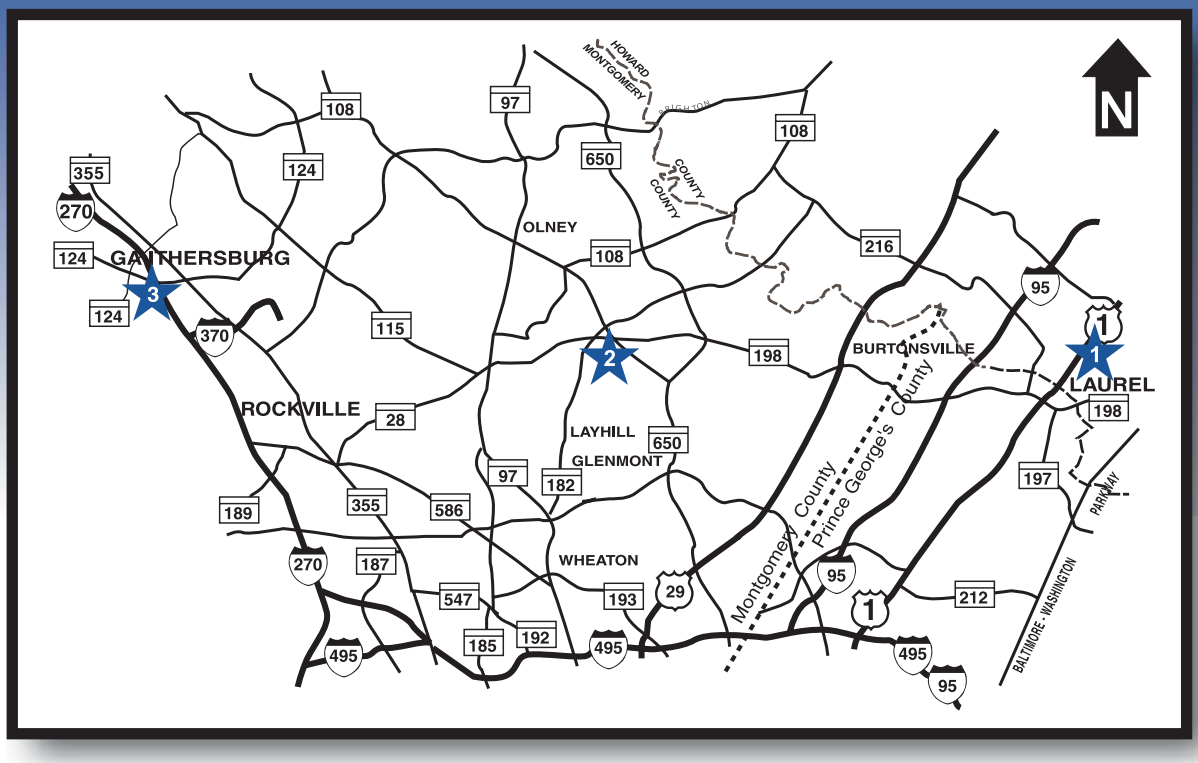
Intercounty Connector Study

ALTERNATIVES

Public Workshop



Thursday, November 13, 2003
1 AMERICAN LEGION POST 60
2 MAIN ST., LAUREL, MD
2:00 PM - 8:30 PM

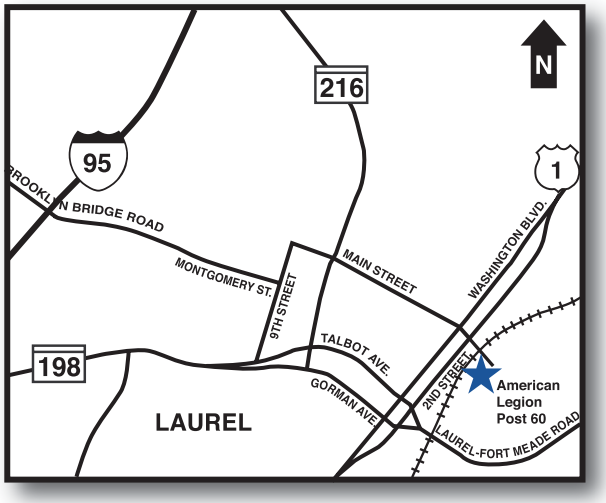
Saturday, November 15, 2003
2 JAMES BLAKE HIGH SCHOOL
300 NORWOOD ROAD, SILVER SPRING, MD
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Wednesday, November 19, 2003
3 BOHRER PARK ACTIVITY CTR.
506 S. FREDERICK AVE.
GAITHERSBURG, MD
2:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Maryland Department of Transportation
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

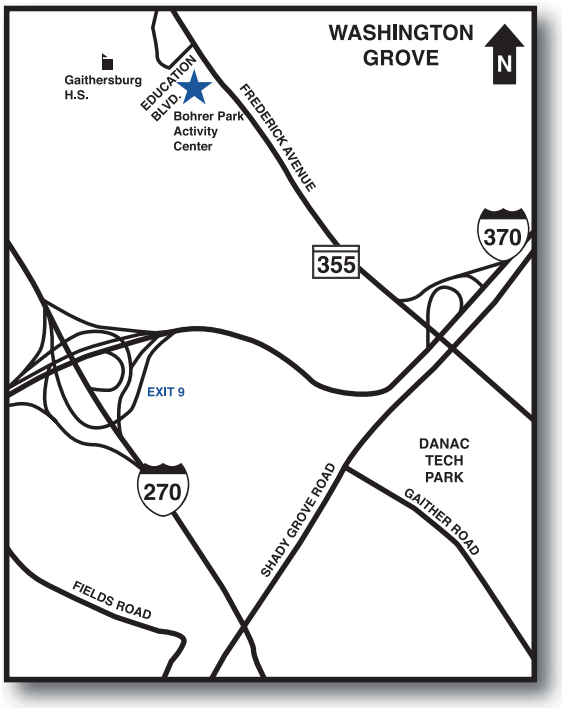
MEETING DIRECTIONS



American Legion Post 60
2 Main Street
Laurel, Maryland

From I-95:

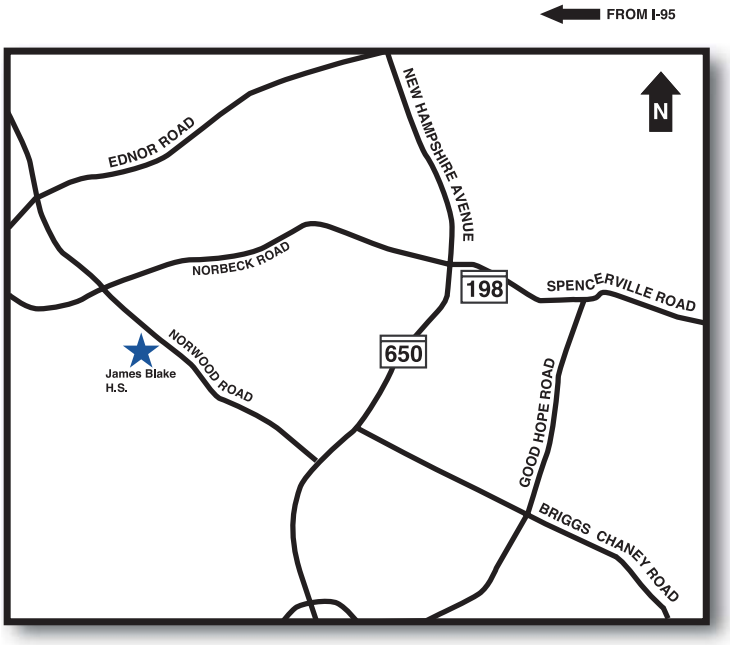
- *Take Exit 35 onto MD 216 toward Laurel*
- *At the second traffic signal, turn left onto Main Street*
- *Follow Main Street past US 1*
- *Continue under railroad bridge onto parking lot*
- *Building is on your right*



Bohrer Park Activity Center
506 S. Frederick Avenue
Gaithersburg, Maryland

From I-270:

- *Take Exit 9 onto I-370 toward Gaithersburg Towne Center*
- *Exit I-370 onto MD 355 North*
- *Continue on MD 355 to the third traffic signal. Turn left onto Education Blvd. (This is a shared entrance with Gaithersburg High School).*
- *Follow circle to third driveway. Continue to parking lot of the Activity Center*



James Blake High School
300 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, Maryland

- *Blake High School is on the west side of Norwood Road between Norbeck Road and MD 650 (New Hampshire Avenue)*

Maryland Department of Transportation
STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Introduction

The Intercounty Connector (ICC) Study Team thanks you for participating in the study and encourages you to continue your involvement.

The ICC Study is being conducted by the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in conjunction with other federal, state and local agencies. The ICC Study Area is located in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, north of Washington, D.C., extending from I-270 to I-95/US 1, and from the Capital Beltway to the Patuxent River.

The Alternatives Public Workshops are being conducted in an interactive open-house format, with no formal presentations. Project information stations related to specific topics and alternatives will be set up throughout the meeting room with displays and handouts describing the various aspects of the project. Members of the Study Team will be available to answer questions, record comments and discuss the project. All information at the meetings will also be available on the ICC website at www.iccstudy.org.

Information presented at the workshops will include:

- The purpose of the study.
- The evaluation of preliminary alternatives.
- The alternatives recommended to be carried forward into detailed study.
- The alternatives recommended to be dropped from further consideration.
- The environmental and community issues identified throughout the Study Area, and how the Study Team proposes to address them.

Project Background

An ICC has been planned for approximately five decades. Here is a brief history of the project:

1950 An outer circumferential freeway (Outer Beltway) was proposed by the National Capital Planning Commission.

1968 Montgomery County switched the Outer Beltway Alignment to the current ICC Master Plan Alignment.

1975 The Outer Beltway concept was dropped (joint decision of Maryland Department of Transportation and both counties), but the portion of the Outer Beltway between the I-270 and I-95 corridors were retained as the ICC.

1979-1999 SHA initiated two Project Planning studies for the ICC; however no final decisions were made.

2002 Governor Ehrlich identifies the ICC as his top transportation priority.

2003 U.S. Department of Transportation places the ICC on the federal environmental streamlining list; SHA kicks-off ICC study.

Process and Schedule

STUDY PROGRESS

- The ICC Study Team began efforts on the ICC this spring with an Interagency Workshop designed to coordinate study plans among local, state and federal agencies. *(See page 4 for more details.)*
- The Study Team developed the Purpose and Need Statement for the ICC project. This document establishes the purpose of the study and is the foundation used to determine if alternatives meet the needs in the area. *(See page 2.)*

- Three Scoping Public Open Houses were held in June and September to assist in determining the issues to be addressed and potential alternatives. *(See page 4.)* The Study Team also staffed a booth at both county fairs.

- The Study Team evaluated a full range of preliminary alternatives using input received from regulatory agencies, the public, and from previous studies. *(See pages 4-8.)* Additionally, the team is working closely with resource agencies to develop conceptual environmental impact avoidance and minimization measures for the preliminary alternatives under study and is working to identify environmental stewardship opportunities. *(See pages 9-10.)*

PROCESS

The Study Team will apply the following process to the ICC Study:

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA)

NEPA requires that any significant project receiving federal funds or requiring other federal action undergo an evaluation of reasonable alternatives and an analysis of potential impacts. It is under the NEPA umbrella that alternatives will be evaluated in this study, and the socioeconomic, natural and cultural environmental issues will be addressed.

Environmental Stewardship and Streamlining

In September 2002, President Bush signed Executive Order 13274 entitled "Environmental Stewardship and Transportation Infrastructure Project Reviews" in order to promote environmental stewardship in the nation's transportation system and to streamline environmental reviews of high-priority transportation infrastructure projects. In February 2003, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta selected the ICC as a Priority Project. Under the Executive Order, all environmental laws and protections remain in effect. Environmental reviews are streamlined through the use of environmental stewardship concurrent reviews, adherence to deadlines, and dispute resolution proceedures.

TIMELINE

Below are major milestones for the ICC Project Planning Study:

June 2003	Initiation of Study Efforts.
Summer 2003	Scoping Public Open Houses.
Fall 2003	Alternatives Public Workshops.
Summer 2004	Progress Update Open Houses.
Fall 2004	Publication of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Location and Design Public Hearings.
Spring 2005	Publication of a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)/Record of Decision.

Purpose and Need

The Purpose and Need Statement establishes why the project is proposed and is the foundation to determine if alternatives meet the needs in the area. The Purpose and Need Statement is developed in consultation with local, state and federal agencies as well as the public. The Study Team will solicit comments from the public on the Purpose and Need until the completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. What follows is the current Purpose and Need Statement.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The proposed Intercounty Connector (ICC) project is intended to link existing and proposed development areas between the I-270 and I-95/US 1 corridors within central and eastern Montgomery County and northwestern Prince George's County with a state-of-the-art, multi-modal, east-west highway that limits access and accommodates passenger and goods movement. This transportation project is intended to increase community mobility and safety; to facilitate the movement of goods and people to and from

economic centers; to provide cost-effective transportation infrastructure to serve existing and future development patterns reflecting local land use planning objectives; to help restore the natural, human and cultural environments from past development impacts in the project area; and to advance homeland security.

PROJECT NEEDS

Community Mobility and Safety

Mobility in the developed portions of Montgomery and northwestern Prince George's counties is severely limited, in part because there is no continuous high capacity transportation facility. This lack of mobility limits job opportunities, interaction between communities, access to government and community services, and contributes to a decrease in the quality of life. The Study Area has developed without a regional east-west highway, as planned. The lack of such a highway severely limits mobility but also creates safety hazards in and among the developed portions of Montgomery and northwestern Prince George's counties. The development that has occurred in the region has resulted in significant east-west travel, but absent an ICC, the local road system must accommodate extremely high volumes of traffic. This overloads local roads resulting in clogged intersections, longer travel times, and limited access for local residents from their driveways and smaller side streets. There are numerous accidents of all types and severity due to local, longer-distance and service vehicles mixing with bicycles and pedestrians. The number of potential conflicts due to the numerous driveways, side streets and other access points contributes to the unsafe condition on the local road network.

Movement of Goods and People To and From Economic Centers

An east-west highway north of the Capital Beltway is needed to support the continued attraction and retention of businesses and employment opportunities in the region. The extensive economic development areas include the I-270 High Technology Corridor, the Baltimore/Washington International (BWI) Airport development area, and the I-95/US 1 corridor. New highway capacity that is efficient and reliable is necessary to accommodate passenger and freight travel, moving people, goods and services throughout the region. Growing congestion in the area today increases costs of doing business, in part because of longer travel times and unreliability to the detriment of the health of the economy.

Local Land Use

Montgomery County and northwestern Prince George's County have developed as planned with intense development in jobs and households along the I-270, I-95/US 1 and I-495 corridors. An east-west regional highway facility has long been a part of local land use planning in order to support the region's orderly growth and development patterns. The foundation for Montgomery and Prince George's counties' general plans (and updates) for the last forty years has been the "On Wedges and Corridors" land use concept, which channels growth into development corridors radiating from or ringing the District of Columbia while preserving wedges of open space, farmland, and lower density residential areas. This overall planning concept is periodically updated in a public process that gives due consideration to sustainability, land preservation, development density and environmental sensitivity. Local officials have carefully executed these progressive land use concepts. Many land use and environmental stewardship principles of Maryland's more recent "smart growth" policies are based on the concepts of the "On Wedges and Corridors" plan.

The population of Montgomery County has grown from approximately 370,000 in 1962 to 910,000 in 2002. In Prince George's County, the population has grown from 418,000 to 833,000 over the same period. Nearly 80 percent of the planned development in the project area has been built. The 103-mile Metro line, the Montgomery County "Ride On" and the Prince George's County "The Bus" transit systems were built and created as planned. Furthermore, other alternative transportation projects and strategies have

been completed or are currently underway. The existing roadways are primarily oriented in a radial fashion, with limited options for east-west travel between these major radial corridors.

Environmental Stewardship

The planned development that has occurred has created certain stresses on the Study Area's environments, including the rich natural resources associated with the north-south oriented stream valleys and their parks. Alternatives for the new east-west highway will be developed in an environmentally sensitive manner using state-of-the-art measures to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts. Further, the alternatives will include appropriate environmental restoration and enhancements. The land use plans in Montgomery and Prince George's counties highly value environmental stewardship and resource protection. These plans allocate certain areas to private and public development and to preservation and open space. The ICC is a major public works project in an already highly developed area, and as such, it needs to be located and designed with full consideration of the current and future condition of important environmental resources in the Study Area. The alternatives will incorporate restoration and enhancement features to help bring about improvements to natural, cultural and human environmental conditions, including but not limited to those that exist today because of past development in the area.

Homeland Security

A new east-west highway will provide much-needed system capacity for military access, population evacuation, and emergency vehicle access in and around the National Capital. With regular congestion on the Capital Beltway, made worse by accidents or other incidents, the region needs a reliable alternate east-west route for emergency response situations. Additional east-west multimodal highway capacity north of the Capital Beltway would provide a grid of high capacity transportation needed in the event of an emergency or sudden need for access. The Washington metropolitan area is home to many government, military and community installations with unique Homeland Security concerns and responsibilities. These agencies depend on a clear and expeditious access and evacuation route being always available. On September 11, 2001, it became clear that this region does not contain sufficient highway capacity to accommodate citywide and metro area evacuation, and subsequent emergency planning has underscored the need for an ICC between the interstate corridors north of the Beltway.

Scoping

Scoping is the first phase of a planning study. Scoping is an iterative process that continues throughout the study and includes continued environmental data collection and engaging project stakeholders in the development of ideas on how to resolve the project needs.

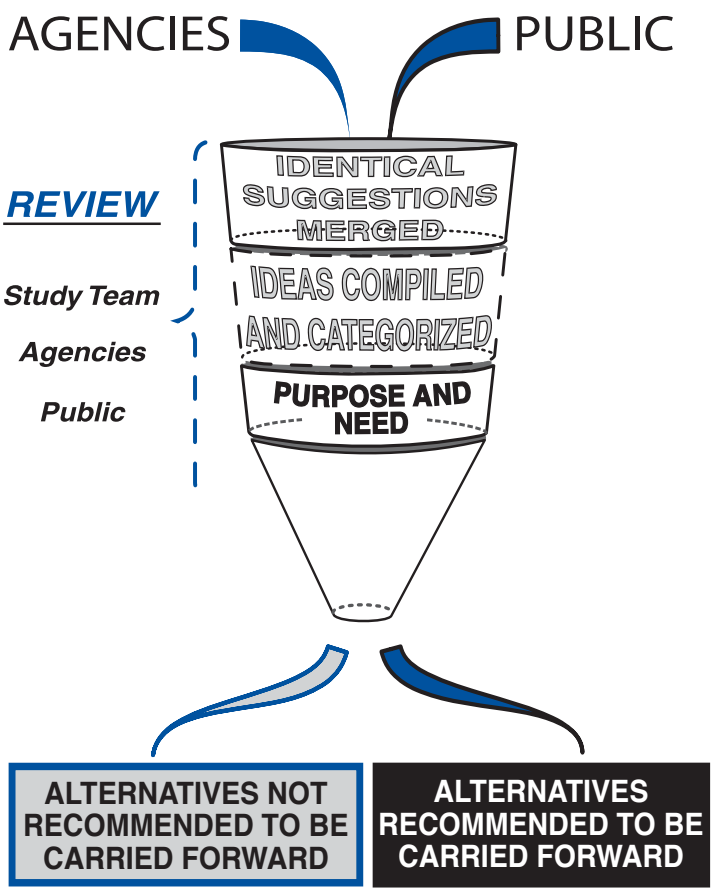
The scoping process began with an Interagency Workshop at the University of Maryland where more than 100 representatives from 28 local, state and federal agencies gathered to discuss study efforts. In addition, Scoping Public Open Houses were held in June and September 2003 in Montgomery and Prince George's counties that were attended by nearly 800 people. Materials available at the Open Houses were also made available on the project website.

EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES AND SUGGESTIONS

The Study Team has evaluated the suggestions and alternatives received to date from the public, regulatory agencies, as well as those generated from previous studies. The goal of this process is to develop alternatives that would encompass all of the suggestions that could reasonably be expected to address the project's Purpose and Need. The basis for evaluating these preliminary alternatives is the ICC Purpose and Need Statement.

All of the suggestions received by the Study Team will be available for review at the Alternatives Public Workshops. Because of space limitations, this booklet provides a summary of the preliminary alternatives evaluation.

Alternatives Screening Process



PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED AND RECOMMENDED TO BE DROPPED FROM FURTHER CONSIDERATION

The Study Team evaluated the following alternatives and recommends that they be dropped from further consideration because they do not substantively meet all or most of the key elements of the project Purpose and Need. Brief highlights are listed below.

Capital Beltway Improvement Alternative

Suggestions included reconstructing the Capital Beltway (I-495/I-95) as a multi-level highway where the top level would carry one direction of traffic and the bottom level the opposite direction.

This alternative would not provide for an east-west, multi-modal highway north of the Capital Beltway to support the region's existing and planned development patterns. SHA is currently conducting a separate study evaluating improvement of Maryland's 42-mile portion of the Capital Beltway, which is being coordinated with a similar study by Virginia.

Upgrade Existing Roads Alternative

An Upgrade Existing Roads Alternative, as presented in the previous ICC study, called for widening approximately 34 miles of east-west and north-south roadways to or beyond the number of lanes specified in the counties' master plans, as well as the improvement of 26 major intersections.

This alternative would mix long-distance trips with local trips on mostly heavily congested roadways and not provide the mobility and safety provided by a controlled access highway. The 1997 DEIS showed substantially longer travel times across the Study Area with the Upgrade Existing Roads Alternative than with the limited-access highway alternatives. Increasing the number of lanes on existing roads beyond that set forth in the counties' master plans would be extremely impactive, and still subject motorists to frequent signalized intersections, entrances and driveways.

Transit-Only Alternatives

Transit-only alternatives were evaluated in the 1997 DEIS and recently suggested as part of the current study. A transit-only alternative would consist of options that include only transit systems such as a new light rail or commuter rail system on a dedicated transitway to connect origins and destinations in the I-270 and I-95 corridors. No new roadways or improvements to existing roadways would be included in this alternative.

This alternative would not provide for a limited-access, multi-modal highway that can accommodate people and goods. In addition, previous studies have indicated east-west transit routes in the Study Area will provide no more than a one percent reduction in travel

by auto, and a rail system would have substantially less ridership than the generally accepted minimum ridership threshold volumes for new rail systems in the United States.

Balanced Land Use Alternatives (Possibly Combined with an Enhanced Transit Alternative)

Land use alternatives generally consist of implementing an alternative land use plan that provides more transit-oriented development, revitalization of existing communities, and a larger balance of housing and jobs (i.e., more housing and fewer jobs in the I-270 Corridor and less housing and more jobs in eastern Montgomery County/northern Prince George's County).

This alternative would not provide for a limited-access, multi-modal highway that accommodates people and goods. In addition, the ICC Study Area is already substantially developed, with nearly 80 percent of the households and employment planned at build-out in place by 2003, with some additional development already approved. Thus, although some changes in land use can occur, they would have a small effect on the overall land use pattern in the study area. An evaluation of a Balanced Land Use Alternative in the 1997 ICC DEIS showed a minimal impact on travel volumes. In 2000-2002, the Montgomery County Planning Board and the Transportation Policy Report Task Force evaluated an Alternative Land Use with Enhanced Transit Network, and found it reduced daily auto trips by only about five percent by 2050.

Howard County Connection Alternatives

Several variations have been suggested for a connection between I-270 near Gaithersburg and Howard County to the north. Potential routes included MD 32, MD 100, MD 108 and MD 216.

This alternative would not connect to existing and proposed development areas in northern Prince George's County. It would also be inconsistent with Howard County land use plans, and would cross the Patuxent River and adjoining planned low-density development areas in Montgomery and Howard counties, including the Montgomery County Agricultural Wedge.

The following suggested alternatives are also recommended to be dropped from further consideration because they do not substantially meet the project purpose and the Study Area needs:

- Extend an ICC west of I-270 and/or east of US 1.
- Build an Auto-Train Route.
- Realign the western segment of a potential Master Plan Alignment to run from MD 97 to I-270/Falls Road instead of from MD 97 to I-370.
- Build an ICC south of all previously suggested alternatives.
- Build I-95 to continue through the District of Columbia.
- Transportation Systems Management/Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM) Alternative.
- Hybrid Alternatives.

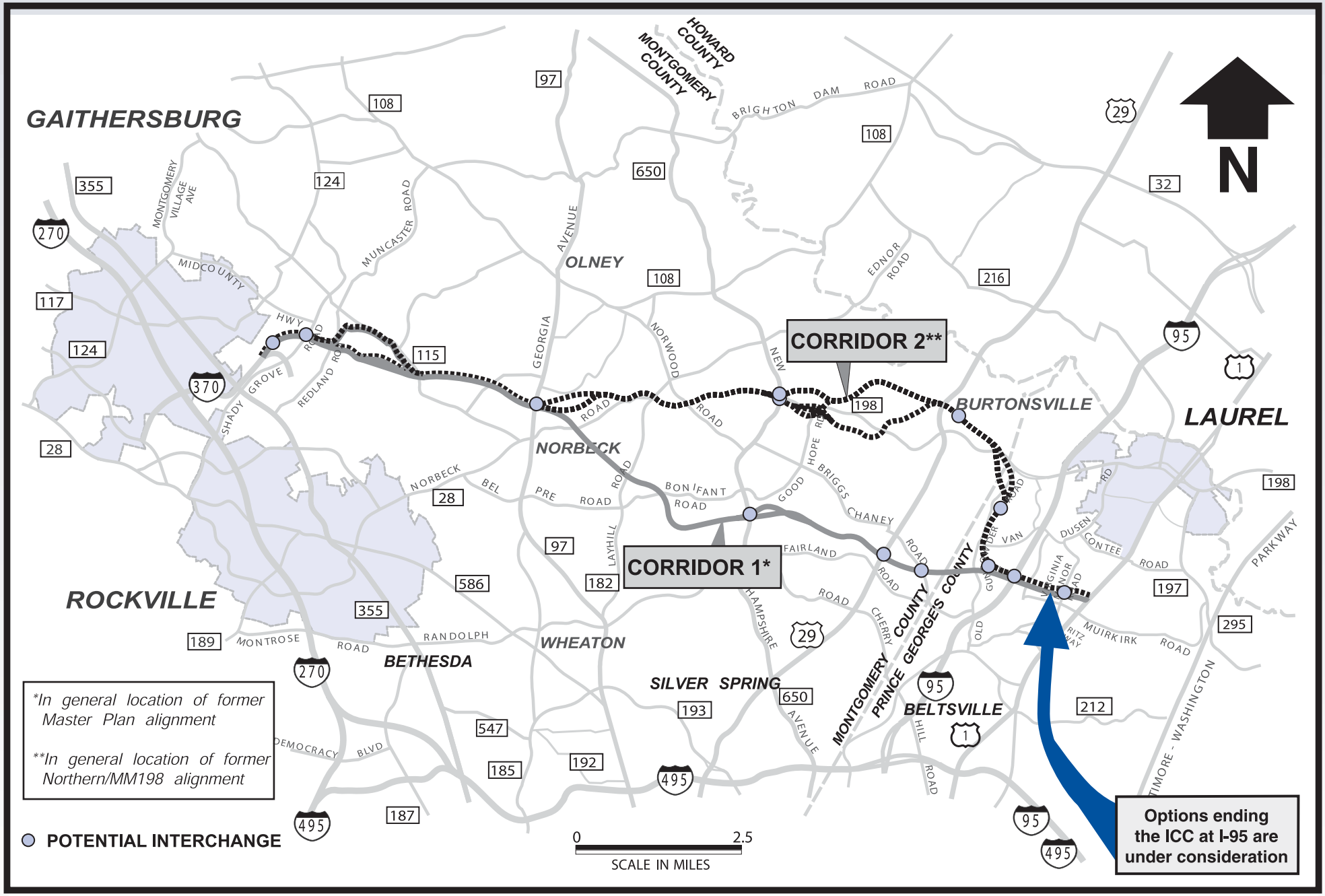
PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED AND RECOMMENDED TO BE CARRIED FORWARD INTO DETAILED STUDY

The Study Team evaluated the following alternatives and recommends carrying them forward into detailed study. They consist of the No-Action Alternative, which includes no major improvements, and build alternatives in two corridors: Corridor 1 and Corridor 2. *(See map on page 7.)*

Corridor 1 generally follows the alignment of the Master Plan Alternative studied in the 1997 DEIS. However, the alternative to be developed in this corridor will reflect significant differences in the footprint and design features to reduce impacts from the alternatives previously developed.

Corridor 2 essentially follows the corridor of the

(Continued on page 8.)



INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR ICC

Preliminary Alternatives

LEGEND

CORRIDOR 1

CORRIDOR 2

Northern and Midcounty/MD 198 (MM198) alternatives studied in the 1997 DEIS, but with changes to reflect this project's Purpose and Need. Alternatives in Corridor 2 will seek to include the best alignment opportunities from both of the 1997 alternatives in an effort to reduce environmental impacts and to respond to development growth that has occurred since the last study. Alternatives in Corridor 2 will incorporate a generally smaller footprint than the previous Northern Alternative, and will include limited access and less impactive design features consistent with this Purpose and Need.

What follows is a brief summary of each alternative.

No-Action

The No-Action (or No-Build) Alternative must be studied in the NEPA process in order to form a basis of comparison for the build alternatives. With the No-Action Alternative, no substantial improvement will be made to east-west transportation facilities beyond those improvements included in the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (MWCOG) Constrained Long Range Transportation Plan.

Minor intersection, interchange and roadway improvements to address localized problems will continue to occur, as well as routine maintenance projects. Measures to reduce travel demand, such as more transit and vanpool incentives, will also occur.

Corridor 1

This corridor follows the general alignment set by Montgomery and Prince George's counties in their master plans. The alternative extends from I-370/I-270 near Shady Grove to US 1 south of Laurel. Several alignment options in this corridor will be considered in the vicinity of Rock Creek Park and Paint Branch Park. Also under consideration is an option to terminate the ICC at I-95. New express bus and improved feeder bus service will be included. The Study Team believes that a limited-access highway, with transit and environmental stewardship features, should be studied in greater detail. *(See pages 8-10 for information on potential design, aesthetic and environmental considerations.)*

Corridor 2

This corridor extends from I-370/I-270 to I-95/US 1 south of Laurel. From I-370 to MD 97 (Georgia Ave.), this corridor will be identical to Corridor 1. However, at MD 97, it curves to the east and continues to the north side of MD 198, crossing I-95 near Corridor 1, and terminating at US 1 north of Muirkirk Road. Several alignment options will be considered in the vicinity of Rock Creek Park, Norbeck, Spencerville and Old Gunpowder Road. Also under consideration is an option to terminate the ICC at I-95. New express bus and improved feeder bus service will be included. The Study Team believes that a limited-access highway, with transit and environmental stewardship features, should be studied in greater detail. *(See pages 8-10 for information on potential design, aesthetic and environmental considerations.)*

Potential Design Elements

The Study Team is considering a number of design elements for the detailed alternatives that are based on context-sensitive design principles, highway safety, functionality, environmental stewardship and visual character. Efforts will be made to minimize the footprint of the roadway, integrate the highway with the existing topography, and minimize impacts to communities, forests and parks. Although design details would vary according to the character of the adjacent area, a seamless transition between sections will be sought.

DESIGN ELEMENTS UNDER CONSIDERATION INCLUDE:

- A limited-access, multi-modal highway with a 60 miles-per-hour design speed. The number of lanes would be determined through the travel demand modeling process, but the initial estimate is that six lanes (three per direction) would be needed.

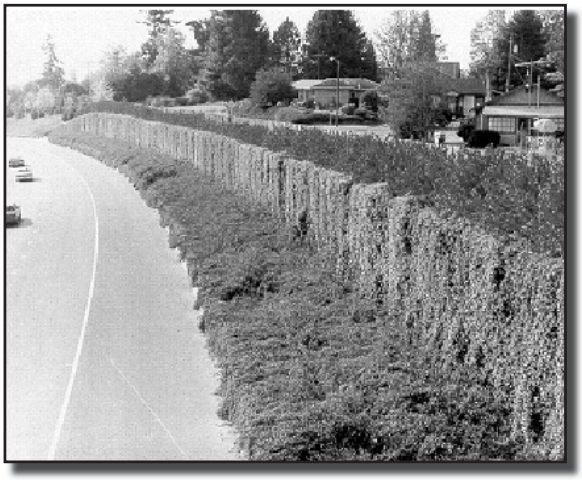
- A reduced roadway footprint compared to the limited-access alternatives considered in the 1997 DEIS. Variable median widths would be used, possibly less than 30 feet in especially sensitive areas. In addition, guardrails, retaining walls and other roadside treatments to reduce the footprint will be considered.

- A lower roadway profile compared to the previous study by building the road below groundlevel where practicable to reduce visual impacts to adjacent communities.

- Minimized impacts in park areas, using minimal cuts, long bridges at major stream crossings, and other techniques.

- Variable treatments for stormwater management.

- Hiker-biker trails where appropriate to complement nearby existing planned trails, either along the ICC alignment or nearby.



- Noise barriers and screening where warranted.

- Intelligent Transportation Systems, such as variable message signs.

- Landscaping.

Related Issues

It is expected that the project will be funded through a combination of sources, including toll revenue bonds issued by the Maryland Transportation Authority, to be secured in part by tolls collected on the ICC, and Maryland Transportation Trust Fund monies. Other funding sources are expected to include federal grants and bonds repaid with future federal funding received by the State of Maryland. The funding plan will be refined as more detailed planning is undertaken and cost estimates are refined.

Tolls would be collected electronically, thus eliminating the need for toll plazas and for motorists to stop and pay. In addition, variable tolls would be used to manage traffic flow on the ICC. This would provide reliable transit times for buses. The travel demand modeling being conducted for this study includes new express bus routes along the ICC as well as improved feeder bus service.

Environmental Issues

Environmental issues in the Study Area have been identified during the preliminary stages of the project planning process. The Study Team has worked closely with resource agencies to identify major areas of concern within the Study Area. Environmental issues for each of the recommended corridors are briefly summarized below. Detailed information will be available at the Alternatives Public Workshops. *(See page 10 for information about Environmental Stewardship.)*

Corridor 1

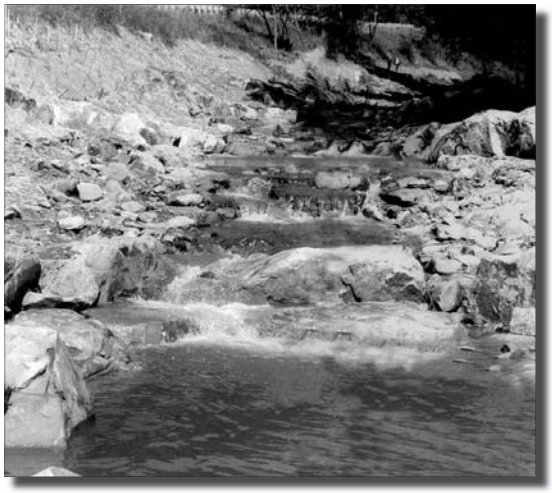
Corridor 1 crosses several streams, as well as associated tributaries and parks. These streams include Mill Creek, Rock Creek, North Branch, Northwest Branch, Batchellor's Run, Good Hope, Paint Branch and Little Paint Branch. Impacts to these streams could affect water quality and aquatic habitat within the watersheds. In addition, the Upper Paint Branch watershed has been designated by Montgomery County as a Special Protection Area, because it contains high water quality and a

self-sustaining trout fishery.

Impacts to wetlands, floodplains, and forests would also occur as a result of roadway construction within Corridor 1. The Study Team will continue to coordinate with resource agencies to avoid or minimize impacts to these resources to the greatest extent practicable.

The Study will fully evaluate how the project would affect residences, businesses and other community features. The acquisition of right-of-way, including potential displacements and changes of access would likely occur. The Study Team will continue to work with the public to identify impacts and to try to avoid and minimize them.

The Study Team will work closely with the Maryland Historical Trust to identify and minimize impacts to any historic or archaeological resources located within Corridor 1.



Corridor 2

Corridor 2 crosses several streams, as well as associated tributaries and parks. These streams include Mill Creek, Rock Creek, North Branch, Batchellor's Run, Northwest Branch, and tributaries to the Patuxent River. Impacts to these streams could affect water quality and aquatic habitat within the watersheds. The Patuxent River tributaries are particularly sensitive due to use of the Patuxent River as a reservoir. The Upper Paint Branch Special Protection Area is also located within the area. The Study Team will work with resource agencies to minimize impacts to these tributaries. Implementation of stormwater management facilities will also be investigated to minimize the potential for impacts.

Impacts to other natural resources including wetlands, floodplains and forests would also be incurred with both alternatives. The Study Team will continue to coordinate with resource agencies to avoid or minimize impacts to these resources to the greatest extent practicable.

The Study will fully evaluate how the project would affect residences, businesses and other community features. The acquisition of right-of-way, including potential displacements and changes of access would likely occur. The Study Team will continue to work with the public to identify impacts and to try to avoid and minimize them.

Within Corridor 2, there is the potential for impacts to historic resources. The Study Team will continue to coordinate with the Maryland Historical Trust to avoid or minimize impacts to these resources.

Environmental Stewardship

The Study Team is committed to not only meet all applicable environmental laws and regulations, but also to seek opportunities to improve aspects of the natural, cultural and human environment. For the ICC, a comprehensive "Environmental Stewardship" approach for the Study Area will be integrated into the overall process.

One of the primary goals of Environmental Stewardship is to identify opportunities to avoid whenever feasible natural, cultural and human resources when planning preliminary alternatives. This commitment to the environment continues with detailed engineering plans to minimize impacts to those resources that cannot be completely avoided.

For those resources affected, state-of-the-art mitigation efforts will be developed that focus on restoring or recreating the functions and values of those resources impacted. The goal is to minimize as much as possible the effect or "footprint" the project may have on the resources.

In addition, Environmental Stewardship will go above and beyond developing compenstory mitigation for direct impacts. In this project, Environmental Stewardship efforts will be directed toward identifying opportunities to restore or enhance resources, some which may be degraded by decades of development. Opportunities to restore or enhance natural, cultural and human resources may include, but are not limited to:

- Water quality improvements.
- Stream habitat restoration.
- Parkland trails creation and enhancement.
- Community enhancement opportunities.
- Cultural resource preservation.
- Increased acreage of wetlands and forests.
- Highway and bridge beautification.

Identifying Environmental Stewardship opportunities will involve all project stakeholders, including regulatory agencies, local governments and the public. Opportunities will be identified through a detailed review of the Study Area, interaction with the public, and coordination with local, state and federal agencies. Other sources will include any documentation developed by local governments and other resource-based organizations describing existing restoration or environmental stewardship opportunities within the Study Area.

Next Steps

Following the Alternatives Public Workshops and further discussion with participating agencies, the Study Team will identify Alternatives to be Retained for Detailed Study (ARDS). Following this, preliminary engineering will be conducted on those alternatives. Detailed impact analyses and technical reports will be prepared that pertain to the socioeconomic, cultural and natural environments. The Study Team will continue to work with agencies to refine avoidance and minimization measures. Conceptual mitigation strategies will also be developed, in addition to environmental stewardship elements.

The results of ARDS will be documented in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), which will be the subject of public hearings late next year. Input from agencies and the public will be considered in preparing the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). Planning concludes with the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD).

Public Involvement

The ICC Study Team is committed to reaching out to the public and encouraging residents, business owners, elected officials, motorists and others to become involved in the ICC study.

Public involvement efforts include:

- Project website www.iccstudy.org - serves as an excellent way to register your comment, attend virtual Open Houses, get the latest project information, and more.

- Public meetings – being held throughout the study at major milestones.

- Information Centers – mini-resource centers have been created throughout the Study Area and provide information about the ICC study. Please visit our web site to find the Information Center closest to you.

- Toll Free Number (1-866-462-0020) – to ask questions of the Study Team, or to request information.

- Newsletters – to receive project newsletters, ask to be added to our Project Mailing List. You can be added by registering on our website, registering at a public meeting or by calling the toll free number.

- Community meetings and events.

HOW TO COMMENT AT THE WORKSHOPS

You can comment on the study in a variety of ways:

- Questions & Comments: Feel free to ask questions of, and offer comments to, the Study Team representatives at any of the stations.

- Comment Sheet: Please take time to fill out the comment sheet in this booklet and drop it in the comment box or mail it from home.

- Additional Feedback: If you would like any other information or would like to offer additional feedback, please feel free to contact the Study Team. *(The names, addresses and phone numbers of team members are provided on page 12.)*

Again, we thank you for your participation and stress the importance of thoughtful public input in the development of this complex study.

ICC Study Team

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NOTES

INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR

ICC

INTERCOUNTY CONNECTOR PROJECT PLANNING STUDY

Alternatives Public Workshop

Thursday, November 13, 2003
Saturday, November 15, 2003
Wednesday, November 19, 2003

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