

Item 4 - Correspondence

From: [Alicia Khadduri](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Comments to Planning Board Hearing on the Realignment of Westbard Ave
Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 4:39:39 PM

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

Hearing Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020, beginning at Noon, 12:00 pm
Item 4- Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No. AB-773
Name: Alicia and Farid Khadduri
Street Address: 5526 Westbard Ave, Bethesda 20816
Email: abk656@aol.com

Dear Sirs,

We first wish to thank the Planning Board for their time and attention regarding the important matter of Realigning Westbard Ave as well as their consideration in seeking resident views to assist their decision.

We have lived on Westbard Ave near the intersection with River Road for over 45 years and and our pleased to submit our perspective.

We strongly endorse the plan to realign Westbard Ave and offer the following in support of this conclusion:

- Over the years, truck traffic has significantly increased in violation with the weight restrictions clearly posted at each end of the 5500 Block of Westbard. This poses a safety risk to the residents of this Block of Westbard which include a number of small children and elderly people.
- Auto traffic has also significantly increased both in volume and speed. Autos routinely ignore the “No Left Turn” sign at the River Road end of Westbard causing accidents and endangering the pedestrian crosswalk at that intersection.
- Autos making the right turn from River Road to Westbard are often speeding. This poses a particular danger to our end of Westbard when we exit our driveway just a few feet from this intersection. An example of how fast cars make this turn occurred two weeks ago when a driver making the right turn was traveling so fast that he lost control, smashed into the median island which required his car to be towed away. Thankfully the median strip prevented the worst case scenario (which has occurred several times) of a head-on collision with oncoming traffic.
- The “No Right Turn” restriction from River to Westbard from 7:00 am to 9:00 am is routinely ignored adding to excessive congestion on our street.

- We are very concerned that our block of Westbard will be used as a truck “cut through” when construction begins on the Westbard Development. The trucks will be violating the weight restrictions and cause even more safety and noise concerns. Realignment of Westbard will provide a safe alternative access to the Development construction site.

Thank you again for the opportunity for us to provide our perspective and recommendation to proceed with the plan to realign Westbard Ave.

Best,

Alicia and Farid Khadduri

From: [MChenyoung](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: cpgreen@verizon.net; [Adrienne Chen-Young](#); [MCY-Michael Chen-Young](#)
Subject: Comment Letter re: Planning Board Hearing on the Realignment of Westbard Ave
Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 4:53:06 PM
Attachments: [Right-of-Way Abandonment, AB-773 - Westbard-Ridgefield Comments- Michael Chen-Young 2020-11-17.pdf](#)

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Dear Chair Casey Anderson,

Re:

- Hearing Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020, beginning at Noon, 12:00 p.m
- Item 4- Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No. AB-773

Please see the attached comment letter regarding the Montgomery County Planning Board's Hearing on Thursday November 19, 2020 to seek resident views regarding the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan: Abandonment of Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road (titled Right-of-Way Abandonment, AB-773, Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road).

Our family has resided at 5521 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, MD since 1997, and are blessed to be a part of this neighborhood. Our home is at the end of the Westbard Avenue intersection with River Road. We are longtime patrons of the local neighborhood stores, knowing many of the individuals in these stores by name and friendly face.

While we understand and support upgrading several aspects of the neighborhood with planned development, we have also raised concerns about the negative impact from very large increases in the neighborhood's density. We appreciate the efforts of everyone to try to minimize the negative impacts.

One of the key parts of the plan that we fully support as a mitigating factor is the Right-of-Way Abandonment, AB-773, Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road. Even before the new construction has begun, we have seen over the years increases in the amount of morning and evening cut-through traffic passing in front of our home, irrespective of the signage restrictions turning right from River Road in the mornings and turning left on River Road throughout the day and especially in the evenings.

The attached comment letter lists the multiple negative impacts to our family and our home value that we are trying to mitigate from the current and expected increase in non-resident through traffic associated with the development plan.

Please let us know if there are any questions.

Warm regards,
Michael & Adrienne Chen-Young
(5521 Westbard Avenue)

Michael & Adrienne Chen-Young
5521 Westbard Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20186
Phone: (301) 652-9435 (Home)
Email: Mchenyoung@gmail.com

November 17, 2020

Montgomery County Planning Board

The Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission
Chair Casey Anderson, MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

CC: Cynthia Green [cpgreen@verizon.net], Springfield Civic Association

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

This letter is in regard to the Montgomery County Planning Board's **Hearing on Thursday November 19, 2020** to seek resident views regarding the **2016 Westbard Sector Plan: Abandonment of Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road** (titled **Right-of-Way Abandonment, AB-773, Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road**).

Our family has resided at 5521 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, MD since 1997, and are blessed to be a part of this neighborhood. Our home is at the end of the Westbard Avenue intersection with River Road. We are longtime patrons of the local neighborhood stores, knowing many of the individuals in these stores by name and friendly face.

While we understand and support upgrading several aspects of the neighborhood with planned development, we have also raised concerns about the negative impact from very large increases in the neighborhood's density. We appreciate the efforts of everyone to try to minimize the negative impacts.

One of the key parts of the plan that we fully support as a mitigating factor is the **Right-of-Way Abandonment, AB-773, Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road**.¹ Even before the new construction has begun, we have seen over the years increases in the amount of morning and evening cut-through traffic passing in front of our home, irrespective of the signage restrictions turning right from River Road in the mornings and turning left on River Road throughout the day and especially in the evenings.

We are negatively impacted by that through traffic in multiple ways listed below:

1. Dangerous speeding cars & trucks disregarding the speed limits and speed bumps: several times while walking we have had to cross quickly to evade the danger, sometimes scolding the driver that they need to slow down

¹ The Sector Plan endorses permanent closure of the residential portion of Westbard Avenue between River Road and Ridgefield Road end.

2. Non-residents in cars parking/waiting on the road just past our home as they face River Road to either:
 - a. rest/nap in the daytime: we've seen drivers (sometime cars with Uber/Lyft signage) waiting there for over 15 minutes; we've seen some drivers recline their seats and take a nap in their cars; several times we have had to go out and ask them if there is anything wrong, after which they drive off; or
 - b. eat lunch: we've frequently seen drivers pull up and stop to eat lunch while in their cars (e.g., from the nearby McDonald's; this would likely increase with the planned new stores); very concerning is that some throw their trash out of their car window on to our grass without any regard; our family ends up picking up the trash and putting in our trash or recycling bins; or
 - c. discard empty beer/alcohol bottles or cans: similar to above, although in the mornings, my family has had to pick up discarded beer/alcohol bottles or cans and sometimes food from the previous night and put in our trash or recycling bins
3. Large trucks illegally (above the weight limit) passing through that:
 - a. cause undue noise/rattling: the loud trucks either from their engines or when they go over the speedbumps create undue noise whenever they pass our home; I am even more disturbed by this while working from home
 - b. disrupt cable lines: we have had large trucks inadvertently pull down the cable line that connects from the light pole across the street to our home, impacting our telephone and television service

We are very concerned that both during and after the new construction, we will be even more negatively impacted along the lines above. Our home being at the end of Westbard Avenue before reaching River Road already gets much of the downside from non-resident cars driving, stopping, and throwing trash. There is also a security concern as more non-residents pass through and can monitor our home and yard.

Based on above, to help minimize the negative impact to our family and our home value, we strongly urge the Board to accept and approve the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan's recommended **Right-of-Way Abandonment, AB-773, Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road.**

Sincerely,


Michael & Adrienne Chen-Young

From: [Phyllis Edelman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony from Phyllis Edelman Item 4, 11/19/2020
Date: Tuesday, November 17, 2020 6:46:24 PM
Attachments: [11-17-2020 PRE draft PB testimony.docx](#)

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

To: Casey Anderson, MCP-Chair

Attached, please find my testimony for Item 4- Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No. AB-773

Sincerely,

Phyllis Edelman
5810 Ogden Court
Bethesda, MD 20816

Sent from my iPad

November 19, 2020

Item 4- Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No. AB-773

Phyllis Edelman

5810 Ogden Court

Bethesda, MD 20816

Predelman@gmail.com

To: Chair Anderson, Vice-Chair Fani-Gonzalez and Members Cichy, Patterson and Verma,

My name is Phyllis Edelman. I'm a resident of Springfield and I'm here to testify in support of the abandonment of portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road. From 2014-2017 I was president of the Springfield Civic Association during the Westbard Sector Plan review.

As the charettes unfolded, residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue (between Ridgefield Road and River Road), a part of the Springfield community, complained to me about the high volume of traffic on their block. Even before I heard their complaints, I knew firsthand about turning issues at the corner of eastbound River Road onto Ridgefield Road.

There were several times when I was waiting in the left lane at a red signal at Ridgefield Road and River, to turn westbound onto River Road when a tractor trailer would start to make the right-hand turn from eastbound River Road to go up Ridgefield Road to make a delivery at the Westbard shopping center. The tractor-trailer would be headed right towards me and my vehicle. With a vehicle in front of me and one behind me, I couldn't move out of the way to give the tractor trailer clearance until the signal turned green. Needless to say, it is not a pleasant feeling to have the cab of a big rig facing your bumper. Tractor trailers and even school buses cannot easily make that right-hand turn from River Road because the turn is narrow and at an acute angle.

Neighbors on Westbard Avenue told me that because of the problem with this turn, many of these trucks and school buses make the right hand turn from eastbound River Road onto their block. The turn onto their block is less acute and the drivers are less likely to face oncoming traffic.

As I and other community members talked to the planners about alleviating the traffic issues on Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road, Equity One, then the developer, said they wanted a "gateway" into the new Westwood I development. The only problem with this was that their "gateway," Ridgefield Road, is actually the gateway to the Springfield community, as this road extends at least a mile into our community.

Since the charrettes were held in Westwood II, the building that sits between River Road and Westbard Avenue along Ridgefield Road, the planners had a bird's-eye view of our community's traffic issues. At the same time, understanding the developer's desires, they suggested a solution: realignment of Westbard Avenue. It may have been the first and only time during the Westbard Sector Plan discussions that the developer and the community agreed to a solution to a problem. By realigning Westbard Avenue, residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue get protection from high traffic volume, which is only expected to increase as redevelopment gets underway, and the developer, now Regency, gets its gateway.

From the time realignment was suggested until the Westbard Sector Plan was approved by the Council, my neighbors and I spoke with planners, county council members and staff to ensure this would be part

of the sector plan. Abandoning parts of Ridgefield Road and Westbard Avenue is the first step to realignment of Westbard Avenue and to alleviating the traffic issues that plague our neighborhood. Consequently, I readily support this measure.

Thank you for your time.

From: cpgreen@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for Item 4, Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No. AB-773
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 11:17:09 AM
Attachments: [CynthiaGreen2020-11-17 PB testimony AV-773.docx](#)

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

Dear Chair Casey Anderson and colleagues,

I am submitting my statement related to the Thursday Nov. 19, 2020 hearing on Item 4-Portions of Westward Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No. AB-773. I appreciate the opportunity to testify. I have pasted in my testimony below and attached the Word file as well.

Thank you,
Cynthia Green

Hearing Date: Thursday, November 19, 2020, beginning at Noon, 12:00 pm
Item 4- Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No. AB-773

Testimony of Cynthia Green, resident of Westward Avenue

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify. My name is Cynthia Green. I am president of the Springfield Civic Association and I'm a resident of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. I can tell you first hand why Westbard Avenue needs to be realigned, requiring the abandonment of parts of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road, which the Springfield community supports.

There are 25 families living on the 5500 block, including 11 children and several elderly people. I've lived on this block for 36 years and as my neighbors and I can tell you, in the last 10 years we've seen a remarkable increase in the volume of traffic. Why? GPS.

There are a limited number of routes drivers can use to get from the Beltway exit at River Road to downtown D.C. via Massachusetts Avenue and its reverse. These are: Goldsboro Road, Little Falls Parkway, and Western Avenue. Thanks to traffic and mapping apps, drivers found a fourth route, Westbard Avenue.

Years ago we had three speed bumps placed on our block and the county put a "No right turn [from 7 a.m. - 9 a.m.](#)" sign from eastbound River Road. Later, "No thru trucks over 7,000 lbs, GVW" signs were added at both ends of the block. Last year the signs were updated to "No thru trucks over 10,000 lbs GVW" – the new standard weight – and MCDOT added a "No left turn at River Road" sign on the northbound side of the block at Ridgefield Road, and a

“No left turn” sign at River Road to discourage drivers from making a left turn onto westbound River Road. This change was needed because it is dangerous for vehicles to cross the traffic on both sides of River Road to go northbound. In addition, MCDOT placed a concrete triangle, which curves to the right, to force drivers to turn onto eastbound River Road, instead of turning left to go northbound. That hasn’t significantly discouraged drivers as statistics below will show you.

In the fall of 2017, MCDOT did a traffic study of our block with a follow-up last January 2020, after the no left turn signs and triangle were installed. A summary of those counts is below:

5500 Block of Westbard Ave.	Average Daily Vehicle Count		Totals for Week		% Reduction from 2017-2020
	2017	2020	2017	2020	
Northbound (towards River Road and the beltway)	728	636	5,098	4,450	1.4%
Southbound (towards Mass. Ave.)	908	742	6,354	5,195	1.26%

On its face the reduction in the total number of vehicles looks positive. Traffic volume decreased by 1,700 vehicles per week. Underlying this slight decrease, however, is a disturbing increase of multiple-axle trucks.

Westbard Ave.	Average Daily Trucks		Total Trucks per Week		% Increase 2017-2020
	2017	2020	2017	2020	
Northbound	7	30	46	211	1.24%
Southbound	13	17	89	120	4.87%

More than 330 trips are made by trucks — not pick-up trucks — but tractor trailers with multiple axles. While they can’t speed down the street because of the speed bumps, they are noisy, disruptive and a danger to our quality of life. Besides these trucks traveling down our block, there are on average five buses per day that rumble through. Some are school buses, which are neither picking up nor dropping off children on our street, but just driving through, and others are private buses, which use our block as a convenient shortcut, avoiding the narrow, sharp right-hand turn at River Road and Ridgefield Road which has been described in other testimony. I want to stress that the MCDOT traffic engineers have done everything possible to reduce cut-through traffic on our residential street. We appreciate their efforts.

From a personal standpoint, living on such a busy street creates a general sense of anxiety and

the need to be alert at all times. When I am raking leaves in front of my house, I have to pay attention to the traffic coming by. Before I cross the street to greet a neighbor, I have to look carefully both ways to see if traffic is coming. I am awakened in the middle of the night by a tractor trailer crashing down on the three speedbumps.

My neighbors and I cope with noise (vehicles honk over every one of our three speedbumps), dust and fumes, trash tossed onto the street, and theft of county traffic signs as well as homeowner's signs. When I put a "Drive like your kids live here" sign in front of my house, it was stolen in less than 24 hours. Some vehicles coming from River Road onto our street are going too fast to turn the corner, causing crashes and near misses. We all have to be on constant alert to make sure children do not go onto the road.

Given our traffic woes, my neighbors and I support the abandonment of sections of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road to prepare for the realignment of Westbard Avenue and some peaceful nights' rest.

Cynthia P. Green, 5512 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20816 Email: cpgreen@verizon.net

Testimony of Cynthia Green, resident of Westward Avenue

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify. My name is Cynthia Green. I am president of the Springfield Civic Association and I'm a resident of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. I can tell you first hand why Westbard Avenue needs to be realigned, requiring the abandonment of parts of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road, which the Springfield community supports.

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block, there are on average five buses per day that rumble through. Some are school buses, which are neither picking up nor dropping off children on our street, but just driving through, and others are private buses, which use our block as a convenient shortcut, avoiding the narrow, sharp right-hand turn at River Road and Ridgefield Road which has been described in other testimony. I want to stress that the MCDOT traffic engineers have done everything possible to reduce cut-through traffic on our residential street. We appreciate their efforts.

From a personal standpoint, living on such a busy street creates a general sense of anxiety and the need to be alert at all times. When I am raking leaves in front of my house, I have to pay attention to the traffic coming by. Before I cross the street to greet a neighbor, I have to look carefully both ways to see if traffic is coming. I am awakened in the middle of the night by a tractor trailer crashing down on the three speedbumps.

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Given our traffic woes, my neighbors and I support the abandonment of sections of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road to prepare for the realignment of Westbard Avenue and some peaceful nights' rest.

Cynthia P. Green, 5512 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20816 Email: cpgreen@verizon.net

From: [Pete Salinger](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Abandonment of Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road in Bethesda
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 11:45:30 AM

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

Dear Mr. Casey Anderson,
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

Dear Mr. Anderson

I am writing to you and the Planning Board to SUPPORT changes in the path of Westbard Avenue to make it easier and safer to get from River Road to Westbard Avenue.

On Westbard Avenue, there is a mid-size shopping center, and a number of apartment buildings. The number of apartment buildings will increase in the future, per the current Westbard Sector Plan.

The 'abandonment' of two small portions of these two roads will enable the SIGNIFICANT improvement in the traffic flow from River Road to this area. It will eliminate a traffic light, and improve safety.

Please do approve of these changes.

Sincerely,
Peter A. (Pete) Salinger
Member, Springfield Civic Association Board of Directors
Resident of Springfield since 1977

From: [Wasył Wasyłkiwskyj](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Realignment of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road
Date: Wednesday, November 18, 2020 1:36:12 PM

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

Hearing date:12/15/2020

Item 4-Portions of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road Abandonment No.AB-773

Wasył and Donna Wasyłkiwskyj

5506 Westbard Avenue

Bethesda, MD 20816

wwasyłkiw@comcast.net

Dear Mr. Anderson,

We would like to inform you that we fully support closing the entrance from River Road to Westbard Avenue.

With best regards,

Wasył and Donna Wasyłkiwskyj