

Item 7 - Correspondence

From: [Peter Gray](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: WABA Testimony on Fenton Street Cycletrack Mandatory Referral
Date: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 4:20:23 PM
Attachments: [Fenton Street Cycletrack Mandatory Referral to the Montgomery Planning Board - January 26, 2022-1.pdf](#)

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See attached.



Casey Anderson, Chair
Montgomery Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902

RE: Fenton Street Cycletrack Mandatory Referral - January 27, 2022 Planning Board Meeting

January 26, 2022

Mr. Chairman and members of the Planning Board, my name is Peter Gray and I represent the Washington Area Bicyclist Association. I am speaking on behalf of the over 7,500 members in the region and thousands of supporters who live in Montgomery County.

WABA commends both MCDOT and the Planning staff for their review of the plans for the Fenton Street Cycletrack. WABA has long supported this project, and worked closely with MCDOT staff and hundreds of residents who live in proximity to this project over the years to help inform the plans under review today. We endorse the Planning staff recommendations on the Cycletrack, particularly the recommendations to 1. Reduce the corner radius from 25 to 15 feet in order to reduce the turning speeds of cars turning right at the three locations noted, plus the use of mountable truck aprons if needed; and 2. Install centerline hardening at King Street and Richmond to reduce the speed of cars turning left from Fenton to King Street.

From: [Seth Morgan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: Marc.Elrach@montgomerycountymd.org; gabriel.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Commission on People with Disabilities comments on the Fenton Street Cycle Tracks Project
Date: Friday, January 21, 2022 7:13:19 PM
Attachments: [Fenton Street Cycle Tracks Comments 1-2022.docx](#)

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Dear Chairman Anderson,

Please find attached the Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities' comments.

Respectfully,

Seth A. Morgan, MD
Chairman, Commission on People with Disabilities

"If you think you are too small to be effective, you have never been in bed with a mosquito."
(attributed to Betty Reese, American Officer and Pilot)



**Commission on People with Disabilities
Montgomery County Planning Board
Fenton Street Cycle Track Comments
January 27, 2022
Seth Morgan, MD, Chair**

As we have all come to realize, the County has set as a priority opening up County roads to bicyclists. After over fifty years of construction focusing exclusively on car-based traffic, many of our roads are too congested to accomplish this safely. We ask that rather than forcing designs that endanger pedestrians, that dedicated bicycle lanes not be built in highly congested urban areas.

In the State, there are at least four different designs of floating bus stops making them both unpredictable and inconsistent. We commend MCDOT on developing guidelines for the *Designing Streets to be Safer and More Accessible for People with Vision Disabilities* toolkit. However, as of yet, there is no consensus that we are aware of among the various local DOTs to incorporate these guidelines in their planning processes making regional variation in design still concerning.

The installation of bicycle lanes and floating bus stops present a serious safety concern for people who are blind, have low vision, are hard of hearing or who have a mobility disability. For comments specific to the Cycle Track:

We are encouraged by some features of the design while still concerned by others. Co-location of all floating bus stops at traffic signals with audible pedestrian signals at both sidewalks and floating bus stops and at least one safe loading and drop-off area for paratransit on each block are welcome design features.

We expect, as was proposed in the Tool Design handbook, that a mock-up of all designs under consideration will be available long before any design finalization and/or installation so a good cross section of disabled persons can have input into the design.

Before any of this work is done, the planned upgrade of the older floating bus stop installations should be undertaken.

We agree with the need to slow traffic, but we are concerned that reducing the number of lanes on Fenton Street will just see drivers and cyclists go out and around a bus (or any vehicle) stopped in the roadway. Other than installing flex-posts the entire length of the route, we do not see how to prevent this.

The narrowing of lanes may have the effect of slowing traffic somewhat but reducing the width of lanes has an impact on accessible parking and safety getting in and out of cars particularly for wheelchair dependent individuals. Street parking with a bicycle lane would require a wheelchair dependent individual to (dangerously) exit their vehicle into traffic.

The plans fail to address how to accommodate and preserve urgently needed accessible parking.

Despite the fact that pedestrians vastly outnumber bicyclists, pedestrian safety seems to be a secondary consideration in MCDOT's planning process. We know that bicycle accidents are equally tragic, but these plans need to work for everyone and address extant most profound dangers first.

As per our repeated recommendations to the Planning Board and the Department of Transportation, the County should prioritize pedestrian safety over all other MCDOT projects (such as installation of bicycle lanes and floating bus stops). While safety has been a consideration in the bicycle lane installation project plans, the emphasis has been on bicyclist safety over pedestrian safety.

Basic sidewalk installation and improvement should be a priority in all neighborhoods and especially on the roads leading to schools where there is no bus service first. Sidewalk construction across the County should be prioritized before bicycle lanes development is even considered. This may require County legislation to make sidewalks mandatory preventing homeowners from blocking sidewalk installation.

The lack of sidewalks forces pedestrians to walk in the street amongst car traffic. The danger of this is self-evident and should be rectified first. Pedestrians sharing roadways with vehicular traffic should not be the only option available. The County needs to provide for a safe way for all people to walk especially for people with disabilities (including wheelchair users, other mobility impaired people, people with low vision or blindness, hearing loss or any other disability type), children and seniors.

We recommend a simplified and more detailed safety review encompassing all transportation initiatives to assure uniformity of goals and inclusiveness of concerns of all pedestrians, including people with disabilities, before any plans are implemented.

Cc: The Honorable Marc Elrich, County Executive

Cc: The Honorable Gabe Albornoz, President, County Council.

From: [Marcus Bolston](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: Marc.Erich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Easterseals and Commission on People with Disabilities comments on the Fenton Street Cycle Tracks Project
Date: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 9:48:27 PM

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Dear Council members,

I am writing on behalf of Easterseals DC MD VA regarding the Fenton Steet Cycle Tracks Project.

Bicycle lanes were developed at on Spring Street and Second Street in Silver Spring, right where the Inter-Generational Center sits on the corner. This has created many challenges for people with disabilities in our local community. The bicycle lanes are now located between parking spaces and the sidewalk. Individuals with low vision, hearing deficits, limited mobility, and/or wheelchair dependent are at a higher risk of injury when trying to cross to the sidewalk. MetroAccess vans are often forced to park in the street and passengers must cross the bike lanes to get to the curb. The extended curbs also make it difficult to turn for 15 passenger handicap-accessible vehicles (such as those operated by Easterseals). There used to be a left turn entry to the center that is now no longer available because of the extended curbs, and you can only now enter the center from one direction.

Last year a driver parked an Easterseals vehicle along the 2nd Street side of the building, and because of the poor weather conditions and the cycle lanes the street is now too narrow. Metro transit buses have a difficult time making that turn. The long metro transit bus hit the side of our vehicle attempting to turn and damaged it. These are just some of the examples in which the bicycle lanes have negatively impacted our local area. We hope that you will take these into consideration for the Fenton Street Cycle Tracks Project and are willing to partner with you to improve these circumstances for people with disabilities.

Marcus Bolston, MS-HIA

Senior Director, Adult and Senior Services

The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Adult Day Services in The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Inter-Generational Center

[1420 Spring Street Silver Spring MD 20910](#)

P [301.920.9765](tel:301.920.9765) • F [301.495.0385](tel:301.495.0385)

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DC MD VA_RGB



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From: Tino Calabia
To: MCP-Chair, Ansbacher, David; christopher.conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov; ADA CompManager Matthew Barkley; Seth Morgan; Johnson, Matt; Senator Susan Lee; Delegate Ariana Kelly; Andrew Friedson; Sue Crawford; ACB/MD Pres Patrick Sheehan; IndexNow; Ed O'R Basehart
Subject: COMMENTS: Improving Floating Bus Stop Infrastructure Without Enforcement Measures -- Will That Produce Safety?
Date: Tuesday, January 25, 2022 11:59:05 PM

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Planning Board Chair and Members: I'm Tino Calabia of Montgomery County. Photos taken last fall in our County, DC, and elsewhere open my comments.

Several focus on Silver Spring floating bus stops (including one on Fenton Street) and two in DC. Three show bikers running red lights on one of New York's heaviest traveled bicycle paths. (In March of 2021, a month hard-hit by the pandemic, 75,000 bikers rode the Prospect Park West bike lane in Brooklyn.)

After the photos, I ask: To achieve safety, is it enough to improve infrastructure design while neglecting enforcement measures?

- 1) At a northwest DC floating bus stop, a one-way bike lane lies adjacent to a bus lane. Are "calming measures" built only onto the bike lane's green-colored and red-colored portions or the entire elevated lane? Are the measures as noticeable and physically arresting as speed bumps are to drivers of motor vehicles?



- 2) A scooter-rider properly uses an uncrowded bike lane. Equally permitted to do so, a second rider on what may be a heavy e-bike avoids the bike lane; he uses the lane marked for buses. Even if calming measures on the designated bike lane can achieve their intended effects, they'll have no effect on bikers who don't use the bike lane.



2.)

- 3) A crosswalk intersects this DC floating bus stop. Its sloping side, visible in shadow near the shoes of the blue-shirted pedestrian, can be a tripping hazard for low-vision and other pedestrians especially at dusk and at night. New DC bus stops will reportedly be built without such hazards.

3.)



4a) Silver Spring floating bus stops, here in photo **4a** and in **4b** below, have a concrete depression like that in photo **3** above. Neither is part of a crosswalk, and so poses little or no hazard for pedestrians. Built in 2019, this Fenton Street stop is designed to guide low vision persons to turn right and go up the ramp to await a bus.



4a.)

4b) Again, no crosswalk intersects this rudimentary bus stop built in 2017. (A pedestrian using the nearest crosswalk is seen at the photo's far right side.) When constructed, Montgomery County's upcoming 2.5 model bus stops will differ from the older models seen here and in **4a** above.



4b.)

5) Passing each other while heading in opposite directions, two New York bikers share a two-way bike lane. Both are illegally running through a red "Stop" signal. (A March 2011 NYTimes article reported two organizations, including Seniors for Safety, filed a lawsuit against this lane's placement in Brooklyn. The suit failed.)



5.)

6) Again, bikers on the same two-way lane run a “Stop” signal. Pedestrians must look one way, then the other way, and maybe repeat the process swiftly enough to see if bikers seem to be preparing to obey traffic signals. Quickly swiveling one’s head is not easy for people with a disability and ineffective for many with low-vision.



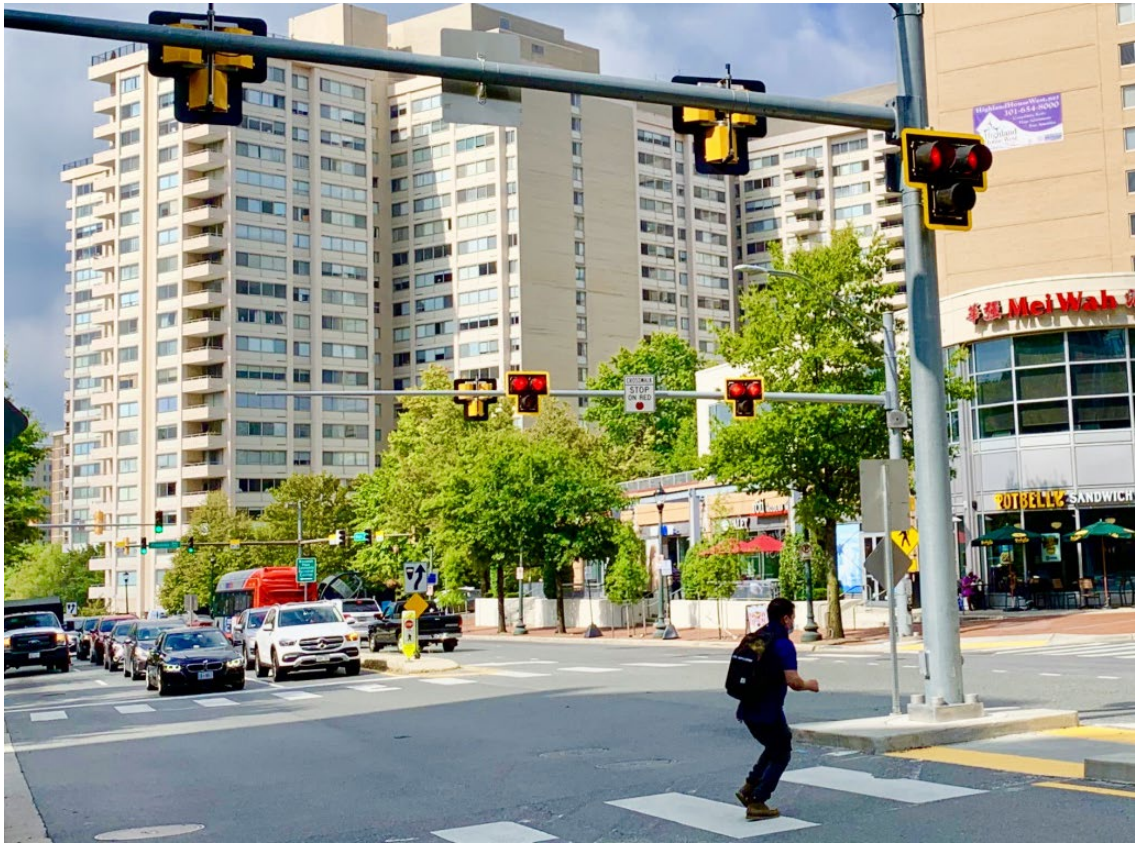
6.)

7) A woman is forced to halt in the bike lane as an adult and a child biker run through the red “Stop” signal at the same intersection as above.

7.)



8a) In Friendship Heights, vehicles stand waiting as an accessible pedestrian beacon (a.k.a. HAWK signal) flashes red enabling a lone pedestrian to cross Willard Avenue.



8a.)

8b) The printed directions posted on the beacon in photo 8a above include a round button at the bottom of the plaque seen in photo 8b that, once activated, can be heard by waiting pedestrians to say “Walk” as soon as the red light flashes “Stop” to vehicular traffic.

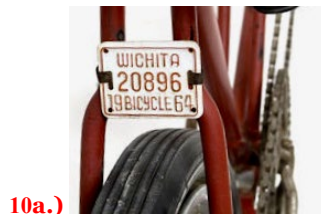


8b.)

9) The traffic signal below is equipped with an enforcement camera that can photograph license plates and simultaneously ticket scofflaws. Many school buses and toll booths have long been equipped with similar enforcement cameras. (I have no info as to which jurisdiction operates this traffic signal, but it's not in our region.)



10a) This photo and a similar one below show actual license plates securely mounted and visible on bicycles. Presumably photo enforcement cameras could record such license plates whenever the biker runs a red “Stop” signal.



10b) The jurisdictions [Wichita and Cambridge] named in the bicycle license plates seen in this and the above photo 10a may no longer require such plates.



Before the above photos were shown, this question was posed: Will improving infrastructure with little or no attendant enforcement measures prove sufficiently effective? The order in which the photos were shown would logically seem to lead to the answer “No.” Why? Because you saw how flagrantly some bikers ignore laws -- e.g., by not stopping when a traffic signal shows red for “Stop.” Thus, improving infrastructure alone and separating it from enforcement is not the answer.

Of course, it’s unlikely that all jurisdictions throughout the Greater Washington region will any time soon require bikes to carry visible license plates such as cars and larger motor vehicles carry. Yet taking time to persuade each jurisdiction to do so is worth the effort.

Meanwhile, even if more street traffic signals were now equipped with enforcement cameras, a scofflaw on a bike that displays no plates and who wilfully runs red lights won’t be identified on camera and wouldn’t automatically be issued a traffic ticket for breaking the law.

So, the next question would seem to be: What can be done at this time?

Before answering, first recall that, during the heyday of gasoline-driven passenger cars, traffic engineers sought the fastest ways to enable car drivers to get from point A to point B as directly and speedily as possible. The era of suburban sprawl prioritized the movement of cars even as cars in recent decades have grown bigger and heavier and, therefore, more lethal.

Now, climate change and global warming have prompted calls for much less reliance on

cars. Municipal officials and urban planners from Paris to Portland OR even envision the “15-minute city,” an urban environment with significantly fewer cars, while safer for bike riding. Yet much road traffic still poses dangers to bikers. Thus, many city planners and traffic engineers have become increasingly aware of the dangers faced by bikers and are designing bike lanes separated from streets and avenues used by motor vehicles. Those special bike lanes do isolate and better protect bikers as intended.

But are municipal officials, their planners, and traffic engineers equally mindful of how to protect people with disabilities and seniors from scofflaw bikers? Will new designated bike lanes become designed and equipped in such ways that bikers slow down for all pedestrians — plus decelerate for those with low vision, people with other disabilities, and seniors? Will better designed infrastructures cause bikers to start braking and come to a halt when traffic signals show red for “Stop”?

Enforcement measures, such as traffic signals that would see bike license plates and automatically ticket red-light runners, are not yet in the tool box of traffic engineers. Nonetheless, for the time being, a stop-gap tool is available: Accessible flashing beacons (a.k.a. HAWK or High Intensity Activated CrossWalk traffic signals).

Look again at photos 8a and 8b at the accessible flashing beacon installed a few short years ago on Willard Avenue, near the Friendship Heights Metro Station from which many WMATA and Montgomery County RideOn buses fan out to distant parts of DC and the County. Residing closeby on Willard Avenue, when passing by this beacon, I marvel at how effectively it enables everyone to cross in safety. Due to the pandemic, I'm more housebound and not been out enough to have seen anyone using a cane or someone in a wheelchair cross Willard. Nonetheless, I have little doubt that people with disabilities and seniors will be well safeguarded by beacons at floating bus stops.

I'll add, too, that last month our fellow County residents, Sue Crawford and Patrick Sheehan, the President of the National Capital Area Chapter of the American Council of the Blind of Maryland, and others wrote to County Transportation Director Christopher Conklin and ADA Compliance Manager Matthew Barkley. To bolster their request that beacons be installed where there are existing or new floating bus stops, Crawford and Sheehan cited Title II of the ADA.

Of course, ultimately, what's needed is for jurisdictions to require license plates on bikes and traffic signals with cameras that will photo-identify bikers who run red lights and issue them tickets. Getting them and others to learn the hard way to obey the law and thereby protect pedestrians with disabilities -- and, indeed, protect everyone -- will take time.

Meanwhile, though public officials and their traffic engineers cannot at this time provide us with exactly what's needed, they should be agreeable to providing us with what's already available. Planning Board Members, wouldn't you agree? --Tino Calabia

From: [Dave Helms](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [David Helms](#)
Subject: Re: Written testimony supporting Fenton Street Cycle Track Mandatory Referrals (Item 7)
Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 9:44:24 AM
Attachments: [Why Build Fenton "Main Street" Cycletrack Now_27JAN2022 - Helms \(1\).docx](#)

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Please replace the first attachment with the attached document for my written input. Thanks, Dave Helms

On Wed, Jan 26, 2022 at 9:40 AM Dave Helms <david.helms570@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Planning Board Members,

Please consider my written testimony, attached, supporting the design of the Fenton Street Cycle Track. I plan to summarize my testimony during the January 27th Planning Board meeting.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Very Respectfully,

Dave Helms
409 Lanark Way
Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
301-466-5561

Item 7

Fenton Street Cycle Track Mandatory Referrals

A. Fenton Street Bikeway Mandatory Referral (MR2022011)

Construction of a cycle track along the west side of Fenton Street from Cameron Street to Gist Avenue.

Staff Recommendation: Approval and transmit comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation

B. Fenton Street at MD 410 Intersection Reconstruction (MR2022008)

Pedestrian and bicycle access and safety improvements for along Fenton Street from King Street to Gist Avenue.

Staff Recommendation: Approval and transmit comments to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation

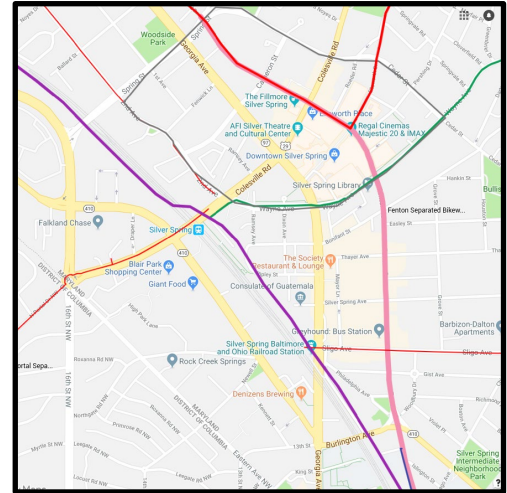
D. Anspacher

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@davidhelms570

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@davidhelms570

Why Build Fenton “Main Street” Cycletrack Now?
From: Dave Helms, 409 Lanark Way, Silver Spring, Maryland 20901
Item 7 : Fenton Street Bikeway Mandatory Referral (MR2022011)

- Fenton Bikeway is included in the Silver Spring Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvement Plan (BiPPA)
 - [SS BiPPA P.5 FENTON STREET](#)
 - Fenton Bikeway is included in the [Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan](#) as a Tier 1 Bikeway, to be implemented within 5 years of the BMP approval (November 2018).
 - Connectivity: Fenton Bikeway will provide the centerpiece for community mobility, integrating Silver Spring’s substantive rail, metro, bus, and trails; connecting:
 - Silver Spring Metro Center (AMTRAK, MARC, and METRO)
 - Purple Line Station at the Library
 - Colesville Bus Rapid Transport at Georgia and Fenton
 - Silver Spring Route 28 Circulator as well as 6 other bus routes
 - 10 Current or Planned Bikeways including:
 - Capital Crescent Trail
 - Metropolitan Branch Trail
 - Green Trail to Sligo Creek [part of [MWCOCG TPB endorsed “National Capital Trail ‘Bicycle Beltway’”](#)]
 - Silver Circle
 - [Vision Zero](#): The Fenton Bikeway will reduce conflicts between motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians identified by #MoCo Vision Zero Data as pedestrian injury hot spots including: Sligo Ave, Silver Spring Ave, Whole Foods, Ellsworth, Colesville, and Cameron.
 - Two people, one bicyclist and one pedestrian, have died on Fenton since 2013.
 - Silver Spring is GROWING, we need more efficient and safe mobility! An additional 5,000+ apartments, townhomes and condominiums under constructions, adding to the 78,038 current Silver Spring residents and 45,295 employees.
 - Provide a viable option for residents the freedom from car ownership - American Consumer Survey data show about 50% of Silver Spring households own 1 or no motor vehicles (twice the national average!).
 - The Fenton Bikeway will provide access to over 80 community services and 250 restaurants and shops (within a mile of the bikeway) for residents to live, shop, and play!
- The Fenton “Main Street” Bikeway will provide access to:
- Churches 4
 - County Service Centers 7
 - Major Employers 6
 - Entertainment Centers 10
 - Event Venues 7
 - Grocery Stores 4
 - Healthcare Facilities 8
 - Parks 10
 - Schools 8
 - Trails Connections 10
 - Transport Facilities 13



Additional Reference Data

- Fenton Points of Interest
 - <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fgo4ExBmNksqMvkVPxj4ChbLfYDqsizAr-w8cgrbaQ0/edit#gid=0>
- Fenton "Main Street" Bikeway Advocacy Reference Data
 - <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1y0skyzhlXVTtoG3BTeqjOhvohfAV3EB4s6zPo5BuBPJq/edit#>
- Fenton "Main Street" Bikeway Map
 - <https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1Eve5ik5uU4DJqYZ3YcCtPTdFWO61sh8S&ll=38.99304587641758%2C-77.03871100919417&z=16>
- Fenton "Main Street" Bikeway Pictures
 - <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1ZBSnqb-jRKRzApjYEthmYmRIFYJ754up>