

## Item 13 - Correspondence

**From:** [Allen McFarland](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** North High Street Extension  
**Date:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 5:00:35 PM

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

Chair Anderson,

I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the North High Street extension (to be discussed at the October 28th meeting). We live nearby on Homeland Drive and regularly cross Morningwood Drive to go to school and for other purposes. Morningwood Drive is a dangerous road that would become even more so with a North High Street extension. Cars come flying down the road; even more would do so if cars could use North High Street to avoid the Georgia Avenue/Morningwood Drive intersection.

In addition, the extension would offer few benefits. There is already a vacant commercial property at the end of North High Street, so demand for more commercial activity in that area does not appear to be strong. The planning study also found minimal benefits in terms of traffic improvement on Georgia Avenue. Finally, the extension is an expensive project that would lead to trees being cut down. Surely there are better uses of our taxpayer dollars than this.

Respectfully,  
Allen McFarland  
18127 Homeland Dr  
Olney, MD 20832

**From:** [snrlinger@earthlink.net](mailto:snrlinger@earthlink.net)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Extension of High Street to Morningwood Drive in Olney, MD  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 26, 2021 3:11:19 PM  
**Attachments:** [Testimony\\_October 2021.docx](#)

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Hello –

Attached is my letter expressing my opposition to the extension of High Street to Morningwood Drive in Olney, MD.

I understand that this issue is on the agenda for Thursday, October 28, 2021.

Thank you,

Susan Nerlinger

Saturday, October 23, 2021

**Statement of Susan Nerlinger**

18255 Rolling Meadow Way

Olney, MD 20832

Member of the Board of Directors of the Homeland Village Community Association  
Commissioner of the Commission on Common Ownership Communities in Montgomery  
County, Maryland

Re: Extending High Street to Morningwood Drive

To the Montgomery County Planning Board:

I have lived at my current address in the Homeland Village (HV) community in Olney for 17 years. Homeland Village (HV) is a residential community of townhouses, condominiums, and single-family residences on land that, in part, borders the yards of the residences on High Street in Olney. High Street starts at Georgia Avenue, just south of the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Highway 108. High Street currently ends before it reaches Morningwood Drive. The Planning Board proposes extending High Street and creating an intersection with a traffic light where High Street would enter Morningwood Drive.

I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed extension of High Street for the reasons detailed below. I apologize for the length of my statement, but it is necessary to explain the technicalities of the traffic situation and why the extension would make it worse.

Every day I and the other residents of HV access Morningwood Drive to drive east to Georgia Avenue. We then use Georgia Avenue to access businesses and amenities in Olney and beyond. Residents of the neighborhoods surrounding HV do the same.

There are no traffic lights on Morningwood Drive and no stop signs. Nothing impedes the flow of traffic for the residents of HV and the surrounding neighborhoods. Several driveways from parking lots along Morningwood give access to Morningwood. But there is no obstruction of traffic flow. It works for all of us every day, because there is an uninterrupted flow of traffic to and from Georgia Avenue.

The Planning Board now plans to create an intersection with a traffic light on Morningwood where High Street would enter that road. High Street would then run from Morningwood at one end

to Georgia Avenue at the other. This would create an obstruction to traffic on Morningwood and serve no purpose for residents of HV and the neighborhoods beyond. Anyone who uses Morningwood has excellent access to Georgia Avenue at the intersection of Morningwood and Georgia where there is a traffic light. In addition, a person can always walk to High Street from Morningwood.

I ask anyone involved in deciding this issue to come out and have a look at the location. It is difficult to describe in words why the extension is a singularly bad idea, but if you can look the situation, it should be clear.

**1. Risk of Accidents.** There is a curve in Morningwood immediately before the area where the new intersection would be located. So, cars going west/southwest from Georgia Avenue into HV and surrounding neighborhoods would not have a view of traffic stopped at the intersection of Morningwood and High Street until they are right behind the cars stopped there at a red light. It would create a risk of accidents.

**2. Disruption of Traffic Flow.** An intersection with a traffic light would also impede the flow of traffic on Morningwood, which, as I have tried to describe, is now working fantastically well.

**3. Worsening Congestion on Georgia Avenue in the Area of the Intersection of Georgia and High Street and Georgia and Morningwood Drive.** Another problem would arise where High Street now intersects Georgia Avenue. An extended High Street would lead from Morningwood Drive to Georgia Avenue. High Street would intersect Georgia Avenue, as it does now, at a place where Georgia Avenue is a 4-lane road. There is no traffic light at this intersection. Nor would anyone want a traffic light there. That is because Georgia Avenue in this location is becoming increasingly backed up for reasons I will explain. One would hope that worsening traffic congestion in Montgomery County would be the last goal of anyone involved in planning in the County.

The problem comes from the fact that past planning decisions have allowed two popular businesses with drive-through windows to allow entry and exit via driveways on Georgia Avenue on and close to High Street, i.e., Dunkin' Donuts and McDonald's. In addition, several other businesses have driveways that also allow entry and exit onto Georgia near High Street. Needless to say, these two businesses attract a high volume of customers throughout the day. Their cars are constantly pouring onto Georgia Avenue within feet of the intersection of Georgia and Morningwood where there is a traffic light. The entrance to Dunkin' Donuts is just south of High Street. At times, often in the morning, the line of cars to enter the Dunkin' Donuts drive-through extends north on Georgia across High Street, blocking traffic from High Street from entering Georgia Avenue. The line blocks one lane of Georgia Avenue as well. The driveways of several other businesses allow entry and exit onto Georgia near High Street, adding to the back-up.

Additionally, cars going south on Georgia Avenue must stop during the day at red lights at the intersection of Georgia and Morningwood. The volume of traffic is such that these cars now are usually lined up at the red lights throughout the day. They obstruct the access of the customers of Dunkin' Donuts, McDonald's and other businesses, who are trying to leave those businesses and enter Georgia Avenue, turning right. So, accessing Georgia Avenue from High Street is already a problem. Extending High Street would make it worse by increasing the volume of traffic on High Street, the traffic that would come from Morningwood.

When the light turns green at Georgia and Morningwood now, stopped drivers who want to be nice do not move. Rather they stay at a standstill to allow the customers of Dunkin' Donuts and cars on High Street to make their turns onto Georgia Avenue. This further slows the flow of traffic through the light at Georgia and Morningwood, adding to the congestion at that intersection and all along Georgia Avenue between Morningwood and Highway 108 (which is the next intersection north of High Street).

Extending High Street would only invite cars to turn left from Morningwood onto High Street. These cars would then drive down High Street to the intersection of Georgia, where they would have to wait at a stop sign to turn left or right on Georgia. This would be a challenge, as I said, because Georgia is a four-lane road. Making left turns across two lanes of traffic onto Georgia would be especially challenging. Also, again, traffic from McDonald's empties onto High Street now. Also, there is a gas station whose driveways exit onto High Street and Georgia Avenue. This is all very close to the driveway for Dunkin' Donuts. It just makes no sense to add to the volume of traffic that is going to stand at the intersection of High Street and Georgia Avenue, unable to enter this densely packed stretch of Georgia Avenue. It only invites worsening of the congestion that already exists.

**4. Effect on Street Parking.** An additional issue is street parking. Many residents of the townhouses in HV park their vehicles along Morningwood. The parking lots are only so big and cannot accommodate all the cars, trucks and vans that are used by HV residents. Of course, business vehicles are not allowed in residential parking lots, so many residents park these vehicles along Morningwood. Limiting parking along Morningwood would worsen the parking situation for HV residents.

**5. Loss of Family Homes and Residential Character of Homeland Village.** Finally, currently at the end of High Street near Morningwood there are several single-family residences. The people who reside in these houses have lived there for years. The homes would undoubtedly disappear, and businesses would be built in their place. Presumably, this is the whole rationale for extending High Street, to pack a few more businesses onto High Street near Morningwood. The yards of the homes border on Homeland Village green space, so the residential character of both High Street and

Homeland Village would be adversely affected. The character of the property next to Homeland Village would change from peaceful residential to commercial. Instead of quiet family residences, there would be traffic flow along High Street with cars accessing businesses. Parking lots for businesses would replace backyards.

Part of the pleasing character of HV is its green space. The developer left ample green space around the structures in the community, and this makes it an especially appealing place to live. Again, extending High Street would only threaten that.

The extension of High Street would do nothing to promote walking in Olney or biking in Olney. There is a pedestrian stairway for accessing High Street from Morningwood now. This is perfect, because it promotes walking to access High Street and Georgia Avenue from Morningwood and serves as a disincentive to use one's car.

I am not anti-business. I understand that business is the lifeblood of the American economy. We all prosper and enjoy the exceptional quality of life that we have because of business. But an extended High Street in Olney is just not the place to locate more businesses. There are several shopping malls in Olney and empty structures where businesses have failed because of the pandemic. There are plenty of other places to locate businesses in Olney.

Extending High Street would worsen traffic congestion on an already congested stretch of Georgia Avenue and worsen the flow of traffic on Morningwood Drive.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask that you not extend High Street to Morningwood Drive in Olney.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely yours,  
Susan Nerlinger  
301-570-5219  
snerlinger@earthlink.net

**From:** [Max Etin](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Cheng, Angel](#)  
**Subject:** Written Statement For North High Street Extension  
**Date:** Tuesday, October 26, 2021 9:28:51 PM  
**Attachments:** [Written Statement For North High Street Extension.docx](#)

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

Good evening,

Attached and below is my written statement regarding the Montgomery County Planning Board 10/28/2021 meeting Agenda Item 13. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Max Etin  
18031 Sunset Lake Ct.  
Olney, MD 20832  
240-447-9117  
[maxetin09@gmail.com](mailto:maxetin09@gmail.com)

**Written Statement For 10/28/2021 Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting  
Agenda Item 13  
By Local Resident Max Etin**

Dear Planning Board Members,

Please support the North High Street Extension connecting North High Street with Morningwood Drive in Olney, MD. As a resident of Sunset Lake Court, which is just off of Morningwood Drive less than a 1 minute drive from the site at issue, I think this would be beneficial to our community. This idea is great for our community in particular of an All Way Stop is put at the new intersection created at Morningwood Drive and North High Street. I will end my testimony by proposing a minor expansion to the current proposal.

Extension Beneficial to Community

This extension will make it easier for the hundreds of residents who live near Morningwood Drive to access the businesses around North High Street, helping these local businesses thrive. The only convenient way to currently access these businesses involves taking Homeland Drive to turn right on Olney-Sandy Spring Road and then turn right to head south on Georgia Avenue. It's not convenient and deters people from accessing these businesses. It also unnecessarily adds traffic to both Olney-Sandy Spring Road and Georgia Avenue that would be alleviated if residents can access North High Street from Morningwood Drive.

Additionally, it will help alleviate some of the traffic heading south on Georgia Avenue on weekday mornings that gets very backed up because of the Dunkin Donuts drive through. The huge back up not only creates a lot of traffic, but creates a very unsafe situation as cars in the right lane try to shift over to the left lane while cars in the left lane are driving fast on that stretch. Now cars backed up in the right lane, can get off at North High Street to get around

the back up.

### All Way Stop Essential For Safety of Drivers and Pedestrians

If you do pursue this extension, please make sure that the intersection of North High Street and Morningwood Drive is an All Way Stop with pedestrian crosswalks.

For driver safety, please consider that some cars drive way past the speed limit along Morningwood Drive. Cars heading towards North High Street from Georgia Avenue approach the area on a sharp curve, making it very difficult for both cars along Morningwood Drive to see cars trying to turn from North High Street and also cars coming from North High Street to see cars approaching before making the decision to start turning on to Morningwood Drive. This could lead to accidents without an All Way Stop at the intersection.

For pedestrian safety, please consider that that area is currently very dangerous, needing action. An All Way Stop would fix current safety issues. Many pedestrians cross Morningwood Drive at that location to walk on to North High Street and I have seen many close calls with cars driving too fast on Morningwood Drive. Additionally, there is both a high school and a middle school bus stop at the corner of Morningwood Drive and Bantry Way within feet of where the intersection of Morningwood Drive and North High Street would be built. Some kids cross Morningwood Drive to reach their school bus stop at Bantry Way. With many cars speeding in the morning on Morningwood Drive to get to work and the sharp curves of Morningwood Drive making sight between drivers and pedestrians difficult, it's a recipe for an eventually unfortunate incident involving a child. This is particularly the case in the Winter when those kids are out there early in the morning in the dark and roads can be slippery. An All Way Stop will both create an incentive for cars making that daily commute to know to slow down in that area in preparation for stopping and it will give students/pedestrians a safe place to cross.

### Idea to Expand the Proposal to make it More Effective

If one of the reasons for this proposal is to help local business in the commercial area of Olney, please consider including as part of this project connecting the McDonald's parking lot off of North High Street with the parking lot next to Milk and Cheese/CB Acai. Currently, there is no way to access the businesses around CB Acai heading north along Georgia Avenue. Connecting the two parking lots I mentioned, means customers can access these small local businesses from North High Street (which has an access point for those heading north on Georgia Avenue) and will now be convenient for residents in my community to use North High Street to access these great local businesses.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this plan.

Sincerely,  
Max Etin  
18031 Sunset Lake Ct.  
Olney, MD 20832  
240-447-9117  
[maxetin09@gamil.com](mailto:maxetin09@gamil.com)

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