

Pamela A. Witzak, LLC  
 LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE  
 SINCE 1989



18620 Tanterra Way  
 Brookeville, MD 20833

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
 THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
 PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

October 14, 2003

Mr. Derick P. Berlage, Chairman  
 Montgomery County Planning Board  
 MNCPPC  
 8787 Georgia Avenue  
 Silver Spring, MD 20910

VIA FACSIMILIE

Dear Mr. Berlage,

There are two proposals pending for the Olney area, affecting the Olney Master Plan, both of which I oppose because they would negatively impact the quality of life for our current and future residents.

The first proposal, as part of the Olney Master Plan, addresses the idea of building a dedicated bus lane down the middle of Georgia Avenue, from 108 to the Glenmont Metro station. Expenses, in the millions, would be huge; transportation congestion relief would be nil.

People move to Olney to get away from urban concentration and mass transit. Those who use the metro system prefer to drive to a metro station, where parking is available, and begin their commute there. People value MOST the quality of life they have - lower crime rates, cleaner streets, safer neighborhoods - while living in an area off main transportation routes. If we wanted easy access to busses and metro routes we would reside in downtown Silver Spring, Wheaton, etc. In spite of their transportation access, how popular are those areas proving to be for business and residential development?

Those of us who live in Olney/Brookeville make a conscious choice to sacrifice some commuting ease when we move to this area. We expect to be supported in our decisions by our county government. Current bus ridership fully supports my contention that people move here to get away from mass transit. Even during peak rush hours (including routes to/from major employer Montgomery General Hospital) there are never more than 10-12 people on a bus. Why do these people need a dedicated bus lane? Are these people even traveling South into metro areas. In order for a bus lane to be remotely economically feasible, current and projected ridership would have to equal at least a quarter of the Olney/Brookeville commuting community. While many of us commute, the number of people traveling to metro-served areas is much smaller than the number of us going to non-metro areas such as Rockville, Gaithersburg, Columbia, Greenbelt, etc. We don't need a bus lane.

But a dedicated bus lane is not the only detrimental proposal being considered currently in Olney. Developers DelWebb and Pulte wish to build a 716 unit "active adult community" off Route 108, across from the OBGC playing fields. This would introduce a huge amount of all-time traffic (probably 716 vehicles or more) onto Route 108, which is a rural two lane highway.

In 2000, I commissioned a traffic study to determine the feasibility of building an 85 child day care center at the corner of Muncaster Road and Route 108. The results of the study indicated that at that time already three of the four studied intersections were or would be traffic laden beyond capacity either during the a.m. rush hour, during the p.m. rush hour or during both; OR were overburdened all the time. All of the "drive by" traffic had been allocated to OBGC for their playing fields - OBGC does not contribute to rush hour traffic.

Tel: (301) 774-6977 • Fax: (301) 774-6977 • E-mail: jwitzak@hotmail.com

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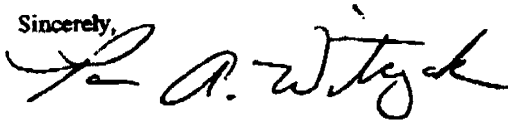
This means that Route 108 would need to become at least a four lane highway - to accommodate increased traffic - and stop lights would need to be added at the intersections of Fieldcrest and 108 and Bowie Mill and 108. There is already a tremendous traffic backup on 108 during every rush hour. Adding an additional 716 potential vehicles and more stop lights would create a nightmare. We would lose our woods and the entire rural feel of that area, while inviting the type of future "strip" development none of us wants to see.

Not only do we not want the traffic, we do not need another "active adult" community. Leisure World, on Georgia Avenue, has available space. Sandy Spring Friends, on Norwood, and now Brooke Grove, both have independent living areas. The Marian House, Andrew Kim House, Sandy Spring Friends and Brooke Grove all offer assisted living facilities. Why do we need more "adult" housing in Olney?

Both the dedicated bus lane and the "active adult community" are bad news for Olney. They would substantially negatively impact the quality of life of all of us in the Olney/Brookeville area by bringing unwanted outside influences to our community; destroying wooded, rural areas; adding to transportation costs and difficulties without relieving congestion and put greater stress on our already taxed public safety, fire and EMS capabilities.

Stop the bus lane; we don't want it, need it, or want our taxes to pay for it. Stop the "active adult community" development; we don't want it or need it. Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,



Pamela A. Witzak

cc: Sharlene Monroe

**Afzal, Khalid**  
**From:** selswick@juno.com  
**Sent:** Friday, October 17, 2003 2:08 PM  
**To:** Berlage, Derick  
**Cc:** Afzal, Khalid  
**Subject:** Comments on Olney Master Plan Revision



busway.wpd

My apologies if I have sent this message to the wrong person. I have attached a WordPerfect document that is a copy of the email below. If I need to submit our comments differently, please let me know. Thanks you.

---

2003 October 18

Mr. Derick P. Berlage  
Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
MNCPPC  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

fax: 301-495-1320

Subject: Comments on the Olney Master Plan Revision/Transportation Section

Dear Mr. Berlage:

The individuals whose names appear at the end of this message support the proposed Georgia Avenue Busway in the revised Olney Master Plan to be constructed in the center median strip of Georgia Avenue from the Glenmont Metro station to Spartan Road in Olney. We cite the following reasons:

- 1) The Busway will address a growing need to alleviate traffic congestion in the Olney area. A Busway would encourage riders to leave their cars at home and commute via bus. Since most commuters ride alone, this would remove a large number of cars from Georgia Avenue during the morning commute. This would also benefit those who will not or cannot abandon their cars, and those who travel in car pools.
- 2) A Busway would help those commuters who cannot commute by car or carpool. Many commuters have no other choice but the bus. A Busway would take their needs into account.
- 3) Fewer cars on Georgia Avenue means less pollution and better air quality in the DC Metro region. The DC area already fails to comply with clean air laws. Reducing the number of cars on the road would help alleviate this noncompliance.
- 4) In the future, Georgia Avenue will probably require expansion to accommodate the growing traffic. We can simply add a third lane in each direction and watch the traffic grow until the road fails, or we can add a third lane in each direction and remove cars from the road.
- 5) Building the Busway enhances Olney's quality of life. We see less traffic and less pollution as desirable goals.

Certain individuals have circulated a petition against the concept of the Busway and we feel we must respond to some of their claims. We respond to each of their arguments below.

- (1) **Keep Olney "Green"** - In the Transportation Section of the Olney Master Plan, the MNCPPC states numerous times its desire to "minimize the adverse environmental impacts of additional pavement" (p. 81); "seek features that enhance the 'rural gateway' concept for southern Georgia Avenue approaching Olney" (p. 84); and "preserve and enhance the rural and agricultural character of the area" (p. 86). In addition, of the 600 informal surveys returned to the MNCPPC, a majority (70.1%) of respondents stated that they [i.e., Olney residents] "are willing to live with some level of congestion to maintain their suburban, semi-rural quality of life." (See p. 81 of the Olney Master Plan and pp. 1 and 10 of The Gazette, "Traffic, Development Top Concerns of Olney Residents," July 3, 2002, Dianne Davenport.) Residents of Olney move to the area to enjoy a rural, pastoral setting with good schools and a strong family-based community. Bringing a bus line to Olney would negatively affect these positive elements and instead bring unwanted overdevelopment to our area—and with it the unpleasant noise, congestion, pollution and crime that follow.

The argument that a Busway would adversely affect Olney's "suburban, semi-rural quality of life" makes little sense. Opponents of the Busway have failed to give any reasons why bus service would bring unwanted overdevelopment to Olney. Developers have already built out most of the Olney area. The Busway itself will only claim the median of Georgia Avenue and an area for the buses to collect riders in Olney. In point of fact, Olney already has bus service. We already experience any so-called negative effects of bus service. A Busway will not change that. The Busway primarily seeks to accomodate commuters who either already live in Olney or who will in the future, or those who already commute through Olney. Many of us who actually grew up in a rural area would point out the features of a "rural quality of life" would include less traffic and less pollution—not more.

- (2) **Olney Suffers From a Barrage of Non-County Traffic** - As of 1995, over 9,000 vehicles passed through Brookeville each day with an expected increase to 18,000 vehicles by 2020 (p. 85 of the Master Plan). These commuters add considerable congestion and additional time to our commute each day and are unlikely to get out of their cars to utilize public transportation. Olney residents should not pay the price of further development in its community to accommodate non-County residents.

True, non-county, pass-through traffic will double by 2020. And if these commuters do not get out of their cars, then Olney will have their vehicles passing through anyway. The more we can encourage these commuters to take

public transportation, the fewer vehicles we will have passing through our community. In other words, if you have a concern about pass-through traffic, you should support the Busway.

- (3) **Low Ridership** - Of the 12,000 working households in Olney, only 17% are employed in Washington, D.C. (2,040 individuals). Of this number, only 7% take public transportation (143 individuals), which compares to a general Metro ridership of 13% elsewhere in the County. Many Olney residents are highly paid professionals who would not utilize public transportation for many reasons: free employer-provided parking, inconvenience (in inclement weather, etc.), increased time needed to take public transportation, inconvenient for getting to business meetings/clients, lack of flexibility for daily family responsibilities (picking up children from sporting and/or extracurricular activities, etc.), emergencies, other issues that may arise during the normal work day.

Low ridership has many root causes, not just the speculative ones mentioned in the petition. We suggest that the following factors might also cause low ridership:

- Metro and Ride-On have not adequately marketed the existing routes. Many Olney residents do not even know they exist or what areas they serve.

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- Commuters have not always had reliable bus service on the routes that exist. Mechanical problems with the buses and scheduling problems with the routes discourage ridership.

Some folks will never take transit to work, even if a Busway makes it a better option. But some will use transit if we make it easier and quicker.

And, we might also point out that a number of commuters do not work in D.C. but still use transit. Many workers commute to Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, Bethesda, Virginia, and Prince Georges County. These workers might welcome a transit option that gets them to a Metro Station or transfer point that would shorten their commute.

- (4) Safety Concerns at Metro Subway Stops - Much crime has been reported at the Wheaton and Glenmont parking facilities, both with respect to car break-ins and personal assaults. During the winter these numbers increase due to a lack of natural lighting. Commuters are not going to ride a transportation system if safety concerns are an issue.

Many factors go into why crime occurs in certain areas. If bus or metro service brought crime, then we would see high crime at other locations such as Bethesda and Shady Grove. Those opposed to the Busway cite no data to show that bus service increases crime, probably because it does not exist.

- (5) Excessive Cost to Benefit Few - The cost of constructing a seven-mile dedicated Busway from the Glenmont Metro Station to Spartan Road in Olney would exceed several million dollars, destroy valuable green space in our community, and waste the taxpayers' dollars of many to benefit very few. Surely a better use of taxpayers' money could be found (e.g., more parking facilities at Glenmont Metro (which fills up by 7:00 a.m. each day), timed lights on Georgia Avenue for speedier southbound travel in the morning, or express bus service from the Norbeck parking lot to the Glenmont station).

A Busway benefits everyone. The fewer drivers on Georgia Avenue, the better the commute for those who continue to drive. Those who want to commute by car should support the Busway to make their own commutes faster.

- (6) Poor/Inadequate Parking Facilities Proposed by the Master Plan - Longwood Recreation Center and/or the Montgomery General Hospital are not viable options. The Longwood Rec Center is already very short on parking facilities for the events it now hosts and there is little room for adding additional parking, much less providing enough additional parking for a commuter lot. The Montgomery General Hospital likewise does not have enough available space for commuter parking.

We agree that we should site any facility carefully with regard to traffic concerns. Longwood has little room for parking, but could serve as a neighborhood pickup point. A large area across Prince Philip Drive from MGH

could easily accommodate a bus center; it features access to major roads in a central location.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Although we have only a few names attached to this message, rest assured that many more bus riders share our views—we just had little time to share this message with them and get their approval to affix their names.

Sincerely,

Olney Residents Supporting the Georgia Avenue Busway

Nadia Bakhshi  
Sau Lai Chung  
Stanley Elswick  
Margarita Bautista-Vigas

October 10, 2003

OCT 16 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Derick P. Berlage  
Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
MNCPPC  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

fax: 301-495-1320

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(3) Low Ridership - Of the 12,000 working households in Olney, only 17% are employed in Washington, D.C. (2,040 individuals). Of this number, only 7% take public transportation (143 individuals), which compares to a general Metro ridership of 13% elsewhere in the County. Many Olney residents are highly paid professionals who would not utilize public transportation for many reasons: free employer-provided parking,

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Please listen to the surveyed residents, the residents below, and the goals that the MNCPPC itself has put forth and **keep Olney green.**

Thank you!

NAME	ADDRESS
Elizabeth Molina	18713 Heritage Hills Dr. Brookeville, MD.
Leri Edwards	18737 Considine Dr. Brookeville MD.
Melissa Grayly	19257 Treadway Rd. Brookeville, MD
Steven Wetsel	7722 Silver Hammer Way, Brookeville, MD
Jim Vnes	2834 Abbey Manor Circle Brookeville MD
Jeff Bales	18760 Olney Hill Rd Olney, MD
Kevin H. Chaff	2612 Owens Rd Brookeville MD
Merna Kurbic	19124 Heritage Hills Drive



NAME

ADDRESS

Chryse	18802 Civitan Club Way, Brookeville MD 20833
MARY Costello	2519 ST GEORGE WAY BROOKVILLE MD 20833
Jennifer Oser	2856 Abby Maria Cir Brookeville 20833
Freddi Wendor	2000 Carter Mill Way Brookeville MD 20833
Cindy Cohen	18472 Heritage Hills Dr. Olney Md. 20832
Johanna Ashwood	19161 Alpenglow Lane, Brookeville MD 20833
<del>Bye Alex</del>	<del>3001 Verdant Court Brookeville MD 20833</del>
Camp Gaur	19009 Heritage Hills Dr Brookeville 20833
Elizabeth Jemern	19001 Starkey Ter Brookeville MD 20833
Jim J Jemern	19001 Starkey Ter. Brookeville MD 20833
Beth Cole	19120 Heritage Hills Dr. Brookeville MD 20833
Jodie Siarkas	3309 Examine Rd Brookeville MD 20833
Elizabeth Lakey	3008 Dubany Lane Brookeville, MD 20833
Kathy Bell	19004 Heritage Hills Dr Brookeville MD 20833
Kim Wallace	4409 Cherry Valley Dr, Rockville 20853
Roger + Deena Friedman	3804 Wingleaf Ct., Rockville 20853
Colleen Williams	19148 Heritage Hill Dr., Brookeville 20833
Bobby Marley	" " " "

The Following Are Signatures Of Olney and Brookeville, Maryland Residents Who Oppose The MC-MNCPPC's Recommendation To Create The Georgia Avenue Busway in the median strip of Georgia Avenue for the purpose of connecting Olney with the Glenmont Metro Station. This plan would waste a significant portion of taxpayers' money and provide little benefit for few in return. This plan would also greatly diminish the rural and agricultural character of Georgia Avenue south of Olney and would, subsequently, adversely affect the attractiveness of Georgia Avenue entering Olney.

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE (Optional)
Michele Waters	19324 DUBARRY DR BROOKEVILLE MD 20837	
Cheryl Dando	2900 Vandever St. Brookeville MD 20833	
Dawn Sadler	18623 Shadowridge Terrace Olney MD 20832	
Valerie Kuyatte	2100 Brighton Dam Rd Brookeville, md 20833	
Gerald Charles Jr.	2112 Rose Theatre Circle Olney MD 20832	
James Lane	4509 Winding Oak Dr Olney MD 20832	
Dana Lyde	4528 Winding Oak DR Olney, MD 20832	
KRISTA PAQUIN	2000 Birthday Ct. Brookeville, MD 20833	
Peter L Buzzy	2001 Birthday Ct Brookeville, MD 20833	
Eric Paquin	2000 Birthday Ct. Brookeville MD 20833	
Deborah Buchanan	4538 Boastfield Lane Olney MD 20832	
Will, Michael	18304 Bluebell LN Olney MD 20832	
Joe Jimmy	17521 LONGVIEW LN. OLNEY MD. 20832	
MARIC MILLER	4807 WALTONSHIRE CIR OLNEY MD 20832	
John Splain	18908 Alpenlow Lane Brookeville MD 20833	

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NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE (Optional)
PAT McMAHAN	Brookeville, md 3324 GOLDMINE RD	301-924-4616
Kenny Ray	17715 GLOBE THEATRE NR OLNEY MD 20832	301-924-2220
SPENCER BRYANT	2006 ROSE THEATRE circle Olney MD 20832	301-570-2494

Montgomery  
For inclusion in Public Hearing Record  
Re: Olney Master Plan  
Date of Hearing: 9-25-03  
Date Rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_  
Corres. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

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*G. Anne [unclear]*

October 15, 2003

VIA FACSIMILE - 301-495-1320

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Derick P. Berlage  
Chairman  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
MNCPPC  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Mr. Berlage:

We would like to voice our **opposition to the proposed Georgia Avenue Busway** to be constructed in the center median strip of Georgia Avenue, from the Glenmont Metro station to Spartan Road in Olney. Some, not all, of the reasons follow:

(1) Keep Olney "Green" - In the Transportation Section of the Olney Master Plan, the MNCPPC states numerous times its desire to "minimize the adverse environmental impacts of additional pavement" (p. 81); "seek features that enhance the 'rural gateway' concept for southern Georgia Avenue approaching Olney" (p. 84); and "preserve and enhance the rural and agricultural character of the area" (p. 86). In addition, of the 600 informal surveys returned to the MNCPPC, a majority (70.1%) of respondents stated that they [i.e., Olney residents] "are willing to live with some level of congestion to maintain their suburban, semi-rural quality of life." (See p. 81 of the Olney Master Plan and pp. 1 and 10 of *The Gazette*, "Traffic, Development Top Concerns of Olney Residents," July 3, 2002, Dianne Davenport.) Residents of Olney move to the area to enjoy a rural, pastoral setting with good schools and a strong family-based community. *Bringing a bus line to Olney would negatively affect these positive elements and instead bring unwanted overdevelopment to our area -- and with it the unpleasant noise, congestion, pollution and crime that follow.*

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Please listen to the surveyed residents, the residents below, and the goals that the MNCPPC itself has put forth and *keep Olney green.*

Thank you!

*Elaine Hirsch*

Elaine M. Hirsch  
18263 Rolling Meadow Way  
Olney, Maryland 20832

*Rosalee Snowden*

Rosalee Snowden  
18261 Rolling Meadow Way  
Olney, Maryland 20832

October 17, 2003

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
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Mr. Derick P. Berlage  
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Please listen to the surveyed residents, the residents below, and the goals that the MNCPPC itself has put forth and *keep Olney green.*

Thank you!

Dale Ann Pearlman  
President  
Homeland Village Condominium Association

Ellen Soldan  
Vice President  
Homeland Village Condominium Association

Elaine Hirsch  
Secretary  
Homeland Village Condominium Association

Shirley Bogage  
Treasurer  
Homeland Village Condominium Association

Don Duff  
Director  
Homeland Village Condominium Association

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Dear Mr. Berlage:

The following individuals indicate, by signature below, their *opposition to the proposed Georgia Avenue Busway* to be constructed in the center median strip of Georgia Avenue, from the Glenmont Metro station to Spartan Road in Olney. Some, not all, of the reasons follow:

(1) Keep Olney "Green" - In the Transportation Section of the Olney Master Plan, the MNCPPC states numerous times its desire to "minimize the adverse environmental impacts of additional pavement" (p. 81); "seek features that enhance the 'rural gateway' concept for southern Georgia Avenue approaching Olney" (p. 84); and "preserve and enhance the rural and agricultural character of the area" (p. 86). In addition, of the 600 informal surveys returned to the MNCPPC, a **majority (70.1%) of respondents** stated that they [*i.e.*, Olney residents] "are willing to live with some level of congestion to maintain their suburban, semi-rural quality of life." (See p. 81 of the Olney Master Plan and pp. 1 and 10 of *The Gazette*, "Traffic, Development Top Concerns of Olney Residents," July 3, 2002, Dianne Davenport.) Residents of Olney move to the area to enjoy a rural, pastoral setting with good schools and a strong family-based community. *Bringing a bus line to Olney would negatively affect these positive elements and instead bring unwanted overdevelopment to our area -- and with it the unpleasant noise, congestion, pollution and crime that follow.*

(2) Olney Suffers From a Barrage of Non-County Traffic - As of 1995, over 9,000 vehicles passed through Brookeville each day with an expected increase to 18,000 vehicles by 2020 (p. 85 of the Master Plan). These commuters add considerable congestion and additional time to our commute each day and are unlikely to get out of their cars to utilize public transportation. *Olney residents should not pay the price of further development in its community to accommodate non-County residents.*

(3) Low Ridership - Of the 12,000 working households in Olney, only 17% are employed in Washington, D.C. (2,040 individuals). Of this number, only 7% take public transportation (143 individuals), which compares to a general Metro ridership of 13% elsewhere in the County. Many Olney residents are highly paid professionals who would not utilize public transportation for many reasons: free employer-provided parking,



inconvenience (in inclement weather, etc.), increased time needed to take public transportation, inconvenient for getting to business meetings/clients, lack of flexibility for daily family responsibilities (picking up children from sporting and/or extracurricular activities, etc.), emergencies, other issues that may arise during the normal work day.

(4) Safety Concerns at Metro Subway Stops - Much crime has been reported at the Wheaton and Glenmont parking facilities, both with respect to car break-ins and personal assaults. During the winter these numbers increase due to a lack of natural lighting. *Commuters are not going to ride a transportation system if safety concerns are an issue.*

(5) Excessive Cost to Benefit Few - The cost of constructing a seven-mile dedicated busway from the Glenmont Metro Station to Spartan Road in Olney would exceed several million dollars, destroy valuable green space in our community, and waste the taxpayers' dollars of many to benefit very few. Surely a better use of taxpayers' money could be found (e.g., more parking facilities at Glenmont Metro (which fills up by 7:00 a.m. each day), timed lights on Georgia Avenue for speedier southbound travel in the morning, or express bus service from the Norbeck parking lot to the Glenmont station).

(6) Poor/Inadequate Parking Facilities Proposed by the Master Plan - Longwood Recreation Center and/or the Montgomery General Hospital are not viable options. The Longwood Rec Center is already very short on parking facilities for the events it now hosts and there is little room for adding additional parking, much less providing enough additional parking for a commuter lot. The Montgomery General Hospital likewise does not have enough available space for commuter parking.

Please listen to the surveyed residents, the residents below, and the goals that the MNCPPC itself has put forth and *keep Olney green.*

Thank you!

*Timothy A. Sterling  
The Highlands of Olney  
Civic Association, Inc.  
Tel. 301-924-2243*

COMMENTS BY  
SHARLENE MONROE  
ON THE  
GEORGIA AVENUE BUSWAY  
OLNEY MASTER PLAN  
PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT  
JULY 2003

September 25, 2003

Good evening ladies and gentlemen of the Planning Commission; thank you for providing this opportunity to receive public comment on the Olney Master Plan, (hereafter the "Master Plan").

My name is Sharlene Monroe and I live in Brookeville, Maryland, a neighboring community north of Olney. I was born in Washington, D.C. and have lived in Montgomery County since childhood. During that time I have seen a lot of development in the County -- and wish this evening to bring to light one proposed development plan to which I, and many in my community, are opposed.

Beginning on page 84, and continuing in detail on page 94 of the Master Plan, the Park & Planning Commission<sup>1</sup> is recommending the construction of an express busway in the grassy median strip of Georgia Avenue, which would be called the Georgia Avenue Busway. This proposal calls for the construction of "a two-lane, bi-directional, bus-only roadway to be constructed within the Georgia Avenue median for ... the seven miles between the Glenmont Metrorail station and the vicinity of Spartan Road,"<sup>2</sup> which is just south of the Georgia Avenue and Rt. 108 intersection. This Busway would provide southbound express commuter buses in the morning and northbound express commuter buses in the evening, and would be dedicated solely for the use of buses. This recommendation, however, is in direct contrast to the Park & Planning's desire to create

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

<sup>2</sup> Olney Master Plan, Public Hearing Draft, July 2003, pages 94-95.

attractive streets that minimize the adverse environmental impact of additional pavement.<sup>3</sup>

I. Olney Residents Live Here To Get *Away* From Congestion

Commuters who need to be near public transportation will choose housing in those areas -- Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, Bethesda -- not Olney. Olney residents will cite many reasons for choosing to live here -- a nice community, good schools, affordable housing and environmental aesthetics. On the first page of Master Plan's Transportation Plan (p. 81), the Park & Planning Commission refers to an informal survey in which *a majority of [Olney] residents stated that they are willing to live with some level of congestion in order to maintain their suburban, semi-rural quality of life.*

People move to Olney to get *away* from traffic, the subway, and the over-development and congestion of southern Montgomery County. To the north, east and west of Olney, we are surrounded by horse stables, working farms and open green space - - which comprise some of the few remaining vestiges of open green space left in Montgomery County. The Park & Planning Commission concurs with this statement, as they write "*one of the[ir] goals ... is to preserve and enhance the rural and agricultural character of the area.*"<sup>4</sup>

How many individuals present here tonight can attest to the congested, overbuilt and unsightly northbound drive that comprises Georgia Avenue from the District? One gas station, shopping center, apartment complex and street light, after another ... for 12

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<sup>3</sup> *Id.*, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*, p. 86.

long miles, until you finally hit a breath of fresh air upon approaching Leisure World, just south of Rt. 28. As you cross Rt. 28, you enter what the Park & Planning Commission refers to as Olney's "rural gateway"<sup>5</sup> -- Georgia Avenue's tree-lined boulevard and its wide, grassy median strip between the north and south bound lanes. I have heard many comments from my own friends and neighbor's friends on how much they enjoy Olney and its surrounding areas (Brookeville, Laytonsville, Sandy Spring, etc.), and specifically mention the rural character of Olney and how pleasant they find the "entrance" into Olney -- Georgia Avenue's tree-lined boulevard.

## II. Public Bus Transportation Not a Favorable Method of Transportation

In the Master Plan<sup>6</sup> it is mentioned that of approximately 12,000 households in the Olney area,<sup>7</sup> 17 percent of employed Olney residents work in Washington, D.C. Of that number, I am told,<sup>8</sup> seven percent (7%) take public transportation. This contrasts sharply with overall general Metro ridership in Montgomery County of 13%. The Parking & Planning Commission also states that "the long commuting distance and workplace parking costs ... define a market of users for whom *public transit is a preferable commuting option, if made sufficiently attractive.*"<sup>9</sup> I, and other members of the greater Olney community, could not disagree more vehemently.

I am one of those 17% of Olney residents who work in D.C. and one of the 93% majority who does *not* take public transportation, but instead chooses to drive to work

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<sup>5</sup> *Id.*, p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*, p. 94.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*, p. 82.

<sup>8</sup> By telephone conversation with Dan Hardy, Transportation Division, MNCPPC, on Tuesday, September 16, 2003.

each day. I have spoken to *many* friends and neighbors in the Olney area who also drive downtown to work. I would like to explain, through my own personal example, some of the reasons why we make this choice:

1. Timeliness. At present, it takes me one hour to commute to work (at 12<sup>th</sup> & Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.). If I were to instead drive to a subway stop, park, wait for the subway, ride the subway and then walk two blocks to work, my commute time to work would likely *increase* to 90 minutes.

Now, if I were to ride a bus along the Georgia Avenue Busway, *first* I'd have to get there. Which means taking a feeder bus from my community or parking somewhere (see page six of this statement for comment on this subject) near the Georgia Avenue Busway to wait for a bus. I would then ride that bus to the subway, wait for a subway train, take that downtown, and walk two blocks to work; my commute time has now easily been increased to 1-1/2 hours or more. And this is during "rush-hour" time schedules with additional buses and trains running. In inclement weather or subway failure, my commute would lengthen even more.

2. Not Feasible in Family Emergency. In a two-income household with children, the daily task of dropping off and picking up children to school and/or daycare may fall on one or both of the parents. If an emergency arose in the middle of the day (*i.e.*, sick or injured child), one parent has to leave work to attend that child, and usually it's me. If I were a bus/subway commuter, my "rush" hour commute of 1-1/2 hours would now be increased to 2 to 3 hours during "non-rush" hour bus/metro schedules. However, in the same scenario, if I had driven my car to work, my emergency commute

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<sup>9</sup> Olney Master Plan, Public Hearing Draft, July 2003, p. 94.

would have been made *faster*, because rush hour is over, and now I would get home in 45-50 minutes because of the reduced traffic on the road.

3. No After-Work "Errands" Can be Performed. When one commits to riding the bus and subway, one commits to a daily home-to-work, work-to-home schedule, with no options for stopping by the store, picking up a child from an evening sporting or dance activity, attending an after-work business function, visiting someone in the hospital, or a multitude of other tasks one may schedule on their commute home. This is very limiting for most people with busy lives and family responsibilities.

### III. Georgia Avenue Bus Lane Not the Solution

*The Dollars of Many Will be Wasted to Benefit the Few.* As I mentioned earlier, the Master Plan states that 17% of Olney residents work in Washington, D.C., and of that percentage, 7% take public transportation. That means that out of 12,000 households, 17%, or 2,040, work downtown. Of that number, 7%, or 143 (142.8 rounded up), ride the Metro system, whether in the form of bus, subway or both. If the Georgia Avenue Busway were to be constructed, how many more would ride the subway? Five? Ten? Fifteen? Not many, for statistics show that Olney residents do not choose to ride public transportation, but instead prefer their cars. Is the County willing to waste tens of millions of tax payer dollars,<sup>10</sup> and destroy the "rural and agricultural" southern gateway into Olney to construct a busway for the benefit of 10 or 15 people?

*Excessive Commute Time.* If, at present, it takes an hour (sometimes more) to commute downtown, who is willing to add time to their commute? Or the added

inconvenience of taking public transportation? (Carrying a briefcase, purse, umbrella for two hours; ruining good shoes in bad weather or having to carry them to avoid the problem, standing most of the way home on the train because the subway is so full there aren't any seats, etc.) Not *any* that I've met.

***Excessive Traffic on Georgia Avenue Caused by Non-County Residents.*** Olney residents should not have to suffer further development to its community to accommodate non-County residents who live in northern, greener areas (*i.e.*, less development per square mile).

As noted on page 85 of the Master Plan, the Average Daily Traffic volume along Georgia Avenue in the vicinity of Brookeville was 9,000 vehicles in 1995 and expected to increase to 18,000 vehicles in 2020. *Much of this traffic is coming from the northern counties of Howard and Carroll counties.* These commuters are not likely to get out of their cars to park at various parking lots in Olney (none yet constructed or viable: Longwood Recreation Center (lot too small), Montgomery General Hospital campus (no available parking and premises out of the way) and/or "shared parking agreements with commercial development within the Olney Town Center"<sup>11</sup> (this is the only lot in Olney with additional parking available; if the Town Center finally gets connected to the Village Town Center, I can't imagine store owners agreeing to this)) to then continue their commute via public transportation.

***Olney Residents Leave for Howard County?*** Once the last vestige of green space is gone in Montgomery County, where does one go? Many residents may choose to follow their predecessors in the "northern flight" and move further up and out of

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<sup>10</sup> Per Khalid Afzal, Park and Planning Commission, telephone conversation of 9/25/03.



Montgomery County into Howard and Carroll Counties. This will only further diminish a declining tax base on which to fund Montgomery County programs.

#### IV. Solutions

***Bring the metro up to Aspen Hill or Norbeck Road.*** Most people I speak with will consider taking the subway if it is closer, but would *never* consider taking the bus, no matter how "attractive" an option the County believes it to be.

***Sync traffic lights with rush-hour traffic to quicken travel times in morning and evening.*** Knowing traffic flows south in the morning and north in the evening, time the lights to provide quicker movement in those directions and diminish the backup of traffic that can be created by long light times.

***Create a larger parking facility at Glenmont subway station.*** At present, this small lot fills up by 7:10 a.m. most mornings, I am told. This certainly decreases commuters' interest in taking the subway if they know no available parking awaits them when they arrive at the station, and are now left to continue their drive further down Georgia Avenue to seek available parking. (I have also experienced a full Wheaton parking garage on many occasions as well, and am then left with driving all the way downtown, and have now increased my commute time even further because of the additional stops I had to make to check out parking facilities. This only dampens one's efforts to try public transportation since subway parking facilities are not as available or reliable as parking facilities at work in the city (which always has space!)).

In closing, whether any of the above suggestions are considered feasible, the one resounding response I have heard stated over and over again to the Park & Planning

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<sup>11</sup> Olney Master Plan, Public Hearing Draft, July 2003, p. 95

Commission's proposal to create this Busway is one of shock, surprise and horror -- no one has been made aware of it, and no one wants to see it brought to fruition. Many residents in Olney remember "old" Georgia Avenue, one lane each way, before it was widened to its current size (four-lane divided roadway). These and many other Olney residents would like to see Georgia Avenue remain as rural as possible, to maintain the beauty and rural characteristics of our community and to welcome them home each evening -- with its tree-lined street and wide center grassy strip.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Montgomery  
For inclusion in Public Hearing Record  
Re: Olney Master Plan  
Date of Hearing: 9-25-03  
Date Rec'd: \_\_\_\_\_  
Corres. No.: \_\_\_\_\_

*G. April B...*

**Preller, Barbara**

**From:** Bmlar@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 07, 2003 11:27 AM  
**To:** MCP-Chairman  
**Subject:** RE: Objection to Dedicated Bus Lane From Glenmont To Olney

**RECEIVED**  
1341  
OCT 07 2003

**OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION**

Dear Mr. Belage:

Please stop plans to have a dedicated bus lane between Olney and Glenmont. My husband and I are Olney residents and have lived here for many years. We are totally against and strongly object to having a dedicated bus lane between Olney and Glenmont for the same reasons of another Olney resident as follow:

This busway will cost tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer money to construct and destroy valuable green space in our community (how many of your friends comment how pretty they think Olney is and love the attractive drive entering our community?)

The Olney Master Plan states that Olney is comprised of 12,000 households, 17% of whom work in Washington, D.C. (2,040 individuals). The County feels this defines a market of users for whom "public transit is a preferable commuting option, if made sufficiently attractive" (p. 94 of the Master Plan). I strongly disagree, for which reasons follow:

**Low Ridership** - Of the 2,040 who work downtown, only 7% ride public transportation (and not necessarily the bus, but the Metro subway system) for a total of 143 people (FYI, this compares to a general Metro ridership of 13% in the rest of the County). If the County constructs the busway, how much would ridership increase? Ten - 15 people? Is it worth tens of millions of dollars to construct a busway for a handful of people? Though the MNCPPC has claimed it wishes to maintain the "rural and agricultural characteristics" of Olney and "seeks features that enhance the rural gateway concept for southern Georgia Avenue entering Olney" (pp. 86 and 84 of the Master Plan, respectively), the MNCPPC's decision to construct this dedicated busway flies in direct contrast to their more "environmentally correct" statements.

**Poor Parking Facilities** ? Where are all these people who take the new bus going to park? They suggest Longwood Rec. Center, the Montgomery General complex or the parking lot at the theatres. I'm sure you think the same of these suggestions as I ? not very feasible (or yet definite or constructed).

**Increased Commute Time** ? I work downtown and take an hour to get to work; if I take public transportation, my ride is increased by 15 minutes if I take the subway, longer if I were to take the subway AND BUS. Who has additional time in their schedule to ride public transportation? I don't.

**Not Feasible in Family Emergency** ? If one of my children are sick or injured, during non-rush hour schedules, my commute could take almost two hours (maybe more!); if I drove, my car will get me home in 45-50 minutes.

**Excessive Traffic from Howard and Carroll County Residents** ? In 1995 the Average Daily Traffic volume on Georgia Avenue was 9,000 vehicles; in 2020 it is expected to increase to 18,000 vehicles (p. 85 of the Master Plan). These non-County commuters add considerable congestion and additional time to our commute each workday. Will these commuters take the dedicated

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10/7/2003

buses? Probably not. Olney residents should not have to suffer further development to its community to accommodate non-County residents who live in northern, greener areas (Glenwood, etc.).

Olney Residents Move Here to Get Away from Congestion ? Commuters who need to be near public transportation will choose housing in those areas ? Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, Bethesda ? not Olney. For any of you who have driven the long 17 miles trek up Georgia Avenue from the D.C. line, I'm sure you can all attest to the unpleasant drive it is ? one gas station, apartment building, shopping center, car dealership, fast food restaurant and traffic light after another. Who wants that in Olney too?

We don't want it!!!!

Sincerely,  
Mary and Bill Larson  
17617 Stafford Ct.  
Olney, MD 20832

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10/7/2003

Preller, Barbara

From: Kathleen Milenkovic [KMILENKO@samhsa.gov]  
Sent: Monday, October 06, 2003 5:07 PM  
To: MCP-Chairman  
Cc: <  
Subject: Bus lane in Olney

RECEIVED

OCT 07 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Berlage,

I'm writing to inform you I am opposed to the bus lane proposal for Georgia Avenue up to Olney. One of the attractions of the homeowners in the area is the family friendly rural atmosphere we are able to maintain by avoiding growth which adds to the pollution, noise, and city look of a permanent center bus lane. We enjoy looking at the country and well developed neighborhoods. I implore you to consider other options for spending our tax dollars. Our locale is not conducive to the existing mass transportation systems and the home owners, most of whom are recent, specifically purchased in the area knowing and choosing an area beneficial to their children, not mass transit options.

Thank you for listening,  
Kathleen Milenkovic

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Preller, Barbara

From: Mark A. Cecil, CFP [cecilplanner@erols.com]  
Sent: Saturday, October 04, 2003 1:32 PM  
To: MCP-Chairman  
Subject: Proposed Changes to Olney Master Plan

RECEIVED  
OCT 07 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Mr. Berlage,

I, a resident of Brookeville, am adamantly opposed to the proposed changes to the Olney Master Plan that would construct a dedicated bus lane in the grassy median strip of Georgia Avenue.

This bus way will cost tens of millions of dollars of taxpayer money to construct and will destroy valuable green space in our community. Although the MNCPPC has claimed it wishes to maintain the "rural and agricultural characteristics" of Olney and "seeks features that enhance the rural gateway concept for southern Georgia Avenue entering Olney" (pp. 86 and 84 of the Master Plan, respectively), the MNCPPC's decision to construct this dedicated bus way flies in direct contrast to their more "environmentally correct" statements.

The proposed changes will have Poor Parking Facilities that would cause enormous congestion in our little town.

It will also increased commute time for residents like me who need to drive down Georgia Avenue each day to work.

This move will attract more people from other areas to travel through our little town which I'm strongly against.

My neighbors and I moved to the Olney area to get away from the big city atmosphere and congestion that is found in other places (Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, Bethesda). Let's not make the quaint little towns of Olney/Brookeville that way.

I'm in support of 9/25/03 testimony given by Sharlene Monroe in opposition to the bus lane. Thank you for your support.

Mark Cecil  
2021 Carter Mill Way  
Brookeville, MD 20833

Mr. Derick P. Berlage  
 Chairman  
 Montgomery County Planning Board  
 MNCPPC  
 8787 Georgia Avenue  
 Silver Spring, MD 20910

RECEIVED  
 OCT 07 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
 THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
 PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

I would like to voice my support for of 9/25/03 testimony given by Sharlene Monroe in **OPPOSITION** to the bus lane proposed for the Olney area. As a resident of Olney, who has worked both downtown Bethesda and now in Rockville. I am representative of those residents of Olney. All places of employment have had direct access to the Metro. I do not take Metro for several reasons, including the exorbitant cost, added commute time (first I drive to get a bus, then take a bus to Metro, then take Metro, then walk a couple blocks to work. What are you kidding?) Residents of Olney, especially women, are not going to do this. Not to mention all the crime reports at the metro stations in Glenmont, Wheaton and Rockville, which is where I would need to go -- in the dark most of the year. Also, as a mother I need my car to run errands, and for emergencies with children.

Very few people in Olney actually work downtown, and of those a very small percentage use public transportation. Not because there isn't a bus lane, but because most people in Olney are highly paid professionals who have parking provided by their employers. The safety risks and inconvenience are the reasons and a bus lane isn't going to change that. Many need their cars in the event of emergencies and to make calls on clients, etc. Metro just isn't feasible for the population of Olney. If the County constructs the busway, how much would ridership increase? Ten - 15 people? Is it worth tens of millions of dollars to construct a busway for a handful of people? People don't ride Metro out of choice. People move to Olney out of choice.

And then there's the issue of where would people park to take the bus? I have heard suggestions of Longwood Rec. Center, the Montgomery General complex or the parking lot at the theatres. This is the craziest part of this plan. First, there isn't a lot of parking at these places, and second where will the people who use the facilities park? The Longwood Rec. center provides a lot of activities during the day for senior citizens. The center is used during the day and with the new shopping centers the parking lots at these two shopping centers is full to capacity.

I understand the traffic has increased due to new homes being developed in Howard and Carroll County. Will these commuters take the dedicated buses? Probably not. Olney residents should not have to suffer further development to its community to accommodate non-County residents who live in northern areas.

Olney Residents Move Here to Get Away from Congestion. Commuters who need to be near public transportation will choose housing in those areas. Silver Spring, Wheaton, Rockville, Bethesda -- not Olney.

For these reasons I am strongly opposed to a bus lane being built in Olney.

Susan Salter

*Susan Salter*

**Preller, Barbara**

RECEIVED

OCT 07 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

**From:** Beacharosa [dsromans@erols.com]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 07, 2003 8:41 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chairman  
**Cc:** smonroe@morganlewis.com  
**Subject:** bus lane in olney

The Romans Family is opposed to a dedicated bus lane from Olney to Glenmont or any other destination. We are opposed for the following reasons:

- 1) loss of green space
  - 2) destruction of pleasant first impression of Olney gateway
  - 3) traffic congestion already a problem, this is not a solution
  - 4) we don't want mass transportation or the problems that come with it
- Drew Romans

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10/8/2003



Preller, Barbara

RECEIVED

From: Stephen Murdock [skmurdoc@erols.com]

Sent: Thursday, October 09, 2003 5:34 AM

To: MCP-Chairman

Subject: Dedicated Busway a Bad Idea

OCT 09 2003

OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN  
THE MARYLAND NATIONAL CAPITAL  
PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Sir,

Your idea of constructing a dedicated busway up Georgia Ave. is a dreadful idea and should be a "non-starter." We don't want destruction of our median, reduction of green space, or the tax burden. Present curbside access to buses is far safer than median access. (If you plan to crossover from the median to each present curbside stop that creates even more safety issues.)

...Steve Murdock

10/9/2003

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