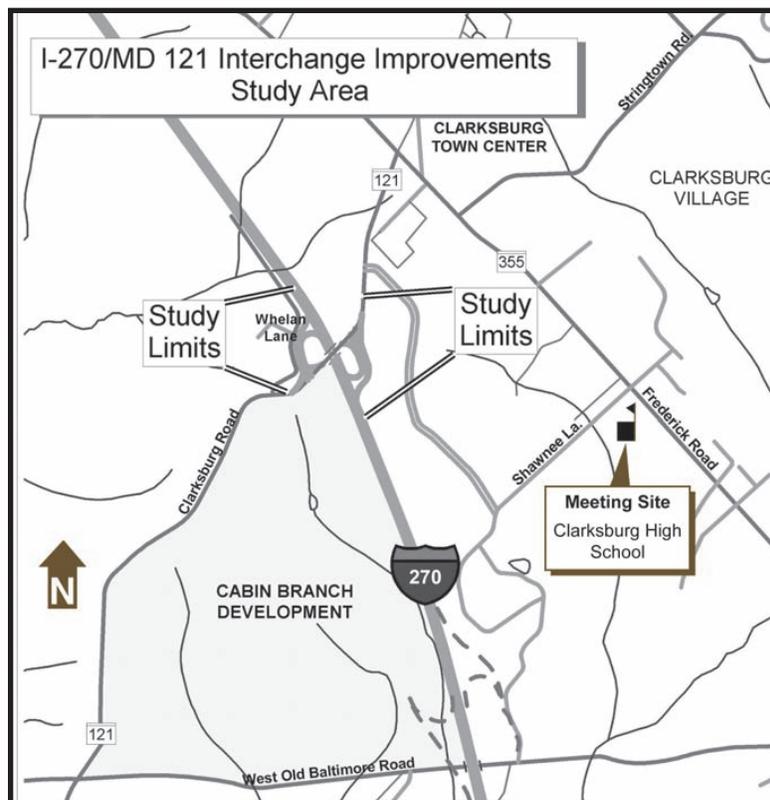


I-270/MD 121 Interchange Improvements Project Planning Study

LOCATION/DESIGN Public Hearing



Tuesday, January 30, 2007
6:00 P.M. - Maps/Displays Available
7:00 P.M. - Presentation/Testimony

Clarksburg High School
22500 Wims Road
Clarksburg, MD 20871

Snow Date: February 5, 2007

Project No. MO426M11



**Maryland Department
of Transportation**
State Highway Administration



US Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

INTRODUCTION

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is conducting a Project Planning Study for improvements to the I-270/MD 121 interchange in Clarksburg, Maryland. The I-270/MD 121 Interchange Improvements Study is a breakout project of the SHA's I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study, which will investigate, develop, and evaluate various improvement alternatives for the I-270/MD 121 interchange. The project's study area limits are the West Old Baltimore Road underpass to the south; the Ten Mile Creek Tributary crossing to the north; the West Old Baltimore Road and MD 121 intersection to the west; and the northbound to eastbound off-ramp terminus to the east. A map of the study area is shown on the cover.

This project is unique in that the developer, Cabin Branch Management, L.L.C., is leading and funding the entirety of the study and its subsequent phases.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The primary purpose of the I-270/MD 121 Interchange Improvements Project Planning Study is to improve vehicular, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle accessibility and provide safety and capacity improvements at the interchange as a result of the Cabin Branch development. The top priority is to address the immediate needs of the Cabin Branch development and pipeline developments in the Clarksburg area.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Cabin Branch development is a 540-acre, mixed-use development site to be constructed in the southwest quadrant of the interchange. It will be built in two phases. In 2004, the Montgomery County Planning Board approved the Phase 1 Cabin Branch Preliminary Plan for 1,600 dwelling units, 1.5 million square feet of employment uses, and 500 dwelling units for elderly housing. The Phase 2 Preliminary Plan consists of

286 dwelling units and 898,000 square feet of employment uses and is pending Planning Board action. Eleven other previously approved pipeline developments are located within the Clarksburg Policy Area of Montgomery County. These developments anticipate more than 856,000 square feet of new office/retail/industrial and mixed-use space with 6,414 residential units.

Montgomery County and SHA have required that the developer meet the following Adequate Public Facilities (APF) requirements as part of the Phase 1 approval for the Cabin Branch development. Accordingly, these requirements have been incorporated into the development of alternatives for this study:

- Construction of a new directional ramp from eastbound MD 121 to southbound I-270;
- Widening of MD 121 over I-270 with a six-lane bridge; and
- Intersection improvements at the northbound and southbound ramp approaches to MD 121.

Five alternatives were developed, including the No-Build Alternative, for the I-270/MD 121 interchange that meet future capacity and safety needs. Input from the study team, as well as environmental and regulatory agency reviews, resulted in two of the five alternatives being dismissed and three alternatives being retained for detailed study, including the No-Build Alternative. These three alternatives are being presented at this Public Hearing.

PURPOSE OF THE HEARING

The purpose of the Location/Design Public Hearing is to formally present the results of the detailed engineering and environmental studies conducted for this project. The Public Hearing will provide an opportunity for interested individuals, associations, citizens' groups, or government agencies to offer verbal or written comments for the project record prior to the selection of an alternative.

HEARING FORMAT

Maps and other exhibits depicting the studied alternatives will be on display for public viewing beginning at 6:00 p.m. Representatives from the SHA, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and other local and State agencies will be available to record your comments and answer questions relating to this project. A formal presentation, lasting approximately 30 minutes, will begin at 7:00 p.m. and will be followed by public testimony. Testimony may also be given privately to a court reporter. The entire proceedings will be recorded and a transcript will be prepared. The transcript will be available for public review within approximately eight weeks after the Hearing, at the locations indicated in this brochure.

HOW TO COMMENT ON THE STUDY

The public is encouraged to participate in the Public Hearing to ensure citizen input in the planning process. A postage-paid return mailer is included in this brochure to allow you to submit your comments. Additional copies of these mailers will be available at the receptionist's desk during the Hearing. Written comments for inclusion in the project record and the Public Hearing transcript may be submitted until Thursday, March 1, 2007.

Persons wishing to have their name(s) placed on the project mailing list may do so by completing the enclosed mailer or by furnishing appropriate information to the receptionist at the Public Hearing. If you have previously submitted your name and address or received an I-270/MD 121 Interchange Improvements Study Location/Design Public Hearing brochure in the mail, you have already been included on the project mailing list and do not need to resubmit.

PROJECT NEED

Between the years 2000 and 2005, Clarksburg's population tripled, for a growth rate of 219 percent, and is projected to grow by another 154 percent between 2005 and 2010. Recent and future growth projections in Clarksburg can be largely attributed to several recently completed developments and to developments being planned in the vicinity of the I-270/MD 121 interchange, such as the Cabin Branch development.

These developments have an effect not only on population growth, but also on Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes on MD 121 at the I-270 interchange. The highest increases in AADT volumes were recorded on MD 121 between years 2001 and 2002. Increases of 45% and 28% were recorded on MD 121 west and east of I-270, respectively.

A similar trend is seen when projecting future traffic volumes on MD 121. By 2030, projected peak hour critical lane volumes at the northbound ramp approach to MD 121 are estimated to increase above existing volumes by 175% during the peak morning period, and by 150% during the evening period. Higher increases of 321% (morning) and 465% (evening) are estimated at the southbound ramp approach.

MD 121 provides local and regional access to the Clarksburg community and access to the Corridor Cities to the south and north via the I-270/MD 121 interchange. If improvements are not made to the I-270/MD 121 interchange to address the anticipated traffic demand, its ability to provide sufficient accessibility to Clarksburg and maintain acceptable traffic operations will be jeopardized.

Existing Conditions

MD 121 consists of one lane in each direction, east and west of I-270. It widens to a four-lane bridge over I-270, with a 5-foot-wide sidewalk on the north side and a 4-foot-wide shoulder on the south side. East of the interchange, MD 121 ties into the newly constructed Stringtown Road Extension project.

I-270 through the study area is a six-lane, limited-access expressway with three lanes in each direction, narrowing to two lanes north of MD 121. The high-occupancy-vehicle (HOV) lane in the northbound direction ends at MD 121.

Interchange ramps consist of loop ramps and directional ramps in the northwest and southeast quadrants. Stop signs control left-turning vehicles on ramp approaches to MD 121.

The posted speeds for the study sections are 55 miles per hour along I-270, and 40 miles per hour along MD 121 in the vicinity of the I-270/MD 121 interchange.

Traffic Operations and Congestion

A Level of Service (LOS) analysis was performed for this study to measure the congestion experienced by drivers. LOS ranges from LOS A (free flow with little or no congestion) to LOS F (failure with stop-and-go conditions). LOS is normally computed for the peak periods of a typical day, with LOS D (approaching unstable flow) or better generally considered acceptable for highways in urban and suburban areas. At

LOS E, volumes are near or at the capacity of the highway. LOS F represents conditions in which there are operational breakdowns, with stop-and-go traffic and extremely long delays at signalized intersections.

Under the current conditions, the LOS is acceptable during peak hour conditions along both MD 121 and I-270 at the interchange. However, after full build-out of the Cabin Branch development and 11 pipeline developments, the LOS would reach LOS F on the existing loop ramp to southbound I-270 during the AM peak period. Likewise, conditions along I-270, south of MD 121, would worsen to LOS F during the AM peak period in the southbound direction, and in the reverse (northbound) direction during the PM peak period. “No-Build 2030” refers to projected traffic conditions in 2030 without improvements to MD 121 and I-270 as part of both this project and the I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study. (See Table 1 below.)

Accident data were reviewed for MD 121 and I-270 within the study limits for a three-year period between 2002 and 2004. While total

Table 1 - Volumes and Level of Service

Locations	2004 Conditions				2030 Conditions			
	Volumes (peak hour vehicles)		LOS		No Build Volumes (peak hour vehicles)		LOS	
	AM*	PM*	AM*	PM*	AM*	PM*	AM*	PM*
MD 121 Intersections								
MD 121/I-270 NB Ramp	473	440	A	A	1,278	1,101	C	B
MD 121/I-270 SB Ramp	321	217	A	A	1,350	1,225	D	C
MD 121/Whelan Lane (Street “A”)	252	278	A	A	-	-	-	-
MD 121/West Old Baltimore Road	208	359	A	A	-	-	-	-
I-270 Mainline Locations								
SB I-270 North of MD 121 - 3 Lane section	4,262	1,950	C	A	5,650	2,700	D	B
SB I-270 South of MD 121 - 3 Lane section	4,607	2,487	C	B	7,350	4,125	F	C
NB I-270 North of MD 121 - 3 Lane section	1,815	4,455	A	C	2,475	5,925	B	E
NB I-270 South of MD 121 - 3 Lane section	1,952	4,535	A	C	3,200	7,375	B	F
SB I-270, at MD 121, off-ramp	231	72	C	B	125	50	D	B
NB I-270, at MD 121, on-ramp	154	349	B	C	175	175	B	D
SB I-270, at MD 121, on-ramp	576	609	C	B	1,825	1,475	F	C
NB I-270, at MD 121, off-ramp	301	429	A	C	900	1,625	B	D

* Peak Period

accident rates fell below the statewide average on MD 121 during this period, rates for I-270 were significantly higher than the statewide average. A total of 30 accidents were recorded during the period, including one fatality.

The Project Planning Study has identified three alternatives for detailed study to address these conditions.

ALTERNATIVES RETAINED FOR DETAILED STUDY

Alternative 1: No-Build

Other than routine maintenance and safety improvements, no major improvements would be made with the No-Build Alternative. This alternative, shown in Figure 1, does include the newly built Stringtown Road Extension project to the east. However, it does not address future traffic concerns or the purpose and need for the project; therefore, it will serve as a baseline for the other alternatives that have been retained for detailed study. (See Figure 1 on page 9.)

Alternative 2

This alternative, shown in Figure 2, provides a new single-lane directional ramp from eastbound MD 121 to southbound I-270, eliminating the existing eastbound left-turn lane to the southbound loop ramp. The bridge and roadway will be widened to three lanes in each direction to accommodate additional capacity and connect with the newly constructed Stringtown Road Extension to the east and the future widening and realignment of MD 121 to the west. The existing stop-controlled ramp termini intersections will be signalized, with a double left-turn lane replacing the single left-turn lane, and a free right-turn lane on ramp approaches to MD 121. A 10-foot shared-use sidewalk and bikeway is proposed on the north side of the bridge, connecting with a similar path being built as part of the Stringtown Road Extension project to the east. The path will cross MD 121 and connect with a future path being planned along the south side of the proposed MD 121 by the developer. (See Figure 2 on page 10.)

Alternative 3

This alternative, shown in Figure 3, provides a new single-lane directional ramp from eastbound MD 121 to southbound I-270, similar to Alternative 2. However, the existing westbound to southbound inner loop ramp will be removed and replaced with a new two-lane ramp curved around the existing salt storage facility, connecting from the median of westbound MD 121 to the new southbound ramp. The bridge and roadway will be widened to a six-lane section consisting of two-to-three through lanes in the eastbound direction and four lanes (two through lanes and two left-turn lanes) in the westbound direction to accommodate additional capacity and connect with Stringtown Road to the east and MD 121 to the west, as mentioned earlier. Again, the existing stop-controlled ramp termini intersections will be signalized, with a double left-turn lane and a free right-turn lane on ramp approaches to MD 121, and a proposed 10-foot shared-use sidewalk and bikeway on the north side of the bridge. (See Figure 3 on page 11.)

ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMARY

Detailed analyses were performed on the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study to identify the potential for impacts to natural, cultural, and socioeconomic resources within the study area. A comparison and summary of potential impacts and costs for each alternative is included in Table 2.

Land Use

This project is consistent with land use plans in the 1994 Clarksburg Master Plan that was adopted for the study area. The Master Plan proposes improvements to MD 121 and ramp improvements to the interchange.

Existing land use includes a mixture of agricultural, forested, commercial, and residential uses. Residential and commercial uses are concentrated east of the interchange.

Future land use in the Master Plan indicates expansion of commercial, residential, and public facilities within the study area to facilitate development of the Clarksburg Growth Area.

Socioeconomic Resources

None of the alternatives being carried forward will require the acquisition of additional right-of-way and no residential or commercial displacements are anticipated.

No publicly owned public parks have been identified in the project area. Emergency response times in the study area would be improved due to improved accessibility as a result of any of the Build Alternatives. SHA will continue coordination with emergency services providers to identify potential traffic delays during construction and detour routes that could affect response times.

The intent of the Smart Growth Priority Funding Areas Act of 1997 is to limit sprawl and direct State funding for growth-related projects toward County-designated Priority Funding Areas. One-hundred percent of each alternative is within the Clarksburg Priority Funding Area.

Consistent with Executive Order 12898 “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations,” no disproportionately high or adverse effects on minority and low-income communities are expected to result from any of the Alternatives Retained for Detailed Study.

Cultural Resources

In consultation with the Maryland Historical Trust (MHT) and other consulting parties, the SHA has identified two historic standing structures/sites in the study area that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places: the Moneysworth Farm and the Clarksburg Historic District. Coordination with MHT is underway to determine the effects of the alternatives on historic properties, and this will be reported at the Public Hearing. However, the I-270/ MD 121 Interchange project should not impact historic properties due to their distance from the proposed intersection improvements.

Archeology investigations recorded two archeological sites in the project area. Both sites are considered not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and no further archeological investigations are warranted. The MHT concurred with this finding on February 16, 2005. In accordance with the procedures of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, this meeting provides the opportunity for public input regarding impacts to historic properties.

Table 2 - Summary of Impacts for Retained Alternatives

Comparison Chart – Build Alternatives					
Item Number	Item Description	Impact	Alternative 1 (No-Build) Quantity	Alternative 2 Quantity	Alternative 3 Quantity
1	Require Land Acquisition (excludes SHA Salt Dome Property)	Yes/No	0	0	0
2	Land Acquisition from SHA Dome Property)	Yes/No	0	0	0.5 ac.
3	Utility Impacts (No. of Poles)	Each	0	11-15	11-15
4	Potential of Wetland Impacts	Impact	0	.02	< 0.4 ac.
5	Potential of Stream, Floodplain Impacts	Impact	0	0	0
6	Potential of Section 4(f) Involvement	Impact	0	0	0
7	Potential of Cultural Resource Impacts	Impact	0	0	0
8	Air and Noise Impacts	Impact	0	0	0
9	Land acquisition from Wooded Lots	Yes/No	0	3 acres	3 acres
10	Bridge Cost	Million	0	3.3	4.2
11	Total Cost	Million	0	8.3*	9.8*

Natural Environmental Resources

The study area is located within the Washington Metropolitan Drainage Area. Coordination with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) indicates that both Use I-P (Water Contact Recreation, Protection of Nontidal Warmwater Aquatic Life and Public Water Supply) and Use IV-P (Recreational Trout Waters and Public Water Supply) streams are within the project vicinity. Generally, no instream work is permitted in Use I streams during the period of March 1 through June 15, inclusive, during any year; or in Use IV streams during the period of March 1 through May 31, inclusive, during any year. All fish species should be adequately protected by the Use I and IV instream work prohibition periods, sediment and erosion control methods, and other Best Management Practices typically used for protection of stream resources during highway projects.

The SHA, through consultation with the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), has identified Waters of the United States, including jurisdictional wetlands, which are regulated by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Possible impacts to wetlands range from 0.02 to 0.4 acre for the Build Alternatives. This Hearing provides the opportunity to present views, opinions, and information which will be considered by the Corps in evaluating a Department of the Army permit. The Corps regulates discharges of dredged or fill material into streams and wetlands (Waters of the US). All comments received will become part of the formal project record. This study also satisfies the alternatives analysis requirements for the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) of the Maryland Nontidal Wetlands and Waterways Permit concerning proposed impacts to nontidal wetlands. In addition, a water quality certification, pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, will be required from MDE. Copies of any written statements expressing concern for aquatic resources may be submitted to Mr. Jack Dinne, US Army Corps of Engineers, Regulatory Branch, 10 South Howard Street, Baltimore, MD 21201 until Thursday, March 1, 2007.

Coordination with the DNR, Wildlife and Heritage Service, indicated that there are no federal or State rare, endangered, or threatened species known to exist within the project area. Coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service documented that no federally proposed or listed endangered or threatened species are known to exist within the project area.

Air Impacts

Montgomery County is a non-attainment area for carbon monoxide (CO). In 2002, a microscale air analysis was conducted for the mainline I-270/US 15 Multi-Modal Corridor Study. The maximum one-hour and eight-hour CO levels were predicted at 37 analysis sites within the study area, and more than 600 receptors were analyzed at those sites. Based on the one-hour predicted CO levels, air quality is predicted to improve or stay the same at 12 sites within the I-270/MD 121 project area. All predicted concentrations are below both the applicable federal and State CO one-hour standard of 35 ppm and the eight-hour standard of 9 ppm.

Based on review and analysis, it is determined that the I-270/MD 121 project meets the Clean Air Act and 40 CFR 93.109 requirements. These requirements are met for particulate matter without a project-level hot-spot analysis, since the project has not been found to be a project of air quality concern for PM_{2.5} as defined under 40 CFR 93.123 (b)(1). Since the project meets the Clean Air Act and 40 CFR 93.109 requirements, the project will not cause or contribute to a new violation of the PM_{2.5} NAAQS, or increase the frequency or severity of a violation.

FHWA Guidance on Air Toxic Analyses in National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents requires analysis of Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSAT) under specific conditions. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has designated six prioritized MSATs which are known or probable carcinogens, or can cause chronic respiratory effects. The six prioritized MSATs are: Benzene; Acrolein; Formaldehyde; 1-3-Butadiene, Acetaldehyde; and Diesel Exhaust (Diesel Exhaust Gases and Diesel Particulate Matter). The I-270/MD 121 project is considered

in the category: "Projects with Low Potential MSAT Effects," as described in the referenced guidance. An example of this type of project is a minor roadway widening, where design year traffic (AADT) is not projected to exceed 150,000 vehicles.

Noise Impacts

Noise analysis is not warranted since the project does not result in any capacity improvements. Additionally, since proposed development is designed with ample setbacks from the proposed interchange, no existing or proposed noise receptors are within the study area.

REMAINING STEPS IN THE PROJECT PLANNING PROCESS

- Evaluate and address public and agency comments received from the Public Hearing (February/March 2007)
- State Highway Administrator Concurrence on SHA's Selected Alternative (March 2007)
- Receive Location Approval from FHWA and Design Approval from the State Highway Administrator for the Selected Alternative (Summer 2007)

NON-DISCRIMINATION IN FEDERALLY ASSISTED AND STATE-AID PROGRAMS

For information concerning non-discrimination in federally assisted and State-Aid programs, please contact:

- Ms. Jennifer Jenkins, Director
Office of Equal Opportunity
State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop C-406
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Telephone: (410) 545-0315
Toll Free in Maryland: 1-888-545-0098
E-Mail: JJenkins@sha.state.md.us

RIGHT-OF-WAY AND RELOCATION ASSISTANCE

For information regarding right-of-way and relocation assistance, please contact:

- Mr. Doug Mills
District #3, Office of Real Estate
State Highway Administration
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt Maryland 20770
Telephone: (301) 513-7300
Toll Free in Maryland: 1-800-849-0737
E-Mail: dmills@sha.state.md.us

DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

The Location/Design Public Hearing Transcript will be available for review within approximately eight weeks of the Hearing. To confirm availability, please call ahead Monday through Friday at:

- Gaithersburg Public Library
18330 Montgomery Village Avenue
Gaithersburg, MD 20879
Telephone: (240) 773-9490
- State Highway Administration
District 3 Office
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt Maryland 20770
Telephone: (301) 513-7300
Toll Free in Maryland: 1-800-749-0737
- State Highway Administration
Public Involvement Section, 3rd Floor
707 North Calvert Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
Telephone: (410) 545-8522
Toll Free in Maryland: 1-800-548-5026

MEDIA USED FOR MEETING NOTIFICATION

An advertisement appeared in the following newspapers to announce this Public Hearing:

- The Washington Post
- The Gazette

Public service announcements were also furnished to radio stations covering the project area. Persons on the project mailing list received direct notice of the Hearing.

PROJECT PLANNING TEAM

STATE HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

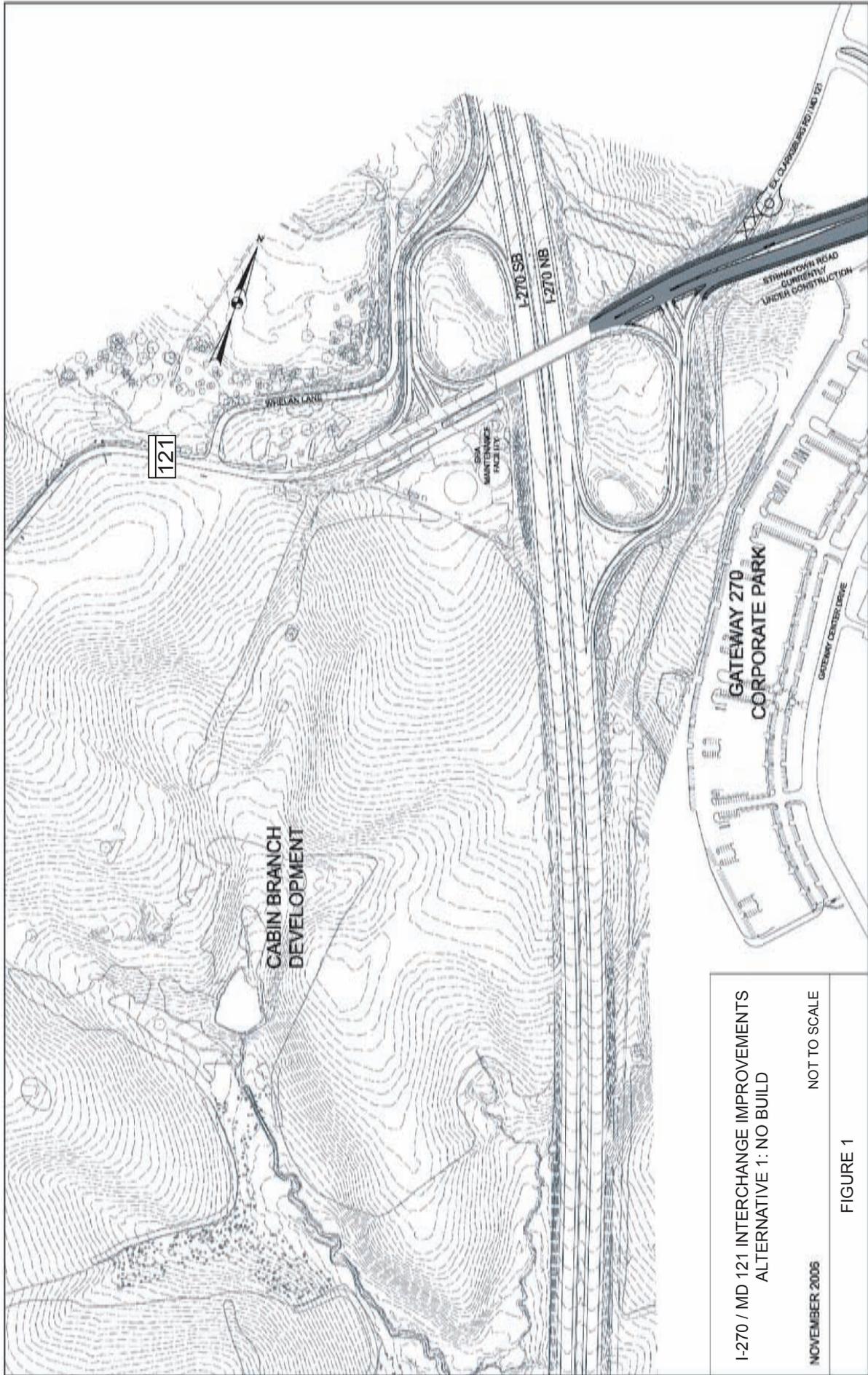
- Mr. Russ Walto, Project Manager
Project Planning Division
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707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop C-301
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Toll Free in Maryland: 1-800-548-5026
E-mail: rwalto@sha.state.md.us
- Mr. Raja Veeramachaneni, Director
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State Highway Administration
707 North Calvert Street, Mail Stop C-411
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
- Mr. Darrell B. Mobley, District Engineer
District 3 Office
State Highway Administration
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt Maryland 20770
Telephone: (301) 513-7300
Toll Free in Maryland: 1-800-749-0737
E-Mail: dmobley@sha.state.md.us

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

- Mr. Dan W. Johnson
Office of Highway Planning and Research
Federal Highway Administration
Delmar Division Office
City Crescent Building
10 South Howard Street, Suite 2450
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

THANK YOU

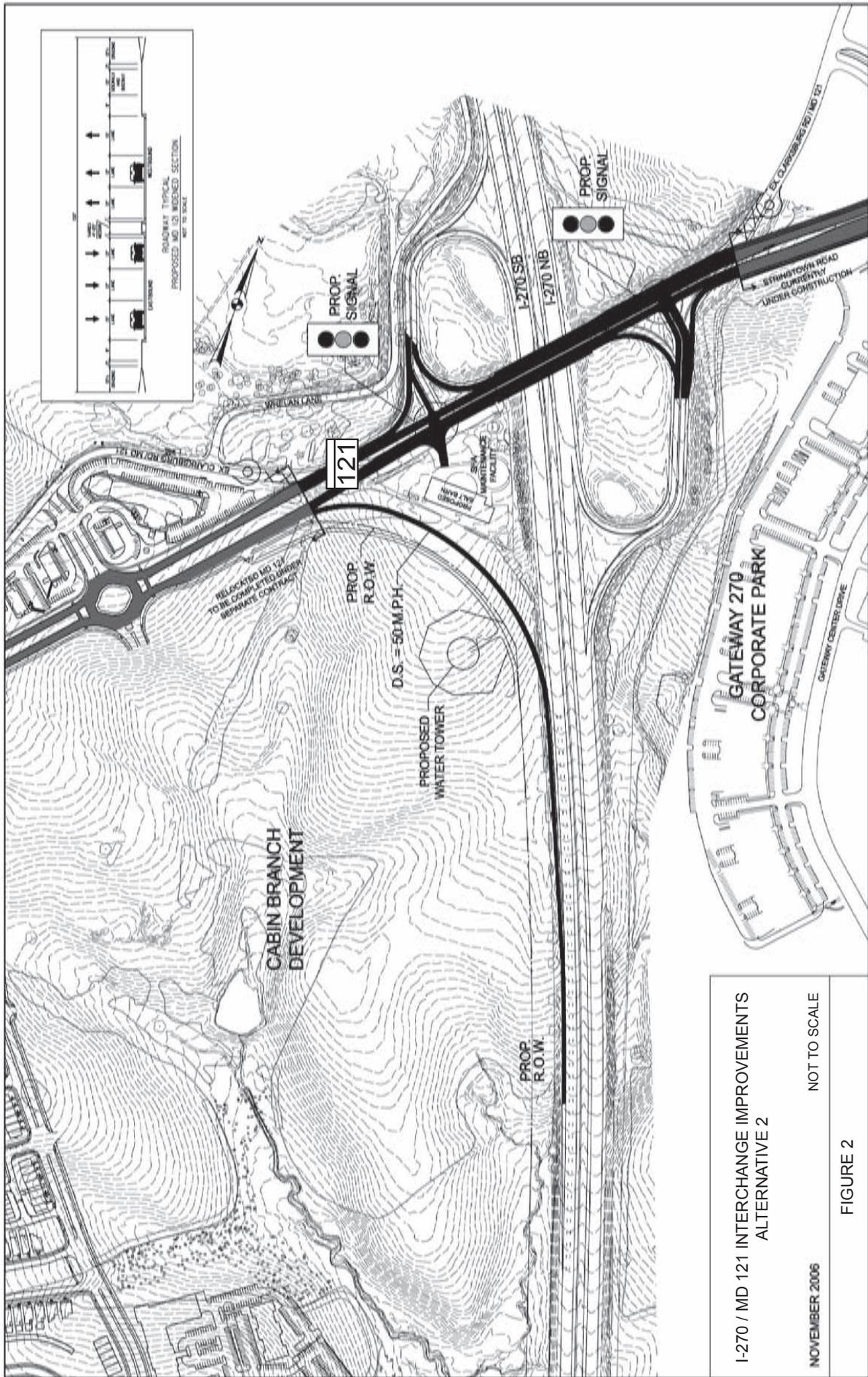
Thank you for taking the time to review this project material and participate in the Public Hearing. Your comments are greatly appreciated! If you have questions, please contact any of the project team members listed on the last page of this brochure.



I-270 / MD 121 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS
ALTERNATIVE 1: NO BUILD

NOVEMBER 2006 NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 1

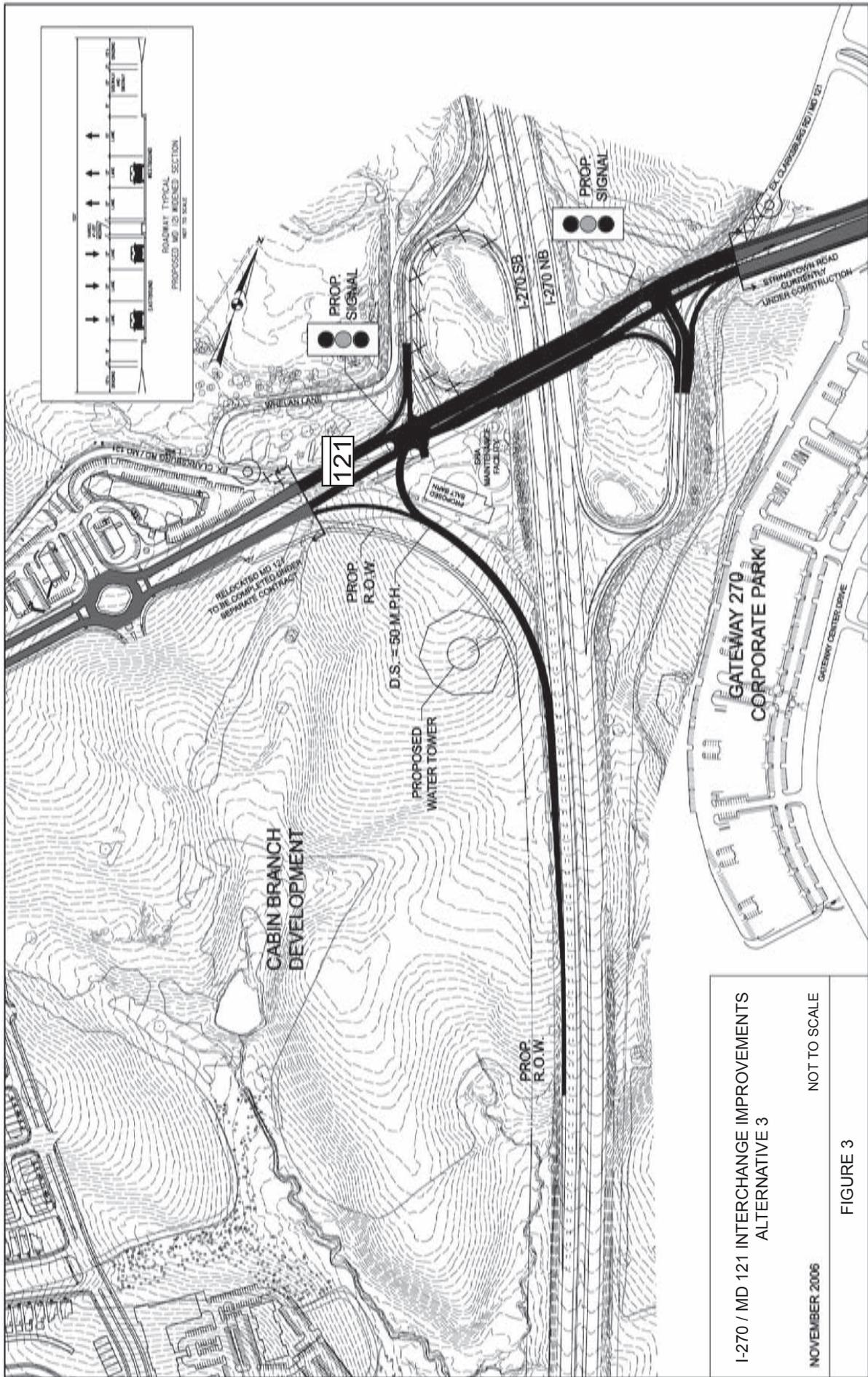


I-270 / MD 121 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS
ALTERNATIVE 2

NOVEMBER 2006

NOT TO SCALE

FIGURE 2



I-270 / MD 121 INTERCHANGE IMPROVEMENTS
ALTERNATIVE 3

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FIGURE 3

From: _____

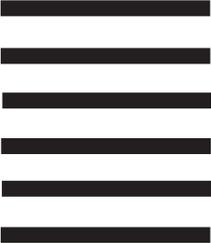


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Description of Alternatives	1	2	3	4
Maps of Alternatives	1	2	3	4
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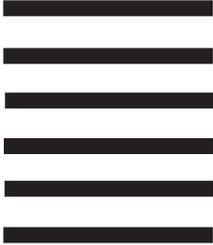


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