

## **Item 9 - Correspondence**

**From:** [John Russell](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** WRP Ball Field #6  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 10, 2022 8:59:05 AM

---

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

My name is John Russell. I run the Ponce de Leon Adult Baseball League and have for the past 10 years. Our league has been renting baseball fields from Montgomery County for 35+ years. Every year we are getting “squeezed” out of more and more field space in your county and losing field 6 at WRP would mean even greater difficulty getting enough space to schedule our games. I strongly encourage you to keep this field in your inventory as losing it would have a big negative impact on our ability to have adequate fields for our games. Thanks for listening.

JR

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Michael S. Milton](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan Update  
**Date:** Saturday, May 14, 2022 12:36:08 AM

---

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

Although I live near downtown Silver Spring, I had been going out to Olney Manor Regional Park to use their outdoor walls to practice my tennis strokes. It was a long drive for me and I never knew if there would even be space for me because the walls are always being used. There are other parks with walls, but they are all inferior to the concrete walls. Also, their use conflicts with court users, the use areas overlapping.

Just two weeks ago I discovered that Wheaton Regional Park has handball walls. They are really hidden away. Each time I have been there I have found others using the walls for tennis practice, never for handball. I have never seen anyone using the walls at other parks for practice at all. So if you must remove the current handball walls, I hope that you will replace them with new tennis walls in the small parks, or do a serious upgrade at the small parks (ha ha like that might actually happen in my lifetime - the court surfaces are not well maintained, nor are the simulated walls).

Regarding pickle-ball, why not convert the existing tennis courts in the small parks so that you can get people through the county interested in playing pickleball, and thus maintain the existing courts for tennis. Having tennis courts mostly in one place allows for easier maintenance. Let the pickle ball players suffer with ill-maintained courts for a while so that they can appreciate it when you give them a pickleball center in 2050.

I didn't read the whole plan, but I like the idea of a food concession near the courts area.

Thanks for reading this.

Mike Milton  
1511 Live Oak Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-412-4769

**From:** [Jeff Tessin](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park plan comments  
**Date:** Saturday, May 14, 2022 7:51:23 AM

---

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

Hello,

I'd like to submit the following comments for the 5/19 hearing on the new Wheaton Regional Park master plan:

- I support opening the trails specified in the plan to bicycles. As a mountain biker, I generally prefer sharing more trails with all users, but I also recognize that some people prefer separate experiences.
- The location of the "mountain bike adventure trail" seems too far away from the other trails open to bikes. It would be better located closer to the Wheaton Loop Trail on the east side of the park. Separating the skills park (or whatever the plan involves) from the other trails would encourage bikers to ride across the park, which creates conflicts between users on paved trails.
- More areas of the park could be open to natural surface trails open to all. In particular, you could designate space off the Wheaton Loop, Arcola, and Deer Hollow trails for future trail development. This would increase the network of trails and make it more desirable, especially for mountain bikers who cover trails more quickly. The MORE MTB club would enthusiastically help develop and maintain these trails, and I'd encourage coordinating with them. Adding a MTB trail network at Wheaton would be an incredible compliment to the NWB trails developed in the past 5 years for sorely needed urban mountain biking in the eastern part of the county.
- In general, I'll defer to the MORE MTB club's comments on this plan, which should be given significant weight for this type of trail user. They have a long history of developing and maintaining trails in this area, and can provide significant expertise.

Jeff Tessin  
Takoma Park, MD

**From:** [ghujks@gmail.com](mailto:ghujks@gmail.com)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton regional park planning  
**Date:** Saturday, May 14, 2022 12:04:49 PM

---

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

Hello,

Please do not get rid of the riding stables. They are unique to the Wheaton silver spring community. If you change it to soccer fields or playgrounds, then you've effectively turned a beautiful unique area into something commonplace which one can find in any neighborhood. The fields have native joe pye weed growing on its edges which help native wildlife. The open fields are beautiful in themselves because very few places can claim pastoral settings with open blue sky. I used to ride here as a kid - both classes and summer camp. The classes are always full. Please do not deprive this city/ urban suburb community from an activity that is a one of a kind. Thank you.

Soraya Grieser

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Natasha Paleau](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Keep the horse trails!  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 9:06:20 AM

---

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

Hello,

I live on Ivydale Street in Wheaton Hills. I often hike and bike in Wheaton Regional Park. I love the hiking trails! One of the treasures I enjoy when I'm hiking is seeing the occasional line of horses making its way through the woods. I see children, families, and individuals of all ages getting a unique experience they cannot get elsewhere in the Silver Spring area!

The attraction of trail rides brings people to Wheaton from across the region. I have spoken to folks at the stable who come from DC, Baltimore, and Virginia to experience Wheaton Park's trail rides. There isn't anywhere else in the Silver Spring area that offers this fun, exciting, and enriching experience in nature.

Horse riding promotes physical and mental wellbeing, and can be an entry into outdoor activities for many. Why limit the way people can engage with the park?

Keeping the horse trails maintains the same opportunities for hiking, adds value to the park, and does not disrupt the existing ecosystems around the stables. Please consider leaving the horse trails as-is.

Thank you!  
Natasha Paleau  
2904 Ivydale St  
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Laurie Fromberg](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park Planning  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 9:29:10 AM

---

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

Hi,

I would like to express support for having mountain biking trails in the new plan for Wheaton Regional Park. There is a large community that would support hiking, trail running and ultimately mountain biking. Having a space outdoors in the woods in such a populous area is great for everyone's physical and mental health!

Thanks!

-Laurie

--

Laurie Fromberg, DVM MPH  
[lauriefromberg@gmail.com](mailto:lauriefromberg@gmail.com)

**From:** [Natalie Hendricks](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 9:41:58 AM

---

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

To Whom it May Concern,

Please accept this email as my written testimony and plea to save the Wheaton Stables. This is such a gem of our community and I find it very misguided to eliminate it. We actually think it should be expanded!! There is a wait list for lessons for our children and in this day and age when outdoor activities are so needed coupled with the immense therapeutic benefits horses and caring for them provide to our community members young and old is invaluable. It is Absolutely short sighted to consider removing a crown jewel of our parks. No one wants this stables taken away. If more resources are needed to care for the animals then focus should be there instead. I'm sure you'd find a much more willing public to support raising resources for the stables and caretakers.

Please do not take away the stables!

Sincerely,

Natalie Morales Hendricks  
1407 Sarah Drive  
Silver Spring, Md 20904

**From:** [Tevi Troy](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Tennis courts  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 11:51:36 AM

---

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

Hi. I have heard that Montgomery County is thinking of taking away some of the tennis courts at Wheaton and replacing them with pickle ball courts. I think this is unwise. I play on the tennis courts regularly, as do many other people from this community. The courts are often full, at all hours, with people of all ages, and they have been even more full since the pandemic. I am all for building new pickle ball courts but not for taking away existing tennis courts. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information on this important matter.

Thanks,

Tevi Troy  
202-203-9644  
611 Somersworth Way  
Silver Spring, MD 20902



**From:** [Ari Koretzky](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Concerns about Wheaton tennis changes  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 12:09:27 PM

---

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

To Whom It May Concern:

First off, thank you for the hard work to continue developing wonderful athletic facilities in our neighborhood.

That said, it has come to my attention, and to the attention of many others with whom I play tennis on a regular basis, that changes are being proposed to the tennis part of the outdoor complex at Wheaton Regional Athletic Center.

As an avid tennis player, just a couple of concerns:

1. These courts are frequently full as it is, at many hours of the day. Halving their number will effectively mean that it will be nearly impossible to get a court at normal hours.
2. Pickleball is a sport that can be incorporated into a tennis court. Why not simply add those lines or the aspects necessary and thereby accommodate both?

Thank you again!!

Ari Koretzky  
1205 N Belgrade Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20902

**From:** [Wendy Wallace](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park— Public Comment  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 2:07:46 PM

---

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

Hello—

I'd like to submit public comment on the regional park plan. I live in the community across the street on the other side of Arcola. My family has two young children, 4 and 2, and as a family, we have used all areas of the park. We feel lucky to live near such a wonderful, clean, and family friendly back. It's also very close to the nature.

We love the Shorefield area, the train, the park area, the carousel, and the playgrounds. We also frequently walk around turtle lake. I think the plan to make the trails better in that area is good. The children's playground is great for little ones but making it easier to watch them is a good idea. I love the park and pavilions. I am concerned about the number of food trucks proposed. I don't want the park to become littered or the air more polluted from the idling of the trucks. They are many near the smith so Ian, for example, and they can be quite dirty. For us living nearby, I am concerned about the air particulates it will create. Right now, it's extremely clean and young family friendly. It's also very close to nature. I don't think it needs food trucks (especially not so many). People bring picnic foods or can order from local businesses in Wheaton. It doesn't need to be built up more. It's very idyllic. The neighborhood also has many young families moving in that take advantage of the amenities and nature. I also ask for more trash stations along the trails for dog poop.

We have also used the Orebaugh area to go to the tennis courts and bubble. My husband and I both have taken courses there. I love the robust number of tennis courts. I would really like more lights on the courts and do not like the plan to remove tennis courts for pickle ball courts. The courts are quite busy on the weekends and evenings in the summer and with more young families moving to the area, it's nice to have these available and not have to pay to play in the bubble when the weather is nice. There are some courts behind the bubble right now that are very under used and could be better kept and signed. If anything, upgrade the tennis courts for better lighting but don't remove them for pickle ball. The baseball fields have exceptional lighting and it's clear the tennis courts are used and could even use more attention.

This general area could be good for basketball courts as well but don't put them in place of the tennis courts.

In summary, no to too many food trucks and pollution and litter. 1-2 is okay but why do we need 10?  
No to removing tennis courts for pickle ball. Put the pickle ball courts elsewhere please.

I commend the general plan, but it does seem like you are trying to do everything with Wheaton park. The changes seem to be a little like a smattering of everything instead of focusing on the good that exists there now.

Thank you,

Wendy  
Franwall Ave

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Nathan Gilson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Against reduction in Wheaton tennis courts  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 5:41:01 PM

---

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

Hello,

I live in Montgomery County near Wheaton Regional Park and am very upset to read about the proposed reduction in tennis courts there.

As it is, there are not enough courts to meet demand from tennis players.

If you keep the tennis courts, they can be used for pickleball when desired. But you can't play tennis on a pickleball court.

Please reconsider the plan.

--

Sent from Mobile Nathan Gilson 617-880-9054

**From:** [Ana Viscal Williams](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Montgomery Planning Board Meeting May 19: Item 9, Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan; support for the Equestrian Center  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 6:03:27 PM

---

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

As the County Planning Board continues to examine and begins to implement its Master Plan for the Wheaton Regional Park, we want to voice our strong support for the long-term importance of the Equestrian Center and Stables as an integral part of the Wheaton Regional Park.

The trails throughout the park that are shared by people on foot and on horseback are key components of the Park and its enjoyment by the community. Those trails preserve and protect native and other plants and nurture the habitat for birds, deer, and other animals for the enjoyment of all and as our legacy for the next generation. The Equestrian Center provides important services, unique in the county, for beginning horseback riders, especially for young beginners and for young people with anxiety and developmental issues. The unique connection between horses and humans has become increasingly recognized by scientists and therapists. The direct value of the services provided by the Equestrian Center has important potential for greater outreach in our community. We strongly encourage the Planning Board, through the Equestrian Center, to explore that potential through such organizations as the STAND Foundation.

We have been home owners near the Park for over 35 years. Our family has regularly enjoyed the Park during those years and we have developed a deep appreciation for the role it plays in our community. We have watched the community grow and change and we welcome the Master Plan's thorough effort to adapt the Park to the developing needs of the community.

We are encouraged that Master Plan acknowledges the community's positive input in retaining the Equestrian Center and stables. We are also encouraged by the Master Plan's recommendations to continue trails through the wooded areas and for improvements to the Equestrian Center's use *in the short term*.

We are concerned, however, by the Master Plan's ambiguity about the future of Equestrian Center *over the long-term*. On the one hand, the Master Plan acknowledges that "the equestrian center site draws visitors who simply enjoy walking the grounds, soaking in the bucolic scenery" (p. 54) as well as the need to "ensure opportunities for quiet contemplative experience" (p. 15). The foundation of that experience is the Equestrian Center and its large, "environmentally unconstrained acreage" (p. 54). As the Master Plan notes, this is the largest such area in the "down county" region, which is to say, in Wheaton and neighboring communities. That "this site could potentially accommodate additional, compatible facilities" should certainly be explored to ensure full use of resources that can appropriately serve multiple needs.

That, however, is far different from using the current site of the Equestrian Center to "accommodate a different use altogether" (p. 54). As our community continues to urbanize, the need for sufficient space for "quiet enjoyment and contemplation" has grown, too. Part

and parcel of that experience will be the need for the conservation of the land and environmental stewardship. Providing fully for the “opportunity for contemplative experience” is not a theoretic “nice to have.” Rather, it has intrinsic value to the community and will grow in importance as the community becomes more and more urban.

When the Wheaton Regional Park was first developed, much of the area along Kemp Mill Road was devoted to the small scale raising of horses by individual home owners and families. Today the Equine Center at the Park is the only reminder of that community tradition. We make that observation not out of simple nostalgia. Rather, we believe that The Equine Center of the Wheaton Regional Park can and should be a prime example of a positive community tradition that moves to meet the new needs of a changing community.

Yours truly,

James H. Williams and Ana Viscal-Williams

12201 Kemp Mill Road, Silver Spring, Maryland  
20902

[gviscal@yahoo.com](mailto:gviscal@yahoo.com)

**From:** [Anna DeNicolò](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** No mountain bike trails in Wheaton regional  
**Date:** Sunday, May 15, 2022 7:18:56 PM

---

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

Please preserve the horse trails in Wheaton, there are few places the public can access horses in the area. My friends daughter is becoming a veterinarian because of her access to that stable. Hikers and mountain bikers don't mix either.

Anna DeNicolò  
10307 Folk St, Silver Spring, MD 20902

**From:** [Kathey Jaucian](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [joejaucian@yahoo.com](mailto:joejaucian@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Horse trail  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 6:28:05 AM

---

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

Hello, To whom it may concern. My husband and I would like to show support for keeping the Wheaton Horse Trail as is with no changes. One of the nicest features of living in silver spring is that it is much like a city, but you still have areas where nature is preserved.

That area close to the horse farm is very peaceful with the gardens and trails close by, and the horses just add to the atmosphere. Having the horse trails allows the riders to enjoy the scenery. And also provides something different to do for residents in the community. There are already plenty of bike trails.

Thank you for your consideration

Joe & Katherine Jaucian  
232 Mowbray Road  
202-689-4421

**From:** [Andrew Stein](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Wheaton Regional Park master plan: tennis courts  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 8:41:10 AM

---

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

Hello:

My name is Andrew Stein, and I am an 11 year MoCo resident. I live in Saddlerock Rd, near the Wheaton tennis courts, and play on both the outdoor and indoor courts on a weekly basis.

I'm writing in response to the proposal to convert 3 outdoor tennis courts into 6 pickleball courts. Let me note that I am a big fan of both tennis and pickleball, but I think permanently eliminating 3 tennis courts is a bad idea. The Wheaton courts are known as a premier tennis spot in the area, and are frequently busy when the weather is decent. I have had to wait for courts on several occasions. Eliminating half the courts would create a real logjam that I think should be avoided.

A better approach, which I think would please tennis and pickleball fans alike, would be to add pickleball lines to 2-3 of the courts, and leave the tennis nets and lines as is. This would make fans of both sports happy and is a reasonable compromise that I have seen elsewhere.

If you do decide to move forward with permanent pickleball courts, I would respectfully suggest that converting 1 tennis court into 2 pickleball courts would be sufficient to satisfy the demand. 6 pickleball courts is a lot, and I really doubt more than 1 or 2 would be used at a time, while the loss of 3 tennis courts would really be felt, especially on weekends.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Andrew Stein  
11702 Saddlerock Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20902



**From:** [Daniel Moshinsky](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton tennis  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 9:27:19 AM

---

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

Good morning,

I read that there's a proposal to eliminate some tennis courts at Wheaton regional park in order to convert them to pickleball courts. I respectfully disagree with this proposal.

I am a frequent user of the courts (2-3 times a week) and the courts are in almost constant use for tennis. During popular times, I often see all the courts occupied. Reducing the number of courts will cause frustration.

I suggest either painting pickleball lines on existing tennis courts, or repairing the practice courts with a hitting wall that are on the other side of the tennis bubble, and are currently in disrepair.

Either of these solutions will add capacity and variety of offerings without disrupting a great amenity the county offers for tennis players.

Thank you,  
Daniel

**From:** [Devora McCoy](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** 2022 WHEATON REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 10:35:57 AM

---

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

Good afternoon,

I'm writing in regards to the current proposed plan for the Wheaton regional park. It is pertinent that a plan be developed that does not affect the environmental enrichment of the horses housed at Wheaton Stables. It is very important for the current grazing area of the horses stay unchanged for their welfare because horses need to have the ability to exhibit normal grazing behavior and be able to relieve energy outside of being under saddle. Reducing the turnout area can result in negative behavioral changes in horses that can be dangerous to riders and those around them due to built up energy. In addition, it is good enrichment for the horses and riders to have the ability to go on trail rides, since that is an opportunity that many stables in this area do not have.

Please consider reevaluating the current proposed plan so that it is not negatively affecting the horses and riders of Wheaton Stables.

Sincerely,

Devora McCoy  
[dmccoy507@gmail.com](mailto:dmccoy507@gmail.com)  
3733 Castle Ter.  
Silver Spring, MD

**From:** [Tony Li](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written Testimony for PUBLIC HEARING: 2022 WHEATON REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 10:49:53 AM

---

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

Hello,

I am emailing to provide written testimony on the proposed 2022 Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan.

The perception among local residents is that the Planning Board is doing everything in its power to eliminate the Equestrian Center, the latest efforts being the proposed elimination of the Horse Trail in favor of an inadequately short trail on the Stables premises, as well as the perennial push to repurpose the land completely.

The Equestrian Center provides a unique, irreplaceable service to this region of the county and its youth.

In addition, there are few enough horse trails as it is. Bikers are free to use almost all trails in Wheaton Regional Park. There is no need to convert the Horse Trail to a hiker/biker trail except as a transparent effort to inflict a death of a thousand cuts for the Equestrian Center.

I ask that the Board listens to the feedback of the local residents who actually use and support the park, and reevaluate your plans for the Equestrian Center.

Sincerely,  
Tony Li  
1518 Ingram Terrace, Silver Spring, MD 20906  
[tony.li.public@gmail.com](mailto:tony.li.public@gmail.com)

**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Wheaton Park Stables MUST Stay!!  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 2:15:01 PM

---

---

**From:** J. Werth <jywerth@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 2:13 PM  
**To:** Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Subject:** Wheaton Park Stables MUST Stay!!

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

Hi,

Please keep the Wheaton Park Stables and let it operate as is including the Circle Trail. There are very few Equestrian Centers around the area, and Wheaton is very unique in what they offer to the families around the DMV area.

I live in DC, and my daughter has been going to the Center for over 2 years. We were very fortunate to get into a class right before the pandemic started. I can not tell you how much being at the stable and being able to interact with the horses have helped (and helping) my child endure the craziness of Covid-19 world which is still ongoing. Pandemic has been compounded by the death of her very close Grandmother who has recently passed away.

Being at the stable has in a way helped her grounded, gave her something to look forward to each week, and provided a therapeutic session to the emotional rollercoaster that we all feel at this time. I also wanted to add that my daughter is not a very athletic kid and providing her the option to do another sport like riding has given her a huge confidence boost!!

We have taken some camps and classes at Rock Creek Stable, and have considered going to another Stables, but decided at the end Wheaton is the best fit. Wheaton Stable is more than just where we drop off the kids to take classes. They are most welcoming, have a feel of a "family" run stable - giving off that warm fuzzy feeling to the whole family (not just the kid who is taking the class), instructors and staff are very responsive, and you can tell that they love being there.

I can not stress enough how our family is grateful for being part of the Wheaton Stable community. They have much to give to the community and have been a huge impact on ours. My daughter's dad and his siblings have taken classes at Wheaton while they were growing up, giving my daughter another connection to our family and Wheaton's community.

Please do not remove the center now or in the future, and keep the Circle Trail without any bikes. Thank you.

-Jennifer Werth

**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Regarding hearing on WPS  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 2:37:21 PM

---

**From:** Amanda Vierling <amanda.m.vierling@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 2:25 PM  
**To:** Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Subject:** Regarding hearing on WPS

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

Ms. Coello,

I understand that there is to be a hearing on Thursday regarding the Wheaton Park Stables and the nearby Circle Trail. I am writing to you to strongly advocate for WPS in this matter.

Our family has a long association with WPS. Not only have we lived in the area for decades, we have used WPS for two children to learn to ride. My daughter has been riding there since she was 9 yrs old and will shortly start her 5th year. She just participated in the horse show (which had about 84 participants). She has attended the summer horse camps for the last three years and loves her lessons so much we don't take breaks in the summer. Ironically she is looking forward to good weather because she wants to do trail rides, and taking horses to the watering hole is the highlight of camp weeks.

The summer camps are so popular you have to act fast to get a slot, and there is often a waiting list for lessons. All of this tells me that people want to be at Wheaton Park Stables and that there is keen interest in what is offered there. In pre-COVID times, the stables also offered trail rides and pony rides, both very enjoyable experiences.

Additionally, it is beautiful. People do photoshoots there. I have also seen people set up to paint the horses. When my commute was different, I deliberately drove by so I could see the horses out in the morning to start my day off on a good note. It is not typical that you get to see horses in the middle of suburbia.

My child has greatly benefitted from WPS. She has grown so much in her confidence over the years. It is the one activity that she has stuck with longer than any other and she even wants to work there in the future. Judging from the camaraderie I see with the teenagers/young adults, strong bonds are formed over years of working and training together. They are consistently kind, hardworking people who set a good example for younger kids. We need to encourage more of that. WPS offered my child something when many other activities were cancelled due to COVID. They have pivoted to adapt and I cannot tell you how grateful I am for all they have done.

I strongly feel that Wheaton Park Stables is an asset to our community. We should highlight this gem in our area instead of treating it like an inconvenience. WPS should be allowed and *encouraged* to continue operations as it already does - the staff do a great

job. It is also affordable. We would not have this opportunity anywhere else.

We as a community should invest now in renovations instead of putting things off until the situation is dire. That is the same kind of poor planning that happens with our schools, which get to the point of needing to be rebuilt instead of maintained. That way of thinking needs to change.

Regarding the trail, it is currently used well by hikers and horses. Adding mountain bikes is just itching for trouble. There is no reason that mountain biking needs to be on that same trail. The horses were there first. Find somewhere else for the bikers to go. The trail is also a source of revenue for the barn and moving those trail rides somewhere else is a direct attack on the stables. Please do NOT think you can create a shorter trail around the barn and/or take away space from the horses. Please do not cut off access to the watering hole for the horses. I do not feel that the planning teams are really thinking about the well-being of the horses or riders when talking about adding mountain biking.

I understand that there are mountain biking advocacy groups that are trying to sway you into permitting this mixed use. Please listen more closely to the people who actually use the stables and use the trail already. Please listen to the people for whom this is our community - where we live and play. WE deserve our paradise to be maintained. There are other places for bikers to go. There are few places for horses to go.

WPS is not just an equestrian facility. It is a family that welcomed us with open arms all those years ago. Please look at the big picture and understand that the Wheaton Park Stables need to be protected.

Regards,

Amanda Stokley Vierling  
301.661.7010

**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Preservation of Wheaton Park Stables and its trails  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 2:51:21 PM

---

---

**From:** Ellen Kao <ellyn.kao@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 2:47 PM  
**To:** Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Subject:** Preservation of Wheaton Park Stables and its trails

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

To the Montgomery County Planning Board:

My name is Ellen Kao, and I'm a near-lifelong resident of Maryland, including 15 years as a Silver Spring resident. I currently live in Silver Spring and utilize Wheaton Park for a variety of activities. I regularly run from my house to Wheaton Park (by taking NWB or Sligo Creek trails), enjoy visiting Brookside Gardens, and work on my ice skating at the Wheaton Ice Arena when I can. However, what most endears me to the park is the opportunity to take riding lessons and trail rides at the Wheaton Park Stables, and it's also what makes Wheaton Park a unique asset to the community.

As an adult, I started horseback riding in this area and have been to numerous local lesson barns. Wheaton Park Stables is the only one I've ever returned back to. I started lessons again during the pandemic because I remembered them for their excellent instruction but also their uniquely inviting environment that makes riding accessible to all ages and demographics. Their ability to operate trail rides from the barn also makes it easy to share my passion with friends or family right from the heart of the neighborhood. The times that I've been on the trail rides have always been positive experiences for both riders and the other trail users who clearly enjoy seeing the horses out there with them in nature. The instructors/trail guides are focused on safety first and respectful of the trails.

I would like to voice my concern over converting some of the hiking/equestrian trails to mountain biking trails. Wheaton Park is a treasure to Montgomery County for offering many diverse recreational opportunities amid a rich, natural oasis. As a cyclist myself who has ridden on both trails and paved roads so I do support providing bikers their fair share of trails for their hobby. However, the reality is that mountain biking is disruptive to the other users of trails, takes away from the peaceful respite that the old growth woods of Wheaton Park offers, and poses a hazard to some demographics such as birdwatchers, the elderly or hard of hearing. Furthermore, there are much longer, challenging and diverse mountain biking trails all over Montgomery County and the surrounding area that most mountain bikers would readily travel elsewhere to satisfy their mountain biking needs. I do not believe that sacrificing any Wheaton Park trails for mountain biking would be appreciated by the community at large nor contribute to the beauty and therapeutic value of the



natural experience offered by the Wheaton Park.

I look forward to Montgomery County making the right decision in this matter.

Sincerely,  
Ellen Kao

**From:** [Alex Atkinson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#); [Kines, Charles](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan 5/19 Hearing - Letter for Consideration  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 3:31:30 PM

---

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

Ms. Anderson and Mr. Kines,

I am writing to submit a written letter (below) for the planned public hearing on May 19th about the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan.

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a resident of Montgomery County and have been enrolled in riding lessons at Wheaton Park Stables (WPS) for just over 1 year now. I also recently participated in the Spring Horse Show at the Wheaton Stable this past Sunday. I wanted to reflect on the joy this event brought to the barn staff, riders, and their families. It's not common, in a county as densely populated as Montgomery, that adults and kids alike have access to a horseback riding facility like this so close to their homes and at such a reasonable cost. During Sunday's horse show for all the riding students and their families, I witnessed the fruits of a lot of hard work by the students who showcased their new skills to their friends and families in a friendly environment. It was a truly special event to see the whole riding community come together for an excellent day of events!

The facility, its staff, and horses have provided a welcomed and needed source of refuge for me personally during the pandemic. With most of my usual activities coming to a halt in 2020, I was really feeling the pandemic depression and needed a way to find some time to do something fun for myself (while staying safe). Having participated in horseback riding as a young teen and during my college years, I had longed to re-enter the sport for several years and finally did at Wheaton Park Stables in 2021. COVID precautions at the stable kept me safe and my mind and body experienced a new low level of stress every week while I also gained new friends and even met some of my neighbors! This sense of community the stable provided me has been invaluable and I have only been riding there for just over one year. I imagine those who have been a part of the stable community for many more years share in my experience of the close-knit community the WPS adds to this area.

For me, horseback riding is not just a sport or a way to get exercise. It is a total mind, body, and spiritual experience. Having the unique opportunity to interact with horses has always left me with a special calm feeling and I still find that true in my third decade of riding. I love having this opportunity (just 7 minutes from my home) to learn and grow as an adult and find that horses have a special ability to teach us about ourselves. I hope that the WPS and its family continues to operate here in Silver Spring as it does now so the community can continue to reap the enormous benefit from this unique

I know that riding lessons is just one of the programs offered by the Wheaton Park Stable and I

hope that my perspective of just a short time interacting with the barn and its staff could offer a glimpse into its important role WPS fills in our Silver Spring community.

My primary concerns are:

1. Wheaton Park Stables MUST stay here, operating as it does.
2. The Stables do need major renovations. However, even major renovations should not be near as costly as brand new, different facilities.
3. The Circle Trail is used by many, both hikers and equestrians, and needs to stay. It is obvious that the majority, whether equestrians or not, prefer mountain bikers not be allowed on this part of the trail system.
4. Wheaton Park Stables is part of the history and heritage of Wheaton Regional Park and the surrounding area. The property is enjoyed by many for its beautiful serene setting and many generations have enjoyed and continue to enjoy the activities offered.

Thank you for your consideration of this letter.

Alex Atkinson  
1135 Loxford Terrace  
Silver Spring, MD 20901

**From:** [Ira Thompson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Tennis Courts  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 4:18:29 PM

---

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

I play both tennis and pickleball and I'm bothered by the plan to convert 3 of the tennis courts to pickleball courts. During nice weather, especially on weekends there can be a wait to get one of the 6 courts currently available. Getting rid of 3 would be a terrible idea. The rec center at the Wheaton library has pickleball Monday, Wednesday & Friday and attendance has been falling somewhat lately. It is available at other county rec centers. I think it would be a shame to remove any of the Wheaton tennis courts



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](https://www.avast.com)

**From:** [Annika O'Hara](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on draft of Wheaton Regional Park master plan update  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 5:02:26 PM

---

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

I am a long-time resident of Wheaton and a frequent user of Wheaton Regional Park where I take my dog for walks along the trails at least a couple of times a week. I am also a member of the Friends of Brookside Gardens and a regular visitor to these wonderful gardens. Here are my comments on the proposed master plan for updating the park:

- 1) Great idea to improve the signage and connections between the various trails and park areas!
- 2) I also welcome the installation of sidewalks or walking trails along Glenallen Avenue, Orebaugh Avenue, and in the Shorefield area.
- 3) I am looking forward to improved trail conditions and even some new trails since so many of them are severely worn down with crumbling pavement and nearly impassable, muddy areas on the natural surface trails.

But there are also some things I am not happy with:

- 1) I object to the planned conversion of the Arcola, Deer Hollow, and Wheaton Loop trails to "multi-use" trails. I can't see that this term is defined anywhere, but I suspect that bicyclists, including mountain bikers, will be allowed on these trails. I am strongly opposed to this idea based on bad experience with bicyclists on the trails in other Montgomery County parks, particularly Rock Creek Park which is taken over by speeding bicyclists on weekends. Please do not let the same thing happen to Wheaton Regional Park! The trails are narrow, it is not always easy to step off them to avoid an approaching bicycle, and it is a particularly bad idea to mix horseback riders and bikers on the Wheaton Loop trail -- there you have an accident waiting to happen.
- 2) Speaking of horses, I was saddened to see the lukewarm support for Wheaton Park Stables. The vague language on page 54 about "future potential uses," including complete repurposing of the land, is ominous and I sincerely hope that you will find a way to preserve the stables. This treasure should be a permanent fixture in the park!
- 3) I am skeptical to the need for two basketball and two soccer courts in the overflow parking area near the carousel when you are planning a huge action sports park in the Rubini Athletic area, including the conversion of a handball court to a soccer court and an upgrade of the existing basketball court. If you must do something in the carousel area, please limit it to basketball! Two soccer fields mean 2 x 11 x 2 players = 44 players = 44 cars + spectators and their cars. This area is busy enough as it is and will become even more popular, especially if you introduce food trucks and larger picnic shelters.

Finally, I would like to add that we need more trash and recycling containers throughout the park, not only in the two locations suggested in the draft (Pine Lake area and the future plaza outside Brookside Gardens).

Oh, and no picnics in Brookside Gardens! Or dogs, for that matter.

Sincerely,

Annika O'Hara

2912 Hardy Avenue  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
email: [ohara3@verizon.net](mailto:ohara3@verizon.net)

**From:** [NEIL ROLAND](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton tennis courts  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 5:20:36 PM

---

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

Folks - Regarding the plan to convert three courts to pickle ball courts...A more sensible plan, it seems to me, would be to just paint pickleball lines on three courts. You get two for the price of one! That, by the way, is a very common approach. Best, Neil Roland

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [ladyhawkjm@comcast.net](mailto:ladyhawkjm@comcast.net)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written testimonial for May 19th - Wheaton Park Stables/Trails  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 6:17:48 PM

---

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

To those who serve the Montgomery County Planning Commission,

It came to my understanding that the Wheaton Park Stable/Trails were developed specifically for providing riding alternatives to the equestrian community. In addition to that, an alternative trail is being planned to take it's place, turning the current trails over specifically to hikers and bikers. It seems that every time we (the equestrian Community) turn around, these groups have been very successful in taking trails away from us.

People seem to think horses can be happy just riding around in circles and it's okay. Well, they get bored, they get depressed, and they also act out sometimes resulting in serious injury to horse and rider. If you own a dog, then you already know this. Animals also get depressed, just like humans do. They need to get out and about and in a relaxed setting. I would think that this was the reason the trails were first developed.

If bikers and/or hikers need trails, consider other alternatives for them instead of taking ours away... Something else to consider is the trash that will start to collect as the wind blows it around. The equestrian community tends to clean up after themselves to protect the areas we ride in.... We also have groups that volunteer their time to keep our trails clean and cleared of debris.

Thank you  
June Mellinger  
Calvert County



**From:** [Alison R](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Park Acorn Trail/Horses  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 7:27:06 PM

---

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

I am a Montgomery County Resident (10409 Rodney Rd, Silver Spring), writing in regards to a proposal to convert the Acorn Trail from use by horses to a pedestrian trail. I encourage the committee to reject such repurposing, and retain the trail for its original purpose. There are pedestrian exclusive trails enough, and the experience of this trail for horse back riders and those seeking a gentler path, is a rare enough opportunity.

Thank you,  
Alison Rollins

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Louise Erlick](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for submission to 5-19-22 public hearing on the Wheaton Regional Master Plan Update  
**Date:** Monday, May 16, 2022 8:06:01 PM  
**Importance:** High  
**Sensitivity:** Confidential

---

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

I have read the plan and nothing is said about there being no public bus to the park. Ride-on route 31 goes up and down Kemp Mill Road, right past the entrance of the park, but does not go inside and only goes during rush hour M-F. Not making the park accessible to those who live nearby but can't walk there and have no cars is discrimination against seniors, children, and the disabled. In addition, a large number of local residents who live near but not walking distance to Brookside Gardens are speakers of languages other than English, immigrants, and members of minority groups. Seen through an equity lens, Montgomery County and Brookside Gardens are discriminating against people who could most benefit from the park and who live in 20902, which includes the park. Everyone has the right to enjoy nature and lack of public transit to inside Brookside Gardens prevents many of us from doing so. That is the definition of unintentional discrimination. I have tried in vain to get MCDOT to recognize this inequity.

**From:** [Micek, Christina](#)  
**To:** [Kines, Charles](#); [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [boardmember01@trot-md.org](mailto:boardmember01@trot-md.org)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Parks New Master Plan- written testimony  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 5:55:12 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[Wheaton County Parks.docx](#)

---

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

*Dear Mr. Charles Kine and Chair Casey Anderson,*

*I am currently mountain biking and hiking in Davis, West Virginia, and will not be able to orally testify at the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan Update Public Hearing on May 19 at 6:00PM. Please accept Trail Riders of Today's comments on this new master plan- attached and pasted below.*

*Christina*

*Board Member Trail Riders of Today and Potomac Bridle and Hiking Trail Organization, member of MORE, Sierra Club, and the National Audubon Society, Montgomery Country Park Volunteer North Bethesda resident, my horse Bailey lives in Potomac*

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board, and Montgomery County Parks,

I read the new Wheaton Park Master Plan with great interest. There are many points in the plan that are quite commendable- too many to mention here, but addressing some of the degrading trail bed is one. Maryland and Virginia are considered horse country, and these cultural roots to the equestrian industry in our state run deep, so we are heartened to see the parks again take equestrian needs into consideration.

**I would like to make a few points in favor of maintaining the only equestrian/walking trail (Wheaton Loop Trail) in the forest canopy in Wheaton Regional Park today. Trail Riders of Today, a Maryland trail organization,** would recommend keeping this one trail hiker/equestrian since Wheaton Stables has a lot of beginners, and new public trail riders. This decision seems fair as the new master plan for Wheaton has included a number of new biking trails and amenities such as bike parking and the wonderful Adventure MTB trail for beginners, giving them access to the entire parks system.

1. **The new proposed equestrian/hiker trail around the stables will not be a replacement for the equestrian/hiker trail in the forest canopy, but is a great idea. It is the equivalent of creating a trail around one's own house for equestrians,** which is fine, but the nature of the trail must be characterized appropriately as such. While it is wonderful that the parks department is aware that Wheaton Stables has a need for a dedicated equestrian trail for beginner riders and their therapeutic riding program, we

hope that this new trail does not require the removal of any old growth trees or grazing pasture space to do so. This trail will also offer hikers a wonderful new bucolic farm / horse viewing trail experience that they requested at the public meetings, but will need signage to make sure both horses and hikers are safe. I.e. no petting, or feeding of the horses

2. **Consider keeping Wheaton Loop Trail to the user groups hiker/equestrian, and making Arcola and Deer Hollow Trails shared use for mountain bikers.** If you do this, it will go a long way in minimizing conflicts between trail users, which this new map would not fully address. If you take our suggestion, please consider creating bikers connector's to their new gravel path, and Northwest Branch Trail., perhaps allowing mountain biking on Wheaton Loop Trail partially to connect to Arcola? It seems as if the parks department has made wonderful and smart choices about mountain and road biking throughout the park in general, creating 10 separate much needed connectors and 56 new bike parking essential to the plan. I especially commend the new adventure biking area and beginner mountain trail path for bikes. However, as we consider the users of each park, one must think to make sure each user group has what they need to still enjoy the park. As you say in your master plan, trails are how people access and experience the park's wooded areas to find a genuine respite from the stresses of daily life. These trails are used for walking, hiking, running, biking, horseback riding, nature center programming, and natural resource-based activities such as birdwatching and photography. As you state, hiking-only trails are valued by many users. What you don't state, is that similarly, trail resources that offer equestrians safe trails away from speeding mountain bikes are also valued by that user group. The goal should be to enhance access, but to also reduce conflicts between trail users, which this new map would not fully address. Where natural surface trails are so close to equestrian centers, the parks should recognize that equestrians are one of their main user groups of the trails, and parks close to equestrian centers should have a mix of trail types when reasonable to accommodate- 1. bird watching and photography areas, 2. hiker only trails, 3. hiker/equestrian only shared trails (which benefits hikers as well wanting trails free of speeding mountain bikers), and 4. shared use trails for hikers/mountain bikers and equestrians. This produces a much happier and conflict-free park experience for all. Protecting safe access to our parks for all users is pivotal. On the new plan, hikers have multiple hiking only trails, bikers have multiple new paved, and gravel paths, and the Wheaton plan relegates the only equestrians/hiker trail to the Wheaton Stables own property? I encourage you to rethink this plan, as it seems a bit unbalanced considering the current user groups.
3. **Hikers and equestrians in general have few issues sharing trails with one another in a recent survey published by American Trails, yet introducing mountain biking should be done with care they found.** American Trail reports the main complaint in adding mountain bikers to shared trails with hikers and equestrians is the speed bikers can get up to which causes obvious danger to all. As the three user groups try to share

especially narrow trails without space to pull over, or if a trail does not include proper signage about speed and etiquette, it can create a situation for multiple points of conflict.

You can see just a few articles about the increasing issue here to consider:

<https://www.outsideonline.com/culture/opinion/mountain-biker-behavior-trail-access/>

and <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/09/06/mountain-bikers-trail-sharing-jeffco-open-space/>

4. **Wheaton Stables offers horseback riding trail rides to the public**, a unique and wonderful experience by those who have joined this activity. Let's keep this activity safe and able to continue.

Equestrians favor sharing our amazing park land and natural surface trails with a wide variety of user groups. We are all taxpayers, and each group should be considered. Shared-use trails make sense for some parks, but having an appropriate mix of equestrian/hiker, and hiker only, and shared use trails in parks that abut equestrian centers such as Wheaton Regional Park, Potomac Horse Center, Wyndham Oaks, Callithea Farm, Great and Small, Meadowbrook Stables, etc. just makes sense.

Does the Montgomery County Parks Department have an equestrian on staff that might be able to speak about this and other issues impacting equestrians? We would be happy to work with the parks department to provide these services if no one on staff can.

Christina Micek  
Board Member, Trail Riders of Today

## CHRISTINA MICEK

MEDIA MANAGER, DIGITAL ASSET MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PARTNERS



CHRISTINA.MICEK@NATGEO.COM  
PHONE: 202.791.1179  
1145 17TH STREET, NW  
WASHINGTON, DC, USA 20036  
WWW.NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM

*Note: My working hours may not be your working hours. Please do not feel obligated to reply outside of your normal work schedule.*

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board, and Montgomery County Parks,

I read the new Wheaton Park Master Plan with great interest. There are many points in the plan that are quite commendable- too many to mention here, but addressing some of the degrading trail bed is one. Maryland and Virginia are considered horse country, and these cultural roots to the equestrian industry in our state run deep, so we are heartened to see the parks again take equestrian needs into consideration.

**I would like to make a few points in favor of maintaining the only equestrian/walking trail (Wheaton Loop Trail) in the forest canopy in Wheaton Regional Park today. Trail Riders of Today, a Maryland trail organization,** would recommend keeping this one trail hiker/equestrian since Wheaton Stables has a lot of beginners, and new public trail riders. This decision seems fair as the new master plan for Wheaton has included a number of new biking trails and amenities such as bike parking and the wonderful Adventure MTB trail for beginners, giving them access to the entire parks system.

1. **The new proposed equestrian/hiker trail around the stables will not be a replacement for the equestrian/hiker trail in the forest canopy, but is a great idea. It is the equivalent of creating a trail around one's own house for equestrians,** which is fine, but the nature of the trail must be characterized appropriately as such. While it is wonderful that the parks department is aware that Wheaton Stables has a need for a dedicated equestrian trail for beginner riders and their therapeutic riding program, we hope that this new trail does not require the removal of any old growth trees or grazing pasture space to do so. This trail will also offer hikers a wonderful new bucolic farm / horse viewing trail experience that they requested at the public meetings, but will need signage to make sure both horses and hikers are safe. ie no petting, or feeding of the horses
2. **Consider keeping Wheaton Loop Trail to the user groups hiker/equestrian, and making Arcola and Deer Hollow Trails shared use for mountain bikers.** If you do this, it will go a long way in minimizing conflicts between trail users, which this new map would not fully address. If you take our suggestion, please consider creating bikers connector's to their new gravel path, and Northwest Branch Trail., perhaps allowing mountain biking on Wheaton Loop Trail partially to connect to Arcola? It seems as if the parks department has made wonderful and smart choices about mountain and road biking throughout the park in general, creating 10 separate much needed connectors and 56 new bike parking essential to the plan. I especially commend the new adventure biking area and beginner mountain trail path for bikes. However, as we consider the users of each park, one must think to make sure each user group has what they need to still enjoy the park. As you say in your master plan, trails are how people access and experience the park's wooded areas to find a genuine respite from the stresses of daily life. These trails are used for walking, hiking, running, biking, horseback riding, nature center programming, and natural resource-based activities such as birdwatching and photography. As you state, hiking-only trails are valued by many users. What you don't

state, is that similarly, trail resources that offer equestrians safe trails away from speeding mountain bikes are also valued by that user group. The goal should be to enhance access, but to also reduce conflicts between trail users, which this new map would not fully address. Where natural surface trails are so close to equestrian centers, the parks should recognize that equestrians are one of their main user groups of the trails, and parks close to equestrian centers should have a mix of trail types when reasonable to accommodate- 1. bird watching and photography areas, 2. hiker only trails, 3. hiker/equestrian only shared trails (which benefits hikers as well wanting trails free of speeding mountain bikers), and 4. shared use trails for hikers/mountain bikers and equestrians. This produces a much happier and conflict-free park experience for all. Protecting safe access to our parks for all users is pivotal. On the new plan, hikers have multiple hiking only trails, bikers have multiple new paved, and gravel paths, and the Wheaton plan relegates the only equestrians/hiker trail to the Wheaton Stables own property? I encourage you to rethink this plan, as it seems a bit unbalanced considering the current user groups.

3. **Hikers and equestrians in general have few issues sharing trails with one another in a recent survey published by American Trails, yet introducing mountain biking should be done with care they found.** American Trail reports the main complaint in adding mountain bikers to shared trails with hikers and equestrians is the speed bikers can get up to which causes obvious danger to all. As the three user groups try to share especially narrow trails without space to pull over, or if a trail does not include proper signage about speed and etiquette, it can create a situation for multiple points of conflict,.

You can see just a few articles about the increasing issue here to consider:

<https://www.outsideonline.com/culture/opinion/mountain-biker-behavior-trail-access/> and <https://www.denverpost.com/2019/09/06/mountain-bikers-trail-sharing-jeffco-open-space/>

4. **Wheaton Stables offers horseback riding trail rides to the public,** a unique and wonderful experience by those who have joined this activity. Let's keep this activity safe and able to continue.

Equestrians favor sharing our amazing park land and natural surface trails with a wide variety of user groups. We are all taxpayers, and each group should be considered. Shared-use trails make sense for some parks, but having an appropriate mix of equestrian/hiker, and hiker only, and shared use trails in parks that abut equestrian centers such as Wheaton Regional Park, Potomac Horse Center, Wyndham Oaks, Callithea Farm, Great and Small, Meadowbrook Stables, etc. just makes sense.

Does the Montgomery County Parks Department have an equestrian on staff that might be able to speak about this and other issues impacting equestrians? We would be happy to work with the parks department to provide these services if no one on staff can.

Christina Micek

Board Member, Trail Riders of Today



**From:** [Victoria Ray Henderson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park update  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 8:19:43 AM

---

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

Good morning,

I read through the plans and would like to show my support for the updates. I live at 4 Briggs Court Silver Spring Maryland 20906. I walk from my house to Brookside Gardens and have been a regular visitor to the park for over 25 years. I appreciate your work and thoughtful consideration of public opinion.

Thank you,  
Victoria

[Victoria Ray Henderson](#)

Associate Broker in DC, VA & MD

The Buyer Brokerage

1320 Old Chain Bridge Road-Suite 430

McLean, Virginia 22101

[301.922.1677](#) Mobile

[703.278.2659](#) Office

Home offices in Silver Spring & Baltimore Maryland

[Host of Listen Up Homebuyers! NAEBA podcast](#)



**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Testimony for May 19 Public Meeting re Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 10:11:24 AM

---

---

**From:** Madeline Cohen <madelinejean.cohen@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 4:55 PM  
**To:** Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Subject:** Testimony for May 19 Public Meeting re Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan

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

Dear Ms. Coello,

Please find below my written testimony for the May 19, 2022 Public Meeting on the Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan.

Testimony

Wheaton Park Stables is an essential part of Wheaton Regional Park. Horseback riding provides physical exercise, helps build confidence and leadership skills, and allows people to create deep bonds with the animals they ride. It also gives children an engaging activity away from cell phones and computer screens. Wheaton Park Stables offers one of the only affordable riding programs in Montgomery County. Other stables target customers who can afford to ride multiple times per week and compete in horse shows. Wheaton Park Stables provides another option. Wheaton does not put any pressure on their customers to ride more often, compete in shows, or take part in other expensive equestrian activities. Instead, they treat everyone with kindness and respect, whether they can afford to ride every day or only once per month. They also offer trail rides to community members and visitors so that everyone can experience the joy of horseback riding. Their goal is to help people learn about equine care, gain riding skills, and have fun. I urge you to ensure that Wheaton Park Stables remains open as part of any master plan for the park. They offer a vital service at an affordable price and they are an essential part of the Wheaton Regional Park community.

Thank you,  
Maddie Cohen  
Former Wheaton Park Stables customer

**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Wheaton Park Horse Stables  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 10:11:29 AM

---

---

**From:** Kirk O'Connor <kirkomick@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 16, 2022 5:16 PM  
**To:** Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>; Wheaton Park Stables <WheatonParkStablesMD@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Wheaton Park Horse Stables

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

Hi Catherine,

I would like to provide public comments via email about the wonderful facilities, staff and horses that are supported at the Wheaton Stables.

The stables and land surrounding pastures for the horses are an amazing view in the mornings when taking my kids to school. We look forward to seeing the horses outside and identifying our favorites.

The education and riding lessons my daughter has received have been excellent, safe, and provides Annabelle with many days of smiles and laughter when she speaks of all the different horses.

I fully support renovations on the stables, but not at the loss of continuous operations; perhaps creating new facilities on the same land, and allowing for the horses to stay and construction, similar to what happened at Candy Cane.

Annabelle has been crying to do a trail ride as soon as possible and allowed. The horse trails need to continue to be allowed.

While I don't know as much about the lessons and support for horse therapy at Wheaton, I do know of the benefits that occur for many people whether for mental or physical handicaps. I would encourage expanding the program, especially for kids with autism, ALS, and other concerns.

My daughter would love to work at the stables either earning SSL hours for school or for supporting programs like the above.

I am grateful that the program is close and available in Montgomery County, please continue to fund, expand, and enhance the stables.

Thanks,

Kirk O'Connor  
13100 Middlevale Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20906  
Kirk O'Connor  
1.202.255.3945



**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Wheaton Park Stables  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 10:11:47 AM

---

---

**From:** richnat@verizon.net <richnat@verizon.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 7:21 AM  
**To:** Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>; NATALIE TUSING <richnat@verizon.net>  
**Subject:** Wheaton Park Stables

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

Hello Catherine,

My daughter Grace Tusing is learning to ride horses at Wheaton Park Stables. This institution and the surrounding trails are vital to the welfare of Montgomery County residents. These facilities provide areas where we can get out into the outdoors in a convenient and easy manner. These days this is so critical to our mental and physical health. I ask you to keep Wheaton Park Stables in our county. Provide the funds to update as needed and invest in the county residents' best interest. This is a new part of our county that needs to be reserved.

Thank you,  
Natalie Tusing  
Rockville resident (20853)  
301-458-1192

[Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS](#)

**From:** [Abigail Norris](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan Update  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 11:09:53 AM

---

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

Hello!

I understand there's a proposal to change the Acorn trail from a horse trail into something more friendly to bikers. I live nearby (Colesville/Northwest Branch) and run these trails all the time. I appreciate the rustic nature of the Acorn trail and the natural settings around me - the feeling of being in the middle of the woods, not to mention being able to run in solitude in the quiet and not have many cyclists or mountain bikers speeding by out of nowhere. I would hate to see this natural area interrupted by development, and also like the fact that the horse riders at the Wheaton Stables have somewhere to go. I think we already have plenty of trail space in Wheaton Regional and elsewhere throughout the county for mountain bikers and cyclists - not as much for the horse riders. Please maintain the trail in its current form.

Thank you for listening,

Abigail Norris

**From:** [Frederica Johnson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Trail  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 12:35:53 PM

---

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

Please save the wheaton trail for equestrians only. New trail riders need a calm riding experience, uninterrupted by trail bikes, in order to gain the confidence necessary to ride horses on trails.

Thank you,

Frederica Wheeler

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)



**From:** [Sarah Barber](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Stables Acorn Trail - PLEASE Do not turn into a hiker trail  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 1:23:15 PM

---

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

Hello,

I am a long-term resident of Montgomery county, over 30 years. I've raised my kids here. I've been taking lessons at the Wheaton stables for over 6 years, and one of my daughters rides as well. The Acorn trail is used by the horses at Wheaton, and is very special.... please don't close it to the horses, even partially. My daughter goes to horse camp at Wheaton every year (she's only 10, started riding at 5) and the trail is a highlight of camp. They can take the horses on the trail, let them drink at the pond, and experience being "in the woods" with the horses. This is a delight for the horses but also the kids, who need all the outside time they can get after two very, very hard years. You would also be limited trail rides, which are a revenue generator for the stables.

I am a hiker, I LOVE to hike and ride trails. I also love to bike. But I can do those things in a million places in Montgomery county. I can't go on trail rides easily anywhere close to where I live that I can afford. Wheaton stables is affordable, and the trail is an integral part of the horses' and riders' well-being. Please don't alter it. You'd be altering or limiting activities that are so very important to the members of the community that have fought so hard to make the stables a warm, welcoming, safe place.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sarah Barber  
Silver Spring, MD

**From:** [A Stowe](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Written testimony for update to Wheaton Regional Park Master Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 6:55:13 PM

---

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

Dear Casey Anderson,

I appreciate the option to submit written testimony regarding my concerns about a few components of the Master Plan Update for WRP. The park is a treasure to those of us living in Down County and many of the recommendations will enhance use by an even broader section of Montgomery County residents.

As a regular user of many resources at WRP, I have three concerns. These are the issues of 1) possible lighting and 2) sound pollution and 3) the impact of mountain bikes on the multi-use trail as byproducts of some new projects mentioned as the Master Plan Update was explained.

First, I hope the County will consider using public lighting guidelines from the International Sky Association that offer ways to provide minimal impact to the area skies while preserving safety when developing the plaza at the back entrance to Brookside Gardens, the Adventure Park and the renovated Dog Park. The image shown of the Arvada Adventure Park showed huge overhead lights that would light up the night far beyond what is necessary. Given the decreasing habitat for numerous insects, birds and animals in our area, using low-impact lighting seems like a good and necessary step toward their protection.

The issue of possible sound pollution coming from users of the Adventure Park - especially if it is kept open until 11:00 like the Dog Park - has me concerned. While currently those back ball fields (fields 4-6) are only used during the day, the Adventure Park may pose a very different (and intentional) use pattern that will greatly impact those who live around the park...as well as the wildlife in the adjacent woodlands.

My third concern is about the proposed multi-use circular trail off Kemp Mill. As a natural surface trail, how does the county plan to rectify or ameliorate the effects of erosion on it with increased use? As we watched the state of the trails throughout the park degrade just through the increased number of walkers/hikers during this pandemic, I can't imagine the added impact made by mountain bikes on that trail, especially after rain. The inclusion of bikes on that trail seems like a choice which will result in constant repair of the natural surface.

Again, thank you for all the work done on the recommendations for improvements to WRP. I will continue to listen in on the public presentations regarding the park.

Thank you,

Amy Schmidt Stowe  
2104 Dayton Street  
Silver Spring 20902

**From:** [Daniel Marcin](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** WRP: thanks for making Orebaugh entrance more ped friendly  
**Date:** Tuesday, May 17, 2022 10:28:00 PM

---

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

Thanks for including improving the Orebaugh entrance for pedestrians in the park update plan. Much appreciated.

Thank you for your service and have a wonderful day.

--

Daniel Marcin  
Economist  
[dsmarcin@gmail.com](mailto:dsmarcin@gmail.com)  
[Homepage](#)

**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Wheaton park stables  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 9:20:06 AM

---

---

**From:** Gina Spangler <ginadspan@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 9:10 AM  
**To:** Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Subject:** Wheaton park stables

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

I am writing in support of keeping the stable on the current property and making renovations to the property. I have lived here all my life and very much enjoy driving by the stables and seeing the horses in the pasture. It is the last bit of open farmland. There is value in that green space.

Also, I prefer that the circle trail not be open to mountain bikes. They are disturbing when they rush by me on the trail. I do enjoy seeing horses on the trail.

Gina Spangler

**From:** [Coello, Catherine](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: From Sandy Creecy at Wheaton Park Stables -- Statement for May 19 Public Meeting on Wheaton Regional Proposed Master Plan  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 9:22:34 AM  
**Attachments:** [May 19 Statement.docx](#)

---

-----Original Message-----

From: Sandy Creecy <[screecy@mindspring.com](mailto:screecy@mindspring.com)>  
Sent: Tuesday, May 17, 2022 3:30 PM  
To: Coello, Catherine <[catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org)>  
Subject: From Sandy Creecy at Wheaton Park Stables -- Statement for May 19 Public Meeting on Wheaton Regional Proposed Master Plan

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

Attached is my statement which I will be making virtually at the May 19 Public Meeting. Please let me know if I need to do anything else, other than the practice MicroSoft Teams test Wednesday afternoon. Thank you so much.

Sandy Creecy

**STATEMENT OF  
SANDRA S. CREECY, PRESIDENT AND OPERATOR,  
WHEATON PARK STABLES, INC.  
May 19, 2022, Public Meeting  
Wheaton Regional Park Proposed Master Plan**

My name is Sandy Creecy and I have been associated with Wheaton Park Stables for 32 years. I began riding as a beginner at Wheaton Park Stables to prepare for a trip to a dude ranch in Wyoming and have been the President and Operator of the Stables for 14 of the past 32 years. I could, of course, talk for hours about Wheaton Park Stables but will try to keep my comments short and sweet, as I believe our position is fairly well known and I would like to leave time for others to speak.

Wheaton Park Stables appeals to a wide variety of individuals for a wide variety of reasons:

- Families from surrounding neighborhoods bringing their children to see the horses, have picnics, or walk their dogs about the property.
- Young children who want to have their first pony ride or who have been intrigued with horses since first discovering them.
- Children who want to take lessons, learn how to ride a horse and participate in competition, or be around animals and/or eventually go to vet school.
- Adults who have always wanted to learn to ride horses and may now have it on their bucket list.
- Riders who have been riding all their lives and are now looking for a stable to continue.
- Grandparents who bring their children and their grandchildren to WPS because they rode here as a child.
- Families who have moved to the United States from other countries, where they rode, and would like to continue that activity at Wheaton Park Stables.

So, as you can see, we appeal to a wide variety of individuals for a wide variety of reasons, as well as a diverse group of people.

Wheaton Park Stables has been at its current location since the early 1960s. Interest has not waned over the years – not during the recession in 2008 (right after I took over the business); not during the pandemic; not now with the post-pandemic and inflation issues; and not in between. And there are no signs of it waning in the future. Interest continues, constantly, appealing to a wide diversity of people.

Wheaton Park Stables is one of very few stables in the area and strives to be the most affordable. The majority of our students would not be able to afford lessons if not for us. The possible repurpose of the Stables, while not immediate, is of great concern to the community, as it would remove a wonderful gathering place for non-equestrians as well as eliminate the one place that many individuals can find the services they are looking for at an affordable cost.

The facility needs major renovation, repairs, and updates -- that is obvious, undeniable, and will be expensive. However, it seems fairly apparent that the new activities/facilities/repurposing which are being proposed would be more expensive than the extensive renovations and repairs needed for the barn. It should be noted that the need for the renovations and repairs is not new or sudden; the need and necessity for these repairs has been building over the years.

The Wheaton Loop Trail is a huge point of contention, not just among equestrians but the local community, hikers, and bikers. At the last public meeting, there were countless comments by hikers who wanted to keep the hiking/equestrian trail and mountain bike trail separate. Mountain biking, simply by its nature, is a fast, abrupt activity, not conducive to walking, hiking, bird watching, or horseback riding. I am simply proposing that possibly it would be wiser, safer, and more enjoyable for all involved were the bikers and the others to be kept separate in some way. Wheaton Park Stables would propose that money that might be spent on a horse trail around the barn property (which could also eliminate some of the greenery or trees and possibly some of the horse paddocks) be better spent creating a better solution to connecting the areas requested by the mountain bikers.

In sum, Wheaton Park Stables is an important part of the heritage and history of this area and community and provides opportunities to many individuals. Wheaton Park Stables has every intention and hope of remaining in our current

location indefinitely and strongly urges the Park, for the benefit and desires of the local community, to renovate the existing Stables and ensure its continued operation for the benefit of generations to come.



**From:** [Kimberly K. Egan](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Jane Seigler](#); [Sandy Creecy](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony re Wheaton Park Master Plan  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 10:53:54 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[2022.05.18 Wheaton Park Testimony.pdf](#)

---

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

Chairman Anderson,

Attached please find comments from the Maryland Horse Council on the Wheaton Park Master Plan.

Sincerely,

Kimberly K. Egan



MARYLAND  
HORSE  
COUNCIL

Kimberly K. Egan | President  
Maryland Horse Council

*-Maryland's equine trade association-*

[www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)



*-Maryland's equine trade publication-*

[www.equiere.com](http://www.equiere.com)



MARYLAND  
HORSE  
COUNCIL

P.O. Box 606 | Lisbon, Maryland 21797  
[www.mdhorsecouncil.org](http://www.mdhorsecouncil.org)

***One Common Bond: The Horse***  
***One Common Voice: The Horse Council***

Re: Wheaton Park Stables and park equestrian trails

Dear Chairman Anderson and members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

The Maryland Horse Council (MHC) is the trade association for all segments of the Maryland horse industry, at the state and local level. MHC has been representing the Maryland horse industry for over 35 years. We are writing in support of the Wheaton Park Stables (WPS) at the Wheaton Regional Park and its important role in the community. The draft Wheaton Park Master Plan contains many recommendations that affect WPS.

WPS has been a fixture in Wheaton for almost 60 years. It is a family and community-oriented riding stable that conducts group lessons, pony pal lessons, summer camps, and trail rides. It is also home to an equine-assisted therapy program called The Cura Personalis Project (CPP).

WPS differs from many other equestrian programs in Montgomery County because it is within walking distance of a dense suburban population that is dominated by a demographic that does not typically have access to horses, horse farms, riding lessons, or any exposure to agriculture or rural life. It is also one of the most, if not the most, affordable riding programs in lower Montgomery County, or, indeed, anywhere in the Washington metropolitan area. There is extensive peer reviewed research that documents the physical, psychological and emotional healing benefits of exposure to horses, whether mounted or unmounted. It would be a tragic loss to the community if access to horses and their pastoral life was curtailed or eliminated for residents of down county Montgomery, especially at a time when accessibility and inclusion are being recognized as so important, see, e.g. the recently passed Great Maryland Outdoors Act.

In addition, The Cura Personalis Project is critically important to residents of Wheaton and the surrounding area because it provides vocational training to children and adults with developmental disabilities. CPP participants receive riding lessons and horsemanship training, and they work in the stables and on the grounds, all of which helps them develop the functional life skills necessary to reach their full potential. Interaction with horses has well-researched and well-documented benefits in teaching self-confidence, self-reliance, responsibility, and problem-solving skills. Equine-assisted therapy programs are also such demonstrably valuable aids in treating psychological trauma that the Maryland State Veterans Administration has recently made equine-assisted therapy available to veterans under the Animal Service Program.

We are encouraged to see that the staff reported in the draft Master Plan a significant community interest in preserving the stables and the equestrian and equestrian/hiking trails for “beginner horseback riders and special program participants.” We urge the Planning Board to cherish the stables, understand their need for functional and safe facilities, and preserve - if not expand - the turnout paddock space for the horses that are providing such an important community service. Any new proposals must not reduce the turnout space for the horses.

WPS is the type of recreational program that Maryland needs more of, and that Montgomery County needs to support. Indeed, it is the policy of both Governor Hogan and the General Assembly that Maryland needs to do a better job of making outdoor recreational activities available to a wider cross-section of our population. For example, the Maryland General Assembly created the State Park Investment Commission to study, among other things, “the extent to which State parks and associated recreational opportunities are adequately accessible to all populations of Marylanders, including low-income Marylanders, those who lack access to a car, and Marylanders with disabilities.” See Press Release, *House Speaker and Senate President Announce State Park Investment Commission* (Aug. 6, 2021). Although this commission is focused on state parks, the issues of equity and accessibility apply to local parks as well.

Finally, equestrian programs are a huge economic driver in Montgomery County and in the State of Maryland in general. As the data in the attached graphics show, there are 3,300 direct equine jobs in Montgomery County, and equine businesses account for over \$23 million in Montgomery County capital expenditures each year. The horse industry also supports hundreds of jobs in related industries, such as veterinary care, construction, fencing, retail tack stores, farriers, hay farmers, transportation, and technology. At the state level, the horse industry generates \$78 million in tax revenue.

For these reasons, we urge you to do everything in your power to make sure that Wheaton residents continue to have access to the many benefits offered by the Wheaton Park Stables. Now is not the time to take away important outdoor recreational activities or equine-assisted therapy programs. Nor is it fair to deprive Wheaton residents of the opportunity to experience the magic of horses in an affordable and accessible way.

Sincerely,

Kimberly K. Egan  
President

**MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL**

cc: Jane Seigler, *Chair -- MHC Government Relations Committee*

Submitted via email to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)



Respectfully submitted,

**THE MARYLAND HORSE COUNCIL**  
(844) MDHORSE (844-634-6773)  
[info@mdhorsecouncil.org](mailto:info@mdhorsecouncil.org)

**From:** [Rebecca Orris](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Wheaton Regional Park recommendations  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 10:57:33 AM

---

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

Hello,

I wanted to submit written comments to the planning board regarding the Wheaton Regional Park recommendations.

I fully support keeping the riding stable open and active, but as a former adult lesson taker at Wheaton Park Stables, I can say that I was disappointed in the way the stable was managed in 2018 when I took lessons and I think my concerns need to be addressed as part of the plan.

1. It was difficult to sign up for lessons. The website basically said call or email us and we'll tell you what's available. In order to engage busy adults it is necessary to have a good website that allows you to get information about the lessons and when they run and how long the sessions are and what they cost.
2. I took lessons in the evening in the winter, and this may, therefore, not be representative of the busier months, but there were typically 1-2 barn staff and they were mostly in the office with the heater on talking to each other. In other words, they were not doing a good job of checking on students and ensuring that they knew what they were doing. If you knocked and said you were having trouble, they were helpful, but it was not a friendly welcoming atmosphere.
3. The horses seemed quite barn sour. They did not want to be bridled. I worry that they weren't getting the care that is needed to keep school horses happy and well-behaved. I have since taken lessons at a stable much farther north (Reddemeade) and found the horses to be much more pleasant to be around with a few exceptions, whose stall doors have signs saying, "An instructor must bridle this horse."
4. Payment was very informal, and I suspect that it would be fairly easy to get a few free lessons without being caught. Keeping a barn is expensive, I'm sure every penny from lessons is needed to help with the budget.

If Wheaton Park Stables isn't completely full with lesson takers at this time, then something is wrong with their program. Other barns have had to completely shut off lessons for new riders, because the pandemic led to long wait lists of students. What I'm saying is that management of the stable needs to be better to create a more welcoming and safe place for people and horses. Have partnerships with local schools with students from a wide variety of backgrounds been considered? The KID Museum has built an amazing program with local schools that benefits the museum and the students. Horses are such marvelous animals and can transform a child. Horseback riding would benefit from people of color, diverse backgrounds and boys being encouraged to ride. I know men are well-represented in the highest ranks of equestrian sports, but the barns are full of girls and women. Let's get boys back involved.

Thanks,  
Rebecca Orris

-----  
Rebecca L. Orris  
3311 Fayette Rd  
Kensington MD 20895  
240-475-0295  
[rorris@gmail.com](mailto:rorris@gmail.com)

**From:** [Tova Welik](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 11:48:20 AM

---

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

Hi,

I live in Kemp mill  
Estates and have four children ages 10-4.

We love the stables and woods around them and don't want them to be altered one bit.

We are also big bikers and love  
The biking trails leading down to the stables and Wheaton Regional park.

We strongly disagree with any ideas to alter the trails in a way that would inhibit or limit the horses uses of the trails  
in the short term or long term.

The stables is a staple

For the community. It's a gift to the neighborhood. Putting the horses on trails along side mountain bikers doesn't  
sound safe for anyone- the riders, horses or bikers. We don't either want to be on streets with horses. We like the  
horses exactly where they are and don't want any of it to change.

Please don't damage our beautiful neighborhood and trails.

I also am

Wondering how the idea even started. I'd like for someone to communicate that.

It seems from how the biking lanes obstructed traffic and took over on university blvd and now

There is this discussion about biking in the forest- I suspect that there are some very aggressive and vocal bikers  
trying to make more space for themselves. It doesn't seem congruent though with the a high majority of the local  
citizens needs or desires- as can easily be seen with the road experiment and now the trails proposal.

Please be more vigilant about not taking in the active bikers voice over the more silent minority of citizens who are  
not hyper focused on Biking.

Best

Tova

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Suzanne Jackson](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Hearing on Wheaton Regional Park  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 11:53:57 AM  
**Attachments:** [SFCA Testimony.pdf](#)

---

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

Hello to the Chair of the Planning Board,  
Attached is my testimony for tomorrow evening's hearing on the planned amendments to the Master Plan for the Wheaton Regional Park.

My mailing address is:  
Suzanne Jackson  
501 Rockford Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20902

I am testifying as a group representative of the Springbrook Forest Citizens' Association.

I can be reached at (301)681-8319 or (301)233-2806.

I also have a question - do Covid restrictions apply that would prevent me from bringing my daughter to the hearing? She is fully vaccinated. She does not plan to testify. :)

Thank you,  
Suzanne Jackson



**THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD**

**HEARING ON DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR THE WHEATON REGIONAL PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE**

**TESTIMONY OF SPRINGBROOK FOREST CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION**

**SUZANNE JACKSON, PRESIDENT**

**MAY 19, 2022**

The Springbrook Forest Citizens' Association, which has authorized this testimony, was established seventy years ago to "advance the civic interests of the community and its environs."

We are neighbors of the Wheaton Park Stables, which for the past sixty years have given County residents the chance to learn about riding, respecting, and rescuing horses. Some of us rode horses at the Stables as children; some have children who now ride at the Stables; others bring grandchildren for pony rides or just to feed carrots to the horses. For many of us, just seeing the horses grazing as we drive or bicycle by gives us a sense of stability, continuity, and tranquility. The Stables' long history of service to children, horse riders, special needs children, and to horses has made it an integral part of our community over generations. We hope the Wheaton Park Stables can be saved, together with the horse trail that was part and parcel of the Stables' domain in the Park for sixty years. Please do not cast aside this gem!

When Montgomery Parks first recommended that the Wheaton Park Stables be closed in September of last year, an overwhelming outpouring of community support for the Stables at a public hearing appeared to persuade them to change their minds. This month's draft plan, however, shows they still plan to eliminate the Wheaton Park Stables:

- 1) The draft plan states that Wheaton Park Stables' "use as an equestrian center" would be retained only "in the short term."
- 2) The draft plan would effectively strip the Stables' access to this riding trail by making it "multi-user," thus allowing bicyclists to use the Loop Trail.<sup>1</sup>
- 3) The proposed new horse and hiker trail that would encircle the Stables is not comparable to the Wheaton Loop Trail, as it would be much shorter, would require either restricting grazing areas or cutting down trees, and would be in the sun rather than in woodlands.
- 4) The draft plan includes no provisions for assessing, much less addressing, the need for repairs and renovation of the sixty-year-old buildings.

---

<sup>1</sup> This proposal was not mentioned in the Equestrian Center/Wheaton Park Stables section of the Draft Plan, and so many commenters at the previous public hearing before Montgomery Parks did not address it. It was contained in a much-larger listing of trail "improvements" in a separate section and no cross-reference was made.

- 5) The report observes that there is room for an additional facility on site, but no consideration of the option of expanding the Stables is made.
- 6) Parks plans to seek other uses for the site, acknowledging that it is “the largest environmentally unconstrained area of not only Wheaton Regional Park, but the larger down-county region as well.”

Last September, over 1,000 people signed petitions and letters giving their strong community support for the Stables. The letter sent by Springbrook Forest is attached to this testimony. The Stables make an extraordinary contribution to our communities, and should be treasured. We take pride in what Wheaton Park Stables has represented for so many years: responsible stewardship of our natural resources, and in addition, responsible animal husbandry. The Wheaton Park Stables frequently rescue horses who would otherwise have been euthanized. Whether they are retired race horses, older horses with little “market value,” or horses that had been abused or neglected, the Stables provide them with health care, food and shelter, a community of caring adults, training, and active and interesting lives with lots of children.

Some have attempted to argue that bicycles and horses can co-exist on natural trails. The Parks draft plan does not make clear whether this is their expectation: the Wheaton Loop Trail is proposed to become “multi-use.” One may infer from the proposed creation of a horse and pedestrian trail circling the Stables, some acknowledgment that a multi-use Loop Trail will not be appropriate for at least some of the riders, and some of the horses. With an experienced horse and rider, both of whom have experience with bicyclists, and level conditions giving excellent sight lines, bicyclists who practice good etiquette may remain safe. But the Wheaton Loop Trail has varied grading, and many turns making sight lines short. There may be a class with eight horses along the trail, meaning that bicyclists would just need to wait. But would they?

The County’s Bicycle Stress Map provides a useful illustration of this point. The Map indicates that Springbrook Forest is a low-stress place to ride a bicycle and a safe place to allow children to ride bicycles. With relatively low levels of traffic, and a speed limit of twenty-five mph, it is surely safer than riding on Georgia Avenue. But landscaping and delivery vehicles every day blow past the speed limit signs; the county school buses fill the entire roadway as they also speed to their stops; very steep hills and sharp turns make pedestrians and cyclists invisible to drivers; and there are no sidewalks where a child who sees or hears an oncoming truck could seek safety. Not all bicyclists will be well-behaved trail riders, nor will they necessarily understand that a startled, 1,000-pound horse can severely injure or kill a rider, a pedestrian, or a cyclist, or be itself injured to the point of requiring euthanasia.

The Northwest Branch Trail was opened to bicycles about six years ago, and it is a rare pleasure to see anyone riding horses there now. The Stables no longer takes students on trail rides there, as the risk to students, pedestrians, bikers, and even the horses is too great. The International Mountain Bicycling Association published an article called “Horse Sense,” observing that a “horse, by design, is a nervous, cautious beast. Mountain bikers are, more or less, risk-takers.” An expert horse rider cited in this article (which was re-published by Griffin Cycles of Bethesda, Md.), advised that horses, when scared or startled, “have one response, flight



– and right now.”<sup>2</sup> Horses will sense a cyclist approaching from the rear before the rider does, “and will instinctively perceive it as a threat.”

Bicycle riders are counseled to stop and ask the horse rider for permission to pass. But we can expect that - as with car drivers, some of whom speed – not all bicyclists will follow the rules. For example, the faded stickers asking people to avoid the Trails during wet weather provide no real notice to anyone, and no notice is taken, as walkers and bicycle riders enter the Trails after a rainstorm and compact the earth around trees at the edge of the path in order to avoid the puddles in the middle.

The draft Parks plan notes that “hikers” (presumably including walkers) expressed a strong desire for more “hiker-only” trails. It is unclear whether the “hikers” were offered the option of asking for more “hikers and horses” trails. Certainly the proposed introduction of bicycles to the Wheaton Loop Trail goes against this expressed preference of hikers for more tranquil settings, free of bicycles. The experience of walking in the Northwest Branch has changed dramatically since the introduction of bicycles; the effects of these changes should be evaluated before eliminating any more desirable hiker-horse trails with the introduction of bicycles.

One Forest resident described her experiences on these trails:

The Wheaton Loop Trail has been my favorite hiking trail in Montgomery County and the DMV area for more than 25 years. It is one of the most secluded, quiet, serene and accessible trails for hikers in our area of the county. I can honestly say that I have circled it more than 1000 times. It will be devastating to the trail and to [horse]riders/hikers to open it up to bikes. The curves, the inclines, the downhill stretches make for a perfectly fabulous ride – especially for mountain bikers – I am certain that it will quickly become a favorite tour for speeding cyclists. Unfortunately, their presence will also create a treacherous, dangerous and absolutely unpleasant experience for hikers and riders. I’m also an avid cyclist and fully recognize the need for more bike trails, but please don’t give up this little treasure!

The Wheaton Loop Trail is critically important to the ability of the Stables to access a woodland trail. The proposed trail looping around the Stables would be a quarter-mile long – four repeated loops would be needed to equal the length of the Loop Trail – and much of this would be in the sun. In order to create this new trail, grazing lands would be reduced, or magnificent trees would need to be cut down, and a recently-constructed natural conservation area would be hemmed in between two paths. This expense should instead go towards improving the Stables themselves, an immense asset to our neighborhoods, our communities, people with special needs, and a wonderful sight to behold when simply driving by: the pastoral view of grazing horses, only five minutes from Georgia Avenue.

The Wheaton Regional Park was meant to be a natural jewel in the County, a place to escape the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives. Community support for peaceful walks in the

---

<sup>2</sup> “Horse Sense,” by the International Mountain Bicycling Association, published by Griffin Cycle of Bethesda, MD, available at [griffincycle.com/articles/horse-sense-pg295.htm](http://griffincycle.com/articles/horse-sense-pg295.htm) (last visited May 17, 2022).

forest, on natural trails, is strong. More study should be undertaken before stripping the Stables of its woodland trail: an agency other than Parks should assess the effects of allowing bicycles into the also-fragile Northwest Branch trail; the effectiveness of any messaging regarding use of the trail when – as is frequent with lowland, watershed areas – the trail is muddy and walkers and bikers alike are tempted to expand the edges of the trail to find dry passage. Parks has made clear its preference for expanding bicycle access to as many trails as possible. Yet their own respect for the fragility of our trails could be questioned. On my last visit to the Northwest Branch Trail, the biggest muddy tracks – which extended at least 12 feet off the trail - were from a motorized vehicle – undoubtedly a county truck, not heeding its own faded sticker, which drove up the trail leaving tracks in the mud on the trail, and then backed well off the trail to turn around, leaving deep tire tracks in the soil and along the sides of the trail.

During the pandemic – which was not the first of its kind and will probably not be the last – horseback riding was the only in-person recreational activity available to many of the children at the Stables, and it continues to make an enormous difference to children's mental health during these difficult times. The Stables' lessons and camps are significantly less expensive than those at other stables in the area, providing access for children whose parents would otherwise not be able to afford lessons elsewhere. Interest in riding lessons has never waned in the Stables' long history and continues to exceed available spaces. We should be growing this resource.

To gain one mile of trail for bicyclists, Parks is proposing to begin the process of stripping the Wheaton Park Stables of its place in our Park where it has flourished for sixty years. Our entire community will lose much, much more than just one mile of trail for hikers and walkers and horse riders. Wheaton Park Stables is a jewel – its setting tarnished, perhaps, by the years and some amount of neglect – but like the neglected horses who find new lives there, the Stables should not be destroyed. The Wheaton Park Stables should be rescued, and given a new future, one that is full of horses, valuable life lessons – and lots and lots of children.

Suzanne Jackson  
President, SFCA  
501 Rockford Road  
Wheaton, MD 20902



**SPRINGBROOK FOREST CITIZENS' ASSOCIATION**  
*Springbrook Forest, Wheaton, Maryland 20902*

Mr. Charles Kines  
Montgomery Parks  
2425 Reddie Drive, 2nd Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Mr. Kines:

We are neighbors of the Wheaton Park Stables, residing close by in Springbrook Forest. We have admired the many contributions made by the Stables to the community over its many, many years. Some of us rode horses at the Stables as children; some have children who now ride at the Stables; others bring grand-children for pony rides or just to feed carrots to the horses. The Stables' long history of service to children and horses has made it an integral part of our community over generations. We hope the Wheaton Park Stables can be saved.

For many of us, just seeing the horses grazing as we pass by gives us a sense of stability and continuity, a sight some of us have seen for the past sixty years.

We also take pride in what the Wheaton Park Stables has represented for all those years, in its fields amidst the forest and horse trails of the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia, and the trails on Acorn Hill: responsible stewardship of our natural resources, and in addition, responsible animal husbandry. The Wheaton Park Stables frequently rescue horses who would otherwise have been euthanized. Whether they are retired race horses, older horses with little "market value," or horses that had been neglected or abused, the Stables provide them with health care, food and shelter, a community of caring adults, training, and active and interesting lives with lots of children.

The moral lessons taught to our children about preserving nature, taking good care of animals, and demonstrating responsibility for others' security and wellbeing, are as tangible and enduring as the riding skills they gain. The instructors and staff are hardworking and big-hearted, teaching so much more than horsemanship as they bring groups of children with disabling conditions to interact with the horses; allow (on occasion) the gentler, older horses to roam within the

building when they are too old to continue with riding lessons; mourn the loss of horses when they have gone. It is a very special community.

During the pandemic, horseback riding was the only in-person recreational activity available to many of the children at the Stables, some vestige of continuity and community in an otherwise wholly-online world. It continues to make an enormous difference to children's mental health during these stressful times.

The Stables' riding lessons are significantly less expensive than those at other stables in the area, providing access for children whose parents would not be able to afford lessons at other stables. Their summer camps are also always oversubscribed – there are not nearly enough openings for the numbers who apply. There has certainly been no lack of demand for the Stables' lessons and camps, at least not before the pandemic struck.

Wheaton Park Stables is a jewel – perhaps tarnished by the years and some amount of neglect – but like the neglected horses who find new lives there, the Stables should not be destroyed. The Wheaton Park Stables should be rescued, and given a new future, one that is full of horses and life lessons and lots and lots of children.

Sincerely,

*Suzanne Jackson*  
Suzanne H. Jackson  
President

Glenn Pollock, Treasurer

Len Greig

Terry Patterson

Quaisar and Naila Shareef

Vera Buettner and Chichio Hand

Cheryl A. Kassed, PhD

Heather Kratz

Deborah and Dov Zakheim

Geoff Patton

Shulamith and David Lesnoy

Christine Halpin and Justin Graves

Gina DeSimone

Francine Jamin and Jeffrey Mazer

Barbara Davis-Long and Jeff Long

Jeanne Reardon

Barbara and Henry Rosenbaum

Doug and Mary Reardon

George and Fran Wollner

Kathryn Camp

Rachel and Ophir Stemmer

Hanna and Greg Simon

Belle and Matthew Kronisch

Sheila Manevitz

Laura Davis and Deb Early

Marc Constantine & Virginia Zuniga

Peter and Suzanne Lubeck

Natalia Vandenberg & Mark Brown

Peggy Davis and Dan Schultz

Linda Sweeting and Tom Campbell

Mary Chlan

Paula Schuman and Paul W. DeCamp

Sherry Harris and Joshua Morganstein

Kara and Joseph Kastan

Frank Solomon and Laurie Russell

Janet Nesse and Mark Lewis

Julia Hughes and David Paglin

Pam Mudd

Mindy Shankman

Sharona and Leo Rozmaryn

Marc and Shuli Tropp

Linda and Phillip Hill

Leah and Michael Rogal

Nick and Stella Lagakos

William and Sarah Stern

**From:** [Amy Truly](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Wheaton Stables and Acorn Trail  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 12:04:50 PM

---

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

Dear Sir or Madam,

Montgomery Parks' proposed plans for the Wheaton Park Stables would strip it of its woodland trail, presently a hiker-horse riding trail, by turning it into a "multi-use" trail which as a practical matter allows mountain bikers onto the trail. Unfortunately, all bikers may not understand that speeding by a horse can be extremely dangerous - to everyone. The Stables cannot take such risks with its students; they had to give up trail rides on the NW Branch Trail when it was opened to bicyclists. The Parks' plans provide zero security to the Stables by 1) providing that use as an equestrian center would only be "in the short term," 2) failing even to assess, much less address, the need for repairs and renovation of the sixty-year-old building, and 3) explicitly planning to seek other uses for the site. This, after over 1,000 people gave strong community support for the Stables. The Parks focus on bicycling over all else threatens the Stables with extinction.

I took lessons here and did trail rides growing up. The Stables are a wonderful asset for the community and I support keeping them and the trail for the horses and for hikers - NOT mountain bikers. Giving access to Mountain bikers is a disaster waiting to happen.

Thank you for your time and attention.  
Amy Truly  
12106 Jan Lane  
Silver Spring MD 20904



**From:** [Lauren Shapiro](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Please protect the Acorn Trail and keep it bike-free  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 18, 2022 12:59:45 PM

---

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

Dear Chair,  
Please confirm receipt.

Thank you,  
Lauren

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** lauren mcvey <l045@yahoo.com>  
**Date:** May 16, 2022 at 9:44:16 PM EDT  
**To:** mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org  
**Subject:** Please protect the Acorn Trail and keep it bike-free

Dear Chair,

I'm writing to urge you maintain the current footprint for the Acorn Trail, and to not expand the use to mountain bikers:

- do not cut any healthy large trees, because their presence gives shade to us, and is a critical foundation of the ecosystem
- do not reduce the grazing area for the horses, because this helps reduce how much hay is needed to feed the horses
- do not allow mountain biking along the horse path, because bikers have far more trails than horses and the bikers could scare the horses which could lead to dangerous injuries.
- do not replace the horse trail with a different surface—it would be much more beneficial to maintain an even smooth path with proper drainage
- removing or needlessly destroying healthy woods will lead to more roadkill and pollution
- there is no reason for the horse riders, walkers and nature-lovers who enjoy the Acorn Trail to lose a quiet and intact experience by foot or hoof to deal with rushing mountain bikes

As a resident of the surrounding community, I testify the stables are a deep sense of joy, pride, and benefit to this part of the County. We must maintain them and preserve them for horses and those moving by foot. We don't need to take away part of the stables to accommodate more wheels.

Best,  
Lauren McVey