




City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch,  City Manager

SUBJECT: Maryland Route 197
Alternative 4 - Modified with Sidewalks and Street Trees
Public Hearing

DATE: April 2, 2009

I. Background

On March 3, 2008 City Council conducted a public hearing on the proposed alternatives under consideration in the project planning study for MD 197, between Kenhill Drive and MD 450. Council sent a letter on March 4, 2008 (Attachment #1) outlining 13 specific concerns to the State Highway Administration (SHA).

On July 14, 2008, SHA staff provided a worksession briefing to Council to review the results of post-hearing engineering studies. SHA presented the "Team Recommended Alternative", which was to support Alternative 4 - Four Lane Divided, with several modifications including: (1) Continuous sidewalk along the western edge of the corridor; (2) Reconfiguration of turning movements at Kenhill Drive; and, (3) Study of retaining walls and other right-of-way reduction measures during the detailed design phase. Five (5) residents, including Senator Douglas Peters, addressed the Council at the worksession about their individual concerns. At the conclusion of the briefing, Council reiterated their position regarding the median width and other concerns noted in the March 4, 2008 letter.

Last August, State Highway Administrator Neil Pedersen reviewed the alternatives under consideration and, responding to the City Council's issues, directed SHA staff to explore a new, four-lane alternative with a narrower median with a median closure at Lyle Lane/Faith Lane and a continuous five-foot sidewalk along the southbound travel lanes, and to determine the minimum outside lane width *required* to provide bicycle access. All findings were to be presented to the public for comment prior to the Administrator's selection of an alternative.

MAYOR G. Frederick Robinson MAYOR PRO TEM Todd M. Turner

COUNCIL Dennis Brady ♦ James E. Marcos ♦ Diane M. Polangin ♦ Isaac C. Truth ♦ Geraldine Valentino-Smith CITY MANAGER David J. Deutsch
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SHA mailed over 13,000 postcards advertising the Open House held on Tuesday, March 24, 2009 as well as the City Council's public hearing. Over 70 people visited the Open House to learn more about the project. There were many comments in favor of the latest plan, Alternative 4 - Modified with Sidewalk and Street Trees (see Attachment #2). SHA plans to conclude the project planning process with Location/Design Approval this summer.

II. Alternative 4 - Modified with Sidewalk and Street Trees

The proposed modified alternative includes a narrower median (12 feet vs. 20 feet), a new 5-foot sidewalk along the entire western side of the corridor, and retention of the 16-foot wide "bicycle compatible" outside travel lanes. The existing full-movement intersection at Lyle Lane/Faith Lane is recommended to be modified by extension of the MD 197 median, which will result in right-in/right-out traffic movements only. (Traffic Levels-of-Service actually improve slightly at that intersection.) A separate outbound right-turn lane is provided on Kenhill Drive at MD 197, and left turns will be maintained at the MD 197 intersection with Long Ridge Lane/Tulip Grove Drive, although the traffic Level-of-Service decreases slightly there. A copy of the proposed Alternative plan is provided as Attachment #3.

III. Analysis

The total width of the cross section of MD 197 has been reduced from 134 feet to 124 feet (see Attachment #4). This has been accomplished primarily by decreasing the median width from 20 feet to a maximum of 12 feet between Long Ridge Lane/Tulip Grove Drive and Lerner Place. The revised plan continues to hold the edge of pavement along the west side of the right-of-way. No roadway pavement will be constructed further west of where it exists today. The existing 10-foot shoulder will become part of the travel lane in both Alternative 4 and Alternative 4 Modified.

Because it has a narrower footprint, the modified version of Alternative 4 has less impact on streams, floodplain and forest resources than the original Alternative 4. However, the number of properties potentially impacted by the limits of disturbance has increased from 58 properties to 66 properties, and slightly more right-of-way will be needed (see Attachment #5).

Alternative 4 Modified also includes a continuous sidewalk along the west side of MD 197, allowing for safe pedestrian access to existing bus stops and the signalized pedestrian crossings at Long Ridge Lane/Tulip Grove Drive and London Lane/Kenhill Drive. Street trees have been added to both sides of the improved roadway, creating more of a boulevard effect and adding more separation between the vehicle travel lanes and pedestrian facilities.

The impacts associated with the Alternative 4 Modified plan are different than the Alternative 4 version, for two (2) reasons. First, by narrowing the median, impacts along the eastern edge of the roadway have been decreased. Because the western edge of

Memorandum RE: MD 197 Alternative 4 Modified

pavement is being held, everything is shifted away from the east, but this shift does not change placement of the roadway on the west side of the corridor. Second, the reason the impacts along the western edge increased is due to the introduction of a 5-foot sidewalk and 8-foot street tree planting strip. Because these elements are located outside the edge of roadway pavement, they pushed the grading limits and proposed right-of-way needs further to the west.

The revised plan includes a median at the Lyle Lane/Faith Lane intersection, precluding left turns into or out of those streets. By eliminating these turns, the new design appears to address an existing safety problem that would be made worse by the addition of two (2) more travel lanes on MD 197. Staff believes no significant traffic problems will occur with the rerouting of minor traffic volumes through the neighborhoods of Long Ridge, Tulip Grove and Foxhill, since the traffic will primarily be residents destined for those neighborhoods. The City's Public Works Department does not anticipate any issues relating to trash truck routes as a result of this change.

The 13 concerns identified in the City's March 4, 2008 letter have largely been addressed by the revised Alternative 4. However, several of Council's issues need further discussion.

#3 (Noise barriers) - The City recommended a 25-foot vegetative buffer at all locations wherever noise barriers are not installed. Staff notes that a stockade fence erected by SHA along west side of the corridor already provides some degree of screening and noise attenuation for homes in Long Ridge. In the event that noise barriers are not erected, the overall impact of the project would be more adverse to adjacent properties if the existing stockade fence is removed and not replaced in kind. Therefore, staff recommends that this contingency be added to the City's comments on Alternative 4 Modified.

#4 (Prohibition of left-turns at minor intersections) - The current version of the plan eliminates left turns at the Lyle Lane/Faith Lane intersection, but allows them at Foxhill Park/Lerner Place and at Tongue Avenue. Staff notes, however, that separate left-turn lanes are provided on MD 197 for traffic turning into Lerner Place and Foxhill Park. Staff concurs that access to the side streets is appropriate at this location, because there are no other convenient access options. However, staff believes that left turns to and from Tongue Avenue will be disruptive to through traffic flow on MD 197 and may be potentially dangerous. A shared left-through lane is proposed in Alternative 4 Modified on northbound MD 197, leaving only a single through-only lane at this location, where two (2) through lanes exist south and north of Tongue Avenue. To avoid the potential for turning traffic conflicting with through traffic, the Tongue Avenue intersection should be closed with a median and a new U-turn bay provided on northbound MD 197 traffic at the Tasker Middle School driveway median break. Drivers exiting Tongue Avenue intending to go north would have to turn right and drive a short distance south to make a U-turn at the London Lane/Kenhill Drive intersection.

#6 (Dedicated right-turn lanes at minor intersections) - The proposed plan does not include dedicated right-turn lanes at Lerner Place/Foxhill Park, Lyle Lane/Faith Lane and

Memorandum RE: MD 197 Alternative 4 Modified

Tongue Avenue. There was public hearing testimony from residents supporting at least deceleration lanes at the minor intersections so that right-turning traffic would have a safe opportunity to decelerate before turning. Shared through-right lanes are shown on Alternative 4 Modified. It is recommended that the feasibility of adding dedicated acceleration/deceleration lanes at these intersections be investigated at the time of detailed design. On the east side of MD 197, at least, it appears that ample room exists within the existing right-of-way to accomplish this.

#9 (Pedestrian crossing of MD 197) - Although a pedestrian footbridge or underpass were determined not feasible by SHA, there will still be some demand for pedestrians to cross MD 197 in the vicinity of Foxhill Park. It is recommended that the concept of mid-block crosswalks or other pedestrian friendly designs be explored at Lyle Lane/Faith Lane and Lerner Lane/Foxhill Park during the detailed design stage.

#11 (Placement of existing utility lines underground) - This recommendation was determined to be too costly for SHA to comply with; however, staff recommends that the City's position letter continue to reiterate the desire to have utilities placed underground so it can be examined during the design and engineering phase.

#13 (Bicycle compatible lanes) - The proposed plan continues to show 16-foot wide bicycle compatible lanes as the outer lanes in the roadway design. Staff notes that Maryland law (Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Act of 2001, aka "Access 2000") includes a specific public policy that states:

- 1) Access to and use of transportation facilities by pedestrians and bicycle riders shall be considered and best engineering practices regarding the needs of bicycle riders and pedestrians shall be employed in all phases of transportation planning, including highway design, construction, reconstruction, and repair as well as expansion and improvement of other transportation facilities.

Policy 15.6.6 Bicycle Accommodations sets forth the following:

All state highway improvements shall be bicycle compatible and provide the preferred bicycle accommodations in accordance with SHA guidelines, including but not limited to 15.6.1 and 15.6.2, where feasible and reasonable as determined by SHA...

Table 15.6.1 includes the following requirement:

Application	Curb Lane Width Required
Urban highways with 11' wide through lanes and posted speed of no more than 40 mph	16' curb lane, including gutter pan

City staff has been repeatedly advised by SHA throughout the project planning phase that 16-foot wide bicycle compatible lanes will be required for this project, despite the existence of the off-road recreational hiker-biker trail that parallels the roadway along the eastern side of the corridor. It is staff's understanding that SHA does not find the existence of the recreational trail to be sufficient justification to waive the requirement for the bicycle compatible lanes. Staff obtained a copy of the Design Waiver for Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations guidelines from SHA. Requests for such waivers are made at the time of design, rather than during project planning. Given that City Council feels strongly about this issue, staff intends to submit a request during the design stage. However, as staff has pointed out to Council previously, the amount of tree clearing and grading needed to support any construction project of this nature will likely result in comparable limits of disturbance to what is already being shown in Alternative 4 Modified. Eliminating the bicycle compatible lane in favor of an 11- or 12-foot wide travel lane will reduce the paved area by eight (8) to 10 feet but will not necessarily result in a corresponding reduction in limits of disturbance, due to topography and grading factors. In addition, staff finds it desirable to have 4- to 5-foot wide area adjacent to the outside travel lanes, offset by a white line, available for breakdowns. This will help alleviate future traffic congestion due to such incidents. An example of such a configuration exists in Bowie on the recently improved MD 450, which includes a similar area adjacent to the outside travel lanes.

IV. Recommendation

Because the Alternative 4 Modified plan is superior to the original Alternative 4 in terms of its amenities and reduced footprint, and because the revised design addresses most of City Council's previously defined issues, staff recommends Council SUPPORT Alternative 4 Modified with Sidewalks and Street Trees, with the following revised position statement (**new recommendations appear in bold**):

The City Council supports Alternative 4 - Modified with Sidewalks and Street Trees because it will provide acceptable levels of service and will result in a safer roadway. However, to address issues raised by the community and City staff, the Council recommends the following:

1. SHA shall use every opportunity available to minimize both the "footprint" of the future roadway and the amount of disturbance by using 2:1 slopes in grading and retaining walls wherever possible.
2. At locations where the noise barrier is not installed, SHA shall create (or recreate) a vegetative buffer within the 25-foot landscape easement on lots containing the easement and establish a similar vegetative buffer on properties that do not have a landscape easement. **To maintain a degree of screening and noise attenuation, any existing stockade fencing removed due to construction shall be replaced in kind.**

Memorandum RE: MD 197 Alternative 4 Modified

3. Left-turns shall be prohibited at the Tongue Avenue intersection. **The Tongue Avenue intersection shall be closed with a median and a new U-turn bay provided at the Tasker Middle School driveway median break for northbound traffic intending to access Tongue Avenue. U-turns shall be allowed at the London Lane/Kenhill Drive intersection to accommodate motorists exiting Tongue Avenue who intend to travel north.**
4. Dedicated right-turn lanes shall be provided at the Foxhill Park/Lerner Place and Faith Lane/Lyle Lane intersections and Tongue Avenue. **The feasibility of adding dedicated acceleration/deceleration lanes shall be investigated at the time of detailed design.**
5. Pedestrian activated crossing signals shall be retained at the Long Ridge Lane/Tulip Grove Drive and London Lane/Kenhill Drive intersections.
6. The project design shall **attempt to address the demand for pedestrians to cross MD 197 in the vicinity of Foxhill Park. The concept of mid-block crosswalks or other pedestrian friendly designs shall be explored at Lyle Lane/Faith Lane and Lerner Place/Foxhill Park during the detailed design stage.**
7. The existing hiker-biker trail alignment shall be used wherever possible in the future trail design.
8. Existing utility lines adjacent to MD 197 shall be placed underground wherever possible.
9. To address the current problem of speeding vehicles, techniques such as traffic calming, speed enforcement cameras and sequencing of traffic signals shall be implemented as soon as possible.
10. The proposed 16-foot wide bicycle compatible lanes shall be reduced to standard size (e.g. 11-foot wide) lanes.

Attachments:

- Attachment #1 - City Council Position Letter dated March 4, 2008
- Attachment #2 - Comment Card Responses Received at Open House
- Attachment #3 - Alternative 4 Modified with Sidewalks and Street Trees
- Attachment #4 - Cross Sections of Alternative 4 and Alternative 4 Modified
- Attachment #5 - Comparison of Environmental Impacts and Costs



City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

March 4, 2008

Ms. Felicia Alexander, Project Manager
Project Planning Division
Maryland State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop C-301
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

RE: MD 197 Project Planning Study Recommendations

Dear Ms. Alexander:

As you are aware, on Monday, March 3, 2008 the Bowie City Council conducted a public hearing on the proposed alternatives included in the Location/Design Public Hearing Information Brochure prepared by the State Highway Administration. The project planning study involves upgrading the segment of MD 197 between Kenhill Drive/London Lane and Relocated MD 450. After conducting a public hearing and listening to the testimony of 12 residents, the City Council unanimously voted to support Alternative 4, with several recommended changes, understanding that you will be returning to the City Council in April or May to further discuss the project and your response to comments that have been received to date. The City Council reserves the right to provide a revised position statement or additional comments at a later time.

The City Council supports Alternative 4 because it will provide acceptable levels of service and will result in a safer roadway. However, to address issues raised by the community and City staff, the Council recommends the following:

1. Separate right-turn lanes shall be added to the Kenhill Drive approach at the MD 197/Kenhill Drive intersection and at the Tulip Grove Drive approach at the MD 197/Tulip Grove intersection.
2. SHA shall use every opportunity available to minimize both the "footprint" of the future roadway and the amount of disturbance by using 2:1 slopes in grading and retaining walls wherever possible.
3. At locations where the noise barrier is not installed, SHA shall create (or recreate) a vegetative buffer within the 25-foot landscape easement on lots containing the easement and establish a similar vegetative buffer on properties that do not have a landscape easement.
4. Left-turns shall be prohibited to and from Foxhill Park/Lerner Place and Faith Lane/Lyle Lane and at the Tongue Avenue intersection.
5. Except where added width is needed at intersections, a continuous 8- to 12-foot wide, landscaped median shall 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.

MAYOR G. Frederick Robinson MAYOR PRO TEM Todd M. Turner

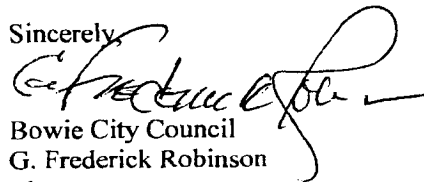
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Letter to Felicia Alexander
re: MD 197 Project Planning Study

6. Dedicated right-turn lanes shall be provided at the Foxhill Park/Lerner Place and Faith Lane/Lyle Lane intersections and Tongue Avenue.
7. A six (6) foot wide sidewalk with a four (4) foot offset from the roadway shall be provided along the entire western side of the corridor, between London Lane/Kenhill Drive and Old Annapolis Road.
8. Pedestrian activated crossing signals shall be retained at the Long Ridge Lane/Tulip Grove Drive and London Lane/Kenhill Drive intersections.
9. The project design shall include a pedestrian footbridge or underpass connecting the east and west sides of MD 197 at the Foxhill Lane stream crossing.
10. The existing hiker-biker trail alignment shall be used wherever possible in the future trail design.
11. Existing utility lines adjacent to MD 197 shall be placed underground wherever possible.
12. To address the current problem of speeding vehicles, techniques such as traffic calming, speed enforcement cameras and sequencing of traffic signals shall be implemented as soon as possible.
13. The proposed 16-foot wide bicycle compatible lanes shall be reduced to standard size (e.g. 11-foot wide) lanes.

The City Council requests your cooperation in addressing these issues and incorporating the necessary changes into proposed Alternative 4. We remain available to discuss these recommendations and encourage you to schedule a worksession date with City Manager David Deutsch in the coming months so we may hear your responses to the issues that have been identified. Mr. Deutsch may be reached at 301-809-3030.

Sincerely,



Bowie City Council
G. Frederick Robinson
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters
The Honorable James Hubbard
The Honorable Marvin Holmes
The Honorable Gerron Levi
The Honorable Ingrid Turner
Mr. Darrell Mobley, SHA District 3 Engineer

MD 197 Open House March 24, 2009

Written Comments :

"Impressed w/ the project. Concern about losing property value"

"Very satisfied with the new Alternative 4 Modified. SHA heard our concerns; appreciative of SHA's outreach efforts"

"No need for sidewalk between Long Ridge and Lyle; Enough money spent on the project already!"

"Bike lanes on the road are wasted space when there is a bike trail."

"Would like a walk thru (opening for pedestrians and bikes) at Old 450 junction if sound walls are part of the project."

"Keep 5' sidewalk on southbound side to continue from NB 197; trees in median should be mostly trunk – no evergreen. Need handouts w/ map of project"

"Wider the road, more fill is needed. Median is pretty, but costly; to save money, delete the median."

"Looks great! Build soon; congestion is a real problem getting from north Bowie to the Health Center and Town Center. We shop in Anne Arundel County sometimes to avoid congestion."

"Good plan. Looking forward to implementation"

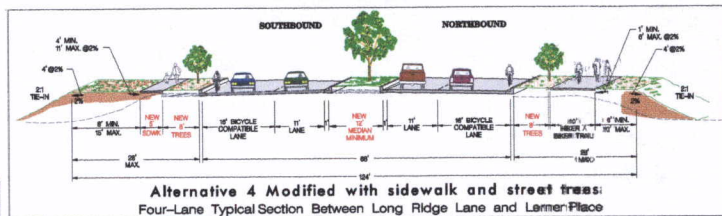
"I like the Alternative 4 Modified with side walk and street trees. It impacts the residents less (not so much encroachment into their yards) and perhaps the trees will help with pollution, noise levels and keep speed reasonable. Glad to know you listened to people's suggestions. The extra money in cost is a good investment"

ALTERNATIVE 4 MODIFIED : 4-LANE DIVIDED TYPICAL SECTION

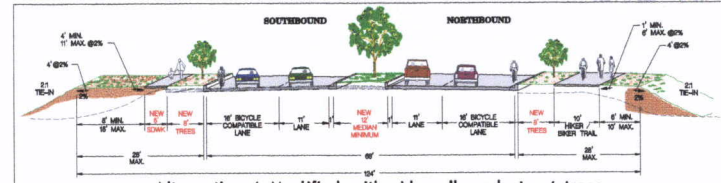
Four-Lane Typical Section Between Long Ridge Lane and Lerner Place

**4-LANE DIVIDED TYPICAL SECTION
(WITH CLOSED MEDIAN)
MODIFIED SECTION**

(WORK IN PROGRESS)

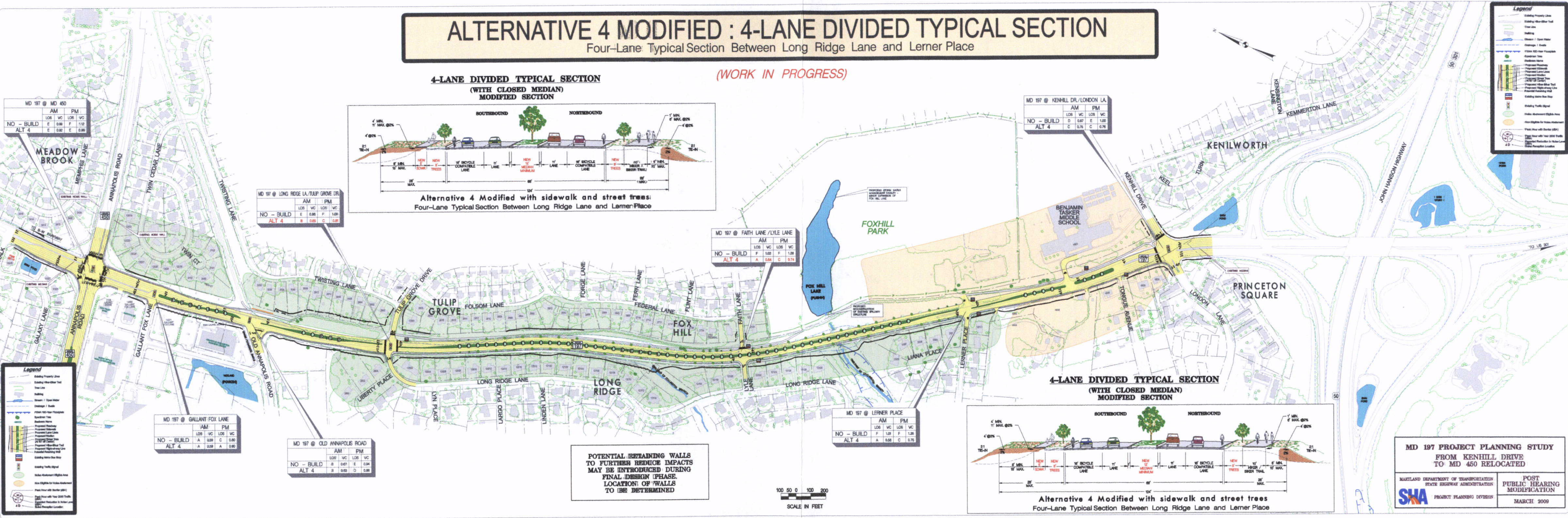


Alternative 4 Modified with sidewalk and street trees
Four-Lane Typical Section Between Long Ridge Lane and Lerner Place



4-LANE DIVIDED TYPICAL SECTION
(WITH CLOSED MEDIAN)
MODIFIED SECTION

Alternative 4 Modified with sidewalk and street trees
Four-Lane Typical Section Between Long Ridge Lane and Lerner Place



MD 197 @ MD 450

	AM	PM
NO - BUILD	E 0.08	F 1.12
ALT 4	E 0.02	E 0.02

MD 197 @ LONG RIDGE LA / TULIP GROVE DR

	AM	PM
NO - BUILD	E 0.08	F 1.08
ALT 4	E 0.02	C 1.02

MD 197 @ FAITH LANE / LYLE LANE

	AM	PM
NO - BUILD	F 1.02	F 1.02
ALT 4	A 0.04	C 0.04

MD 197 @ KENHILL DR / LONDON LA

	AM	PM
NO - BUILD	D 0.02	E 1.02
ALT 4	C 0.23	C 0.23

MD 197 @ GALLANT FOX LANE

	AM	PM
NO - BUILD	A 0.02	C 0.02
ALT 4	A 0.02	A 0.02

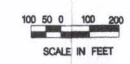
MD 197 @ OLD ANNAPOLIS ROAD

	AM	PM
NO - BUILD	B 0.07	E 0.04
ALT 4	B 0.02	D 0.02

MD 197 @ LERNER PLACE

	AM	PM
NO - BUILD	F 1.02	F 1.02
ALT 4	A 0.04	C 0.04

POTENTIAL RETAINING WALLS TO FURTHER REDUCE IMPACTS MAY BE INTRODUCED DURING FINAL DESIGN PHASE. LOCATION OF WALLS TO BE DETERMINED



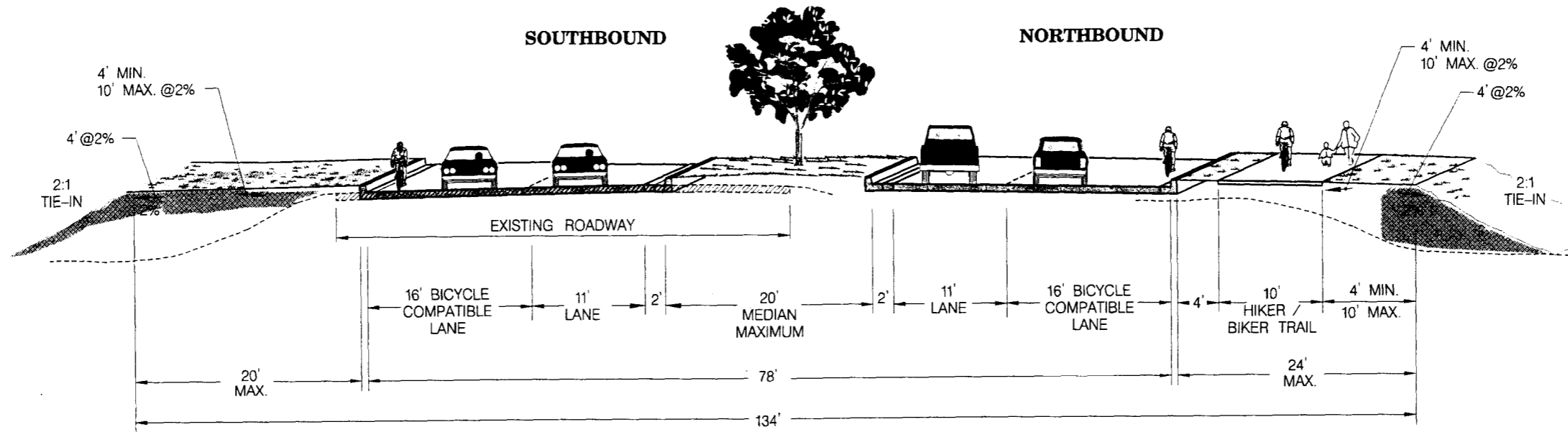
MD 197 PROJECT PLANNING STUDY
FROM KENHILL DRIVE TO MD 450 RELOCATED

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

POST PUBLIC HEARING MODIFICATION
MARCH 2009

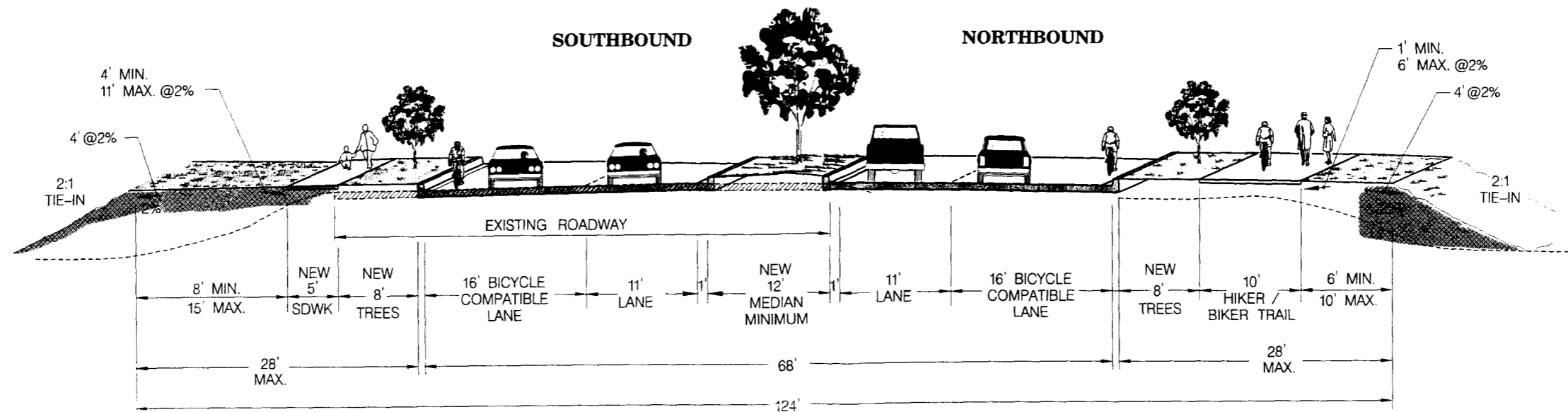
Alternative 4 - Four-Lane Divided

As Presented at Public Hearing, February 2008



Alternative 4 - Modified with Sidewalk and Street Trees

Four-Lane Divided Typical Section between Long Ridge Lane and Lerner Place, March 2009



LEGEND	
	EXISTING ROADWAY
	PROPOSED ROADWAY

NOT TO SCALE

DRAFT: WORK IN PROGRESS

Comparison of Environmental Impacts and Costs

Features	Alternative 4: Four-Lane Divided Section (as presented at Public Hearing)	Alternative 4 Modified: Four-Lane Divided Section
<i>Right-of-Way¹</i>		
Number of Residential Properties Affected	58	66
Number of Commercial Properties Affected	1	1
Number of Displacements	0	0
Total Right-of-Way (acres)	3.2	3.6
<i>Natural Environment</i>		
Wetlands (acres)	0.6	0.6
Streams (linear feet)	313	255
Floodplains (acres)	0.13	0.10
Parks (acres)	0	0
Forest (acres)	10.1	9.8
Specimen Trees (number)	12	12
<i>Cost</i>		
Estimated Right-of-Way Cost (millions)	\$17 - \$21 ³	\$18 - \$22
Estimated Construction Cost ² (millions)	\$90 - \$98 ³	\$100 - \$108

¹ Impacts may be further reduced in final design as a result of more detailed engineering

² Construction cost estimates presented in 2020 dollars

³ Costs previously presented at the 2008 public hearing updated to reflect current material costs and land values. Right-of-Way cost was \$11 - \$15 million. Construction cost was \$85 - \$93 million.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For additional information, please contact:

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 (410) 545-8514 or toll-free 1-800-548-5026
 MD Relay Service for teletype users at 7-1-1

or log on to SHA's website at www.marylandroads.com and click on **Projects**