# Item 10 - Correspondence

From:	Murnen, Lily
То:	MCP-Chair
Cc:	<u>Glazier, Eli</u>
Subject:	RE: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway - Planning Board Hearing 9/12
Date:	Tuesday, September 10, 2024 3:21:30 PM
Attachments:	image002.png
	image003.png
	image004.png
	image005.png

Hello Catherine,

I have received three other comments from residents that I want to forward to the Chair's office so the board is aware. If you could please confirm that the Board has received these comments, I would appreciate it. Thank you

#### Ann Main (annmain03@gmail.com):

As a pedestrian/dog walker, I am generally in favor of the virtual sidewalk on Grove St. However, I'm also a bicyclist. If you are planning to change the virtual sidewalk along Grove St. to a hardscape/concrete traditional side walk, and follow the same wide footprint as the virtual sidewalk, I note that could introduce a hazard for bicyclists. I am very familiar with that Grove route as I often use it to commute (by bicycle) to and from work. The problem is that at certain parts of the virtual sidewalk, there is very little room for cars and bicyclists to co-exist because one on side, there is the virtual sidewalk and on the other side, people park their cars, leaving very little space for moving traffic. Often cars coming down the hill (from Sligo Ave in the direction of Thayer) will be moving very fast (the traffic circle at Sligo only slows them down through the intersection) and won't slow down for cyclists going uphill. Or if a truck (wider than a car) is coming down the hill, no matter what the speed, in my estimation, there is no safe room for a bicyclist to pass in the roadway. In those instances, for my safety, I will often bike in the virtual sidewalk for a short period of time while the truck or car passes (and then I move back to the street). However, if you change to a hardscape (in the same footprint), it won't be possible to move back and forth because I can't hop up on a sidewalk. You could of course move the sidewalk closer to the houses on the same side as the sidewalk to provide safe room for bicyclists to bike on the road but I don't know if that is what you anticipate/if homeowners on that side would be supportive of losing some of the public right-of-way land they may associate with their properties. (Because of the parked cars, there also sometimes isn't enough room to safely bike down the hill with a car or truck coming toward me. In those instances, I simply pull over behind the parked cars until there is safe passage to resume my ride on the street.)

Catherine Eliot and Bill Haris (wharis@yahoo.com - 762 Silver Spring Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910):

We have have the following initial questions and concerns regarding the Greenway:

1. Lighting: There is a proposed additional light pole for the corner of Silver Spring and Grove, however, the entire intersection is already functionally illuminated by the existing light pole. Why the additional light pole? Placing an additional light pole at this corner will cause light spillage directly into two bedrooms in our home.

2. Currently, the consistent and often times aggressive traffic that uses Grove Street (most of which are drivers who use Grove Street as a bypass for Fenton Street) makes our egress to/from our driveway very challenging and sometimes danagerous. We have have had no less than a dozen near miss incidents with aggressive drivers. Additionally, drivers traveling Northbound will typically block our driveway when another car is traveling Southbound because the street is too heavily used. As a final note, we continue to experience damage to our vehicles parked along the roadway - a cracked tail light, and strikes three times to our side-view mirrors.

3. We witness constant use of the walkway and fully support the sidewalk, however, the location and shape of the curbs are important. If there is a sidewalk between the two driveways of 800 Grove Street, our ability to make adequate use of our driveway will be negatively impacted. We will encounter issues backing out of our driveway in some instances, and we will also have issues navigating our trailer on and off our property if the sidewalk is extended too far southbound along Grove Street.

4. As a final note, parking for our property is an issue given the previously removed parking from the front of our property line on Silver Spring Ave. As we reviewed with you in person a few years back, if parking is removed on Grove street, we will not have access to any parking along our property.

We would welcome a visit from you to review the issues we are voicing.

#### Mike Ryan (mryan103@gmail.com):

I just now heard about the proposed extension of the East Silver Spring Greenway Project. I live on Richmond Avenue 2 houses in from Woodbury Drive. Looking back at last year's meeting slides, it looks like the proposal for Woodbury includes a treatment for the circle at Woodbury and Richmond, similar to the circle at Woodbury and Gist. I strongly oppose that proposal. There are a lot of young children in the neighborhood, including mine, and the circle at Woodbury and Richmond is a gathering place for our kids to ride bikes and scooters and for parents to chat and catch

up all spring, summer, and fall. It's not unusual for kids and parents to come from a couple streets away as well. Since the circle is not a through way it's a safe spot, and it's really the only one around here where kids can ride bikes and play. It was a godsend during the pandemic in particular, it's where my 2nd grader learned to ride a bike, and where my preschooler is currently learning to ride a bike. It's where I see my neighbors across the circle as they come and go. It helps the neighborhood feel cohesive. A circle treatment would disrupt our neighborhood's ability to use that circle as a gathering spot and would isolate one side of the street from the other. We all love the circle at Woodbury and Gist, but we get much more use out of the circle at Woodbury and Richmond as it is. I ask that you please reconsider the proposal and leave the circle at Woodbury and Richmond as it is.

#### Lily Murnen (she/they) Multimodal Transportation Planner, Countywide Planning Division Montgomery County Planning Department 301-495-1337

From: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2024 9:10 AM
To: Murnen, Lily <Lily.Murnen@montgomeryplanning.org>
Cc: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>
Subject: RE: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway - Planning Board Hearing 9/12

Good morning Lily,

Great, I will relay this info. FYI, the mailing address is:



Thanks!





From: Murnen, Lily <<u>Lily.Murnen@montgomeryplanning.org</u>>

Sent: Monday, September 9, 2024 5:30 PM

To: MCP-Chair <<u>mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org</u>>

Cc: Glazier, Eli < eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

Subject: RE: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway - Planning Board Hearing 9/12

Good afternoon Catherine,

Please see my responses below. If you could relay them, that would be great, or I can also contact the resident directly if needed. Just let me know.

- Mr. Johnson's email does not constitute formal noticing from the Planning Board; Mr. Johnson works for MCDOT, who is the applicant for this project, and sent that notice as a courtesy to MCDOT's community participant list.
- Official paper notices were mailed from the Planning Department on Friday, August 30, and these represent the formal notices that must be sent 10 days in advance of the hearing.
- According to the official notice list for this hearing, a notice was been mailed to "Re Margaret Ann" on Silver Spring Avenue. Could the resident confirm that they received this notice in the mail? If not, could the resident please confirm/provide their full name and address?
- Comments can be received until noon tomorrow, Tuesday, September 10.
- The bikeway is fully funded for design and construction using General Obligation Bonds in the county Capital Improvement Program.

Thank you,

#### Lily Murnen (she/they)

Multimodal Transportation Planner, Countywide Planning Division Montgomery County Planning Department 301-495-1337

From: MCP-Chair <<u>mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org</u>>
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2024 3:27 PM
To: Murnen, Lily <<u>Lily.Murnen@montgomeryplanning.org</u>>
Subject: FW: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway - Planning Board Hearing 9/12

Good afternoon Lily,

I wanted to flag the below comments (regarding Item 10: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway MR) since they have noticing and funding inquiries. May you please respond or provide any information you'd like me to relay?

Thanks!



Catherine Coello Administrative Assistant III

Montgomery County Planning Board, Chair's Office 2425 Reedie Dr 14th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902

<u>catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org</u> m: 301.495.4605 | d: 301.495.4608



Sent: Saturday, September 7, 2024 12:12 PM
To: MCP-Chair <<u>mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org</u>>
Subject: Fwd: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway - Planning Board Hearing 9/12

# **[EXTERNAL EMAIL]** Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello,

Matt Johnson sent the email below on Friday, September 6, for a Thursday, September 12 meeting. According to the <u>Rules of Procedure</u>, under 4.2 and 4.3, those wishing to provide comments must submit comments two days before, meaning comments must be submitted by Monday, September 10. According to 4.4, notice must be provided at least ten days before this meeting. How was that requirement met, and does Mr. Johnson's email meet that requirement?

Can you confirm this project is fully funded?

Thank you, Margaret Re

----- Forwarded message ------

From: Johnson, Matt <<u>Matt.Johnson@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>> Date: Fri, Sep 6, 2024 at 2:47 PM Subject: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway - Planning Board Hearing 9/12 To: Johnson, Matt <<u>Matt.Johnson@montgomerycountymd.gov</u>>

Good afternoon. Thank you for your interest in MCDOT's Fenton Village Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects.

I wanted to provide an update on the **East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway**, which will be going before the Montgomery County Planning Board for a Mandatory Referral Hearing on this coming Thursday, September 12. The agenda may change, but this item is currently scheduled to be the second item after lunch. The Planning Board is anticipated to return from lunch at 1:30PM, so this item will be heard shortly thereafter. Details on attending or testifying at the meeting are included below.

To learn more about the East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway, please visit the project's website: <u>https://montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/EastSilverSpring/index.html</u>.

#### Project Background:

The East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway Project will implement a "neighborhood greenway" on several streets east of downtown Silver Spring to provide a low-stress corridor for bicyclists and pedestrians. A neighborhood greenway is a street where the fast, through movement of cars is discouraged and the safe and comfortable movement of bicyclists and pedestrians is prioritized. The

East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway starts at the intersection of Fenton Street and MD 410 (Philadelphia Ave/Burlington Ave) and runs along Woodbury Drive, Sligo Avenue, Grove Street, Bonifant Street, and Cedar Street to end at the intersection of Wayne Avenue and Cedar Street. Houston Street between Thayer Avenue and Bonifant Street is also included in the project.

The types of improvements planned for the project include the addition of or upgrades to wayfinding signage for bicyclists, upgraded crosswalk markings, addition of a traffic circle at Woodbury and Violet and at Bonifant and Cedar, addition of a signalized pedestrian crossing at Woodbury and Sligo, addition of speed humps and other traffic calming treatments to Grove Street, the addition of a sidewalk on the west side of Grove Street, and the addition of a sidewalk to the west side of Houston Street.

The project is currently at 30% design. We expect to complete design by early summer 2025. The project is funded for construction, and we expect to begin construction in late 2025, however, the project may be constructed in phases rather than all at once. We have not yet determined a specific construction sequence or detailed schedule at this time.

### Planning Board Testimony and Attendance:

A Mandatory Referral is a type of hearing that is required for some projects led by public agencies. This hearing gives the Planning Board an opportunity to hear testimony from the public and to make recommendations to the public agency leading the project. Projects typically go to Mandatory Referral when reaching the 30% stage of design, which is the current status of the East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway project.

If you are interested in viewing the meeting, you can do so in-person at 2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton in the Second Floor Auditorium. You can also view the meeting remotely via Microsoft Teams. If you wish to testify in this matter, you can do so either in-person or remotely via Microsoft Teams, however, you <u>MUST</u> sign up no later than 12 noon ET on Tuesday, September 10. The East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway is Item #10 on the September 12 agenda. Instructions on signing up and attending are available on the Planning Board website. Details are on this page: <a href="https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/meetings/signup-to-testify/">https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/meetings/signup-to-testify/</a>

You can view the Montgomery County Planning Department staff report and other attachments on the Planning Board website (scroll down to Item 10), available here: https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/agenda-item/september-12-2024-copy/.

Should you have any questions about the project, please feel free to reach out. However, I cannot assist you in signing up to testify at the Planning Board hearing. For any issues related to the Planning Board, please contact them directly.

Thank you for your continued interest in these projects.

--Matt'

Matt Johnson

Bikeways Coordinator Division of Transportation Engineering Montgomery County Department of Transportation 240.777.7237

For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity

In regard to East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway, MR2024019:

As a pedestrian/dog walker, I am generally in favor of the virtual sidewalk on Grove St.

However, I'm also a bicyclist. If you are planning to change the virtual sidewalk along Grove St. to a hardscape/concrete traditional side walk, and follow the same wide footprint as the virtual sidewalk, I note that could introduce a hazard for bicyclists. I am very familiar with that Grove route as I often use it to commute (by bicycle) to and from work. The problem is that at certain parts of the virtual sidewalk, there is very little room for cars and bicyclists to co-exist because one on side, there is the virtual sidewalk and on the other side, people park their cars, leaving very little space for moving traffic. Often cars coming down the hill (from Sligo Ave in the direction of Thayer) will be moving very fast (the traffic circle at Sligo only slows them down through the intersection) and won't slow down for cyclists going uphill. Or if a truck (wider than a car) is coming down the hill, no matter what the speed, in my estimation, there is no safe room for a bicyclist to pass in the roadway. In those instances, for my safety, I will often bike in the virtual sidewalk for a short period of time while the truck or car passes (and then I move back to the street). However, if you change to a hardscape (in the same footprint), it won't be possible to move back and forth because I can't hop up on a sidewalk. You could of course move the sidewalk closer to the houses on the same side as the sidewalk to provide safe room for bicyclists to bike on the road but I don't know if that is what you anticipate/if homeowners on that side would be supportive of losing some of the public right-of-way land they may associate with their properties.

(Because of the parked cars, there also sometimes isn't enough room to safely bike down the hill with a car or truck coming toward me. In those instances, I simply pull over behind the parked cars until there is safe passage to resume my ride on the street.)

Dear Planning Commission members,

My name is Ariel Bierbaum. I am a hometowner at 702 Twin Holly Lane, just off of Grove Street, where my daughter learned to walk during the height of the pandemic. I am also a professor of urban studies and planning at the University of Maryland.

I have several comments about the greenway installation, particularly along Grove and Sligo Avenue.

**1. We need traffic calming at the top of Grove Street, immediately off of Sligo Avenue.** It is downhill and people speed making that turn (and driving up the hill). I asked for a temporary one several times over the past several years to test it and was deeply frustrated that DOT did not actually take seriously testing several different kinds of interventions.

**2. We need some kind of pedestrian actuated signal crossing at Grove and Sligo Avenue**. This intersection has heavy pedestrian traffic from Grove onto Sligo Avenue, especially those traveling east on Sligo Avenue.

**3. Taking out the circle on Silver Spring Avenue with no alternative traffic calming intervention is a dangerous mistake.** That intersection is dangerous and people coming from both east and west blow through that intersection without stopping or looking. Given the havey pedestrian traffic, including children walking to and from East Silver Spring Elementary, some kind of intervention is necessary at this intersection.

**4. Parking needs to be prohibited at all the Grove Street corners.** Right now, cars can park very close to the end of the block. This makes turning and passing near impossible and creates a hazard for drivers and also for pedestrians and bikers, as cars bump onto the walking lane to make turns and pass. 2 or 3 additional car lengths need to be blocked off as no parking allowed at Silver Spring, Thayer, Easley, and Bonifant.

**5. We need the crosswalk and curbcut at Twin Holly and Grove put back.** We had a curb cut and crosswalk at this intersection. It was taken away when the new Artscape townhomes were built. We have 8 children under the age of 7 who walk to school regularly and have to dangerously cross Grove Street with no traffic calming or access to a sidewalk. We also have elders who regularly walk in the neighborhood and are at risk.

6. Please advise DOT and planning to accurately name their design processes in ways that make sense to lay people, and not use technical designations. I have talked to several neighbors who cited DOT correspondence that says the design is "30% done" as instilling confidence that they have a lot of time and space to weigh in on the design that matters to them. In fact, this 30% metric is an internal measure that has to do with the full life cycle of

the project NOT the components that the public can weigh in on. The term is meaningless at best and misleading at worst for the community.

Hello,

I fully support the proposed projects. Please ensure there is good walkability at the proposed traffic circle. I'm concerned that if the circle is too "mountable" people will just run the intersection.

Please also make sure to coordinate with the purple line construction so that neighborhood residents are not trapped.

Thanks, Grant MacIntyre 8202 Cedar St, Silver Spring, MD 20910

rs., Sept. 12, 2024
r

Public Comments re East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway Hearing Date: Thurs. September 12, 2024 From: Stevan Lieberman and Debora McCormick 800 Silver Spring Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910

We support the entire East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway concept as it is the best solution for calming the Grove Street cut-through traffic attempting to circumvent downtown Silver Spring and makes the area safer for pedestrians and bicyclists, especially children going to school. However, we are concerned that MCDOT might misconstrue property boundaries and take some of our property along Grove Street for the sidewalk and sign placement.

The East Silver Spring neighborhood already experiences considerable amounts of reckless cut-through drivers along Grove Street and we expects cut-through traffic to get worse on Grove Street, Bonifant Street and Cedar Street once the Purple Line is completed. Consequently, Grove Street must be made pedestrian and bike friendly as it is a major walking and bicycling route for children attending East Silver Spring Elementary School and Takoma Park Middle School. We applaud the installation of the "walking lane" as it has increased pedestrian and bike traffic along Grove Street, a designated Community Bike Route for over 25 years. Unlike three years ago, people now perceive Grove Street as a safer place to walk and ride, but there are still problems with drivers running stop signs, driving recklessly, and speeding.

Another issue and our biggest concern about transitioning from the "walking lane" to sidewalks is by adding more concrete to current dirt / grassy areas along Grove Street it will increase the "heat island effect." **East Silver Spring now suffers from the "heat island effect' and impervious concrete surfaces will cause the areas closer to our homes to be hotter**. Moreover, with more frequent and intense rainstorms we believe permeable surfaces will allow better drainage.

Is it possible to use permeable surfaces, instead of impervious concrete for the

### sidewalks?

Although we support the East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway concept, there are concerns about the implementation of all the included treatments after reviewing Attachment A - Corridor Engineering Drawings submitted for the Sept. 12, 2024 hearing.

We have been advised of the following: "The Grove Street sidewalk will be located mostly in the same place as the existing walking lane, but some of it will extend behind the existing curb by around 2 feet. This is necessary to provide 2 feet of additional clearance for emergency vehicles. So essentially, the existing walking lane will be shifted back 2 feet and raised 6 inches." Matt Johnson, Bikeway Coordinator, Division of Transportation Engineering – MCDOT - Sept. 6, 2024 Email "RE: East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway – Planning Board Hearing 9/12".

Please be aware, our 800 Silver Spring Ave. property line runs 160 feet from Silver Spring Ave next to the west side of Grove Street with the wooden fence and brick wall on our property about 30 inches from ours and the MCDOT boundary line (2 ft measured from inside the current curb line and 3 ft into the roadway is where the sidewalk is to be installed). According to the Corridor Engineering Drawings on Pg. 54 and Pg. 67 it appears to show the sidewalk directly adjacent to our 6 ft wooden fence and MCDPT signage directly adjacent to the wall.

WE DO NOT WISH TO HAVE CONCRETE DIRECTLY ADJACENT TO OUR WOODEN FENCE AND BRICK WALL and we DO NOT WISH FOR MCDOT SIGNAGE TO BE PLACED AGAINST OUR WOODEN FENCE AND WALLS BECAUSE THE CONCRETE SIDEWALK AND SIGNAGE WILL BE ON OUR PROPERTY, NOT MCDOT'S PROPERTY.

Additionally, on Pg. 100 of Attachment A - Corridor Engineering Drawings there is a list of additional lighting to be installed on the East Silver Spring Neighborhood Greenway. **One item (L12-PP), PENDANT POLE (28.5 FT) with 100 watt LED light, is to be installed with an 8 FT Lighting Arm and Fixture on the SE CORNER OF SILVER SPRING AVENUE & GROVE STREET.** The list acknowledges that **there is currently a 100 watt LED Light on a 25 FT Pole with an 8 FT ARM on the NW CORNER OF SILVER SPRING AVENUE & GROVE STREET (L11-WP)**. The current NW Corner Utility Pole with the 8 FT Arm 100 Watt LED Light gives off so much light at night that the other light pole on the SW corner is not necessary. Currently, we can walk in our front yard at 800 Silver Spring Ave at night, and it seems as bright as daylight. A few residents on that corner use "black out curtains" at night to decrease the light pollution from the light on the pole at the NW CORNER of Silver Spring Ave & Grove Street. We and our neighbors agree, <u>do not put</u>

## another light pole on the SW CORNER of Silver Ave & Grove Street.

In conclusion, we request 1) the project take NOT MORE THAN 24 inches (2 ft) MEASURED FROM INSIDE THE CURRENT CURB LINE (and less if possible) of the dirt / grassy areas along the west side of Grove Street for constructing the sidewalk; 2) the MCDOT signage not be placed against our fence and walls at 800 Silver Spring Ave. as they are not on MCDOT property; 3) DO NOT INSTALL a 28.5 ft Pendant Pole with 100 watt LED Light on the SE Corner of Silver Spring Ave & Grove Street; and 4) MCDOT use permeable surfaces for the sidewalk.

Thanks you for accepting these comments.

Stevan H. Lieberman Debora J. McCormick 800 Silver Spring Ave. Silver Spring, MD. 20910 202-270-4802

Hello,

Thank you for the Planning Board hearing notice regarding greenway plans. I've lived with my family on Silver Spring Ave and Grove Street for 15 years. While we welcome the efforts to traffic calm and create greenways for pedestrians and cyclists, the infrastructure that has been installed is an 'eye sore'. We really do not like the white/reflective ballyards and striped painted roadway in front of our house and neighbors have expressed the same feelings. It is unsightly and makes the neighborhood feel too urban instead of the lovely residential feeling it had previously.

The traffic circle roundabout and three signs sticking up at the intersection of Grove and Silver Spring are really awful looking and cars do not know how to navigate around them. I have seen near accidents with vehicles, cyclists, and scooters. Can we not have a roundabout like the one on Gist Ave with flowers and plants to beautify the neighborhood instead of that awful traffic circle? It would serve the same purpose without yellow plastic ground barriers and ugly three signs sticking up (which are now bent front being hit).

The yellow ground barriers and reflective ballyards on Grove are ugly too and get hit and broken by vehicles and lie on the side of the road as broken rubbish. Can we not just establish a pedestrian and bike lane with unobtrusive signage, maybe arrows painted on the pavement to make the infrastructure less intrusive? Or, paint a green pedestrian / bike lane?

Again, we very much support greenway efforts, but wish it can be done in a way that is unintrusive and blends in rather than de-beautify our neighborhood.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards, Jonathan Ban