



S T R A U G H A N
E N V I R O N M E N T A L
S E R V I C E S , I N C .

Environmental Impact Statement Intercounty Connector

Location: Montgomery and Prince George's Counties

Client: Maryland State Highway Administration

Description: The Intercounty Connector (ICC) road has been studied for more than 50 years. This east-west limited access six-lane 18-mile road is proposed to pass through highly developed portions of two counties as it connects I-270 and I-95. Straughan Environmental Services, Inc. (SES) is providing Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) with community outreach and environmental justice support for its streamlined NEPA study. The purpose of the public outreach study was to interview members of the public to develop an understanding of existing conditions, the locations of unique resources, and community concerns; and later to interview members of the public to develop the community effects analysis. This approach allows the analysts to understand the extent of community cohesion, local circulation patterns, and other issues. This approach is helping to assure the community that a balanced analysis of community effects and impacts to natural resources will be included in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Some of the strategies SES used to obtain the opinions and input of low-income and minority communities included:

- Creating project materials at sixth- and seventh-grade reading levels to reach those with limited English proficiency;
- Posting project materials in ethnic grocery stores, recreation centers, libraries, post offices, social service centers, and other community gathering locations;
- Conducting outreach events in supermarkets located in low-income and minority communities to display project mapping, distribute information, and conduct stakeholder interviews; and
- Conducting stakeholder interviews with willing community members as they shopped, waited for buses, or moved about their community.

SES developed a GIS-based methodology for identifying the potential for disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and low-income populations in the study area. This map analysis evaluated the location and severity of all project effects including noise, air quality, access, community cohesion, parks, displacements, and property acquisition in relation to the location of environmental justice populations. SES attended engineering section design meetings to participate in identifying potential community effects and to understand avoidance, minimization, and mitigation strategies that are being used to minimize impacts to all communities.