

## **Item 12 - Correspondence**

**From:** [Sebastian Smoot](#)  
**To:** [Aldrich, Stephen](#); [Nelson, Katherine](#); [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Chuck Halpin](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony: Sept 24, 2020, Item 12 Good Hope Road Sidepath  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 23, 2020 10:27:55 AM  
**Attachments:** [2020.09.23 GHECA Planning Board Testimony Good Hope Road Sidepath.pdf](#)

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

On behalf of the Good Hope Estates Civic Association, I would like to testify in support of the Good Hope Road Sidepath. Earlier this morning I signed up to testify via phone and/or videoconference.

I request that the planning department make available to the planning board, applicant, and staff the figures shown in the attached document during my testimony.

PS. I am copying the current GHECA president, Chuck Halpin, who has allowed me to testify on behalf of the association.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sebastian Smoot

Immediate Past President, Good Hope Estates Civic Association  
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## GOOD HOPE ESTATES CIVIC ASSOCIATION

DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING AND IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY

September 23, 2020

Casey Anderson  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Good Hope Road Sidepath  
Preliminary/Final Water Quality Plan MR2020035  
Mandatory Referral MR2020035

Dear Planning Board Commissioners,

On behalf of the Good Hope Estates Civic Association, I am testifying in support of the approval of the Good Hope Road Sidepath. This is a critical project for the safety of our residents (see Figure 1).

There is an old proverb that goes, “The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is now.” I think you will all agree this saying is true for sidewalks.

The community has been requesting a sidewalk along Good Hope Road for more than 30 years (Figure 2). Regrettably, only a few of the original residents who moved in during the 1970s still live here and will witness the completion of this long-awaited project.

I want to add a few comments for the record, for the benefit of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, the Planning Department, and the Planning Board. I hope that you reflect on how some of these comments can apply to the Thrive Montgomery 2050 Plan.

1. The cost of this project is ten times more than the typical cost of a sidewalk. MCDOT estimates this project will cost \$5.4 million per mile. The typical cost for a sidewalk is less than \$500,000 per mile. While I appreciate that there are some environmental regulations that complicate this project, our county urgently needs to figure out how to execute projects more cost-effectively and be more creative about how to leverage existing infrastructure and resources to provide services to residents.



2. Related to the point above, another lesson learned is that all roads should be provided with sidewalks when they are initially built. This will not only save a lot of money in the long run, but more importantly, a lot of lives.
3. The Good Hope Estates Civic Association supports environmental regulations such as the Forest Conservation Law, stormwater management requirements, and most importantly, the Special Protection Area requirements. However, I wish to point out that strict adherence to County Codes have been extremely burdensome for small projects that serve the public, such as the recently constructed Maydale Nature Center and the planned Burtonsville Access Road. While these regulations are critically important for large projects such as shopping centers, office parks, or housing developments, it's worth asking if the people who wrote these regulations anticipated that these rules would add \$4 million to what normally would be a \$1 million sidewalk project. I am not offering any specific recommendations, but simply raising this point for your consideration.
4. This comment is specific for MCDOT, but I am bringing it up for the record: throughout the planning and design phase of this project, we have repeatedly offered suggestions on areas for impervious mitigation (Figure 3), most recently in May 2019. MCDOT replied they would consider these locations. However, it was not until this week that we found that MCDOT already had identified the areas for impervious removal back in January 2019 (attachment 2 of this agenda item). We believe that MCDOT should have shared this list with the community 18 months ago and coordinated with the residents throughout the process.
5. One of the impervious area removal locations considered by MCDOT is removing the shoulder of Briggs Chaney Road. This is very concerning because pedestrians, joggers, dog-walkers, and bicyclists use the shoulder because there is no sidewalk on this stretch of road (Figure 4). Removing an area used by pedestrians as part of a pedestrian project is self-defeating. Additionally, it's worth pointing out that the Approved and Adopted Bicycle Master Plan recommends adding a sidepath on the north side of Briggs Chaney Road in this area. Removing the shoulder without building the master-planned sidepath would be a missed opportunity and inefficient use of limited resources.

Sebastian Smoot (speaking on behalf of current GHECA President, Chuck Halpin)  
Good Hope Estates Civic Association [gheca@gheca.org](mailto:gheca@gheca.org)


cc: Chuck Halpin, President



**Figure 1. A mother walks with her four children along Good Hope Road.**







# Good Hope Estates

## Good Hope Estates Civic Association Newsletter for July 1989

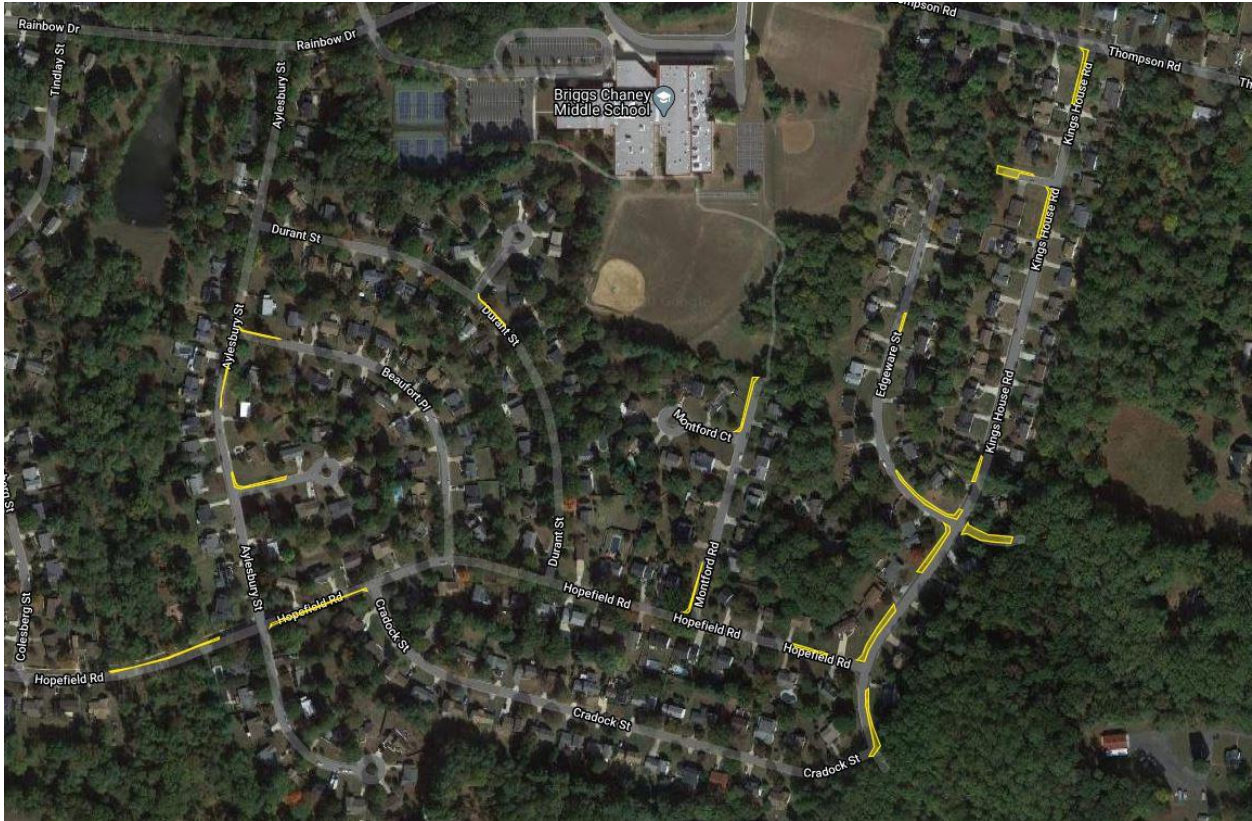
### GOOD HOPE ROAD SIDEWALKS

The County government has received numerous citizen complaints about safety in our stretch of Good Hope Road since the improvement of Bonifant Road. A committee to prioritize sidewalk improvements county-wide has been formed by the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, and they are addressing the need for sidewalks on Good Hope Road, particularly between Hopefield Road and Briggs Chaney Road. The Montgomery County Public Schools are represented on this committee, and they have specifically requested that improvements be made to Good Hope Road to coincide with the opening of Briggs-Chaney Middle School. It is our understanding that this request has now been included in the updated 1991 C.I.P. budget proposal.

### TRASH!

The Good Hope Estates petition for County trash collection balloting has been stalled by a rash of petitions by larger communities also requesting County trash collection. The earliest estimate for the beginning of County trash service is October of this year, assuming that the results of the ballot indicate a strong desire by the residents for such service. County trash service is applied only to whole communities, after a County sponsored mail-in ballot among the homeowners. Trash collection fees would be lower (at least initially) due to the community-wide nature of the service, and would be billed with the County's annual property tax bill. The County plans to conduct the balloting over a much wider area than just Good Hope Estates, and would then use the ballot results to redraw the boundaries for County trash collection.

Figure 2. Newsletter article mentioning request for sidewalk on Good Hope Road



**Figure 3. Potential areas for impervious mitigation.**

Note: The total highlighted area in this map is 0.7 acres, which is more than the 0.62 acres that are required to be mitigated as part of this project. Some of these areas identified for road narrowing are anticipated to not only provide environmental benefits, but also discourage speeding. The locations on this map are shown for representative purposes only—the community would like to discuss in more detail with MCDOT.





**Figure 4. Briggs Chaney Road, in area of MCDOT recommended shoulder removal.**