



May 21, 2014

Dear Ms. Harman

Thank you for your continued interest regarding the US 29 Northbound Widening & Rivers Edge Road Improvements project. We have received your emailed dated 05/06/2014 and below are the responses to your questions:

## 1. General information about the phases of the US 29 project.

### **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The project, located in Howard County, is for the widening and resurfacing of northbound US 29 from Middleton Patuxent River to MD Route 175, a distance of approximately 4 miles. The project includes: base widening along the US 29 median to provide a third through lane; construction of noise abatement measures, where warranted; drainage improvements; evaluation and installation of traffic barriers; utility relocations; removal of the existing access points to Gales Lane and Old Columbia Road from US 29 northbound; an evaluation for the improvements to the existing US 29 and Rivers Edge Road intersection; modification and installation of traffic signing and pavement markings; resurfacing and landscaping. The project is broken into three phases. The phases are as follows:

#### **PHASE 1A: Gales Lane & Old Columbia Road Access Only**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** This Phase consists removal of the existing access points to Gales lane and Old Columbia Road from US 29 northbound. The scope of the project is for the construction of the Old Columbia Road access road by extending the existing road to connect to Twin Knolls; and the relocation of the property owners along Gales Lane.

**SCHEDULE:** Begin Construction – Fall 2013  
Estimated Completion – Spring 2014

#### **PHASE 1B: Northbound Widening & Noise Barriers Installation**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** This Phase consists of the northbound widening from south of Seneca Drive to South of MD 175. The improvements include: Ramp 4 (from northbound US 29 to eastbound MD Route 175) realignment and reconstruction; construction of 8 noise barriers through the limit of the project, drainage improvements; evaluation and installation of traffic barriers; utility relocations; modification and installation of traffic signing and pavement markings; resurfacing and landscaping.

**SCHEDULE:** Begin Construction – Summer 2014  
Estimated Completion – Fall 2016



## PHASE 2: US 29 Northbound Widening & Rivers Edge Road Improvements

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** This Phase consists of the northbound widening from Middleton Patuxent River to South of Seneca and includes the Rivers Edge Road Improvements.

**SCHEDULE:** Project Re-initiated – March 2014

Completion of Concept Evaluation – September 2014

Begin Final Design – December 2014

Estimated Construction Starts – Fall 2018

**FUNDING:** This Phase is only funded for design. It is not yet funded for right-of-way and construction.

### PROGRESS TO DATE:

April, 2014: Community Focus Group Established (13 members).  
Organized by Stephanie Cates-Harman (Rivers Edge Community)

April 10, 2014: First Focus Group Meeting

Current Activities: Preliminary design of alternatives is underway by SHA's consultant design team (A. Morton Thomas & Associates)

### LOCATION MAP

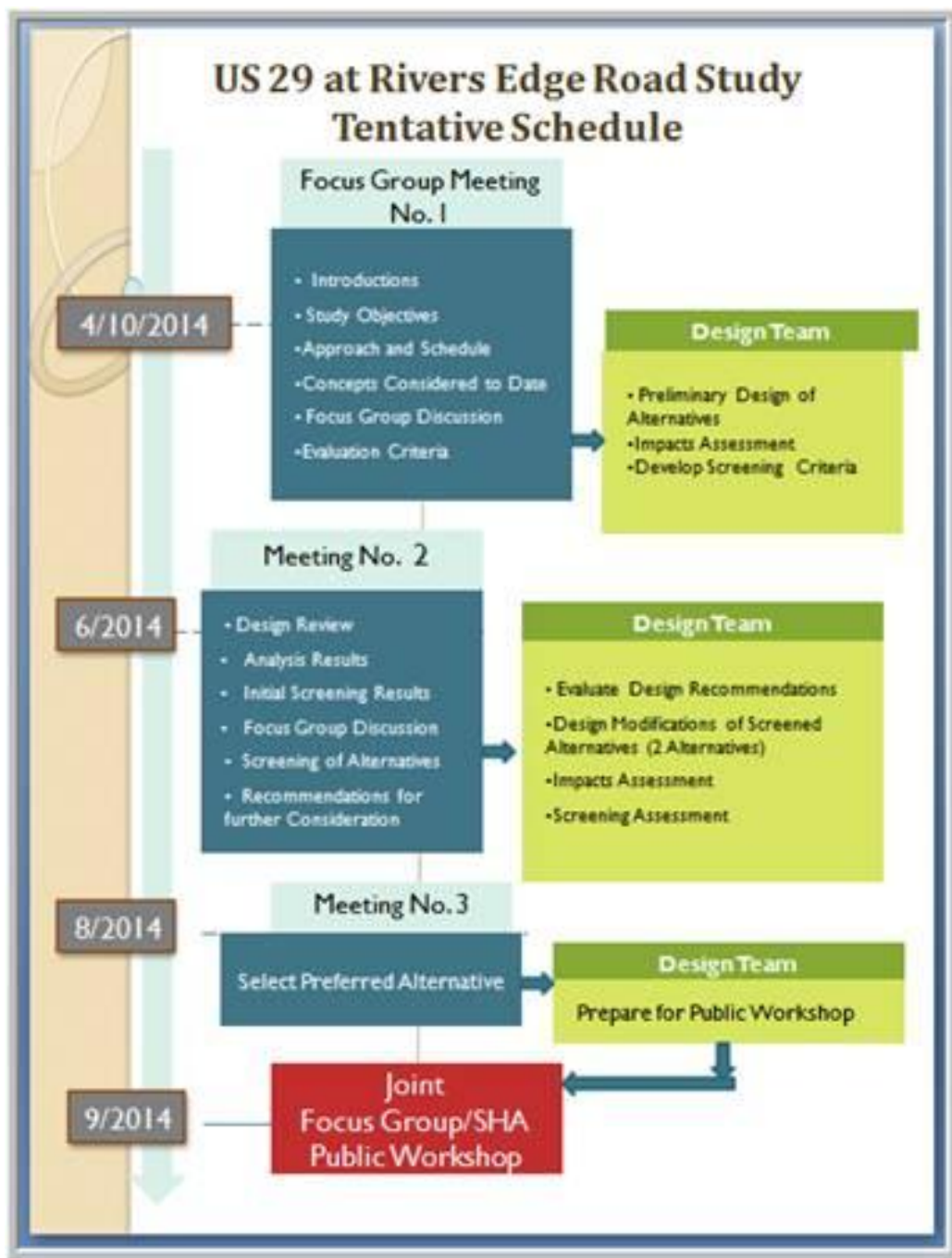




2. Estimated timeline for each phase

The estimate timeline for each phase is described and listed above on our responses for general information about the phases.

3. The steps that will take place for the Rivers Edge portion of the project and your estimated timelines.





#### 4. Explanation of the evaluation criteria.

The starting point for the evaluation/ alternatives screening criteria will be based on the project's Purpose and Need (P&N) Statement in the approved Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). A matrix of criteria will be developed and the correspondence "performance" of the proposed design alternative identified, i.e. the criteria should match the P&N, and the performance would relate to the results of the impacts assessment. Priority of screening criteria in the decision-making process will be discussed with the Focus Group.

If you would like to view a copy of the 1987 approved FONSI, it can be found on the SHA's website:

<http://apps.roads.maryland.gov/WebProjectLifeCycle/ProjectDocuments.aspx?projectno=H03172113#>).

#### 5. Identification of design restrictions, i.e., limitations because of exit ramps, barriers or obstructions.

Design development will include evaluation of a number of factors, including environmental, engineering, right-of-way, etc. These "restrictions" will be included in the impacts assessment of alternative design development underway. AASHTO and SHA design criteria for specific roadway design elements can be provided.

#### 6. SHA position on the impediments to keeping the light

US Route 29 is a regional facility and is classified as a major arterial. This roadway serves the traveling public between Baltimore and Washington and functions to move traffic over a long distance at higher speeds. According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), such a facility requires a higher level of access control. That is why over the past 25 years, several interchanges have been constructed along the corridor. For facilities such as US 29 that are classified as major arterials, AASHTO recommends that at-grade crossings and direct, private driveway connections be prohibited.

The traffic signal at the intersection of US 29 and Rivers Edge Road is an interim measure until a viable and feasibility grade-separated option could be identified. In 1987 a project planning study was completed to upgrade US 29 to a six-lane freeway with grade separated interchanges; this study also recommends an interchange at Rivers Edge Road. The main impediment to keeping the light is safety; according to crash data, 40 percent of crashes reported for this corridor were rear-end collisions, and the majority of these rear-ends were along southbound US 29 near Rivers Edge Road; another impediment is opposition from the communities served by the Rivers Edge Road and commuters.



## 7. General Information of Noise Barrier

SHA is mandated to consider the need for sound barriers when a new highway is being built or an existing highway is being expanded. In 2010, a technical analysis was completed to assess noise conditions within the project limits from Middle Patuxent River to MD 175. As a result of the proposed widening improvements to northbound US 29, several noise barriers were found to be warranted for the study area. A noise barrier was found to be warranted for the Riverside and Holiday Hills communities. Below is the link to SHA's noise policy. It outlines the criteria used to install noise barrier along state highway facilities.

[http://roads.maryland.gov/ohd2/sha\\_noise\\_policy.pdf](http://roads.maryland.gov/ohd2/sha_noise_policy.pdf)