



City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch, City Manager *DJD*

SUBJECT: MD 197 Project Update

DATE: January 10, 2008

At Monday night's Council worksession, representatives of the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) will present an update on the project planning study for the segment of MD 197, between Kenhill Drive and MD 450. SHA has advertised a Location/Design Public Hearing for Wednesday, February 13, 2008 at Benjamin Tasker Middle School (see attached notice). Council will need to decide whether to hold a City Council public hearing prior to the February 13, 2008 SHA hearing or to wait until after that meeting is held.

This project is one of the City's highest transportation priorities. An excerpt from the City Council's current Transportation Priority List letter to Transportation Secretary John Porcari related to this project is provided below:

MD 197 (Prince George's County Line 26) - This project consists of improving the segment of MD 197 between Kenhill Drive and Relocated MD 450 to a four-lane divided roadway. Prince George's County has made this project a very high priority, as evidenced by the County including \$1 million in their budget to partially fund studies for improvements to MD 197. As you know, the existing, two-lane section is severely congested in the morning and evening peak periods. In addition, there are continuing concerns voiced by residents about pedestrian safety and access from the side streets. The lack of roadway capacity has resulted in ever-increasing diversion of traffic from MD 197 onto the City's local street system. Continued community involvement will be crucial to achieve a consensus on the ultimate design of this roadway.

The City Council believes that MD 197 should be designed to accommodate a maximum of four lanes. Except where added width is needed at intersections, a continuous 8- to 12-foot median should run between the northbound and southbound lanes of MD 197 between the intersection of MD Route 197 with Tulip Grove Drive and the intersection of MD 197 and Lerner Place. The alignment of the road should be configured for minimal roadbed and minimum disturbance of foliage on both sides of the new roadway. The project should maintain a hiker-biker trail on the east side of the road. Safe pedestrian crossing from the Long Ridge Section to Foxhill Park is also a goal.

Attached is a brief summary of the project history. Staff is prepared to answer any questions Council may have about the City's continued involvement in this process.

Attachments

PUBLIC NOTICE

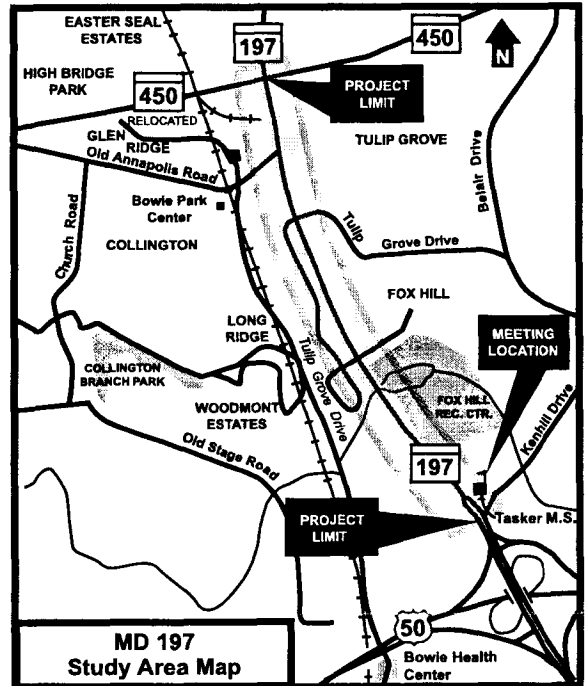
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
 STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION WILL CONDUCT
 A LOCATION/DESIGN PUBLIC HEARING
 FOR THE MD 197 PROJECT PLANNING STUDY
 FROM KENHILL DRIVE TO MD 450 RELOCATED IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY



| WHEN | WHERE |
|--|--|
| Wednesday, February 13, 2008 6:00 p.m. Maps/Displays Available 7:00 p.m. Presentation/Testimony Snow Date: Thursday, February 21, 2008 | Benjamin Tasker Middle School 4901 Collington Road Bowie, Maryland 20715 |

The Maryland Department of Transportation, State Highway Administration (SHA), in coordination with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is conducting a Project Planning Study on MD 197 from Kenhill Drive to MD 450 Relocated in Prince George's County.

The purpose of this Location/Design Public Hearing is to afford all interested persons the opportunity to present their views regarding the proposed location and general design of the project alternatives, including the associated social, economic, cultural, and natural environmental effects.



Beginning at 6:00 p.m., mapping depicting the project alternatives will be available for public viewing. Representatives of SHA and FHWA will be available to record your comments and discuss points of interest with you.

A formal presentation beginning at 7:00 p.m. and lasting approximately 30 minutes will include a description of the project alternatives, an environmental impact summary, information on right-of-way acquisition and relocation assistance procedures, and information about Title VI of SHA's Equal Opportunity Program. This presentation will be followed by the receipt of public testimony.

SHA, in consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and other consulting parties, has conducted a survey of the study area for cultural resources. MHT has concurred with SHA's determination that no historic standing structures located within the project area are on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Detailed archeological studies have been completed and SHA has determined that, due to previous disturbance within the project area, no significant archeological sites exist. Coordination with MHT is ongoing to confirm this determination. In accordance with the Section 106 procedures of the National Historic Preservation Act, this public hearing provides the opportunity for public input regarding cultural resources.

Individuals and representatives of organizations who wish to testify at the public hearing and/or add their contact information to the project planning mailing list may submit written requests to Ms. Felicia Alexander, Project Manager, Project Management Division, State Highway Administration, Mail Stop C-301, P.O. Box 717, Baltimore, Maryland 21203-0717. They may also make these requests by calling 410-545-8511 or 1-800-548-5026 (toll-free), or by sending an email to faalexander@sha.state.md.us.

Persons who receive a copy of this notice in the mail are already on the project mailing list. They will be kept informed of project developments and opportunities for public involvement as the study progresses.

In order to be included in the Public Hearing Transcript, written statements and other exhibits in lieu of or in addition to an oral presentation at the public hearing must be submitted to Ms. Alexander no later than March 26, 2008.

Requests to be placed on the speakers' list for this public hearing must be received no later than February 6, 2008. Elected officials will be given the opportunity to speak first. Other speakers will be called in the order in which their requests are received. Attendees not on the speakers' list may provide testimony after those on the list have been heard. Should a large number of speakers wish to be heard, time allotted to each speaker may be limited. A court reporter will be present to record comments of persons who prefer to provide private testimony. Brochures and forms for written comments will be available at the public hearing.

HEARING-IMPAIRED/NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING PERSONS:

Persons with a hearing impairment who plan to attend the public hearing should notify Ms. Alexander in writing at the address above or by teletype at 1-800-735-2258 (Statewide toll-free). Non-English-speaking persons who plan to attend should notify Ms. Alexander in writing at the same address or by telephone at 410-545-8553 or toll-free at 1-800-548-5026. All requests for oral, sign-language, or non-English-language interpreters must be received by February 6, 2008. To the extent feasible and possible, interpreters will be provided.

A-0505
 January 10, 2008



Neil J. Pedersen
 State Highway Administrator

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MD 197 Project History

1986 Prince George's County General Obligation Bond provided funding for design and construction of a 4-lane divided road

6/1987 Design Study Report prepared for Prince George's County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPW & T)

8/3/87 City Council Public Hearing

County Proposal: 4-lane divided road with 16' wide median

City Staff Rec.: 4-lane divided road with 16' wide median reduced to 4' wherever possible

CURRB Rec.: 4-lane undivided using existing pavement section

9/14/87 City Council Public Hearing

9/22/87 City Council Position Letter

12/7/87 City Council Letter to County Executive Glendening re: Meeting held to discuss MD 197

2/1/88 City Council Letter to County Executive Glendening re: Public Forum and City Position Statement

12/11/91 City Council/Greater Bowie Chamber of Commerce Joint Signature Letter requesting State funding of MD 197

1/27/92 Response Letter from Transportation Secretary James Lighthizer, who stated: "Elected officials from the area requested us to delay this project. Subsequent to the decision to delay this project, the county funding for this project was deleted from the county's Capital Improvement Program.

Due to the revenue shortfall in the Transportation Trust Fund, the funding for this project is not available."

1992> Continued attempts to convince State to fund the project

1996 SHA installed "pork chop" medians for safety reasons

2005 Prince George's County agreed to fund \$1 million for planning studies. A Project Planning Study reappears in the State Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP).

November 13, 2006 - Project briefing by SHA staff to City Council

December 12, 2006 - Alternates Public Workshop held at Bowie City Hall

November 14, 2007 - Informational Open House held at Bowie City Hall