



Oak Drive / Ridge Road (MD 27) Sidewalk Improvement Project

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Question 1: Does the project add additional pavement and additional lanes to Oak Drive, Ridge Road (MD 27) or Kingstead Road?

Response 1: This sidewalk improvement project is not proposing to add new pavement or lanes to any of the roadways. The Recommended Alternative for the project proposes installation of a five-foot sidewalk along the west side of Oak Drive, the east side of Ridge Road, and the south side of Kingstead Road. The sidewalk would be placed a minimum of four-feet from the existing edge of pavement to create a buffer between pedestrians and the existing roadway. The goal of the Recommended Alternative is to create a safe, continuous network of pedestrian access to existing sidewalks, transit stops, commercial areas, and community/public facilities within and beyond the study area.

Question 2: Why was one side of the existing roadway chosen to propose installation of sidewalk over the other side?

Response 2: The west side of Oak Drive, the east side of Ridge Road and the south side of Kingstead Road are proposed as the sidewalk locations to provide connectivity to existing sidewalks or trails, as well as subdivisions and local destination facilities (e.g., Damascus Recreation Center, John T. Baker Middle School, and John Haines Recreation Park are on the west side of Oak Drive; Damascus High School, residential subdivisions and some sidewalk are located on the east side of Ridge Road; an existing shared-use path through John Haines Recreational Park is accessible via the south side of Kingstead Road). Specifically regarding Ridge Road, there were several inquiries as to whether the west side of the roadway could be considered for proposed sidewalk. The study team concluded that the sidewalk would not be feasible on the west side of Ridge Road due to the close proximity of homes to the edge of the roadway and other constraints related to grades and drainage channels in some of the front yards of the homes.

Question 3: What is the status of redistricting the John T. Baker Middle School located on Oak Drive?

Response 3: Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) Officials have stated that currently there are no redistricting plans for the John T. Baker Middle School. However, in the future, MCPS may reassess redistricting the John T. Baker Middle School. Irrespective of redistricting decisions, MCDOT believes that providing safe pedestrian connections to or between community facilities or activity centers is of primary importance.

Question 4: Who requested this project, and what is the demand?

Response 4: MCDOT received a request from the Damascus Recreation Center and concerned citizens who use, or would like to use, the area facilities and see a need for increased pedestrian access and safety improvements. The request was forwarded to the County's sidewalk program staff; however, they determined that engineered plans are needed for construction. Therefore, the study was put in the County's Facility Planning Program. The intent and goal of the Recommended Alternative is to create a safe continuous network of pedestrian access to existing sidewalks, transit stops, commercial areas, and community/public facilities along and beyond the study area. A study of the pedestrian network in this area indicates significant gaps in the sidewalk connections along Oak Drive, especially the missing sidewalk links between the John Haines Neighborhood Park and Avonlea Ridge Place and between Avonlea Ridge Place and John T. Baker Middle School. The project also addresses the sidewalk gaps along Ridge Road from Bloom Drive to Tralee Terrace and between Oak Drive (north intersection) and Damascus High School.

Question 5: Why don't the project limits extend to the Sweepstakes Road/MD 27 intersection, which is a signalized intersection with sidewalks? The additional length would create a continuous sidewalk, along Ridge Road, from Sweepstakes Road to Bethesda Church Road.

Response 5: Extending the project limits would be outside of the purpose and scope of this project and would require additional funding and approval. A request for an extension of project limits can be sent to MCDOT for the Director and County Council to review.

Question 6: Why are no storm drain inlets with curb and gutter (i.e., closed section) proposed along Oak Drive, Ridge Road or Kingstead Road under review?

Response 6: The proposed open section (i.e., no curb and gutter) roadway will allow drainage to proceed to existing roadside channels, which the Study Team considers to be the most effective method for controlling runoff from the roadways, while meeting the State's and County's regulatory stormwater management requirements. Environmental Site Design (ESD) or Low Impact Develop (LID) techniques, which treat stormwater runoff with vegetative practices that improve water quality and reduce the overall volume of stormwater being conveyed to storm drain systems, may be introduced during the detailed design phase.

Question 7: If a sidewalk is built, who will be required to maintain and remove snow from these facilities?

Response 7: MCDOT will perform all required maintenance of the sidewalk except for snow removal. Property owners are responsible for clearing their public sidewalks, driveways and entrances within 24 hours of the end of a snowstorm.

Question 8: How does the project address the difficulty pedestrians experience when crossing Ridge Road at its southern intersection with Oak Drive, which is not a signalized intersection and has sight distance concerns?

Response 8: The Study Team has considered the potential for creating a pedestrian crossing of Ridge Road at the southern Oak Drive intersection. This potential crossing location must be reviewed and approved by MD State Highway Administration and Montgomery County's Division of Traffic Engineering and Operations in order to be built. If the necessary concurrences are received allowing the Recommended Alternative to proceed to Facility Planning Phase II (35% design), the Study Team will conduct a comprehensive safety review and analysis to evaluate traffic volumes and speeds, pedestrian volumes and sight distance as part of coordination and approval processes with appropriate State and County agencies.

Question 9: What will be done to minimize impacts to a large number of existing mature trees and landscaping/property along Oak Drive and Ridge Road?

Response 9: MCDOT strives to meet the many challenges of balancing the planning and design of a safe and efficient transportation system for all users while considering the specific needs of the local residents as well as of the community at large. We understand that some of the residents have direct frontage along Oak Drive and may have one viewpoint different from those of others who live further away. Efforts will be made in Facility Planning Phase II (35% design) to avoid and/or minimize impacts within the Oak Drive and Ridge Road rights of way while addressing the challenge of retrofitting improvements in an established and mature setting.