bridge over Hawlings River. The existing bridge is in poor condition, therefore Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) is beginning the design process to replace the bridge.

In response to your concerns, please be assured that the new Zion Road Bridge will be designed to meet esthetic and environment standards required for this rustic road located in the environmentally sensitive Patuxent River watershed.

The design of the new bridge will provide many features and items suggested in your letter including:

- The new bridge will have no weight restrictions.
- One of the bridge types studied for the concept plan will be a concrete arch structure, similar to the existing bridge.
- A hydrology and hydraulic study will be performed to determine if the roadway flooding in this area can be reduced by providing a longer bridge, and/or increasing the capacity of the culvert north of the bridge.
- The two "Significant Features" of Zion Road (1. Pleasant road blending into adjacent land, and 2. Forest Canopy over northeastern section of road) specifically identified for this rustic road will be maintained.
- The new bridge construction schedule will be coordinated with the Brookeville Bypass Roadway construction schedule.

Please note that for safety reasons, the existing one lane bridge on Zion Road will be replaced with a new two-lane bridge. A two-lane bridge is required for the following safety reasons:

- Reported crash data collected in the last five years shows that there has been two head on collisions at the bridge causing disabling injuries to four occupants.

Office of the Director

101 Monroe Street, 10th Floor • Rockville, Maryland 20850 • 240-777-7170 • 240-777-7178 FAX
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Located one block west of the Rockville Metro Station

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- Highway Service crews periodically repair the existing bridge parapet, traffic barriers, and guardrail on the approach roadway due to many unreported collisions at the bridge.
- The average daily traffic on Zion Road is 2,053 vehicles. Generally, Transportation Standards only consider construction of a new one lane bridge if the average daily traffic on the road is less than 100 vehicles.

Although public safety requires the reconstruction of a two-lane bridge on Zion Road, there are other operational and financial factors which support the construction of a two-lane bridge at this site:

- The Agricultural Advisory Committee, the Montgomery County Farm Bureau, and the Montgomery Agricultural Producers have all requested that the new bridge on Zion Road should be at least 24foot wide with two lanes of operation to allow the crossing of all farm equipment. All three organizations have stated that some of their farm equipment are too wide to cross a one lane bridge. All three organizations quote Rustic Road regulations which state that on rustic roads, "the roads and bridges may be widened to accommodate the equipment that farmers are using. Doing so, helps ensure a safe environment for the agricultural community, as well as the other community members who use these roads".
- MCDOT can acquire federal funds to pay for a portion of the design and construction for a new, two-lane bridge on Zion Road, however, federal regulations will not allow the use of federal funds for the design and construction of a new, non-standard, unsafe, one lane bridge. The estimated cost (all of it funded by Montgomery County) for a one lane bridge is \$4.3 million. The estimated cost for a two-lane bridge is \$4.6 million (Federal Funds = \$3.0 million, County Funds = \$1.6 million). Montgomery County Government will save approximately \$2.7 million if a two-lane bridge is constructed instead of a one-lane bridge.

Please be assured that RRAC will be included as part of the review process during the design of the new bridge, beginning with the initial Concept plan. If you have any questions, please contact our Bridge Program Manager, Barry Fuss, at 240-777-7261.

Sincerely,



Al R. Roshdiah
Director

ARR:gc

cc: Mike Riley
All Council members
Doug Lechluder, Vice Chairman, Agricultural Advisory Committee
Michele Cropp, President, Montgomery County Farm Bureau
Bob, Cissel, Director, Montgomery Agricultural Producers
West Montgomery County Citizen Association