

MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: David J. Deutsch
City Manager

RE: *Glenn Dale, Seabrook, Lanham & Vicinity
Preliminary Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*

DATE: September 16, 2009

Staff reviewed the recently released *Glenn Dale, Seabrook, Lanham & Vicinity Preliminary Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment* and noted that the City Council's desire to have a future interchange constructed at US 50/MD 193 has not been included in the Plan's recommendations. As a general comment, staff finds that the *Preliminary Plan* is very thorough and far more detailed and comprehensive than the *2006 Approved Bowie and Vicinity Area Master Plan*. However, the Bowie and Vicinity planning area is not mentioned anywhere in the *Preliminary Plan* and US 50 is virtually ignored in the *Preliminary Plan's* transportation recommendations.

A Joint Public Hearing of the District Council and County Planning Board has been scheduled for Tuesday, October 6, 2009. Staff prepared the attached City Council position letter to remind the County of the City's desire to have an interchange constructed at US 50/MD 193. The City has already recommended this interchange in recommendations made on the *Preliminary Countywide Master Plan of Transportation*.

Recommendation

Consistent with Council policy, it is recommended that the attached recommendation letter containing the City Council's position supporting an interchange at US 50/MD 197 be sent as the City's input at the Joint Public Hearing.

Attachment

DRAFT

September 22, 2009

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

RE: *Glenn Dale, Seabrook, Lanham & Vicinity
Preliminary Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*

Dear Chairperson Bland:

The Bowie City Council recently reviewed the *Glenn Dale, Seabrook, Lanham & Vicinity Preliminary Sector Plan and Sectional Map Amendment*, and we wish to comment on several aspects of the proposed *Preliminary Plan*. As a general comment, we note that the *Preliminary Plan* is very thorough and far more detailed and comprehensive than the *2006 Approved Bowie and Vicinity Area Master Plan*. However, the fact that the Bowie and Vicinity planning area is not mentioned anywhere in the *Preliminary Plan* and the fact that US 50 is virtually ignored in the *Preliminary Plan's* transportation recommendations are of great concern to the City Council.

The City Council recommends that a new interchange be provided at US 50 at MD 193 (A-16/A-27). An interchange was previously included at this location in the *1970 Approved Bowie-Collington-Mitchellville and Vicinity Area Master Plan*. A new 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. The recommended interchange will also help to address some of the regional circulation deficiencies that are also compelling the City to recommend a new arterial roadway north of the City in the *Countywide Master Plan of Transportation (MPOT)*. Both of these improvements are critical transportation improvements for the northeastern part of Prince George's County. It should be noted that the *Adopted MPOT* does recommend some interchange ramps in other parts of the County. For example, 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 recommendation for an interchange at US 50/MD 193 is entirely consistent with the *Adopted MPOT's* stated goal of managing capacity and minimizing congestion of the highway network.

The City respectfully disagrees with the M-NCPPC staff's contention, in the *Preliminary MPOT* public hearing transcript analysis, that an interchange at US 50/MD 193 would not be beneficial to the area road network. In fact, in the 1990s, during the review of the MD 450 reconstruction project (between MD 193 and Stonybrook Drive), traffic forecasters of the Maryland State Highway Administration stated unequivocally that traffic burdens on MD 450 and MD 197 would be alleviated by an interchange at US 50/MD 193. This conclusion was crucial in obtaining the consensus of all local elected officials on the MD 450 roadway design, which included no more than two (2) through lanes in each direction within the City of Bowie. Also, if the District Council will recall, rezoning approval of the 1,800 dwelling units at Fairwood assumed an interchange on US 50. Because no interchange was ever constructed, all of

Fairwood's traffic must now travel a circuitous route through the area, adding to the congestion problems on local roads.

The City Council also notes that one of the *Preliminary Plan's* transportation goals, stated on page 214, is to "Improve transportation flow on regional routes". The construction of a US 50/MD 193 interchange might positively impact the reconfiguration and cost of improvements at the Capital Beltway/MD 450/MD 564 interchange (where a costly reconstruction is proposed) as well as providing greater access to the Seabrook MARC station.

Finally, to be fiscally prudent in these challenging times, the County should look to take a long-range view toward maximizing its transportation resources and minimizing unnecessary and costly infrastructure investments. It is a fact that, in northeastern Prince George's County, there are only four (4) grade-separated road crossings of the Northeast Corridor railroad alignment: at MD 197 near Bowie State University; at MD 564 in Old Town Bowie; at MD 193; and, at Carter Avenue in Lanham. To avoid additional railroad crossings from having to be constructed or existing road crossings expanded further in the future to move vehicular traffic, access from a US 50/MD 193 interchange would capitalize on MD 193's existing four-lane crossing of the Northeast Corridor.

It is clear from the above that adding an interchange on US 50 at MD 193 would improve transportation flow on regional routes, would be cost-effective and may even reduce the cost of other highway improvements. Because this transportation issue is so important to the City Council, we ask that you thoroughly review the information conveyed in this letter and reinstate an interchange on US 50 at MD 193 in your action on the proposed *Sector Plan*. Thank you for your serious consideration of the City Council's recommendations.

Sincerely,

Bowie City Council
G. Frederick Robinson
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Ingrid Turner
The Honorable Samuel Dean
The Honorable Samuel Parker
Ms. Angela Ruppe, Community Planning Project Manager