



City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch
City Manager

RE: Preliminary Countywide Master Plan of Transportation
Arterial Roadways North of Bowie

DATE: May 28, 2009

Earlier this year, staff contacted the manager of Patuxent Research Refuge and Director of Long Range Planning for Anne Arundel County to inform them of City Council's recommendation for planning a new arterial roadway between MD 197 in Prince George's County and the MD 3/MD 424 intersection in Anne Arundel County. After reviewing Prince George's County's Preliminary Master Plan of Transportation (MPOT) in January, City Council recommended construction of this new roadway as a contingency of supporting the future expansion of MD 197 between Laurel and Bowie, recommended in the Preliminary Master Plan, to a 4-lane arterial design. The attached responses to the City's correspondence firmly reject the City's proposal, with very cogent reasons being cited by each agency. Based on this turn of events, the logical position for Council to take is to abandon the recommendation for a new roadway between Prince George's County and Anne Arundel County.

Further, Council should oppose any expansion of MD 197 between Laurel and Bowie beyond the current two lanes. The relevant policy in the current City *Development Review Guidelines and Policies* document is as follows:

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS

5. The City opposes construction of A-44, the Inter-County Connector, east of I-95 due to its detrimental environmental impacts and impacts on the quality of life of current and future residents along its alignment and to minimize additional negative impacts to US Route 1 in the Laurel area.

Page 36 of the Preliminary MPOT, under Policy 1, Strategy 2 states:

Construct MD 197 (A-24) as a four- to six-lane arterial from US 301 to the Baltimore-Washington Parkway to maintain the operational integrity of MD 197,

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

COUNCIL Dennis Brady ♦ James L. Marcos ♦ Diane M. Polangin ♦ Isaac C. Trough ♦ Geraldine Valentino-Smith **CITY MANAGER** David J. Deutsch
City Hall (301) 262-6200 **FAX** (301) 809-2302 **TDD** (301) 262-5013 **WEB** www.cityofbowie.org

Memo re: Preliminary Master Plan of Transportation

in light of the deletion of A-44 from the Prince George's County highway network.

While the planned alignment of A-44 (now designated as F-3 in the Laurel area) currently starts in Montgomery County and ends at US 1, it should be noted that MD 197 north of the Baltimore-Washington Parkway is already designated a six-lane arterial road (A-4). While these roads are not directly connected, the potential exists for MD 197 to become the de facto "A-44" between Laurel and Bowie, if A-24 is designated for expansion to a four- to six-lane arterial. If Council concurs, staff will draft a supplemental letter to the District Council indicating this position.

The Preliminary Master Plan of Transportation was adopted by the Planning Board with MNCPPC-recommended changes in April. The District Council will begin having worksessions on the Plan in early June.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Council send a letter deleting its recommendation for a new arterial road crossing the Patuxent River north of Bowie to the District Council. It is further recommended that Council oppose the recommendation in the MPOT to expand A-24, between Bowie and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, to a four- to six-lane arterial roadway.

Attachments



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Patuxent Research Refuge
12100 Beech Forest Road, Suite 138
Laurel, Maryland 20708



MAY 18 2009

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

MAY 13 2009

Mr. Joseph M. Meinert, AICP
Director of Planning and Development
City of Bowie
2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, MD 20715

Dear Mr. Meinert:

The Patuxent Research Refuge (PRR) is in receipt of your March 9, 2009, letter stating the Bowie City Council supports the recommendation by the Prince George's County Council and Planning Board in its updated Master Plan to upgrade MD 197 between Laurel and Bowie to a 4-lane arterial roadway. This letter also voiced your support for construction of a proposed new arterial roadway connecting MD 197 to MD 3 in Anne Arundel County. Both of these projects have direct impacts to the refuge, a unit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System (NWRS). These are essentially two separate projects, in terms of how the refuge views them, and will be addressed as such.

A significant amount of refuge acreage is within the proposed 4-lane alignment footprint. Under United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) 49 U.S.C. 1653(f) (Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966 with subsequent revisions, it is national policy that special effort be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites, such as the refuge. The intent of the Section 4(f) statute and the policy of the USDOT and Federal Highway Administration in cooperation with the State Highway Administration is to avoid the use of significant public parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and historic sites as part of a project, unless there is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of the land.

Furthermore, under regulations and policies promulgated as a result of the Refuge Improvement Act of 1997, proposed uses of refuge lands such as highway construction would be subject to both an appropriate use analysis, and a compatibility determination. Should these analyses conclude that the proposed use of constructing a highway on lands dedicated to wildlife research and conservation is neither appropriate nor compatible, the Service would not be able to support moving forward with the project as designed.

As for the proposed new arterial road to connect MD 197 with MD 3, the location on the map provided with the March 9, 2009, letter is problematic from the Service's perspective for many reasons.

- 1) It would result in significant impacts to refuge habitat, including forest fragmentation, lessening the refuge's ability to support forest wildlife, in particular forest interior dwelling bird species. It appears the proposed route would also cross several wetlands, as well as the Patuxent River, again having adverse impacts to those habitats and the wildlife dependent upon them.
- 2) It would be located immediately downstream of Cash Lake Dam, which is currently classified as a high hazard dam, due to the downstream presence of a public roadway (MD 197). Construction of an arterial roadway at the proposed location would only exacerbate public safety concerns related to Cash Lake Dam.
- 3) It would be constructed in close proximity to the U.S. Geological Survey's captive whooping crane flock, one of the most endangered birds in the world. The captive propagation area is a multi-million dollar facility, which cannot easily be relocated/replicated elsewhere, for biological and financial reasons. Having a new road constructed this close to this facility is unacceptable from this standpoint alone. The captive-rearing program for the whooping crane at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center is a critical part of the recovery program for this endangered species. Any Federal funding or action that impedes that recovery may be contrary to the requirement of Section 7(a) (1) of the Endangered Species Act that all Federal agencies use their authorities to further the conservation of endangered species. In addition to consultation with the Service's Refuge Program, Section 7 consultation with the Service's Ecological Services Program may be required prior to proceeding with any plan for the proposed roadway.
- 4) All of the Section 4F guidances and NWRS appropriate use and compatibility policies and regulations would apply to this project as well, if it were to move forward at this location.

I strongly urge the County Council and Bowie City Council to rethink the location of this proposed arterial roadway, as the current location is essentially a "non-starter" from the refuge's view. There would appear to be other less impactful locations farther to the south and east, where refuge property could be avoided altogether.

I look forward to discussing this matter further at your earliest convenience. Please call me at 301-497-5582 and we can arrange to meet for further discussion of this matter.

Sincerely,



Brad Knudsen
Refuge Manager

cc: Chesapeake Bay Field Office (Attn: Mitch Keiler)
FWS Regional Office (Attn: Sue McMahon)
USGS – PWRC (Attn: Graham Smith)
Prince George’s County Council (Attn: Marilyn M. Bland)



ANNE
ARUNDEL
COUNTY

M A R Y L A N D

Office of Planning and Zoning

P.O. Box 6675
2664 Riva Road
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RECEIVED

MAY 26 2009

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

May 20, 2009

Joseph M. Meinert, AICP
Director of Planning and Economic Development
City of Bowie
2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

Dear Mr. Meinert:

Thank you for your recent letter providing comments about our DRAFT *General Development Plan Update*. Your letter noted a recommendation to show a road alignment from Laurel-Bowie Road (MD 197) connecting to Conway Road near its intersection with Robert Crain Highway (MD 3) and Davidsonville Road (MD 424).

I have directed the Transportation Division staff to review the proposal and to provide comments. In their review the Division offered the following concerns which are provided in brief below and in no specific order:

Plan Conformity: The alignment would provide a connection between two very low density areas within the adjacent counties. It would easily be construed as a change agent and could be employed to make an argument for land use and zoning changes creating density in places where neither Prince George's County nor Anne Arundel County would want that to occur. The alignment is located outside of the Priority Funding Areas of either County.

Impact to Natural Environment: The alignment would cross the Patuxent River floodplain and stream system in multiple locations. It would also create miles of linear impact to stream systems feeding a river designated by the State as scenic.

Cost: Such an alignment would require multiple bridges with spans of varying, but long length. It would also require wetlands and forest impacts which would substantially increase cost to construct, but offer little in additional capacity for the cost incurred. The project would also require a grade separation of the Northeast Corridor of AMTRAK as no at-grade roadway crossings are permitted.

Other Resource Impacts: The alignment as shown, and practically any other alignment meeting the desired connections, would impact the Patuxent Wildlife Research Refuge

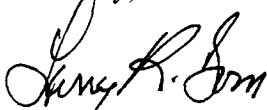
(PWRR) leading to avoidable impacts to flora and fauna which would likely trigger environmental impact studies where very early in the process the question of avoidance would be raised. The alignment would also impact the Anne Arundel County Greenways Master Plan which shows a segment running north-south in this area. That continuous corridor would be severed by any roadway of this type.

Lane Continuity: A four-lane facility connecting to MD 197 from MD 3 would likely require upgrades of both MD 197 from its planned four-lane configuration to something wider, probably six lanes, plus median. Linear impacts to the PWRR in Prince George's County would be more substantial than assumed in the County's Subregional Master Plans.

Impact on Ongoing Environmental Studies and Neighborhood Impact: MD 3 from US 50 to MD 32 is currently undergoing an environmental assessment leading to a Final Environmental Impact Statement/Record of Decision which is currently anticipated to be completed by Winter 2010. Introduction of a new roadway into the studied system would lead to a requirement to reassess the impact of the proposed continuous flow intersection at MD 3/MD 424 probably requiring an interchange at this location. An interchange at MD 3/MD 424 is not consistent with adopted plans and policies of Anne Arundel County and is contrary to the desires of residents living in Crofton.

I appreciate your interest in our ongoing planning effort and I also understand your desire to see traffic rerouted from Bowie which has neither an origin nor destination in your community. However, given the results of our Transportation Division's analysis, I am compelled to not accept your recommendation to amend the County's DRAFT *General Development Plan*. Again, thank you for your comments regarding our Plan. Should you have any other comments or concerns, please contact George Cardwell, Planning Administrator at (410) 222-7440, or via e-mail at pzcard44@aacounty.org.

Sincerely,



Larry R. Tom
Planning & Zoning Officer

cc: Eric Foster, Chief, Transportation Planning, MNCPPC
Carole Sanner, Assistant Planning & Zoning Officer
Lynn Miller, Planning Administrator, LRPD
George Cardwell, Planning Administrator, TD



City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

March 9, 2009

Mr. Brad Knudsen, Refuge Manager
United States Department of the Interior
Fish and Wildlife Service
Patuxent Research Refuge
12100 Beech Forest Road
Laurel, Maryland 20708

RE: Patuxent Research Refuge Transportation Planning Study

Dear Mr. Knudsen:

Thank you for your letter of February 20, 2009 informing me of the "open house" public information meeting to be held on March 19, 2009 at Patuxent Research Refuge. I wanted to make you aware of a recent letter sent by the Bowie City Council to the Prince George's County Council and Planning Board regarding the transportation network serving Prince George's County. The County is now engaged in updating its Master Plan of Transportation. The proposed Plan recommends upgrading of MD 197 between Laurel and Bowie to a 4-lane arterial roadway. Be advised that the City Council supports this recommendation and is further recommending the addition of a new arterial roadway connecting MD 197 to MD 3 in Anne Arundel County. The recommended intersection of this new road, which is only conceptual at this stage, is north of the City of Bowie and Bowie State University, on the Patuxent Research Refuge property (see attached).

The City welcomes the opportunity to participate in your transportation planning process, and we appreciate your consideration of the City Council's recommendations. If you should have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Meinert

Joseph M. Meinert, AICP
Director of Planning and
Economic Development

Attachment

cc: City Council
City Manager
County Council Member Ingrid M. Turner
Mr. Harold Foster, AAG, AICP



City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

March 10, 2009

Mr. Larry R. Tom, Planning and Zoning Officer
Office of Planning and Zoning
Long Range Planning
2664 Riva Road, MS 6403
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: General Development Plan Transportation Recommendations

Dear Mr. Tom:

I understand the public comment period for the Draft General Development Plan (GDP) is now closed. However, I would like to make you aware of a recent letter sent by the Bowie City Council to the Prince George's County Council and Planning Board regarding the transportation network serving northeastern Prince George's County and western Anne Arundel County. The proposed Master Plan of Transportation under development by Prince George's County recommends upgrading of MD 197 between Laurel and Bowie to a 4-lane arterial roadway. Be advised that the City Council supports this recommendation and is further recommending the addition of a new arterial roadway connecting MD 197 to MD 3 in Anne Arundel County at the MD 3/MD 424 intersection (see attached).

The City welcomes the opportunity to participate in your transportation planning process, and we appreciate your consideration of the City Council's recommendations as input at the upcoming public forums. If you should have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Joseph M. Meinert, AICP
Director of Planning and
Economic Development

Attachment

cc: City Council
City Manager
County Council Member Ingrid M. Turner
Mr. Harold Foster, AAG, AICP

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

COUNCIL Dennis Brady ♦ James L. Marcos ♦ Diane M. Polangin ♦ Isaac C. Trough ♦ Geraldine Valentino-Smith CITY MANAGER David J. Deutsch
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City of Bowie

2614 Kenhill Drive
Bowie, Maryland 20715

January 16, 2009

The Honorable Marilyn M. Bland, Chairperson
Prince George's County Council
County Administration Building
14741 Governor Oden Bowie Drive
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20772

RE: Preliminary Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (MPOT)

Dear Chairperson Bland:

The Bowie City Council conducted a public hearing on the Preliminary Countywide Master Plan of Transportation on January 5, 2009. The City Council is very concerned about the length of time that has passed since the last Master Plan of Transportation was completed (in 1982). In order to keep pace with the challenges of growth, it is crucial that the County conduct its transportation plan updates on a more frequent basis, such as every 10 years.

At the conclusion of the hearing, the City Council chose to endorse several major recommendations. We believe these recommendations are most prudent and cost-effective; if they are not accepted, the City Council would like to receive a detailed analysis of why they are unacceptable.

1. **MD 197 Between Laurel and Bowie (A-24)** - Acknowledging that traffic conditions may warrant the eventual expansion of MD 197 through the Federal properties between Laurel and Bowie, the City Council conditionally supports the proposal to upgrade the road (see below), but recommends a stipulation that the City's past policy supporting no more than four (4) lanes on MD 197 be upheld in planning for that segment. In addition, the City Council has adopted a position that a new arterial roadway (similar to A-58 in the former Area Master Plan for Bowie) is needed north of Bowie State University, to connect MD 197 to MD 424 in Anne Arundel County (see Attachment). The City therefore recommends that any upgrading of MD 197 beyond its current two (2) through lanes be contingent upon construction of this new arterial road. ~~These improvements will improve regional traffic circulation and alleviate congestion in~~ the Route 450 corridor, east of Race Track Road, and the heavy traffic volumes that are projected to use Race Track Road and Jericho Park Road. The need for the new road is further justified with the impending approval of a new mixed-use Center at the MARC Station/Bowie State University which will intensify usage of the MARC Station and will result in new residents, workers and shoppers traveling through the area.

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

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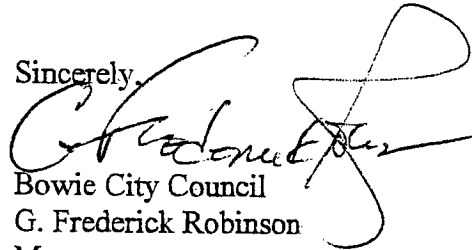
Countywide Master Plan of Transportation

2. **New Interchange Ramps from US 50 (F-4) to Local Roads** - A new interchange should be provided at US 50 at MD 193 (A-16/A-27) and new access connections should be examined from US 50 to Melford Boulevard (C-309) and Governor Bridge Road. The MD 193 interchange is critically needed to provide access to and from the employment centers in the MD 193 corridor, especially around NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center, and to take regional through traffic off of MD 450 and MD 197 between Kenhill Drive and MD 450. A new access connection to Governor Bridge Road would provide a second route to and from the large residential community of Longleaf and the north parking lot of Prince George's Stadium and help traffic levels of service at the US 50/US 301/MD 3 interchange. Another key circulation improvement in the vicinity includes construction of a new interchange at Melford Boulevard that would provide a secondary access to the Melford project, allow for additional development and enhance the site's marketability as an employment center. The Preliminary MPOT does recommend some interchange ramps in other parts of the County. For example, on page 36, Policy 1, Strategy 3 recommends construction of ramps to provide a full-movement interchange at MD 200, the ICC, and MD 201, Kenilworth Avenue Extended (A-56). The City's recommendations are entirely consistent with the Plan's stated goal of managing capacity and minimizing congestion of the highway network.
3. **Transportation Priority Growth Districts** - The City did not support the concept of Transportation Policy Exception Areas (TPEAs) discussed in the 2006 Bowie and Vicinity Area Master Plan, since it has always been the City Council's policy to require adequate public facilities (APF) conformance prior to approval of new development. Based on this principle, the City does not support any future application of exception areas including those in Transportation Priority Growth Districts (TPGD) within Regional Centers in the Developing Tier and asks that language to this effect be included in the MPOT.
4. **Fixed Guideway Transit Service to Bowie via US 50** - The City Council has always supported improved transit service to Bowie, including recommendations using the US 50 corridor for mass transit service and the creation of a transit hub at the Bowie Gateway Center. Because it is consistent with current City policy, the City specifically supports this transit proposal of the Preliminary MPOT. However, it should be noted that the two (2) local spurs of the planned fixed guideway route shown on Map 5 (page 86) in the vicinity of Bowie Town Center and Bowie Gateway Center, while only conceptual in nature, may not be the most feasible alignments. Since it is not possible to be specific at this time and to avoid confusion about what is intended, it is recommended that these local spurs be deleted from Map Number 5.
5. **Trails** - The City supports the additional trail recommendation for MD 197 between Laurel and Bowie and also recommends additional trail facility amendments, including the Old Town Bowie Trail System and the A-44 Greenway, among others.

Countywide Master Plan of Transportation

The City Council also supports the concept of Complete Streets and reiterates its support for establishment of an interjurisdictional congestion management system to address regional traffic impacts, previously discussed in the Bowie and Vicinity Area Master Plan, and specifically endorses Policy 3 in Chapter VII of the MPOT. It is vitally important that the County's transportation concerns be discussed with other jurisdictions so that mutually beneficial solutions can be determined. Finally, the City Council does not support any consideration for increased usage of the CSX Railroad tracks, west of Bowie, for heavy or hazardous freight because of the irreparable harm this would do to the community and because of the exorbitant cost of grade-separating the adjacent roadways. **Additional testimony supplementing all of the above will be provided by the City's Planning Director at the Joint Public Hearing.** Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important County policy plan.

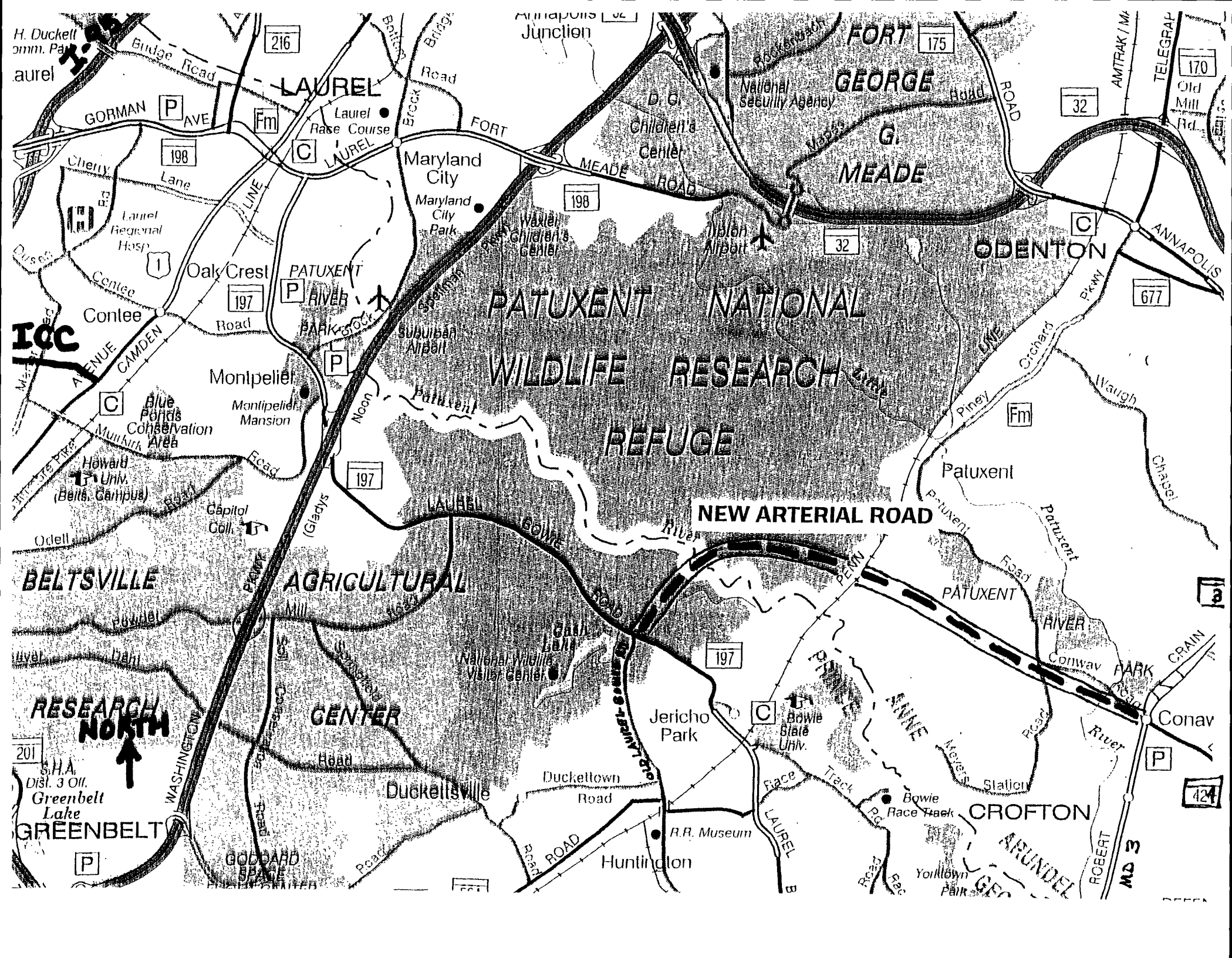
Sincerely,



Bowie City Council
G. Frederick Robinson
Mayor

Attachment

cc: The Honorable Ingrid M. Turner
The Honorable Samuel H. Dean
The Honorable Jack B. Johnson
The Honorable Douglas J.J. Peters, State Senator
The Honorable James Hubbard, Delegate
The Honorable Marvin Holmes, Delegate
The Honorable Gerron Levi, Delegate
The Honorable Samuel J. Parker, Jr.
Mr. Harold Foster, AAG, AICP
Ms. E. Fatimah Hasan, AICP



H. Duckett
Comm. Park
Laurel

216

LAUREL

FORT 175

GEORGE

MEADE

32

170

Old Mill Rd.

GORMAN AVE

Laurel Race Course

Maryland City

198

Cherry Lane

Oak Crest

PATUXENT RIVER

Maryland City Park

Walter Children's Center

Robert Albright

ODENTON

677

I-97

Contee

Montpelier

PATUXENT NATIONAL WILDLIFE RESEARCH REFUGE

Patuxent

NEW ARTERIAL ROAD

BELTSVILLE

AGRICULTURAL CENTER

Patuxent

PATUXENT RIVER

RESEARCH NORTH

AGRICULTURAL CENTER

Jericho Park

Bowie State Univ.

CROFTON

GREENBELT

Duckettsville

Duckettown Road

Huntington

Bowie Race Track

ARUNDEL

GREENBELT

GODDARD

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