

MEMORANDUM TO: Mayor and City Council

VIA: James D. Arnoult, Acting City Manager

FROM: Greg Ossont, Director
Planning and Code Administration

DATE: February 11, 2008

SUBJECT: Midcounty Corridor Study

Staff recently attended a public workshop on the Midcounty Corridor Study. During the meeting, Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation staff presented 11 preliminary alternatives. Of the 11 alternatives presented, MCDPWT is recommending only 5 alternatives continue to be evaluated as Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS). Of the 6 not recommended as ARDS, staff concurs with Montgomery County staff that these alternatives not be studied further.

The following is a summary of the 5 recommended ARDS:

Alternative 1 (No Build) – This alternative is the “no build” option which is required to be maintained throughout the evaluation period.

Alternative 4 (Goshen-Wightman-Brink) – This alternative has little or no impact potential for the City of Gaithersburg. Staff supports this alternative being included as an ARDS.

Alternative 8 (Lower Watkins Mill – Master Plan) – Staff notes that this alternative directs additional traffic to Montgomery Village Avenue, MD 355, and Watkins Mill Road. Additionally, this alternative creates the potential for “cut through” trips on Christopher Avenue and Russell Avenue. Finally, immediate following the Lower Watkins Mill section, this alternative follows the Master Plan alignment which significantly impacts both City neighborhoods, natural resources and Blohm Park.

However, staff does recognize that the impacts to the City are the result of avoiding impacts to Watkins Mill Elementary School, stream valley buffers and the Woodland Hills community. Accordingly, staff is recommending that the County continue to evaluate this alternative.

Alternative 9 (Master Planned Alternative) – Staff notes significant impacts to City neighborhoods, natural resources and park properties. However, staff recognizes that this is the Master Plan alignment and should be included for further study and evaluation.

Alternative 11 – Montgomery Village – Upper Watkins Mill – This alternative has little or no impact to the City. Staff supports this alternative being included as an ARDS.

As you are aware, Montgomery County recently extended the public comment period of the Midcounty Corridor Study until March 1, 2008. Staff is recommending that the 5 aforementioned alternatives be included for further review. Staff will be present at the Mayor and City Council meeting February 19th, 2008 to seek guidance in preparing a letter to be transmitted to Montgomery County.

I hope this information is helpful. If you have any questions please contact me directly at 301-258-6330 or gossont@gaitthersburgmd.gov

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