

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Luecking, Betsy](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Glazier, Eli](#); [Brunetto, Odile](#)  
**Subject:** Commission on People with Disabilities Pedestrian Safety Remarks for Public Hearing  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:26:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [Pedestrian Master Plan2023 TGComments.pdf](#)

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

Please see the attached. Patricia Gallalee, Chair, Commission on People with Disabilities will not be testifying in person. If you have any questions, please let me know.

**Kindest Regards,**

**Betsy Tolbert Luecking, Community Outreach Manager**

Commission on Veterans Affairs - Commission on People with Disabilities  
Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Aging and Disability Services  
401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20850

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**Commission on People with Disabilities**  
**Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing**  
**March 23, 2023**  
**Patricia Gallalee, Chair**

The Montgomery County Commission on People with Disabilities thanks the Montgomery County Planning Department on its proposed Pedestrian Master Plan and for consulting with the Commission during its development.

We continue to be very concerned about the continued installation of designated bicycle lanes that appear to be rarely used by bicyclists. The designated bike lanes pose a great risk to pedestrians when trying to cross them. The design of the bike lanes affect available accessible and typical parking spaces, narrow the amount of space to safely exit a vehicle on the driver's side, and challenge persons using a wheelchair or other assistive device. From page 115, the approach detailed in the Prioritization Methodology appendix state the Planning Department ensures that the areas with the greatest need for pedestrian and bicycle improvements receive that investment by prioritizing areas of the county: • with low levels of pedestrian and bicycle comfort • near schools and transit stations • with high pedestrian and bicycle demand • with more pedestrian and bicycle crashes. Instead, we ask that the County limit the installation of designated bike lanes as they have a negative impact on pedestrian safety and persons who need to drive and park.

For example, the current design on Old Georgetown Road poses many liabilities. The lanes have been seen full of trash, make it impossible to access accessible street parking for shopping (or medical appointments), and put pedestrians in danger as they stand in the bike lane when waiting in the crosswalk, and frustrated drivers have shorter distances to make a right turn which gives the driver less time to look for pedestrians who may be crossing the neighborhood street. We believe that more studies should be conducted on the design of designated bike lanes by taking an approach that puts pedestrian safety first and includes consideration for individuals on bikes that do not have easily enforceable safety laws.

As the plan notes on page 11, "The ability to walk" [or roll] "safely, comfortably and conveniently in one's community is the minimum expectation a Montgomery County resident should have".

We disagree with the assertion on page 42 that, "Missing sidewalks on local streets are not classified as sidewalk gaps because traffic volumes and speed limits often allow for a comfortable experience for those pedestrians travelling in roadways." As mobility impaired individuals, low vision/blind pedestrians and or those with low hearing (amongst other disabilities), we know that walking in roadways is never safe or comfortable and must not be the only option for pedestrians of all ages. We are concerned about crosswalks that are at an angle. We recommend tactile crosswalks. It isn't uncommon for a person to be crossing a street only to have a car pull more than halfway over the crosswalk and when if the person can't see the crosswalk, they aren't certain if they are walking correctly. A person cannot walk in front of the car because they will be in an intersection and if a person tries to walk

behind the car the second car could be on the first drivers bumper or it is easy to get confused. If the crosswalk is tactile then a blind person can easily figure out where they are.

As noted on page 69, “The public process around sidewalk construction should be reframed to focus on how the sidewalks in question can best be constructed, not whether they should be constructed at all.”

On page 115 - **Provide additional on-street parking corrals for dockless vehicles in high-use areas and coordinate with operators to provide incentives to encourage their use.** We appreciate the inclusion of recommendation EA-2c as movable sidewalk obstructions, such as electric scooters, pose barriers to people of all types of disabilities traveling down a sidewalk.

We hope that planners will take a more careful look at the installation of designated bike lanes with, more importantly, input from the communities they impact. We are hopeful more thought will be given to the process of ongoing improvement in pedestrian safety in Montgomery County. We look forward to continuing in our advisory capacity as a resource to Montgomery County as plans evolve further.

From: [Barbara Sanders](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: March 23, item 7: Pedestrian master plan testimony  
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 8:48:07 PM  
Attachments: [Ped MP Testimony - Sanders .docx](#)

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

TO: Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

RE: Thursday, March 23, 2023, item 7: **Pedestrian Master Plan**

FROM: Barbara Sanders, 1710 Noyes Lane, Silver Spring MD 20910,  
[bsanderslww@gmail.com](mailto:bsanderslww@gmail.com), 301-587-1323

I am writing in strong support of the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan. My husband and I moved to this County in 1979 to be within walking distance of a Metro station to our central DC office jobs, as well as retail, entertainment and recreational opportunities near our Woodside home. After over two decades of commuting to downtown 99.9% of the time by Metro, I am still an avid user of Metro. I also continue to walk to local retail and entertainment in downtown Silver Spring and Montgomery Hills for the last two plus decades. I have long awaited the completion of the original Georgetown Branch trolley/now Purple Line light rail and the completion of the Capital Crescent Trail into Silver Spring.

I was very happy to see and compliment the staff on the inclusion of the County's Purple Line stations in the details of current conditions of pedestrian access. As a longtime supporter of this cross-county transit line, I will highlight only a few of the pedestrian master plan goals and recommendations that I think are vital to the Purple Line's success, and the County's future for an equitable, energy-efficient and climate-aware system of movement that does not rely on motor vehicles.

It is imperative that major County infrastructure -- transportation facilities, government offices, schools, recreational, entertainment and retail centers -- be made accessible to walkers and rollers, not just from their "front door" to the first available parking space, but also on a safe path/sidewalk to adjoining community sidewalks and paths, as well as any parking facilities. The Pedestrian Master Plan highlights the need to have this off-site connectivity to transit stations included in main capital projects or in parallel efforts (B-7g, page 84). It also has similar recommendations for CIP funding to improve pedestrian access to other community assets.

I am also delighted to see the recommendation to "pivot the Annual Sidewalk Program from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data-driven process." (B-1a, page 63.) Some of the Woodside residents find it remarkable that the County is constrained by the current Sidewalk Program to require citizen-initiative for sidewalks. For the safety of our Woodside and Woodside Park residents heading to the Woodside/16<sup>th</sup> St. station, it is important to recognize the need to make at least two safe pedestrian connections from our community sidewalk network on Second Avenue to the 16<sup>th</sup> St. stairway/ramp and the Capital Crescent trail access points on Third Avenue before the Purple Line becomes operational. This is a glaring example of a deficiency in our current County pedestrian efforts that ignores the gaps

in making small additions that would allow major capital improvements to be truly accessible to all.

These are just a couple of the important goals and recommendations that I found in this Pedestrian Master Plan. I urge the Planning Board members to accept this skillfully researched document and its impactful goals and tasks with a minimum delay. We need this plan to move into implementation quickly if our County is to grow and allow all its citizens to take advantage of its many strengths.

TO: Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

RE: Thursday, March 23, 2023, item 7: **Pedestrian Master Plan**

FROM: Barbara Sanders, 1710 Noyes Lane, Silver Spring MD 20910,  
[bsanderslwv@gmail.com](mailto:bsanderslwv@gmail.com), 301-587-1323

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These are just a couple of the important goals and recommendations that I found in this Pedestrian Master Plan. I urge the Planning Board members to accept this skillfully researched document and its impactful goals and tasks with a minimum delay. We need this plan to move into implementation quickly if our County is to grow and allow all its citizens to take advantage of its many strengths.

From: [Sanjida Rangwala](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Written Testimony - March 23 - Item 7 - Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing  
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:24:01 PM

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

Dear Planning Board,

I am writing to express my strong support of the Pedestrian Master Plan as drafted by the Montgomery Planning (February 2023). This plan is nothing less than a revolutionary document that, if implemented, will bring much-needed safety improvements and connectivity to our county streets and roads.

Although Vision Zero was announced as a goal years ago, deaths and injuries from vehicles remain high, often outpacing other types of violent deaths in the county such as those by firearms. Yet, they fail to elicit a level of outrage befitting their frequency. We need to take bold actions to make meaningful progress to Vision Zero, and this plan is an important step in that direction.

The most important element of the Pedestrian Master Plan is the push for proactive audits of sidewalk infrastructure. Currently, sidewalks and other standard pedestrian infrastructure are planned mainly in response to community requests. This means that neighborhoods that neglect to ask for (or actively oppose) such infrastructure are left in active non-compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act. This is absurd, not to mention inequitable. Everyone deserves to have safe, pleasant, and practical routes for walking and rolling, no matter where they live, and whether their neighbors want them to or not. This is why the ADA exists. Getting community vetoes out of essential infrastructure planning is a fundamental, necessary step to achieving public safety.

Another part of the plan that makes me happy is the recommendation that the county take more responsibility for snow and vegetation clearance particularly along major thoroughfares, including state-administered highways (MA-2). I live near one such road, University Boulevard. After heavy snowfalls, snowplows bury sidewalks in snow and ice. Walk and ramps may remain inaccessible for days or even weeks, long after snow has melted elsewhere in the county. This produces an extreme safety hazard, as non-drivers, especially those with stroller or mobility devices, may be unable to access the sidewalks and may be forced to walk in the road alongside high speed vehicles.

But it doesn't snow too often here - as this last winter proved. An even greater and more common hazard comes from erosion of vegetation, soil, or debris from adjoining properties. This erosion buries the sidewalks, effectively narrowing the passable space. County-owned

parks properties, such as next to Sligo Creek Parkway and University Boulevard, are often the worst offenders. I am pleased to see the Pedestrian Master Plan acknowledge that vegetation overgrowth needs to be audited, monitored, and remedied. Moreover, the plan acknowledges and recommends that more permanent sidewalk obstructions, such as utility poles (EA-2), should also be moved out of the right of way.

These are just a few items that I love about this Plan. The Pedestrian Master Plan also provides a framework for many more wonderful things - such as increased pedestrian crossings, public restrooms, and placemaking elements.

I recommend you approve the Pedestrian Master Plan without delay so we can start the tough, necessary, work of budget allocation and implementation.

Best regards,

Sanjida Rangwala  
711 Dryden Street  
Silver Spring  
(314) 435-7089



**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [David N Heller](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Glazier, Eli](#)  
**Subject:** Written Statement re: MoCo Pedestrian Master Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:55:03 PM  
**Attachments:** [SPHCA statement on MC Pedestrian Master Plan.pdf](#)  
[SPHCA statement on MC Pedestrian Master Plan.docx](#)

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To: Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

I am submitting a written statement from the Sligo Park Hills Community Association, in regard to the Montgomery County Planning Board meeting scheduled for Thursday March 23, 2023, at 6:00 pm, on the topic of the County's Pedestrian Master Plan. The written statement is attached as an MS Word document and a PDF.

I represent the 300 households of Sligo Park Hills as the Vice-President of the Community Association. My contact information is:

David Heller

14 Sunnyside Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910. [dn.heller@verizon.net](mailto:dn.heller@verizon.net). 301-602-2975.

Written Statement *re*: Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan  
Submitted by Sligo Park Hills Community Association, Silver Spring, MD  
March 21, 2023

Submitted by David Heller, SPHCA Vice-President.

14 Sunnyside Road, Silver Spring, MD 20910. [dn.heller@verizon.net](mailto:dn.heller@verizon.net). 301-602-2975.

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## WHO WE REPRESENT

Sligo Park Hills is a community of 300 residences located between Piney Branch Road and Sligo Creek Park. The Community Association represents 138 member households and acts on behalf of all residents and visitors.

Our neighborhood shares a 0.8 mile border with Sligo Creek Park. Piney Branch Road runs along and through our community for 0.6 miles. Piney Branch is a busy, state-owned, commuter route which our residents must walk along or cross to attend school, access public transportation, or shop.

Most of Sligo Park Hills was laid out in 1930 as a suburban community with narrow road beds and no sidewalks. Most of our neighborhood roads are categorized as “Uncomfortable” on the county map of Pedestrian Level of Comfort.

## APPRECIATION

We appreciate that the county has developed the Pedestrian Master Plan. We thank the Planning Board for the opportunity to submit a written statement regarding this Plan.

## SUPPORT FOR THE PLAN’S GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our association enthusiastically supports all four major Plan Goals and all Recommendations. We support the Plan’s goals and recommendations county-wide, and we express our solidarity with all residents and communities who need improvements in pedestrian accessibility, comfort, and safety.

We agree it is time to correct the unfortunate fact that, as stated on page 6, “the Montgomery County transportation system was designed for motor vehicle travel to the exclusion of people walking and biking.”

We support a focus on pedestrian safety. As stated on page 50, pedestrian safety includes “shifting from a focus on maximizing motor vehicle efficiency to ensuring that the transportation system is safe for all, regardless of travel mode.”

## SUPPORT FOR IMPROVED AND EQUITABLE PROCESSES

It is appropriate, as stated in section B-1a (p. 63), to “Pivot the Annual Sidewalk Program from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data-driven process.” It is welcome to read (p. 6-7) that “The plan guides the county to update policies and procedures that may currently benefit connected individuals and communities that have the time and resources to advocate for themselves at the expense of communities that may have greater need for pedestrian infrastructure and amenities.” While we hope to participate with the county to address our own local issues, we don’t want this to come at the expense of other communities’ needs. Where the data show that improvements to pedestrian safety are needed, that’s where resources should be prioritized.

We support the many reasonable recommendations which aren't relevant to our neighborhood, such as those relating to downtowns, town centers, newer suburban communities, and country areas.

## SUPPORT FOR PLAN ELEMENTS RELEVANT TO OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Objective 2.3 (page 15): "Comfortable pedestrian access to parks." Sligo Creek is an important amenity for the entire county. Access for many county residents to the west of Sligo Park Hills is by foot through our neighborhood.

Recommendation B-1e (page 65): "Explore use of temporary materials to create dedicated pedestrian spaces where sidewalks are not feasible." We support the type of pedestrian enhancements implemented along Grove Street in East Silver Spring, where many of our residents walk *en route* to downtown Silver Spring. This solution would be relevant to streets within Sligo Park Hills and similar older neighborhoods lacking sidewalks.

Recommendation B-4g (page 77): "Make the Open Parkways along Beach Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway permanent." It's not clear whether the recommendation would be to continue the current three-day-a-week closure for Sligo Creek Parkway or make it seven. The current system is very popular among our residents. It is worth consulting the local neighborhoods whether to extend the current system to more closure days.

We support Recommendation B-6: "Reduce pedestrian pathway temperatures." Our neighborhood's tree canopy is roughly 70%. We benefit greatly from the shading provided to our pedestrians, and we want all county neighborhoods to share this advantage. We encourage the county to expand all tree planting programs.

Recommendation B-7c applies to Sligo Park Hills, given the number of pedestrians entering Sligo Creek Park via the neighborhood: "Create a new Capital Improvement Program (CIP) project to build pedestrian and bicycle connections to park land."

Recommendation B-9: "Make traffic calming easier to implement. Traffic calming measures should be installed wherever target speeds as defined in the CSDG or relevant master plans are not being met." This is key, as it shows how neighborhoods like ours can benefit from traffic calming measures.

Recommendation B-10 (page 88): "Assume county control of state highways." The Plan does not recommend this for all state highways in the county, and it seems that Piney Branch Road isn't included. **We ask that Piney Branch Road be included in the recommendation. We regularly witness traffic violations along Piney Branch Road which threaten pedestrian safety. These violations include speeding in general, treating the center turn lane as a high-speed passing lane, and ignoring existing traffic restrictions.** Some might argue that this isn't a pedestrian safety issue, but we know that it is, as cars speeding through the turning lanes endanger pedestrians trying to cross Piney Branch. We ask that the county study how to prevent misuse of central turning lanes (on both county and state roads), via enforcement, erecting physical barriers, or other options.

Recommendation P-2a: "Develop a methodology for identifying and prioritizing implementation of new protected crossings at mid-block or uncontrolled locations ...." We ask that the county investigate improvements to all pedestrian crossings along Piney Branch Road from Long Branch to Takoma Park, including Sligo Avenue (where children cross *en route* to school and parks) and Mississippi Avenue (where pedestrians cross *en route* to Sligo Creek Park).

Recommendation P-2g: “Remove free-flow channelized right turn lanes where roadway geometry allows and improve their design where it does not.” This issue applies to the right-turn lane of southbound Piney Branch at Sligo Avenue, where drivers coming up this channelized lane don’t yield to pedestrians, (nor to drivers entering Sligo Avenue from northbound Piney Branch Road or from west-bound Park Valley Road).

Recommendation EA-8a: “Pursue a modification to the Maryland Code clarifying that drivers, bicyclists, and scooter riders are required to yield the right of way to pedestrians on shared streets.” We agree that “As the most vulnerable user in a shared street environment, pedestrians should have the right of way.”

In Tables 29-31, several pedestrian arteries near SPH are listed at “Tier 1-3” for future BiPPA improvements. We support future funding for these zones, which include: Piney Branch Rd from Sligo Ave to Long Branch Town Center, Piney Branch Rd from Sligo Rd to Philadelphia Ave, and Sligo Ave from Downtown Silver Spring to Piney Branch Rd.

An Example Monitoring Report is shown on page 267. Is there a way to report and tally “near misses,” i.e., an incident which doesn’t result in a police investigation or hospitalization?

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONS TO THE PLAN

### Places To Pause

The Plan assumes that all pedestrian travel is purpose-driven: commute to work, attend school, shop, or engage in recreation. However, in our neighborhood – and doubtless many other neighborhoods – walking along public roads and sidewalks is a social activity in itself. **We ask that consideration be given along sidewalks and pathways for people to stop, gather, and talk.** These little meeting places could be a cut-out shaded by a tree, or a small grassy area with a bench. Potential users would be parents pushing a stroller, dog walkers, neighbors getting to know each other, people discussing local issues, and people with mobility challenges taking a breather. This request would expand Recommendation B-4h to include Suburban neighborhoods: “Provide public seating, restrooms and other pedestrian amenities in Downtowns, Town Centers, and along Boulevards.”

### Pocket Parks

In recent decades the concepts of Pocket Parks (Miyawaki Forests) have been developed, to provide compact natural areas in densely-developed, highly paved, or treeless neighborhoods. These mini-forests can be as small as 100 or 200 square yards. They can be inserted into large paved areas such as parking lots, to provide local residents a local park-like destination, as well as mitigating the heat island effect of paving. In environmental terms, selectively removing paving to install Pocket Parks can offset the increase in paved sidewalks resulting from this Plan’s implementation. We ask that this option be included under Recommendation B-6c, mitigating heat islands.

### Provide Online Guide to Pedestrian-Friendly Infrastructure Options

On page 5 it is stated that the “Plan prioritizes areas for investment, rather than what those specific investments should be.” The Plan’s Appendices include a Design Toolkit. The toolkit will be extremely helpful to all residents as a sourcebook for specific solutions, because our residents are not infrastructure experts. Given that the Pedestrian Master Plan is high-level and focused on prioritization,

goals and measures, we request that an online guide be created from the Design ToolKit, for Montgomery County residents to use as a reference. We would all benefit from photographs of implementations, brief descriptions, and assessments of these engineering options.

#### Process For Requesting a Review of a Neighborhood's Pedestrian Safety

We support the process of prioritizing neighborhoods by need, for example, the tiered approach to providing BiPPA improvements. We ask that this approach include a process for community associations to request a safety review by a Traffic Engineer, to acquire data, assess the local level of need, identify local problems, and consider feasible solutions.

Recommendation B-9b seems to address this issue: "Deemphasize pedestrian volumes as a determining factor in deciding where to install pedestrian or connectivity improvements. Through the Traffic Engineering Study process, community members can identify safety and connectivity issues and request MCDOT address them with the appropriate treatments." Communities need an easy process to request a Traffic Engineering Study.

#### Process for Temporary Road Closure

We've noticed that other jurisdictions (e.g., Washington DC) allow for certain residential blocks to be closed for a few weeks to vehicular traffic, except for access by residents. Temporary barriers and official signage were placed at the entrance to those blocks. This can give a short-term respite from heavy traffic. We ask that this option be available for Montgomery County's residential areas.

#### Enforce Existing Regulations Along Problematic Roads and Intersections

The Executive Summary (p.2) mentions "increasing the number of Automated Traffic Enforcement locations," specifically for enforcing speed limits and no-turn-on-red. We ask that ATE and other enforcement tools be used for additional violations, such as running stop signs, ignoring posted restrictions against rush-hour entry / egress, or using a left-turn lane as a high-speed passing lane.

#### Help Community Associations Work with the State of Maryland

If the county is unable to influence state planning for pedestrian safety and comfort on state roads in Montgomery County, we ask that the county provide guidance for community associations on engaging with the Maryland Department of Transportation.

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Lauren Saunders](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Comments on Pedestrian Master Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:04:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [Pedestrian master plan written comments.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

Attached please find my comments on the draft Pedestrian Master Plan. Thank you for considering this input.

Lauren Saunders  
7000 Millwood Rd.  
Bethesda, MD 20817

7000 Millwood Road  
Bethesda MD 20817

March 21, 2023

By email to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)  
Chairman Jeff Zyontz  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Pedestrian Master Plan. I applaud the County for taking a holistic look at the multiple factors that go into developing a safe, comfortable and appealing network for walking, biking and rolling.

I write these comments from the perspective of a resident of Kenwood Park, which in late January suddenly received a proposal from the Annual Sidewalk Program. That experience has revealed the multiple flaws of the Sidewalk Program and its approach that is divisive, antiquated, not holistically focused on safety, and counter to County environmental and other goals.

The proposal was developed with virtually no neighborhood input, is based on no data, and makes little sense. It proposed to remove 148 trees and to build sidewalks on quiet, rarely used streets, ignoring other streets that have much more pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The proposal, which is similar to others in the County, gave virtually no thought to numerous alternatives that would save trees and improve pedestrian safety, while also meeting goals of the pedestrian plan to shade sidewalks and enhance the pedestrian experience.

Some of these flaws are acknowledged and addressed in the draft Pedestrian Master Plan. In particular, I strongly support the recommendation (B-1a) to pivot from a reactive request-driven process to an equitable, data-driven process to ensure that the highest-priority connections are made and that resources are expended equitably.

But I have three key suggestions on how the draft plan can be improved.

First, I disagree with the proposal to limit public input into whether and where sidewalks should be built. Instead, the County should allow earlier, more meaningful input to ensure that sidewalks are built where they make sense and are a priority given limited resources. It is undemocratic to cut out public input, and the County should not artificially limit what information the public can supply.

Second, the Master Plan should recommend a more profound overhaul of how sidewalks are built in neighborhoods. Montgomery County has the opportunity to change the Sidewalk Program from a siloed program narrowly focused on its own tools and goal of adding linear feet, to a best-in-class, holistic, cross-County effort to maximize neighborhood safety, preserve trees, and enhance the pedestrian experience. In particular:



- The Sidewalk Program should work together with the Traffic division to consider street alterations that calm traffic and save trees, and
- The Program should work with the Department of Environmental Protection and the Planning Department to draw on experience around the country about how to use state of the art techniques to build and maintain walkscapes while saving trees.

Progressive Montgomery County can set the standard and do so in a democratic way. The combination of early public input and a more thoughtful approach to enhancing pedestrian safety while preserving the environment are more likely to help the community to see a sidewalk plan as a positive opportunity to improve the neighborhood, rather than as something that is being imposed on it.

Third, the County should make efforts to inform homeowners, landscapers and others about the right of way that the County asserts on many properties and the possibility of future sidewalk construction in order to encourage landscaping and other improvements to be made in ways that will not interfere with future sidewalk construction.

### **1. The Pedestrian Master Plan Should Not Stifle Public Input.**

Recommendation B-1b states that public engagement should be reimagined so that members “can share valuable local perspectives.” Yet the explanation of the recommendation undermines the importance of those perspectives by stating that the public process should be reframed to focus on “how” sidewalks can be constructed, not “whether they should be constructed at all.” But it is counter to democracy – and to the goal of an equitable, data-driven process – to limit data that comes from local perspectives.

Those who live in a neighborhood know what the traffic and pedestrian patterns are. They have valuable information that should be incorporated much earlier into the process. The decision to build sidewalks in our neighborhood and to select the streets on which to build them seem to have come primarily from three sources: the vagaries of requests from a couple of individual residents; a political opportunity created by a tragic but completely unrelated accident; and the opportunity to build a large number of linear feet in one neighborhood and achieve a third of the Sidewalk Program’s annual goal in one place.

After three years of development, the Sidewalk Program has now made a proposal that is not based on any data on pedestrian or vehicle traffic. It simply does not make sense from the perspective of where in our neighborhood sidewalks may be needed. It also may be that other neighborhoods in Montgomery County have much greater needs.

While the Sidewalk Program has held a hearing on the proposal and is taking public comment, it is clear that the program is already very invested in the proposal that they have been working on for three years.

Earlier public input would have supplied valuable data from local knowledge that should be incorporated into the decision of whether and where to build sidewalks. Incorporating that input would enhance the goal of an equitable, data-driven process. Equity is not served by limiting public input. Data is not served by ignoring important information about pedestrian needs.

While the draft Plan indicates that the County has conducted surveys and collected data that will be considered in assessing where to build sidewalks, that data is incomplete, and also is static. The County

has not monitored pedestrian and traffic patterns in neighborhoods, and thus community input on those factors is critical.

Earlier notice and public input would also help to avoid some of the controversy around sidewalk proposals. A large part of the frustration of our neighborhood is the realization that a fully formed proposal has been stealthily planned for three years and has suddenly been sprung on us, given us only 5 weeks to a hearing, with little time to get information, ask questions, and figure out what has been going on. The opportunity to provide more meaningful input, actively considered, would make it easier for neighborhoods to welcome or at least accept sidewalk construction when it comes.

Earlier notice would also give people in neighborhoods time to adapt to coming sidewalk construction and prevent homeowners and home builders from investing money in landscaping and other improvements that will be destroyed. Our family, for example, just completed a major landscaping project and tree planting last year, completely unawares, much of which will now be ripped out. We could easily have built it differently had we known. Other neighbors have installed invisible dog fences and irrigation systems that will also be removed, but could have been installed outside of the path of the planned sidewalks.

Finally, together with a more holistic approach to how to build sidewalks, enhance safety, and save trees, as discussed in the next section, early public input will help the entire neighborhood to see a potential sidewalk plan as a positive opportunity to improve the neighborhood, rather than as something that is being imposed on it. In short, the point of allowing earlier public input, without artificially limiting what the public can comment on, is not to make it easier to kill sidewalk proposals, but to make them better and to achieve all of the County's goals.

**2. The sidewalk program should be overhauled to create a best-in-class, holistic, cross-department approach that is not singularly focused on sidewalks but rather on the best way to maximize neighborhood safety, preserve trees, and enhance the pedestrian experience.**

The original sidewalk proposal in our neighborhood called for taking 8 feet from yards to build sidewalks with a grass buffer, removing 148 trees, many of them large, mature trees and the signature cherry trees that give our neighborhood its beauty and character. Two other neighborhoods, Willerburn Acres and Rock Creek Manor, received similar proposals that that, collectively with our neighborhood, put over 300 trees at risk.

Removing that large number of trees – in just three of the many neighborhoods where the Sidewalk Program expects to build sidewalks – conflicts with several County goals of the draft Pedestrian Master Plan and the County's Climate Action Plan, as outlined below.

While the Sidewalk Program claims that it will plant three trees somewhere in the County for every one removed, that is insufficient. First, it is clear that most of these trees will not be in the neighborhoods where trees are being removed. Most shrunken yards cannot accommodate additional trees, and a document produced by the Sidewalk Program indicates that of the 46 trees removed in FY 2022, only 3 were replaced in those neighborhoods. It is not clear where or even whether the additional 135 promised trees will be planted.

Second, three small trees are not the equivalent of one large, mature tree. For example, one of the trees originally proposed to be removed in our neighborhood is a Pin Oak with a 30" diameter that is perhaps

40 feet tall. According to the U.S. Forest Tree Calculator,<sup>1</sup> over 20 years, that one tree has \$1,708.71 in environmental benefits, including carbon dioxide uptake, storm water mitigation, air pollution removal and other benefits. A replacement tree with a 2" diameter has only \$77.61 in the same benefits, even over 20 years. Thus, even 3 for 1 replacements are not nearly enough.

After an enormous outcry, the Sidewalk Program has now revised the tree reports for the Kenwood Park and Willerburn Acres plans to incorporate use of flexi-pave, detours around trees, and other methods to attempt to save many of the trees. The number of trees that will ultimately be saved is unknown; many have been moved from the "remove" category to "air excavation" for an assessment of whether they can be saved.

The Rock Creek Manor proposal is apparently about to start as proposed, removing 48 trees, despite a majority of the neighborhood being opposed.

The new willingness to use flexi-pave and to wind around trees is welcome. However, it is clear that many trees will still be removed. In addition, in many places the new sidewalk paths will encroach much deeper into yards, closer to houses, adding to the disruption of the sidewalks.

The Sidewalk Program still seems unwilling to work with the Traffic Division to consider street alterations, even minor ones, which are in the jurisdiction of the Traffic Division. Yet street alternations would allow sidewalks to be built in a way that would calm traffic, enhance safety and save trees all at the same time. For example, sidewalks could be bumped out around trees, creating more of a winding "parkway" feel that would force cars to slow down – while making the neighborhood more walkable. In addition, the streets in our neighborhood are far wider than they need to be for neighborhood traffic – which encourages fast driving – and we have ample parking, with few cars using street parking. Thus, streets could be narrowed and/or parking could be limited to one side of the street to allow for sidewalk construction that does not conflict with trees. These changes, too, would slow down traffic.

Relatedly, one of the recommendations in the draft plan, B-1e, is to consider other ways to create dedicated pedestrian walkways where sidewalks are not feasible. As the plan notes, Seattle uses walkways in roadways to preserve trees and other environmental features. In quiet neighborhoods like ours with wide streets, pedestrian walkways built into the street area using flex posts, jersey barriers or other materials may be quite sufficient.

It is also important for the Sidewalk Program and the Traffic Program to work together because sidewalks alone are not the best way to improve safety. In fact, as explained at greater length in written comments by our neighbor Linda Tilchin, modern approaches to pedestrian safety show that slowing down traffic is more important than building sidewalks. Thus, the two divisions should assess what the needs of a neighborhood are and how best to achieve them through a combination of traffic measures and sidewalks.

In addition, our quick research has revealed that there are many techniques that can be used to build sidewalks while saving trees, and to save trees that start to encroach on sidewalks. These, too, are explained in Linda's memo, which draws on just a small amount of research going on around the country, including from a recent webinar from Penn State on how to avoid tree-sidewalk conflicts. For

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<sup>1</sup> <https://mytree.itreetools.org/#/benefits/individual>.

example, sidewalk “bridges” can go over tree roots, and multiple techniques can be used to move and save roots.

Thus, the County should take a more holistic approach to building walkscapes that relies not just on the Sidewalk Program’s knowledge, goals, and jurisdiction, but also on those of other parts of the County, including the Traffic Division, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Planning Department. And, the County should seek out knowledge around the country, as these issues are not unique to Montgomery County.

A revamped program would better achieve the overarching goal of developing safe, comfortable and appealing pedestrian experiences. In particular, a best-in-class approach to building sidewalks that incorporates public input, preserves trees and considers street alterations would achieve these goals of the draft Pedestrian Master Plan:

- **B-1a Use a data-driven approach and use limited resources efficiently.** Pedestrian safety should be the goal, not sidewalks per se. The traffic and sidewalk divisions must work together and consider a variety of approaches.
- **B-1e Explore dedicated pedestrian spaces where sidewalks are not feasible,** whether to preserve trees or for other reasons.
- **B-4 Build More Walkable Places.** Sidewalks that are in neighborhoods that preserve their trees, vegetation and neighborhood character, and have more of a parkway feel, will be more inviting to pedestrians.
- **B-6: Reduce pedestrian pathway temperatures.** Preserving trees along sidewalks would meet the goals of ensuring shading of sidewalks (B-6(a)) and investing more in street tree preservation and maintenance (B-6(b)).
- **B-9 Make traffic calming easier.** The Sidewalk Program should be required to work holistically with the Traffic Division to incorporate traffic calming measures when sidewalks are being considered.

A revamped, holistic program would also help achieve these goals from the Climate Action Plan:

- **Retain and increase the tree canopy**
- **Update public space and streetscape design to require cool-colored permeable surfaces.** The Sidewalk Program should explore the best ways to build sidewalks that not only accommodate trees but also reduce the amount of concrete and include more permeable surfaces.

Importantly, a revamped Sidewalk Program that made more significant efforts to save trees and to calm traffic in neighborhoods would engender less controversy. When neighborhood input is added in earlier in the process, sidewalks can still be built with much more community support and a far better outcome in achieving the County’s multiple goals.

### **3. Inform homeowners, landscapers and others about County right of ways and encourage improvements that do not interfere with future sidewalk construction.**

One of the biggest frustrations we have had with the Kenwood Park Sidewalk Proposal is that we had no idea that the County claimed a right of way on our property or that a sidewalk plan was under development. We spent tens of thousands of dollars last year on landscaping that is now going to be

ripped out, and the initial proposal also called for the removal of 5 cherry trees that we planted, two last year and three about 15 years ago. Had we known, we could have done things differently.

Similarly, neighbors have installed invisible dog fences, irrigation systems, and other improvements that will now be removed and could have been installed further back from the street.

There were several points at which we could have been informed:

- When we bought our house. Neither our realtor nor the title insurer said anything. The plat map provided with our title policy clearly showed the drainage easement in the rear of our home, but nothing about a claimed 17 foot right of way along the street. Even had we seen the larger plat for the entire neighborhood, we would have never known that the tiny number “60” up the street meant that the County claimed 30 feet in either direction from the center of the street.
- When the neighborhood association encouraged people to plant cherry trees. About 15 years ago, our association embarked on a campaign to ask people to restore the original cherry trees in our neighborhood, which were getting old. No one indicated that they should be planted back from the street to accommodate a right of way and future sidewalks.
- When the County began serious work on the sidewalk proposal in our neighborhood. Our neighborhood was prioritized for sidewalks in early 2020 and the tree report was completed that year. Yet the Sidewalk Program did not mention a word of it to our neighborhood until late January 2023.
- When we did landscaping last year. The landscaper said nothing, and seemed as surprised as we were when we contacted them this year after getting the sidewalk plan.

Similarly, we have seen many new homes built in our neighborhood that have planted trees within the planned sidewalk zone, even though they had plenty of flexibility as to where to put them.

Given the County’s apparent plans to continue building sidewalks in a number of neighborhoods, the County needs to undertake greater efforts to let the public know of those plans, of the rights of way the County holds, and of the importance of making property improvements that will accommodate sidewalks.

Potential options include:

- A required notice or map when a home is sold.
- Outreach to realtors, landscapers and gardening centers.
- Notice to homeowner associations.
- Notice from the sidewalk program as soon as a neighborhood is under serious consideration.
- General publicity through the County Executive’s newsletter and other channels.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Yours very truly,

Lauren Saunders

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Doug Scott \(Comcast\)](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Anne.Kaiser@house.state.md.us](mailto:Anne.Kaiser@house.state.md.us)  
**Subject:** For Thursday's Hearing on Pedestrian Safety  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:44:19 PM  
**Attachments:** [Riding Safety.docx](#)

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

Sometimes you do not run out of changes, just time.

I hope this is useful. I will confine my self to three minutes or less. I will probably focus on lights and the wooden bridge issues as I firmly believe those two issues are where we can make a meaningful dent in the short term.

Doug

## Riding Safety

I have looked at the County pedestrian vision. There is little in it that one could say is objectionable in the words and charts. It is the execution to date that concerns me.

I am 62, I have ridden a bicycle as my principal sport/exercise since I was 14 growing up in Fairfax County. I have raced extensively, ridden cross country, but mostly just ride. Currently, my annual miles range from 3,000 to 6,000 for the last 8 years. You can't do long weekend rides in the hills without a minimum of 2-3 rides during the week. I used to do neighborhood errands and rides through Rockville, I rarely do this anymore. It is a risk/reward calculation. It is also a parking/theft issue.

A ride is between 35 and 80 miles, it traverses many communities. As a community ourselves, we lack any sort of physical or geographic center of mass. So, we are mostly unaware of or left out of community level discussions. In my cohort, there is a tendency for DC and VA cyclists to cross into MD. We tend to head to Frederick County on the weekend but remain in MoCo during the week (or indoors now). The AG Reserve is a huge asset to us, but the deterioration of the asphalt at the sides of the Milk Roads has us seeking more travelled routes. The joint between the old concrete and the paved sides is increasingly problematic.

I avoid the MUT's. Lots of reasons, mainly pedestrians, dog walkers with long leashes and cyclists do not mix. I do think for the major commuter trails, one might consider legislating bike commuter only hours much like HOV lanes. My parents lived along the Mt. Vernon trail, there view was cyclists at high speeds terrorized them.

E-bikes are a multidimensional challenge, 55-60 pounds of steel moving at 28mph creates a lot of energy. It takes skill discipline for an e-bike rider to integrate with regular bikes, even experienced riders struggle. You can go uphill at high speed but you fall back downhill. I get the popularity, many of my friends are moving to e-bikes.

I am boggled by the notion any group could think it is a good idea to build two-way bike lanes on one side of a road with driveways and cross-streets. But, that is Water street in DC today, it is also a small stretch of the Capitol Crescent Trail in Bethesda and the revised Haines Point configuration (there are fewer cross streets there but other issues boggle the mind). The mindset changes of getting both riders and drivers to look both ways when crossing these lanes are huge. I won't use them, I hope the mother of today's 14-year-old understands they are a terrible risk. Again signs should be posted.

I think often of the today's 14-year-old and how their parents might "rely" on some of these safety innovations. Vision Zero, has is a catchy name of consequence initially pitched as an approach to address a misleading 26% year over year spike in road fatalities a few years back. Cycling fatalities have run between 700 and 1,000 every year since 1964. That spike was statistically and factually irrelevant.

The first fatality I encountered was in 1977. Steve was a racing friend; he was right behind me I still can hear the sound of his bare rim sliding on concrete.  
Steve, Mike, Miji, Debbie, the 3 on 121 in Allen, TX,

I have been in contact motor vehicles 5 times over the years. Three were the result of a motorist passing without enough room on the paved surface. The last of these was a county Ride-On Bus, a county police officer was a witness and equated the contact by the bus to a car going over the posted limit by 9-mph. It was far more serious but hard for an inexperienced police officer to appreciate the skill involved in staying upright. Lack of enforcement is a huge problem today.

Veeco, Car Door, McLean, Texas and Ride-on Bus

The County accident database is missing two 911 involved accidents (no car involved), a couple more I was around for and a slew of non-911 incidents that ended up in ER's. The DC database misses the accident I had on the Mt. Vernon trail. I believe that going after the source of accidents is probably better for society and more fruitful than going after fatalities. The reporting is better than in the past, but I suspect it is understated.

There are five basic car involved on the road accidents for cyclists:

**Rear Ender** – This is the distracted driver or the low sun in the eye's situation. It is also the Landscape truck accident. This is a newer issue where the driver understands the width of the his/her vehicle but loses track of the significantly wider trailer. NHSTA data suggests the rear ender is by far the predominate cause of fatalities. It is also the fingerprint of the most horrific deliberate accidents.

**Squeeze** – A car passes with out enough room in the lane or the will/ability to move further left, cyclist is forced off the road either by contact or avoiding contact. This is 3 of my five vehicular incidents.

**Left Hook** – Car is passing a cyclist just as the cyclists initiates a left turn. Often, the driver sees the potential turn coming, but their reaction is to accelerate to get beyond the issue and back to their correct lane. This risk is mostly manageable by a cyclist but noiseless EV's are an area of concern. Garmin and a couple of others make good radar units that provide a reasonable understanding of what is approaching, but only a tiny minority of the cycling public is so equipped. My experience is this is mostly a suburban and rural accident.

**Right Hook** – This is the recent Langenkamp accident, most of us see and understand this constant threat. There are two variants: first, the car passes the cyclists but not fully then slows and makes a right turn often into some type of sideroad or driveway. The second is at a light or in traffic. The cyclist uses the bike lane or space on the right to advance in the queue. The vehicle does not see the bike passing on the right and turns right. This is why I see the present implementation of bike lanes and "Protected" bike lanes as deceptive.

**The head-on** - A less frequent but dramatic accident, this is mostly on sharp high-speed curves where the cyclist or car crosses the yellow line. It also happens where a cyclists encounters unexpected gravel in a high speed left turn and has to increase the radius of their turn because it is too late to brake. (Hipsley Mill at Annapolis Rock is an example where Howard County helped greatly by improving drainage)

There is a world of cyclist only accidents each has a root cause mainly in poor communication or momentary distraction. Usually, it is two things together that make the accident inevitable. My



overall view is rider skills are often underdeveloped. Many riders my age are former runners taking care of their knees and hips. We use a term “protect your front wheel” as even the most momentary failure to concentrate on threats to the front wheel will cause an accident. It takes a while to appreciate the importance of this statement.

In June '22, I was saved on the “protected” lanes on M Street in DC when the pedestrian detection system in a Volvo XC 90 turning across the protected lane to a parking garage safely brought the car to a stop about 2' from my knee. I no longer ride in those lanes, cross traffic for parking garages 2x per block are too dangerous. These lanes reflect a basic failure to understand the differences between small European cars and US SUV's and Amazon vans.

I avoid areas like where the Langenkamp accident happened on River Rd. east of Goldsborough and Old Georgetown Rd anywhere. There are simply too many alternative routes, and these primary roads are littered with entrances and exits on the right side. I sort of woke up when I heard about that accident as I realized there were cyclists out there unlike my gang that saw those lanes on those roads as somehow safe. For several years, I used to go from the Marriott HQ area to I can imagine 14-year-old me telling my mom I am going to ride the “protected lanes” on OGR to a friend's and her thinking that was great. Rockledge to Fernwood, or the Trolley Trail to Fleming connecting to Grosvenor remain the safe routes today, not the OGR protected lanes. These lanes were a mistake and any cycling group that lobbied for them should be ashamed.

If I am caught in one of these roads my approach is as follows:

- Ignore the bike lane, ride in the middle to middle-left of the lane. I want to be as visible as possible and as hard to pass as possible. Some think the lane on the far right provides for their safety, it does not. In the bike lane or far right, experience says you are easily “passed” and forgotten. The painted bike lane is a deceptive trap for the trusting or inexperienced. I think this gets worse with the separation afforded by “protected” lanes. On the far side of the flexiposts the cyclist is out of sight and out of mind. It is worse in the District where parked SUV's and Amazon vans form the separation which becomes a tunnel.
- I have stopped advancing on the right in traffic in most circumstances. Exceptions might be as on Rt.28 at Quince Orchard. Where I am going straight and there is a right turn lane next to me. I will move up to the relative safety of a concrete island protecting my right side.

The county got the Carl Hein Trail right where it crosses 270 at 28. Users of the trail experience the flyover as a non-event. Cyclist's like me make a quick jig off 28 and are on the flyover approach with the other end is equally close Rt. 28. The actual interchange itself is far less dangerous than OGR and the 270 Spur. I am not convinced any amount of colored paint makes OGR and the 270 Spur “protected”.

Let's look at another example: MacArthur Blvd at Old Angler's

Iconic road and important access for area cyclists. Long ago we used to have access to the Clara Barton now we are all on MacArthur.



The right-of-way is way below any current standard for the traffic.

The Venn diagram that solves this are for all parties probably shows no solution.

These flexiposts and curbs extend 0.5 miles.

The gravel contains fine steel wire from radial tires, there will be flats. How do riders get off roadway safely?

This is at the base of long downhill, at the exit of a blind curve.

The posted speed limit 30, I exit turn at 30-35 mph. I want to carry as much speed as I can through that turn or, if possible, be "stuck" behind a slow car. This is to discourage an impatient driver from passing before they have a full view of oncoming traffic and "squeeze" me into the gravel/flexipost. It is too complicated; I have abandoned the idea of riding one of my favorite roads since 1974.



The MoCo flexipost is higher than my handlebars. In a "squeeze" the bars will contact the flexipost, a rider will then be driven into the curb in the MacArthur example above. The injuries are likely horrific. The triangular vs. tubular shape used in the District (below) make the county's much more resistant to yielding on impact.

I mentioned these concerns to a country road engineer in a meeting last summer. He did not contest the safety issues, he simply observed "this is a Vision Zero Project and it will not change."

I belong to an area Listserv said to be 4,000 cyclists long when I asked if anyone was involved or consulted in our community, I got no response.

Perhaps the County could consider a sign? "Caution "Vision Zero" infrastructure ahead, unsafe for cyclists"?

A better approach in the District:



Bars clear the post.

Round post yields to impact of front tire. It may be possible survive contact without an accident. I survived contact with a similar post in NJ with a different base.

No curb, no debris to add risks.

I have seen photos in Northern Europe of 2 low 3' rubber strips placed diagonally between posts. You would know if you hit these but probably survive.

Some data suggests nearly 500,000 bicycle related accidents annually. I would offer getting after some of the causes here will have more benefit than a questionable bike lane on OGR.

**My ideas? Go after the 500,000+ accidents, not the fatalities.**

**Bike lights** work in daylight, at night, in shadows, and significantly lights can overcome direct low level sun coming into a driver's eyes. With a little work, the County or State could acquire nice rechargeable light sets for under \$20/pair. Trek is taking this issue on with my crowd, perhaps some PSA's and school giveaways could be implemented? We need to meet riders where they are, not at events for established cyclists or enthusiasts'.

Lights need to become like helmets, -do not get one your bike without them.

**Pressure treated wood** should be banned and removed as a bridge surface by all MUT's, State and National Parts. When I rode to the Langenkamp memorial event in DC, the three of us hanging out all realized we had each had low speed (5mph) topples at the wooden bridge on the Mt. Vernon Trail at Roosevelt Island. That was 1 broken hip, 3 broken collar bones and 2 with broken ribs (to hospitalizations, 3 surgeries). Go to any bike shop nearby and they all know

the accident. Go to the Park Service? The few that get through get a lecture about wetlands and chemicals. The French have solved this, so have the Danes and the Dutch. States and counties are not free of issue here. A similar bridge in Loudon County cost a friend his femur. Another friend is paralyzed in Frederick, we do not know the cause of his solo spinal injury, but hikers found him suspiciously on one of these bridges.

There is a cost issue here, but if the aggregate costs of the accidents or liability for them were transferred to the builder/designers/owners the pressure treated wood would be gone in a heartbeat. That surface when damp is like oil on glass and in shaded areas it stays damp long after a rain. We do not even have the decency to post signs pointing out the likely danger.

**Bike theft/Secure Parking** is a separate unaddressed issue. Bikes have serial numbers that are traceable, there ought to be a national registry tracked to the original purchaser where thefts can be registered. Altering one ought to be the equivalent of altering a VIN on a car. It is a dirty secret the industry presently sees a net gain through insurance replacements. Thefts come from sources as simple as joyriders to professional gangs. There is not a portable lock in the world that will not yield quickly to a battery powered cutoff saw.

My experience is casual riders (my daughter for example) simply give up after a theft or the combination of theft risk and accident risk is perceived to be too much. People have a lot of financial and emotional investment in their bicycles. Without secure parking, bicycles are not reliable transportation. Secure parking/storage is not widely available.

Riding skills are also an issue. In my youth the invitation to good rides was word of mouth. It was earned by both power and skill. The decline of clubs in the area is in no small part that rides are posted on the internet so anyone can show-up. I have seen tons of riders way more powerful than me, without the most basic skills. My group rides are invitation only. I recognize this is exclusionary, but in 8 years we have had three accidents only one of which involved rider contact. On my "posted public" 2x weekly ride we are having 2-3 serious contact accidents a season. That is unacceptable.

44 years on I am proud of what I see in many dimensions of our sport. Women are no longer a rarity. If you can't deal with being around women who are stronger than you, cycling is not your activity. Viet Velo is something like 400 strong in the DMV area and the strongest club in the area is predominantly black. I raced all over the country, Patrick Gellineau, a Trinidadian was the sole black racer, and the Mattes brothers represented the Asian community. We are far from perfect, but the change is unmistakable.

From: [Paula Whyman](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Pedestrian Master Plan  
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:54:56 PM

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

Thank you for the chance to comment on the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan. In the interest of time and space, I will keep my comments short. It's of crucial importance that citizens retain the ability to evaluate and comment on all construction projects that impact their homes and communities. I'm deeply concerned—shocked in fact—that the Plan proposes to eliminate community input on whether or not sidewalks should be built—as if it's not a question of “whether” to build sidewalks in a given location of the County's choosing, only of how to do so. The first question to ask when considering sidewalk construction should be, does the community *want* more sidewalks? In fact, I suspect eliminating community input would be unconstitutional either by county or state statute, if not both.

The answer is not to silence the input, as if the County doesn't want to know what citizens will say, doesn't want to hear potentially opposing views, doesn't want to consider that there might be a better way of meeting the same safety and other goals. The answer is to reexamine the plans and try to understand why they drew a negative community response in the first place. The best answer, though, is to begin the process in concert with the community, even at the stage of proposing data-collection, with community support and with their full knowledge.

We have seen in our community what happens when the County announces a sidewalk plan without such preliminary engagement with citizens. In our case, plans were in the works for 3 years before the community was informed by the County, and then only a fraction of our neighbors received announcements that should have gone out to all community members.

I've lived in Montgomery County all my life, and I've always spoken of the County proudly when talking with people from other jurisdictions, in particular as a place that believes in participatory government, a place that listens to its citizens. I'd like to be able to continue boasting about that feature of life here.

My neighbor, Lauren Saunders, has submitted detailed testimony that I fully support; her comments include the above issue, as well as many other aspects of the plan. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Paula Whyman

[paulawhyman.com](http://paulawhyman.com)

@paulawhyman@writing.exchange (Mastodon)

***MAD LAND: Rediscovering the Wild, One Field at a Time***, forthcoming, Timber Press/Hachette Book Group

Editor in Chief, [Scoundrel Time](#)

[YOU MAY SEE A STRANGER](#), TriQuarterly Books: *"Honest & sharply observed. . . smart, artful stories capture a woman's life & the moments that define her."* — *PW*, starred review

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Nate Engle](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Mayor & Council](#)  
**Subject:** Written testimony for March 23 Public Hearing - Agenda Item 7 - Pedestrian Master Plan  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:02:15 AM  
**Attachments:** [ToK testimony Ped Mast Plan March22.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chair Zyontz,

I'm submitting the attached testimony on behalf of the Town of Kensington in support of the March 23 agenda item regarding the Public Hearing for the County's Pedestrian Master Plan.

I will also be providing in-person testimony during the meeting tomorrow to highlight key points in our attached written testimony.

Kind regards,

Nate Engle  
Councilmember, Town of Kensington

**Mayor Tracey Furman**

**Council Member Darin Bartram**  
**Council Member Nate Engle**



**Council Member Conor Crimmins**  
**Council Member Ann Lichter**

March 22, 2023

Montgomery Planning Board  
Jeff Zyontz, Chair  
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Chair Zyontz,

I write on behalf of the Town of Kensington to express support for the County's Pedestrian Master Plan. The document covers an impressive range of issues and offers targeted solutions for increasing walking rates and pedestrian satisfaction, creating a comfortable, convenient, and connected pedestrian network that is equitable and just, and enhancing pedestrian safety.

The process to produce the plan was data-driven and involved considerable outreach and public engagement. Eli Glazier, the lead for the Pedestrian Master Plan for Montgomery Planning, provided a briefing to our Town Council on the Plan's progress in 2022, and we worked with him on several occasions to explore synergies between the Plan and our Town's Pedestrian and Bicycling Access and Safety Working Group. Overall, we are encouraged by the collaborative spirit and approach embodied by this Plan.

There are several substantive aspects of the Plan that resonate with the Town of Kensington. In the Plan, the Town of Kensington is designated primarily as a "Town Center". The data regarding the fatality and severe injury rates is particularly striking, with "30% of crashes involving pedestrians on streets with a posted speed limit of 45-mph or higher result in a severe injury or fatality, [whereas] only 11% of crashes on streets with a 25-mph posted speed limit result in a severe injury or fatality...pedestrian crashes along a street (rather than at an intersection) are disproportionately likely to result in a severe injury or fatality". Furthermore, the Plan highlights that Town Center Boulevards are amongst the most dangerous street types and are flagged for prioritized improvements.

These data speak to two key points that the Town has pursued over the past few years. The first is lowering speed limits on all streets, and the second is improving pedestrian and bicycling safety and access along our Town Center Boulevards; primarily Connecticut Avenue, Knowles Avenue, Plyers Mill Road, Metropolitan Avenue, and University Boulevard. In 2022, the Town Council successfully lowered the speed limit on all Town-owned roads to 20 mph and has actively pursued grant and program opportunities to bring together our transportation partners at the state and county levels to evaluate improvements to the above-mentioned boulevards. This includes working with the Montgomery County



Mayor Tracey Furman

Council Member Darin Bartram  
Council Member Nate Engle



Council Member Conor Crimmins  
Council Member Ann Lichter

Department of Transportation (MCDOT) in 2021-2022 on a Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) grant to improve connectivity, safety, and access along Connecticut Avenue, and securing Maryland Department of Transportation State (MDOT) State Highway Administration (SHA) Bicycling and Pedestrian Priority Area (BPPA) designation. The BPPA plan is currently being developed, and it will match the County's BiPPA designation boundaries to improve linkages with County processes. Still, while we have seen progress over the past two years, we face considerable challenges with making the improvements we desire along the non-Town roads. This is mainly the case for the Town Center Boulevards noted earlier, which are all Maryland state roads. These state roads intersect with various Town and County roads, creating a complicated web of jurisdictional responsibilities. Moreover, coordination with MDOT SHA to prioritize improvements, while improving in recent years, remains a protracted process that often results in the deemphasis of pedestrian access and safety. For example, we are continually rebuffed by MDOT SHA in our request to lower the speed to 25 mph along Connecticut Avenue. **Thus, we foresee considerable benefit in prioritizing the recommendation to explore transferring control of these state roads in Town Centers to the County.**

We also note several other recommendations that align particularly well with the ongoing efforts of the Town to increase pedestrian and bicycling access and safety. These include, inter alia, the data-driven program to build more sidewalks faster, raised crosswalks, pedestrian recall, marked cross walks at all legs, no-turn on red limitations, leading pedestrian intervals, driver yield requirements, shading improvements along pedestrian pathways, improving education programs (including in MCPS), traffic gardens, and deemphasizing pedestrian volumes as a determining factor in deciding where to install pedestrian or connectivity improvements. These and other recommendations create an excellent roadmap for the County to follow. Although the Kensington Town Center BiPPA is listed in the Tier 3 category\*<sup>1</sup>, **most of the pedestrian improvements we urgently seek are contained in the Tier 2 BiPPA list (i.e., the entire stretch of Connecticut Avenue, Knowles Avenue, and Summit Avenue), and thus we encourage the County to progress from Tier 1 implementation to Tier 2 implementation in the CIP as quickly as possible.**

One area in which the County's Pedestrian Master Plan falls short, however, is that it does not list municipalities as key agencies and implementation partners (see page 61). **As a result, municipalities are excluded as stakeholders in the key actions and recommendations.** This is unfortunate because many of these jurisdictions, like the Town of Kensington, maintain ownership over the roads within their boundaries, which often intersect with County and State roads, as previously noted. This is a missed opportunity to identify specific areas for collaboration from the perspective of the County, so we are left with having to self-identify where to plug into the process and prioritize. An example of this would be to identify processes for municipalities to ensure pedestrian improvement projects within our boundaries are on the list in County plans for accessing federal funding.

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\* Plyers Mill Road is also a Tier 3

Mayor Tracey Furman

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Council Member Ann Lichter

Finally, the Town has conducted biennial walkability/bikeability audits, starting in 2020. **We will continue to draw the linkages with this effort and will endeavor to sync our biennial audits** with the Pedestrian Master Plan biennial monitoring report (action MO-1a) and the biennial pedestrian and bicycling survey (action MO-1b) so that the data in each are as current as possible.

Again, there is much to applaud in this Pedestrian Master Plan. We look forward to working with the County to pursue the opportunities and address the issues flagged above, and in so doing, continue partnering on pedestrian and bicycling safety and access improvements in the Town of Kensington and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nate Engle".

Nate Engle  
Councilmember, Town of Kensington  
Co-Chair, Pedestrian and Bicycling Access and Safety Group  
Co-Chair, Mobility and Traffic Committee

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Alison Gillespie](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair; Glazier, Eli](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 8:26:17 AM  
**Attachments:** [Pedestrian Master Plan Testimony from Alison Gillespie.pdf](#)

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

Here is my testimony for Thursday's planning board hearing on the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Thanks.

Alison Gillespie  
301-385-0313

For the record I am Alison Gillespie.

I am here today to show my enthusiasm for the Pedestrian Master Plan. I am past president of my civic association and I raised two children in Montgomery County. When they were younger, I served as president at the middle school PTA, and then went on to start the countywide PTA Safe Routes to School committee when they were in high school.

My husband and I were overjoyed to find a house near Metro twenty years ago, and we both walk and ride buses a lot. My kids walked to school at some points, rode the bus and then drove themselves to school eventually. They also took mass transit everywhere and they still do as college students. One of the great joys of living in the Forest Glen area between Silver Spring and Wheaton is that there are a lot of transit options to choose from.

But one of the nightmares is we have some incredibly dangerous roads that you must walk along to get to that mass transit.

I have spent hundreds of hours advocating for safety upgrades and pedestrian infrastructure – not just for my own family, school, or neighborhood but for places across the county. At first when I moved here I thought things were bad for walking because we had chosen an older neighborhood that needed retrofitting, but years of advocating and also years of working in the up county proved this was not the case. We simply are not putting pedestrian needs first. We don't do it in older neighborhoods and far too often we don't do it in newer neighborhoods either. And we all suffer for it. It takes a toll on quality of life and it is increasingly taking lives. Too many people are dying on our roads as they try to walk or roll to daily activities.

I am here tonight to express my support for the Pedestrian Master Plan because I see that it could help us fix a lot of our toughest roads and make them safer for all. I have watched as the planning staff has worked incredibly hard on this plan. Their diligence, care and extreme professionalism are demonstrated in every paragraph and word. It is a really magnificent plan and we all should be proud of it and I hope you will enact it.

The recommendations are wide-ranging, but I believe that they have to be – and I support that. The pedestrian environment is about more than just sidewalks and crosswalks. This isn't a plan about infrastructure. It's a plan that seeks to change our culture from being car-centric to pedestrian friendly. That means we must think about not just what we build but how we enforce rules, how we design, and how we define accessibility for all.

So many people are getting injured and killed in crashes on our roads. Making roads safer for all is a huge and daunting problem. I salute the way this plan goes above and beyond what master plans typically do. There's no time to waste. We've lost too many people already and too many people from marginalized communities and low income neighborhoods especially.

I think that the more places these types of recommendations are made, the more visible they are, and the more likely they are to be implemented. Having recommendations in multiple places is great.

I literally have nothing to criticize in this plan – but I did want to call out my favorite part. I especially love the “Build More Walkable Places” section. For years we, as parents, have asked MCPS to site schools and other public buildings to prioritize providing safe and direct pedestrian access. We’ve also been asking to revise the minimum acreage requirements for school sites. It is wonderful to see those requests in writing and I want to help our county make them a reality.

I also would love to see you all vote to make the Open Parkways along Beach Drive and Sligo Creek Parkway permanent. As one of the three founders of Open Streets Montgomery I spent a lot of time during the pandemic getting more streets open to pedestrians. Those two areas have transformed my weekends and have changed my neighborhood for the better. Let’s make the open parkways permanent!

Thanks for being leaders who listen and thanks for considering my input.

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Maddy Glist](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Pedestrian Master Plan - Kenwood Park  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:12:11 AM

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

As a homeowner in the Kenwood Park neighborhood. I'd like to submit my thoughts on the new Pedestrian Master Plan.

I'd support the recommendation (B-1a) to pivot from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data driven process, but that data should include the input and interest of the community that knows the neighborhood and where sidewalks are needed. I'd reject the recommendation (B-1b) that public engagement should be limited to how sidewalks should be constructed, not whether. Community notice and involvement must be incorporated earlier in the process. Earlier notice and involvement also help people to make landscaping and other decisions while a sidewalk plan is being developed to reduce conflict.

The sidewalk program should be revamped to create a best-in-class, holistic, cross-department approach that is not singularly focused on sidewalks but rather on the best way to maximize neighborhood safety, preserve trees, and enhance the pedestrian experience. This includes: (1) working together with the Traffic division to consider street alterations that calm traffic and save trees; (2) developing a comprehensive approach to how to build sidewalks while saving trees, drawing on the work of others across the country, including not only the use of flexi-pave but also of other state of the art techniques such as root bridges, as a way to save roots.

The Pedestrian Master Plan should bring together these elements into a recommendation specifically focused on reworking the sidewalk program. This would achieve these County goals, which are not specifically incorporated into sidewalk program recommendations.

Best,

Madelyn Glist & Tim Pohle  
6106 Lenox Road  
Bethesda, MD 20817

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [MICHAEL HEYL](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing – March 23, 2023 - Written Testimony of Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands Citizen's Association  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:27:46 AM  
**Attachments:** [BRCH Master Plan Comments.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of The Planning Board

The Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands (“BRCH”) Citizen’s Association, Inc. is hereby submitting the attached comments to express our concerns with the county’s proposal to make closures of certain sections of Beach Drive permanent, as included in section B-4g of the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan. While we support the objectives of the Pedestrian Master Plan to create safer, more comfortable experiences for county pedestrians, this particular aspect of the proposal is inconsistent with the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan, Vision Zero and Thrive Montgomery 2050. Moreover, Montgomery Parks has not sufficiently evaluated or researched the impacts that the existing weekend and holiday closures have already created.

Our written statement is attached.

Sincerely,

Michael S. Heyl, Esq.  
Mark Redmiles, Esq.

March 21, 2023

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

Mr. Jeff Zyontz  
Acting Chair Montgomery County Planning Board M-NCPPC  
2425 Reddie Drive 14th Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing – March 23, 2023  
Written Testimony of Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands Citizen’s Association

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of The Planning Board:

The Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands (“BRCH”) Citizen’s Association, Inc. is hereby submitting these comments to express our concerns with the county’s proposal to make closures of certain sections of Beach Drive permanent, as included in section B-4g of the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan. While we support the objectives of the Pedestrian Master Plan to create safer, more comfortable experiences for county pedestrians, this particular aspect of the proposal is inconsistent with the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan, Vision Zero and Thrive Montgomery 2050. Moreover, Montgomery Parks has not sufficiently evaluated or researched the impacts that the existing weekend and holiday closures have already created. Montgomery Parks has not been transparent and has ignored community concerns raised regarding the unsafe situation created in adjacent neighborhoods due to the redirection of excessive volumes of “cut through” traffic in the BRCH neighborhood. Moreover, as drafted in the Pedestrian Master Plan proposal, it is ambiguous as to whether “permanent” refers to the existing weekend and holiday closures, or whether the proposal actually is seeking a 7 day a week closure. Permanent closure of Beach Drive would be incredibly short-sighted. The closures are not needed to achieve the cited goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan as adequate pedestrian pathways parallel to Beach Drive already exist. Weekend and holiday closures have already led to the very situation that the Pedestrian Master Plan seeks to avoid. Other practical and achievable alternatives, such as the creation of designated bikes lanes on Beach Drive are available, yet not being considered. We urge the Parks and Planning Commission to delay any vote on the Pedestrian Master Plan until the Commission is seated with five full time members. We also urge the removal of this ill-conceived and unsupported provision from the Pedestrian Master Plan until additional due diligence and dialogue with county transportation officials and local residents adversely impacted by this provision is performed.

The BRCH Citizens Association has authorized the substance of these comments.

**Background**

**BRCH Citizen’s Association**

The BRCH Citizens Association was established in 1976. One of the key principles upon which the association was formed was to ensure the safety of our residents from traffic. Although the association was inactive in recent years due to people moving away and passing on, we have recently revived the association. The primary purpose of reviving the association is to address the safety issues created by the weekend and holiday closure implemented as part of Montgomery Parks’ Open Parkways program.

Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands sits between Connecticut Ave. to the East, Beach Dr. to the South, Cedar Lane to the West and Saul Road to the North. Culver Street is parallel to Beach Dr. and runs from Connecticut Ave., connecting to Cedar Lane via a small portion of Delmont Lane.



### Open Parkways

In April of 2020, Montgomery Parks initiated the Open Parkways program as a COVID-oriented program. Under the program, the 2.6 mile stretch of Beach Dr. between Connecticut Ave. and Knowles Ave. was closed Fridays through Sundays to allow residents to get outside and safely social distance from one another. At that time, the pandemic essentially created exigent circumstances warranting such closures. However, as time went on and the county re-opened, residents in BRCH became increasingly concerned with the volume of traffic using Culver Street as a detour when Beach Dr. was closed. Working through then County Council President Gabe Albornoz, and representatives from MCDOT, common sense and reason prevailed and Montgomery Parks was persuaded to amend the program by limiting the closures to Saturdays and Sundays. This opening of Beach Drive on Fridays occurred in mid-December of 2022. If the proposed closure of Beach Drive is intended to be seven days a week, the proposal would undermine the decision not to include Fridays – a decision which had the support of the County Council, MCDOT and the then newly appointed interim Parks and Planning Chair.

Although traffic volume on Fridays has decreased 46%<sup>1</sup> from the excessive and unsafe volumes experienced when Beach Drive was closed (as evidenced by the traffic volume data summarized on the attached **Exhibit 1**), the closure of Beach Drive on weekends and holidays still funnels an unsafe and excessive volume of non-local/cut-through traffic on Culver Street - a narrow, residential street that does not have sidewalks, speed humps, parking lanes or yellow lines. The average Saturday traffic volume alone is double the average daily traffic volume on Culver Street on Monday through Thursday. And, including Sunday, the weekend traffic volume on Culver Street when Beach Drive is closed increases 1.7 times the average daily traffic volume experienced on Monday through Thursday.

For the purpose of context, BRCH is concerned with the closure of the .60 mile stretch of Beach Drive that extends between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave. This is the stretch that parallels Culver Street in the BRCH neighborhood. It also is coincidentally the only stretch of Beach Dr. that leads commuters right to and from the intersection of Connecticut Ave. and the I-495 Beltway and Bethesda and Rockville. This is a heavily relied upon stretch of road based on location alone. For example, it provides direct access to the Beltway for traffic flowing to and from NIH, Bethesda Naval and Walter Reed – each of which have shifts that operate 7 days a week. The stretch also provides an alternate route to Stone Ridge High School as well as commuters traveling to and from Rockville or Bethesda and the Capital Beltway.

### **Impact of Beach Drive Closures on BRCH**

While the citizens of BRCH support the overall goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan, we are concerned with the proposal to make the weekend/holiday Beach Drive closure permanent. The closure of the aforementioned section of Beach Drive redirects significant volumes of non-local traffic<sup>2</sup> from all over the DMV onto a residential street as a cut through. Traffic uses Culver Street

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) has conducted four tube count style traffic studies on Culver Street since Montgomery Parks started the Open Parkways Program. Attached as Exhibit 1 is a summary of the traffic volume data contained in the four studies. A copy of each individual study's traffic volume and speed is also attached as pages 2-5 of Exhibit 1.

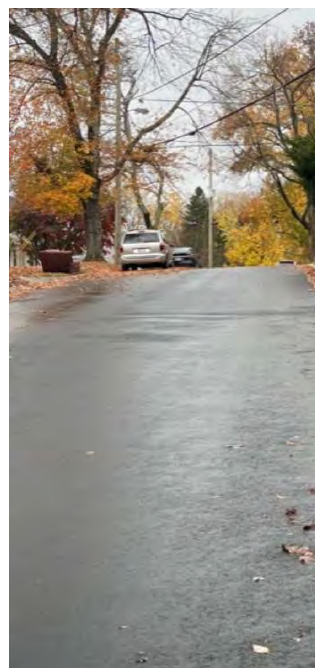
<sup>2</sup> Non-Local Traffic is defined as those vehicles entering or exiting a neighborhood street and having a registration address further than 3/4 mile (4000 feet) straight line distance from any point on the street under evaluation; estimated by means of a license tag survey sample or other appropriate

with access points from Connecticut Ave. as well as a small portion of Delmont Lane which intersects with Cedar Lane. Specifically, traffic is re-directed:

- From Beach Drive, which has:
  - a paved pedestrian footpath adjacent to the road that has been in place since the 1970s and 1980s;
  - a double yellow-line;
  - Parking lots; and
  - No residential homes.
  
- To BRCH (Culver Street), which:
  - does not have sidewalks;
  - is a narrow residential street with houses and families aligned on both sides of the street;
  - no speed humps;
  - has on-street parking, but no parking lanes thereby reducing traffic to one narrow lane;
  - has several blind spots (hills and curves) and;
  - does not have a double yellow-line.



**Image 1:** Culver Street. No sidewalks; No parking lanes; narrow throughway; No speed humps.



**Image 2:** Culver Street. One of many blind spots.

Moreover, many of the cut-through drivers are distracted holding their phones to see the detour – not paying attention to what’s in front of them as they are non-local and not familiar with the area. This

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methods. Montgomery County Code §31.69.01.02, COMCOR 31.69.01, *Through Traffic Volume Access Restrictions in Residential Areas*.

also has led to altercations between cut-through drivers and BRCH residents merely trying to walk in their neighborhood. There also have been numerous reports of sideswipe hit and run accidents damaging cars on Culver Street. In addition to numerous mirrors being sheared off, cars have even been sideswiped.

The local impacts of the closure of Beach Dr. is completely at odds with two of the primary goals of the county's Vision Zero implementation plan: (i) access to maintained sidewalks for pedestrians in high traffic volume areas (see Action S-12 Montgomery County Vision Zero FY22-23 Work Plan)<sup>3</sup>; and (ii) safe access to public transportation (See e.g., Action T-2 Montgomery County Vision Zero FY22-23 Work Plan)<sup>4</sup>. With bus stops located at Connecticut Ave. and Culver, as well as on Cedar Lane, BRCH residents are forced to walk to bus stops while dodging speeding cut-through traffic.

This proposal also is contrary to several of the primary goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan. For example, forcing excess cut-through traffic into a residential neighborhood makes walking and bicycling in the BRCH neighborhood inherently less safe. This by no means is the program "enhancing pedestrian safety" in the BRCH neighborhood. Rather, it has made walking on the street unsafe and has created a real risk of harm to any pedestrian brave enough to walk on Culver Street.

Closing Beach Drive also does not "Create a Comfortable, Connected, Convenient Pedestrian Network." As noted above, there already is an established pedestrian footpath and bike trail that runs parallel to Beach Drive through the areas subject to the Open Parkways program. Indeed, the plan for building the footpath dates back to the 1960s. Ironically, the purpose for building the trail was to establish a connected series of paths and trails for citizens to walk and bicycle throughout the county. Construction of the paved path parallel to Beach Drive was initiated in 1971. The section running between Connecticut Ave. and Cedar Lane and Knowles Ave. was built in the 1975-1977 timeframe. For decades, this pathway has served to provide a comfortable, connected and convenient network for pedestrians and bicyclists alike. As a result, including the Open Parkways and associated Beach Drive closures in the Pedestrian Master Plan is not warranted. Moreover, and as addressed in more detail below, the county has not presented any evidence or data demonstrating, or even suggesting, that the existing pedestrian pathway is somehow overcrowded or otherwise insufficient to meet the goals to "Create a Comfortable, Connected, Convenient Pedestrian Network" as articulated in the Pedestrian Master Plan.

As stated in the Pedestrian Master Plan, pedestrian "*Comfort*" is not the same as "*safety*." *While safety will always be the bedrock principle of the transportation system (and is the focus of Goal 3), increasing pedestrian comfort can also help create a pedestrian experience in Montgomery County that residents and visitors enjoy and look forward to, not just tolerate or overcome.* The same logic applies to the impact of the weekend and holiday Beach Drive closure on the BRCH neighborhood. Safety should be the priority. The impact of the Beach Drive closures has made it less comfortable to walk in the BRCH neighborhood. At present, residents on Culver Street cannot safely walk their dogs, or even walk or bicycle safely on their street on the weekend. The weekend traffic is twice the amount of weekday traffic and something that our residents do not look forward to – due to the safety issue created, it is something that cannot just be tolerated and overcome. Making the closure permanent – either as 7 days or the weekend – subjects the residents of BRCH to significant risk. It is placing the "comfort" of an unneeded duplicative pedestrian pathway over the safety of county residents.

Montgomery Parks is simply looking for a basis to justify the continuation of a COVID-era program that is no longer **needed**. Open Parkways was creative and provided an outlet for residents to get

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<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County Vision Zero Work Plan, FY22-23, available at [Vision Zero Fiscal Years 2022-2023 Work Plan \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/VisionZero/FY22-23-Work-Plan), (last accessed March 17, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

outside and safely distance from one another. There were exigent circumstances as the world was facing a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. However, as the pandemic has waned, public health emergency orders lifted and life has gotten back to normal, there is no longer a need for wider spaces on existing public trails. Because the footpath already meets the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan, the resources being allocated to support the Open Parkways should be redirected to other projects, such as building a designated bike lane on Beach Dr. for advanced cyclists, or building new trails in other areas of the county which better meet the racial equity and social justice objectives of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

### **Traffic Volumes Are Excessive for a Residential Street**

Shortly after the Open Parkways program was initiated in April of 2021, residents in BRCH noticed an increase in the volume of cars traveling in the neighborhood, many at dangerous speeds, on Fridays through Sundays. As noted above, at that time, Beach Drive also was closed on Fridays. Residents quickly reached out to the MCDOT to express their concerns. In response to these concerns, MCDOT commissioned traffic studies that were conducted the weeks of: October 7 - October 13, 2020; January 5 - January 11, 2021; March 13-March 19, 2021; and January 18-January 24, 2023. Each study records and reports the speed, volume and vehicle class for motorized vehicles traveling North and South bound on Culver Street for a specified 7-day period. These studies showed an increase of car volume of over 300% between weekdays and weekends (including Fridays).<sup>5</sup> The results of these traffic studies are attached as pages 3-5 of the attached Exhibit 1. They also are available from MCDOT.

A more recent MCDOT traffic study was performed in January of 2023.<sup>6</sup> As with the other 3 studies, a tube count was performed at a single designated location on Culver Street. Due to there being just one tube counter, the results do not reflect the total volume of traffic on Culver Street, which would have included the volume of residential trips that did not involve passage over the tube. Nonetheless, due to the placement of the tube counter at the midway point on Culver St., the traffic counts predominantly reflect the volume of cut-through traffic running between Connecticut Ave. and Delmont Lane/Cedar Lane. Similar to the counts taken during the pandemic, traffic volumes on Culver Street doubled on Saturday as compared to the weekday average traffic volume.

The data from the 4 studies has been summarized into a single page – page 2 of attached **Exhibit 1**. The data using all 4 studies establishes that traffic volume on Culver Street from Monday through Thursday<sup>7</sup> when Beach Drive was open averaged 350 vehicles per day. In contrast, the average traffic volume on the 4 Saturdays in the studies, when Beach Drive was closed, was 692 vehicles per day. This Saturday volume is almost double the Monday-Thursday traffic volume. The average traffic volume for the 8 weekend days (Saturday and Sunday) in the studies, when Beach Drive was closed, was 591 vehicles per day. The combined weekend day volume is 1.7 times the Monday - Thursday daily average.

Beach Drive was closed on Fridays during the first 3 studies (2020 and 2021) and traffic volume averaged 955 vehicles on Fridays in those 3 studies. During the fourth study, Beach Drive was open, and on Friday January 20, 2023, traffic volume was 437 vehicles. This is a 46% reduction (437 vehicles down from 955 vehicles) with Beach Drive open compared with the 3 Fridays when Beach Drive was closed. By re-opening Beach Drive on Saturday and Sunday, a similar 46% traffic volume reduction could be expected. As a result, traffic volume on weekend days would be expected to return to more normal traffic volume of fewer than 400 vehicles per day (instead of 500-

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<sup>5</sup> See attached Exhibit 1, p. 3-5.

<sup>6</sup> See attached Exhibit 1, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Monday October 12, 2020 was the Columbus Day holiday, so it was not included in the non-holiday Mon. - Thur. average for the data summary page.

800 vehicles per day) - which is a safer traffic volume level for a residential street not designed nor intended to carry this volume of traffic, especially with the characteristics of Culver Street.

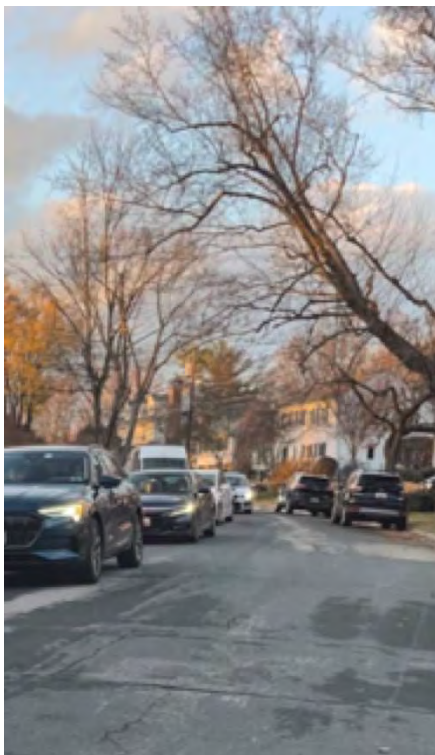
As noted above, due to its location with access to the and from the Capital Beltway, Culver Street serves as the “alternate route” that is used when Beach Dr. is closed. The weekend traffic is unsafe and excessive. Moreover, Culver Street is just one Beltway incident away from being jammed with cars from Connecticut Ave. to Cedar Lane. The images below depict one such event on a Saturday in November of 2022, as well as a Saturday on Culver Street. It goes without saying that the traffic jam that occurred in November of 2022 (shown below) took place at night when Beach Drive sat closed and empty.



**Image 3:** Culver Street. Traffic Jam, Saturday, November 19, 2022



**Image 4:** Culver Street. Traffic Jam, Saturday, November 19, 2022



**Image 5:** Culver Street traffic on a Saturday in December 2022

### **Montgomery Parks Has Either Not Conducted or Disclosed any Traffic Studies to Support Permanent Beach Drive Closures**

We continue to have concerns about the lack of diligence conducted prior to the implementation of the Open Parkways and the associated lack of data supporting its continuation. As noted above, Montgomery Parks implemented the Open Parkways at the outset of the pandemic in April of 2020. Due to the exigent circumstances, it appears that the decision to close Beach Drive was made without any type of assessment of traffic volumes or the potential for cut-through traffic into adjacent neighborhoods. Moreover, no such data have been collected since the program was initiated. Thus, it does not appear that Montgomery Parks has any data showing the volume of traffic that relies on this particular section of Beach Dr. during the week or on the weekends. Despite requesting such data in multiple Montgomery Public Information Act (“MPIA”) requests, if such data do exist, it has not been provided (even in redacted form) in response to these requests for this information.

Moreover, prior to the implementation of the Open Parkways program, there was little to no coordination between Montgomery Parks and MCDOT to gauge the level of potential spill-over traffic onto residential roads that would result from the closure. This was confirmed through a series of communications between BRCH residents and representatives from MCDOT in 2020 and 2021. Although MCDOT has performed multiple traffic counts clearly showing the detrimental impact on local roads resulting from the Beach Drive closure, no consideration (or re-consideration) was undertaken by Montgomery Parks with respect to the program as a whole. Only after the increased involvement of MCDOT and political pressure was applied by the County Council in Q4 of 2022 did Montgomery Parks amend the program to apply only to Saturdays and Sundays. Nonetheless, as

the traffic studies discussed above show, this modification has had limited effect with Saturday and Sunday traffic still being an issue.

### **Having Montgomery Parks Responsible for Traffic Remediation Creates a Conflict of Interest**

It was explained to BRCH residents by county officials that there is a Montgomery County policy whereby if a county agency implements a program that disrupts the flow of traffic, that agency is responsible for the remediation of such disruptions. As a result, it is Montgomery Parks that is responsible for resolving the adverse traffic impacts resulting from the Open Parkways program. This includes addressing the unsafe cut-through traffic volume in the BRCH neighborhood. However, Montgomery Parks' jurisdiction and mission is dedicated to the betterment of the county's parks and providing county residents access to the parks.

In fact, on a town hall type Zoom call held by Maryland State representatives regarding Little Falls Parkway on October 24, 2022,<sup>8</sup> Montgomery Parks' Director Mike Riley stated his priority and only concern is providing access to the parks and any transportation related issues or safety concerns caused by any changes made by Montgomery Parks are not his concern. This attitude should not be tolerated by the Planning Department. Beach Drive and other roads that traverse the interior of some Montgomery County Parks are significant arteries in the county and facilitate significant amounts of traffic volume. Montgomery Parks should be a "good neighbor" with the rest of Montgomery County and county residents and its road policies should maximize safety on neighboring roads and not just park access.

As a result, having Montgomery Parks in charge of resolving the deleterious and unintended consequences of the very program that it initiated and support creates a significant conflict of interest. It defies logic that an agency whose mission is to "Protect and interpret our valuable natural and cultural resources; balance demand for recreation with the need for conservation; offer various enjoyable recreational activities that encourage healthy lifestyles; and provide clean, safe, and accessible places" is responsible for identifying and implementing remedial measures that impact the very programs that it puts in place. There is a very obvious conflict of interest in having Montgomery Parks in charge of resolving these traffic and safety issues. Parks' goals are met by closing Beach Drive – not by resolving the resulting traffic issues created on county roads.

It also is unclear as to why personnel whose training, experience and vision is dedicated to providing enjoyable, accessible, safe, and green park system that promotes community through shared spaces and treasured experiences, would be responsible for handling issues that fall outside of their jurisdiction.

The impact of such a conflict of interest is clearly demonstrated by Montgomery Parks' unwillingness to engage in regular dialogue with representatives from the BRCH neighborhood. Even more demonstrative is the lack of adequate and meaningful actions and plans being considered to detour traffic away from BRCH. As a result of this conflict of interest, BRCH residents have been treated as adversaries rather than advocates offering alternatives that achieve mutual objectives. Moreover, if the intent of the word "permanent" in the Pedestrian Master Plan proposal is for a 7 days a week closure of Beach Drive, this would clearly undermine and run contrary to Parks Director Riley's statement in December 2022 when he stated, "In response to community feedback about an increase in neighborhood vehicle traffic, our engineers examined traffic data and concluded that reopening the parkway to vehicles on Fridays would alleviate traffic resulting from the closure and

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<sup>8</sup> Little Falls Parkway was also impacted by Montgomery Parks' Open Parkways program. Sligo Creek Parkway is the third road impacted by the program.

improve neighborhood safety.”<sup>9</sup> Although re-opening Beach Drive on Fridays was the absolute right thing to do in the name of neighborhood safety, it was not a zero-sum game. Ensuring the safety of the citizens of Montgomery County and BRCH is not a Monday to Friday endeavor. Additional actions need to be taken on the weekends as well.

*The Traffic Abatement and Street Signage Placed By Montgomery Parks is Inadequate*

By placing Montgomery Parks in charge of addressing the disruption of county traffic flow on non-Parks regulated roads, it makes sense that the few signs that have been placed have had, and will continue to have, zero impact. The signs are not visible and some are even inaccurate. They also are not identified as “detour” signs, but rather, advise drivers to seek an alternative route. For example:

1. On NB Cedar Lane, there are no signs between Beach Drive and Delmont Ln., the entrance to our neighborhood providing access to Culver Street. The only “Alt. Route” sign appears AFTER the Delmont entrance to the neighborhood.

Moreover, that sign erroneously directs traffic to Rt. 355 when it should say Rt. 185 (Connecticut Ave.).



**Image 6:** Sign placed after BRCH entrance; wrong road identified

2. The Alt. Rt. signs on Knowles Ave. redirecting traffic from the Beach/Knowles intersection actually lead traffic right to Delmont Road and into our neighborhood.
3. On NB Connecticut Ave., there are no signs preventing cars from turning left onto Culver Street. Rather, there is an “Alt. Rt.” sign on the other side of the road. It is too small to read in addition to being placed 30 yards up the road and across three lanes of traffic. Based on this location, it also is typically obstructed by vehicles traveling on Connecticut Ave.
4. There are no signs at the Beach Dr. intersections (or blockage gates) that even suggest that there is a detour. As noted, on Connecticut Ave. the Alt. Rt. sign is 30 yards up the road and across three lanes of traffic. There already is a no U-turn sign and post right at the Culver Street Connecticut Av. Intersection. It would be very easy to replace this sign with an appropriate “No Through Traffic” or “No Access to Cedar Lane” sign. As noted, on Cedar Lane, there are no signs at all prior to Delmont.

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<sup>9</sup> Montgomery Parks, Press Release, *Montgomery Parks to Modify open parkways schedule on Beach Drive*, December 7, 2022, available at [Montgomery Parks to modify open parkways schedule on Beach Drive - Montgomery Parks](#) (last visited March 19, 2023).



On January 3, 2023, MCDOT submitted to Montgomery Parks a revised detour proposal to address collateral traffic concerns on Culver Street when Beach Drive is closed on weekends and holidays. The revised detour proposal included barricades and “no through traffic” signage at Connecticut Ave. and Culver Street and the Cedar Lane and Delmont Street intersections. These are the two intersections that provide access to Culver Street for cut-through traffic on weekends and holidays. According to MCDOT Montgomery Parks has not agreed to follow MCDOT’s expert recommendation and has not agreed to erect the barriers with signage on weekends and holidays. MCDOT has also recommended to Montgomery Parks that it only close Beach Drive between Cedar Lane and Knowles Avenue. This is because the neighborhood road configuration in Parkwood is different than BRCH. For example, there are sidewalks and there is no road providing access to Connecticut Avenue and Beltway access parallel to Beach Drive in Parkwood. Montgomery Parks has also ignored this astute input from the transportation experts at MCDOT. It is not only inconceivable for Parks to ignore MCDOT suggestions, but also dangerous.

*Lack of Transparency to Explain Why Beach Drive is Not Closed Between Connecticut Ave. and Stonybrook Dr.*

The BRCH Citizens Association also is concerned with the lack of transparency from Montgomery Parks regarding why certain sections of Beach Dr. were selected for closure under the Open Parkways program while others were not. Although this rationale and associated documentation has been requested at meetings and in the MPIA requests, as of the date of submission of these comments, we have yet to receive a response. This particular section of Beach Dr. is contiguous with the section that is closed between Connecticut Ave and Cedar Lane and the Rock Creek Hills neighborhood road configuration is more like the Parkwood neighborhood without a single street running parallel to Beach Drive. It also is a frequently used stretch of Beach Dr. for bicyclists coming from the Washington DC portions of Beach Dr. Hence, if the goal of closing Beach Dr. on weekends is to provide a pathway for serious bicyclists, it is unclear why Montgomery Parks chose not to close the section used to connect bicyclists with the other sections of Beach Dr. in the District.

Unfortunately, this issue and the associated lack of transparency raises a perceived conflict of interest due to the residents who live in Rock Creek Hills. For example, Montgomery Parks Director Michael Riley lives in Rock Creek Hills on a street that connects to Beach Drive. In addition, two state delegates and a U.S. Senator live in this neighborhood. Due to the disparity in traffic impacts between BRCH and Rock Creek Hills resulting from the Open Parkways program and the associated closures of Beach Drive, Director Riley should have recused himself from the decision-making associated with this program. Ignoring document requests, meeting requests and the overall concerns of the BRCH community is not the same as a recusal.

**Beach Drive Pedestrian Counts Are False and Their Presentation is Misleading**

Throughout the entirety of the Open Parkways program, Montgomery Parks has consistently relied upon its counts of people using the Open Parkways as its basis to continue the program. The program has repeatedly been described by Parks as popular and that the popularity of the program justifies its continuation. However, the data upon which Montgomery Parks is relying lack statistical validity. The data as presented also are misleading, particularly with respect to the stretch of Beach Dr. between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave. For example:

- **There are no pedestrian counting sticks on the stretch of Beach Dr. between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave.** Thus, Montgomery Parks has zero data upon which to claim that the closure of Beach Dr. between Connecticut Ave. and Cedar Lane is “popular” or to justify the closure of this segment based on volume of usage.
- The counting device that Montgomery Parks has been relying upon actually is 1/3 mile north of the Cedar Lane intersection at Wildwood Ave. This device only counts on that stretch of

Beach Drive – not the stretch between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave. There is no rational basis to support any representation of these numbers as applicable to the stretch between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave. There are no real data demonstrating the number of people who use this stretch of Beach Dr. when it is closed. Absent any such data, the characterization of the “popularity” of this closure is misleading. If such data exist, it was not provided (even in redacted form) in response to multiple MPIA requests for this information.

- Montgomery Parks does not use any statistical algorithms to normalize the data that it collects on pedestrian usage when Beach Dr. is closed. For example, Montgomery Parks does not take into account the volume of people who follow Beach to the end of the closed portion (e.g., at Knowles Ave., etc.) and then turn around and pass the counting stick again. Rather, it appears that these people are counted twice.

Moreover, when taking into account the other counter at the Knowles Ave. intersection, when aggregate numbers are tallied, a single user could be counted as many as four times per use. See “Total Counts” in **Image 7** below. Montgomery Parks has consistently been touting these aggregate raw counts which artificially inflate the volumes of people using Beach Dr. As a result, representing that in excess of 1.5 million people have taken advantage of the Open Parkways on Beach Dr. is false and materially misleading. If a data normalization equation or algorithm is used, it was not provided (even in redacted form) in response to our MPIA requests for this information.

Based on the forgoing, the volume of people using Beach Drive on weekends is grossly exaggerated. The image below demonstrates how Montgomery Parks is presenting the data that it collects. The chart below presents the counts collected on January 21, 2023. The number at the top characterized as “Total Counts” actually aggregates the counts taken at both Wildwood Ave. and Knowles Ave. There also are no disclaimers are qualifying language regarding the double and quadruple counting of actual users. This shortcoming was finally acknowledged by a representative of Montgomery Parks on a call with representatives of the Kenwood Neighborhood Association on February 15, 2023.



**Image 7:** Parks Counts at Beach Dr. and Wildwood Ave., January 21, 2023

The image above shows a gross total of 628 “counts” taken at Beach Dr. and Wildwood Rd. on Saturday January 21, 2023 – one of the days included in the most recent MCDOT study during which traffic was counted on Culver Street in the BRCH neighborhood. Even if no reduction is taken into account for people being double counted at this stick, this number is still significantly less than the 788 cars funneled to Culver Street. Taking into account that most people on Beach Dr. are being counted twice, the disproportionate number of cut-through cars redirected to Culver St. compared to the small number of people actually using Beach Dr. is staggering.

The images below also show segments of Beach Dr. on two random Saturdays in 2022 and 2023.



**Image 8:** Empty section of Beach Dr., weekend of February 25-26, 2023



**Image 9:** Empty section of Beach Dr., weekend of November 5-6, 2022. Note the runners still using the footpath.

It should also be noted that popularity should not be used as a metric to support what are intended to be safety oriented programs. Popularity is not one of the goals of Vision Zero or the Pedestrian Master Plan. Indeed, the word popular only appears once in the Pedestrian Master Plan – and it is the characterization of Beach Drive as being one of the most popular trails in the county. Assuming there are even data supporting the statement, it most certainly is because there is already a pedestrian pathway there. The only other interpretation would be that it is popular for commuters driving to the Beltway, which clearly demonstrates why it’s closure forces cars onto Culver Street. Moreover, as noted above, there are no data demonstrating, or even suggesting, that the existing pedestrian pathway parallel to Beach Drive is somehow overcrowded or insufficient to meet the goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

In sum, we remain concerned by the reliance upon raw data to justify the “popularity” of the Open Parkways and its extrapolation to a section of a section of Beach Drive where Parks has no data.

### **The Impact of Open Parkways Has Exacerbated an Already Problematic Traffic Issue in BRCH**

The BRCH Citizens Association was formed in 1976 to address, among other things, traffic safety concerns in our neighborhood. Although some degree of cut through traffic is expected on any residential street, the traffic issues in BRCH increased exponentially in 2012 when Walter Reed was moved the NIH Bethesda campus. This move alone was projected to result in: (i) 3,600 new employees; (ii) an increase to the base’s total workforce of 44%, increasing the volume to 11,686

people; (iii) patient visits doubling to an annual 1 million, with most expected to arrive by car. *Source, Washington Post, Aug. 6, 2012.*

Based on a review of traffic planning documentation related to the Walter Reed move, significant effort was placed to ensure that the local area could accommodate this increased volume of traffic. Roads, ramps and intersections were widened and pedestrian access was enhanced on the east side of campus on Jones Bridge Road. The Jones Bridge Road intersection at Connecticut Ave. was envisioned to be the primary route for commuters and employees to gain access to the Beltway. As a result, the majority of traffic mitigation efforts were placed there. Unfortunately, little to no attention was paid to the “back-way” to obtain access to the Capital Beltway. This pathway simply has commuters traveling on the other side of campus via Cedar Lane and then either using Beach Drive or cutting through BRCH to access Connecticut Ave. at the beltway intersection. Little to no attention was made to the Cedar Lane side and resulting traffic flow there – particularly when the Jones Bridge and Connecticut Ave. intersection is backed-up. The increased use of navigation apps such as Waze and GoogleMaps since 2012 has only served to direct higher volumes of non-local traffic into the BRCH neighborhood.

Until April of 2020, Beach Dr. served as the primary access-way to reach the Beltway for commuters traveling between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave. With Walter Reed and Bethesda Naval operating shifts 7 days a week, closing Beach Dr., if even just on weekends let alone permanently, would continue to funnel an already unsafe volume of cut-through traffic into the BRCH neighborhood forcing Culver Street to serve as the primary access thoroughway to/from Connecticut Ave. and the Beltway. Simply put, the existing weekend closure of Beach Dr. has eliminated and would continue to eliminate the primary roadway used to access the Beltway, thereby forcing traffic into the BRCH neighborhood.

### **The Open Parkways Program Has a Disproportionate Impact on the BRCH Neighborhood**

The impact of the Open Parkways also has had a disproportionately adverse impact to residents in the BRCH neighborhood as compared to the other neighborhoods affected by the closure of park roads by Montgomery Parks. For example, the road that parallels Sligo Creek Pkwy (which also is closed under Open Parkways), Tenbrook Dr., has sidewalks, a wider road with a double yellow divider line, and even parking lanes on both sides of the road. Culver Street has none of those. An even greater disparity exists when BRCH is compared to the neighborhood directly across Connecticut Ave. Rock Creek Hills is not impacted at all as the portion of Beach Dr. that runs adjacent to that neighborhood remains open. Moreover, Montgomery Parks placed a “No Turn on Weekends” sign placed for that stretch of Beach from Connecticut Ave. creating an even greater disparity between Rock Creek Hills (Director Riley’s neighborhood) and BRCH. Residents of BRCH have asked for the rationale supporting why a contiguous stretch of Beach Dr. in South Kensington remains open while the stretch next to BRCH is closed. To date, despite being asked directly, and as part of our MPIA requests, we have not received any justification.

### **The Comparison of Open Parkways to JFK Blvd. in San Francisco (Section B-4g of the Pedestrian Master Plan) Is Misguided**

Section B4g of the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan refers to the closure of JFK Drive through Golden Gate Park as a precedent for closure of Beach Drive. BRCH is gravely concerned with the use of this precedent as the JFK closure is a permanent, 7 day a week closure.<sup>10</sup> A similar such closure on Beach Dr. would have a significant and deleterious impact on BRCH, as is described throughout this comment.

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<sup>10</sup> See [JFK Promenade | San Francisco Recreation and Parks, CA \(sfrecpark.org\)](https://www.sfrecpark.org/) (last visited March 19, 2023).

BRCH also questions such a comparison as the demographics are clearly distinguishable from one another. For example, JFK Drive is located in an urban area and does not serve as a throughway to gain access to an interstate. By way of comparison, Beach Drive is located in a residential area and provides access for commuters to and from a major interstate (I-495). Moreover, the issues regarding redirected traffic are entirely different. For example, as noted above, traffic from Beach Dr. is being funneled to a residential street that (i) does not have sidewalks; (ii) is populated with single family homes; (iii) has no designated parking lanes for residents, thereby making it a single lane road in parts; and (iv) has several blind spots due to curves and hills. On the other hand, the roads that parallel JFK Dr. in San Francisco (Lincoln Way and Fulton Street) have: (i) four lanes each with concrete island dividers separating them; (ii) sidewalks on both sides of the street; (iii) designated parking lanes on both sides of the street; and (iv) apartments buildings and commercial dwellings on one side only as the park is on the other side of the street.

As a result, the only comparison that can be made between the closure of JFK Blvd. and the proposed closure of Beach Dr. is that both were closed during COVID. This is clearly not a one-to-one comparison as the location and demographics are entirely different.

### **Montgomery Parks Has Not Considered Reasonable Alternatives**

There are other very obvious and very reasonable alternatives to meet the goals of Open Parkways while not creating a dangerous situation for county residents. Ensuring the safety of the residents of BRCH and providing a path for cyclists on Beach Dr. do not need to be mutually exclusive. For example:

*Establishing Designated Bike Lanes on Beach Dr.:* Establishing designated bike lanes on Beach Dr. between Connecticut Ave. and Cedar Lane would be a win-win. Bike lanes with barriers would allow Beach Dr. to remain open while providing safe bike access 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. There also is plenty of space to pave such a bike lane either off of Beach Dr, itself, or as a new lane to the existing pedestrian foot path.

It should be noted that this exact concept was addressed in the MNCPP Countywide Park Trails Plan in September of 2008. That plan described the planning processes and outlined a plan for the development of Countywide Park Trails in Montgomery County. It contained materials on natural and hard surface trail corridors and planning, needs assessments and implementation strategies. Among other things, the plan included a recommendation to “Provide shoulders along Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park and Sligo Creek Parkway to accommodate advanced cyclists.” Ironically, both of these stretches of road do not presently have designated bike lanes and instead are subject to weekend closures as a result of the Open Parkways program.

Such a measure also is consistent with the goals of Vision Zero, the county’s current Vision Zero implementation plans as well as the Pedestrian Master Plan. Moreover, if Parks is looking for something that truly would be popular, this would certainly be it – BRCH residents and Beach Drive users/cyclists alike would most certainly support this endeavor in the name of pedestrian/bicycle safety.

If Beach Drive is to remain closed on weekends, more has to be done to prevent traffic from using Culver Street as a cut-through and to ensure the safety of the BRCH neighborhood which is disproportionately impacted.

*Identification of Detour and Placement of Detour Signs:* As noted above, the “Alternate Route” signs that have been placed are not adequate and have not been remotely successful in curtailing the volume of cut through traffic. The designation of a defined “Detour” rather than deferring to drivers to seek an alternate route should have been considered long before now. The alternate route that is

being sought is through the BRCH neighborhood rather than to Saul Road, which is the Primary Residential road that is designated in the County Master Plan to connect Connecticut Ave. and Cedar Lane. Saul Road also contains traffic calming measures, including speed humps and painted lane divides. It also has a sidewalk.

Moreover, the detour signs should be placed at meaningful intersections and locations. For example, detour signs should be placed at the entrances to Beach Dr. and at the entrances to the BRCH neighborhood (Culver St. and Connecticut Ave.; Delmont Lane and Cedar Lane) to direct traffic to the designated detour. In fact, this is what MCDOT recommended as part of its revised detour recommendations it submitted to Montgomery Parks on January 3, 2023. To date, the placement of the “Alt. Route” signs make no sense as they cannot be seen or otherwise are currently placed AFTER the entrances to the BRCH neighborhood.

*Placement of “No Through Traffic” signs:* As part of or in addition to the Detour signs contemplated above, the county also should place “No Through Traffic to Connecticut Ave.” and “No Through Traffic to Cedar Lane” signs at the entrances to the BRCH neighborhood (Delmont Lane and Cedar Lane; Culver St. and Connecticut Ave. respectively). Again, this is what MCDOT recommended as part of its revised detour recommendations it submitted to Montgomery Parks on January 3, 2023. At a minimum, Montgomery Parks should be required to follow the recommendations of the County’s traffic management experts and install the recommended barriers and “no through traffic” signage. MCDOT should have the authority, or be allocated the resources to place these signs. Having them tied to decision-makers at Montgomery Parks defies logic and reason.

As part of this proposal, barricades also could be placed at the entrances to the BRCH neighborhood. Barricades were placed for a two weekends in 2021 and were effective.

*Closure of Delmont Lane on Weekends:* As part of or in addition to the proposals identified above, another option that has not been contemplated is the closure of Delmont Lane on weekends. Delmont Lane serves as the entrance point to the BRCH neighborhood from Cedar Lane. If this road is closed concurrently with weekend closures of Beach Dr., there would be no access between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave. Such a closure also should be accompanied with “No Through Traffic” signs.

*Changes to GPS Algorithms:* An added advantage of placing more meaningful and permanent signs or taking the actions described above is the ability to petition GPS App vendors to change their algorithms. In discussions with a representative from the Town of Kensington, we understand that there is precedent for Waze and GoogleMaps changing their GPS algorithms to re-direct traffic away from a residential neighborhood so long as there is adequate signage also directing traffic away from the neighborhood. As with each of the alternative proposals described above, it is disappointing that this issue has not been contemplated or even discussed with the BRCH neighborhood.

### **Inclusion of Permanent Closures of Beach Drive in the Pedestrian Master Plan Likely Violates the Capper Crampton Act**

As the subject portion of Beach Drive was acquired by the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission with federal funding appropriated pursuant to the Capper-Crampton Act of 1930. 46 Stat. 482, Montgomery Parks is required to follow certain administrative procedures, or seek approval of an exemption therefrom. This law governs programs that impact Park lands and requires program sponsors, such as Montgomery Parks, to follow an administrative procedure that includes (i) a Pre-Submission Briefing; (ii) Concept Review; (iii) Preliminary Review; (iv) Final Review; and (v) a public hearing. It does not appear that Montgomery Parks has initiated this process as information regarding compliance with the Capper-Crampton Act with respect to the closure of Beach Dr. has not been disclosed to the public or provided to BRCH despite numerous

requests and MPIO submissions seeking such information. Pushing Beach Drive closures through as part of the Pedestrian Master Plan is not only forcing a square peg into a round hole, it also may appear to be a means to usurp compliance with the Capper-Cramton Act.

Although there are a number of exceptions in the Capper-Cramton Act that would allow Montgomery Parks to deviate from this process, Montgomery Parks must receive confirmation from the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) during a Pre-Submission Briefing that the project falls under one of the exceptions. It is unclear whether the Open Parkways, or this portion of the Pedestrian Master Plan, was submitted to the federal NCPC for any such review or concurrence that it falls under an exception. Numerous requests for this information, including MPIO requests, have gone ignored – which again shows Montgomery Parks’ lack of transparency and another result of the conflicts of interest discussed above.

Nonetheless, permanently closing Beach Dr. does not represent a change that is consistent with a public park use. In particular, the section of the Pedestrian Master Plan under which the Beach Drive closure is placed is focused on “building more walkable places.” In particular, “creating and enhancing places where people can easily, quickly, and directly access many destinations on foot or using a mobility device .... Good land-use planning and site design result in shorter and more rewarding trips, making walking a preferred way to travel.” As a safe pedestrian sidewalk and a pedestrian access pathway already exists, it is unclear how closure of Beach Drive accomplishes this goal. Due to its lack of data, in particular the lack of data regarding use of Beach Dr. between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave., Montgomery Parks does not offer one scintilla of support for why the existing pathway does not already meet this goal of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Moreover, Parks has not provided any residents affected by the Open Parkways - in a public hearing or otherwise - any basis indicating why the benefits of closing Beach Drive outweigh the risks associated with redirecting thousands of cars onto a narrow residential street that does not have sidewalks. All Parks has said is that it is popular – a characterization that lacks any meaningful data to support the closure between Cedar Lane and Connecticut Ave. As noted above, popularity should not outweigh safety for a program intended to improve pedestrian safety.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing, the BRCH Citizens Association hereby urges the Montgomery County Planning Board to delay any votes or decisions on the Pedestrian Master Plan until (i) additional research and diligence is performed regarding the deleterious impacts of closing Beach Drive on weekends and holidays in light of these comments; (ii) the reasonable alternatives identified above are properly assessed; (iii) the detour recommendations and other Beach Drive closure input from MCDOT provided to and considered by the Planning Board and (iv) there is a full time Planning Board and Planning Board Chairperson appointed in June 2023. Due to the transitory status of the Board, decisions which will impact the county for years to come should not be made until all five seats are filled with permanent Board Members and a duly appointed chair.

Residential streets were not designed nor intended to serve as a major through-way for non-local traffic. A simple review of the county’s Master Plans clearly shows this. The unintended consequences of the weekend and holiday closures as part of the Open Parkways program has put the residents of the BRCH neighborhood at risk and more needs to be researched and implemented before making any decision to make it permanent. The program does not meet its intended purpose of expanding the county’s pedestrian footprint due to the presence of an existing footpath that was built for this purpose almost 50 years ago. The program also undermines several of the tenets of the county’s Vision Zero program. Due to the lack of research performed, this is an issue that requires more fulsome data, consideration of better alternatives and impact assessments as well as the involvement and cooperation of government agencies working together at all levels to find a

commonsense solution that meets the goals of the county and its residents. Rash decisions based on self-serving popularity and without sufficient data or the input of those impacted will have consequences. So far, only cars and property have been damaged. It shouldn't have to take a tragedy for a commonsense solution to be implemented, let alone considered.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Submitted by:

Michael S. Heyl, Esq.  
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Kensington, MD, 20895

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9635 Culver Street  
Kensington, MD, 20895



# Exhibit 1

MCDOT CULVER STREET TRAFFIC STUDY DATA SUMMARY					
DAY	DATE	NB VOLUME	SB VOLUME	TOTAL VOLUME	SIGNIFICANT DATA POINTS
MON	1/23/23	135	148	283	Avg. volume 15 days M-TH (non-holiday) = <b>350 vehicles per day</b>  46% less volume w/Beach open on Friday Avg. volume for 4 Saturdays = <b>692 vehicles per day (DOUBLE M-TH volume)</b>
TUE	1/24/23	154	179	333	
WED	1/18/23	165	209	374	
THUR	1/19/23	205	189	394	
FRI	1/20/23	190	247	437	
SAT	1/21/23	401	365	766	
SUN	1/22/23	263	232	495	
MON	3/15/22	129	145	274	Avg. volume 8 Saturdays/Sundays = <b>591 vehicles (1.7x M-TH volume)</b>
TUE	3/16/22	132	162	294	
WED	3/17/22	120	149	269	
THUR	3/18/22	116	142	258	
FRI	3/19/22	368	584	952	
SAT	3/20/22	351	336	687	
SUN	3/21/22	253	206	459	
MON	1/11/21	167	209	376	
TUE	1/5/21	165	190	355	
WED	1/6/21	201	206	407	
THUR	1/7/21	190	207	397	
FRI	1/8/21	320	538	852	
SAT	1/9/21	331	325	656	
SUN	1/10/21	268	234	502	
MON	10/12/20	135	189	324	Columbus Day, so day not included in M-TH
TUE	10/13/20	168	208	376	
WED	10/7/20	214	242	456	
THUR	10/8/20	176	224	400	
FRI	10/9/20	434	627	1061	
SAT	10/10/20	314	335	659	
SUN	10/11/20	261	244	505	

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
 Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Culver Street Near 9629 Culver Street					
Date	85% Speed (MPH)		Volume		Total Volume
	NB	SB	NB	SB	
1/18/2023	27	27	165	209	374
1/19/2023	27	29	205	189	394
1/20/2023	25	27	190	247	437
1/21/2023	26	28	401	365	766
1/22/2023	26	28	263	232	495
1/23/2023	26	28	135	148	283
1/24/2023	27	29	154	179	333



Location: Culver Street Near 9629  
Count Date: 03-13-2021 -- 03-19-2021  
Request No: 1235



MCV Associates, Inc.  
4605-C Pinecrest Office Park Drive  
Alexandria VA 22312-1442



**SUMMARY SHEET - SPEED**

POSTED SPEED LIMIT:

DAILY	NB								SB							
	13-Mar-21	14-Mar-21	15-Mar-21	16-Mar-21	17-Mar-21	18-Mar-21	19-Mar-21	13-Mar-21	14-Mar-21	15-Mar-21	16-Mar-21	17-Mar-21	18-Mar-21	19-Mar-21		
	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		
85th	28 MPH	28 MPH	27 MPH	26 MPH	27 MPH	25 MPH	26 MPH	28 MPH	28 MPH	27 MPH	26 MPH	27 MPH	27 MPH	28 MPH		
Mean Speed	23 MPH	24 MPH	22 MPH	21 MPH	23 MPH	20 MPH	22 MPH	24 MPH	24 MPH	22 MPH	22 MPH	23 MPH	23 MPH	24 MPH		
10 MPH Pace	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	21-30 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	16-25 MPH	21-30 MPH	17-26 MPH	21-30 MPH		
AM Peak Hour	11:00 AM	9:00 AM	6:00 AM	10:00 AM	7:00 AM	8:00 AM	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	6:00 AM	7:00 AM	10:00 AM	9:00 AM	11:00 AM		
85th	27	28	29	28	24	24	27	29	24	24	24	27	27	31		
PM Peak Hour	1:00 PM	12:00 PM	4:00 PM	3:00 PM	1:00 PM	4:00 PM	2:00 PM	5:00 PM	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	2:00 PM	4:00 PM	4:00 PM		
85th	26	28	24	23	28	24	27	26	29	27	24	28	28	29		

**SUMMARY SHEET - CLASS**

VEHICLE CLASS TYPE	NB (Volume)								SB (Volume)							
	13-Mar-21	14-Mar-21	15-Mar-21	16-Mar-21	17-Mar-21	18-Mar-21	19-Mar-21	13-Mar-21	14-Mar-21	15-Mar-21	16-Mar-21	17-Mar-21	18-Mar-21	19-Mar-21		
	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday		
Motorbikes	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1		
Auto / P.U.	338	248	118	123	109	106	354	325	202	132	152	142	134	565		
Buses	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	3	0	0	1		
Trucks	13	5	8	7	10	8	13	11	4	10	7	7	7	17		
TOTAL	351	253	129	132	120	116	368	336	206	145	162	149	142	584		
	NB (Percentage)								SB (Percentage)							
Motorbikes	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	0.2%		
Auto / P.U.	96.3%	98.0%	91.5%	93.2%	90.8%	91.4%	96.2%	96.7%	98.1%	91.0%	93.8%	95.3%	94.4%	96.7%		
Buses	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.8%	0.9%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	2.1%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%		
Trucks	3.7%	2.0%	6.2%	5.3%	8.3%	6.9%	3.5%	3.3%	1.9%	6.9%	4.3%	4.7%	4.9%	2.9%		



Location: Culver Street @ 9709  
Count Date: 01-05-2021 -- 01-11-2021  
Request No: DRF-1199



MCV Associates, Inc.  
4605-C Pinecrest Office Park Drive  
Alexandria VA 22312-1442

**SUMMARY SHEET - SPEED**

POSTED SPEED LIMIT:

DAILY	NB							SB						
	05-Jan-21	06-Jan-21	07-Jan-21	08-Jan-21	09-Jan-21	10-Jan-21	11-Jan-21	05-Jan-21	06-Jan-21	07-Jan-21	08-Jan-21	09-Jan-21	10-Jan-21	11-Jan-21
	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
85th	27 MPH	26 MPH	27 MPH	26 MPH	26 MPH	27 MPH	26 MPH	28 MPH	28 MPH	29 MPH	29 MPH	28 MPH	29 MPH	28 MPH
Mean Speed	21 MPH	20 MPH	22 MPH	22 MPH	22 MPH	21 MPH	20 MPH	23 MPH	22 MPH	24 MPH	24 MPH	23 MPH	24 MPH	23 MPH
10 MPH Pace	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH
AM Peak Hour	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	10:00 AM	10:00 AM
85th	19	28	25	25	24	28	27	28	24	28	31	24	29	28
PM Peak Hour	2:00 PM	5:00 PM	12:00 PM	5:00 PM	2:00 PM	1:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	6:00 PM	2:00 PM	1:00 PM	3:00 PM
85th	28	27	30	24	27	26	24	26	33	30	28	29	29	28

**SUMMARY SHEET - CLASS**

VEHICLE CLASS TYPE	NB (Volume)							SB (Volume)						
	05-Jan-21	06-Jan-21	07-Jan-21	08-Jan-21	09-Jan-21	10-Jan-21	11-Jan-21	05-Jan-21	06-Jan-21	07-Jan-21	08-Jan-21	09-Jan-21	10-Jan-21	11-Jan-21
	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Motorbikes	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	3	1	1	1
Auto / P.U.	159	199	187	314	327	266	165	182	200	205	519	319	232	204
Buses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Trucks	6	2	2	5	3	2	2	5	6	1	10	5	1	4
TOTAL	165	201	190	320	331	268	167	190	206	207	532	325	234	209
	NB (Percentage)							SB (Percentage)						
Motorbikes	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.4%	0.5%
Auto / P.U.	96.4%	99.0%	98.4%	98.1%	98.8%	99.3%	98.8%	95.8%	97.1%	99.0%	97.6%	98.2%	99.1%	97.6%
Buses	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Trucks	3.6%	1.0%	1.1%	1.6%	0.9%	0.7%	1.2%	2.6%	2.9%	0.5%	1.9%	1.5%	0.4%	1.9%



Location: Culver Street  
Count Date: 10-07-2020 -- 10-13-2020  
Request No: DRF-1161



MCV Associates, Inc.  
4605-C Pinecrest Office Park Drive  
Alexandria VA 22312-1442

**SUMMARY SHEET - SPEED**

POSTED SPEED LIMIT:

DAILY	NB								SB							
	07-Oct-20	08-Oct-20	09-Oct-20	10-Oct-20	11-Oct-20	12-Oct-20	13-Oct-20	07-Oct-20	08-Oct-20	09-Oct-20	10-Oct-20	11-Oct-20	12-Oct-20	13-Oct-20		
	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday		
85th	26 MPH	25 MPH	28 MPH	28 MPH	28 MPH	27 MPH	26 MPH	26 MPH	26 MPH	28 MPH	26 MPH	27 MPH	27 MPH	25 MPH		
Mean Speed	20 MPH	20 MPH	22 MPH	23 MPH	22 MPH	22 MPH	20 MPH	21 MPH	20 MPH	23 MPH	22 MPH	22 MPH	22 MPH	21 MPH		
10 MPH Pace	20-29 MPH	16-25 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	21-30 MPH	16-25 MPH	16-25 MPH	21-30 MPH	16-25 MPH	21-30 MPH	19-28 MPH	16-25 MPH		
AM Peak Hour	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	9:00 AM	8:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	11:00 AM	9:00 AM	11:00 AM	9:00 AM		
85th	25	25	30	28	25	28	23	25	25	27	28	27	28	23		
PM Peak Hour	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	12:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM	4:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	3:00 PM	5:00 PM		
85th	27	24	24	26	29	27	27	26	27	28	28	29	24	26		

**SUMMARY SHEET - CLASS**

VEHICLE CLASS TYPE	NB (Volume)								SB (Volume)							
	07-Oct-20	08-Oct-20	09-Oct-20	10-Oct-20	11-Oct-20	12-Oct-20	13-Oct-20	07-Oct-20	08-Oct-20	09-Oct-20	10-Oct-20	11-Oct-20	12-Oct-20	13-Oct-20		
	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday		
Motorbikes	1	4	2	1	1	2	3	3	2	2	1	4	1	1		
Auto / P.U.	210	170	424	312	260	133	159	236	218	616	331	237	184	200		
Buses	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0		
Trucks	2	2	8	1	0	0	6	3	4	8	3	3	4	7		
TOTAL	214	176	434	314	261	135	168	242	224	627	335	244	189	208		
	NB (Percentage)								SB (Percentage)							
Motorbikes	0.5%	2.3%	0.5%	0.3%	0.4%	1.5%	1.8%	1.2%	0.9%	0.3%	0.3%	1.6%	0.5%	0.5%		
Auto / P.U.	98.1%	96.6%	97.7%	99.4%	99.6%	98.5%	94.6%	97.5%	97.3%	98.2%	98.8%	97.1%	97.4%	96.2%		
Buses	0.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%		
Trucks	0.9%	1.1%	1.8%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	1.2%	1.8%	1.3%	0.9%	1.2%	2.1%	3.4%		

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [David Engel](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Glazier, Eli](#); [Wayne](#); [Aviv, Pazit](#)  
**Subject:** Pedestrian Master Plan: Support by Montgomery County Commission on Aging  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 10:58:49 AM  
**Attachments:** [CoA Pedestrian Master Plan Support Letter 2023.pdf](#)

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

To: Chair Planning Department

Please see the CoA letter of Support for the Pedestrian Master Plan with recommendations regarding the Older Adult Population.

The highlight of our letter is that while the CoA supports the goals, recommendations, and policy objectives of the Master Plan, we do feel that it needs to recognize the growing older adult demographic in the County more explicitly and the areas where they tend to live and be active, such as apartment complexes, parks, shopping areas, and recreational centers. The plan, rightly so, provides recommendations for areas where school and playgrounds are located, but seems to fall short in recognizing that pedestrian improvements also need to be a focus for areas where older adults live and are active. Projects like curb cuts, better sidewalk / intersection lighting, and longer signal timing to cross busy intersections are important in areas where older adults are active.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this input.

David Engel  
Chair  
Montgomery County Commission on Aging  
cell: 240-620-4783  
email: [david@davidengelrealty.com](mailto:david@davidengelrealty.com)  
pers. email: [dbe8027@gmail.com](mailto:dbe8027@gmail.com)  
[Watch 50+ in Montgomery County](#)



## COMMISSION ON AGING

March 20, 2023

To: Chair, Montgomery County Planning Department

From: David Engel, Chair  
Montgomery County Commission on Aging

Subject: Support for Pedestrian Master Plan

The Montgomery County Commission on Aging (CoA) appreciates this opportunity to offer its support for the new Pedestrian Master Plan. The CoA is authorized by the Older Americans Act and was established by Montgomery County in 1974 to advise County government on the needs, interests, and issues of older adult residents, and to advocate on their behalf at the local, state, and national levels. We offer this input for your consideration at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> public hearing.

The CoA commends the Montgomery County Planning Department for taking the important initiative to prepare such a comprehensive, thoughtful, and unique long-term plan for pedestrian safety improvements. We have followed the development of the master plan over the last two years. Mr. Eli Glazier from your Department spoke to our Commission twice, in September 2021 and again in October 2022. He did a great job presenting the master plan and responding to our questions. The Commissioners learned a lot from his presentations.

While overall we support the goals, recommendations, and policy objectives of the Master Plan, we do feel that it needs to recognize the growing older adult demographic in the County more explicitly and the areas where they tend to live and be active, such as apartment complexes, parks, shopping areas, and recreational centers. The plan, rightly so, provides recommendations for areas where school and playgrounds are located, but seems to fall short in recognizing that pedestrian improvements also need to be a focus for areas where older adults live and are active. Projects like curb cuts, better sidewalk / intersection lighting, and longer signal timing to cross busy intersections are important in areas where older adults are active.

Data from the County's Vision Zero initiative, that has been also presented to the CoA, indicates that over 50 percent of the total pedestrian injuries and fatalities, per 100,000 population, are people over 50 + years old. We urge the Planning Board to recognize pedestrian safety needs of older adults as part of the policy and recommendations sections of the Master Plan, before it is approved.

We hope this input will help as you work to approve the Pedestrian Master Plan. We look forward to working with County staff and the County Council to ensure that the goals and recommendations of this plan are realized going forward.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide this input.

Sincerely,

*David Engel*

David Engel, Chair

**Department of Health and Human Services**



Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

**From:** [Fonner Family](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#); [Glazier, Eli](#); [Fonner Family](#)  
**Cc:** [Katharine Dellenoci](#); [Eleni Athanasakis](#); [Boyer Household](#); [rbutrum@verizon.net](#); [Uchoi913@gmail.com](#); [Sandy and Tom Dean](#); [Rubi Defensor](#); [rdefensor@nih.gov](#); [JOHN DILLON](#); [Jim Doherty](#); [Patti Doherty](#); [deutchsoldat46@gmail.com](#); [Harmison, George \(NIH/NINDS\) \[E\]](#); [Henjum Household](#); [Norbeck Woods Homeowners Association](#); [Karen Lanni](#); [fionata@msn.com](#); [Jackson, John Household](#); [mar21jackson@gmail.com](#); [Beverly Jackson](#); [Daniel Johnson](#); [Mbulaiteye Household](#); [Dion Trahan](#); [Kacornell9@gmail.com](#); [Glen Muir](#); [Mesfin Household](#); [Douglas Noll](#); [Kirti Patel](#); [Fred Paul](#); [msp525@gmail.com](#); [WENDALLOULSEN@GMAIL.COM](#); [CJPOULSEN@AOL.COM](#); [Natalie S.](#); [dasfpe1@gmail.com](#); [Judy Sullivan](#); [Doug Troian](#); [Rudy Watson](#); [aremita@aol.com](#); [Jesse Fonner](#)  
**Subject:** Concerns re: lack of Pedestrian Sidewalks in the Master Plan  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:03:29 AM

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

Greetings!

I am unable to attend the public hearing but would like to voice my concerns regarding what seems to be a lack of Pedestrian Sidewalks in the Master Plan on the very busy Norbeck Road/Route 28. While the Pedestrian Master Plan does not make specific sidewalk recommendations for any roadway in Montgomery County, it does make recommendations that should lead to more sidewalks being constructed countywide.

The Master Plan needs to address the **lack of sidewalks on Norbeck Road** (Route 28) between Wintergate (at the the bridge over the ICC) and Twin Valley Court on one side of Norbeck and Laughlin Lane on the other? If any one tries to walk to the Norbeck Animal Clinic for a vet appointment, which is just two blocks from my home, or if the kids living in my neighborhood want to walk to the East Local Norbeck Park across from Bailey's Lane, we put our lives in peril! Not everyone has a car or can drive so walking is often not a choice but a necessity and often involves walking in the busy road!

There is a hodgepodge of pedestrian paths from Bailey's Lane North towards Georgia Ave but nothing from Baileys Lane East on Norbeck. There is a short bit of sidewalk on the bridge (at Norbeck and Wintergate) but nothing after it going East towards Layhill Road.

From what I understand it looks like Norbeck Road (Route 28) is not going to be addressed, is that correct? What a shame since there is NO pedestrian sidewalk or walkway of any kind basically from Georgia Avenue East to Layhill Road. That's quite a long stretch which cars and trucks whiz down much faster than the posted 40 mile an hour speed limit!

I have lived here over 33 years and Norbeck Road is still pretty much the same in terms of lack of pedestrian safety (except for the traffic light at Wintergate that a neighbor Barbara Dillon and I were instrumental in getting the County to install after several years of terrible car accidents which we documented). The only improvements in terms of sidewalks that have been made are by private companies building condos etc. This lack of support for the safety of our residents in the Pedestrian Master plan is shameful!

Thank you for adding my voice to this discussion.  
Davida Fonner  
2402 Twin Valley Lane,

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

Silver Spring, MD 20906  
[fonnerfam@gmail.com](mailto:fonnerfam@gmail.com)  
301-455-3112

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Christine Scott](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Purple Line NOW Testimony  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:09:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [Planning Board Testimony.pdf](#)

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

Hello,

Please accept written testimony (attached) from Purple Line NOW for tomorrow, March 23, Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing. Please let me know if there is anything else you might need.

Thank you,

**Christine Scott**

=====  
Christine Scott | Executive Director | Purple Line NOW  
☎:: 301.5000.PLN (1-301-500-0756) or (c) 865.300-7959  
🌐:: [cscott@purplelinenow.com](mailto:cscott@purplelinenow.com) • [www.purplelinenow.com](http://www.purplelinenow.com)



DATE: March 23, 2023  
TO: Montgomery County Planning Board  
FROM: Purple Line NOW Board of Directors  
RE: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing

Purple Line NOW advocates for the completion of the light rail line from New Carrollton to Bethesda and the Capital Crescent Trail from Bethesda into Silver Spring, with connections to the other bicycle/pedestrian trails along its route. Along with the Purple Line Corridor Coalition, we are also strong supporters of having the Purple Line light rail stations directly accessible by pedestrians, bicycles and other mobility aids into the neighboring communities and adjacent bus and Metro network stops to facilitate an integrated transportation system that reduces the need for automobiles and furthers the equity goals of the County.

**We appreciate the staff's recognition that the Purple Line is a major component of our future transit network and its inclusion in this pedestrian Master Plan when evaluating the existing pedestrian conditions and in the recommendations, implementation, and monitoring goals.** Since the current State-administered Purple Line contract only covers a small radius around the stations, Purple Line NOW strongly recommends the inclusion of all the suggested implementation goals that connect the transit locations with pedestrian and rolling connections into the adjoining business and residential communities. Also, we support the equity goals of having this light rail system, along with all other transit options, accessible to everyone along their length and from access points crossing its stations.

The following objectives are of special interest to us and the future riders of the Purple Line:

- Objective 1.4 expects 70% of the riders will walk to MDOT Purple Line stations. This is a crucial point since there are no parking spaces available at the non-Metro community stations. We want to make sure the surrounding communities have good connections to their sidewalk networks beyond the MDOT contract sidewalks. [page 11 of document 16 on website]
- Objective 2.4 anticipates increasing the comfort level for pedestrians to access Purple Line stations from 79 to 90-95%. We applaud this goal of making sure those within a walkshed distance of one mile have good access. [page 15 of document 20 on website, Purple Line walkshed distance specifics on pages 44-45/49-50]



Post Office Box 7074  
Silver Spring, MD 20907

(301) 500-0756  
contact@purplelinenow.com  
www.purplelinenow.com

- Objective 4.3 hopes to decrease the difference between the access comfort along pathways to the MDOT Purple Line stations, currently rated at 73% from Equity Focus Areas and 81% from non-EFAs. This 8% differential is considerably worse for EFAs on the Purple Line than the pathway comfort to stations on the other transit lines reviewed, which are higher for EFAs than for non-EFAs: WMATA Red Line (85% EFA to 88% non-EFA) and MARC Brunswick Line (83% EFA to 88% non-EFA). [pages 18/23 and 58/63]

Purple Line NOW strongly supports the two following recommendations that address shortcomings in existing conditions:

- 1) Design, Policy and Programming systemic changes that identify, build, and maintain the **“pedestrian amenities** - better, faster, safer and more equitably.”
- 2) Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area Prioritization of bicycle and pedestrian capital **improvements** “in a data -driven way based on equity, comfortable access, safety and other metrics.”

It is our hope a major area for prioritizing improvements is where State and County investments are already being made to reach their highest potential. These recommendations should facilitate having new and improved connections to MTA Purple Line station areas from the surrounding communities in a timely manner to maximize the investment from its opening day. [Pages 60/65]

These include such key actions as changing Annual Sidewalk Program improvements from instigation by individual requests to using the limited resources to achieve the highest-priority connections that also improve equity. Local perspectives on how to build are to be sought, rather than permission to do a project. [Pages 63/68] Additionally, we strongly support the encouragement of nonmotor residential access to be as highly planned and funded as motor access, including pedestrian access always signalized at intersections with rail stations, community amenities, schools, and retail to allow pedestrian movement as easily as that of motor vehicles.

In conclusion, our major support is for recommendation B-7g:

Fund off-site pedestrian and bicycle access improvements to transit stations as part of the main capital project or through a parallel effort.

In order to have these accessibility options available from the opening day of the Purple Line, there is no time to waste! As a joint Maryland/Montgomery County project, the Purple Line pedestrian accommodations are a great place to start the cooperation that will be needed across jurisdictional and administrative boundaries to improve the pedestrian experience in our County, and hopefully, the State. We urge the adoption of this Master Plan and the implementation of its goals now!

From: [Goshen Association](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Pedestrian Master Plan Testimony  
Date: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:19:33 AM

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

Good evening:

Our neighborhood sits uniquely between two parks, The Milton Kauffman Park and the [Great Seneca Creek Stream Valley Park with the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail](#) on Wightman Road in Gaithersburg. Both parks are within walking distance of each other, yet none of the residents can do that due to a road that is not pedestrian friendly, narrow and lacks sidewalks.

There is actual parking at the Milton Kauffman Park, which is the only real parking between the two parks, and there is a sidewalk system from the Milton Kauffman Park which will take residents to bus stops and shopping in Montgomery Village.

We are requesting sidewalks from Milton Kauffman Park to [Great Seneca Stream Valley Park](#) so that the residents can walk to both parks. Also, there is a Senior Living complex with sidewalks from that development right at the corner of Warfield and Wightman Roads. If sidewalks were installed up Warfield to the back entrance of the [Kauffman Park](#), it would make crossing Wightman Road safer for those residents.

The [Montgomery Parks Trails Department](#) is in concurrence with this request and we have previously entered a request for these sidewalks.

Please give this serious consideration for the safety and betterment of our community,

Regards,  
The Greater Goshen Civic Association  
Kathleen Sentkowski 301-212-9896

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [jeff.karns@verizon.net](mailto:jeff.karns@verizon.net)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Calverton Comments Pedestrian Master Plan Hearing 3232023  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:23:55 AM  
**Attachments:** [Calverton Comments Pedestrian Master Plan Hearing 3232023.pdf](#)

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

Good morning,

Hope your day (hump day) is going well.

I have attached the Calverton Citizens Association Comments for the Pedestrian Master Plan Hearing on March 23, 2023.

Thank you,

Bernadine (Bernie) Karns, President  
Calverton Citizens Association  
3005 Gazebo Court  
Silver Spring, MD 20904  
301-572-8018 (H)  
301-538-5280 (CP)

*Calverton is bi-county community located in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties*

*Calverton Citizens Association*  
*P. O. Box 21*  
**Beltsville, Maryland 20704-0021**

March 21, 2023

Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

RE: Montgomery County's Pedestrian Master Plan Hearing March 23, 2023

The Calverton Citizens Association knows that the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan has been a long time in the making and has been developed from the results of many people doing their part(s). Thank you for your hard work.

Prioritizing the projects across the county is the only way to ensure that all the projects eventually get done over the span of time that is needed to complete the Pedestrian Master Plan. Prioritizing also helps with budgeting the amount of money required throughout the project time frame to ensure that the Pedestrian Master Plan gets completed. The monitoring part is important to ensure that the schedule is being kept and that the projects are getting done on time and in an equitable and fair process.

Calverton appreciates the Complete Street Design Guide. What is the point of improving roadways if the improvements don't give communities a nice, safe, accessible community? The East County already has many communities without sidewalks that are not walkable because too many vehicles parked on the roads, there is no place to go when a vehicle comes down the road. The East County already has bike lanes that go nowhere, just look at Calverton Boulevard. We already have bike lanes that are too narrow and have no protection nor separation from vehicles, just look at Broadbirch Drive. The East County already has missing sidewalks/paths that were not done when road improvements were done, just look at Briggs Chaney Road between Fairland Road and the ICC. The East County already has sidewalks/paths that get flooded during rainstorms and freeze in the winter because they dip down so that puddles form, just look at the sidewalk/path on Fairland Road from Galway to the Calverton Fairland Park and look at the sidewalk/path at Route 29 and Fairland Road. The sidewalk/path at Route 29 and Fairland Road is a very unsafe path that goes behind trees and tall brush to get to the light at Route 29. Unsafe not only for healthy people but terribly unsafe for people with people with disabilities.

It is going to be hard for all residents to wait for improvements to come to their community. Waiting is okay if projects are not getting bumped or pushed back even longer because some community is shouting and screaming at the County and then the County gives in and allows



the “squeaky wheel gets the oil/grease.” The East County of Montgomery County and the Calverton Citizens Association are tired of hearing that saying when it comes to building projects, road repairs, and other Montgomery County situations. We are tired of getting the shaft for many, many years. When it came to transferring MPU’s from Potomac, Chevy Chase, and Bethesda the MPU’s from those areas of the county were transferred to the East County. We are tired of being ignored when it comes to making the East County a nice, safe, accessible community for people to live and to get around like Potomac, Chevy Chase, and Bethesda. It is now our time to get the resources, projects and improvements that have been given to other parts of the County. We hope that this plan works equitably and strives for equity for all communities in Montgomery County. We hope the County sticks to the plan and works hard to make sure that money is available to keep the Pedestrian Master Plan on schedule.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony on the Pedestrian Master Plan.



Bernadine (Bernie) Karns, President  
Calverton Citizens Association  
3005 Gazebo Court  
Silver Spring, MD 20904  
301-572-8018 (H)  
301-538-5280 (CP)

*Calverton is a bi-county community located in Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties*

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [diana.huffman](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Sidewalk plan for Kenwood Park  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:51:16 AM  
**Attachments:** [sidewalks.docx](#)

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

Attached is our comments on this plan

Diana Huffman

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Diana Huffman and Kenneth Levine  
7100 Millwood Road  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

By email to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)  
Chairman Jeff Zyontz  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reedie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Chairman Zyontz:

We are the property owners at 7100 Millwood Road, one of the properties that will be dramatically impacted negatively by the Kenwood Park Sidewalk program. We have lived at that address since 1983 and adamantly oppose the sidewalk proposal for Kenwood Park on two grounds: 1. The process of developing the plan and procedures up to date for implementing it. 2. The substance of the proposal, which will dramatically alter the character and appearance of a 60-year-old neighborhood without a shred of evidence or data to support the need for sidewalks.

First, we will address the process. This proposal was based on the request of two individuals for sidewalks in 2020 and 2018. Those two individuals identified themselves as representing the Kenwood Park Citizens Association. In fact, they did not and do not represent the members of the KCPA nor the community at large. They never consulted with the community or even informed the community of their request. The first residents knew about the proposal was when we received a letter informing us of a plan to remove 148 mostly mature trees and replace them with a width swath of cement.

Two days before a virtual hearing on the proposal, the Department of Transportation created a new plan, after many residents had already prepared their hearing statements. This one purported to vastly reduce the number of trees to be destroyed, but when read carefully it gave no assurance that most of the trees would be saved. Instead it said an evaluation of each tree would be made by the county, again with no input from residents. Understandably, residents did not believe the county wanted to minimize the trees loss but instead was trying to mollify a community that clearly did not support the sidewalk proposal and intended to fight it vigorously.

Then we received a third proposal, which again claimed it would not destroy 148 mature trees (an unthinkable idea to begin with) and was addressing the community's concerns. What the Transportation Department fails to understand is a vast number of community residents oppose the plan and never asked for sidewalks. The county just assumed that the two people making the request represented the community without even checking. By the way, the membership of the KPCA does not represent even the majority of Kenwood Park residents.

The final and most important problem with the process is that it is based on absolutely no evidence or data. In fact, the Department told residents that it conducted no traffic or pedestrian studies and developed no evidence of incidents in Kenwood Park that happened because of the lack of sidewalks, much less that sidewalks would solve what ever perceived problem there was. And they said they did not have to and did not intend to. That this proposal was based on nothing is outrageous and demonstrates the need to completely overhaul the sidewalk program procedures and ensure oversight by the County Council and County Executive. What our experience exposed was that a group of bureaucrats and engineers had and still have the ability to impose their preferences without consulting those affected and without considering many other options that would preserve trees and green space and not destroy the character of the neighborhood permanently. That the county would commit to spending millions of dollars on a plan supported by no data or need is unbelievable. Is this supposed to be “good government.”

The final outrageous part of the procedure was we were told that the county would contract with a third party to install the sidewalks, but if there were any issues or damage to residents’ property it was up to the resident to get the contractor to fix the problem. In other words, the county would wash it’s hands of the project.

The Department now proposes to limit community input even more by restricting that input to how sidewalks are constructed not where or whether they should be. Restricting the input of county citizens (who last time I checked paid the salaries of department employees) on issues that directly affect not only how their property looks but also significantly reduces their value by substituting cement for trees and grass and shrubs is simply an abuse of power. If all county residents learned of this, idea the outrage would be far greater that what has been demonstrated by Kenwood Park residents.

It is clear that the county is trying to mollify residents by continually changing the plans because they have figured out this proposal will be opposed by all means, including litigation, which will not only delay the project for some time, but also cost the county a lot of money. The bottom line is that the county does not care that the residents DO NOT WANT sidewalks.

Our second reason for opposing the plan has to do with what the county actually wants to do. The plan to destroy the tree canopy runs counter to the county’s commitment to reducing climate change. Many of us moved to Kenwood Park because it had mature trees and significant amounts of grass. Even when houses are being torn down in our neighborhood established trees have been protected from builders who want to cut down as many trees as possible. Kenwood Park was not laid out with sidewalks and to add them 60 years later and after many residents have spent a good deal of money on landscaping (some very recently) is not only unfair, but against the wishes of the community. And it WILL destroy the character of our neighborhood. Those of us affected directly (most of those supporting the plan are homeowners whose property will not be affected) will see our front yards become cement and our property values diminished.

Not only did the county develop this plan based on no studies, data or evidence of a need, but it refuses other options and designs that have worked in other places and would reduce the amount of cement. The goal should have been to limit the destruction of trees, grass and shrubs, but clearly the county disagrees with that.

The streets in Kenwood Park have always been pedestrian friendly, I have walked on Millwood Road for 30+ years and never felt unsafe. Countless residents walked our neighborhood streets during Covid without any pedestrian incidents. Last year after major back surgery, I walked through the neighborhood using a walker and then a cane and never was concerned that there were no sidewalks. At least one resident supports sidewalks so her child can ride a bike on them. If the sidewalks are used for biking, pedestrians will have no choice but to walk in what would then be a much narrower street. It is also unclear how the county determined which streets would be included or what side of the street would get sidewalks. What is clear is that preserving greenery was not part of the equation.

This entire process has exposed the major flaws in the sidewalk program that are as troublesome as the plan to destroy mature trees. We remain opposed to the plan.

Sincerely,

Diana Huffman  
Kenneth Levine

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Jim Laurensen](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Testimony for Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:57:06 AM  
**Attachments:** [Testimony on the Pedestrian Master Plan - CAP Coalition 3-23-2023.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chair,

Attached please find the written testimony that will accompany oral testimony to be given at the Item 7 hearing tomorrow, March 23, at 6 pm.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jim Laurensen

5916 Melvern Dr.

Bethesda, MD 20817

[james.p.laurensen@gmail.com](mailto:james.p.laurensen@gmail.com)

703-342-9496

**Written Testimony:**  
**Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan and Climate Assessment Tools**

Submitted March 23, 2023 to the  
*Montgomery County Planning Board*  
by the  
*Montgomery County Climate Action Plan Coalition*  
[moco.cap.coalition@gmail.com](mailto:moco.cap.coalition@gmail.com)

Thank you for considering these comments from the Montgomery County Climate Action Plan (CAP) Coalition (“Coalition”) about the upcoming climate assessment of the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP).

The Coalition represents 18 grass-roots community organizations, and many unaffiliated individuals. In 2017, many of these organizations successfully advocated that the county adopt the Climate Emergency Declaration in which the County committed to reducing Greenhouse Gasses (GHGs) by 80% by 2027 and 100% by 2035, and equitably build resilience to climate impacts. Since then, we have worked with the County Executive, the County Council, and County staff to adopt legislative measures and executive branch programs to work towards these goals, consistent with emergency action.

Our mission is to ensure robust and equitable implementation of, and improvements to, the Climate Action Plan consistent with emergency action.

The Coalition also was fundamentally involved in developing and passing the Climate Assessment legislation that requires climate assessments of all legislative bills, as well as assessments of all master plans, master plan amendments, and zoning text amendments.

These comments are a continuation to comments submitted previously by the CAP Coalition, which were submitted on the Climate Assessment Tools, <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/MCPB-12.8.22-Item-8-Correspondence-Climate-Assessment-tools-for-master-plans-and-ZTAs-per-Bill-3-22.pdf>, but now through the lens of the first Master Plan to undergo such an assessment. As a reminder, key points from that testimony are that we:

- enthusiastically applaud the shift to conducting the Climate Assessment for Master Plans during the initial phases and throughout the planning process;
- recommend that the Planning Staff be provided with sufficient resources to ensure development of the QUANT tool, the data inputs, and a public facing dashboard;
- request that stakeholders, including the Coalition, be allowed to further comment on the results of the pilot testing of the template; and
- urge the Planning Department to mount a systematic focus on improving the availability and quality of climate change related data for the County to ensure optimal outcomes.

As we began reviewing the PMP, additional issues arose:

- One is that during template development, we understood that there would be three stages in the master plan process where climate change would be factored in, and public involvement allowed. However, we now understand that we won't see any data or assessments until they are transmitted to Council. Thus, we won't have an opportunity to review preliminary data and analysis, and provide timely input. We recommend that the climate assessment process for this and future master plans provide a formal opportunity for public review and input prior to transmission to the Council.
- The county also needs to ensure that the climate assessments follow the recommendations of the county's experts<sup>1</sup> that each master plan climate assessment be primarily quantitative, with only some qualitative elements. Unfortunately, we learned recently that mainly only a qualitative assessment is planned for the PMP.
- We also urge that the assessments follow the experts' recommendations that all consumption-based and embodied carbon emissions be included, as many in the Coalition have requested over the years.
- Finally, the Coalition recommends that a systematic focus is used on improving the availability and quality of climate change-related data across the entire planning sphere, in order to ensure optimal outcomes using a systems, rather than reductionist (or siloed), understanding.

To illustrate the importance of these more recent points, the omitted emissions have been estimated to be more than half of our overall emissions, and when they are included indicate that county-attributed emissions are likely still increasing, or at least not decreasing as the county repeatedly claims.<sup>2</sup> Also, relying primarily on a qualitative assessment is a missed opportunity to think deeper and quantitatively estimate the PMP's potential. And, as we have previously noted, if data are insufficient, then the county should systematically work to improve the availability and quality of climate change-related data.

Regarding the PMP itself, we offer three overarching comments.

- First, the PMP should focus much more on climate. The almost 300 page document refers to climate only in three brief instances, only one of which—using parking market rates to reduce car use—directly relates to reducing GHGs. The PMP must clearly emphasize the relationship between our existential crisis, and the reduction of GHGs that an improved pedestrian infrastructure brings by encouraging people to transition out of cars into a safer walking environment and onto transit, bikes, or scooters. Such messaging helps the planners develop a more effective plan; helps those who conduct the climate assessment; and helps the general public who ultimately are the ones who need to transition and thus need to understand the

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<sup>1</sup> ICF, 2022, Final Report Climate Assessment Recommendations for Master Plans and Zoning Text Amendments in Montgomery County

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/global-greenhouse-gas-emissions-data#Sector>



connection, and who can also contribute to the assessment (see next comment) from their real-life user perspective.

- Second, many components of the plan can be more explicitly connected to climate impacts and mitigation/resilience, which provides a clearer path for the climate assessors who can thus convert the component quantitatively to GHGs. We understand that the climate assessment of the PMP is a separate step that is currently in progress, but it's imperative that the connections between key factors are clearly noted for the benefit of not only the climate assessors, but also for the planning staff who could then expand on the relevant data, and for the general public who bring a ground-level—literally—user perspective.

For example, the qualitative benefits noted in the PMP of tree canopy could be highlighted and quantified more deeply by planners, thereby allowing for a quantitative assessment of its benefits such as carbon sequestration. Similarly, increased walking rates can be tied to reductions in vehicle miles traveled, etc.

We understand the difficulty of converting metrics into quantitative estimates of climate impacts, and the temptation to conduct only qualitative analyses. And we recognize the complexities of a broader systems approach to the climate assessments and Master Plans. But the uncertainty can be readily addressed by, for example, using a reasonable range of parameters to obtain bounded low-end and high-end results.

- Third, the PMP is part of the broader interconnected system of transportation—including the Bicycle Plan and the Transit Plan—and other plans. Combining the climate assessments, if not also the Plans, could provide a more informed “systems” understanding of their potential to meet GHG reduction and other environmental and societal goals.

Examples from the PMP that support these comments are in the **Attachment** below.

We believe that the benefits to implementing our suggestions could be enormous, as the results could provide a much clearer understanding of the extent to which we will meet the overall County GHG goals, and thus in turn guide us toward the most effective mitigation for our predicament.

As you know, Montgomery County, and the DMV more broadly, has perhaps the largest concentration of federal and international employees in the country, if not the world. What we do to reduce our GHG footprint will be noticed, and perhaps, in turn, replicated.

We look forward to working with you.

Thank you,  
The Montgomery County CAP Coalition  
Organization Members:  
350 Montgomery County  
ACQ Climate (Ask the Climate Question)

Bethesda Green  
Biodiversity for a Livable Climate  
Chesapeake Climate Action Network  
Elders Climate Action  
Environmental Justice Ministry Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church  
Ecosystems Study Group  
Friends of Sligo Creek  
Glen Echo Heights Mobilization  
Green Sanctuary Committee of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Silver Spring  
Montgomery County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions  
One Montgomery Green  
Poolesville Green  
Safe Healthy Playing Fields  
Sugarloaf Citizens' Association  
Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended/M-83 (TAME)  
The Climate Mobilization Montgomery County  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment Committee (TPMEC)  
Zero Waste Montgomery County

## ATTACHMENT

The approach to developing the PMP highlights a number of opportunities and concerns with respect to the climate tools. Various members of the Coalition have provided examples from the PMP, which have been loosely organized into the following categories:

- Focus on Climate
- GHG Metrics and Data/Statistics
- Integration With Other Plans
- Other

Please note that most of these examples cut across several categories.

### Focus on Climate

Climate has been incorporated into the PMP as follows:

- how the PMP is “an important element in the county’s...2021 Climate Action Plan” (p. 1),
- the goal of reducing pedestrian pathway temperatures by implementing the CAP recommendation to retain and increase tree canopy (p. 79), and
- charging market rates for parking, which reduces driving/car ownership, lowers vehicle miles traveled, and helps achieve climate goals (p. 125).

Unfortunately, these are the only mentions of climate in the 282 page PMP.

There also is very little mention or messaging of how an improved pedestrian infrastructure would encourage people getting out of their cars and into not only a safer walking environment, but also into transit and on to bikes and scooters. This is somewhat implicit, but needs to be explicit.

Another concern is that there is only brief mention of changing the infrastructure to better withstand the increasing heat from the climate crisis.

### GHG Metrics and Data/Statistics

The PMP has an outstanding volume of data and statistical analyses to support it, which in turn bodes well for how the data could be used for climate assessment. Per above, it is unfortunate that little is mentioned on connecting that data to GHG assessment. Therefore these comments are provided to not only improve on the PMP, but also to highlight some of the ways the data and analysis could be more explicitly connected and/or affect the assessment of GHGs.

- Any good study supporting such a plan will have accurate, sound data collection and analysis that is accessible to the reader. The survey sent to 60,000 randomly selected households, however, is only described briefly on pgs. 2 and 20 and yet is referenced throughout the PMP. There appears to be a substantial amount of data,

and claimed to be “statistically valid”, but little could be found on the location of the actual data and analysis. Some survey details were eventually found at <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/pedestrian-planning/pedestrian-master-plan/pedestrian-master-plan-tools-and-resources/>, as Appendix D to the Pedestrian Master Plan Existing Conditions Report. But this is a relatively short appendix—12 pages. The full report, it turns out, is referenced in a footnote. Data and analyses such as these, and of the statistical validity metrics, such as whether/how cohort stratification was conducted pre- or post-survey, etc., need to be highlighted prominently in the PMP so they could be more readily used in the climate assessment.

- The PMP has many good perspectives on how differing levels of socioeconomic equity can affect the lived experiences of county residents, but it is unclear whether the same level of intentionality was applied to the survey. For example, someone with less political efficacy, tougher financial situation, more tenuous immigration legitimacy status, and/or a preoccupation with surviving what they might perceive as a car-dependent hellscape they live in might not have the wherewithal to complete a survey randomly sent to them. Thus, the respondent pool might be skewed towards those who have more socioeconomic resources and the leisure time to devote to answering surveys from their county government. It’s important to consider how civil rights, socioeconomic justice, and transportation equitability intersect and can affect even the research intended to right the historical wrongs of redlining and racism, and it is unclear whether the data analysis considered these factors, which in turn could skew the GHG assessment.
- Given the focus on righting wrongs of the past in terms of ignoring people with disabilities, a thorough assessment of the PMP by representatives of that user group—if not already included—would be valuable, and would also bring greater legitimacy and accuracy to the assessment of GHGs.
- An analysis of pedestrian conditions along all streets and crossings in the county (e.g., p 42) indicates that there are large areas of the county where it is uncomfortable to walk and many locations where it is undesirable to do so. Figure 14 summarizes pedestrian comfort along pathways: “Comfort levels in urban (65%) and transit corridors (69%) are greater than in exurban/rural (48%) areas of the county. Pathway comfort levels are substantially higher in EFAs (Equity Focus Areas) (73%) than non-EFAs (58%), likely due to where these areas are located and when they were developed.” An alternative result: perhaps people in EFA’s, aka swathes of land where the county’s data show that inequality is more present, are more likely to walk because they don’t have cars. Thus, they are more likely to have more experience walking for utility purposes.

- On p. 19 is a very chilling point about EFAs:

*Objective 4.5:*

Eliminate the disparity in the rate of pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries between EFAs (Figure 2) and non-EFAs. In 2020, there were 4.8 times more severe pedestrian injuries and fatalities inside EFAs than outside them.

*Metric*

Ratio of pedestrians killed or severely injured per mile of roadway inside EFAs compared with outside EFAs

This again highlights the disparities in our pedestrian infrastructure that can be quantified in terms of disparities of impacts from the climate crisis.

- Pgs. 26 & 27

While walking departure rates from school are generally below 20%, there is wide variation in walking rates among individual schools. In some cases, walking rates exceed 30 or 40% of school access mode share. Table 5 shows those elementary, middle, and high schools with the highest walking departure rates. Many of the schools with the highest walking rates are schools designated as Title I/Focus or high FARMS rate schools. High walking rates may be related to shorter walking distances, neighborhood conditions conducive to comfortably and safely walking to/from school, and whether

walking is the only option because busing is not provided (within a certain distance of the school) and parents or guardians are not available to drive the student.

Table 5. Schools with the Highest Walking Departure Rates by School Type

Schools	Walk Mode Share
<b>Elementary Schools</b>	
<i>Glen Haven Elementary School</i>	50%
Snowden Farm Elementary School	49%
<i>Gaithersburg Elementary School</i>	48%
<i>New Hampshire Estates Elementary School</i>	43%
<b>Middle Schools</b>	
<i>Montgomery Village Middle School</i>	46%
Hallie Wells Middle School	43%
Takoma Park Middle School	36%
<i>Gaithersburg Middle School</i>	34%
<b>High Schools</b>	
Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School	24%
<i>Wheaton High School</i>	20%
<i>Albert Einstein High School</i>	19%
<i>Rockville High School</i>	17%

Source: Montgomery County Student Travel Tally

We recommend polling students from the higher walking-rate schools. Let them tell their story. Hear their experiences! This can get other students teetering on a modal switch to try walking etc. Maybe ask students from high/low walk schools to draw the route from their house to school—they'd love that!—and use those drawings as a sort of visceral visual comparison. As w/the above comments, this can also contribute to differential impacts.

- Pg 28

### *Walk Purpose*

Pedestrian trips are made for many reasons, from recreational walking and exercise to walking to work or to complete errands. Figure 5 summarizes why respondents have taken trips in the past month. No matter the land use type, exercise and outdoor recreation are the most common reasons for walking. More than 90% of respondents walked for recreation in the past month.

Utilitarian pedestrian trips—where the purpose of walking is accomplishing errands or getting to a destination—are more common for residents in urban areas (shown in blue in Figure 5) than residents of transit corridors or exurban/rural areas (shown in orange and grey, respectively).

People in less urban areas likely would walk for utility purposes more if land-use policy was less favorable to car-dependent land-use. Corner stores, denser housing—rehabilitate the suburbs! All of which supports the need for a more systems view of the master plans.

- From county Facebook posts, e.g., <https://www.facebook.com/100064738386290/posts/pfbid02JzqXLPbwQj4qQKC5zE7RYqvqMcK6gpX6zeAhLwKAjvRRKqYhs74CQ4g8fT3synrZl>, which we suspect the county is assessing too, but some seem more important than others, such as:
  - "...putting the crosswalks at intersections where the bus stop is. People are not going to cross the street in the opposite direction they want to go to get to a crosswalk that is in the direction they want to go." This is an example of how combining plans can be useful.
  - "There is not enough time to successfully cross some of the streets. The time needs to be lengthened by at least 10 to 15 seconds." This gets at the potential increase in pedestrian miles.
  - "Traffic laws are not adequately enforced here. So many speeders, who do not stop for red lights or traffic signs. Very dangerous place to drive, bike or walk!" Clearly a call for better enforcement, which in turn could result in an increase in use.
- Under the various Design, Policy, and Programming sections of the plan, starting on p. 61, there are a number of other metrics that could be used, for example:
  - B-1c: Require all new public buildings, as well as major renovations, to design and construct bikeways and walkways along their frontage as recommended in master plans and the CSDG, as well as to dedicate right-of-way where required.
  - B-2: Eliminate the need to press a button to cross the street.
  - B-4f: Develop and implement a comprehensive pedestrian wayfinding system for the county.
  - B-10: Assume county control of state highways. Thrive Montgomery 2050, the county's General Plan, envisions transforming activity centers and growth corridors into safe, comfortable, and irresistible multimodal environments.
  - MA-1a: Create a plan for proactively inspecting and repairing Montgomery County sidewalks and pathways equitably across the county and track implementation.

- P-4a: Conduct pedestrian and bicycle safety educational programs in partnership with agencies such as MCPL, MCPS, and MCR.
- MO-1 (on Monitoring, p. 264): Track implementation of the Pedestrian Master Plan. The Pedestrian Master Plan contains performance measures to better understand progress toward achieving plan goals over time. A biennial monitoring report would allow planners, elected officials, and members of the public to track progress on Pedestrian Master Plan implementation, help guide future priorities, and provide more timely climate assessment data.

### **Integration With Other Plans**

- It is critical to combine the master plans—or at least the climate assessments—in some way, given they are part of the broader interconnected system of transportation, housing, business, and all other aspects of living in a shared environment, whereby a change in one plan usually affects changes in the other, including regarding climate.
- P. 18, If you build it, they will come! I.e., use induced demand. More frequent service on the MARC line, service in both directions not just trains into DC in the morning and out to Frederick in the evening, and electrification of the line so we can stop using pollution-heavy diesel locomotives, all will improve the pedestrian experience. Simply making the areas around transit stations more ped-friendly is not enough, but a multi-faceted approach will have multiplicative effects
- Facebook comment above about the need for crosswalks near bus stops

### **Other Recommendations**

- The plans need a lot more messaging (or plans thereof) to highlight the climate crisis, health, etc. to win over drivers who are addicted to their cars due to a century of the truly amazing—but now known to be misguided—car-centric culture. The harsh reactions to recent road diets have been sobering!

- Love the shortcuts focus. Have you contacted Google maps staff? They have a similar project that allows public input, which is always available. For example below is a view of a bike and walk path and bridge (circled in first figure, from Google Maps) that connects a neighborhood with a well-known path that avoids the dangerous hill (for pedestrians etc.) on Cedar Lane. One of our members used the Maps contribution feature, and within days it recently was added, as shown here, although it's not in the PMP shortcut map (second figure).





**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Pat Mulready](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** I am sharing "Mulready Pedestrian testimony summary" with you  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 11:57:55 AM  
**Attachments:** [Mulready Pedestrian testimony summary.pdf](#)

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

Patricia M. Mulready, M.S.,M.Phil.

10233 Capitol View Ave

Silver Spring, MD 20910

[Pmulready13@gmail.com](mailto:Pmulready13@gmail.com)

SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY FOR PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN 3/23/23 HEARING

RE: NO MENTION OR RESPECT FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS OR PROPERTIES; DEVASTATION OF FORESTED PARK LANDS

Historic districts show what was and should remain as they are, especially when there are walkable routes close by. This is especially true when 100+ year old trees will be killed in order to put in sidewalks – removing green canopy for the black paved roads, homeowners property, and surrounding areas. Temperatures around my 111 year old house are typically 15° less than surroundings so this isn't theoretical.

People who move into Historic Districts have notification when they buy the property and shouldn't expect to change it.

Historic districts should be treated equally. Poorer, diverse ones shouldn't be punished with ADA impermeable sidewalks which actually destroy >15' while areas like Brookeville Rd in Chevy Chase have 2-1/2' permeable ones which don't kill trees and maintain the look of the neighborhood. Brookeville did sidewalks correctly and other historic districts should be allowed to do the same (especially when no RoW in front of houses).

The idea of putting lit ADA impermeable sidewalks into the back areas of parks, forested areas, and wetlands defeats the purposes of those areas which includes protection of wildlife. Especially structures such as the "bridge" shown in the draft Master Plan. Many animals wouldn't be able to get over them safely. Lighting hurts biological clocks. And German arborists' research has established that killing one tree in an area causes the others to die.

Also, I am a handicapped pedestrian and have been for the past 6 years. I have had far more close calls with persons using bicycles and motorized scooters than cars who pay attention to people walking and give them the right of way. Plus can hear most cars.

Thanks.

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Tim Soderquist](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Public Testimony on Pedestrian Master Plan  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:01:14 PM

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

Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing, Item 7, March 23, 2023

Dear Planning Board,

I strongly support the approval and implementation of the Pedestrian Master Plan. Walking is a normal, healthy, environmentally sound mode of transportation that needs to be encouraged and made safe, comfortable and dignified. This plan will do just that. Here are three points in particular I would like to emphasize:

-Our sidewalk program is not working. Restructuring is as outlined in the plan and increasing funding will help neighborhoods that need sidewalks get them faster, and without having to fight and advocate for limited resources.

-We need Safe Routes to School. I live across an arterial street from a large high school. There are traffic lights where students as young as middle school age cross that allow right turns on red, have no leading pedestrian interval and misaligned crosswalks that make it difficult for drivers to see pedestrians. This plan should emphasize creating Safe Routes to School as soon as possible.

-Extra urgency should be given to taking control of SHA maintained roads. The MDSHA does not share the same values as Montgomery County. By taking control of roads in Town and Urban Centers, Transit Corridors and School Zones, we can ensure that proper, safe, welcoming pedestrian infrastructure is installed.

Thank you,

Tim Soderquist  
9920 Cherry Tree Ln.  
Silver Spring, MD 20901

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [saundersbarrett@verizon.net](mailto:saundersbarrett@verizon.net)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Draft Pedestrian Master Plan Comments from Bernard J. Barrett  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 12:02:11 PM  
**Attachments:** [Pedestrian master plan written comments from Bernard J Barrett.pdf](#)

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

My comments are attached.

7000 Millwood Road  
Bethesda MD 20817

March 22, 2023

By email to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)  
Chairman Jeff Zyontz  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the current draft Pedestrian Master Plan. I moved with my wife and then young children to the Kenwood Park neighborhood almost 20 years ago— attracted by the overall quality of life in the County and particularly in Kenwood Park. Every member of my family has always been an enthusiastic walker or biker. Over the last five years my wife and I have walked compulsively on average five days a week principally in and around Kenwood Park. We have been very happy with our pedestrian environment. In the past I have appreciated what appeared to be a responsive county government committed to the well-being of all residents and the quality of life for all. I applaud this effort to choose a holistic street masterplan for all residents of our County. However I write to express my deep concerns with this draft Master Plan as well as dissatisfaction with County processes and trepidation about the County's direction.

I write these comments from the perspective of a resident of Kenwood Park, which is the subject of a suddenly revealed rush proposal from the Annual Sidewalk Program. Without any analysis of the character or our neighborhood, the nature of the pedestrian "walkspace," actual safety information, the impact on the environment of the proposal, the interests of the majority of the residents, the readily available data, or the best uses of the County's resources, the County proposes to impose one-size-fits-all sidewalks on Kenwood Park to meet the Program's linear feet goal and get its budget spent this fiscal year.

The draft Master Plan appears to be a similar mad rush to expedite sidewalk construction wherever possible as fast as possible. (See B-1a, the first recommendation under "Build", "Build more sidewalks faster.") Pedestrian and other human powered travel should be carefully developed across the County in a measured and thoughtful manner. Sidewalks and other improvements should be built first in places where needed most; should be built in a manner that promotes environmental and other County goals; and should preserve the character of our neighborhoods.

I have concerns about this master plan process similar to my concerns about the sidewalk process for our neighborhood. I heard about the draft Master Plan late in the process and still do not fully understand how the process works. The draft Master Plan recommends that public input on whether to build sidewalks should be foreclosed. (See B-1b, the second recommendation under "Build", preclude consideration of "whether [sidewalks] should be constructed at all.") I fear that the policy decision to rely on the willy-nilly building of sidewalks has already been made.

I believe that, overall, the County needs to make an open public decision as to whether the County will spend its resources and place sidewalks on home lawns: 1) on both sides of all streets in the county; 2) on selected streets throughout the county; 3) on selected streets in selected neighborhoods; or 4) no where in the County. I support a thoughtful decision through an open public policy process to build sidewalks now where immediately needed and wanted in conjunction with the development of a careful long term plan to improve the overall pedestrian and biking environment across our County for the long term.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments.

Yours very truly,

*Bernard J. Barrett, Jr.*  
Bernard J. Barrett Jr.

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Lee Keiser](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** (In-Person) Testimony for Ped Master Plan, March 23  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 2:11:00 PM  
**Attachments:** [Keiser Testimony Ped Master Plan 23 March 2023.pdf](#)

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

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for your telephone call this afternoon confirming my in-person testimony tomorrow evening. The PDF file of my testimony is attached. I appreciate your assistance!

Thank you,

Lee R. Keiser

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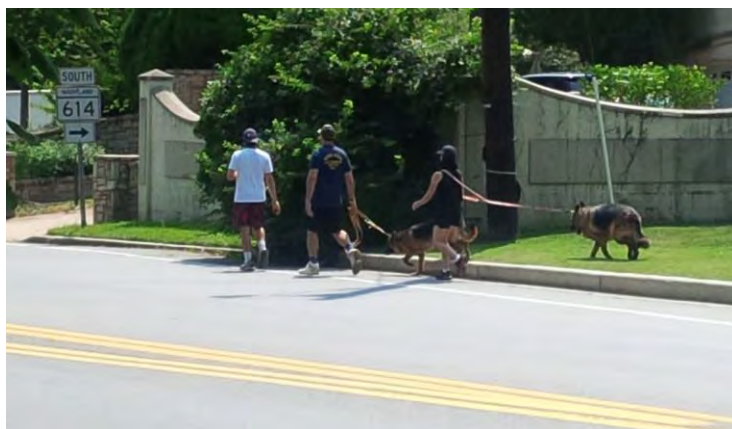
Lee R. Keiser  
Sr. Leadership Montgomery (2019)  
PO Box 31224, Bethesda 20824

E-mail: [lee@ourcivicvalue.com](mailto:lee@ourcivicvalue.com)

## Testimony by Lee R. Keiser on the *Pedestrian Master Plan*

Montgomery Planning Board, Wheaton, MD; March 23, 2023

Good evening Chairman Zyontz and Planning Board. I am Lee Keiser, a county resident for nearly 30 years. Having served as Patrol Captain at my MCPS elementary school, my pedestrian safety advocacy comes naturally, and was reinforced more recently as a pre-pandemic leader of my neighborhood's civic association, whose dual-zip-code community is bisected by a two-lane state road (MD-191, photos below). I continue to track closely the many long-standing Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects that would bring basic infrastructure to support safer multi-modal travel. Several of these projects, including the one in my Bradley Blvd. (MD-191) community (CIP# P501733), were first referenced in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Master Plan of 1990. Seemingly stuck in Final Design stage, construction on our project's proposed sidewalk might start by the end of this decade, or 40 years after infrastructure was first recommended by this agency.



Accordingly, I found the *Pedestrian Master Plan* scope of work, and resulting draft proposal, to be a fascinating and comprehensive civic undertaking. My testimony focuses on four areas of proposed enhancements to uphold Montgomery Planning's historic high bar for its own initiatives.

### **#1 Enhance Transparency in the Prioritization Methodology for Project Tier "BiPPAs."**

The *Pedestrian Master Plan* (p. 128) identifies on Tables 28 through 31 "BiPPA areas within the top four BiPPA tiers." The highest tier is reserved for those areas "currently funded in the Capital Improvements Program," while "other BiPPA areas are broken into tiers based on their Prioritization Methodology score." The Plan notes that its "prioritization approach" can be adopted by the Montgomery County Dept. of Transportation and the MD Dept. of Transportation (p. 260). Yet the term "Prioritization Methodology" is not listed in the Plan's Glossary, nor is it detailed in any example in the Plan.

The Prioritization Methodology is addressed in the Plan's *Appendices* (a separate document, online pps. 126-130). A table shows 10 factors, and their respective weights, in "Step One" of the prioritization process. The "Step Two" process has a single factor, "Equity," that indicates if a geographic area falls within an Equity Focus Area. After various mathematical calculations, then a "Final Score" is produced.



A minimum of two examples of arriving at a Final Score – with real locations, perhaps one in an EFA and one that’s not – should be added to the *Pedestrian Master Plan* report itself. Moreover, in the “Step One” factors of school and transit access, what is the geographic scope of “access?” For example, with the county’s extensive RideOn bus network, access may be possible for many residents; some incur a 20-minute ride to their destination, others may have an option of a 20-minute walk. Yet weights of “12” are assigned to both “school access” and “transit access.” Such equal weighting distorts a particular location’s proximity to a Central Business District or primary BiPPA area.

### **#2 Cross-reference existing CIP projects, where applicable, to Project Tier “BiPPAs.”**

The Plan distinguishes between BiPPA areas that “are currently-funded in the Capital Improvement Program,” and those that are not. Those currently-funded appear in the highest tier (p. 128-129). The term “currently-funded” needs to be defined: does this mean a CIP project that exists in the current fiscal year budget; or is engaged in its actual “Construction” stage? Long before construction begins, capital funds are expended on sidewalk/bikeway CIP projects that are in various “design” stages. Understandably, given the funding prioritization negotiations that occur between the County Executive and County Council, determining which projects are “currently-funded” can be challenging. Once a decision is made by the Pedestrian Master Plan team, a possibly-revised list of highest-tier BiPPAs should include a new, adjacent column that specifies the associated CIP project number with each geographic location. Practically, relevant CIP project numbers should be referenced regardless of assigned tier. Such an addition will further assist with prioritization transparency, and help to inform considerations by elected officials and community advocates alike.

### **#3 Re-examine the Plan’s assumption about expediency if the county takes control of state roadways.**

The Plan proposes to assume county control of state highways (p. 88). This would permit “flexibility to retrofit these state roads to prioritize walking, bicycling, and transit, and allow it to do so much faster than can happen today.” This assumption may not always play out. For example, the original Bradley Blvd. Improvements Project (CIP #P501733) focused on adding to a one-mile stretch of State Road 191 (aka “Bradley Blvd.”) sidewalks, a shared use path, crosswalks, stormwater management, and enhanced lighting. The original scope also called for adding dedicated left-turn lanes at the intersection of MD-191 and MD-188 (Wilson Lane), seen below.



Due to concern by Montgomery County DOT about perpetual delays in this project’s funding schedule, alongside their increasing concerns about safety and traffic management at this well-travelled intersection, they pulled the left-turn-lane addition out of the sidewalk CIP and placed it into MCDOT’s own “Spot Intersection

Improvements” CIP (#P507017), over which they have more direct control. This switch occurred five years ago, in 2018. While MCDOT may at last be visibly edging closer to actual construction at this intersection, those dedicated left-turn lanes – first recommended in the 1990 B-CC Master Plan – do not yet exist.

Relatedly, if an existing CIP sidewalk/bikeways project calls for additional un-signalized crosswalks within the project scope – un-signalized meaning that they involve painting the pavement – if the county DOT assumed full control of the original Bradley Blvd. project (#P501733), could one assume that those new crosswalks would be painted more expeditiously, without having to wait many more years for the project’s full implementation and construction? With many of our state roads representing communities’ “Main Streets,” the Plan’s proposed takeover of state roads is very important, and thus understanding of how it might play out would benefit from a few case studies or possible scenarios. The Plan references application in “Downtowns, Town Centers, and along Bus Rapid Transit corridors” (p. 89), but residential “Main Street” scenarios should also be presented.

#### **#4 Address inconsistencies in Tier Assignments.**

Tier 2 includes **Wilson Lane**, from Bradley Blvd. to Downtown Bethesda. This 1-mile stretch of Wilson Lane (MD-188) already has sidewalks (consistently on the EB-side, inconsistently on the WB side), plus seven crosswalks. Tier 3 includes Bradley Blvd., from Huntington Parkway to Downtown Bethesda. There are no sidewalks (until close to MD-614, Goldsboro Rd.), and crosswalks are about every half-mile. Further, a one-mile portion of this **Bradley Blvd.** segment is within the scope of CIP #P501733, referenced earlier. Without transparency for geographic-specific Prioritization Final Scores, it is confusing to see on a lower tier a roadway that presently has zero infrastructure (no sidewalks, crosswalk distance of half a mile) that is part of an existing CIP project, versus a location literally around-the-corner that has had for decades both sidewalks and crosswalks.

Similarly, Tier 3 includes Wilson Lane from Bradley Blvd. to River Rd. This section of Wilson Lane also has sidewalks, and encompasses two schools. Thus, Tier assignment confusion arises, in part, in not knowing the extent to which existing pedestrian safety infrastructure counts toward a Final Score.

#### **Miscellaneous Recommendations:**

1. The Plan includes many maps: Complete Street Maps and Pedestrian Shortcut Maps. Where relevant within each map’s scope, Metro (and perhaps planned Purple Line) stations, and libraries, should be “pinned,” accordingly. Their absence was likely an inadvertent oversight.
2. The Plan uses the word “country” often, instead of “county.” This appears throughout the narrative, and on the Montgomery County map title (p. 208).

Thank you for the opportunity to share my feedback to enhance the practical value, for many stakeholders, of this comprehensive Pedestrian Master Plan.

Lee R. Keiser

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Diana Huffman](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Re: sidewalks comments  
**Date:** Thursday, March 23, 2023 1:50:27 AM

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

i submitted it at 11:30 am but it bounced back and kept saying domain name not recognized. I certainly hope my comments were included because i met the deadline and sent to the correct address.

Diana Huffman  
dianahuffman19@gmail.com  
Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 22, 2023, at 1:52 PM, MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Good afternoon,

The correspondence packet will be distributed to the Board momentarily. We will need to know now whether to include Ms. Huffman's comments (if submitted before the deadline) or to send directly to staff to include in the record.

Thank you,

**Catherine Coello, Administrative Assistant**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Montgomery County Chair's Office  
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902  
Main: 301-495-4605 | Direct: 301-495-4608  
[www.MontgomeryPlanningBoard.org](http://www.MontgomeryPlanningBoard.org)

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**From:** Lauren Saunders <laurenksaunders1@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 4:06 PM  
**To:** MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>; Diana Huffman <dianahuffman19@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** Re: sidewalks comments

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

Diana, can you confirm when you first tried to submit the comment? Thanks.

On Wed, Mar 22, 2023 at 3:42 PM MCP-Chair <[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)> wrote:

Good afternoon,

May you please confirm that this was initially submitted prior to the 12pm, noon deadline today? If so, I will include in the correspondence packet for the Planning Board's review. If not, it will go directly into the record for Planning staff to review.

Thank you,

**Catherine Coello, Administrative Assistant**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
Montgomery County Chair's Office  
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902  
Main: 301-495-4605 | Direct: 301-495-4608  
[www.MontgomeryPlanningBoard.org](http://www.MontgomeryPlanningBoard.org)

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**From:** Lauren Saunders <[laurenksaunders1@gmail.com](mailto:laurenksaunders1@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 22, 2023 3:37 PM

**To:** MCP-Chair <[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)>

**Subject:** Fwd: sidewalks comments

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

I have been asked to forward this.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Diana Huffman** <[dianahuffman19@gmail.com](mailto:dianahuffman19@gmail.com)>

Date: Wed, Mar 22, 2023 at 1:57 PM

Subject: sidewalks comments

To: Lauren Saunders <[laurenksaunders1@gmail.com](mailto:laurenksaunders1@gmail.com)>

i have sent this half dozen times and it keeps bouncing back

Can you please forward it

Diana Huffman

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

[dianahuffman19@gmail.com](mailto:dianahuffman19@gmail.com)

Sent from my iPad

Diana Huffman and Kenneth Levine  
7100 Millwood Road  
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

By email to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)  
Chairman Jeff Zyontz  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reedie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Chairman Zyontz:

We are the property owners at 7100 Millwood Road, one of the properties that will be dramatically impacted negatively by the Kenwood Park Sidewalk program. We have lived at that address since 1983 and adamantly oppose the sidewalk proposal for Kenwood Park on two grounds: 1. The process of developing the plan and procedures up to date for implementing it. 2. The substance of the proposal, which will dramatically alter the character and appearance of a 60-year-old neighborhood without a shred of evidence or data to support the need for sidewalks.

First, we will address the process. This proposal was based on the request of two individuals for sidewalks in 2020 and 2018. Those two individuals identified themselves as representing the Kenwood Park Citizens Association. In fact, they did not and do not represent the members of the KCPA nor the community at large. They never consulted with the community or even informed the community of their request. The first residents knew about the proposal was when we received a letter informing us of a plan to remove 148 mostly mature trees and replace them with a width swath of cement.

Two days before a virtual hearing on the proposal, the Department of Transportation created a new plan, after many residents had already prepared their hearing statements. This one purported to vastly reduce the number of trees to be destroyed, but when read carefully it gave no assurance that most of the trees would be saved. Instead it said an evaluation of each tree would be made by the county, again with no input from residents. Understandably, residents did not believe the county wanted to minimize the trees loss but instead was trying to mollify a community that clearly did not support the sidewalk proposal and intended to fight it vigorously.

Then we received a third proposal, which again claimed it would not destroy 148 mature trees (an unthinkable idea to begin with) and was addressing the community's concerns. What the Transportation Department fails to understand is a vast number of community residents oppose the plan and never asked for sidewalks. The county just assumed that the two people making the request represented the community without even checking. By the way, the membership of the KPCA does not represent even the majority of Kenwood Park residents.

The final and most important problem with the process is that it is based on absolutely no evidence or data. In fact, the Department told residents that it conducted no traffic or pedestrian studies and developed no evidence of incidents in Kenwood Park that happened because of the lack of sidewalks, much less that sidewalks would solve what ever perceived problem there was. And they said they did not have to and did not intend to. That this proposal was based on nothing is outrageous and demonstrates the need to completely overhaul the sidewalk program procedures and ensure oversight by the County Council and County Executive. What our experience exposed was that a group of bureaucrats and engineers had and still have the ability to impose their preferences without consulting those affected and without considering many other options that would preserve trees and green space and not destroy the character of the neighborhood permanently. That the county would commit to spending millions of dollars on a plan supported by no data or need is unbelievable. Is this supposed to be “good government.”

The final outrageous part of the procedure was we were told that the county would contract with a third party to install the sidewalks, but if there were any issues or damage to residents’ property it was up to the resident to get the contractor to fix the problem. In other words, the county would wash it’s hands of the project.

The Department now proposes to limit community input even more by restricting that input to how sidewalks are constructed not where or whether they should be. Restricting the input of county citizens (who last time I checked paid the salaries of department employees) on issues that directly affect not only how their property looks but also significantly reduces their value by substituting cement for trees and grass and shrubs is simply an abuse of power. If all county residents learned of this, idea the outrage would be far greater that what has been demonstrated by Kenwood Park residents.

It is clear that the county is trying to mollify residents by continually changing the plans because they have figured out this proposal will be opposed by all means, including litigation, which will not only delay the project for some time, but also cost the county a lot of money. The bottom line is that the county does not care that the residents DO NOT WANT sidewalks.

Our second reason for opposing the plan has to do with what the county actually wants to do. The plan to destroy the tree canopy runs counter to the county’s commitment to reducing climate change. Many of us moved to Kenwood Park because it had mature trees and significant amounts of grass. Even when houses are being torn down in our neighborhood established trees have been protected from builders who want to cut down as many trees as possible. Kenwood Park was not laid out with sidewalks and to add them 60 years later and after many residents have spent a good deal of money on landscaping (some very recently) is not only unfair, but against the wishes of the community. And it WILL destroy the character of our neighborhood. Those of us affected directly (most of those supporting the plan are homeowners whose property will not be affected) will see our front yards become cement and our property values diminished.

Not only did the county develop this plan based on no studies, data or evidence of a need, but it refuses other options and designs that have worked in other places and would reduce the amount of cement. The goal should have been to limit the destruction of trees, grass and shrubs, but clearly the county disagrees with that.

The streets in Kenwood Park have always been pedestrian friendly, I have walked on Millwood Road for 30+ years and never felt unsafe. Countless residents walked our neighborhood streets during Covid without any pedestrian incidents. Last year after major back surgery, I walked through the neighborhood using a walker and then a cane and never was concerned that there were no sidewalks. At least one resident supports sidewalks so her child can ride a bike on them. If the sidewalks are used for biking, pedestrians will have no choice but to walk in what would then be a much narrower street. It is also unclear how the county determined which streets would be included or what side of the street would get sidewalks. What is clear is that preserving greenery was not part of the equation.

This entire process has exposed the major flaws in the sidewalk program that are as troublesome as the plan to destroy mature trees. We remain opposed to the plan.

Sincerely,

Diana Huffman  
Kenneth Levine



From: [Cathie Cooper](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Written Comments on Pedestrian Master Plan  
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 12:46:48 PM

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

I am a walker, a cyclist, and a driver in Montgomery County, and I have been a resident and homeowner here for almost 25 years. I would like to make the following case: instead of wasting time and money developing a utopian model for a walkable and bikeable community, the County should first look inward and ask "What do we have now, can we maintain what we have, and what are the root problems that we need to address with any potential changes, and will those changes significantly address the problems?" I don't see that happening here. I see this project as generally throwing money randomly at many problem that will not go away (and perhaps even get worse) if it is not approached in a thoughtful and systematic way. Let's address all three issues.

#### 1. Pedestrians

First and foremost, we need pedestrian education, and that means education that actually sticks and changes bad behavior. As you well know, many pedestrians are irresponsible, running into the street without looking, walking in front of cars (without looking), crossing against red lights (even if in a crosswalk). Many are blissfully ignorant of basic physics which, in this case, is the fundamental principle that a 2000 lb car cannot stop on a dime when going 25+ MPH (even when it is traveling at 5 MPH or even it it is made of lightweight fiberglass). Making cars lighter, so they won't hurt oblivious pedestrians as badly, is simplistic, unworkable, and suggests that the County is not thinking clearly and realistically about the problem. It devalues my confidence in the County being able to make thoughtful assessments and meaningful improvements for all residents.

Some attempts to provide pedestrians with safe crossings are ignored or abused by pedestrians, so making more of them may not be the solution to the problem at all. For example, the Hawk system installed on Aspen Hill Road between Giant and Kohls was installed with good intentions but is largely ignored or misused by walkers, and creates more problems (traffic snarls) than it prevents (pedestrian vs. car encounters). They don't press the button but walk anyway. OR, they press the button and then cross during the flashing yellow light phase leaving the crosswalk empty of pedestrians when the light turns red and stops traffic (backing it up into the intersection at Connecticut, sometimes). The County needs to consider human (bad) behavior FIRST. As long as pedestrians walk in their own little Bubble of Oblivion, all the enhancements in the world will not prevent many of these problems.

Secondly, the County needs to actually maintain the pedestrian infrastructure they have. Show that the County can do so effectively before spending money to make more infrastructure that needs to be maintained (and probably won't be). Some of the plan points to improvements in maintenance, and those should be prioritized and fully functional before "upgrades" are implemented. I like to walk, mostly for exercise, but I try to combine exercise with functional walking such as errands to local stores and businesses. A 3-4 mile walk is common for me, so that gives me access to many of the Aspen Hill businesses from my home. Many public sidewalks, not in front of a home or business, go uncleaned after a snowstorm, limiting how

far I and others can go on public streets in the winter. The plan says that the County will TRY to improve that. The County MUST improve that to demonstrate they are willing and capable of maintaining infrastructure upgrades. One example of poor maintenance is Georgia Ave at Hewitt (from Winter 2022 when we actually had snow). I know this is a state road. I walked to the intersection of Georgia and the Matthew Henson Trail, which is a great pedestrian resource. The sidewalk on the west side of the intersection with Georgia was shaded and a complete sheet of ice. I was sliding around, just trying to get to the crosswalk button. So I figured, on that day, I would just abandon that trip and go home, and I would make it a loop and walk back home down Georgia Avenue. However, the entire sidewalk on Georgia (adjacent to the park property), even though it was in sun, was crusted with frozen and melting snow and ice. I could either walk in the busy street or walk in the melting icy snow and end up in the busy street if I slipped and fell. There is a heavily used bus stop at Georgia and Hewitt and so what did the people using public transport do? Walk in the street? Slip and fall? I've seen both. Another example of not cleaning sidewalks was Old Georgetown Road and the sidewalk that runs along the west side of the road behind the back fences of homes facing an adjacent residential street, above Tuckerman Lane. I commuted to work on that street for over 20 years. That sidewalk was never cleared. I digress to a concern about the wackadoodle bike lanes now installed on that road. How is the County going to effectively plow that and keep it ice-free? Remember, it's not only removing the initial snowfall from the walking or riding surface, it's keeping that surface clear of ice from any remelt that occurs, which would be a great problem since Plows cannot plow the surface where the little white dividers sit.

Installing those bike lanes was clearly a case of Ready, Shoot, Aim in my opinion.

Crosswalk lighting is a recurrent problem throughout the County. I would say the lighting is generally sufficient in most cases for pedestrians to see their way, but what about motorists (and preventing pedestrian vs. motorist incidents)? Remember: shared responsibility. When I am driving at night, there are crosswalks, even on some major streets, where I can only clearly see the middle part of the crosswalk that sits in a weak puddle of light in the middle of the road, and not the sidewalks to either side. The key to not hitting a pedestrian in a crosswalk, at night or any at any time, is to be able to see them on the sidewalk before they step into the street, know that they are possibly coming, and be prepared to stop (again, concerns with the pedestrian Bubble of Oblivion and basic physics). The County needs to drive the streets at night and ask whether the lighting is sufficient for motorists to see the pedestrians CLEARLY before they step into the street. This is an issue that needs to be addressed since it is proposed that motorists will be responsible for pedestrians before they step into the street. That said, there are often bus stops next to intersections: a way needs to be provided to clearly define who is waiting to cross the road vs. who is at the bus stop.

## 2. Cyclists

A friend lives near Old Georgetown Road and says that, since the new bike lanes have been put in, she's seen maybe one or two cyclists use them. This may not be a case of *If You Build It They Will Come*. When I commuted on that road (for over 20 years), I would see the occasional cyclist, so there wasn't demand to begin with. What study of bike traffic was done before it was determined that special lanes were needed? There is the Bethesda Trolley Trail that goes north to south close to Old Georgetown Road, which is bike and pedestrian friendly. Why not urge pedestrians and cyclists to use that, especially when it does not share space with motorists? Where does the County set the bar to making bike-friendly road improvements? Does the County have an actual plan to effectively maintain those lanes (see comments about

snow and ice removal above)?

Also, out in the rural County, particularly on nice spring/summer/fall days, I often come upon pelotons of cyclists filling the whole road, riding four or five abreast, blocking traffic and creating a hazard when a motorist is trying to pass them. This is a particular problem out on River Road and adjacent roads. There are even signs saying that bicyclists can use the whole road. Why? Shouldn't they have to share the road equitably with motorists? Also, many cyclists are as oblivious as pedestrians, or just plain rude. For example, I go to Riley's Lock frequently in the spring/summer/fall, since I am a Canal Steward charged with keeping an eye on Mile 23. I remember a recent encounter on Route 112, where a group of cyclists blew through a stop sign on a side street and flew right onto Rte 112, right in front of me, filling the whole lane. They were moving pretty fast (maybe 25 MPH) and the view of the intersecting road was limited until just before the stop sign. For cars merging from that intersecting road, this wouldn't be a huge problem since they will (or should) pause at the stop sign where I can see them and they can see me. In this case, I was able to veer into the opposing traffic lane, which was empty, luckily. There are many places where River Road winds enough that I cannot see a peloton of cyclists until I come around a corner and am right upon them (filling the road, of course). Sure, we could reduce the maximum speed limit on those roads to that of a bicycle, but that would be a fairly bass-ackwards approach to management of the problem, wouldn't it be?

We need cyclist education that will stick, as much as we need pedestrian education, and creation (if necessary) and enforcement of traffic rules for bicyclists, too. FYI, I only ride my bicycle on bike paths or on neighborhood streets (where I am hyperaware but less so than if I were riding on a heavily traveled road).

### 3. Motorists

Nearly every time I drive, I can't help but think that Maryland sets the bar far too low for issuing a driver's license. I've lived in four states (California, New York, Massachusetts, and Maryland) and Maryland drivers are by and far the worst? Why? There are clearly people who are driving that should not be behind the wheel. Since there is essentially no enforcement of traffic laws in the County (a real problem in my opinion, and one that needs to be addressed by more than the passive enforcement by traffic cameras) this is not going to stop. I don't know if people are driving with an impairment (visual, cognitive, or chemical), lacking minimal basic driving skills, or looking at their phones when they should be looking at the street. Every time I drive I see people weaving along the street, crossing lane dividers and center lines, blowing through stop signs, crosswalks with people in them, etc. On some streets (some examples are Randolph Road, Nicholson Lane) some drivers can't even negotiate gentle curves while staying in their lane.

In addition, traffic patterns need to be negotiable by all motorists with valid driver's licenses (see concern about low bar, above). If the pattern is too complex, some motorists will fail to negotiate it correctly, and only the hyperawareness of the other drivers in the pattern will prevent an accident from happening. For example, multiple left turn lanes are a particular problem (some examples FYI are: Rockledge connector to NB Old Georgetown, NB Old Georgetown to 355, Tuckerman to NB 355, Knowles to NB Connecticut, NB Connecticut to NB Connecticut at University). Even when lane markers are helpfully put down in the intersections, there are usually one or two drivers who cannot (or will not) stay in their lane while making that turn. A recent example from just last week: I was driving on NB Connecticut. I was in the middle left turn lane at University. The car in front of me

completely changed into the lefthand left turn lane in the middle of the intersection then crossed back into the middle lane once they were through the intersection. Fortunately that lefthand lane was empty at the time. Driving out of the designated lane is a frequent occurrence at these kinds of intersections.

How is the County going to protect pedestrians and cyclists in their Bubble of Oblivion when people are driving at this level of competency/awareness (and in their own Bubble of Oblivion)? Unless Montgomery County can effectively manage up and force Maryland to raise the bar and institute improved driver training (and driver maintenance training), this will continue to be a problem. I am rather skeptical that such improvement can be driven by the County but, please, prove me wrong! Plus, when roads and walkways are incompletely cleared of snow and ice (and, remember, that involves removing the ice that forms across sidewalks, bike paths, and roadways when plowed or shoveled snow melts and refreezes), it forces pedestrians and cyclists into the road with traffic, and that is never a good thing.

#### General Thoughts:

I know MoCo has great intentions about making walkable communities within the County. I support that. I support high density housing near transit hubs as opposed to urban sprawl. However, when I moved here ~25 years ago, I was struck at how awkwardly the County lays out its roads and traffic patterns, and how badly they are maintained. In fact, I often marvel at how consistently bad road "improvements" can be. It's almost as if the people doing road planning in the County hate motorists and are consciously trying to wreak havoc on the roads. Or maybe they are generally unqualified for the job they've been hired to do? I have vacillated between incompetent vs. malicious for all of these years. You say "Malicious, oh come on!" Try looking at some of the so-called traffic improvements through that lens, and you can see that "sticking it to the motorist" could be one interpretation. I see the County addressing what is perceived to be a series of specific problems without thinking one step further, asking first whether those solutions will create more problems (as it often does) or even actually solve the problems that they are trying to address.

#### In Summary:

1. Use money to address the real, root problems and resist the urge to make quick, cosmetic changes will not address or resolve root problems and that, in fact, may create a new set of problems.
2. Do a meaningful study before the County throws a solution at a perceived problem. Ask first: what is the root problem there (and which category of road user is most responsible for causing the problem)? Then ask: is there a solution that would benefit all users, and not one type of user at the detriment of other users? Then ask: does that solution create more problems? Then ask: can we effectively implement this change? Otherwise, it's just a case of pretty words.
3. Show that the County can maintain the infrastructure we have, before building more, and that, when the County builds the new infrastructure, make sure there is a workable plan to maintain it to a level that makes it consistently useful for everyone. Baby steps; Rome wasn't built in a day, etc. etc.
4. The Arrogance of Right-of-Way needs to be addressed. Just because a Pedestrian or Cyclist or Motorist has the Right-of-Way in a particular situation doesn't mean that they are absolved

of all responsibility to watch out for others who are sharing the same travel space. In addition to obliviousness, mistakes can be made by everyone. Pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists have a shared responsibility when they share travel spaces, and each needs to be considerate of (and aware of) the others.

5. The County has equal responsibility for enhancing and maintaining the experience of all users -- Pedestrian, Cyclist, Motorist -- and a plan heavily weighted toward pedestrians that negatively impacts motorists is just plain wrong.

If you got this far, thank you for reading. I won't come to a public meeting because there are so many people talking that the people who should be listening just tune out after a while. I would be happy to discuss further, in a quiet forum, but I suspect that you've gotten plenty of feedback, just like this, from other concerned residents. Still, my contact information follows.

Sincerely,

Cathie Cooper

3703 May Street

Silver Spring, MD 20906

From: [M.Schoenbaum](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Pedestrian Master Plan (March 23, 2023)  
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 12:31:31 PM

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

Dear Planning Board,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Action Committee for Transit (ACT).

We are very happy that the Pedestrian Master Plan has advanced to the Planning Board public hearing stage. We believe there are twin crises for walking and rolling in Montgomery County. One crisis is safety. The other crisis is access. Crash prevention is very important - but not enough. It must be, not just safe, but also comfortable and convenient for people to travel by foot or mobility device in the county. The absence of comfortable, convenient walking/rolling infrastructure leads to excessive driving, limits access to transit, degrades public health, exacerbates the social isolation of people who are unable to drive (especially young people and old people), and weakens the sense of community.

Therefore, we ask you to please adopt the public hearing draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan and immediately transmit it to the Montgomery County Council for approval. The sooner the Pedestrian Master Plan is adopted, the sooner everyone can start using it to make Montgomery County safer, more comfortable, and more convenient for everyone who is walking and rolling here.

Thank you,

Miriam Schoenbaum  
Vice president, Action Committee for Transit  
15004 Clopper Rd  
Boys MD 20841

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**


**From:** [Public Testimony](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Submit Written, Audio or Video Testimony [#2838]  
**Date:** Monday, March 20, 2023 11:39:18 AM

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

**From:** Wufoo <no-reply@wufoo.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 19, 2023 6:44 PM  
**To:** Public Testimony <Public.Testimony@montgomerycountymd.gov>; #CCL.Councilmembers (Private) <#CCL.CouncilmembersPrivate@montgomerycountymd.gov>; #CCL.Councilmembers (Public) <#CCL.CouncilmembersPublic@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Subject:** Submit Written, Audio or Video Testimony [#2838]

**[EXTERNAL EMAIL]**

First name *	Warren
Last name *	Chan
Address	<input type="checkbox"/> 7710 Woodmont Ave Bethesda, MD Bethesda United States
Phone Number	(301) 246-0816
Email *	<a href="mailto:goodstuffnow@gmail.com">goodstuffnow@gmail.com</a>
Date of Public Hearing *	Thursday, March 23, 2023
Hearing Topic (e.g. Bill 16-20, Operating Budget, Capital Improvements, etc.) *	Pedestrian Master Plan
Type of testimony *	Document
Attach a document file in .pdf or .docx format. Limit 25 MB. *	 <a href="#">to_the_montgomery_county_planning_board.pdf.pdf</a> 24.47 KB • PDF



**For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit:**  
<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

# To the Montgomery County Planning Board:

I am writing to support the recommendations in the Pedestrian Master Plan draft. Taken together with the approved Bicycle Master Plan, significant progress can be made in progressing the Counties stated equity, climate and vision zero goals.

We need to change the norm that humans can be sacrificed to vehicular violence as a justifiable result of convenience and the need of vehicular level of service.

We continue to excuse excess injuries and death to additional vehicular miles driven. Even in the Counties report in Vision Zero, a **20% increase** (from 202 to 241) in injuries is normalized/excused by additional miles drive. See below for the highlighted quote from the Vision Zero FY2022 Annual Report:

“Serious and fatal crashes increased from 202 in 2020 to 241 in 2021,1 but was 15% below the 2015-2019 average. **Much of the year-over-year increase, particularly for serious injury crashes, was due to a 9% increase in vehicle miles traveled** as people returned to the road after COVID- 19 related shutdowns. (from the Vision Zero FY2022 Annual Report).

We need to do better.

We remember Jake Cassells 17, Dr Ned Gaylin 81, Jennifer DiMauro 31, Eric Frank Grosse Jr. 71, Enzo Marcel Alvarenga 18, and recently Sarah Langenkamp 41.

Best regards,

Warren Chan

March 19, 2023



**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Elizabeth Wehr](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** RE: County"s Proposed Pedestrian Master Plan -- comments  
**Date:** Monday, March 20, 2023 10:49:05 AM

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

As a resident of Kenwood Park, I am writing to urge the county to overhaul its deeply flawed “sidewalks” program that, as it seems, enabled the county to propose very disruptive plans (original and revised) to retrofit sidewalks to several neighborhood streets -- with no showing of actual need or general support within my neighborhood. Indeed, there is considerable opposition to these plans, which we hope the county will recognize and desist from moving forward with sidewalks. I was shocked to learn, on reading online county information about the sidewalks and “traffic calming” programs, that a sidewalks retrofit can be triggered by a simple request — either by a neighborhood association or just a few residents — and a showing of feasibility (e.g. available right of way). There is no requirement that a sidewalk’s planned safety benefit be supported by actual data, specific to the affected neighborhood, on traffic and safety issues that would make imposition of sidewalks the best solution to traffic safety problems. Nor does there seem to be any requirement to consider environmental impact, and among other problems, the Kenwood Park sidewalk plans seem to threaten losses of the established tree canopy and imposition of more paving. In my view, sidewalks should not be addressed in a separate program but be one of multiple options for “traffic calming” interventions by the county, and such interventions should include meaningful input from affected neighborhoods, from early in a planning process.

Elizabeth Wehr  
5900 Plainview Road  
Bethesda, MD 20817

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Glazier, Eli](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Montgomery Co. wants to hear from residents about long term pedestrian plan, Kate Ryan, WTOP, 03,17,2023.  
**Date:** Monday, March 20, 2023 9:44:30 AM  
**Attachments:** [GOVERNORS HIGHWAY SAFETY ASSOCIATION BTSCRIP SUBMISSION FOR 2022 Dec 2021.docx](#)

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**From:** Trevor Frith <leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 4:37 PM  
**To:** kryan@wtop.com; Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>  
**Subject:** Montgomery Co. wants to hear from residents about long term pedestrian plan, Kate Ryan, WTOP, 03,17,2023.

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

To: Kate Ryan, WTOP, Eli Glazier, Montgomery Co

From: Trevor W. Frith, [leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org). Was it driver error OR the way WE taught them to brake?

Subject: Montgomery Co. wants to hear from residents about long term pedestrian plan, Kate Ryan, WTOP, 03,17,2023.

Kate, we have an idea to save drivers, pedestrians and cyclist's lives which you might be interested in. The idea is to get rid of the right foot braking method we are all forced to use when braking an electric or automatic car.

Even though it is claimed to be the 'gold standard' by state and federal officials, the right foot braking method is directly or indirectly responsible for the deaths of 19 pedestrians and cyclists each DAY! It has ZERO scientific justification other than 'That's the way it's always been taught' (Taught or BRAINWASHED?) The 'boys' like it just fine because, 'Real men brake with their right foot'. (9 years of hate mail from the 'boys').

What is the alternative? We proposed that a scientific study be used to compare the right foot braking method with the Left Foot Braking Method which has the following advantages:

1. Allows the driver to apply the brakes  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a second sooner, thus stopping the car in a shorter distance of from 30 – 60 feet depending on the speed of the car. Simply put, it allows the driver to stop the car in a shorter distance from 30 mph than from 20 mph! Applying the brakes sooner would prevent many right turn on Red crashes. (KATE, NO NEED FOR WHAT EVIRONMENT SUPPORTERS AND DRIVERS FEEL IS AN

UNNECESSARY LAW).

2. Makes 'Hit the gas pedal instead of the brake pedal', IMPOSSIBLE! (It would not be necessary to spend billions on those ugly bollards!). EVEN A HIGH SCHOOL CLASS, WITHOUT ANY TESTING, WOULD CONCLUDE THAT IF ALL DRIVERS USED THE LEFT FOOT BRAKING METHOD, THERE WOULD BE NO 'HIT THE GAS INSTEAD OF THE BRAKE'! AND WITH THE INSTANTANEOUS HIGH TORQUE OF THE EVs, IT IS GOING TO BE 10 TIMES WORSE!

3. Not only safer but easier to learn, retain with age and is more friendly to female drivers.

4. The cost to ban the teaching of the right foot braking method and replace it with the Left Foot Braking Method would be minimal.

Note: The simple use of the left foot to brake is NOT, repeat NOT the Left Foot Braking Method.

Kate, there is a method to determine if the right foot braking method is really the, 'gold standard', of braking methods. It is called the Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program (BTSCRCP). It is a forum supposedly committed to saving lives and is supported by the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) ([ghsa.org](http://ghsa.org)), the National Highway Traffic Administration (NHTSA) ([nhtsa.gov](http://nhtsa.gov)) and the Transportation Research Board (TRB) ([trb.org](http://trb.org)). The BTSCRCP program calls for ideas to save the lives of pedestrians and cyclists. We submitted an idea in 2018 calling for a scientific study comparing the right foot braking method with the Left Foot Braking Method. It was rejected. We have submitted a revised proposal which is attached. All the State representatives of GHSA have a copy of the proposal. (Status Unknown). We know our proposal is not popular. Tucker Carlson would go crazy with a headline that read, 'After study, state and federal governments ban the teaching of the right foot braking method used to brake electric and automatic vehicles.'

If you get them young enough (student driver), tell them a lie, big enough (the right foot braking method is the only braking method that should be used on automatic or electric vehicles), and often enough (plus telling them that if they want their license they will brake with their right foot), they will believe it for life and will systemically pass it on to their children!

Hope you will care enough to investigate, expose and pass on this information to others who want to take some immediate low cost action to prevent deaths and injuries of pedestrians and cyclists. Kate, if you do nothing else, please feel free to send this email to the Maryland representative of GHSA and ask for comment. That person is Christine Nizer, [cnizer@mva.maryland.gov](mailto:cnizer@mva.maryland.gov) Please ask them why they are not supporting a scientific study comparing the two braking methods. All a big misunderstanding or the biggest cover up in automotive history and worthy of a Pulitzer? Please make sure you ask them to

give you SCIENTIFIC JUSTIFICATION for their support of the right foot braking method.

Thank you for caring about these needless deaths and life changing injuries.

Trevor W. Frith, [leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org). [leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com](mailto:leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com)

All we are asking for is a scientific study.  
[leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org)

## **Governors Highway Safety Association**

### **Behavioral Traffic Safety Cooperative Research Program**

#### **I. PERSON DEVELOPING THE PROBLEM STATEMENT December 13, 2021**

Trevor W. Frith B.S.M.E., P.Eng. (R)

[leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org)

[leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com](mailto:leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com)

#### **II. Problem Title**

**An estimated 19 pedestrians and cyclists die each day due to right foot pedal errors.**

This highlights the necessity of this request for a scientific research study comparing the traditional right foot braking method used on automatic transmission vehicles with the Left Foot Braking Method (LFBM). The LFBM is believed to be easier to learn and retain with age, has shorter stopping distances and is immune from pedal misapplication thus making it potentially the safer braking method. It should be understood that casual braking using the left foot is not the Left Foot Braking Method. See [leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org) for a complete description.

#### **III. Research Area**

##### **Cyclists and Pedestrian Safety**

#### **IV. Research Problem Statement**

It has been estimated that each day approximately 19 cyclists/pedestrians will die and hundreds will receive life changing injuries. (These deaths are specific to the issue of braking and no other causes such as driver distraction, effects of alcohol or drugs etc.) These cyclists/pedestrians will be killed sitting in their favorite coffee shop or wherever (a car building/parking lot crash) or walking on a cross walk or cycling on a

roadway, etc. (a car-pedestrian/cyclist crash). They will die because they were crushed to death by an automatic transmission vehicle which did not stop in time.

The crash will typically be reported in the media using one of the following phrases:

- (1) 'Driver hit the gas instead of the brake'.
- (2) 'Driver could not stop in time'.

(1) 'Driver hit the gas instead of the brake', is a right foot pedal error also known as pedal misapplication and can be tied directly to the right foot braking method which is highly susceptible to this braking error. This braking error in our view, can be classified in one of two types:

**TYPE ONE**: Driver needs to stop or slow down. Driver attempts to move the right foot from the gas pedal to the brake pedal. Right foot ends up on the gas pedal. Driver becomes aware of the error and attempts again to move the right foot to the brake. Driver may be able to avoid or minimize the crash.

**TYPE TWO**: Driver needs to stop or slow down. Driver attempts to move the right foot from the gas pedal to the brake pedal. Right foot ends up on the gas pedal. Driver is convinced that the right foot is on the brake pedal and pushes harder on what is actually the gas pedal. This error may occur over many, many seconds and is usually only terminated with the crash. In many cases the driver has little or no understanding of what went wrong and will tend to believe it to be a mechanical malfunction, a temporary medical condition, right foot stuck between the gas and brake pedal etc.

**We believe that the Left Foot Braking Method is immune to this type of pedal error and believe that the proposed research study will prove that.**

(2) 'Driver could not stop in time'. Even if the driver makes good contact between the right foot and the brake pedal the right foot braking method, stopping distances will be much greater than those of the Left Foot Braking Method. This is because the right foot braking method requires at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a second longer to initiate and 30-40 more feet to stop even at slow school yard speeds.

**We believe that the Left Foot Braking Method has superior stopping distances and that the proposed research study will prove that.**

The proposed scientific research study objective would achieve at least two results:

- (1) If it is found that the Left Foot Braking Method is safer and superior to the traditional right foot braking method, we would expect for the sake of a reduction or elimination of pedestrian and cyclist deaths and injuries, that the teaching of the right foot braking method would be **banned** and replaced with the Left Foot Braking Method which would be taught by all driving schools and as a requirement for obtaining a driver's license.
  
- (2) If it is found that the right foot braking method is superior to the Left Foot Braking Method, then at least for the first time in history, this method would have some scientific justification, other than, *'That's the way it's always been taught'*. The only scientific research that has so far been carried out concerning this subject has been by NHTSA. See references: DOT HS 811 597<sup>i</sup>, 812 058<sup>ii</sup> and 812 431<sup>iii</sup> and the work of Professor Richard A. Schmidt, UCLA<sup>iv</sup>. These reports concluded that pedal braking errors were the fault of the drivers. There was never any suggestion or conclusion to the effect that, *"is it possible we are teaching student drivers the wrong way to brake an automatic transmission vehicle?"*

## **V. Research Objective**

To carry out a research program comparing the traditional right foot braking method used on automatic transmission vehicles with the Left Foot Braking Method. The objective is to determine which braking method is superior in terms of:

1. The elimination of pedal misapplication.
2. The shortest reaction and stopping distances.
3. Is easiest to learn and retain with age.

## Methodology

While it would be the final responsibility of the BTSCRCP contractors to provide an outline of the proposed study we hope that it would look somewhat as follows:

1. Select a number of young people who are seeking driver training to obtain their driver licenses. Perhaps 50 to 100 in total. Driver training would be offered free.
2. The students would be advised that the objective of the study would be to attempt to determine whether the right foot braking method or the Left Foot Braking Method is the best way to brake a car equipped with an automatic transmission.
3. The students would then be divided into two groups. Both groups being 50% male and 50% female and an equal ratio of shapes and sizes etc. to represent the demographics of the population and would be assured that retraining would be given to the group that represented the losing braking method.
4. Both groups would be exposed to the typical classroom driver training with adjustments made if failures occurred so that the remaining candidates were equal in both groups.
5. The successful classroom graduates would then be exposed to two phases of hands on training:

### **Phase One**

The use of the latest generation of driving simulators. After the students mastered the simulator they would then be exposed to a number of braking tests, maneuvers to test driver stability within the driver compartment, ability of the driver to function under unstable and panic induced situations. An example might be to offer cash rewards to the driver for successfully answering skill testing



questions via a hands free phone just prior to a roadway panic situation etc.

Examples of data that would be recorded include time to make contact with the brake pedal, stopping distance from a specified speed, instances of right foot pedal errors etc.

### **Phase Two**

The use of driver training cars completely computer wired with all appropriate sensors to record similar data to what was recorded from the simulators. Again after the student had mastered the driver training cars they would be exposed to real life tests especially all aspects of parking lot driving and general roadway braking under severe panic situations. Panic tests would be carried out with extreme footwear, (high heels, construction boots, snowmobile boots, no footwear, flip flops etc.).

6. During all of the above tests data would be collected by the scientists (hopefully being 50% female) which would allow a final decision on which type of braking was superior when braking a car equipped with an automatic transmission.

It is of interest to note that one of the largest barriers to executing a fair and neutral study will probably be the selection of driver instructors. The scientists involved will have to select these instructors carefully to ensure that they will not carry their traditional right foot braking prejudice into the study. Perhaps just female instructors (e.g.: recent college/driving school graduates with good teaching skills), who have not been exposed to the "Real men brake with their right foot" lobby.

Why use student drivers? Simply put they have not been taught either braking method and therefore have no reason to favor one braking method over the other. Four years of interaction with male drivers has clearly shown us that the average male driver has been so indoctrinated into the so called superiority of the right foot braking method that no amount of science will change their minds. Therefore they would certainly not be impartial participants in the project.

### **Supplementary braking tests:**

#### Right foot braking method vs the Left Foot Braking Method

A final portion of the research project should involve the teaching and testing of a number of senior drivers. Again a ratio of male and female drivers 50% using the existing right foot braking method and 50% being trained and using the Left Foot Braking Method. It is felt that this exercise would show that the braking advantage of the Left Foot Braking Method increases with age, a further reason to explore retraining senior drivers.

### **WHAT WOULD BE THE ACTION PLAN IF THE LEFT FOOT BRAKING METHOD IS FOUND TO BE SUPERIOR.**

1. At the very least the report would be required reading by all driving school instructors and it would be made illegal for driving instructors to threaten students with failing grades for using the Left Foot Braking Method.
2. At best it would be required by driving schools to teach only the safer Left Foot Braking Method to students seeking to obtain a license to drive a car equipped with an automatic transmission. (As a point of interest, different licenses could be offered to students who want to drive clutch type cars in the same way as different licenses are issued for motorcycles, large trucks etc. A license to drive a car equipped with an automatic transmission would still require a passing grade using the Left Foot Braking Method).

### **IF THE LEFT FOOT BRAKING METHOD IS FOUND TO BE SUPERIOR, WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT EXISTING DRIVERS?**

Another similar study would presumably have to be carried out to determine if existing drivers could successfully be retrained. If the study was successful, driver training schools (for a fee) could be taught how to teach existing drivers and those drivers could (for a fee) be retrained in the Left Foot Braking Method.

Estimated funding requirements for the proposed research project:

In our rough estimates of the cost of the project we assumed that a driving school would be selected that could accommodate 100 students and would have sufficient simulators, extended time requirements for the simulators, special instructors and a special course to handle that number of students. Based on standard average industry estimates and increased due to the special nature of the project this could result in an estimated project cost of \$400,000 plus.

## **VI. Urgency and Potential Benefits**

Unfortunately specific data on right foot braking errors has never been collected by those in charge of driver legislation and training. However our organization has spent the past 4 years observing crash reports by the media, some official data, and feedback to our website. Therefore, we believe the information we have gathered underlines the urgency and potential benefits of the proposed scientific study:

1. From a scientific point of view, it can be noted that of the 40,000 estimated yearly automotive deaths, 7,000 of those deaths can be attributed to either the direct cause (pedal misapplication) and/or to the inefficiencies of the right foot braking method.
2. From a social point of view it can also be noted that since the introduction of the automatic transmission, it is estimated that right foot pedal errors have accounted for the deaths of over 150,000 pedestrians/cyclist, many of whom have been children, as well as life changing injuries to millions and costs in the billions.
3. Right foot pedal errors occur 40,000 times each day. This results in 60 car-building/parking lot crashes and over 100 pedestrian/cyclist crashes that very day. Driver error is almost always listed as the cause.

4. The right foot braking method is particularly difficult to learn and retain by young and old drivers. According to the late Professor, Richard A. Schmidt, of UCLA, when it comes to right foot braking, old may be defined as the age when one cannot successfully complete several basketball free throws, one after the other!
5. A large number of right foot pedal errors are committed by young and old female drivers. Never has there been any thought by those in charge as to why? Implied of course is the age old male assumption that women drivers are inferior. Never thoughts like can we make the braking method easier to learn and retain with age as well as more efficient and safer. 'ME TOO' may not be the only victim of a male systemic belief!
6. ***The obvious potential impacts of failure to fund this research project is the continuation of unnecessary deaths due to right foot pedal errors.***

Miscellaneous comment:

It might be argued as to whether this is an important enough issue on which to spend money, given that we are soon to be all riding in a driverless vehicle? In the writers view this issue is extremely urgent and worthwhile. We are turning out millions of new drivers each year and when it comes to safe braking, they have all been set up to fail. We will be graduating these drivers for many years to come as it will be sometime before the average male driver will be convinced or forced to accept driverless vehicles, perhaps 2040.

On what bases do we make such predictions? We make them based on 4 years of male driver feedback (Some would call it hate mail!) to our website. These people not only feel they are the world's greatest drivers but they can also vote! From the feedback then, here are some generalized predictions, comments, etc. that we remember. We won't list their comments regarding the Left Foot Braking Method. We think you already know what they were:

1. Most women drivers and all old drivers should not be allowed to drive.
2. If we were allowed to vote, there would be no seat belts, ADAS, etc. and Vision Zero would not be allowed to ruin the roads.

3. Driverless vehicles? “I will give my gun and my pickup when you pry them from my cold dead hand.”
4. Politicians will never allow our drive vehicles to be outlawed. Driverless vehicles will only take over when the insurance costs become prohibitive and the cops will catch us for ‘no insurance’. The rich will still drive their cars on the open road.
5. Real men don’t drive vehicles with automatic transmissions anyway.
6. Adaptive cruise control (Doesn’t get back up to speed fast enough or get close enough to the vehicle I am following, people can cut in).
7. Lane wandering and departure alarm (Bugs the hell out of me, I don’t need to be between the lines all the time anyway (The cyclists have nightmares about these guys).
8. Back up camera (I liked the original version which just warned you and you decided the need to brake. The new one stops the car so I have turned it off).
9. Automatic emergency braking (Scares the hell out of me. I can stop faster myself because I am the best driver in the world). Emergency crash avoidance with adaptive steering. (A dog runs out on the road and my car decides to save the dog and do front end contact with a semi!).
10. Google will tell you how to disconnect all these ADAS.

## **VII. Implementation Planning**

1. The appropriate target audience for the research results would be those in charge of driver legislation and training at the state level.
2. The key decision makers who could approve, influence or champion the research results would we hope be the GHSA and NHTSA.
3. Organizations with likely responsibility for adoption of the results would again be those in charge of state legislation and driver training who via the appropriate legislation, would champion the safety and efficiencies of the Left Foot Braking Method.
4. Early adopters would hopefully be the premier driving schools who could put aside their past prejudices to any braking method other than the right foot braking method.
5. The barriers to implementation are mainly the average male driver as described in section **VI**. Some politicians will be reluctant to take on the

right foot braking lobby but hopefully like the issue of seat belts, the lifesaving benefits will be too great to ignore.

Concerning the testing and evaluation of the research findings – [leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org) is a grassroots organization interested only in reducing the deaths and injuries of pedestrians and cyclists by proposing what we feel is a safer and more efficient braking method for automatic transmission vehicles. As such we would not be capable of testing or evaluating the research results.

**VIII. Person developing the problem statement:**

Trevor W. Frith B.S.M.E., P.Eng. (R)  
[leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org)                      [leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com](mailto:leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com)

**IX. Submitted by**

Trevor W. Frith B.S.M.E., P.Eng. (R)    [leftfootbraking.org](http://leftfootbraking.org)  
[leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com](mailto:leftfootbraking2014@gmail.com)

REFERENCES

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- iii. DOT HS 812 431 “Older-Driver Foot Movements”, July 2017  
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- iv. Professor Richard A. Schmidt, UCLA “Cars Gone Wild: The Major Contributor to Unintended Acceleration in Automobiles is Pedal Error”,  
Frontiers in Psychology, Published online 2010 Nov 25  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3153815/>

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

From: [Alexander Edwards](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Re: Thank you for your message  
Date: Sunday, March 19, 2023 3:23:54 PM

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

My address is:

8455 Fenton St Apt 622  
Silver Sping, MD 20910

My written testimony is:

Hello,

Just a quick comment:

It is not possible to go outside in downtown Silver Spring without being subjected to high levels of noise, pollution, and danger imposed by drivers. There has to be a better way. Please plan for people, not cars.

Thank you,

Alexander

On Sat, Mar 18, 2023, 9:26 AM MCP-Chair <[mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org)> wrote:

Thank you for this message. If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. You may provide this to [MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org)

For all other e-mails, Chair's Office staff will respond as soon as possible. If you need immediate assistance, please call our office at (301) 495-4605.



From: [John Devine](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Cc: [bdevine](#)  
Subject: Comments on Proposed Sidewalk Plan - Kenwood Park  
Date: Saturday, March 18, 2023 5:28:35 PM

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

We're writing to voice our strong objection to the proposed plan to construct sidewalks in the Kenwood Park neighborhood. Our family has resided on Millwood Rd for over ten years - the first year as renters, and the past nine years as homeowners. We selected this neighborhood, in large part, for its character - idyllic streets lined with mature trees, many of them large, flowering cherry and other varieties. These are slow growing trees that have taken many decades to achieve their current state. It would be a travesty to lose any of them. Our house is slated to lose three.

Before we bought here, we inquired of many neighbors if there had ever been proposals for sidewalks. Although most people were opposed, two neighbors told us they had petitioned several times, but were repeatedly informed by the county that traffic on Millwood Rd didn't create conditions that would justify sidewalks. Rather, speed-bumps were installed to control traffic speed.

Some specific concerns:

- **Cost/benefit analysis** - How much has already been spent in the planning for this effort in Kenwood Park? What is the estimated total cost of the proposed project in Kenwood Park? **Can you quantify the actual benefit of this expenditure?** If safety is an issue, constructing more/higher speed bumps would be dramatically more cost efficient.
- **Timing** - how long has this project been planned, and why are residents just now being notified? Some residents have recently spent thousands of dollars on landscaping and trees that are now at risk of being removed.
- **Climate** - In the FAQ's, climate change is listed as a primary motivation for the sidewalk plan, by promoting walking rather than driving. But most of this neighborhood is located **much** too far from shopping, entertainment, daycare centers, parks, playgrounds, etc. for people to walk to those destinations. Further, pedestrians would have to cross Goldsboro, and/or Bradley Blvd to access any of the above destinations, **How many cars do you predict will be removed as a result of these sidewalks?** How do you quantify that? Were any surveys taken to determine how many people would actually walk rather than drive to the above destinations?
- **Safety** - As noted above, over the years, occasional requests for sidewalks have been denied on the grounds that the lack of sidewalks wasn't a safety issue. Instead, speed bumps were installed. Why not install more speed bumps, and at a height that would significantly slow traffic? Current speed bumps on Millwood are not high enough. **What is the data on vehicle-pedestrian collisions over time in Kenwood Park?**
- **Drainage/damage** - If construction of the sidewalks results in eventual drainage issues and/or damage to the property or homes, **what is the liability of the county to remediate?**

- **Data driven decisions** - We **support** the recommendation **(B-1a)** to pivot from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data driven process, but that data **should include the input and interest of the community that knows the neighborhood and where sidewalks are needed**. We **reject** the recommendation (B-1b) that public engagement should be limited to how sidewalks should be constructed, not whether. Community notice and involvement must be incorporated earlier in the process. Earlier notice and involvement also helps people to make landscaping and other decisions while a sidewalk plan is being developed to reduce conflict.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

John and Beni Devine  
6608 Millwood Rd  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
johnpdevine1@msn.com

*John P. Devine*

johnpdevine1@msn.com

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Tuuli Lipping](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Safety on Goldsboro Drive in Bethesda  
**Date:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 11:30:48 AM

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

Hello,

There is a stretch of Goldsboro Drive between Glen Echo and Massachusetts Avenue where there is no sidewalk or pedestrian lane. There is only about 6 inches of asphalt between the edge and the white traffic line. I'm ok walking it on weekends when there's little traffic, but during the week I'm very nervous about walking that stretch of road. A while ago the county put up those traffic sticks, or pylons, along the stretch of MacArthur at Glen Echo park to prevent drivers from going into the sidewalk. They also installed them further up on MacArthur by Old Anglers Inn to prevent mass parking on peoples property.....Perhaps the same could be done on Goldsboro?

Many thanks,

Tuuli Lipping

Sent from my iPhone

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Melita Patel](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Question sidewalk to Ross Boddy Center  
**Date:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 8:43:27 AM

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

Good morning,

I'm writing to you as I saw the article about making Montgomery county more pedestrian friendly. My question is will the sidewalk continue from Brooke rd in Sandy Spring all the way to the Ross Boddy Center to make that more accessible for local children to be able to walk to the recreation center without having to walk on the road with cars driving extremely fast along the road. Currently the sidewalk stops on Brooke road by the tree farm, then pedestrians have to walk on the road which is extremely dangerous. They're a lot of folks that walk up Brooke road to get to the bus stop on route 108. If there was a walking path to the rec center more folks could access it or go towards route 108 to be able to catch the bus.

I would like for you to consider this in your plan since the rec center was rebuild before COVID-19 for community residents but the only real way to access it is for folks to drive. It would be great to have a walking path especially with summer camps being held there, kids could ride their bikes there and home etc.

Respectfully,

Melita Patel

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Glazier, Eli](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: "Pedestrian Master Plan" Feedback  
**Date:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 7:33:24 AM

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**From:** Mike Bailey <mbailey@usa.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 18, 2023 7:29 AM  
**To:** Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>  
**Subject:** "Pedestrian Master Plan" Feedback

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

Hi Eli, I wanted to give you feedback on the "Pedestrian Master Plan" that relates to the blinking red lights now seen at some pedestrian crossings in the Wisconsin Ave. area. While I think the red lights are a positive development, they can be confusing for both drivers and pedestrians. The County regulations are that drivers must stop their car when a pedestrian is in a designated crossing, but with the red lights drivers can become accustomed to that being the sole indicator that they should stop. Pedestrians who enter the crossing without the red lights flashing are in danger of being hit or of getting into confrontations with drivers.

As I understand, *regardless of the red light status* a pedestrian always has the right-of-way when in a designated crossing. We need to be sure drivers still understand this and don't depend on the red lights as a "crutch".

Thanks,  
Mike

**Mike Bailey**  
4620 N Park Ave Apt 407W  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Glazier, Eli](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Crosswalk on Veirs Mill Rd  
**Date:** Friday, March 17, 2023 6:32:45 PM

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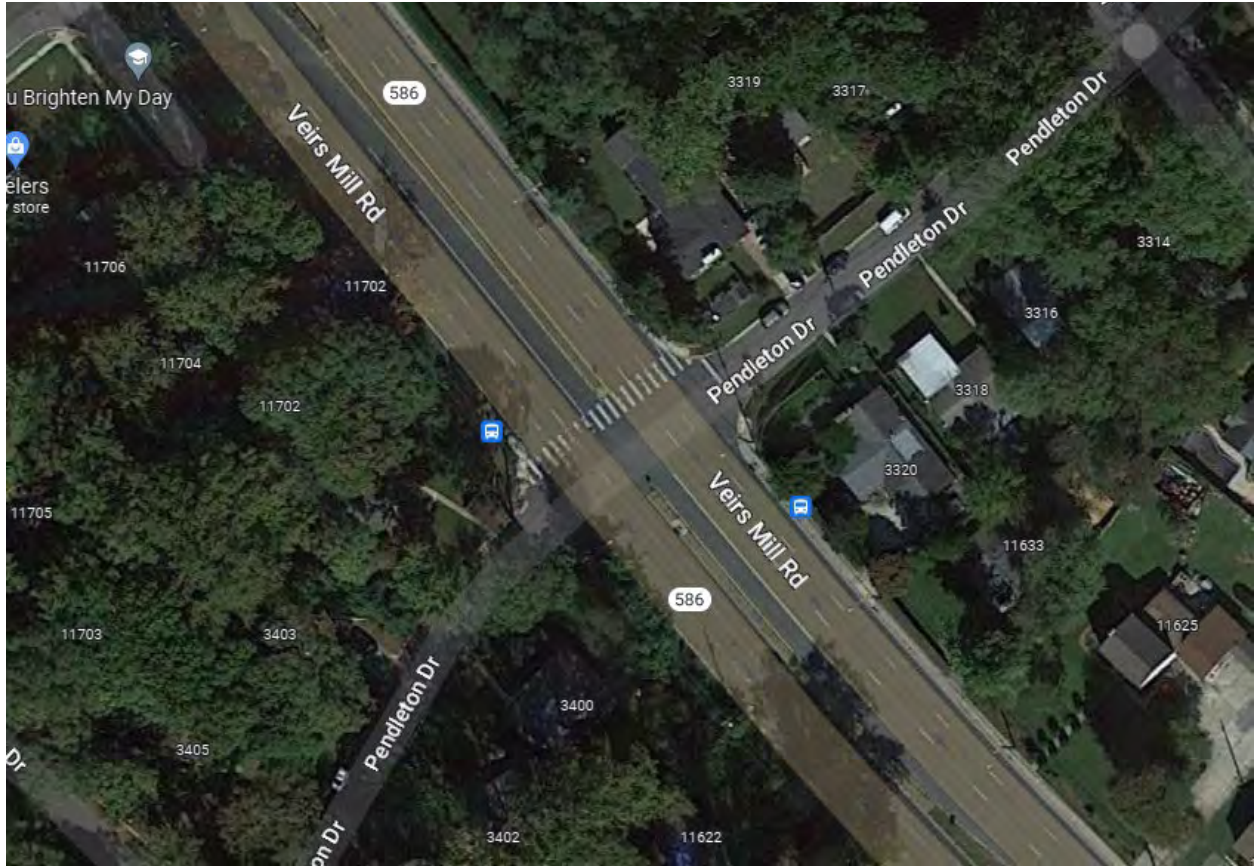
**From:** SSA <spinndry@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2023 6:15:54 PM  
**To:** Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>  
**Subject:** Crosswalk on Veirs Mill Rd

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

This crosswalk is mostly ignored by drivers going 45 mph.  
There is little or no enforcement of traffic laws in the area.  
A pedestrian would really have to foolish to use this crosswalk and expect that vehicles would yield the right of way.

Stephen Sachs📧  
11710 Old Georgetown RD #1002  
Rockville, MD 20852  
541-292-2991

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1



From: [Hillary Berman](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Cc: [Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov); [Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
Subject: Kenwood Park Sidewalk Plan/Pedestrian Master Plan Concerns  
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 5:24:33 PM

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

To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing as a concerned resident and parent about the Kenwood Park Sidewalk Proposal.

We live on the corner of a street that is often used as a direct route through the neighborhood from Whitter Blvd. While there is a 4-way stop, cars often travel at high speeds and pass through the stop signs at full- or barely-reduced speed. I am also the parent of three children who very much enjoy playing in the yard and riding bikes in the neighborhood. One walks to school and one picks up an MCPS bus right on our corner. I am intimately familiar with the paramount need for improved road safety in our community.

However, the current proposal neither achieves road safety goals nor enhances our community. The best options to improve road safety and reduce speed remain to be seen given there have been no traffic studies or proposals that specifically address speed and traffic volume in the neighborhood. Additionally, the community who has the most knowledge has not been consulted for our feedback on where sidewalks would be most valuable. I reject recommendation B-1b that we only have input into how sidewalks should be constructed.

While sidewalks are theoretically a good approach, when those sidewalks drastically impact the environment and aesthetics of a neighborhood, their value is also called into question. While the numbers can be massaged to claim that the county's planting of multiple saplings (or marginally larger trees) replaces one grown, established tree, this is marketing and optics. Grown trees provide shade and beauty that saplings take years to achieve. There's more to the environment than CO2 impact and we deserve more than a PR-crafted pitch on the county's commitment to it.

The revised proposal was completed as quickly and haphazardly as the original one. The claim that air excavation will save trees is highly suspect. That approach to the plan only requires arborists to review trees, not take proactive steps to save trees or root systems. Again, we deserve better.

I support some version of a sidewalk plan, but not one that is done without community participation in the process. A reactive, request-driven process as is currently occurring stands in the way of the supposed road safety goals and is a massive waste of time and money. The current proposal feels like a win for only the concrete and sidewalk contractors and a huge loss for the community and our county. I expect better stewardship of my tax dollars from our elected, appointed, and hired county officers.

I am happy to elaborate on my concerns as requested.



Kind regards,

Hillary Berman  
7001 Kenhill Road, Bethesda, MD 20817  
301-803-7013

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Rich Kuzmyak](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [Gerrit J. Knaap](#); [nfinio@umd.edu](mailto:nfinio@umd.edu); [Sheila Hosagrahara Somashekhar](#)  
**Subject:** Pedestrian Master Plan Comments  
**Date:** Friday, March 17, 2023 2:53:10 PM  
**Attachments:** [Pedestrian Master Plan Commentary.docx](#)  
[RK Comments on MoCo Ped Plan.docx](#)

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

Please regard the attached as written testimony in support of Montgomery County Planning's Pedestrian Master Plan, scheduled for public hearing on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

I should note that while I am an Affiliate of the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland and have received acceptance of the content by the NCSG, any issues regarding opinion or phrasing should be attributed to me as the author of the documents. I trust my comments are helpful, and my colleagues and I regard this as an important and well-executed piece of work.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

J. Richard Kuzmyak  
Transportation Consultant  
9509 Woodstock Ct.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-332-8767

[jrichkuz@outlook.com](mailto:jrichkuz@outlook.com)

## Commentary on MNCPPC Pedestrian Master Plan

Submitted by:

March 17, 2023

J. Richard Kuzmyak  
Transportation Consultant, LLC  
9509 Woodstock Ct.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-495-8814  
[jrichkuz@outlook.com](mailto:jrichkuz@outlook.com)

I would like to use this occasion to offer my thoughts and suggestions in support of the Draft Pedestrian Master Plan as it comes up for review on March 23, 2023.

For the record, I am a semi-retired transportation planner and researcher who has practiced across the country for over 40 years, and a resident of Montgomery County (Forest Glen Park) since 1986. I claim expertise in the areas of travel behavior, demand analysis, demographic and historic trends, smart growth/land use, multimodal transportation and accessibility, non-motorized modes, environmental justice, and air quality/climate change. I have led or been a major participant in numerous research studies for the National Academy of Sciences/Transportation Research Board, the US Department of Transportation and Environmental Protection Agency bearing on the issues cited above and have consulted at a high level to the Maryland State Departments of Transportation and Planning and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments.

Since leaving full time employment in 2018, I have been an Affiliate of the National Center for Smart Growth at the University of Maryland, where I recently served as the transportation lead in the Purple Line TOD study funded under a \$2 million grant from the Federal Transit Administration. In that study, under the auspices of the Purple Line Corridor Coalition, extensive analyses identified critical gaps in the pedestrian and bicycle systems that will critically impact the success of the Purple Line project, both in its ability to serve as a higher-level transit alternative and its role in effecting the social and economic revitalization of the corridor. The final report for that project, whose recommendations bear strong similarity to those in the Pedestrian Plan, may be found here: <https://www.umdsmartgrowth.org/projects/purple-line-fta-mta-tod-planning-grant/>. A follow-up grant from the FTA to the PLCC & NCSG is about to begin and will focus on advancing the recommendations of the initial study; these objectives would be greatly enhanced through the adoption and implementation of the Pedestrian Plan.

We at the National Center believe that the County's Plan reflects exceptional hard work and vision, and demonstrates the commitment of the County to serve as a regional leader in advocating for more livable, sustainable, and healthy communities. Walking is not only itself a healthful activity but is the essential ingredient that makes transit and compact, mixed-use communities viable. Importantly, many of the county's residents who are most negatively impacted by the inadequacy of the walk network are also from low-income, non-White households who depend on transit and walking for all of their basic needs, and the most frequent victims of traffic incidents.

Like most suburban counties in the United States, the structure of Montgomery's environment has been shaped around the presumed superiority of the private motor vehicle. Emphasis in the design and operation of the transportation system prioritizes moving vehicles quickly across long distances, and

virtually all needs and services – school, shopping food, health care, entertainment – require use of a vehicle. These services are located outside convenient walking distance, their setting discourages pedestrian access, and everything in between poses a confrontation between a pedestrian and a motor vehicle. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than in the Purple Line corridor. While residential neighborhoods may have tree-lined streets that are generally safe for walking, pedestrians are ultimately pushed out to the arterial highway network in order reach transit or basic services, and what they find there are the following impediments:

- Wide, multi-lane streets with fast-moving traffic
- Narrow, disjointed sidewalks, frequently in disrepair or with objects obscuring the path, and with no buffer from speeding curbside traffic.
- Frequent curb cuts to enable vehicle access to shopping centers or high-rises
- Long distances between signalized crossings
- Channelized right turns with no active pedestrian controls
- Signal timing that prioritizes through movement of traffic over pedestrian crossing; combined with crossing buttons that have no apparent impact on crossing opportunity
- Large radius curbs at street entrances to facilitate easy car access/egress, typically paired with crosswalks dangerously set back from the intersection.
- Missing, worn out, or inadequate crosswalks

Our Purple Line study report highlights the prevalence of these conditions in the corridor, all of which have received coverage in the recommendations of the Pedestrian Plan. Hence, we are excited about the foundation the Plan provides to ensure that the Purple Line recommendations move forward. An attachment to this letter provides a set of detailed comments on many of the individual recommendations from the Plan, largely serving to endorse the recommendation and in some cases to add additional emphasis or detail where it was thought to be helpful.

If we were to highlight what we believe are the most critical elements of the Plan in moving forward, it would be these:

- Ultimately, better design should lead to safer streets and better control over the undesired aspects of vehicle travel behavior: speeding, ignoring traffic controls, aggressive driving. In the meantime, however, much more needs to be done to improve enforcement. Additional police involvement is probably not optimal from the standpoint of coverage, cost and undesirable conflicts. But automated traffic enforcement (ATE) can be a cost-effective and equitable alternative, and it is significantly under utilized in the county at present. Miniaturization is allowing this technology to cover broader areas at much lower cost, and offers the ability to manage traffic through better monitoring and to scale the intervention (fines vs. warnings) to the severity of the instance.
- A new, better pattern of cooperation needs to happen between the county and the state departments of transportation. As noted, the most significant problems and needs occur in relation to the arterial highway system, most of which routes are also state numbered highways and, hence, governed by state priorities and protocols. This includes speed limits; number and design of signalized intersections; signal phasing and intersection management; ATE deployment; and authority over right of way dedication to walking or bicycle solutions. These

differences in policy must be clarified and resolved if any meaningful change is to come on these arterial streets.

- Funding will always be a factor in determining which recommendations are implemented, how soon and with what priority. Fortunately, the availability of resources to address many of the improvements and programs featured in the Plan may be covered with unprecedented new funding programs out of the U.S. Department of Transportation resulting from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. One program that should draw immediate attention is Safe Streets for All (SS4A), which is making available \$1b per year over 6 years on an 80/20 match basis. Applications for the first year of funding were received in September 2022, from which grants of \$34 million and \$7.5 million were secured respectively by Prince George's County and MNCPPC Parks for pedestrian and bicycle related safety programs. Only MPOs, counties, cities, towns, other special districts that are subdivisions of a state may apply for these funds, as state DOTs are not eligible as leads. Montgomery County DOT would be well advised to take advantage of this unique opportunity.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Pedestrian Plan and to offer endorsement of the many important elements it brings to the fore. My colleagues at NCSG and PLCC are happy to respond to questions or participate in further conversations.

Respectfully submitted,



J. Richard Kuzmyak

## Detailed comments on individual recommendations, Draft Pedestrian Master Plan

B-1a: Strongly support data driven approach to identify key sidewalk needs

B-1b: Strongly agree that the community should be integral to the sidewalk discussion and decision-making process. In the Purple Line 2 grant we plan to convene community groups (residents, businesses, stakeholder) in the assessment and response process through community walks that will also include planning and elected officials.

B-1e: This concept might also be helpful for introducing a community or system of roadway users to a coming (more permanent) change so that behavior can be gradually modified, even allowing for improvements in the final design.

B-2a: This part of the pedestrian environment may be more important than many would see, particularly when they are one of the crucial features of accommodating pedestrians along the counties multi-lane arterial roadways. These buttons have become ubiquitous at virtually every signalized intersection, yet in the vast majority of cases the buttons do not function on the pedestrian or cyclist's behalf, unless their purpose is to initiate a cycle change where one has not been previously programmed in (recall). Extensive personal research in lower Montgomery County suggests that the crossing buttons make no difference in the timing of the dominant (through traffic) green cycle, i.e., if the cycle is set for 2 minutes, pushing the button ensures that it will happen at 2 minutes, but no sooner. This results in a fair number of pedestrians and cyclists becoming impatient and choosing to cross against the light. While a pedestrian or cyclist shouldn't presume that pressing the button would give them immediate priority to cross, they should receive at least some acknowledgement of their presence with a nominal shortening of the mainline green signal. These protocols may appropriately be altered for peak vs. off-peak or weekday/weekend time periods, but right now there does not appear to be any change. The data collection capabilities of this technology should also be used to compile user information and establish crossing protocols accordingly.

B-2c: A full (diagonal) crossing cycle is appropriate and desirable at major intersections in downtowns, along transit corridors, and in proximity to transit stations/bus stops. Establish threshold criteria for their implementation.

B-2d: This is a very important safety feature, where the pushback would be that a given intersection has too little traffic or pedestrian activity. Again, establish threshold criteria to guide their implementation at individual intersections.

B-3a: A related issue in crosswalk alignment is when curbs are built with large radii, to facilitate easy auto turning from traffic; when this happens, however, the curb cuts and crosswalks are also set back from the face of the intersection, putting the pedestrian at added risk

B-3c: Raised or textured crosswalks make sense at all intersections, but particularly at crossings where the only traffic control is a stop sign. Generally, stop signs are the most difficult traffic controls to ensure compliance with, so more robust design may help convey the importance of stopping. One argument against crosswalks by traffic engineers are that they cost too much to maintain; if that is true, the up-front cost of a raised or textured crosswalk would seem to offer long-term cost effectiveness.

B-3d: There should be no reason why all legs of an intersection with connected sidewalks are not provided with crosswalks. Not sure whether this is a cost-saving measure for transportation agencies or an infringement on auto movement, but the net effect is that the pedestrian may have to execute three separate crossings to simply “cross the street”.

B-3e: While the county has become more aggressive at installing pedestrian crossing signs and apprising of state law to comply, a viewing of many setups in the county will currently show no signage, signage facing one direction and not the other, signs put in places where they are not immediately visible, or situations where vehicle traffic will not be apprised that there is a crosswalk ahead around a blind corner when they may be carrying excess speed or be distracted.

B-4a: NCHRP Report 770 and TCRP Report 95/Vol 15 present compelling data that shows that people will willingly walk to many activities rather than drive if (1) the walk network is safe and well-connected, and (2) there are attractive and practical things to walk to. In the typical suburb, neither of these conditions exist. And since trips unrelated to work amount to 85% of household travel, the overwhelming lion's share of household Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) in the suburbs is for non-work purposes. This is why the planned transformation of the Purple Line corridor portends such an important growth model for the county. Therefore it should be a priority to locate as many essential needs and services (healthy foods, schools, services, health care, restaurants, parks) within easy and safe walking distance of households.

B-4d: Incredibly important recommendation. These arterial corridors are where the vast majority of deaths and severe injuries involving pedestrians and cyclists occur, and a primary factor is speed, aided and abetted by auto-friendly design features like infrequent signalized intersections, channelized turns, and insufficient enforcement. Paradoxically, pedestrians who live in these areas are forced out of the relatively safe neighborhood street networks onto the busy arterial roadways to reach their destinations.

B-4e: The design of intersections along the county's arterial highways – which are also the principal transit corridors – but transit users at considerable disadvantage. Because the intersections comprise a large footprint, and with modifications like channelized (uncontrolled) right turns, bus stops are not located at the corners where the pedestrian crossings are, but mid-block. This makes access much more time consuming and encourages dangerous mid-block crossings, often in the dark when the pedestrians are harder to see. Major redesign of these intersections is essential to addressing this serious concern.

Also included in this category is the recommendation to supportive strategy of reducing the vehicle-favoring practice of businesses catering to customers arriving by auto with street facing parking, often with singular curb cuts/driveways and fencing to discourage pedestrian traffic. Many (most) of these commercial centers also are designed to restrict access from the rear of development at the interface with the neighborhoods. A supportive secondary street grid is absolutely necessary to alter this outdated and dangerous practice.

B-4g: Since parkway trails (for bikes at least) are often coincident with the roadways, and with no shoulder safety buffer, it is imperative that greater attention be given to managing auto speeds and distracted driving on these facilities.

B-4i: This concern may be most critical in relation to high-radius curb designs at a large number of current intersections, both on arterial highways and in neighborhoods.

B-6a/b: Trees and other planting not only make the pedestrian environment more comfortable and inviting, but can also serve a traffic calming role.

B-7a: Note that this is a time of great opportunity, with the Federal infrastructure bill and an emphasis on reconnecting communities, safety, equity and climate change. All diligence should be given to trying to access these funds and greatly ramp up the sidewalk program. It should also be stressed that the most critical pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure needs are along the major arterial roadways, though current county programs seem to be much more focused on neighborhood improvements.

B-7f: Be sure to target this recommendation also to bridging the current lockout condition between residential communities and local goods and services.

B-7g: The continuation of the Purple Line TOD study work by the PLCC and UMD via a grant from the Federal Transit Administration is going to focus on maximizing safe access to the 21 Purple Line stations. A solid partnership between PLCC, County and State should be a priority here.

B-8: Thorough analysis of Purple Line station access in the FTA study showed many occasions where, due to topography, a geographic feature (stream), utility, or other barrier, neighborhoods that might otherwise enjoy reasonable access to the station are essentially cut off. These areas can be highlighted with GIS mapping tools and decisions made as to whether enhancing their connectivity would be cost effective.

B-9: Through personal experience I can attest that earning attention from county traffic engineers to clear traffic safety issues is extremely difficult. In my neighborhood (Forest Glen/Linden Lane), the county removed the crosswalks and curb aprons that the developer had put in under code, has allowed for only one (5-way) stop sign that is poorly marked and flagrantly ignored by through traffic, and posted only two 25 mph speed limit signs in locations not visible or relevant to traffic. Over 20 years it has been a constant battle to get reasonable attention and help, despite major community consensus and petitioning.

B-10: MNCPPC's reactions to Evan Glass's Pedestrian Safety Bill took special note of the difference in authority over management issues like right turn on red, signal timing, etc. on county vs state roads. It is essential that the county be able to influence design and operating decisions on the major arterial highways like University Blvd., Georgia Ave., etc. when it comes to safety, pedestrian accessibility, and other critical policy initiatives. Ideally, this gap will be narrowed under the new state administration.

MA: One major area of authority resolution and policy should be with snow clearing. Whether it is state or county workers who clear the major arterial roadways, there should be a policy that it is more important to keep sidewalk areas clear than to clear all 6 lanes of the roadway, curb to curb. A similar situation occurs in terms of overgrowth during the green months, as foliage on both public and private property is allowed to take over pedestrian facilities, forcing pedestrians to sidetrack into the street.

P-1: County vehicles, such as Ride-On buses, school buses, WSSC trucks, county utility trucks (e.g., trash and leaf removal) and even police vehicles not on call can frequently be observed driving much faster than the posted speeds. This not only poses an immediate danger because of the large mass of the vehicle, but sets a poor example for all other drivers.

P-2a: An incredibly important recommendation, already addressed in comments above



P-2b: Incredibly important, also address above.

P-2c: Totally agree, note that this was also addressed in MNCPPC comments on Evan Glass legislation.

P-2d: As above.

P-2e: HIGHLY support this recommendation, per earlier comment.

P-2f: Question whether pedestrian refuges would diminish the ability for a pedestrian to cross the entire street on one cycle, instead of having to wait for a separate crossing opportunity?

P-2g: Absolutely endorse.

P-3a: Absolutely support, per earlier comment.

P-5: A highly important issue. Suggest that attention ALSO be given to the origin end of a school trip, when frequently children needing to get to a bus stop do not have appropriately safe access in terms of sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and traffic calming.

P-7b: There are many locations where stop bars don't exist at all, or which have been neglected for so long that they are not visible/functional. Consider as supplemental strategies: flashing stop signs at critical intersections; raised crosswalks; double posting of stop signs where visibility is impaired; adding painted stop "boxes" or writing "STOP" at the intersection.

P-8: EXTREMELY important. Police simply cannot spread thin enough to cover all situations where traffic control is needed, and frequently their intervention leads to more serious and undesirable outcomes. ATE is the future, but to realize its potential it must: (1) be in many more places, (2) be unpredictable as to location, (3) be equitably distributed, (4) be more realistic and relevant in terms of interacting with the motoring public – at least warnings if not citations; broadcast knowledge that the system is operating; not allowing a 12 mph buffer before issuing a citation. New technology is emerging that will make this approach much more flexible, broader coverage, and inexpensive. A major obstacle to overcome is State DOT reluctance to greater application, and cost – although the new Federal funding should make this much more achievable.

EA-3: Agree, per earlier comment.

EA-4: These systems are currently operating far short of their potential benefit and value, particularly given their cost.

F-1: Again, there is unprecedented funding opportunity under the latest Federal programs. But there must be agreement and coordinate response to access these funds.

From: [Roy Niedermayer](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Pedestrian Master Plan  
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 1:42:49 PM

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

Please include these comments and testimony in the record for the above Plan.

The Master Pedestrian Plan should

1. Move from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data driven process as noted in S recommendation (B-1a). But the data should include the input and interest of the community that knows the neighborhood and where sidewalks are needed. Greater consideration should also be given to **Equity Focus Areas rather than areas where the more affluent, highly educated professionally trained residents know how to make requests, take advantage of and manage/employ the current MCDOT system.**
2. Reject the recommendation (B-1b) that public engagement should be limited to how sidewalks should be constructed, not whether. Community notice and involvement must be incorporated earlier in the process. Earlier notice and involvement also helps people to make landscaping and other decisions while a sidewalk plan is being developed to reduce conflict.
3. Be redone so that the sidewalk program create a holistic, cross-department approach that is not singularly focused on the installation of sidewalks merely because they are feasible and there is a budget for them in MCDOT, but rather focus on the best way to maximize neighborhood safety, preserve trees, and enhance the pedestrian experience. This includes: (1) working together with the Traffic division to consider street alterations that calm traffic and save trees; (2) developing a comprehensive approach to how to build sidewalks while saving trees, drawing on the work of others across the country, includes not only use flexi-pave but also other state of the art techniques such as root bridges and how to save roots.
3. Meld the above elements into program and recommendations specifically focused on reworking the sidewalk program. This would achieve these County goals, which are scattered right now and are not specifically incorporated into MCDOT sidewalk program such as these elements already mentioned in the draft Pedestrian Master Plan:
  - B-4 Build More Walkable Places
  - B-6: Reduce pedestrian pathway temperatures, including fulfilling B-6(a) to ensure shading of sidewalks, and B-6(b) to invest more in street tree preservation and maintenance
  - B-9 on Make traffic calming easier (by incorporating it as part of the sidewalk process)

and these from the Climate Action Plan:

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

- Retain and increase the tree canopy
- Update public space and streetscape design to require cool-colored permeable surfaces

--

Roy Niedermayer  
6128 Durbin Road  
Bethesda, MD 20817-6107  
301-951-4456

From: [CHI](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Montgomery County Master Pedestrian Plan  
Date: Friday, March 17, 2023 1:23:52 PM

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

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan.

The comments below are provided by the Game Changers. The Game Changers is a group of people who are self-advocates. The members are people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who are supported by CHI, Inc.\*, located in Silver Spring. Many of the Game Changers members use wheelchairs in the community.

We whole heartedly agree with the vision of the Master Plan to improve “to create safer, more comfortable experiences walking or rolling around the county, and to make getting around more convenient and accessible for every pedestrian.”

We agree with many of the recommendations that address accessibility, safety and comfort. We would like to highlight some of the recommendations that we feel are **very** important. Our additions to the recommendations are italicized.

1. To increase the time to cross the street.
2. To widen sidewalks so that at least 2 people who use wheelchairs can travel next to one another.
3. To improve maintenance of sidewalks to remove bumps and level uneven sidewalks.
4. To widen crosswalks.
5. To implement passive detection (such as sensors) to eliminate the need for pedestrians to press a button to safely cross the street in areas. *A voice activated signal would also be helpful.*
6. To add trees for shade. *The shade would also help by decreasing glare.*
7. To not only add more public restrooms *but to make sure there is an adult changing table or family bathroom available.*

Thank you for considering our comments. If you have questions, please contact Cathy Lyle at [lylecesy@verizon.net](mailto:lylecesy@verizon.net).

Sincerely,

Cathy Lyle  
Game Changers facilitator  
\*WeAchieve (formerly CHI Centers)  
10501 New Hampshire Ave.  
Silver Spring, MD 20903

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Glazier, Eli](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Comments on Ped Plan  
**Date:** Monday, March 20, 2023 3:21:49 PM  
**Attachments:** [RK Comments on MoCo Ped Plan.docx](#)

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**From:** Rich Kuzmyak <jrichkuz@outlook.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 15, 2023 7:33 PM  
**To:** Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>  
**Cc:** Murnen, Lily <Lily.Murnen@montgomeryplanning.org>; Anspacher, David <david.anspacher@montgomeryplanning.org>  
**Subject:** Comments on Ped Plan

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

Eli and all:

I found great delight in the Pedestrian Plan, and spent a fair amount of time going through it. Extremely well done.

If it is of any value, I have tried to summarize my comments focused on the recommendations, which I have compiled in relation to the recommendation numbering system in the Plan. I thought I should let you look through them, get your general reaction, and then try to reframe them as “written testimony”.

I am sort of doing this both for myself and for NCSG, which they encourage as they probably will not comment directly. I’ll make sure they are OK with my comments before and if I imply that they are also backing the Plan, which I feel pretty sure they will.

All the best,

Rich

J. Richard Kuzmyak

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

Transportation Consultant  
9509 Woodstock Ct.  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

301-332-8767

[jrichkuz@outlook.com](mailto:jrichkuz@outlook.com)

## Comments on Ped Plan

B-1a: Strongly support data driven approach to identify key sidewalk needs

B-1b: Strongly agree that the community should be integral to the sidewalk discussion and decision-making process. In the Purple Line 2 grant we plan to convene community groups (residents, businesses, stakeholder) in the assessment and response process through community walks that will also include planning and elected officials.

B-1e: This concept might also be helpful for introducing a community or system of roadway users to a coming (more permanent) change so that behavior can be gradually modified, even allowing for improvements in the final design.

B-2a: This part of the pedestrian environment may be more important than many would see, particularly when they are one of the crucial features of accommodating pedestrians along the counties multi-lane arterial roadways.

These buttons have become ubiquitous at virtually every signalized intersection, yet in the vast majority of cases the buttons do not function on the pedestrian or cyclist's behalf, unless their purpose is to initiate a cycle change where one has not been previously programmed in (recall). Extensive personal research in lower Montgomery County suggests that the crossing buttons make no difference in the timing of the dominant (through traffic) green cycle, i.e., if the cycle is set for 2 minutes, pushing the button ensures that it will happen at 2 minutes, but no sooner. This results in a fair number of pedestrians and cyclists becoming impatient and choosing to cross against the light. While a pedestrian or cyclist shouldn't presume that pressing the button would give them immediate priority to cross, they should receive at least some acknowledgement of their presence with a nominal shortening of the mainline green signal. These protocols may appropriately be altered for peak vs. off-peak or weekday/weekend time periods, but right now there does not appear to be any change. The data collection capabilities of this technology should also be used to compile user information and establish crossing protocols accordingly.

B-2c: A full (diagonal) crossing cycle is appropriate and desirable at major intersections in downtowns, along transit corridors, and in proximity to transit stations/bus stops. Establish threshold criteria for their implementation.



B-2d: This is a very important safety feature, where the pushback would be that a given intersection has too little traffic or pedestrian activity. Again, establish threshold criteria to guide their implementation at individual intersections.

B-3a: A related issue in crosswalk alignment is when curbs are built with large radii, to facilitate easy auto turning from traffic; when this happens, however, the curb cuts and crosswalks are also set back from the face of the intersection, putting the pedestrian at added risk

B-3c: Raised or textured crosswalks make sense at all intersections, but particularly at crossings where the only traffic control is a stop sign. Generally, stop signs are the most difficult traffic controls to ensure compliance with, so more robust design may help convey the importance of stopping. One argument against crosswalks by traffic engineers are that they cost too much to maintain; if that is true, the up-front cost of a raised or textured crosswalk would seem to offer long-term cost effectiveness.

B-3d: There should be no reason why all legs of an intersection with connected sidewalks are not provided with crosswalks. Not sure whether this is a cost-saving measure for transportation agencies or an infringement on auto movement, but the net effect is that the pedestrian may have to execute three separate crossings to simply “cross the street”.

B-3e: While the county has become more aggressive at installing pedestrian crossing signs and apprising of state law to comply, a viewing of many setups in the county will currently show no signage, signage facing one direction and not the other, signs put in places where they are not immediately visible, or situations where vehicle traffic will not be apprised that there is a crosswalk ahead around a blind corner when they may be carrying excess speed or be distracted.

B-4a: NCHRP Report 770 and TCRP Report 95/Vol 15 present compelling data that shows that people will willingly walk to many activities rather than drive if (1) the walk network is safe and well-connected, and (2) there are attractive and practical things to walk to. In the typical suburb, neither of these conditions exist. And since trips unrelated to work amount to 85% of household travel, the overwhelming lion’s share of household Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT) in the suburbs is for non-work purposes. This is why the planned transformation of the Purple Line corridor portends such an important growth model for the county.

Therefore it should be a priority to locate as many essential needs and services (healthy foods, schools, services, health care, restaurants, parks) within easy and safe walking distance of households.

B-4d: Incredibly important recommendation. These arterial corridors are where the vast majority of deaths and severe injuries involving pedestrians and cyclists occur, and a primary factor is speed, aided and abetted by auto-friendly design features like infrequent signalized intersections, channelized turns, and insufficient enforcement. Paradoxically, pedestrians who live in these areas are forced out of the relatively safe neighborhood street networks onto the busy arterial roadways to reach their destinations.

B-4e: The design of intersections along the county's arterial highways – which are also the principal transit corridors – but transit users at considerable disadvantage. Because the intersections comprise a large footprint, and with modifications like channelized (uncontrolled) right turns, bus stops are not located at the corners where the pedestrian crossings are, but mid-block. This makes access much more time consuming and encourages dangerous mid-block crossings, often in the dark when the pedestrians are harder to see. Major redesign of these intersections is essential to addressing this serious concern.

Also included in this category is the recommendation to supportive strategy of reducing the vehicle-favoring practice of businesses catering to customers arriving by auto with street facing parking, often with singular curb cuts/driveways and fencing to discourage pedestrian traffic. Many (most) of these commercial centers also are designed to restrict access from the rear of development at the interface with the neighborhoods. A supportive secondary street grid is absolutely necessary to alter this outdated and dangerous practice.

B -4g: Since parkway trails (for bikes at least) are often coincident with the roadways, and with no shoulder safety buffer, it is imperative that greater attention be given to managing auto speeds and distracted driving on these facilities.

B-4i: This concern may be most critical in relation to high-radius curb designs at a large number of current intersections, both on arterial highways and in neighborhoods.

B-6a/b: Trees and other planting not only make the pedestrian environment more comfortable and inviting, but can also serve a traffic calming role.

B-7a: Note that this is a time of great opportunity, with the Federal infrastructure bill and an emphasis on reconnecting communities, safety, equity and climate change. All diligence should be given to trying to access these funds and greatly ramp up the sidewalk program. It should also be stressed that the most critical pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure needs are along the major arterial roadways, though current county programs seem to be much more focused on neighborhood improvements.

B-7f: Be sure to target this recommendation also to bridging the current lockout condition between residential communities and local goods and services.

B-7g: The continuation of the Purple Line TOD study work by the PLCC and UMD via a grant from the Federal Transit Administration is going to focus on maximizing safe access to the 21 Purple Line stations. A solid partnership between PLCC, County and State should be a priority here.

B-8: Thorough analysis of Purple Line station access in the FTA study showed many occasions where, due to topography, a geographic feature (stream), utility, or other barrier, neighborhoods that might otherwise enjoy reasonable access to the station are essentially cut off. These areas can be highlighted with GIS mapping tools and decisions made as to whether enhancing their connectivity would be cost effective.

B-9: Through personal experience I can attest that earning attention from county traffic engineers to clear traffic safety issues is extremely difficult. In my neighborhood (Forest Glen/Linden Lane), the county removed the crosswalks and curb aprons that the developer had put in under code, has allowed for only one (5-way) stop sign that is poorly marked and flagrantly ignored by through traffic, and posted only two 25 mph speed limit signs in locations not visible or relevant to traffic. Over 20 years it has been a constant battle to get reasonable attention and help, despite major community consensus and petitioning.

B-10: MNCPPC's reactions to Evan Glass's Pedestrian Safety Bill took special note of the difference in authority over management issues like right turn on red, signal timing, etc. on county vs state roads. It is essential that the county be able to

influence design and operating decisions on the major arterial highways like University Blvd., Georgia Ave., etc. when it comes to safety, pedestrian accessibility, and other critical policy initiatives. Ideally, this gap will be narrowed under the new state administration.

MA: One major area of authority resolution and policy should be with snow clearing. Whether it is state or county workers who clear the major arterial roadways, there should be a policy that it is more important to keep sidewalk areas clear than to clear all 6 lanes of the roadway, curb to curb. A similar situation occurs in terms of overgrowth during the green months, as foliage on both public and private property is allowed to take over pedestrian facilities, forcing pedestrians to sidetrack into the street.

P-1: County vehicles, such as Ride-On buses, school buses, WSSC trucks, county utility trucks (e.g., trash and leaf removal) and even police vehicles not on call can frequently be observed driving much faster than the posted speeds. This not only poses an immediate danger because of the large mass of the vehicle, but sets a poor example for all other drivers.

P-2a: An incredibly important recommendation, already addressed in comments above

P-2b: Incredibly important, also address above.

P-2c: Totally agree, note that this was also addressed in MNCPPC comments on Evan Glass legislation.

P-2d: As above.

P-2e: HIGHLY support this recommendation, per earlier comment.

P-2f: Question whether pedestrian refuges would diminish the ability for a pedestrian to cross the entire street on one cycle, instead of having to wait for a separate crossing opportunity?

P-2g: Absolutely endorse.

P-3a: Absolutely support, per earlier comment.

P-5: A highly important issue. Suggest that attention ALSO be given to the origin end of a school trip, when frequently children needing to get to a bus stop do not

have appropriately safe access in terms of sidewalks, crosswalks, lighting, and traffic calming.

P-7b: There are many locations where stop bars don't exist at all, or which have been neglected for so long that they are not visible/functional. Consider as supplemental strategies: flashing stop signs at critical intersections; raised crosswalks; double posting of stop signs where visibility is impaired; adding painted stop "boxes" or writing "STOP" at the intersection.

P-8: EXTREMELY important. Police simply cannot spread thin enough to cover all situations where traffic control is needed, and frequently their intervention leads to more serious and undesirable outcomes. ATE is the future, but to realize its potential it must: (1) be in many more places, (2) be unpredictable as to location, (3) be equitably distributed, (4) be more realistic and relevant in terms of interacting with the motoring public – at least warnings if not citations; broadcast knowledge that the system is operating; not allowing a 12 mph buffer before issuing a citation. New technology is emerging that will make this approach much more flexible, broader coverage, and inexpensive. A major obstacle to overcome is State DOT reluctance to greater application, and cost – although the new Federal funding should make this much more achievable.

EA-3: Agree, per earlier comment.

EA-4: These systems are currently operating far short of their potential benefit and value, particularly given their cost.

F-1: Again, there is unprecedented funding opportunity under the latest Federal programs. But there must be agreement and coordinate response to access these funds.

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [djwilhelm@verizon.net](mailto:djwilhelm@verizon.net)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Pedestrian Master Plan comments  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 9:36:40 AM  
**Attachments:** [Ped MP PB 3-6-23.docx](#)

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

See attached testimony.

**Greater Colesville Citizens Association**  
**PO Box 4087**  
**Colesville, MD 20914**  
**March 21, 2023**

Montgomery County Planning Board  
Attn: Jeff Zyontz, Chair  
2425 Reedie Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Comments on Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Chairman Zyontz:

The Greater Colesville Citizens Association (GCCA) supports the recommendations in the Draft Pedestrian Master Plan except as noted below. GCCA supports the four Goals on page 9, but the objectives that follow them (pages 9-19) are reasonable only in some parts of the county and not others.

As has been stated multiple times to the Planning Department and Board, "one size doesn't fit all." The plan does have different standards for urban, transit corridors and exurban/rural areas. We think a better way to categorize area is: downtowns, town centers, suburban, industrial and county, as used in the recommendation section of the Plan. The towns should be subdivided as in the Thrive Plan, each with their own standard: medium, small and neighborhood. The suburban area also needs to have subcategories based upon density.

The proposed improvements will only increase the amount of walking by a small amount, not two or three times.

In Objective 1.4, access to transit is proposed from Metrorail, MARC and Purple Line. Access to BRT needs to be added.

In Objectives 1.5 and 4.2, the number of students walking should be based upon the distance to school, and whether major roads must be crossed. In East Montgomery County, many students are not assigned to the closest school or to a neighborhood school so they will not be able to walk. Also, many parents are concerned about the safety of their elementary students walking by themselves and therefore they walk with them or drive them to school. Expecting 50% of the students to walk is not reasonable when currently the percentage is much lower.

In Objective 3.2 personal safety includes the fear of being attacked as well as sidewalk design. Having 75% feeling safe to walk at all hours of the day and night must address that other aspect.

Our comments on the recommendations follow. We only comment on those that need to be changed.

### **Build**

B-4b. Since the county is largely built out, it is too late to locate schools and other public buildings where there is good pedestrian access. Steps need to be taken to improve walking access where the buildings are located.

B-4h. Restrooms and public seating should be in downtowns and medium sized town centers next to premium transit stations.

B-5c. It is not practical to return malfunctioning streetlights to service within 24 hours. First, repair efforts would not occur on weekends and holidays. There is also the issue of learning that a malfunction exists. Today that largely occurs based upon public reporting, which often does not occur for weeks. (This is a maintenance objective, not a build objective).

B-9b. We think pedestrian volumes needs to remain a determining factor in deciding where to install pedestrian and connectivity improvements. There is limited amount of funding available and it needs to be used where the need is greatest.

B-10. We do not support the county assuming control of state highways, which surely means the county will also assume the funding for maintaining them.

### **Maintain.**

MA-2b. The proposed action is to require property owners to clear snow on pathways for a width of at least 5 feet. This is not possible if the path is not 5 feet in width. Also, even if the concrete is 5 foot wide, many places grass has grown over the edges so it is no longer that width.

### **Protect**

P-1e. Requiring knowledge testing as part of driver's license renewal should only be required once every other renewal.

P-2e. We strongly oppose reducing traffic signal cycle lengths so pedestrians don't need to wait as long. Shorter cycle times just reduces intersection capacity and thus leads to more congestion. More congestion will lead to more dangerous driving habits.

P-4a Pedestrian and bicycle safety education needs to include a requirement for them to use paths rather than use roads. Too often we see people walking in the street when there is a sidewalk available.

P-5c. We oppose closing streets nears schools during arrival and dismissal. Those streets are needed by parents dropping off their children and in the case of high schools, students driving to school. The roads are also needed by the traveling public. Often there are not any nearby alternative roads that can be used.

P- 5d. Transportation Demand Management is often not practical for schools, except for encouraging parents to carpool when taking children to school or picking them up.

P-5d. We oppose eliminating breakaway traffic signals and other poles in locations with pedestrian activity. That would just increase the injury rate for vehicle operators.



### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area Prioritization**

GCCA agrees that there needs to be a priority for constructing Bicycle and Pedestrian improvements called for in this plan. We think the priority should be:

- Areas around BRT and Purple Line stations, constructed when the transit service starts
- Downtown areas
- Town Centers, in order of geographic size
- Major roads that are the most problematic for pedestrians and bicyclists and that will have a significant number of users. Rather than providing new facilities along major roads that will have few users, roads with small numbers of users should use BRT, where it exists.
- Neighborhoods

Sincerely

Daniel L. Wilhelm

GCCA President

From: [joel@silvermail.net](mailto:joel@silvermail.net)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Sidewalk planning  
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 6:02:28 PM

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

Greetings,

We are currently opposing a poorly thought-out and unsupported plan to install sidewalks in Kenwood Park. In the bigger picture, we believe the process should be revised and concur with the recommendations expressed by one of my neighbors and summarized below.

We support the recommendation (B-1a) to pivot from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data driven process, but emphasize that that data should include the input and interest of the community that knows the neighborhood and where sidewalks are needed.

We reject the recommendation (B-1b) that public engagement should be limited to how sidewalks should be constructed, not whether. Community notice and involvement must be incorporated earlier in the process. Earlier notice and involvement also helps people to make landscaping and other decisions while a sidewalk plan is being developed to reduce conflict.

The sidewalk program to be revamped to create a best-in-class, holistic, cross-department approach that is not singularly focused on sidewalks but rather on the best way to maximize neighborhood safety, preserve trees, and enhance the pedestrian experience. This includes: (1) working together with the Traffic division to consider street alterations that calm traffic and save trees; (2) developing a comprehensive approach to how to build sidewalks while saving trees, drawing on the work of others across the country, includes not only use flexi-pave but also other state of the art techniques such as root bridges and how to save roots.

The Pedestrian Master Plan should bring together these elements into a recommendation specifically focused on reworking the sidewalk program. This would achieve these County goals, which are scattered right now and are not specifically incorporated into sidewalk program recommendations:

From the draft Pedestrian Master Plan:

- B-4 Build More Walkable Places
- B-6: Reduce pedestrian pathway temperatures, including fulfilling B-6(a) to ensure shading of sidewalks, and B-6(b) to invest more in street tree preservation and maintenance
- B-9 on Make traffic calming easier (by incorporating it as part of the sidewalk process)

From the Climate Action Plan:

- Retain and increase the tree canopy

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

- Update public space and streetscape design to require cool-colored permeable surfaces

Thank you,

Joel and Connie Lesch

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

From: [Peter M Gottesman](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Cc: [momsaknickfan@gmail.com](mailto:momsaknickfan@gmail.com)  
Subject: Installation of Sidewalks  
Date: Monday, March 20, 2023 5:12:50 PM

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

To Whom It May Concern,

My wife and I live at 6109 Lenox Road. We have two mature trees that will be affected by the installation of a sidewalk. We have lived here for 40 years so I ask why now?

if you can't save the trees then I am asking for the County to relocate them on the other side of the new sidewalk.

Peter Gottesman

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From: [ameros2452@gmail.com](mailto:ameros2452@gmail.com)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Comments on MoCo Pedestrian Master Plan  
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 12:29:00 PM

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

To Whom It May Concern,

It is great to see that traffic and pedestrian safety is a priority for Montgomery County. Please consider the following comments and suggestions in your planning activities.

- As a resident of North Bethesda, it is unclear how activities affecting traffic in the area will be coordinated. These include the Tuckerman Diet Plan, the new bike lanes on Old Georgetown Road, the new pedestrian crossings on Democracy Boulevard, the anticipated dedicated bus lanes from the bus terminal at Montgomery Mall to the Metro, and the opening of the new high school.
- Specific to the Tuckerman Diet Plan:
  - How will entrance to, and egress from, the Devonshire East neighborhood be managed? At peak times, one often has to turn right onto Tuckerman, cross Old Georgetown Road, turn into the neighborhoods and come back out, and then turn right on Old Georgetown Road to go toward Bethesda. Or use the other exit from Devonshire East, go toward Pike and Rose on Old Georgetown Road, make a U-turn somewhere and come back toward Tuckerman Lane to go toward Bethesda.
  - What will be the effect on emergency vehicle traffic? It is not unusual to see fire engines and ambulances several times a day going from Old Georgetown Road toward Rockville Pike on Tuckerman Lane.
  - How will snow removal be managed? In years past, heavy snow has resulted in single lane traffic on even the major arteries.
  - Can the bus stops be moved further away from the pedestrian crossings? One commonly sees people standing by the crossings but some intend to step out into traffic and some are waiting for the bus, causing confusion for drivers.
  - Can better lighting be installed around the crossings and trees cut back coming down the hill from Rockville Pike? At night, Tuckerman Lane can be dark around those crossings and the trees can block the view.
- Specific to the new bike lanes:
  - Will bicyclists be required to undergo safety training? Although most bicyclists are cautious, at least one waved traffic off and sped through a busy intersection when the lights changed.
  - As above, how will snow removal be managed with all the pylons in the roadways? In years past, heavy snow has resulted in single lane traffic on even the major arteries and the pylons on Old Georgetown Road already have been run over in several places, especially near entrance/exit spots for the churches, school, and other turn points. It's hard to envision how snow plows will avoid the pylons and the snow pile-up becomes a

bigger concern for emergency vehicle traffic.

- Specific to pedestrian crossings on Democracy Boulevard:
  - Is it possible to reset the timers on the red lights? The red lights stay on far longer than pedestrians need to cross the road. Also, if one encounters a string of pedestrians who cross in succession, it can take a long time to get past the crossings. And if one encounters strings of pedestrians at both crossings, the traffic pile-up is even worse.
  - Can a light be installed for traffic exiting the Davis Library? The exit is between the point where traffic stops and the pedestrian red lights, so it's unclear what to do when the light is still red but pedestrians have finished crossing Democracy Boulevard.
- Specific to the dedicated bus lanes (Mall to Metro), can a clear explanation be provided of where these lanes will be (and when), given all of the preceding concerns?
- Specific to the new high school, one can expect these issues to be intensified with additional bus traffic and students driving cars, walking or using scooters, and leaving the school for lunch.

Finally for a long-term view, has thought been given to a suspended railway, similar to the Personal Rapid Transit system in Morgantown, WV? One could envision such a system between Montgomery Mall, the Wildwood area and school, Strathmore/Metro, the North Bethesda Metro, the new high school, Pike and Rose, etc.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sally Amero  
11160 Cedarwood Drive  
Rockville, MD 20852

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [LWV of Montgomery County, MD](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [LWV of Montgomery County, MD](#)  
**Subject:** For the Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing - 3/23/2023  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:39:47 PM  
**Attachments:** [2023-03-22 Testimony to Planning Board re Pedestrian Master Plan.pdf](#)

---

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

To the Montgomery County Planning Board Chair & Board:

Attached is our written testimony for the Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing to be held on March 23, 2023.

--

**League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, MD**

15800 Crabbs Branch Way, Suite 300

Rockville, MD 20855

Tel: 301-984-9585

[lwvmc@erols.com](mailto:lwvmc@erols.com)     [lwvmocomd.org](http://lwvmocomd.org)

[vote411.org](http://vote411.org)



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**March 22, 2023**

**To: Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board**

**In re: Pedestrian Master Plan**

The League of Women Voters of Montgomery County (LWVMC) commends the Planning Department for its efforts to improve county safety and create a more pedestrian-friendly environment with its Pedestrian Master Plan. The LWVMC believes in a balanced transportation system that includes not just cars but all modes of transportation that are safe, accessible, convenient, just and serve all communities.

The Planning Department's proposal includes many good components for pedestrians but LWVMC believes there is room for improvement in a few areas.

- **Better accessibility to buses.** Previously there was a program called the Bus Stop Improvement Program that allocated funds for better bus accessibility, including concrete pads at bus stops. Perhaps the Planning Board should reintroduce and expand this program. Another issue is the difficulty in getting to these concrete pads because there is still a lack of sidewalks.
- **Better accessibility to new Bus Rapid Transit stops and new Purple Line stops as well as nearby businesses.**
- **Better policing of drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians to help curb dangerous behavior.** The county must enforce its regulations governing this behavior. Perhaps placing more cameras in certain zones would help.
- **Improved education of drivers so that they watch for pedestrians.** Drivers must be reminded to yield to pedestrians at crosswalks and be aware of pedestrians crossing streets to catch buses, etc. Also please consider adding more multi-language signage and programs.
- **Better oversight of developers and master plans that include improved pedestrian safety.** We must ensure that the Planning Department gets a decent agreement with developers and that everyone involved follows through in the best interest of the county.

Pedestrian safety and this Pedestrian Master Plan need to be a combined effort among municipalities, the county, building processes, planners, developers and individuals. Everyone must work together to make this plan a reality and to incorporate its elements at every level. In addition, the county must complete a thorough evaluation after its implementation to ensure success. The county should also assess past procedures to ascertain whether they still serve a legitimate purpose. If not, the county must be willing to discontinue them.

*Continued*



The LWVMC makes note of the **wealth of information in the plan's appendix that could immediately make areas more accessible for pedestrians. We recommend that the department immediately begin using this information** to more quickly and efficiently improve safety and equity. We also wish to **highlight how inaccessible schools are at all levels**. The county boasts a large number of walkers, but there are many amenities accessible only to residents who drive. Let us commit to changing that and then provide the budget to do it.

This Pedestrian Master Plan offers much guidance and usable information. However, the county must do more to **make urban, suburban and rural areas safer and more accessible for all, including pedestrians**.

Nancy Bliss and Vicky Stella, co-presidents

From: [Kelly Banuls](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Fwd: Testimony for Planning Board  
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:55:53 PM  
Attachments: [Persimmon Tree Petitions.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chair and Fellow Board Members,

I am sending this email as written testimony for the March 23rd meeting because I will no longer be able to testify live. On behalf of our neighborhood, I am reaching out to formally request the installation of a cross walk on the corner of Caraway and Persimmon Tree Rd, in Cabin John, MD.

There is a school bus stop at this location with children and young adults crossing each morning and afternoon. Cars constantly speed up and down Persimmon Tree Rd, making this an unsafe situation for all.

We have spoken as a community, and this topic has been raised by neighbors over the past many years with absolutely no response. We have signed petitions within the community, please see the attached documentation. These petitions were collected and reflect the severity and need for a crosswalk at this location.

We understand that an investment is required for such improvements, but would like to make the Board aware that handicap accessible ramps already exist on both sides of the street, which we understand is one of the largest parts of the investment. We also understand that the Board is reviewing and considering some other critical pedestrian needs and believe that this is a small ask that could have a huge impact on the safety and well-being of the children throughout our community.

A speed study was conducted several years ago during Covid, when traffic was minimal and did not accurately reflect current speeds and patterns. We appreciate your time and support.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Kelly Banuls  
6613 Persimmon Tree Rd  
Cabin John, MD 20818

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the residents of Cabin John/Bethesda, would like to formally request the consideration of speed humps and a speed camera be placed on Persimmon Tree Road to help protect our residents. We would also like to formally request the placement of a crosswalk at the intersection of Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street. This is a school bus stop, and it is critical to protect the children that are crossing this street every day.

With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: LORI ADAMS CHABAY

Date: 7/18/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Madhavi Sunder

Date:

07/07/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street


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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.



Signature:

V. GRAY

Printed Name:

2-14-22

Date:

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- ~~NO!~~ Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: John Waits

Date: July 15, 2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

Hi Kelly,

Bravo to you for trying to make Persimmon Tree Road safer! Perhaps you can benefit from my experience trying to do something similar. About 8 or 10 years ago, I tried to get the County to reduce the speed limit on Persimmon Tree from 35 to 30 and to install a speed camera where the road dips down to MacArthur (and the cars' speed increases). I can't find the letter I wrote but if I remember correctly, my arguments were:

1. Reducing the speed limit is essential for the safety of pedestrians, including the many children, elderly, and dog walkers in the neighborhood.
2. The speed limit is 30 on Seven Locks and Wilson, which are less residential and have fewer homes near the road than Persimmon Tree. It makes no sense for the speed limit to be higher on Persimmon Tree.
3. The speed limits on Persimmon Tree are inconsistent and illogical. It is 30 closer to River Road, where the homes are spaced farther apart and there are few pedestrians, and 35 miles in the rest of the road where the homes are closer together and there are more pedestrians.

In response, I was told to contact the police because they are responsible for speed issues, not the Department of Transportation. I suspect that the County will not do anything unless the police agree that there is a problem so I suggest starting with the police or calling the County to ask about the appropriate office to contact.

The police responded by installing two of those machines that flash your speed and record the speed of oncoming cars. My problem with that is that they installed them in the wrong places. They needed to be installed where the road dips down and the cars increase their speed, but they installed them where the road is flat. They would not move the machines.

After a few weeks, I received a letter from the police (someone with chief in his title but it must have been a deputy) telling me that their equipment did not detect excessive speeding. It included a comment about the differences in the speed limit at different parts of the road being the result of "history" because at one time part of the road was controlled by the state and another part was controlled by the county. That history, of course, does not explain why today there still is a speed limit inconsistent with the rest of the road and inconsistent with the limits on Seven Locks and Wilson.

By the way, I never asked for speed bumps. I used to live on Nevis Road, which has multiple speed bumps. The cars, most of which were luxury cars, flew right over them, but speed bumps are great when they work.

I hope you succeed where I did not! Please keep us posted.

Thanks and good luck,



Risa Sandler  
6609 River Trail Ct  
301-502-2001

Dear Neighbor,

I am hoping to request your support and signature on the attached petition to the Montgomery County Transportation Division. From the time we moved into the neighborhood, I noticed how fast cars travel on Persimmon Tree Rd. Now with an elementary school aged child, crossing the street every morning for the bus, makes it even more concerning to me as a parent and a community member.

Several of us have already sent individual requests to the Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works, but I feel that a signed petition from the community could carry so much weight and hopefully encourage a more rapid response.

Please join me and my family in signing the petition below and send it back using the pre-addressed envelope. I will consolidate all the responses and will submit them to the County.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Kelly Banuls

6613 Persimmon Tree Rd.

Kelly,  
Make sure you address the correct  
gov't agency. I think this is a  
COUNTY Dept. of Transportation  
matter, NOT State. Also Anne  
London (301-320-0762) who lives across  
from me, has tried to get cameras  
etc to slow traffic so you might  
ASK her who she dealt with?  
just a thought!

Good Luck, we need a  
crosswalk! I bet  
others on your side  
of Persimmon would  
sign it too.

Judy



Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:

*N. Schneider*

Printed Name:

*Nisreen Schneider, 6523 Persimmon  
Tree R*

Date:

*24 June 2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name: Brett Walters

Date: 6/26/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

MICHELLE FRYER  
8217 CARAWAY ST

Date:

CABIN JOHN, MD 20818

6/24/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

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- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Christian De Jong

Date:

6/28/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name: Dana Hunter

Date: 6/27/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Steve Ross 6901 CARLYNACT J Arda Ross

Date:

6/27/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

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- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

JOSEPH ETIENNE

Date:

6/28/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: *Helen Elaine Hornauer*

Printed Name: *Helen Elaine Hornauer*

Date: *28 June 2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street



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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: *Risa D Sandler*

Printed Name: *RISA SANDLER*

Date: *6-24-22*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

Reduce speed limit to 30 mph

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: *Forrest Minor*

Printed Name: *FORREST MINOR*

Date: *26 JUNE 2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:

*Lorraine R Minor*

Printed Name:

LORRAINE R MINOR

Date:

*26 June 2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

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Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

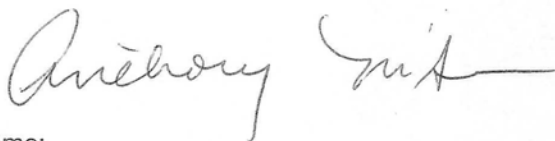
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Anthony McGovern

Date:

29 June 2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:   


Printed Name: Nancy Templeton  
David Roberts

Date: 6/27/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road (YES) → several cameras
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road (NO)
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street (YES)

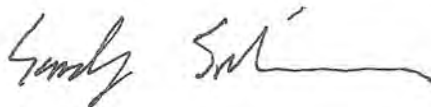
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: SANDY & BARBARA SILVERMAN

Date: 6-27-22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

NO Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

NO Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

YES Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:

*Judith Welles*

Printed Name:

*Judith Welles  
8301 River Trail Lane  
W. Bethesda, MD 20817*

Date:

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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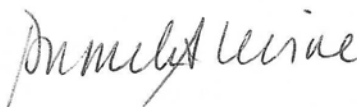
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:





Printed Name:

Pamela Levine

Todd Schenk

Date:

6/27/2022

6/27/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street



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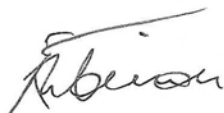
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

EDITH J. BENOIT

Date:

June 25th, 2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:

Printed Name:

Beatrix Winkler-Bessie & Timothy Healey

Date:

June 28, 2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: Paul Mazzi

Date: 07-09-2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- ~~Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road~~
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

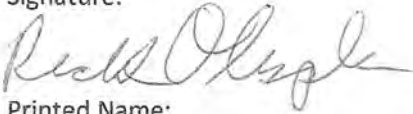
Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

To Whom It May Concern,

We, the residents of Cabin John/Bethesda, would like to formally request the consideration of speed humps and a speed camera be placed on Persimmon Tree Road to help protect our residents. We would also like to formally request the placement of a crosswalk at the intersection of Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street. This is a school bus stop, and it is critical to protect the children that are crossing this street every day.

With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

RICHARD OLESZEWSKI

Date:

6-24-22



Elizabeth Oleszewski

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Rebecca Glazer

Date:

6/26/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: *Mary Ann L Hai Bui*

Date: *June 26, 2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Sam Passman

Date:

06-24-22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: LEWIS GOLLUB

Date: 6/26/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street



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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:

*Micaela Fernandez Allen*

Printed Name:

Micaela Fernandez Allen

Date:

6/25/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

Micaela Fernandez Allen  
6604 Persimmon Tree Rd.  
Bethesda, MD 20817

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:

*Nancy J. Cooke*

Printed Name:

NANCY J. COOKE  
6708 River Trail Court  
Bethesda MD 20817

Date:

24 June 2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Merle Rosen

Date:

6/24/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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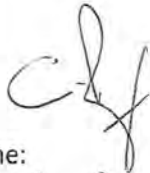
Montgomery County  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Ceile Lowman-Toner

Date:

6/23/06

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Sarah Heidema, 6503 81<sup>st</sup> St, Cabin John

Date:

6/23/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Jessica Blake Hawke

DANIEL M. Hawke

Date:

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: NEVENKA POBERA

Date: 6/30/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: *JON PUTNAM*

Date:

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street



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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Joseph Governski

Date:

6/23/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

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- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: *Chou P. Hung*

Printed Name: *Chou P. Hung*

Date: *June 28, 2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

*preceded by rumble strips and sign<sup>flashin</sup>*

Dear Neighbor,

I am hoping to request your support and signature on the attached petition to the Montgomery County Transportation Division. From the time we moved into the neighborhood, I noticed how fast cars travel on Persimmon Tree Rd. Now with an elementary school aged child, crossing the street every morning for the bus, makes it even more concerning to me as a parent and a community member.

Several of us have already sent individual requests to the Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works, but I feel that a signed petition from the community could carry so much weight and hopefully encourage a more rapid response.

Please join me and my family in signing the petition below and send it back using the pre-addressed envelope. I will consolidate all the responses and will submit them to the County.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Kelly Banuls

6613 Persimmon Tree Rd.

Hi Kelly,

Thanks for all your efforts. I fully agree: the street is unsafe due to high speeds / lack of curbs (aprons?) in some places / houses built close to the road. Why does Wilson Lane have a lower speed limit than Persimmon Tree Rd? Why is the speed limit on PT Rd the same as the speed limit on the much wider Taskerman Lane (at least east of 7 Locks Rd)?!

Have to say -- I think that the fact that preponderance of cars comes from goes to Potomac makes MC / police less likely to decrease the speed limit on PT Rd.

Bevin Ratner, 6700 River Trail Court

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: *Bevin Ratner*

Printed Name: *Bevin Ratner*

Date: *June 28, 2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road *at various locations!*

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

<sup>at</sup> Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street *and at Tomlinson*

*Flashing speed limit signs*

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: *Ann London*

Printed Name: *Ann London*

Date: *7/1/2022*

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road = *A permanent speed camera*
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

*There is no visibility coming up Persimmon Tree (toward Avenel). Cars speed and a person crossing the road at Persimmon Tree & Caraway risk their life crossing the road. In fact, a mom and her young child crossed the road and the mom fell in the middle of the road. I saw this and stopped traffic until the mom and child were safely on the sidewalk. It was a very scary experience.*

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

GITASREE KUNDAGRAMI

Date:

6/28/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

SARAH CRAVEN

Date:

6/30/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
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- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

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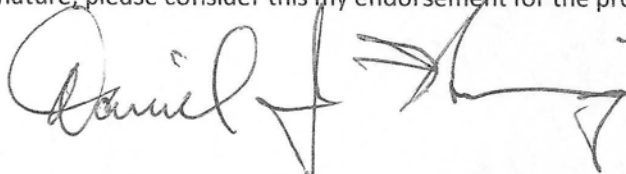
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Daniel Monnig  
8 Persimmon Ct

Date:

7/3/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road

Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road

Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street



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Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: *Marcia T. Boogaard* 4 Persimmon Ct.  
Bethesda, MD 20817  
Printed Name: MARCIA T. BOOGAARD (301) 229-5879  
Date: 7/5/2022

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

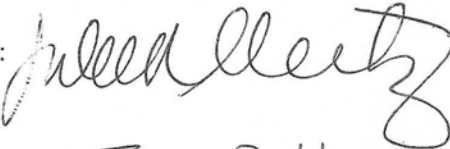
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With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature: 

Printed Name: Julie R Mertz

Date: 7/8/22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

Dear Neighbor,

I am hoping to request your support and signature on the attached petition to the Montgomery County Transportation Division. From the time we moved into the neighborhood, I noticed how fast cars travel on Persimmon Tree Rd. Now with an elementary school aged child, crossing the street every morning for the bus, makes it even more concerning to me as a parent and a community member.

Several of us have already sent individual requests to the Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works, but I feel that a signed petition from the community could carry so much weight and hopefully encourage a more rapid response.

Please join me and my family in signing the petition below and send it back using the pre-addressed envelope. I will consolidate all the responses and will submit them to the County.

Thank you in advance for your support!

Kelly Banuls

6613 Persimmon Tree Rd.

Hello Kelly,

Thank you for organizing this. I tried to do this last Nov and got rejected from the transportation service. I have the email response if you'd like to see it. I hope you get through. You have my support! Good luck!!

Rhea Strnad

6604 Carlyan Drive

rheaStrnad@yahoo.com

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

Montgomery County  
Maryland Department of Transportation & Public Works  
Traffic and Parking Services Division

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We, the residents of Cabin John/Bethesda, would like to formally request the consideration of speed humps and a speed camera be placed on Persimmon Tree Road to help protect our residents. We would also like to formally request the placement of a crosswalk at the intersection of Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street. This is a school bus stop, and it is critical to protect the children that are crossing this street every day.

With my signature, please consider this my endorsement for the proposed transportation modifications.

Signature:



Printed Name:

Rhea Strnad

Date:

07-11-22

Requested transportation modifications (please check all that apply):

- Speed Camera on Persimmon Tree Road
- Speed humps on Persimmon Tree Road
- Cross walk at Persimmon Tree Rd and Caraway Street

From: [Richard](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Cc: [laurenksaunders1@gmail.com](mailto:laurenksaunders1@gmail.com)  
Subject: Reasons for OPPOSING the Sidewalks proposal for Kenwood Park  
Date: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 4:14:26 PM

---

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

From: Richard and Caroline Berney 6818 and 6820 Millwood Road

The problem with the current sidewalk proposal is the increased possibility of property damage from flooding of the Minnehaha Branch Stream, both for the houses on Millwood Road and for drives on Goldsboro Road, where heavy rains have frequently caused the Minnehaha to overflow its banks and flood Goldsboro Road below Massachusetts Avenue.

The County's sidewalk department/committee has not considered the impact of the proposed sidewalks on the potential for flooding problems with the Minnehaha Branch Stream which runs between Kenhill and Millwood, from Durbin Road to Goldsboro Road. From there it goes under River Road and alongside Goldsboro to the canal. The Kenwood Park portion of the Minnehaha was put into a culvert some fifty-five plus years ago, when the construction of homes on Kenhill reduced the amount of permeable land sufficiently to cause it to overflow its banks in heavy rains. As a result, Montgomery County has designated the land between the Minnehaha and houses on Millwood to be a **Flood Plain**, with subsequent heavy restrictions on land use there.

The current proposal to install five-foot-wide sidewalks on the stream sides of both Millwood and Kenhill will greatly increase the non-permeable land in the surrounding drainage area, further exasperating the possibility of flooding on Millwood Road, as well as causing greater and more frequent flooding of Goldsboro Road. If the County is intent on building sidewalks on these streets, it needs to build them on the opposite side of the streets, away from the flood plain, where the extra water from heavy downpours would flow safely into the sewer system.

I am a former President of KPCA and I would like to point out the fact that the Kenwood Park Citizen's Association (KPCA) is NOT a Homeowner's Association (HOA). Rather, we are a voluntary organization with no authority to represent, or speak on behalf of the Kenwood Park community. KPCA has a membership fee of \$39 per year. Its main functions are to organize Halloween and Christmas programs and such family social events and to support a local Security Patrol. And even with a low \$39 annual membership fee, barely a

third of Kenwood Park's households are members. In recognition of its position, it has, appropriately, remained neutral in this sidewalk controversy. Nor did the initial request for sidewalks come from the KPCA Board of Directors, it came from the Chair of KPCA's Security Committee, who is not an elected position of the KPCA Board. As such this person had no authority to request sidewalks in the name of KPCA.

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Don Slater](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Recommend Acceptance of Pedestrian Master Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 4:33:39 PM

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

March 21, 2023

Chair Jeff Zyontz  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reedie Drive 14th Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Chair Zyontz,

I would like to recommend to the Planning Board passage of the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) draft as presented. My wife and I have lived on the edge of downtown Silver Spring for 20 years and we really appreciate the walkability of the neighborhood. But we also believe it can be a lot safer and a lot easier for those with disabilities to navigate.

The PMP is an ambitious plan to drastically improve the walkability of the county in order to significantly increase the percentage of trips made on foot versus those made by car. To achieve this, the PMP sets out its four primary goals: Increase walking rates and pedestrian satisfaction, create a comfortable, connected, and convenient pedestrian network, enhance pedestrian safety, and build an equitable and just pedestrian network. Rather than calling out a series of specific projects to accomplish these goals, the PMP provides a strong set of guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian projects in the future. This is precisely the kind of master planning we need and ask that the Planning Board accept the PMP.

Best regards,

Don Slater  
402 Mansfield Road  
Silver Spring, MD 20910  
301-585-5038  
[Slater402@gmail.com](mailto:Slater402@gmail.com)

-----  
Don Slater                      Silver Spring, MD USA  
[slater402@gmail.com](mailto:slater402@gmail.com)        +1.301.641.2925 (m)

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Sam Tacheron](#)  
**To:** [Glazier, Eli](#); [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Cc:** [rosenfeldlaw@mail.com](mailto:rosenfeldlaw@mail.com)  
**Subject:** Testimony for 3/23/23 Pedestrian Master Plan Hearing  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 21, 2023 5:10:12 PM  
**Attachments:** [Testimony for Planning Commision 23 March.pdf](#)  
[Attachment 1 - 1967 Settlement.pdf](#)  
[Attachment 2 - Landscaping Addendum.pdf](#)  
[Attachment 3 - Fence drawing.pdf](#)  
[Attachment 4 - Special Exemption Mod 7-28-16.pdf](#)

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

Mr. Glazier

Please allow the attachments in this email to serve as my hearing testimony regarding the Pedestrian Master Plan that will be held on 23 March 2023. Attached you will find my signed letter for the board, as well as the following:

Attachment 1 – 1967 Settlement Agreement

Attachment 2 – 1967 Settlement Landscape Addendum

Attachment 3 – Geico Fence Block Diagram

Attachment 4 – Board of Appeals Special Exemption Modification dtd 7/28/16

Attachment 5 – Current Picture of Fence Block

Please let me know if you need further information or require assistance with any of the attachments.

Thank you,  
Sam Tacheron  
5332 Sherrill Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
(301)652-0404



Sam Tacheron  
5332 Sherrill Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

March 21, 2023

Eli Glazier  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
2425 Reedie Drive,  
Wheaton, MD 20902

RE: My opposition to the proposed Pedestrian Shortcut Sherrill Avenue/Willard Avenue Trail recommended in Montgomery County's Pedestrian Plan Public Hearing Draft (page 212, Map Reference #85) dated February 2023.

Dear Members of the Planning Board:

My home (5332 Sherrill Avenue) borders Geico Insurance Corporation's southern parking lot which is controlled by various Special Exemptions adopted by the Montgomery County Board of Appeals spanning from 1957 to 2016. Case No. CBA 2110, for example, produced a settlement agreement in 1967 between Geico and the adjacent neighbors establishing terms that provide homeowners relief from many negative externalities (see Attachment 1). One of those terms dictates the installation and maintenance of a cedar wood fence that is set back 5 feet from the property line so Carolina Hemlocks can be planted to conceal the fence from the homeowners view (see Attachment 2).

Some of these trees fell in the past resulting in the perception that a shortcut existed on the property. In 2006, we contacted Geico's Vice President of Facilities and told him that trespassing had become a problem and asked if Geico could help keep people off our property. The VP responded by immediately installing a perpendicular fence block adjacent to the right corner of our back yard (see Attachment 3). Days later, we wrote a letter to the community newsletter publishing our combined efforts to eliminate the trespassing and posted a "No Trespassing" sign to further dissuade the use of our property. The Board of Appeals commended our efforts by incorporating the fence block into its Special Exemption modification dated July 28, 2016 (see Attachment 4) requiring Geico to maintain the block as long as there is a wood fence.

In summary, this perceived shortcut has been closed for 17 years and does not fit the characterization of an existing pedestrian shortcut as stipulated in Montgomery County's Pedestrian Draft Plan and should not be listed on Table 33, page 212 (see Attachment 5). B-7b of the Draft Plan does not apply here either because of the extensive legal history involving this portion of Geico's property.

Sam Tacheron  
5332 Sherrill Avenue  
Chevy Chase, MD 20815  
Page 2

Therefore, it is my testimony that the Planning Commission should remove the proposed Pedestrian Shortcut Sherrill Avenue/Willard Avenue Trail entry recommended in the Montgomery County's Pedestrian Plan Public Hearing Draft (page 212, Map Reference #85) dated February 2023 since it fails to meet any of the stipulations of an existing or unencumbered Pedestrian Shortcut. There has never been an easement granted by my family or Geico where our properties meet between Sherrill and Saratoga Avenues.

Sincerely,



Sam Tacheron

Attachments (5):

- Attachment 1 – 1967 Settlement Agreement
- Attachment 2 – 1967 Settlement Landscape Addendum
- Attachment 3 – Geico Fence Block Diagram
- Attachment 4 – Board of Appeals Special Exemption Modification dtd 7/28/16
- Attachment 5 – Current Picture of Fence Block

CC: Michele Rosenfeld, Esq.

Tacheron

SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

THIS SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT, made this \_\_\_\_ day of May, 1967, by and between GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES INSURANCE COMPANY, party of the first part, hereinafter called GEICO, and VIRGIL L. MONTGOMERY, SOPHIE T. MONTGOMERY, JOHN E. MERRILL, ROSALYN MERRILL, WERNER W. LINDER, CHRISTA E. LINDER, WILLIAM J. HUSIC, DONALD O. TACHERON, NETTE TACHERON, ORCHARDALE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION and BROOKDALE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION, parties of the second part, hereinafter called Neighboring Residents,

WITNESSETH:

That for and in consideration of the mutual promises, agreements, releases and responsibilities, as hereinafter set forth, the parties hereto covenant and agree with each other as follows:

1. GEICO and Neighboring Residents agree that in consideration of the mutual promises set out below they will, upon the execution of this agreement, and the filing of the stipulation provided in paragraph 2 below, and upon the entering of the Order of Court agreed upon in Law Nos. 20801 and 20804 in the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, Maryland, each dismiss any pending actions pertaining to the Montgomery County Board of Appeals' decision in Case No. 2110 and agree not to appeal the said Order entered in Law Nos. 20801 and 20804. Further, the parties hereto agree to and do hereby expressly release each other from all claims, actions, debts, responsibilities and liabilities in law or equity which have or may arise out of the controversy pertaining to the Board of Appeals' decision in the above-indicated case and any matters incidental thereto.

2. The parties to this agreement acknowledge that the Board of Appeals has no objection to the stipulation filed in Law Nos. 20801 and 20804 in which the parties agree that they interpret the Board of Appeals' opinion in Case No. 2110 to require and that GEICO under Case No. 2110 hereby agrees that it will comply with the conditions hereinafter set forth and which it acknowledges are to be included as and added to conditions imposed by the Board's order in Case No. 2110. The conditions are as follows:

(a) There shall be a 25-foot buffer strip between the parking lot and the southern property line of petitioner's property along the entire southern side of petitioner's property included in the petition for special exception in Case No. 2110, which buffer strip shall remain undisturbed, except that petitioner shall erect and maintain a fence, screening and planting in that area as set out below.

(b) GEICO will place a six-foot high cedar fence along the southern side of its property from Saratoga Avenue to Willard Avenue at the location shown on the attached plans.

(c) GEICO will install necessary planting and screening within the aforesaid 25-foot buffer area on each side of the aforesaid fence, in accordance with the type, number and sizes of such shrubs, trees and planting as detailed on the attached plans marked Exhibit A. In addition, GEICO will plant and maintain screening in the buffer area along the Husic home as indicated on Exhibit A, which shall consist of a sufficient number of pine trees in the area beside the Husic home to provide thick planting in that area. In connection with all of the aforesaid screening, GEICO will maintain and replace such screening when necessary. GEICO shall have the right to enter into the area on the south side of the aforementioned fence for the purpose of planting,

maintaining and replacing the screening and to cross the adjoining lands of property owners to the extent necessary to provide the aforesaid planting, maintenance and replacing of screening.

(d) There shall be no retaining wall on the new addition to the parking lot. The land shall be sloped down from the south property line where necessary and the slope will begin three to four feet from the south property line and continue gradually to the concrete curb 25 feet from said property line.

(e) GEICO and Neighboring Residents agree that the trees now existing in the 25-foot buffer strip shall be left standing unless it is determined by Asplundh Tree Expert Company, a qualified tree expert, that a tree or trees must be removed for safety reasons.

(f) Parking area west of Saratoga Avenue shall be policed by GEICO guards and if necessary, the entrance to the parking area shall be chained between the hours of 7:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. to assure that there is no unauthorized parking within this area. Regular parking shall be provided in this area for the day shift. Other work shifts shall be discouraged in the use of this area. No buses and/or maintenance equipment shall be parked in this area.

3. GEICO has a low point on its property adjacent and east of Saratoga Avenue which receives water from the surrounding area. GEICO will endeavor to alleviate the pocketing of water in this area.

4. The presidents of Government Employees Insurance Company and the Orchardale and Brookdale Citizens Associations agree promptly upon execution of this agreement to issue the following statement:

The undersigned, being the presidents of Government Employees Insurance Company and Orchardale and Brookdale Citizens Associations, wish to state that they regret that matters involving the special exception for a parking lot (Board of Appeals No. 2110) have evoked so much controversy, publicity, unfortunate statements and turmoil and now that they have agreed on a mutually satisfactory and amicable settlement are confident that good relations between all of the parties will again prevail as they have in the past.

Very truly yours,

Samuel Gordon  
Campbell Graueb  
Norman Gidden"

5. The parties hereto agree and state that they have carefully read in full the foregoing mutual release of claims and actions contained herein, that they know the contents thereof and that they execute the same as their own free act.

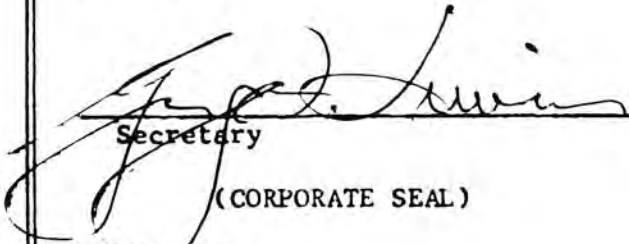
6. The parties agree to execute such documents as may be required to comply with the terms of this agreement.


7. GEICO and the Neighboring Residents hereby agree that the exhibit attached hereto is incorporated in this Settlement Agreement so that the terms and conditions applicable under Case No. 2110 may fully appear in this document.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this Agreement as of the day and year first herein before written.

Attest:

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES INSURANCE COMPANY

  
Secretary  
(CORPORATE SEAL)

By   
Title President

WITNESSES:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
VIRGIL L. MONTGOMERY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SOPHIE T. MONTGOMERY  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JOHN E. MERRILL  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ROSALYN MERRILL  
\_\_\_\_\_  
WERNER W. LINDER  
\_\_\_\_\_  
CHRISTA E. LINDER  
\_\_\_\_\_  
WILLIAM J. HUSIC  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DONALD O. TACHERON  
\_\_\_\_\_  
METTE TACHERON  
\_\_\_\_\_  
ORCHARDALE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION  
\_\_\_\_\_  
BROOKDALE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

This addendum to the Settlement Agreement executed this \_\_\_\_\_ day of May, 1967 between GEICO and the undersigned parties referred to as Neighboring Residents,

WITNESSETH:

That for and in consideration of the mutual promises herein-after set forth and as previously set forth in said Settlement Agreement, the parties covenant and agree as follows:

1. That there shall be planted along the fence which is to exist at the end of Saratoga Avenue and alongside Saratoga Avenue on both sides for a distance of approximately twenty feet hemlocks located as elsewhere along said fence, except that no such hemlocks shall be planted where they would harm existing trees, said hemlocks to be located on the Saratoga Avenue side of said fence.

2. In the aforesaid Agreement there shall be substituted for the words "Asplundh Tree Expert Company" in paragraph 2e of the aforesaid Agreement the following: "American Tree Service Company."

3. It is understood and agreed by the parties that the following existing trees which, under the agreement, are to remain undisturbed, are now located in the 25 foot buffer strip:

a. Between accessory building and Saratoga Avenue - 6 dogwood, 7 ash, 1 tulip, 4 pine, 2 locust, 2 hemlock, 1 maple, 1 cottonwood and 1 sassafras.

b. Close to the end of Baltimore Avenue on the east side and between Baltimore Avenue and Willard Avenue the following trees - 9 poplar, 2 loblolly pines, 1 white oak, 2 plane, 2 willows and 1 unknown.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have executed this addendum to agreement as of the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 1967.

Starting from SHEPHERD



Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

By \_\_\_\_\_

(CORPORATE SEAL)

Title \_\_\_\_\_

WITNESSES:

Danny J. McLaughlin

Virgil L. Montgomery  
VIRGIL L. MONTGOMERY

Danny J. McLaughlin

Virgil L. Montgomery  
VIRGIL L. MONTGOMERY

Roselyn Merrill

John E. Merrill  
JOHN E. MERRILL

Roselyn Merrill

Roselyn Merrill  
ROSALYN MERRILL

Werner W. Linder

Werner W. Linder  
WERNER W. LINDER

Christa E. Linder

Christa E. Linder  
CHRISTA E. LINDER

William J. Music

William J. Music  
WILLIAM J. MUSIC

DONALD C. TACHERON

METTE TACHERON

Orchardale Citizens Association

Danny J. McLaughlin  
ORCHARDALE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Brookdale Citizens Association

W. S. Graub  
BROOKDALE CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

Document File!

Julian Yeatman

652-9191  
486 3500

WASHINGTON OFFICE  
200 DAVIS BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006

ARTHUR G. LAMBERT  
E. FONTAINE BROUN  
(ADMITTED D. C. AND N. Y., NOT MD.)  
WALTER S. FURLOW, JR.  
ROURKE J. SHEEHAN  
S. CHURCHILL ELMORE  
CHARLES E. KERN, II  
(ADMITTED D. C., NOT MD.)  
ROBERT L. HIGGINS

LAW OFFICES  
LAMBERT, FURLOW & SHEEHAN  
306 JEFFERSON BUILDING  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850  
POPLAR 2-9010

January 17, 1968

Norman Glasgow, Esq.  
Tower Building  
Washington, D. C. 20005

Re: Government Employees Parking Lot.

Dear Norman:

I have now obtained the approval of Mr. and Mrs. Tacheron of my forwarding to you the copy of the settlement agreement which they previously executed and left with me. As you know, all the remainder of my clients had previously signed a copy of the agreement which I have previously forwarded to you.

My clients are willing to accept the settlement agreement without the addendum previously proposed being attached thereto, with the understanding that you will meet with a representative of the citizens on the site and prepare a joint list of the trees that presently exist and sign that list on behalf of your client. This latter qualification was suggested in your letter of October 7, 1967 to me. Harry Monahan, President of Orchardale Citizens Association, will meet with you and will call you sometime next week to set a time.

I am enclosing the copy of the settlement agreement signed by Mr. and Mrs. Tacheron.

Very truly yours,

ROURKE J. SHEEHAN

Encl.  
RJS/mdc

COPY

FENCE 5'-0" FROM  
PROPERTY LINE

PLANT HEMLOCKS  
3'-0" NORTH OF  
PROPERTY LINE

NOTE:  
CAROLINA HEMLOCKS TO BE  
LOCATED ON SOUTH SIDE OF  
EXISTING AND PROPOSED  
FENCE - 5'-0" O.C.

LOCATE HEMLOCK SO AS NOT TO  
DISTURB EXISTING TREES  
IN AREA

SHERILL  
AVENUE

SARATOGA  
AVENUE

5'-0"

LINE OF EXISTING FENCE

PROTECT EXISTING  
TREES

EXISTING GROVE  
OF GYCAMORES  
TO BE RETAINED

NEW LA

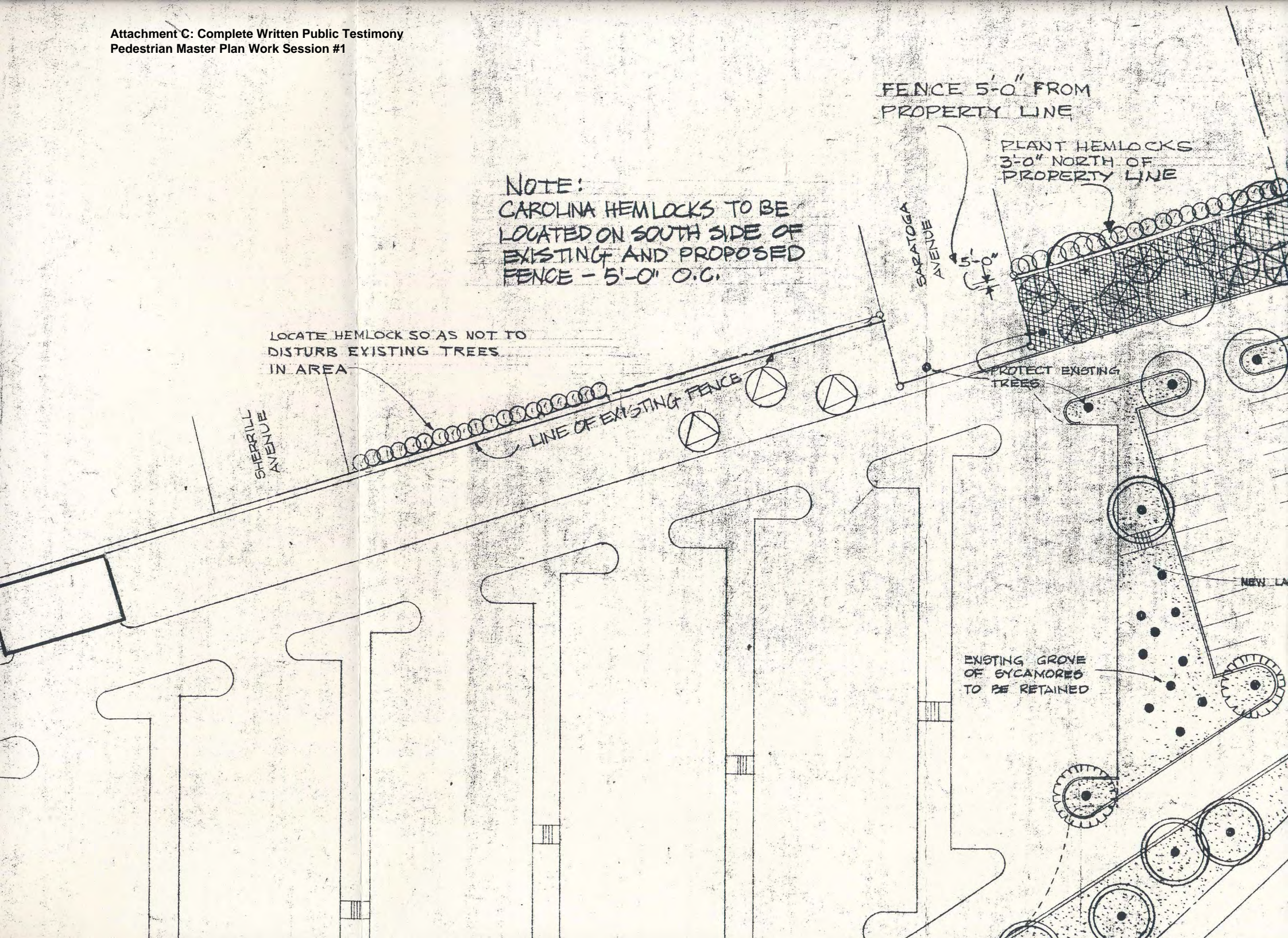




Exhibit 1B

**BOARD OF APPEALS  
for  
MONTGOMERY COUNTY**

Stella B. Werner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850  
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/boa/>

(240) 777-6600

**Case Nos. CBA-544, CBA-544-A; CBA-544-B; CBA-663;  
CBA-1359; CBA-2110; S-41**

**PETITION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES INSURANCE COMPANY**

**RESOLUTION TO GRANT MODIFICATION OF SPECIAL EXCEPTION**

(Worksession Date July 20, 2016)  
(Effective Date of Resolution: July 28, 2016)

Case No. CBA-544, granted August 13, 1957, permitted the use of 4.46 acres of a 28.23 acre tract known as part of "Friendship," fronting on Western and Willard Avenues, in the R-60 zone, for off-street parking, in connection with a proposed commercial use. On February 24, 1959, in Case No. CBA-663, the Board of Appeals granted a special exception to permit the use of a part of Parcel A, containing 7.45 acres, Friendship Subdivision, Chevy Chase, Maryland, located between Western and Willard Avenues, about 800 feet west of Wisconsin Avenue, in an R-60 zone, for off-street parking in connection with a commercial use. On February 18, 1963, in Case No. CBA-1359, the Board approved a request to permit the continued use of an off-street parking lot and to increase the capacity from 654 spaces to 1,075 spaces, on approximately 7,656 acres, part of Parcel A, Friendship Subdivision, at 5260 Western Avenue, Bethesda, Maryland, in an R-60 zone. On December 28, 1966, in Case No. CBA-2110, the Board granted 42 additional parking spaces between Saratoga Avenue and Baltimore Avenue and two islands, as well as 12 additional spaces along Willard Avenue and west of the proposed lot, but denied the remaining additional parking spaces that were requested. On May 18, 1972, in Case No. S-41, the Board approved additional parking on the area marked "B" on the site plan submitted with that application, but denied additional parking on the area marked "C." On May 25, 1981, in Case Nos. CBA-544, CBA-663, CBA-1359, CBA-2110 and S-41, the Board approved a request to modify the existing special exceptions to permit modification of existing parking lot lighting. On March 29, 1985, in Case Nos. CBA-544, CBA-633, CBA-1359 and CBA-2110, the Board approved a modification to permit

paid parking at GEICO's headquarters building. On October 30, 1987, in Case No. CBA-544-A, the Board modified the special exception to permit lighting improvements in connection with off-street parking for a commercial use. On February 8, 1991, in Case No. CBA-544-B, the Board modified the special exception to allow the construction of an underground parking garage; on June 8, 1992, this grant was revoked at the request of GEICO. In a decision effective May 16, 2016, the Board reopened the record to receive a copy of a 1967 settlement agreement between GEICO and neighboring property owners.

The subject property is located at 5260 Western Avenue, Chevy Chase, Maryland, in the R-60 Zone.

The Board received a letter dated July 6, 2016, from Terence A. Perkins, Assistant Vice President, Real Estate Facility Management, GEICO, requesting a minor modification to the special exceptions held by GEICO to permit an increase in height of the wooden fence required by the 1967 settlement agreement between the GEICO property and certain abutting properties from six (6) feet to six (6) feet, six (6) inches (6' 6"). Mr. Perkins indicates that GEICO was petitioned by the Brookdale Citizens' Association ("BCA") to extend the height of this fence to the maximum allowable height for a fence in a residential zone. He explains that the BCA believes that this will further conceal a metal fence previously installed on the GEICO property.

The Board is also in receipt of a letter dated July 8, 2016, from Richard Podolske, President of the Brookdale Citizens' Association, noting that GEICO has been working with the community, and expressing support for the requested increase in height of the wooden fence, which Mr. Podolske explains "will help to screen GEICO's parking lot and the new metal fence from the neighborhood."

In addition, the Board is in receipt of a letter dated July 12, 2016, from Sam Tacheron, on behalf of Mette Tacheron, objecting to the requested administrative modification for various reasons set forth in his letter, including that the increased height will adversely affect a planned fence installation and will materially change the screening alongside Ms. Tacheron's home. The Board is also in receipt of emails dated July 12, 2016, and July 13, 2016, from both Jose (Tony) Valado and Vanessa Brown, noting their desire that any agreement comply with the terms of the 1967 settlement agreement between GEICO and its neighbors, and opposing the requested modification.

The Board of Appeals considered the modification request, together with the BCA's letter of support, as well as the letter and emails voicing opposition, at its Worksession on Wednesday, July 20, 2016. Terence A. Perkins appeared on behalf of GEICO. He was represented by Robert Harris, Esquire, of Lerch, Early & Brewer, Chtd. Sam Tacheron appeared in opposition to the request on behalf of his mother, Mette Tacheron.

At the Worksession, Mr. Harris explained that GEICO has been working with its neighbors to ameliorate their concerns about its fencing and other things, resolving issues such as noise from the air conditioning units, invasive vines, and untrimmed trees. He

stated that GEICO had received a Notice of Violation from DPS indicating that the existing wooden fence was not properly maintained. He stated that the existing fence has been repaired but is not in perfect condition, and indicated that GEICO has applied for a fence permit to install a new (replacement) fence in its place, to correct the deficiencies noted in the Notice of Violation. Mr. Harris stated that the Brookdale Citizens' Association was receptive to the installation of a new wooden fence, but asked if GEICO could increase the height of the new fence from six (6) feet to six (6) feet, six (6) inches, to better screen the metal fence.

Mr. Tacheron stated that his mother objects to the increased height of GEICO's wooden fence because since December, 2015, she has had a fence permit in place to construct her own fence to shield her property from the GEICO property. He stated that the fence companies from which his mother had received estimates indicated that they cannot install a fence taller than six (6) feet along her property line, due in part to the presence of trees from the GEICO property growing at an angle and crossing the property line. He explained that he did not want to lose these trees because of their screening value, but also did not want a six (6) foot, six (6) inch fence immediately behind his mother's (proposed) six (6) foot fence. He explained that the fencing was needed to keep people from traversing through his mother's back yard in order to circumvent hemlocks, etc., that are planted between the GEICO fence and his mother's back yard. He noted that at his mother's request, GEICO did install a lateral "fence block" – a perpendicular run of fence between GEICO's wooden fence and the property line at the point where the Tacheron and Bender/Brown properties meet – to discourage persons from crossing through the Tacheron property, but that there was no requirement for GEICO to maintain that block. See Exhibit 66(a) (showing location of the fence block).

Because GEICO's special exceptions were approved prior to October 30, 2014, under Section 59-7.7.1.B of the current Zoning Ordinance, the instant modification request can be reviewed under the standards and procedures in effect on October 29, 2014. Section 59-G-1.3(c)(1) of the Montgomery County Zoning Ordinance (2004) provides, pertaining to modification of special exceptions:

If the proposed modification is such that the terms or conditions could be modified without substantially changing the nature, character or intensity of the use and without substantially changing the effect on traffic or on the immediate neighborhood, the Board, without convening a public hearing to consider the proposed change, may modify the term or condition.

The Board finds that the requested administrative modification can be granted, with conditions, on grounds that a six-inch increase in the height of this fence will not substantially change the nature, character or intensity of the underlying parking lot use, and will not substantially change its effect on traffic or on the immediate neighborhood. The Board notes that the six (6) inch increase in height was requested by and is supported by the Brookdale Citizens' Association, and that the installation of this new fence will provide for a consistency in the fencing materials. The Board further notes that to address the concerns voiced by Mr. Tacheron, GEICO has agreed to abide by a requirement to

increase the height of and maintain the fence block. After considering all the evidence, John H. Pentecost, Vice Chair, moved to grant this administrative modification with the following conditions: (1) that GEICO also be required to replace the existing "fence block" with a new six (6) foot, six (6) inch tall wooden "fence block," and (2) that GEICO be required to maintain the new fence block in the same manner and fashion as it is required to maintain the wooden fence. Thus on a motion by Mr. Pentecost, seconded by Stanley B. Boyd, with Carolyn J. Shawaker, Chair, Edwin S. Rosado and Bruce Goldensohn in agreement:

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Board of Appeals for Montgomery County, Maryland that the request to modify the special exception to allow a six (6) inch increase in the height of the wooden fence is granted, subject to the following conditions:

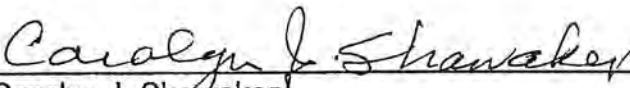
(1) GEICO must replace the existing "fence block" described above with a six (6) foot, six (6) inch tall wooden "fence block," in the same location as the existing fence block, and

(2) GEICO must maintain the new fence block in the same manner and fashion as it is required to maintain the wooden fence; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Board of Appeals for Montgomery County, Maryland that the records in Case Nos. CBA-544, CBA-544-A; CBA-544-B; CBA-663; CBA-1359; CBA-2110; S-41 are re-opened to receive the July 6, 2016, letter from Terence A. Perkins, requesting this modification; the July 8, 2016, letter from Richard Podolske; the July 12, 2016, letter from Sam Tacheron; and the emails dated July 12, 2016, and July 13, 2016, from Jose (Tony) Valado and Vanessa Brown; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Board of Appeals for Montgomery County, Maryland that all terms and conditions of the original special exceptions, together with any modifications granted by the Board of Appeals, remain in effect; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Board of Appeals for Montgomery County, Maryland that the opinion stated above is adopted as the Resolution required by law as its decision on the above-entitled petition.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Carolyn J. Shawaker  
Chair, Montgomery County Board of Appeals



Case No. CBA-544, et al.

Page 5

Entered in the Opinion Book  
of the Board of Appeals for  
Montgomery County, Maryland  
this 28th day of July, 2016.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Barbara Jay  
Executive Director

**NOTE:**

Any party may, within fifteen (15) days of the date of the Board's Resolution, request a public hearing on the particular action taken by the Board. Such request shall be in writing, and shall specify the reasons for the request and the nature of the objections and/or relief desired. In the event that such request is received, the Board shall suspend its decision and conduct a public hearing to consider the action taken.

Any request for rehearing or reconsideration must be filed within fifteen (15) days after the date the Opinion is mailed and entered in the Opinion Book. Please see the Board's Rules of Procedure for specific instructions for requesting reconsideration.

Any decision by the County Board of Appeals may, within thirty (30) days after the decision is rendered, be appealed by any person aggrieved by the decision of the Board and a party to the proceeding before it, to the Circuit Court for Montgomery County, in accordance with the Maryland Rules of Procedure. It is each party's responsibility to participate in the Circuit Court action to protect their respective interests. In short, as a party you have a right to protect your interests in this matter by participating in the Circuit Court proceedings, and this right is unaffected by any participation by the County.



## SUBMISSION OF LEONARD BEBCHICK

I am Leonard Bebchick and reside at 6321 Lenox Road. My property is not affected by the proposed sidewalk construction and I favor sidewalks where they are needed; but I am opposed to the proposed projects because they are the result of locational criteria which are (1) wholly unrelated to pertinent public safety considerations, such as pedestrian vehicle, biking and pedestrian traffic flows and actual safety needs, and whose locations are defined by and limited to those requested by members of the public; (2) to be both rejected and superseded by more pertinent criteria contained in the county's proposed Pedestrian Master Plan set for hearing on March 23, 2023; and (3) are clearly unlawful under well established precedent as constituting an impermissible delegation of governmental power to private individuals. In addition, the current Sidewalk Program does not in fact lawfully exist, and it has not received lawful approval or authorization.

1. Under the existing Sidewalk Program, the sites for sidewalk construction are determined solely by requests from members of the public (including Homeowner/Civic Associations), and construction is limited to and can be undertaken only within the physical limits so requested by such a private person. County officials are not obliged to build sidewalks so requested, but they have no discretion where to build sidewalks other than at the locations requested by such members of the public – their discretion is limited to considerations of construction and operational feasibility, what they call “GIS Location Data” and cost and budgetary constraints. As Ms. Lori Main, the designated contact/spokesperson for the Annual Sidewalk Program, MCDOT and this hearing, candidly admitted on February 8, 2023 - “ the Sidewalk Program does not perform studies of any kind, except for the on-site field study that was performed to determine whether or not the Kenwood Park landscape conditions were conducive to sidewalk installation.” Exhibit 1, p.1 (underscoring for emphasis). In the final analysis, as stated above, County officials do not have the discretion to vary, modify and, most important, to add to the locations and or the scope of sidewalks as requested by any member of the public.

Thus, when requested to produce all traffic (vehicle, bike and pedestrian) data, studies and analyses made, consulted or relied upon in preparing the sidewalk routes at issue, Ms. Main replied that the Department did not make any such studies, and that “A studying (sic) regarding traffic volume would not influence the decision regarding sidewalk installation.” Exhibit 1, p.1 (underscoring for emphasis). When

queried as to why the proposed Lenox Road sidewalk was not extended to Radnor Road (given a fatal bus student death nearby which Ms. Main had referenced), she responded on February 9, 2023 that such segments “were not included because sidewalk installation had not been requested along the full length of Lenox Road.” Exhibit 2, page 1 (underscoring for emphasis).

Some further examples: While the fig leaf CIS Location Data indicates Walt Whitman High School as a significant traffic generator, sidewalks are not to be built along the its adjacent and heavily pedestrian and vehicle traveled Plainview Road, Goodview Road and Robinwood/Hopewood Roads simply because no private citizen had requested any such sidewalk installation. A cursory look at these streets during the early morning and mid-afternoon hours on school days chillingly shows floods of students traversing them which then are loaded with both moving and stationary automobile traffic. This is a disaster of Silicon Valley Bank proportions just waiting to happen. And nothing will even begin to address and remedy this situation unless a private citizen had made a request to build sidewalks there. To be clear, under the current Sidewalk Program, the hands of County officials are tied – they cannot designate a street for sidewalk construction. They can only determine which of the sidewalks requested by private citizens can and should be constructed.

Another example is the Department’s intention, at the request of a single member of the public, to build sidewalks along the entire length of little-traveled Kenhill Road from Highboro Drive to Durbin Road, a distance of 2568 feet which would needlessly impact a host of properties, since vehicular traffic moving across Kenwood Park is well catered for by Millwood Road.

2. This bizarre approach will be intentionally discarded and superseded by the County Planning Board’s proposed and long in preparation Pedestrian Master Plan which is set for public hearing on March 23rd. Its Key Action B-1a states: “Pivot the Annual Sidewalk Program from a reactive, request-driven process to an equitable, data-driven process.” The Master Plan then proceeds to note that “an approach to sidewalk construction that relies upon community requests does not necessarily address those locations with the greatest need. Using a data-driven approach to allocating the limited resources of the Annual Sidewalk Program will ensure that the highest priority connections are made and that resources are expended equitably.”

So the sensible thing to do, and we ask the Hearing Officer to so find and recommend, is that the Kenwood Park Sidewalk Construction Program be placed in suspense until the issue of its sidewalks can be addressed thru a soon to be adopted data driven process where County officials, on the basis of all relevant factors and freed from the constraints of private citizen requests, are themselves able to exercise the discretion and governmental power of deciding where sidewalks should be built.

3-A. Lastly, the proposed Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program is clearly illegal because, as shown above, it delegates the power to specify and so limit the location of proposed sidewalks solely to members of the public. That is a clear violation the long established and still vibrant legal doctrine of “nondelegation of governmental power to private citizens.”

The law is clear that governmental powers may not lawfully be delegated to private citizens, and this non-delegation doctrine has long been the law of Maryland. *Browner v. Curran*, 114 Md. 586, 119 A.2d 250 (1922) For example, it is clear that while citizens may petition for the creation and the boundaries of a construction project, the final decision including its boundaries must rest within the sound discretion of governmental officials; otherwise the action is an unlawful delegation. *Ackley v. Wicomco County Urban Services Commission*, 223 Md. 196, 162 A.2d 122 (1960) To like effect is *Foley v. County Commissioners of Carrol County*, 247 Md. 162, 230 A.2d 298 (1967). Similarly, an unlawful delegation was found when the authority of a Milk Licensing Board to exercise its broad powers in any marketing area was made dependent, not on the exercise of its discretion, but rather was expressly contingent upon a request for the exercise of its powers being made "by a substantial proportion of the producers and/or consumers, and/or distributors," in that area. *Maryland Co-Operative Mill Producers v. Miller*, 182 A. 432, 170 Md. 81 (1936).

The “nondelegation to private citizens” doctrine is alive and well and has recently shown renewed vigor throughout the nation, both in the Federal and State courts. If the existing Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program is allowed to proceed, it is destined to be enjoined and delayed as the case winds its way through the court system, and in my view, is over-turned. The County undoubtedly has the power under its property easements to build sidewalks, but it does not have the power, as it has done, to delegate the power to determine the location of where sidewalks can be

built to one or more private citizens. Such a delegation also has been found by both Federal and State courts to constitute a violation of due process which we now note, but see no reason to here brief that issue.

3- B. A further fatal flaw in the Department's proposed and intended action is that no properly established and subsisting Sidewalk Program in fact lawfully exists. Its March 14, 2023 response to my Public Information Act request for (a) the text of MCDOT's current Sidewalk Program and (b) the documents constituting the action taken by any MCDOT official authorizing, adopting or approving said Sidewalk Program indicates that NONE EXIST! Exhibit 3 (underscoring for emphasis). So what apparently has occurred is that a few persons in the Sidewalk unit of MCDOT's Transportation Engineering Division have taken upon themselves and without authority (a) to create and from time to time to vary the "provisions" of the Sidewalk Program without even reducing its terms in writing to an integrated document, and (b) more significant, without approval or authorization by a properly empowered County official, to having delegated the power to determine the locations of sidewalks to private citizens. No court and, we trust, no responsible County legal official would sanction or approve such covert and unlawful action.

Again, the Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program should be placed in suspense until superseded by the pending Pedestrian Master Plan now in the final stage of adoption. The resulting delay likely would be less than resulting protracted law suit sustained by a continuing injunction.

In conclusion, while the scope of the Hearing Officer's powers unclear and this is not an assessment proceeding as contemplated by section §49-53, we ask that the Hearing Officer address each of the issues and contentions we here raise and indicate those, if any, found to be beyond the Hearing Officer's authority. Out of an abundance of caution and to avoid any future contention that administrative remedies were not exhausted, we here are presenting some of the issues we would intend to press in court should the subject Program be permitted to proceed.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leonard N. Bechick', written in a cursive style with several loops and flourishes.

/s/ Leonard N Bechick

beblaw@verizon.net

**From:** beblaw@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 5:06 PM  
**To:** 'Main, Lori J.'  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program

Thank you for your very helpful clarification.

Leonard Bebchick

**From:** Main, Lori J. <Lori.Main@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:37 PM  
**To:** beblaw@verizon.net  
**Cc:** Gonzales, Robert <Robert.Gonzales@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Holley, Geary <Geary.Holley@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Berrios, Juan A. <Juan.Berrios@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Bilgrami, Khursheed <Khursheed.Bilgrami@montgomerycountymd.gov>; TrafficOps <TrafficOps@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program

Hello Mr. Bebchick,

Thank you for contacting the Sidewalk Program. I hope this finds you well and enjoying the day.

As a minor projects program, the Sidewalk Program does not perform studies of any kind, except for the on-site field study that was performed to determine whether or not the Kenwood Park landscape conditions were conducive to sidewalk installation. This is because sidewalks are installed as a proactive measure because MCDOT understands that there is no safer place to walk than on a sidewalk separated from the roadway and oncoming traffic. Additionally, a vehicle does not have to be speeding to cause serious head trauma or bodily injury when it hits a person. In one of our previous proposals, Dr. John Schreiber, a child neurologist at Children's National Hospital and Associate Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics at George Washington University testified,

“ . . . I think what's important to also stress here is the real effects that these injuries can have on people . . . I've seen kids all too many times who have been stuck by a motor vehicle, even at low speeds, and you have significant contusions, bleeding, strokes, brain injuries that leave them with disability for the rest of their lives and so, this concept that speed is a necessary component of injury is just – it's just incorrect. . . . ”

A studying regarding traffic volume, therefore, will not influence the final decision regarding sidewalk installation.

The Traffic Engineering and Operations Division (DTEO) performs traffic studies when residents request speed bumps or other traffic calming measures. You may contact them via email at [TrafficOps@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:TrafficOps@montgomerycountymd.gov) to request copies of any studies that may have been previously performed in your community.

Thank you again and have a wonderful evening. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Best,

*Lori*

(she/her/hers)

**beblaw@verizon.net**

---

**From:** beblaw@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:05 PM  
**To:** 'lori.main@montgomerycountymd.gov'  
**Subject:** Proposed Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program

Kindly make available as soon as possible with instructions as to how the public may view all traffic (vehicle, bike and pedestrian) data, studies and analyses, if any, made, consulted or relied upon in the preparation of this Sidewalk Plan. Some or a portion of some of sidewalk routes proposed do not appear justified by the traffic flows normally observed. What is essential both for the public to understand and to serve as a basis for any meaningful hearing or decision is the actual data, whether assumed or actually measured, which form a basis for the sidewalk routings selected.

Leonard Bebchick



beblaw@verizon.net

---

**From:** Main, Lori J. <Lori.Main@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 9, 2023 11:00 AM  
**To:** beblaw@verizon.net  
**Cc:** Gonzales, Robert; Holley, Geary; Berrios, Juan A.; Bilgrami, Khursheed  
**Subject:** RE: One further point RE: Proposed Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program

Hello Leonard,

Thank you for contacting the Sidewalk Program. I will be happy to answer your question.

The Sidewalk Program is a request-based program. Our proposals are generated from resident requests for sidewalk installation. On July 23, 2018, the Chair of Traffic & Safety for the Kenwood Park Citizens' Association requested sidewalk installation on the following roadways:

- Request 10458 - Millwood Road from Goldsboro Road to Lenox Road;
- Request 10459 – Lenox Road from Millwood Road to Whittier Road.

On October 25, 2018, we further received the following requests:

- Request 10502 – Millwood Road from Plainview Road to Lenox Road;
- Request 10503 – Durbin Road from Bradley Boulevard to Hopewood Street.

Sadly, on December 12, 2019, a 9-year-old Bradley Hills Elementary School student was killed when hit by a Montgomery County school bus at the intersection of Millwood Road and Tanglewood Drive. Subsequently, on January 3, 2020, we received the following additional requests for sidewalk installation in the Kenwood Park neighborhood:

- Request 10692 - Kenhill Road – Whittier Blvd to Durbin Road (since Kenhill Rd ends at Highboro Drive and not Whittier Blvd, Highboro Dr was added to the proposal to facilitate this request)
- Request 10693 – Durbin Road from Hopewood Street to Radnor Road.

Because the sidewalks were requested by the Kenwood Park Civic Association, a body who represents the community, and due to the death in the community resulting from the pedestrian/vehicle collision, the aforementioned requests were escalated, a sidewalk proposal to be issued in the next few years. The segments of roadways that are missing from the proposal, such as Lenox Road, were not included because sidewalk installation had not been requested along the full length of Lenox Road.

When a sidewalk installation request is received, the Sidewalk Program has a duty to investigate. Our process of community involvement via written testimony as well as oral testimony at the public hearing, is the final stage of our investigation. This is because we understand that not all residents have the same opinion regarding pedestrian safety conditions in their community. Based on the testimony received, the proposal may be modified or portions suspended. Likewise, all sidewalk proposals begin with our standard design of a 5-foot-wide concrete sidewalk with a 0 to 3-foot-wide greenspace; following the public hearing, this standard design may also be modified to save some of the trees slated for removal, for instance. During this process, we are here to answer your questions and listen to you.

Thanks again, Leonard. Have a lovely day and please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Best,  
*Lori*

beblaw@verizon.net

**From:** beblaw@verizon.net  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 7:40 PM  
**To:** 'Main, Lori J.'  
**Subject:** One further point RE: Proposed Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program

Lori

Now that it is clear that traffic studies play no role regarding the placement of sidewalks, the question is what was the basis for selection of the streets where sidewalks are proposed to be built? Even if based on "judgment," that "judgment" has to be based on articulable criteria and factors. What were they in the case of this proposal? The decisions certainly were not made by throwing darts at a map.

A few may be obvious. Durbin already has speed bumps. But what are the others? Why, for example, is Kenhill included? And some decisions are surprising such as not placing sidewalks on Lenox all the way to the Radnor cross road. In short, what were the factors/considerations that led to the decisions taken?

Leonard Bebchick

**From:** Main, Lori J. <Lori.Main@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 8, 2023 4:37 PM  
**To:** beblaw@verizon.net  
**Cc:** Gonzales, Robert <Robert.Gonzales@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Holley, Geary <Geary.Holley@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Berrios, Juan A. <Juan.Berrios@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Bilgrami, Khursheed <Khursheed.Bilgrami@montgomerycountymd.gov>; TrafficOps <TrafficOps@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Proposed Kenwood Park Sidewalk Program

Hello Mr. Bebchick,

Thank you for contacting the Sidewalk Program. I hope this finds you well and enjoying the day.

As a minor projects program, the Sidewalk Program does not perform studies of any kind, except for the on-site field study that was performed to determine whether or not the Kenwood Park landscape conditions were conducive to sidewalk installation. This is because sidewalks are installed as a proactive measure because MCDOT understands that there is no safer place to walk than on a sidewalk separated from the roadway and oncoming traffic. Additionally, a vehicle does not have to be speeding to cause serious head trauma or bodily injury when it hits a person. In one of our previous proposals, Dr. John Schreiber, a child neurologist at Children's National Hospital and Associate Professor of Neurology and Pediatrics at George Washington University testified,

beblaw@verizon.net

**From:** Main, Lori J. <Lori.Main@montgomerycountymd.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 14, 2023 6:36 PM  
**To:** beblaw@verizon.net  
**Cc:** Gonzales, Robert; Goldsmith, Brady  
**Subject:** Response to MPIA  
**Attachments:** Section 49-53.pdf; Sidewalk Brochure 2015.pdf; Sidewalk Brochure Under Leggett.pdf; Sidewalk Brochure (Before 2020).pdf; Sidewalk Brochure 2019.pdf; Sidewalk Program Process & FAQ.pdf; Sidewalk Program Process Handout (Nov 2022).pdf; Sidewalk Program FAQs.pdf

Hello Leonard,

I am writing in response to your Maryland Public Information Act Request submitted March 7, 2023. I have copied your requests below and provided my responses in purple.

1. The full text of MCDOT's current Sidewalk Program. This refers to the actual text which sets forth the details of the program and how it is to be conducted and not to summaries thereof already made public such as "Sidewalk Program Process" and "Frequently Asked Questions". This record/document should be supplied as soon as available and should not await the completion of a search for other records/documents here requested.

✓ The Sidewalk Program has no documentation or literature discussing the formation or process of the Sidewalk Program, except for the Sidewalk Program Process handout that was received by you in the proposal package. In addition, I have attached Section 49-53 of the Montgomery County Code which governs the public hearing and outreach efforts that must be made. There have also been various iterations of the Sidewalk Program brochure, process and FAQs which are attached.

Additionally, the Office of Management & Budget's webpage on the Sidewalk Program provides a description of the program, budgetary information dating back to 2018, project justification and other information. The Sidewalk Program, itself, is a Capital Improvement Project (CIP). Below listed are links that discuss how a CIP project is created and funded:

- Capital Improvements Program;
- Capital Budget Process.

2. The action and documents constituting the action, if any, of the Secretary or other MCDOT official authorizing, adopting or approving said Sidewalk Program. This record/document should be supplied as soon as available and should not await the completion of a search for other records/documents here requested.

✓ The Sidewalk Program has no documents responsive to this request.

3. All records/documents, if any, which supplement, vary or further detail the manner in which the provisions of the said Sidewalk Program as set forth in its text (requested in item 1 above) are to be administered or conducted. This request is not intended and does not extend to feasibility, engineering, construction, budgetary or like documents, but only to documents, if any, which, as stated, supplement, vary or further detail how the provisions of the Sidewalk Program are to be administered and conducted.

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

See Response to Request No. 1 and the attached documents. Aside from that, the Sidewalk Program has no documents or literature in response to this request.

Thanks, Leonard. Have a great evening and please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Best,

*Lori*

(she/her/hers)

**Lori Jean Main**  
**Planning Specialist**  
**Annual Sidewalk Program**  
**Montgomery County Department of Transportation**  
Division of Transportation Engineering  
100 Edison Park Drive  
4th Floor  
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

[lori.main@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:lori.main@montgomerycountymd.gov)  
240-777-7271



Stay connected



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.cisa.gov/be-cyber-smart>

**From:** beblaw@verizon.net <beblaw@verizon.net>

**Sent:** Tuesday, March 7, 2023 9:48 PM

**To:** Goldsmith, Brady <Brady.Goldsmith@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Email

# Exhibits for Agenda Item #...

Owner

MCP...



Email

From

Bruce Schwalm

To

<MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; Catherine Coello; catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Exhibits for Agenda Item #7: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent

Date Received

3/23/2023 1:06 PM

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

Hello, The following are submitted as exhibits related to my testimony for the subject public hearing. I will be attending virtually.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Bruce

[https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/pedestrian\\_injuries\\_fatalities.pdf](https://popcenter.asu.edu/sites/default/files/pedestrian_injuries_fatalities.pdf) DOJ project study Pg. 5-12 "Pedestrian Behavior"

<https://www.kxan.com/news/local/austin/barriers-on-i-35-help-decrease-number-of-pedestrian-deaths-txdot-says/>

[https://www.roads.maryland.gov/OPR\\_Research/MD-17-SHA-UM-4-28\\_Median-Fencing\\_Report.pdf](https://www.roads.maryland.gov/OPR_Research/MD-17-SHA-UM-4-28_Median-Fencing_Report.pdf) MDOT Study Pg. 27-28 "Summary and Conclusions"

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/countystat/Resources/Files/Ped%20Safety%20Web%20Version.pdf> DOT, MCPD, PIO pg 31 "Pedestrian Collision Variables: Fault"

<https://www.hindawi.com/journals/mpe/2021/5567638/> Section 4 "Conclusions and Future Directions"


<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-PedSafety/overview.html> "Data Driven Approach" "Three E's of Pedestrian Safety"

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**Rev. Dr. Bruce Schwalm, Ph. D**

Doctor of Leisure Science, Ordained Dudeist Priest

### Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	↻
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Dear Chairman Zyontz and the Montgomery County Planning Board,

We are writing to request that the Pedestrian Shortcut between Kersey Road and Auth Lane in the Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing Draft (page 216, map reference #186) be removed from the Pedestrian Master Plan. We just recently learned from MCDOT about its designs to build a pedestrian bridge and path over a stream that feeds the Northwest Branch at the cost of up to \$400K. The project is exorbitantly costly, provides no safety benefits, is not ADA-compliant, connects two random neighborhood streets that lead to no places of interest, unnecessarily removes healthy trees, and will ruin the quality of life we enjoy on our property.

We have lived at 11700 Auth Lane for 46 years now. Our home is at the very end of the Auth Lane cul-de-sac, immediately adjacent to a county public right-of-way. We are long-time residents of Kemp Mill, a wonderful neighborhood, and we will end up suffering terribly if this bridge is built. Any bridge or path built right next to our home will impact our lives directly. The right-of-way is very close to the side of our house. Our house also backs up to the stream, which we can see from our rear windows. We often enjoy the beautiful and bucolic view from our rear deck, where we watch the wildlife of all kinds and listen to birds chirping and frogs croaking. It is a completely natural and serene setting. A pedestrian bridge and accompanying path would turn this idyllic scene into a public thoroughfare right in our backyard and straight past our home. We know that it is county property and a right-of-way. We know that many people have used it as a shortcut for decades. We have no issue with that. It is also an undeveloped stream and forest, has been that way forever, and should remain that way forever. This is part of what makes Kemp Mill such an amazing place to live. We should not ruin this beautiful setting, and there is no pressing safety issue at hand here. Walkers taking a shortcut from one small neighborhood street to another are free to do so and traverse the stream. Or, they can walk around another way. To spend hundreds of thousands of county tax dollars for the convenience of some people in Kemp Mill at the expense of a few is unfair and unjust.

Auth Lane is often used by kids/teens for skateboarding, scootering and bicycling due to it being long, straight, and the perfect degree of slope. A formal walkway leading from Auth Lane down to any bridge would encourage even more noisy disturbances from users of skateboards, scooters and bicycles. It might also be an irresistible lure for small motorized vehicles, such as motorcycles and scooters, regardless of any signs which would be posted. This would be a safety concern for the teens/kids and would also take a beautiful, quiet, natural setting and turn it into a noisy race track.

Over 30 years ago, there was similar talk about building a bridge here. Many different agencies were involved, including WSSC and MNCPPC. There were many difficult issues related to constructing a bridge over this stream, considering the steep terrain and the fact that the area is a floodplain. Ultimately, the plan was scrapped, as the cost to build a suitable bridge in this location was astronomical, considering it would need to be elevated high above the stream and span a very long distance to account for high water flow during storms, and that it would have to be ADA-compliant. We were surprised to hear during a zoom meeting recently with MCDOT and our neighborhood civic association (Kemp Mil Civic Association) that the bridge being proposed now will not be ADA-compliant. The Pedestrian Master Plan seeks to enhance pedestrian accessibility and safety and do it in an equitable and just way. If this project cannot be built to be accessible to both walkers and wheelchair users, it should not be included in the Pedestrian Master Plan.

We strongly urge you to remove this expensive, ecologically damaging, unsafe, inequitable, and unjust pedestrian shortcut project from the Pedestrian Master Plan. Thank you for your efforts, and for the opportunity to comment on this public draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Respectfully,  
Mona and Sol Freishtat  
11700 Auth Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20902




## Email




# Pedestrian Plan Meeting



Owner

 MCP...

## Email

**From**  [Doug Scott \(Comcast\)](#)

**To**  <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  [MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org)

**Cc**  [anne.kaiser@house.state.md.us](mailto:anne.kaiser@house.state.md.us);  [julie.meyer@waba.org](mailto:julie.meyer@waba.org)

**Bcc**

**Subject** Pedestrian Plan Meeting

**Date Sent** **Date Received** 3/23/2023 11:04 PM

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

This was probably the wrong time an place for my observations. I give my self a fail in that context.

It seems like a vast amount of well intended work has been done, and the time for my thoughts and experience had long passed. I have always been suspect of WABA's representation of the cycling community, tonight reinforced my concern, they sounded like the FAA to Boeing.

While the words and charts are all perhaps best in class, I am concerned. The implementation I have seen to date is poor to misguided. I stand firmly behind 50 years experience saying we will regret the new OGR lanes. The failure to have a bridge at 270 & OGR is a remarkable omission (\$\$\$ over safety?). The commercial and residential right turns will only get more unsafe with the additional separation of the lane buffers. Out of sight out of mind is the issue, both cars and cyclists will become complacent about the risks. I have ridden the lanes, they are seductively comfortable with fresh asphalt. Seductive and comfortable should not be conflated with safe.

MacArthur Blvd's barriers at Old Angler's are a hostile threat to cyclists. I am at least aware enough to decide to abandon my favorite road.

Much of the discussion was accolades for the data driven process. I went back to the map data, and the omissions I noted in my long form submission finally jumped out at me. You have no data for the Parks - Federal, State or Local it is not there. You are missing the pressure treated wood bridges entirely in your data set.

Among the group of 21 or so cyclists I ride with routinely I know of the following from those bridges:

- broken hip, broken collar bone, hip ultimately replaced 4 mph crash trying to read tiny print on a directional sign(me)
- broken collar bone
- broken collar bone, broken ribs
- broken femur
- broken spine paralyzed (the rider involved is probably one for the 5-10 most distinguished riders of the area in the past 20 years).

That is 6 incidents in 21 skilled riders who do not use the trails with any frequency (may be part of the problem). This information did not come from a formal survey most surfaced in a conversation at the Langenkamp Memorial.

These wooden bridges are all on government property, controlled by government agencies and maintained by government organizations. This is 100% controllable by government.

Other countries I have ridden in recently (France, Italy) have addressed these surfaces with different environmentally friendly safe materials. When a common citizen like me approaches Park staff we are always told that the pressure treated wood is there because of environmental concerns. I have little patience for officials who fail to appreciate that people they are speaking with might be intelligent and knowledgeable.

In consoling me this evening a friend pointed out that the plan for a new layout of Haines Point which we tried to guide in a different direction has been put on hold after the sample section was installed in December. While less problematic than Water St in DC, the idea of introducing a bi-directional bike/pedestrian lane in Haines Point was mind boggling. I hope the reaction to the test area informs a better future revision and a better process for reaching these design decisions in the next round.

My mom had no idea what I did at age 14. I was riding up to 400 miles weekly training out of Northern Virginia often across Chain Bridge. I worry what a more informed/opinionated parent might say to her 14 year old saying "Do not worry, I will ride in the protected lanes." If you rely on the painted lanes in the area of last summer's Langenkamp accident on River Rd. you are in the wrong place in the traffic lane to be safe for that brief congested section. I am normally in the far right of the shoulder, but in those areas I take the lane and make it hard for cars to pass and I rarely use the clear bike lane at a light to advance on traffic. Cars don't always use signals and if I am passing the outcome is my fault.

The landed cost of the lights I had tonight was \$8.25 - I was involved in the procurement. They are cheap, you can probably do better. Give them out at school's or wherever and give them out with a singular message "Please have these because your County Government (or school) cares about you." We do too much through grants letting others take credit for the resources of government.

**Attachments**

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Page 1

March 22, 2023

Mr. Eli Glazier  
Multimodal Transportation Planner Coordinator  
Montgomery County Planning Department  
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
2425 Reedy Drive  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear, Mr. Glazier:

The Greater Olney Civic Association (GOCA) has had some initial discussions about the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan Draft published February 13, 2023 and without question GOCA supports the Master Plan's "vision to create safer, more comfortable experiences walking or rolling around the county, and to make getting around more convenient and accessible for every pedestrian." Further, we support Montgomery County's Vision Zero goals to "eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries."

GOCA conducts monthly meetings among our 35 community homeowner association membership in greater Olney. These meetings provide the forum to discuss and debate issues, policies and initiatives that affect homeowner life in our communities. The publication of the Plan was discussed at our most recent meeting on March 14. While we distributed the Plan draft online link to HOA members, and some officers have read the plan, we recognize that we must afford all members ample time to review, understand, discuss and agree on a position for GOCA to develop regarding this 282-page plan.

From our initial conversations within our group, we know that there are a few recommendations that some of our members have some concerns about. So, we plan to continue the conversation with our members so that we can develop our recommendations in a resolution to put forth to a vote to GOCA member representatives at our next meeting, April 11. I will in turn, forward GOCA's recommendation and feedback as voted by our membership to your attention as soon as possible following the meeting.

Thank you,



Helene I. Rosenheim  
President

From: [Adam Carlesco](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Cc: [Glazier, Eli](#)  
Subject: Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan Comments  
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:16:08 AM

---

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

Dear MoCo Planning Dept,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic support of the pedestrian master plan. Currently, much of MoCo is a terrible experience for pedestrians and is heavily car-dependent. I've noticed so many difficult and dangerous intersections as I've walked, many nasty narrow sidewalks along major high speed roads, and utility poles blocking the middle of sidewalks. This needs to change.

One additional piece of infrastructure that is desperately needed is [raised crosswalks](#) that slow traffic at dangerous intersections while leaving pedestrians at the same height as the sidewalks as they cross the street. These have been tremendously successful at reducing pedestrian injuries and deaths throughout Europe (and even in the District of Columbia!) and need to become standard practice in many parts of our county.

Additionally, the county should begin installing bollards throughout dense urban areas within the county along sidewalks (e.g., Wheaton). Too many people are hit or buildings damaged because a speeding vehicle hops the curb. The risk for such behavior should be placed upon the driver - not the rest of the community - for their reckless automotive behavior.

Additionally, while I understand that this is about planning for pedestrian rights of way, automobile speed limit reductions are also necessary for ensuring pedestrian safety. Wider sidewalks are not enough.

- My mailing address is 10904 Bucknell Dr, Silver Spring, MD 20902
- The hearing date of March 23, 2023
- The hearing item #7

Thank you,  
Adam Carlesco

--

Adam S. Carlesco  
Phone: 202.740.3651  
E-mail: [carlescoas@gmail.com](mailto:carlescoas@gmail.com)


## Email







## Motor Vehicles &amp; the Pede...

Owner

MCP...

## Email

**From**  [sumax@verizon.net](mailto:sumax@verizon.net)

**To**  <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  County Council;  Dale Tibbitts;  Glenn Orlin;  [Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov);  MCP-Chair #;  [MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org)

**Cc**

**Bcc**

**Subject** Motor Vehicles & the Pedestrian Master Plan

**Date Sent** **Date Received** 3/26/2023 4:34 PM

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

**I watched some of the testimony about the Pedestrian Master Plan & felt that it would be of interest to many to be aware of some of the statistics to do with motor vehicles.**

**As of 6/30/21 there were 794,713 cars registered in Montgomery County. Add to that the number of school buses delivering & picking up students in our many schools, both public & private. Additionally, there are the buses in the Metro system, plus those in the Ride-On system. There are also motorcycles as well as trucks & emergency vehicles.**

**Montgomery is a county of about 500 square miles with a population of roughly 1.1 million people. Therefore it is easy to realize that the most overwhelming proportion of travelers & goods will be transported by motor vehicles. In contrast, at best, - .6 of 1% commute by bicycle. Also, according to the Planning Department's Research unit, 3.8% walked or used other means to get to work. Many will find these statistics to be representative of the real world, as it is.**

**I am very much in favor of more people being able to bicycle or walk to work & to other destinations. However, there will be a limit as to the extent to which this will be possible. Impacting the amount of bicycling & walking are factors such as weather, distance, terrain, time, & condition of individuals wishing to so travel. Bear in mind that the Perennial group, those 65 years of age & older, as of 2020, was 15.5% of the county's population & growing quickly, so don't count on them to swell the numbers of bicyclists & walkers very much.**


**Further, realize that reducing lane numbers & narrowing roads reduces speeds, increases congestion, & keeps cars in traffic longer, adding to pollution.**

**The emphasis on walking & bicycling in the pedestrian master plan, in my view, ignores the real world to too great an extent, so I have added some facts & statistics to add some balance to the discussion.**

**Thanks for reading this far. I appreciate it.**

**Max Bronstein**

**Attachments**

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	↻
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0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1



## Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association (NFCCA)

April 3, 2023

Submitted by: Sharon Canavan, Secretary Northwood Four Corners Civic Association,  
10213 Edgewood Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901

To: Montgomery County Planning Board:

Members of the Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association (NFCCA) would like to express our views regarding the draft Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP) developed by the Montgomery County planning department staff. NFCCA requests that this statement be incorporated into the Planning Board's March 23<sup>rd</sup> public hearing record.

NFCCA supports the priorities set out under the Bicycle and Pedestrian Areas (BiPPA) program concentrating investments in areas with the greatest need. The road from downtown Silver Spring through Four Corners Town Center to Burnt Mills Town Center is designated as one of the highest priority BiPPA areas and this stretch of roadway is proposed to be funded in Montgomery County's Capital Budget.

Downtown Wheaton through Four Corners Town Center and east to Long Branch Town Center are recommended to receive consideration for improvements next as a Tier 1 BiPPA. Dennis Avenue from Georgia Ave to University Blvd and Lockwood Dr from Burnt Mills Town Center to White Oak Town Center are treated as Tier 2 BiPPAs. Arcola Ave from Georgia Ave to University Blvd is listed as a Tier 3 BiPPA. NFCCA also supports the recommendation for these Tier 1 and 2 projects as priorities to be undertaken later.

NFCCA supports the general objectives of the PMP and strongly urges the Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council to both seriously consider and approve funding to make the pedestrian improvements necessary to address traffic problems and safety issues. The PMP seeks to increase the comfort level, safety, and accessibility countywide for pedestrians (for the purposes of this letter, pedestrian includes walkers, bicyclists, scooter riders, etc.) Also, the Montgomery County's "Vision Zero" goal is to eliminate transportation-related fatalities and severe injuries by 2030 by fundamentally changing how county roads are planned and designed and shifting from maximizing traffic volume and efficiency "to ensuring that the transportation system is safe for all, regardless of travel mode."



To provide some context, the size and scale of Four Corners is best characterized as a “Town Center” located at the confluence of two thoroughfares designated for Corridor-Focused Growth. This close-in community in southeastern Montgomery County is made up of three neighborhoods—Northwood-Four Corners, Woodmoor, and South Four Corners—each of which is represented by its own civic association. Although separated by major highways (US 29/Colesville Road and Route 193/University Boulevard), these neighborhoods function as a racially diverse, cohesive, and appealing community, stitched together by a commercial district, two high schools, active church and civic organizations, and affordable small-lot single-family housing stock.

Thrive Montgomery 2050 (TM 2050) encourages greater density along major road corridors served by public transit. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Flash already runs on US 29, and the Countywide Transit Corridor Functional Master Plan recommends a BRT route on Route 193 from Wheaton to Langley Park. Increased density in Four Corners and nearby Corridor-Focused Growth areas has the potential to exacerbate the already congested and dangerous traffic conditions existing here today.

The intersection at Four Corners is a complex, multilane, commercially bisected junction. US 29 is a heavily trafficked major portal to up-county and downtown Silver Spring. Route 193 is a major east/west thoroughfare. Adding to traffic volume, two nearby Beltway exits feed into this intersection. Traffic flooding from the north, south, east, and west peaks here; the Four Corners intersection is a traffic chokepoint producing significant backups before cars spill onto the Beltway or drive along to their destinations.

Instead of allowing left turns from US 29, drivers must turn right, cross multiple traffic lanes, and negotiate through “jug-handles” on Route 193 that are neither convenient nor intuitive for those who are unfamiliar with the intersection. The complex design at the Four Corners intersection produces significant traffic backups, illegal U-turns on US 29, and inevitably streams of exasperated drivers that cut through the narrow streets of our community to avoid this intersection. Even with Vision Zero improvements currently in place or in the planning stage, pedestrians struggle to navigate the Four Corners intersection safely. Moving a high-volume of traffic along densely travelled major thoroughfares impacts quality of life in nearby communities.

The small-scale businesses in the Four Corners Town Center commercial district would benefit from measures to connect the surrounding neighborhoods to a vibrant, well-designed, safely walkable shopping district. A more cohesive redesign of traffic and pedestrian flow would greatly enhance the interrelation, unity, livability, walkability, attractiveness, and cohesion of the Four Corners communities.

TM 2050 outlines the planning principles of Complete Communities and 15-minute living. TM 2050 envisions reconfiguring existing communities to support 15-minute living by mixing housing, offices, and retail in a neighborhood so services, infrastructure, facilities, and amenities are within walking distance. In line with those objectives, the PMP seeks to prioritize the pedestrian scale and encourage walking and bicycling through design principles such as smaller blocks, narrower streets, buffered bike lanes and sidewalks, while making transportation safety improvements.

The busy Four Corners crossroads offers local residents and transit users the *potential* to enjoy the principles embodied in the concepts of complete community and 15-minute living. There are multiple public transportation stops (FLASH, Metro, and Ride On), as well as grocery stores, restaurants, a church, schools, a heavily used local park, senior housing, and multi-sector commercial businesses. If the concepts of complete communities and 15-minute living are to be realized, a quick trip to the local Safeway or the Woodmoor Shopping Center should be manageable on foot. But the reality today is pedestrians must walk long blocks on narrow sidewalks and then negotiate six to eight lanes of traffic, multiple traffic lights, and traffic racing through the intersection.

Done right, however, there are ways to enhance walkability and reduce pedestrian injuries and fatalities. Walkability in Four Corners is not an amenity so much as it is a necessity. A number of pedestrians have been hit and even killed nearby on Colesville Road and University Boulevard; as recently as March 26<sup>th</sup> a pedestrian died after being fatally hit by *two* cars in nearby Burnt Mills! If this area is made safer, community residents will be more likely to walk or bike to the many nearby businesses, restaurants, and public amenities.

The Four Corners area is characterized in the PMP as an urban and major transit corridor, because Colesville Road and University Boulevard run along its boundaries. With its many public transit options and high volume of traffic, the Four Corners area is particularly dangerous for pedestrians. The PMP observes “As transit corridors such as Georgia Avenue, Veirs Mill Road, and *University Boulevard* (emphasis added) account for 10% of fatalities and severe injuries but only 1.3% of roadway miles, more frequent protected crossings and lower target speeds are needed on these roads to achieve Vision Zero.”

The PMP observed that 16 percent of severe and fatal pedestrian crashes take place at uncontrolled intersections and 37percent of severe and fatal pedestrian crashes take place midblock. The PMP added that “Longer block lengths limit routing options for pedestrians and encourage crossing streets at unsafe places because protected crossing locations are spaced too far apart. Driveways create conflict points between cars and pedestrians.” The Colesville Road and University Boulevard corridors near Four Corners merit more protected crossings to give all pedestrians, and particularly public transit riders, safer opportunities to cross when catching the bus.

In Town Centers with higher pedestrian activity, such as Four Corners, the PMP calls for re-evaluating no-turn-on-red to protect pedestrians, implementing Leading Pedestrian Intervals (LPIs) at traffic lights to give pedestrians a head start, and reducing signal cycle lengths to make pedestrian travel more convenient and limit non-compliance when impatient pedestrians cross against the light. The PMP also recognizes the need to manage dangerous driving behaviors with greater Automated Traffic Enforcement (ATE) such as speed and red-light cameras. Unsurprisingly the PMP observes that “Managing vehicle speed is an essential element in creating a high-

quality pedestrian environment” and recommends installation of traffic calming measures, crosswalk markings, and other treatments.”

Pedestrian safety measures—such as additional walk signs, crosswalks, caution signage, blinking lights, or other safety measures—could increase walkability and make 15-minute living more of a reality in Four Corners. Other recommended improvements to consider are: adding crosswalks on nearby highways and lowering highway speeds approaching this intersection, allowing more time to cross Route 193 and US 29 safely with a leading walk sign before the light turns green; reducing the number of driveways into the many commercial buildings near the intersection, and increasing Automated Traffic Enforcement.

To promote walkability and bike-ability in the Four Corners community, county planning and transportation agencies should take steps to reduce cut-through traffic and discourage speeding by prohibiting turns onto arterial roads at certain points and installing traffic calming measures in residential neighborhoods. If east/west flow on Route 193 could be improved, fewer frustrated drivers would resort to cutting through these neighborhoods.

More specifically, the cut-through trouble spots in Northwood-Four Corners include: Lorain Avenue between Route 193 and US 29; Timberwood Avenue to Route 193; Dennis Avenue to either Eastwood Avenue or Edgewood Avenue; and Southwood Avenue. Drivers routinely ignore or slow-roll through stop signs and exceed posted neighborhood speed limits. Although not cut-through opportunities, cars speeding along several other streets, including Caddington and Cavalier as well as Hannes Street (all with school children walking to Forest Knolls Elementary) endanger pedestrians.

Sidewalks should be installed on streets where there are none and existing sidewalks should be improved or widened to allow access by pedestrians, strollers, and wheelchairs. NFCCA also has concerns about potential proposals to ease per-unit parking requirements to reduce builders' cost. Maneuverability is already a problem on narrow streets in the NFCCA neighborhood; cars coming from one direction must ease to the curb to allow another car to pass through. This is particularly problematic on streets without sidewalks.

NFCCA is also closely following development of the University Boulevard Corridor Plan. We anticipate that this general planning effort will consider many of the concerns raised in this letter and ultimately recommend improvements to traffic flow and investment in measures to improve safety for pedestrians negotiating the Four Corners intersection as well as the neighborhood in nearby communities.

NFCCA thanks the Montgomery planning department for the considerable thought and effort that went into the development of the draft PMP and for the opportunity to present our views.



Comments Montgomery Counties Pedestrian Plan Public Hearing Draft February 2023  
By Jerry Garson, Chair of the MCCF Transportation Committee

The Montgomery Civic Federation, Inc., will make the following recommendations to the Montgomery County Planning Board on its the Pedestrian Plan. Public Hearing Draft dated February 2023

The mission of the MCCF is to preserve and improve the quality of life for all current and future residents of Montgomery County, Maryland. Since its founding in 1925, the volunteers of the MCCF have committed themselves to providing an effective citizen voice to government policy makers, both elected and appointed.

We think that Pedestrian Safety is important for all residents of the County.

We recommend that the County provide all residents with reflectorized vests for walking and bicycle riding. These will provide significantly more visibility to motorists in rain or at night.

Why not mark all crosswalks with priority within 3,000 of all schools and by bus stops and all signalized intersections on all four corners?

We are concerned that the Planning Board recommends "Assume County control of State highways. Transferring control of these roads would give the county the flexibility to retrofit these state roads to prioritize walking, bicycling, and transit, and allow it to do so much faster than can happen today."

Has the cost of assuming County control of state highways been considered? The cost of maintaining all State roads is very expensive. The snow removal cost is also a major expense. This is a very large expenditure recommendation and should include a cost estimate. We assume it includes all numbered roads such as MD 355 Rockville Pike, MD 190 River Road, MD 185 Connecticut Avenue. MD 28 which runs across the whole County. Does this proposal also include I-270, I-370, I-495 and the Intercounty Connector. What is the estimated cost to the County Residents. Page 88, B-10

Page 64, B-1c: Add all parks to paragraph, including both Montgomery County and Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission parks.

Page 65, B-1f: In the paragraph, Montgomery County's Residential Permit Parking should not include removal of parking restrictions near high schools. This requires students walking to school in streets to have a wider clear street to walk in.

Page 66: B-2 Change pedestrian recall default to only hours between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. to reduce pollution caused by vehicles waiting for green light at late night hours.

Page 73, B-4a and B-4b: Require sidewalks in all parking lots to provide safe walking

from vehicles to stores or building entrances. Since Page 53 indicates 21% of the pedestrian crashes occur in parking lots.

Page 77, B-4h: Add parks and trails to have public seating.

Page 78, B-5a: There should be a requirement for street lights in all areas with sidewalks; there should not be more than 150 feet between street lights.

Page 79 B-5c require all government agencies to report malfunctioning streetlights. Include Police and Fire Departments.

Page 82, B-7c: Add words requiring sidewalks in front of all parks.

Page 83, B-7e: Remove incentive but keep requirement in new developments to connect to nearby sidewalks. Make it a requirement.

Page 89 B-11: Add language to require that county snow plows not place snow in marked and unmarked crosswalks.

Page 94 P-1a: Require all current county and public agency vehicles to have backup cameras and require all future new vehicles have forward and rear pedestrian detection equipment.

Page 97, P-1e: Require the county to mail to each resident at least yearly all changes to traffic rules and regulations, instead of requiring drivers to have an in-person knowledge test every eight years.

Page 98, P-2b: Require marked crosswalks at the nearest intersection for all bus stops.

Page 102, P-3a: Require walking paths or sidewalks in all parking lot design standards. Since Page 53 indicates 21% of the pedestrian crashes occur in parking lots.

Page 103 P-4c, Require sidewalks to where parents pick up students from all Public Schools.

Page 105 P-5c, Does this stop parents from picking up students at schools.

The Montgomery County Civic Federation, Inc. (MCCF) represents about 150,000 Montgomery County residents.

The Civic Federation is a not-for-profit, county-wide umbrella group designed to promote cooperation, education and effectiveness of civic and community associations in Montgomery County.

It addresses a wide range of concerns in transportation, land use, environment, education, budget and finance, public safety, and ethics. With its strength of numbers and thoroughness of its deliberations, the Federation influences county policy and balances the activities of vested county pressure groups.

Thank you for considering our views.

Email

# Testimony on Item 7 - Ped...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Carrie Kisicki

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Testimony on Item 7 - Pedestrian Master Plan - Support

Date Sent

Date Received

3/30/2023 3:53 PM

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

Good afternoon,

Please accept the following comments on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth.

Best,

Carrie Kisicki

726 Thayer Ave.

Silver Spring, MD 20910

Cell: 224-522-2040

---

March 23, 2023

Montgomery County Planning Board

2425 Reddie Dr, 14th Floor

Wheaton, MD 20902

Item 7 - Pedestrian Master Plan - Support

Carrie Kisicki, Montgomery Advocacy Manager



**Good evening Chair Zyontz and Planning Commissioners. My name is Carrie Kisicki and I am speaking on behalf of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, the leading organization in the DC region advocating for walkable, inclusive, transit-oriented communities as the most sustainable and equitable way to grow and provide opportunities for all. We strongly support the Pedestrian Master Plan draft and commend the plan's holistic approach to achieving pedestrian safety and comfort across the county.**

**In particular, we appreciate that the plan acknowledges pedestrian planning as a critical tool to meet our goals around health, equity, accessibility, climate, and land use, and that we need to think about these policies as interconnected.**

**First, we see the plan's recommendation of building more walkable places (B-4) as an important step to making walking trips safer, more useful, and more comfortable. Land use is a key part of walkability: we not only need to retrofit existing places and streets for safe, comfortable pedestrian use, but to think comprehensively about building walkability into our land use policies in the future.**

**Second, the plan identifies important connections between pedestrian planning and transit. The plan identifies safe crossings to bus stops as a priority (P-2b) and specifies that off-site pedestrian and bicycle access in areas surrounding transit stations should be a higher priority than car access (B7-g). These recommendations recognize that to use transit, people first have to get there safely. Prioritizing safe, comfortable pedestrian and cyclist access to transit will help to truly make transit a desirable, climate-friendly alternative to driving and reduce emissions and vehicle miles traveled.**

**Lastly, the plan suggests paths forward to transform deadly arterials into safe walkable places. The plan recommends updating the Complete Streets Design Guide to include transit corridor overlays, providing additional context-based guidance on crossings and target speeds on transit corridors where a disproportionate share of injuries/fatalities occur (B-4d). It also recommends transferring control of state highways to Montgomery County (B-10).**

**CSG strongly supports these recommendations, which would make it faster and easier to make critical safety improvements to arterials. While transferring control of state highways to Montgomery County will be a longer term process, it is important that we are beginning that conversation now by including this item in the plan. The acute danger to pedestrians on these roadways is too urgent a problem for solutions to be held up by bureaucratic obstacles.**

**Car-dependent infrastructure took a long time to develop as the dominant way of organizing our communities. This plan provides the deliberate, comprehensive approach we need to reorient ourselves towards people-centered infrastructure.**

**We are excited to see this plan move forward and would like to thank all those who had a hand in putting this comprehensive and visionary plan together.**

**Thank you for your time.**

--  
**Carrie Kisicki** | Montgomery Advocacy Manager  
**Coalition for Smarter Growth**  
Coordinator for Montgomery for All  
carrie@smartergrowth.net | calendly.com/carrie-csg  
www.smartergrowth.net | @betterDCregion

## Attachments

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**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Randolph Civic Foundation](#)  
**To:** [MCP-Chair](#)  
**Subject:** Public Hearing #7  
**Date:** Tuesday, April 4, 2023 8:09:49 AM  
**Attachments:** [Final RCA\\_RCF Walk Audit Report.pdf](#)

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

To All involved in improving our Walking and Rolling here in Montgomery County,

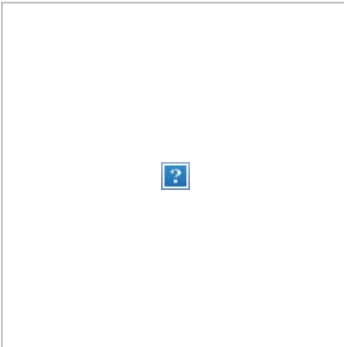
I am pleased to submit this report to be included in the testimony. Since submitting our report after holding a walk audit, we have not had much improvement as per our requests.

We put a lot of effort into this event as well as the detailed recommendations and very little has been done in making our neighborhood safer for walking.

Please let me know if you have any questions.  
Nell Rumbaugh, Esq.  
301-717-1303

Our mailing address  
PO Box 489 Garrett Park, MD 20896  
The hearing date of March 23, 2023  
The hearing item #7

Attached is our testimony from our neighborhood walk audit and our finalized walk audit report submitted to all relevant parties, including our Area Engineer, **Kutty Menon**.



**Randolph Civic Foundation, Inc. (RCF)**

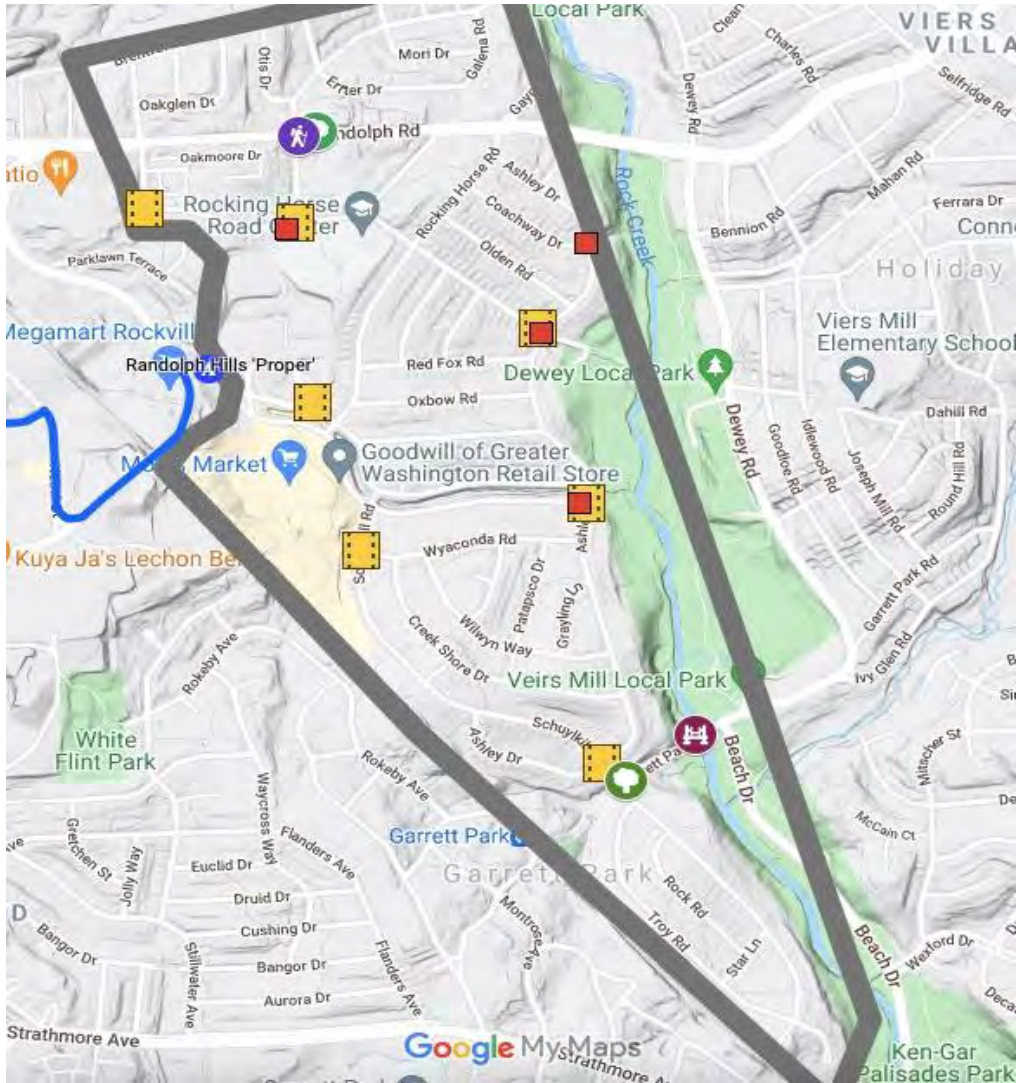
*Nell Rumbaugh, President | Andi Jones, VP | Ellen Bourbon, Treasurer | Mara Greengrass, Secretary |*

Website: <http://randolphcivicfoundation.org> | Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RandolphCivicFoundation>

Donate here: <http://randolphcivic.org/about/membership> (click on blue box "RCF" & "Beautification")

# RANDOLPH HILLS WALK AUDIT

CONDUCTED ON JUNE 12, 2021



## RANDOLPH CIVIC ASSOCIATION & RANDOLPH CIVIC FOUNDATION

Submitted to the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Montgomery County Council, Montgomery County Planning Department, Montgomery County Department of Parks, Kronstadt Realty Investors, Delegate Carr, Delegate Shetty, Delegate Solomon, Senator Waldstreicher

Date of Report: 08.31.2021

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PREFACE

On behalf of the Randolph Hills Community, the Randolph Civic Association (RCA) and the Randolph Civic Foundation (RCF), **we extend our gratitude for your attendance at our Walk Audit held June 12, 2021.** Also, we are grateful for the **substantial and readily apparent improvements** underway in and around our community including but not limited to; sidewalks, removal of dead trees, replacing the old gas lines and allocation of funds to make improvements to active transit routes that lead to our schools and parks.

This report is the culmination of information collected by a Walk Audit process; a process that commenced at Safe Routes to Schools training at Northwood HS in Fall 2019 and a Walk Audit that took place on June 12, 2021. Distinguished county representatives attended our Walk Audit on June 12th alongside Randolph Hills residents to evaluate our neighborhood's walkability.

### PURPOSE

The residents of the Randolph Civic Area (Randolph Hills, Franklin Park, Montrose Park, and the North Quarter) desire a neighborhood where it is safe and comfortable to walk and bike. The neighborhood has experienced a dangerous increase in traffic volume, speeding cars and aggressive driving. In an effort to determine how to improve our community, the Randolph Civic Association (RCA), Randolph Civic Foundation (RCF), and residents conducted a walk audit in mid June 2021 with MCDOT personnel and County officials. This report is the compilation of necessary action items to assure safety in our neighborhood.

### SUMMARY

We ask the County to allocate resources in the following areas to help us improve the safety of walking and biking in the Randolph Civic Area by addressing our short term and long term priorities areas included below.

“Short term” priority areas are those improvements that the County can address within the next 18 months with minimal resources.

“Long term” defines an improvement that would take over 18 months to address and may require more resources for inclusion in the Capital Improvements Program.

## Short Term Priority Areas:

1. Complete Recent Upgrades
2. Curb Extensions & Striped Crosswalks
3. Stop Signs & Traffic Calming Measures
4. Vegetation Control
5. Speed Limit Reduction (20 is Plenty)

## Long Term Priority Areas:

1. Bike/Ped connection to White Flint Metro and Pike & Rose
2. Garrett Park Road Bridge Replacement
3. Safe Pedestrian Crossing at Randolph Road
4. Study for a Traffic circle at Rocking Horse/ Boiling Brook.

## SHORT TERM PRIORITY AREAS

### 1. COMPLETE RECENT UPGRADES

Complete recent upgrades to maximize their effectiveness by installing the following:

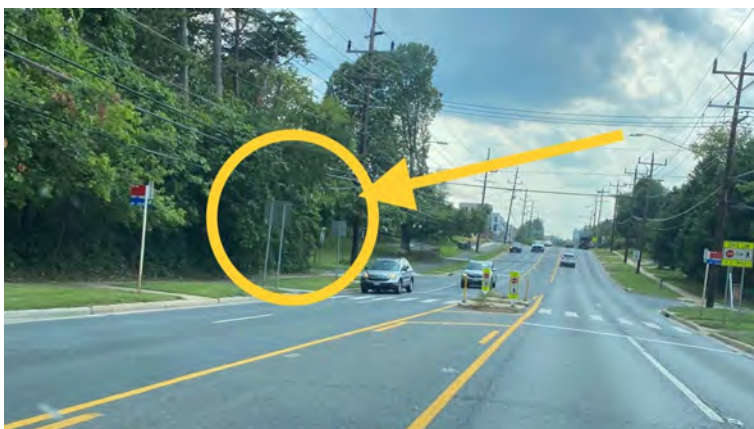
- a. **Rocking Horse Road and Macon Road** - Install two more yellow pedestrian walking signs so *both directions of traffic see that it is a pedestrian crossing*



Here is an example of how we would like to have this intersection:



- b. **Hunters Road and Randolph Road** - Same as above; two additional crossing signs need to be installed so *both directions of traffic* see that there is a pedestrian crossing



## 2. CURB EXTENSIONS & CROSSWALKS

Randolph Hills residents are alarmed by dangerous speeding in our area. When curb extensions are added to intersections, i.e. at Randolph Hills Park entrance at Macon Road/Ashley Drive and Macon Rd/Rocking Horse Road intersections, speeding is reduced.

We are requesting curb extensions and striped crosswalks to the following key intersections in our community as referenced in the map by yellow crosswalk icons on this map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=10aOnMRM6OOUh9lBLS63fs1iJwmdGlega&usp=sharing>

- **Ashley Drive & Macon Road** We have seen a huge increase in foot, bike and vehicle traffic that negotiate this intersection on a daily basis. Dog walkers, bikers, and track team members negotiate this intersection because of its connectivity to Rock Creek Trail, Randolph Hills Park and Dewey Park.



The number of families with children nearby, number of bicyclists and number of walkers going and coming to the new Dewey Park in addition to this being the walk path to our feeder elementary school warrants action. Cars come down Ashley at a rate of speed that is dangerous.

- **Hunters Lane & Boiling Brook Parkway (Entrance of CESJDS)<sup>1</sup>**  
Non-resident drivers (we have many, see ‘cut through’ traffic\*) often don't know whether to go straight or veer left here. **This confusion caused an accident between a bicycle and a car on April 20th, 2021**
- Wyaconda Road & Schuylkill Road
- Ashley Drive and Boiling Brook Parkway
- Schuylkill Road & Ashley Drive
- Hunters Lane & Macon Road
- Macon Road & Putnam Road

---

<sup>1</sup> A pedestrian refuge may also be a solution to improve safety due to the width of the intersection.



### 3. STOP SIGNS, PAINTED ARROWS & OTHER LOW COST TRAFFIC CALMING MEASURES

Too many drivers travel above the 25 mph speed limit. And, increasingly, drivers are going the wrong way on our one way streets. To reduce speeding, we want the County to increase the number of controlled intersections in our neighborhood.

**A. Stop signs** are needed at the following intersections as indicated by red squares in the following map:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=10aOnMRM6OOUh9lBLS63fs1iJwmdGleqa&usp=sharing>

- Ashley Drive and Macon Road- this intersection has a high volume of pedestrian and automobile traffic and warrants a 4 way stop
- Hunters Lane & Macon Road
- Ashley Drive & Boiling Brook Parkway
- Ashley Drive & Coachway

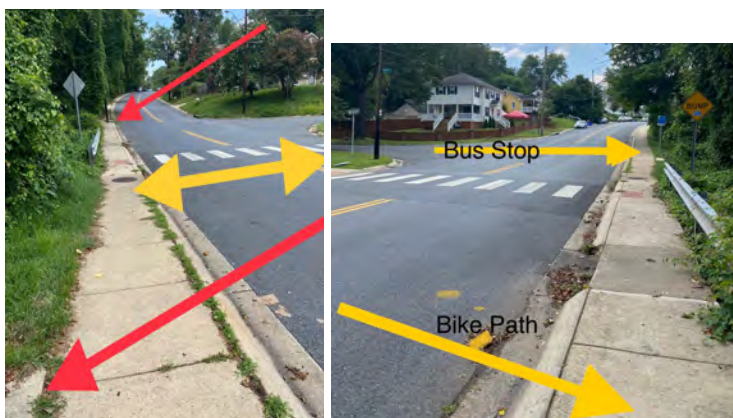
**B. Traffic calming measures** should be installed where speeding is rampant:

- Along **Ashley Drive, especially near the entrance to Randolph Hills Local Park**, which is also a school walking route for our elementary school
- Along Boiling Brook Parkway

**C. Signage and Painted Arrows** to clearly indicate correct traffic flow and calm traffic at the following crossroads will enable safer travel through Randolph Hills and safer connectivity to and from Randolph Hills:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=10aOnMRM6OOUh9lBLS63fs1iJwmdGleqa&usp=sharing>

- **Boiling Brook Parkway** -Boiling Brook Parkway continues to experience drivers going the **wrong way on the one way streets**. This poses a serious safety concern to residents. An easy low cost solution would be to paint stretched arrows on the pavement showing the flow of traffic at every decision point along with some lane delineators to assist drivers in determining which direction to travel.
- **Dewey Road and Mahan Road** as indicated as Orange Bicycle on Map. **Children** from our neighborhood bike to the nearby Connecticut Belair Pool during late Spring and Summer.



- At the intersection of **Randolph Road and Dewey Road**, add a **No Turn on Red** sign for northbound motorists turning right from Dewey onto Randolph.

#### 4. VEGETATION CONTROL

Overgrown vegetation obstructs sight lines for drivers and walkers; Drivers can not see and active transit users are not able to comfortably walk or bike.

Areas that need the vegetation cut back to make it safer, especially for our children to walk and bike, include the following as indicated on the map with a green circle with a tree:

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=10aOnMRM6OOUh9lBLS63fs1iJwmdGleqa&usp=sharing>

- **Boiling Brook Parkway and Rocking Horse Road**, Sight lines at this increasingly problematic intersection are obstructed by vegetation. Vegetation control (removing

trees, weeds and brush) would increase sight lines. As cars stack up at this high volume (residents, shoppers, commuters and cut through traffic) intersection, the more time it takes for drivers to determine how to safely navigate the intersection. If vegetation were controlled, drivers would be able to see and therefore have more confidence to be able to navigate the intersection more safely.

- **Randolph Road** eastbound, near the C8 Bus stop and pedestrian refuge (cross street is Macon Road). Bushes and trees have encroached on the sidewalk making it unsafe; nearly impassable.
- **Garrett Park Road** on the westbound side alongside the protected sidewalk. There are many low hanging branches.

## 5. SPEED LIMIT REDUCTION TO 20 MPH

Reduce the speed limit to 20 mph. We have seen this change improve the walkability of our neighbors across the CSX tracks (Garrett Park) and other areas in Montgomery County. While we understand that road design is what provides the greatest deterrent to speeding, we know reducing the speed limit throughout our neighborhood will help reduce high speed traffic and cut through traffic.

## LONG TERM PRIORITY AREAS

### 1. BIKE/PED CONNECTION TO WHITE FLINT 2

The **connection from our community to White Flint area is unsafe, inefficient, and challenging**. Our neighborhood is located merely a ½ mile from White Flint Metro but it is inaccessible due to the CSX tracks. To travel from Randolph Hills to White Flint Metro, one must go a mile out of their way to cross the CSX tracks. This greatly discourages cycling and walking.

It is a priority for the RCA and RCF to connect our 1300+ households safely and conveniently to the White Flint metro and the Rockville Pike & Rose area. **The 1300+ residents of this area deserve a convenient and safe way to travel to the area by walking or biking.**

### 2. GARRETT PARK ROAD BRIDGE<sup>2</sup>

The Garrett Park Road Bridge is a key connector to Rock Creek Trail and Beach Drive. A substantial amount of traffic commutes through our neighborhood to various destinations; the completion of White Flint 2 will result in even more commuter traffic.

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<sup>2</sup> Garrett Park Road bridge reconstruction was originally scheduled to be completed in 2020, it has been pushed back multiple times and is now slated to begin in 2025.

The following are safety improvements for the Garrett Park Road Bridge:

- Improved lighting on the westbound side of the road along the sidewalk.
- Increased space for walkers/bikers.
- Protected sidewalk as part of the bridge

Please note this is a heavily used bridge. Since the Beach Drive closure has been ongoing for over 18 months, the increased foot and bicycle traffic makes it impassable on weekends, and many people who are not comfortable being in the street have to do so to get across this bridge.

### 3. PEDESTRIAN CROSSING AT RANDOLPH ROAD

Randolph Road bisects the northern part of our community and has drastically increased in traffic volume and speed in recent years. It is exceedingly dangerous for pedestrians to cross this road. There are no controlled intersections between Lauderdale Drive and Rocking Horse Road (approximately a ½ mile stretch) yet there are two bus stops. People using the bus are expected to dangerously cross at an uncontrolled intersection or walk ¼ mile to the nearest traffic light.

We need a safer and more convenient crossing of Randolph Road at Hunters Lane:

- First preference: include a *stoplight* at the intersection.
- Second preference: include a *pedestrian hawk signal* at the intersection.

### 4. ROUNDABOUT ON BOILING BROOK PKWY

A **roundabout at Boiling Brook Parkway and Rocking Horse Road** would more efficiently serve our CESJDS families as well as the patrons of Randolph Hills Shopping Center. MDOT has stated in the past that this would “be a perfect place for a roundabout”. We also requested it during the WF2 sector plan.

## CONCLUSION

The Randolph Hills Community through the RCA and RCF are pleased to submit this report to the Montgomery County Division of Transportation, to our County Council, business stakeholders, and our representatives. Our community represents over 1340 households in the North Bethesda triangular area bounded by Randolph Road, Nicholson Lane/CSX tracks, and Rock Creek Park. The RCA and RCF communicate regularly with our residents through our Echo print newsletter - delivered free of charge to all our residents since 1956 - and our social media channels. We hold regular monthly meetings and annual community events including a 5K run,

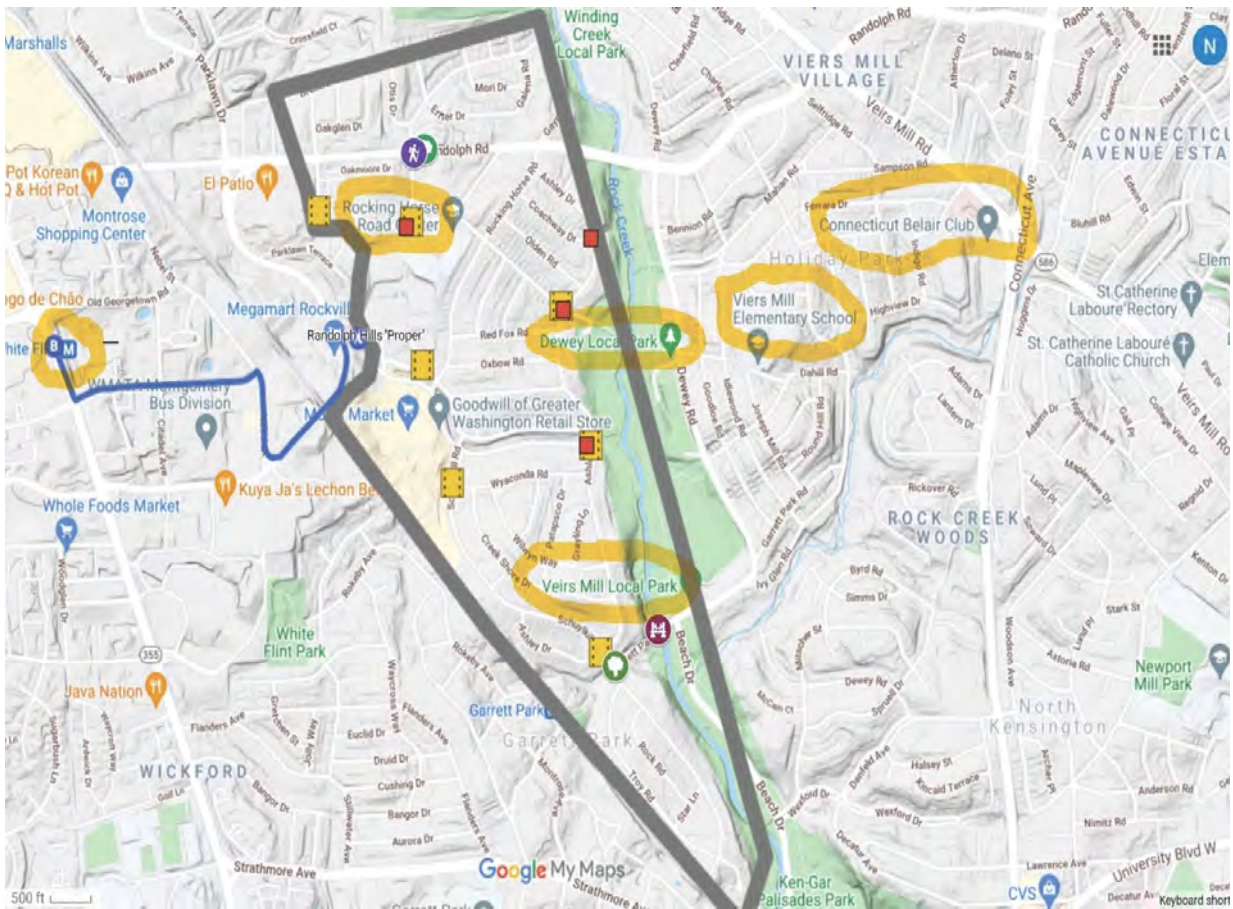
kids run, Community Day, and a Music Festival.

We live in a unique part of unincorporated Rockville/North Bethesda because our community bridges Kensington, Silver Spring, and other parts of unincorporated Rockville. The connectivity of our community is a valuable asset that leads many of our residents to move to the Randolph Civic area due to its convenience to urban areas, public transit, and Rock Creek Park, in addition to availability of affordable housing and good schools. Residents include employees from NIH, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, MedStar Health, and NOAA. This connectivity also leads to so-called cut-through traffic, which is one of our gravest concerns when keeping our neighborhood safe for walking and cycling.

Walking, cycling, and access to public transit is central to the vibrancy of our community in the Randolph Civic area. On June 12, 2021, members of our community, along with dedicated stakeholders from local and state government and community organizers, audited our neighborhood by foot and by bike to assess our area. We appreciate the opportunity to show our stakeholders and decision makers what it is like to walk and/or bike throughout the Randolph Civic Area. We appreciate Montgomery County helping us improve the safety and level of comfort to travel, walk and bike throughout the Randolph Civic area and to our connecting areas by addressing the areas of improvements we have listed in this document.

Indicated in **yellow** are **common destinations from the Randolph Civic Area**;

- 1) **Connecticut Belair Swim Club**; our neighborhood children bike to this venue during summer months.
- 2) **Viers Mill Elementary School**; this is our neighborhood feeder elementary school and where buses meet for transportation to other area schools.
- 3) **Dewey Local Park** (new dog park and hockey rink), this has become a major destination for many MOCO residents; dog owners, soccer players, bikers, and walkers.
- 4) **Veirs Mill Local Park** (Running and Bike Clubs meet here often)
- 5) **Rocking Horse Road Center** (School Community Use Center by MCPS Employees)
- 5) **Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School**
- 6) **White Flint Metro**



The RCA and RCF appreciate the opportunity to work with MCDOT to improve the safety and convenience of walking and biking in the Randolph Hills Civic area. Thank you.

## CONTACTS

1. Nell Rumbaugh, ESQ. President Randolph Civic Foundation, Inc. & Class of 2022 Leadership Montgomery [randolphcivicfoundation@gmail.com](mailto:randolphcivicfoundation@gmail.com) 301-717-1303
2. Alison Dewey, Randolph Civic Foundation Director, [alison.dewey@gmail.com](mailto:alison.dewey@gmail.com)
3. Jack Stillwell, Randolph Civic Association President [president@randolphcivic.org](mailto:president@randolphcivic.org)
4. Josh Silverstein, Randolph Civic Association Vice President [josh@randolphcivic.org](mailto:josh@randolphcivic.org)
5. Andre Miesnieks, Randolph Civic Association Vice President 2 [vicepresident2@randolphcivic.org](mailto:vicepresident2@randolphcivic.org)

11805 Saddlerock Rd  
Silver Spring, Md. 20902  
March 29, 2023

Jeffrey Zyontz  
Chairman,  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
Dear Mr. Zyontz;

I am writing in reference to the recent planning meeting of March 23 and in advance of the next one on March 30. I am a senior citizen and my wife (also a senior citizen) and I are raising our two grandsons ages 5 and 6 in Silver Spring. While this situation may be unusual or atypical; I doubt that this detracts from my observations about the impending planning changes to University Blvd. and the neighborhood, in our case Kemp Mill because clearly other people voiced them on March 23.

Although I have not read the planning documents discussed there; the comments I heard were alarming. In this respect I wholly agree with the criticisms made at the March 23 meeting by Ms. Megan Brown among others. It appears that this plan was drawn up to conform to the wishes of an aggressive minority whose standpoint is that private automobiles are inherently evil while walking and/or bicycle riding are inherently good. I strongly doubt that this outlook conforms to majority opinion in the county. Moreover, this fact does not seem to have occurred to either these lobbyists or the planners.

Neither did they apparently take into account the fact that such plans cannot and should not be implemented in defiance of glaringly obvious socio-economic, demographic, and traffic realities. These lobbies and apparently the planners seem not to notice that public transit in the county and metropolitan area as a whole is a disaster and getting worse, e.g. Metro. Yet at the same time it is impossible for most if not all of the county's resident to go to work, doctors, school, shopping or entertainment without driving. Buses are either too few in number, on time rates, or not close enough to these destinations to make travelling upon them worthwhile unless there is no other alternative. Neither is there any sign of the county will change these conditions. Yet one of the lobbyists said that the planners should override community objections to what she believes is needed infrastructure. This, I need not add, is hardly an example of democratic decision making.

And while the effort to reduce traffic fatalities and increase sidewalks are laudable; creating special bus lanes on University Blvd. in the absence of enough buses merely adds to traffic congestion there but does not really alleviate speeding. That can be done without disrupting traffic by putting in new lights, speed cameras, and taking the gloves off the polices who are held back by the county from issuing tickets. As for allowing bicycle riders to ride in bus lanes, this is a transparent ploy to sneak in provisions for bicyclists even though it obviously would be more unsafe for them to ride in bus lanes than in lanes with cars.

This experiment was tried at University Blvd and Arcola Ave. last summer and was a resounding failure. The community opposed it; it worsened rather than ameliorated traffic

problems, and there were few or no bicycle riders there, a fact that seems to have eluded planners and lobbyists. The results on Old Georgetown Rd. in this context speak for themselves. These reforms, if you can call them that, were installed there and traffic congestion there has become significantly worse.

In conclusion may I suggest that the planning board and planners actually consult the community rather than few self-appointed zealots who represent only themselves. And in addition, the planners should endeavor to learn how people actually live and consult them before making and implementing plans that have no basis in reality. That appears to have happened previously with the results being the truly pathetic mass transit situation that is the actual reality now. Ultimately failing to consult the members of the community will further aggravate the situation, antagonize the community, and probably lead to replacement of members of the council in the next election. But that will not improve traffic conditions in Montgomery County.

Sincerely Yours

Dr. Stephen Blank



Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

From: [Kyle Woerner](#)  
To: [Glazier, Eli](#)  
Subject: pedestrian master plan question  
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:31:48 PM

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

Hi Eli,

I saw your email address on the master plan website: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/pedestrian-planning/pedestrian-master-plan/>.

After reviewing the plan, I do not see any mention of the extremely dangerous section of road on Norbeck Road between Wintergate and Layhill. There was a previous plan to install a path or sidewalk on the North side of Norbeck to connect streets like Laughlin Lane to the trail system by the ICC. As of now, there is not even a shoulder to walk safely which forces pedestrians, strollers, runners, and the like to be dangerously close to speeding traffic.

Can you please offer any insight as to whether there is still an effort being planned to make this stretch of road more safe?

Thank you,  
Kyle Woerner

--

## Email

# Master Plan: Sidewalk Plan...

Owner

 MCP...

## Email

## From

 Lillian Klein Abensohn

## To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

## Cc

## Bcc

## Subject

Master Plan: Sidewalk Planning

## Date Sent

## Date Received

4/1/2023 12:10 PM

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

Lillian Klein Abensohn

7108 Millwood Road, Bethesda, MD 20817

April 1, 2023

By email to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org) Chairman Jeff Zyontz  
Montgomery County Planning Board 2425 Reddie Drive

Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Kenwood Park Sidewalk Planning; Master Plan

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

News of this planning fell on our community like a bomb! We have enjoyed our wide streets and limited neighborhood traffic, which allow ample room and safety for bikers as well as walkers to enjoy the canopy of established cherry trees and wide lawns.

Installing sidewalks, especially since they are not remotely needed, will not only reduce the value of property but will also change the entire character of our beloved Kenwood Park. Adding more cement will certainly not make the neighborhood more gracious. Replacement

trees will take decades to approach the size of what will be cut down. All for what? Perhaps some residents on streets that won't be affected would like to see sidewalks (on someone else's property), but are they remotely necessary in this secluded area? We have been told that the contract for the work has already been awarded, and that there's nothing we can do about it. This imposition of sidewalks is certainly not democratic. This sounds like a political payoff to some entity at the expense of the tax-paying community.


Have field studies of traffic and pedestrian usage been completed? NO. What criteria determined the choice of installation sites? Isolated request/s. Perhaps we will have to resort to legal measures to have this delayed until it can be entirely stopped.

Please register this household as firmly voting NO to this proposal as it stands. Residents want the representation they are entitled to.

Yours truly,

Lillian Klein Abennohn

**Attachments**

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## Email

# Comments on Pedestrian ...

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

From

 Sinaly Roy

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Comments on Pedestrian Master plan

Date Sent

Date Received

4/1/2023 1:52 PM

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

I think the approach of the Master Plan seems too narrowly focused on just building sidewalks, rather than thoughtfully and holistically addressing issues including the structure of the roads and vehicular traffic controls that affect pedestrian safety, as well as, the environmental affects that changes will have runoff and climate change, and that can be mitigated by construction materials and landscaping.


Of particular concern, is the concept of minimizing community input in planning. If the purpose of this plan is to make appropriate infrastructural changes for the benefit and well being of the communities, then community input must be an integral part of planning at ever stage. The best source of information on pedestrian needs and usage should come from the pedestrians themselves.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sinaly Roy

5724 Durbin Rd, Bethesda, MD

### Attachments

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There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

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Page 1

From: [Joseph Elbaum](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Cc: [Glazier, Eli](#)  
Subject: Additional information re: Kersey Road to Auth Lane Pedestrian Shortcut  
Date: Monday, April 3, 2023 12:11:36 PM  
Attachments: [pedestrian shortcut map request screenshot.png](#)

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of The Planning Board,

During a recent Kemp Mill Civic Association meeting on 3/21/32, a representative from MCDOT indicated that the reason funding was approved for the design of the Kersey Road to Auth Lane Pedestrian Bridge was because MCDOT and MNCPPC were both approached formally by KMCA to request it on behalf of the community. However, this is not the case. At that same meeting, the KMCA president confirmed that KMCA made no such request, and has had no official communications with MCDOT, MNCPPC, or the Planning Department regarding this project.

As it turns out, on 12/18/2020, an individual acting as a private citizen submitted a request for a footbridge on the Pedestrian Shortcut Map via the online form here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/pedestrian-planning/pedestrian-master-plan/pedestrian-shortcut-map/>. However, this individual signed the form using their official title as Vice President of KMCA, and also provided their official KMCA email address. Please see attached screenshot from the Pedestrian Shortcut Map. This may be the source of the confusion which, intentionally or not, may have misled MCDOT and MNCPPC into approving funding for this project.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Elbaum  
11709 Auth Lane

Silver Spring, MD 20902



## Email

# Re: Question sidewalk to R...

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

From

 Glazier, Eli

To

 Melita Patel

Cc

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Bcc

Subject

Re: Question sidewalk to Ross Boddy Center

Date Sent

Date Received

3/30/2023 9:33 AM

Good morning Ms. Patel,

I apologize for the tardiness of this reply and appreciate your patience.

The short answer is that the Pedestrian Master Plan does not include a specific recommendation for a sidewalk connection at that location or at any other specific location countywide.

With some limited exceptions, the plan prioritizes areas for investment, rather than what those specific investments should be, so the sidewalk connection you are interested in is not specifically recommended. The plan is complemented by the county's Complete Streets Design Guide (CSDG), a document that defines the appropriate speed limit, sidewalk width, and other roadway characteristics for every road in the county. With those more specific nuances for each roadway already addressed, the Pedestrian Master Plan's recommendations will improve the pedestrian experience systematically, not one street at a time. By changing approaches and procedures, routine maintenance and other ongoing efforts will yield major pedestrian benefits.

The plan has the following types of recommendations:

**1. Design, Policy, and Programming**

These recommendations address systemic issues that negatively affect the pedestrian experience by recommending changes to how pedestrian amenities are designed and constructed, the policies that guide transportation engineering in the county, as well as opportunities for expanded traffic safety education and more robust programming. The design, policy, and programming recommendations are the heart of the Pedestrian Master Plan because they address at a countywide level the issues highlighted through public engagement and existing conditions data collection. Particularly significant recommendations in this section include:

- Providing more time for younger pedestrians, older pedestrians, and those with mobility issues to cross the street safely
- Updating pedestrian pathway and intersection lighting standards

- Improving driver education, particularly for people driving vehicles with identified pedestrian safety issues
- Adopting a more proactive, data-driven sidewalk construction and maintenance approach
- Increasing the number of places pedestrians can safely cross the street
- Identifying opportunities to change the streetscape to help mitigate climate impacts that affect pedestrians, such as extreme heat.
- Beginning a conversation on the transfer of state highways in more urban areas to county control to provide improved design flexibility and accountability
- Developing a plan to provide public restrooms countywide
- Reimagining Safe Routes to School programming
- Increasing the number of Automated Traffic Enforcement locations countywide
- Removing obstructions like utility poles from pedestrian pathways

**2. Bicycle Pedestrian Priority Area Prioritization**

These recommendations identify where in the county bicycle and pedestrian capital improvement projects should be prioritized in a data-driven way based on equity, comfortable access, safety and other metrics.

**3. Complete Streets Design Guide Area Type Classification**

These recommendations advance the transition from the Road Code area type classification (Urban, Suburban, Rural) to the Complete Streets Design Guide classifications (Downtown, Town Center, Suburban, Industrial, Country) to ensure that pedestrian-friendly streets are provided as roadways are reconstructed in the years ahead.

**4. Pedestrian Shortcut Identification**

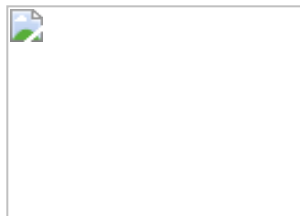
These recommendations identify locations where public or private investment will shorten pedestrian trips and make the pedestrian network more accessible.

**5. Country Sidepath Identification**

These recommendations indicate where sidepaths—shared pedestrian and bicycle pathways—should be built along roadways in the more rural parts of the county, in line with guidance in the Complete Streets Design Guide.

Thank you for your interest in pedestrian safety and connectivity in your community and across the county.

Eli



**Eli Glazier**

Planner III

Countywide Planning and Policy Division

Montgomery County Planning Department

2425 Reedie Drive, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor | Wheaton, MD 20902

[Eli.Glazier@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:Eli.Glazier@montgomeryplanning.org)

o: 301.495.4548

**Attachments**

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	

<a href="#">image001.png</a>	10,663
<a href="#">image002.png</a>	845
<a href="#">image003.png</a>	942
<a href="#">image004.png</a>	967
<a href="#">image005.png</a>	827
1 - 5 of 5 (0 selected)	Page 1

From: [Elliott Klonsky](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Glazier, Eli](#)  
Subject: Proposed bridge/path connecting Kersey Rd with Auth Lane  
Date: Friday, March 31, 2023 8:01:09 AM

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Mr. Glazier:

Please consider the following concerns regarding the proposed project to build both a bridge and a walkway connecting Kersey Road with Auth Lane. Our home at 11704 Auth Lane would be significantly impacted since the proposed pedestrian walkway would cross close to, and directly along the front of, our home and patio.

1. **BRIDGE MAYBE, PATH NO:** A bridge would undoubtedly make it safer for pedestrians opting to cross the creek, the vast majority of them being members of the orthodox Jewish community, of which I am one, and who utilize this pathway almost exclusively one day of the week, the Sabbath. However, there is no need to also create a paved or dirt-filled walkway since years of pedestrian traffic has already created a safe dirt path which maintains the natural beauty of this forested area. Please note that a 2020 community survey which was used as a basis for requesting a bridge states that " the proposition is just for a bridge over the creek and not a path."

2. **PROTECT SAFETY AND NATURAL BEAUTY:** Auth Lane is often used by teens for skateboarding, scootering and bicycling due to it being hilly. A formal walkway leading from Auth Lane down to a bridge would create an enticing extended "track" where teens could scooter, skateboard or bike down Auth Lane onto the newly formed walkway and over the bridge toward Kersey. And Back! This would be a safety concern for these teens and especially for any pedestrians who would be "sharing" this walkway! Equally important: such a proposed formal pathway would require removal of several trees, turning this pristine, natural, quiet setting into a skateboard track.

3. **LIGHTING?:** Removal of trees and shrubs will diminish the natural beauty of this area, but lighting would destroy it. Usage of this path after dark is quite limited. For the small number of pedestrians opting to use this pathway after dark there are paved roads and lighted streets which are safer and add only a few minutes to the walk time. Lighting would also be an enticement for the skateboarders, etc., discussed above to extend their play time until after dark. I really fear that creation of a formal path could change this quiet cul de sac into a hub of noisy activity for the entire street, and especially for our home.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,  
Elliott and Linda Klonsky  
11704 Auth Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20902

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

**From:** [Sartori, Jason](#)  
**To:** [Glazier, Eli](#)  
**Cc:** [Anspacher, David](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Pedestrian Master Plan  
**Date:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:43:17 AM

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I didn't see this in MCTracker, so I'm forwarding.

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**From:** Zyontz, Jeffrey <Jeffrey.Zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:37 AM  
**To:** Sartori, Jason <Jason.Sartori@montgomeryplanning.org>  
**Subject:** FW: Pedestrian Master Plan

Did you get this? Just checking.

**Jeff Zyontz**

**Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board**

Montgomery County Planning Department  
2425 Reedy Drive, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902  
[MCP-CHAIR@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:MCP-CHAIR@mncppc-mc.org)  
301.495.4605

---

**From:** Jane Lyons-Raeder <[janeplyons@gmail.com](mailto:janeplyons@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 27, 2023 8:58 PM  
**Subject:** Pedestrian Master Plan

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

Good evening,

I'm writing in support of the Pedestrian Master Plan. The draft plan is an achievement in planning and, once implemented, will make Montgomery County an international example. It outlines the steps that need to be taken so that every person in the county can walk or roll safely.

I also want to applaud the level of outreach and data analysis that went into this plan over the past four years of its development, especially the Countywide Pedestrian Level of Comfort Analysis and Countywide Pedestrian Survey. These are the types of strategies the government should be using to make data-based decisions. With each new functional master plan, Montgomery Planning outdoes itself and sets new standards for the field.

Below are a few of my comments on specific aspects of the plan:

- Maybe I'm just not reading carefully enough, but it's not immediately obvious what the target year is for these goals in many of the sections.
- I would like to see more aggressive goals for increasing walking rates. If achieved, will these levels of reduction get us the necessary reductions in greenhouse gas

emissions (along with the county's other goals for transit use and biking)?

- I am especially excited about the recommendations to:
  - assume county control of state highways;
  - provide public seating, restrooms and other pedestrian amenities in Downtowns, Town Centers, and along Boulevards;
  - price parking spaces in county-operated facilities at market rates and use net proceeds to fund pedestrian, bicycle, and safety projects in the surrounding community;
  - increase funding through new and existing capital programs;
  - deemphasize pedestrian volumes as a determining factor in deciding where to install pedestrian or connectivity improvements;
  - assume county responsibility for snow clearance on sidewalks in certain areas
  - establish standards for the distance between bus stops and the nearest protected crossing to encourage pedestrians to cross the street at safe locations

I do not want this plan to sit on a shelf. All of the hard work will only be worthwhile if it is implemented. Luckily, the recommendations in this plan are incredibly actionable, and many do not require funding, only a change in policy and internal processes. Although, this will require a culture change within MCDOT and other agencies. As planning commissioners, I urge you to champion the recommendations in this plan through its adoption and into implementation.

Thank you,  
Jane

--

**Jane Lyons-Raeder**

(410) 474-0741

[janeplyons@gmail.com](mailto:janeplyons@gmail.com)

From: [Joseph Elbaum](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Cc: [Glazier, Eli](#)  
Subject: Comments on Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan  
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:03:49 AM

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of The Planning Board,

I am writing in opposition to the proposed Pedestrian Shortcut Kersey Road to Auth Lane (Policy Area Kensington/Wheaton) recommended in Montgomery County's Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing Draft (Page 216, Map Reference #186), dated February 2023.

MCDOT is currently in the design phase of a proposal to build a pedestrian bridge over a small stream at this location. I live right next to this proposed bridge, and I feel very strongly that the bridge should not be built, for several reasons:

Firstly, the stream over which the bridge would be built is in very poor condition, is heavily eroded, and is in need of major stream restoration. Construction of a bridge in this area before the stream can be restored can further damage the already delicate area. In addition, the construction of a pedestrian bridge through this area will require the removal of several healthy and mature trees. The shortcut in question is used only by local pedestrians to cross from one neighborhood street to another. It is not a sidewalk proposal, it is not located near any transit stops or places of communal interest, and it will have no connection to Vision Zero. I do not believe that building a convenient neighborhood shortcut is a sufficient justification for further deforestation of our beautiful woods. Lastly, I feel that this project is an unjust and inequitable use of county resources and does not meet the goals of the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Act. It is located in an affluent neighborhood, and it is not possible to make the bridge ADA accessible due to the steep surrounding terrain. Therefore a pedestrian bridge built here would only be able to be used by able-bodied walkers. I believe that the county's resources should be directed toward other more equitable and just projects.

**Stream Erosion:**

The stream where this bridge is proposed is in very poor condition. So much so that

the County (DEP and MNCPPC Parks Division) is planning a restoration project of the stream (Lamberton Tributary) spanning from Yeatman Terrace to the Northwest Branch of the Anacostia River. Knowing that there is a stream restoration project already in the works, why undertake a construction project now, before the stream has been restored? I believe it would be safer to wait until the stream restoration project has been completed first, as the bridge construction itself could further damage the already eroded stream. Only after the stream has been safely restored and the extreme levels of erosion have been addressed, would it then be appropriate to consider adding a pedestrian bridge over the stream.

### **Mature Trees:**

In 2020, a sidewalk was built along Hermleigh Road and Stonington Place, just one block away from the proposed shortcut. I share the Pedestrian Master Plan's vision for improved pedestrian safety and access, however, the sidewalk construction required the removal of 47 trees, many of which were very large and mature shade providers. Shortly after the sidewalk was constructed, several otherwise healthy-looking trees began to fall, both on our property and on our neighbors' properties. Removing large trees changes long-standing air and wind patterns, which can cause healthy trees to break and fall during wind storms. I feel that cutting down trees for infrastructure projects should only be done when absolutely necessary. It may sometimes be necessary for sidewalks which actually improve pedestrian safety, but not for the small convenience of a shortcut over a stream that runs between two small neighborhood streets. A bridge of convenience here is not worth permanently altering our natural environment.

### **Equity and Justice:**

I believe this project does not meet the goals of the County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Act. It is not an equitable use of county resources, as it will mostly benefit residents of an affluent upper-middle-class neighborhood, very few minority residents, and only those who are able-bodied. This particular shortcut is not near any places of transit, a school, a community center, or a place of business. It is used mostly by people walking to and from a friend's house for a visit on a leisurely Saturday afternoon. Someone using this shortcut is typically doing so to save about



5-10 minutes of walking time. Furthermore, due to the steep inclines on either side of the stream, constructing an ADA-compliant pathway is not possible here. Yes, a bridge will allow pedestrians to cross the stream, but they will still need to get to and from the bridge and the street. This project simply cannot adequately meet the needs of all residents in a fair and just way.

In my opinion, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to build a pedestrian bridge in this location is an unjust and inequitable use of the county's resources. It is the opposite of what a plan for racial equity and social justice should look like. I believe that the county should spend these valuable resources in other less privileged areas, in keeping with the stated goals of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

I urge you to please reconsider and remove this pedestrian shortcut project from the Pedestrian Master Plan. Thank you for your efforts, and for the opportunity to comment on this public draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Elbaum  
11709 Auth Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20902

Email

# Pedestrian Master Plan Pu...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Brad Schachat

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent

Date Received

4/5/2023 2:35 PM

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

Hello,

I would like to provide some feedback to the county regarding the pedestrian master plan as it pertains to the hearing on March 23 of this year as hearing item #7.

I live at 5440 Marinelli Rd. in North Bethesda, and I would like to express my total support of the pedestrian master plan as put forth by Eli Glazier. This county is in dire need of improvements for all its people who travel by modes other than by automobile. Plenty of lip service has been paid to the need for easier traversal through the county for pedestrians, but the design of the roadways continues to send a clear message to pedestrians that we aren't welcome here. Improvements for pedestrians seem to be only acceptable if they don't inconvenience those traveling by car. The county's Vision Zero goal of zero pedestrian fatalities by the year 2030 is lofty and admirable, but feels like a pipe dream given the current rate of progress toward safety improvements.

As is stated in the county's own vision, "Local infrastructure was largely developed in the 1950's through 1980's with the goal of moving cars long distances at high speeds. And that is not our vision for the Montgomery County of the future." ([https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/Resources/Files/MCDOT\\_VisionDocMain.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dir/Resources/Files/MCDOT_VisionDocMain.pdf)). I understand that many of these improvements take time to implement, but there is a lot of low hanging fruit that the county seems to be dragging its feet on.

One such example would be the intersection at the end of my block, which is not unique by any stretch. The intersection of Citadel Avenue and Nicholson Lane is a simple intersection with no dedicated left turn arrows and a crosswalk on each side. When the light turns green for traffic traveling along Nicholson, pedestrians traveling parallel to automotive traffic do get a walk signal, as they should. After a set amount of time, the walk signal counts down and becomes a don't walk. If the sensors pick up cars waiting on Citadel, they will then get a green light, but pedestrians do not get a walk signal unless they push the button. If a pedestrian arrives and pushes the button a millisecond after the light has turned green, they will have to wait an entire light cycle to be able to safely and legally cross. If there are no cars present on Citadel when the pedestrian signal to cross Citadel has counted down to zero, pedestrians still may not cross, even though car traffic on Nicholson still has a green light. If a pedestrian arrives and pushes the button to cross Nicholson during this phase, they will not be given a walk signal. However, if a car is sensed on Citadel during this phase, they will get a green light. The pedestrian will still not get a walk signal, though. The car gets to go, but the pedestrian must stand there watching the car get a green light while they have to wait a full cycle, even though they got to the intersection first. This sends a clear message to anybody traveling in the area on foot that they are not appreciated and should just be driving a car instead. And to be clear, this is not in some rural area with nothing to walk to, this is within the quarter-mile walkshed of the North Bethesda stop on the Metro's red line.


Simply allowing pedestrians to cross the road when it is reasonable to let them do so shouldn't require installation of expensive new hardware or construction, and it would go a long way toward achieving the master plan's stated goals of increasing the proportion of overall trips that are made by foot by making it faster and less frustrating to walk around the county. I can say from personal experience that my mood is soured any time I walk anywhere from my apartment, as no matter which direction I travel, I will encounter intersections with designs that make it inefficient and infuriating to get anywhere. Arriving at a light right as it turns green only to not get a walk signal never fails to remind me that the intersection was designed with efficiency for cars not just as the highest priority, but seemingly the only priority. I get to stand there and think about that for a few minutes too, as I am standing on the street corner watching cars go by while I cannot legally cross.

Safety improvements such as leading pedestrian intervals, raised crosswalks, and implementation of Barnes Dances would all be amazing and should happen in as many cases as possible where appropriate, but improvements as simple as pedestrian recall would make such a massive difference in comfort for pedestrians brazen enough to walk or roll through this county's streets.

The pedestrian master plan addresses these concerns and many more, and I would expect any reasonable person with the authority to implement its suggestions to do so immediately if they have any interest in making the county a safer and more pleasant place to walk/roll. The plan is extraordinarily thorough and well thought-out and I cannot express my support for it strongly enough. Thank you.

Brad Schachat  
(301) 275-0854  
5440 Marinelli Rd. Apt. 125  
North Bethesda, MD 20852

### Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	↻
		
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## Email

# Comment for the Pedestria...

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

From

 Alla Corey McCoy

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Comment for the Pedestrian Master Plan for Montgomery County

Date Sent

Date Received

2/15/2023 11:18 AM

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


To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for taking upon improving the walkability of our communities, providing a safer and healthier environment for us all. I would like to write about a walkability issue in our community that also negatively affects other adjacent communities and severely limits walkability for many. There are sidewalks installed on both sides of New Hampshire Avenue/Route 650 from where Route 198 meets Route 650 all the way to Randolph Road and beyond south. However, there is a small portion of Route 650, where on the west side of the road the sidewalk completely disappears, and private property fence is installed all the way to the roadway. There also is no shoulder on that stretch of the road because the shoulder becomes too narrow at first and then becomes a turn lane. This is extremely dangerous, as I see people walking right in the path of the fast moving vehicles, and sometimes even at night in the dark. It significantly limits walkability for the residents of the Stonegate community and adjacent communities, making it impossible to safely walk to the two shopping centers (including the one with Safeway). There also is no crosswalk that would allow people to safely cross to avoid that stretch of non-existent sidewalk. The stretch of the road is on New Hampshire Avenue between Stonegate Drive (entrance to the Stonegate community) and the St. Andrew Ukrainian Cathedral. I think it is important to build a sidewalk there, or at least to add a safe crosswalk at the intersection of New Hampshire Avenue and Stonegate Drive, with a zebra on the roadway, and with a button operated light to stop traffic.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Alla McCoy  
200 Farmgate Lane  
Silver Spring, MD 20905

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Page 1

## CABIN JOHN CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 31, Cabin John MD 20818

*Organized 1919 Charter Member Montgomery County Civic Federation*  
Scott and Heidi Lewis – Co-Presidents; Bob Walsh – Treasurer; Kelly Banuls – Secretary

February 21, 2023

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

Mr. Jeff Zyontz  
Acting Chair  
**Montgomery County Planning Board**  
**M-NCPPC**  
2425 Reddie Drive  
14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing – March 23, 2023  
Written Testimony of Cabin John Citizen's Association

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of The Planning Board:

Cabin John Citizens Association is pleased to share our written testimony to the Pedestrian Master Plan in advance of the public hearing on March 23, 2023.

We support the objectives of the Pedestrian Master Plan to create safer, more comfortable experiences for county pedestrians. Outdoor activity and alternative forms of transportation remain important to the Cabin John community, so we support thoughtful planning and infrastructure investment that encourages walking and biking.

We recognize that resources are limited and that Pedestrian Master Plan recommendations must be prioritized. We believe, however, that the county has devoted too few resources to responding to our community's requests for less costly pedestrian safety improvements such as marked crosswalks.

We, along with individual Cabin John citizens, have repeatedly requested crosswalks in several key locations in Cabin John for almost a decade – nearly all of which have been denied. Our crosswalk requests have included school bus stop locations, entrances to public parks, and on commuter traffic roads with poor sightlines. We should not have to wait until something terrible happens to proactively address pedestrian safety concerns. We ask that the county commit additional resources to install pedestrian crosswalks as requested by our community.

We also support the testimony of Kelly Banuls and the residents along Persimmon Tree Road in Cabin John and Bethesda, which includes a petition request for a crosswalk at Persimmon Tree Road and Caraway Street, a school bus stop location.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Scott and Heidi Lewis,  
Co-Presidents

Charlotte Troup Leighton,  
Vice President of Advocacy

cc: Eli Glazier, Montgomery County Planning - [eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org)  
Councilmember Andrew Friedson, Montgomery County Council - [councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov)

Email

# Sidewalk Master Plan - Spe...

Owner

MCP...



Email

From

Cris

To

<MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>; MCP-Chair #; MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Sidewalk Master Plan - Specific Recommendations?

Date Sent

Date Received

2/13/2023 1:39 PM

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

Hello-

In my cursory review of the Pedestrian Master Plan, I did not see a specific reference to streets in mature neighborhoods that may have, in the past, been appropriate settings to exclude sidewalks, but which today, given a multitude of changed circumstances, make the inclusion of sidewalks necessary. I believe such (primarily Downcounty) neighborhood streets necessitate a close, case-by-case evaluation of sidewalk appropriateness given the greater likelihood of higher density in Downcounty areas, as well as the aforementioned street design, which in many cases occurred decades in the past.

One such street is **Kent St., between Stoneybrook Dr. and Kensington Parkway**. Kent Street bisects the Rock Creek Hills subdivision, a neighborhood developed in the 1950s and 1960s with the intent of creating a neighborhood with a "park-like setting." To be sure, attempts by neighbors over recent years to increase sidewalks in Rock Creek Hills have been met with resistance from those who enjoy the setting of the neighborhood "as-is." However, I believe there is a middle ground for this debate, which I also believe to be applicable to other, similarly mature neighborhoods with these dynamics.

This middle ground is to create a pedestrian "loop," around which pedestrians can travel, that connects existing sidewalk and trail networks together by bridging any missing "pieces." In this way, pedestrians can avail themselves of all the desired benefits of a sidewalk network, while those who do not want sidewalks within their neighborhoods are less impacted than by extending the sidewalk network further within neighborhood streets.

In the case of Rock Creek Hills, Kent St is a Ride-On bus route, MCPS bus route (with stops), and heavily-used commuter connector to avoid congested intersections and major roads within and around Kensington. To that point, the Town of Kensington successfully installed 'no left turn' signs at several locations in TOK, to prevent commuter motorists from using Rock Creek Hills and TOK as a 'cut through' for commuter travel. While this strategy may or may not have helped in this regard, it is evidence that TOK recognized the volume of travel coming through town limits, as well as Rock Creek Hills.

Kent St., and Kent St. alone, should have sidewalks. Not only do many school-aged children use this road for walking to school or the bus, but they also use it to access 'downtown' Kensington, parks, and other neighborhood amenities. Many pedestrians use Kent to access the Beach Dr./Rock Creek Park trail network. Those living along and beyond Stoneybrook Ave frequently take walks through Kensington/Rock Creek Hills, and by necessity, use Kent St for access. But because it is a bus route and a major cut through for vehicular traffic, with on-street parking permitting, it is often the scene of many hazardous pedestrian-vehicular interactions. To that end, over the years the County

**Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**


has installed speed bumps, and even a roundabout, for traffic calming purposes. It is not enough. To be a pedestrian along Kent St is not enough, as even stop signs at Kent St. and Wake Dr. seem to be deemed optional by motorists.

I am therefore requesting the inclusion of Kent St. into future sidewalk analyses with the hope that one day the road is served by sidewalks.

Thank you

Cris Maina  
3304 Wake Dr  
Kensington, MD 20895

**Attachments**

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	🔄
		
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## Email

# Walking in MoCo

Owner

 MCP...



## Email

### From

 Esther and Terence Curry

### To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

### Cc

### Bcc

### Subject

Walking in MoCo

### Date Sent

### Date Received

3/4/2023 2:36 PM

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

In my opinion, in Montgomery County walking is seen as a leisure activity that takes place on trails rather than as a means of actually getting anywhere useful. As a result you can amble along a trail that has no amenities like cafés or lavatories and then go home again. If, however you wanted to go on foot to get a pint of milk you'd almost certainly have to brave a narrow sidewalk (too narrow for two people to walk comfortably side by side) with no buffer between you and six lanes of traffic. You'd then have to pick which is the least inconvenient crossing, have to wait for ages to cross and then have to sprint across when it's finally your turn.

Because of zoning we have no corner stores accessible to neighborhoods which, as someone who grew up in the UK and who has lived in both Vienna and Berlin, is nonsensical. The layout of residential streets with odd cutoffs to stop cars using them as cut throughs means that pedestrians, if they are mad enough to try, also have to go the long way round. This is even more intolerable in summer by the lack of trees on many streets.

Where I live there is one grocery store that one can get to on foot or by bike pleasantly. However, Shalom Kosher is (naturally) closed on Saturday. The car lot (far too big with no trees and unbearably hot in the summer) is accessible from the Sligo Creek trail. From Dennis Avenue round to the Safeway on University an obvious pedestrian route would be along Gilmore because it parallels University Blvd but it is chopped up and there is no side access to the Safeway car lot. Who in their right mind would want to walk along University Boulevard to get there? Don't even talk to me about walking to Snyders over on Georgia Ave. it's theoretically feasible, but the most tolerable route takes you partially along the trail and then through a neighborhood but that's a way longer route than the most direct but wildly unpleasant one along the main road.

In Europe people walk regularly to get basic necessities because it is a pleasant experience so they combine exercise with errands. Everyone has a shopping basket on wheels and takes it with them. Here, even in Kensington, walking from one store to another and having to cross Connecticut Ave one feels vulnerable and out of place as one waits for an eternity to cross the road.

Truly, the car has taken over but it is time that neighborhoods and built up areas were reclaimed for pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists. A kid should be able to hop on their bike and go and buy some candy without it being a full-scale expedition where they could well be mown down by an irate driver who doesn't see why they should stop just because there's a stop sign, or an optimistically painted crosswalk on their six-lane highway.

Esther Curry  
1507 Woodman Avenue

Sent from my iPhone

**Attachments**

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	↻
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0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)		Page 1

## Email

# FW: Montgomery County ...

Owner

 MCP...



## Email

### From

 Glazier, Eli

### To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

### Cc

### Bcc

### Subject

FW: Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan

### Date Sent

### Date Received

2/28/2023 11:05 AM

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

From: Gael Cheek <gaelcheek@yahoo.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 28, 2023 11:04 AM

To: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

Cc: Qi, Lily Delegate <Lily.Qi@house.state.md.us>

Subject: Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan

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

Dear Eli

I recently received a helpful email from my State Delegate Lily Qi concerning the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan. I understand from that document that you are the staff contact for the Montgomery County Pedestrian Master Plan. I would like to know how to find a map of all the sidewalks in Montgomery County, both currently built and planned. I would also like a list of all the agencies and contacts for requesting sidewalks in Montgomery County.

I have recently worked with Lori Main from the Annual Sidewalk Program. She has been an excellent help concerning my neighborhoods request for a sidewalk as a result of a recent pedestrian accident involving two pedestrians. I believe that her proposal for our sidewalk is forthcoming and that it will be successful.

In the course of getting information to request the sidewalk two problems came to my attention. I was not able to find any map that shows where sidewalks currently exist or one showing where they will be built. Because the request for a sidewalk is more likely to be viewed favorably if the sidewalk requested connects to other sidewalks, not having such a map is a problem for individuals requesting sidewalks.

The other problem was that many different agencies seem to be involved in building sidewalks based on certain criteria which are too numerous to list.



This is a problem because in my case it is possible that our sidewalk would be connected to one proposed on a major road near our street but there is no way for me to know if the sidewalk on that street would be built.

Since many citizens do not know how to request sidewalks this lack of a map and list of agencies is a barrier for improvements based on the shared experience of pedestrians. I believe a map showing where current sidewalks are is crucial for citizens faced with dangerous road conditions.

Thanks for you help on this important plan.

Gael Cheek  
12201 Ambleside Dr  
Potomac MD  
20854  
301-466-7666

### Attachments

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## Email

# Pedestrian Master Plan Pu...

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

From

 Laura

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing

Date Sent

Date Received

3/14/2023 7:43 AM



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

Bikes, scooters, and skateboards on the sidewalk are a danger to pedestrians -- especially the elderly and disabled -- and should not be allowed.

In my downtown Silver Spring neighborhood, I experience frequent near misses while walking when people on fast-moving bikes and scooters come from behind with no warning. I rarely hear them approaching because of the traffic noise. I do not always walk in a straight line (because I am not a robot) so it is not always easy for the person to avoid hitting me. Walking on the sidewalk should not be a safety risk.

Please address this urgent problem.

### Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		

**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected)

Page 1

## Email

# Pedestrian Safety in Damas...

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

From

 Marie Dean

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian Safety in Damascus

Date Sent

Date Received

3/14/2023 3:38 PM

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

**As a longtime resident of Damascus, I am pleased to see that the need for sidewalks in Damascus Town Center is addressed in the Pedestrian Safety Survey. Sidewalks in the town center are vital to allow for the revitalization of the town center which is currently struggling. Residents understand that Damascus has sidewalk issues because all of the major roads (routes 27, 124, and 108) are state highways. Retrofitting sidewalks to meet modern needs is expensive, but it is important for planners to remember that the idealized vision of a rural town in Damascus does not match today's reality. There has been increasing residential construction in the town center due to the lower cost of real estate in Damascus. One senior housing complex has been completed in the town center (Victory Haven) and another is under construction at St Anne Church. There is a new townhouse development under construction adjacent to Damascus Elementary School. There needs to be a master plan for sidewalks to link all of this new development to the existing town center including Damascus High School.**

**The planning board needs to address sidewalk issues when development is planned. Let me give you a few examples. I reported concerns about the sidewalk situation at Victory Haven (route 108) in June 2020 when I witnessed a disabled senior walking in route 108 with a walker because there is no sidewalk connecting Victory Haven to the crosswalk leading to the senior center/library complex on the other side of route 108. There is a**

**sidewalk in front of Victory Haven but it does not connect to the existing sidewalk that leads to the crosswalk at route 124. The needed gap in the sidewalk is one residential lot in width but there is no sidewalk. This situation should have been addressed during the planning process but now it is 3 years of promises but no sidewalk. We have been told that it will be another year before the sidewalk that everyone acknowledges is necessary will be built because 108 is a state road. It should not take 4 years to get fix this problem.**


**There is a senior housing center under construction at St Anne Church on a dangerous section of route 27. There are no sidewalks on that section of route 27. Many have questioned the approval of this project at that location because the seniors will be unable to walk safely anywhere off the property.**

**There is a new townhouse development being built next to Damascus Elementary School. It is actually an ideal location for such a development with access to the town center and transportation and walkable to both an elementary school and Damascus High School. But there is no sidewalk on that side of route 27. The residents will not be able to walk safely to town. There needs to be a sidewalk on both sides of route 27 from Bethesda Church Road to the town center. Damascus Center is a still a small town. Let's make it walkable.**

**Thank you for addressing our problems,**

**Marie Dean**  
**10720 Middleboro Drive**  
**Damascus MD 20872**  
[Marie\\_dean@verizon.net](mailto:Marie_dean@verizon.net)

#### **Attachments**

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		
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Page 1

**From:** [digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org)  
**To:** [Glazier, Eli](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from Pedestrian Master Plan feedback (final)  
**Date:** Friday, March 10, 2023 11:58:40 PM

---

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

#### Comments

This plan includes a lot of proposals that are about as dumb as a ton of bricks.  
There are 91% of the residents in MD own and drive cars.  
The number that walks regularly is about 62%, but that is typically less than 10 minutes per day and in a park or local neighborhood.  
The county developed a "Go Green Montgomery Plan" (which includes a lot of dumb ideas also, like outloawing natural gas appliances...) -  
Making every intersection in the county a "mandatory walk signal" on every cycle is a HUGE waste in carbon emissions !!!!!  
Making pedestrians push a button to cross the street is not unfair. Most light cycles there is NO ONE waiting.  
It will also cost a fortune to change the hardware - yet another wasteful spending line in the county budget.  
Raising taxes for this plan is ridiculous and anti-business. Let the policies phase in ONLY as regular equipment, lighting, and roadway maintenance allows it. Its fine.  
The number one priority for the county is LOWERING the cost of solar power and supporting job growth, as the ability to "build its way out" of the budget is going the way of the dinosaurs (and former local farms). Most of this plan is NOT a priority, and frankly several ideas are pretty anti-driver.  
BTW - the "safe crosswalks" the county has been creating are also a disaster waiting to happen - I have seen cars race past them without stopping while another car blocks the view of an aging pedestrian or baby stroller in the cross walk. PLEASE STOP creating these dangerous non-solutions (and take them out or install a real red-light that stops traffic when pedestrians request it).  
You need to create safer DRIVING roads in this county, in particular around the schools, and stop wasting money on marginal improvements for pedestrians that are normally NOT THERE.

#### Name (optional)

David Lechner

#### Email (optional)

[dave@lechnersonline.com](mailto:dave@lechnersonline.com)

## Email

# FW: New submission from ...

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

From

 Glazier, Eli

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

FW: New submission from Pedestrian Master Plan feedback (final)

Date Sent

Date Received

3/6/2023 8:45 AM

Additional testimony.

There is not any contact information, but is that okay?

---

From: digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org <digitalteam@montgomeryplanning.org>

Sent: Sunday, March 5, 2023 9:56 PM

To: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

Subject: New submission from Pedestrian Master Plan feedback (final)



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

### Comments

I have some issues with section B-4g. I am NOT in favor of making the closure permanent. I live near the north end of Sligo creek parkway. I use this road for commuting during the week. I also actively bike and walk along it. It is currently closed on FRIDAYS as well as during the weekend. I cannot use it to commute on Fridays, and indeed even sometimes see school buses hurrying to get off the road on Friday mornings before the gates are closed. Sligo Creek Parkway was my commute and access to the beltway near Forest Glen, access to Holy Cross hospital and access to downtown Silver Spring and Takoma park. I now have to loop around and go onto even more crowded street (Georgia Ave. or Colesville Road) to get to these locations. The extra time is especially concerning for Hospital access on weekends. I also know several families from nearby apartments who used to use the rec center and picnic areas off the parkway on weekends, but no longer can as there is extremely limited or no nearby parking or easy access from which to walk to these facilities. On weekends the parkway recreation areas are basically off limits to anyone who is unable to walk or bike there. I have been walking, biking and driving this road since before the pandemic and did not have any issues using the path along the parkway or

Sharing the road with bicyclists before the pandemic. Even now I don't see much more pedestrian traffic than before the pandemic closures, although most people seem to choose to use the open road and not the path, which is often unused weekends. I ask you to consider reopening the road and make it usable by all in the nearby communities. At the very least please reopen it on Fridays for those of us who have to commute.

## Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
		
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Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

From: [Fonner Family](#)  
To: [Glazier, Eli](#)  
Cc: [Jesse Fonner](#); [John Dillon](#)  
Subject: Norbeck Road: lack of pedestrian sidewalks  
Date: Thursday, February 16, 2023 5:01:30 PM

---

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

Dear Mr Glazier,

I understand that there is a Pedestrian Master Plan available online for Montgomery County. I am unable to download it to read so I'm wondering if you can answer my single question:

Does the plan address the **lack of sidewalks on Norbeck Road** between Wintergate (at the the bridge) and Twin Valley Court on one side and Laughlin Lane on the other? If I try to walk to the Norbeck Animal Clinic for a vet appt, just two blocks from my home, or if the kids living in my neighborhood want to walk to the East Local Norbeck Park across from Bailey's Lane, we put our lives in peril. Not everyone has a car or can drive so walking is often not a choice but a necessity and often involves walking in the road!

There is a hodgepodge of pedestrian paths from Bailey's Lane North towards Georgia Ave but nothing from Baileys Lane East on Norbeck. There is a short bit of sidewalk on the bridge (at Norbeck and Wintergate) but nothing after it going East towards Layhill Road.

Thank you for any clarification you can provide.  
Davida Fonner

## Email

# Pedestrian master plan sub...

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

**From**

 pablo collins

**To**

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

**Cc**

**Bcc**

**Subject**

Pedestrian master plan submission

**Date Sent**

**Date Received**

3/13/2023 11:22 AM

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

I submit the attached document for inclusion in the hearing on the Pedestrian Master plan.

Thank you  
Pablo Collins  
4820 Leland St  
Chevy Chase MD 20815  
301 946-4919

### Attachments

File Name

File Size (Bytes)



There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.

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Page 1

# SIDEWALK TRAVESTIES

by Pablo Collins

Submission to Planning Board Hearing on the Pedestrian Master Plan



- The following pictures make it very clear that no one is looking out for pedestrians and the sidewalks on which they travel.
- Policy makers may talk about “pedestrian friendly” but the sidewalks are far from that.
- Government, business, and drivers feel free to intrude on the sidewalks, without concern for pedestrian access or safety.
- Are there any standards and are they ever enforced?
- Is anyone in charge? Is there any oversight?
- Does anyone care?



Montgomery Ave.  
Driveway curbs impede free  
flow and force pedestrians  
and wheelchairs close to  
the street

Montgomery Ave.  
Signal pole in middle of sidewalk



Bradley Blvd.  
Phone pole in middle of sidewalk



Bradley Blvd.  
Phone pole and traffic  
control box make for a  
slalom course





Wisconsin Ave.  
Driveway curbs present  
tripping hazard and wheelchair  
obstacle

Montgomery Ave.  
Abandoned commercial sign  
obstructing sidewalk



Montgomery Ave. at  
Waverly  
Why are these flower  
boxes blocking more  
than half the sidewalk?  
See next picture.





Montgomery Ave. at  
Waverly

The engineers or  
construction crews  
obviously overlooked the  
different grades at the  
corner and rather than  
repair their error they  
decided it was easier to  
block the sidewalk.



Bethesda Ave.  
Commercial signage  
restricts pedestrian flow  
forcing people off the  
main walkway



Bethesda Ave.  
Another view of  
commercial signage  
blocking pedestrian flow



Bethesda Ave.  
More commercial  
signage in walkway



Bethesda Ave.  
Whose great idea  
was this, leaving the  
fire hydrant in the  
middle of the  
sidewalk. One  
wouldn't leave a  
hydrant in the  
middle of the street  
but its ok to leave it  
in the sidewalk.



Bethesda Ave.  
Multiple commercial  
signs left randomly  
on the sidewalk



Arlington Blvd.  
Is this sidewalk for parking  
or walking?



Bethesda Ave.  
No place for  
pedestrians except the  
street.





Arlington Blvd.  
Utility pole falling over? No  
problem, place an anchor  
in the middle of the  
sidewalk.



Arlington Blvd.  
How many poles can we  
plant on the corner?



Hampden Lane  
Lovely view while walking  
down the sidewalk.



Hampden Lane, Is this  
a sidewalk or a waste  
loading dock?



Hampden Lane  
Car parked on sidewalk,  
obstructing pedestrian  
flow



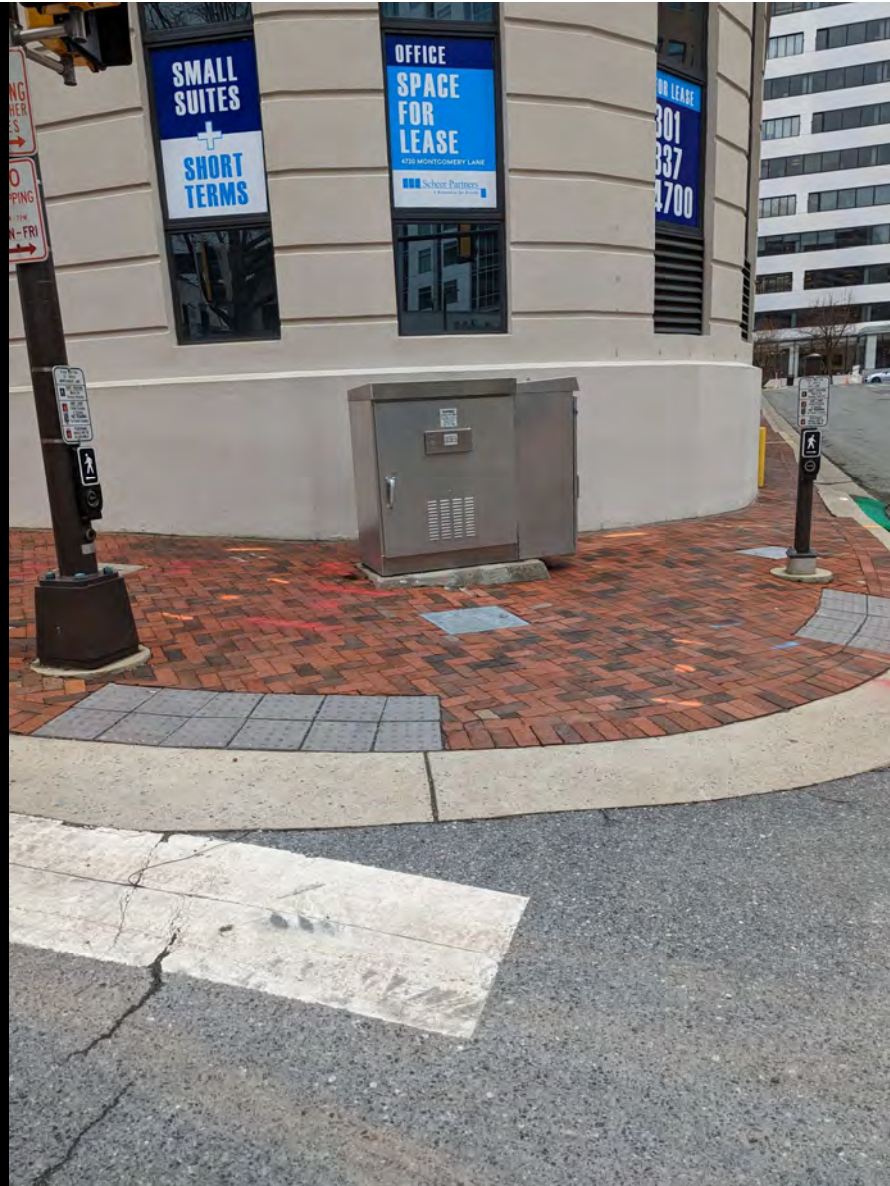
Hampden Lane  
A simple way to keep  
cars and trucks from  
using driveways and  
sidewalks for parking.  
No Parking barriers



Woodmont Ave.  
More signs blocking  
the sidewalk



Montgomery Ave.  
Large signal box in the  
middle of the walkway





Montgomery Ave.  
A common sight – vehicles  
blocking the sidewalk



Wisconsin Ave.  
Pipe in the way – not too  
worry, just block more of  
the sidewalk.



Leland St.  
Pedestrians Forced to  
veer out of the walkway  
while the sidewalk on  
other side of street  
closed for different  
construction project.



March 15, 2023

Planning Chair Jeff Zyontz  
Montgomery County Planning Board  
2425 Reddie Drive, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Wheaton, MD 20902  
[mcp-chair@mncppc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc.org)

Re: Public Hearing Draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan

Dear Mr. Chairman,

The Pedestrian Master Plan was initiated as part of Montgomery County's 2017 Vision Zero Action Plan to eliminate traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. Given that we have not yet achieved even the 50% reduction called for in the County's January 2002 Blue Ribbon Panel report in the subsequent two decades, **how will we achieve Vision Zero's 100% reduction in the next seven years?** Good intentions are not enough.

The Pedestrian Master Plan must be very clear in its presentation of what the problems are: where current design practice runs contrary to the law, policies, standards and accepted professional best practices; what legal and regulatory changes need to be made; and who is responsible for fixing the problems. **This Plan must be a game-changer or Vision Zero is just a meaningless slogan.** The Public Hearing Draft's recommendations would create a better environment for pedestrians, but significant changes are needed for the Plan to be truly effective.

**Pedestrian safety must be the Plan's clear #1 goal:** Increasing walking rates and pedestrian satisfaction are good goals, but they *follow from* making Montgomery County a safer place to walk, rather than *lead to* safety. The methodology for prioritizing projects should be moved from the appendix to the body of the Plan so that it can be put into better context, but it also needs to be revised to better promote pedestrian safety. Pedestrian crash history - safety - is only 15% of the total score, and four of the ten prioritization factors specifically address bikes whereas only two address pedestrians - it's not clear why bike factors predominate or even why they're included in a prioritization of pedestrian projects. **The methodology should prioritize pedestrian safety for project implementation and the plan should also clearly state what types of projects would do the most to promote pedestrian safety** since specific locations are unspecified.

**Many more metrics are needed to ensure that we are improving pedestrian safety:** In the Vision and Goals section, "Enhance Pedestrian Safety" has just two metrics, the satisfaction of residents and the number of pedestrian fatalities and severe injuries; the latter is the most important metric but is actually a measurement of failure to provide a safe system. Many other operational aspects of the system should be measured first to avoid that failure, such as tracking the percentage of roads with an appropriate posted speed limit; the frequency and severity of speeding on the county's roads; the frequency of red light running; the frequency of driver failure to yield to pedestrians; the percentage of roadway lighting that is up to standard and operational; the percentage of crosswalk markings that are in good condition; and the percentage of stop bars and roadway lane markings that reflect the safest roadway operation for pedestrians.

**The Recommendations section should be significantly reorganized to ensure that the entities responsible for making changes can clearly understand what they need to do:** The themes in the Design, Policy and Programming section are too focused on translating the recommendations into active verbs like “build” and “protect” and not enough on which parties need to take the desired actions, confusing both responsibility and priority; for example, Action B-6 “Reduce pedestrian pathway temperatures” is listed well in advance of Action B-10 “Assume control of state highways.” Recommendations should instead be organized first as to their level of statutory importance. This plan is almost 300 pages, its appendices more than 150, and the Complete Streets Design Guide, with which this plan should be read, is over 300. Most lawmakers and upper management in transportation agencies are not going to wade through 750 pages to find the changes they’re being asked to make, e.g., the legislative changes that would be led by our State Delegation are now shown in eight places spread over 54 pages. **All recommendations that would require a change in State law should be grouped together.**

The Introduction states that unlike the Bicycle Master Plan and Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, the Pedestrian Plan focuses on policies, programs and priorities. As such, **having an organizational format with a clear legal and technical framework that is directed to those responsible for making the necessary changes is essential.** Up to five agencies are noted as having lead responsibility for some recommendations, reducing the likelihood that any single agency will be held accountable. All recommendations that would require changes to an agency’s standards, policies and practices should be grouped together to make it easier for the agency to see clearly what they need to address. Such a reorganization would also help the public understand where an agency’s policies adversely affect pedestrian safety and where to apply pressure to make the right thing happen. Where a satisfactory agreement cannot be achieved in discussions with state and/or local agencies, **M-NCPPC should maintain a record of these open issues on the Pedestrian Master Plan website.** During my 20-year career as the highway coordinator and de facto pedestrian coordinator for the Planning Department from 1996 until 2016, many of the Plan’s issues were previously discussed but not satisfactorily resolved. Having a permanently available public record may prompt a better response by the applicable agency.

The Introduction’s statement is misleading however because specific location-based recommendations for facilities *are* made in this Plan as 62 pages of “Pedestrian Infrastructure Recommendations,” but the recommended 310 pedestrian shortcuts are a distraction from the necessary focus on safety. The Plan section states that the need for new and reconstructed sidewalks far exceeds the county’s capacity to build them. No basis is given for that statement but if we are serious about achieving Vision Zero by 2030, an all-hands-on-deck approach is needed, and **the County should consider starting no new highway capacity projects until we have a safe pedestrian system.**

Councilmember Will Jawando was recently quoted as saying that **over the past decade, out of over 700,000 traffic citations in Montgomery County, only 3,300 drivers have been cited for failing to yield to a pedestrian. That’s less than one-half of one percent of all citations - roughly one ticket per police officer every four years for the 1,281 currently authorized positions - while pedestrians are involved in 4% of all crashes and comprise 27% of the severe injuries and fatalities,** per the Existing Conditions data in the plan. Subtracting the citations given as part of dedicated sting operations would get us pretty close to zero, i.e., virtually no

day-to-day enforcement. *(I regularly walk the length of Georgia Avenue through the Silver Spring Central Business District and typically see 2-3 violations during my 30 to 40-minute roundtrip, i.e., I see more pedestrian-related violations by drivers on an average day than MCPD is ticketing in the entire county.)* Using the above statistics, **police enforcement to protect pedestrians should be at least eight times what it is currently and MCPD should consider having a dedicated group of motivated officers in charge of enforcement so that proper training and accountability are assured.** A list of all potential traffic and pedestrian-related violations should be included on the County's Vision Zero website, along with a tally of all tickets given for each offense every year.

**Transportation engineers must be accountable for the projects they design, and the police department should concur on the design:** Additional metrics are needed for the capital projects that we undertake and we must ensure that those in charge take responsibility for safety. Each project should be scored by the agency's project manager for pedestrian safety and comfort and for adherence to the stated target speed. The design should then be scored by an independent engineer under contract to the MCPD who should make recommendations for any necessary additional improvements. Rather than argue about whether a problem is best addressed via enforcement or redesign, **both agencies with shared responsibility for the day-to-day safe operation of our roadways should have input into a project's design and success,** enabling the county to avoid future speeding and safety problems. These scores should be reflected in the transportation project manager's and design section chief's personnel reviews and in the review of the design consultant for use in the consideration of awards for future work. The project should also be scored one year after construction to ensure that actual operation has met the project goals and remedial work undertaken as needed. **MCPD should also have a process to formally request roadway projects to address perennial enforcement problem locations.**

The driving culture in Montgomery County needs to improve, but County employees themselves need to take public safety seriously, have adequate supervision to ensure that they do so and be punished when they do not. While red light-running is rampant **at the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Colesville Road, the frequent occurrence of Ride-On bus drivers running the red light and cutting off pedestrians in the crosswalk is the most egregious.** *(I have personally witnessed this happen even in groups of two or three buses and recently even by an articulated FLASH bus, the County's premier transit service. The current driver expectation of punishment in such a high-visibility location apparently must be quite low.)* In addition to punishing drivers who break the law, **MCDOT should also consider adopting an operation policy to require bus drivers to stop on a yellow light as long as it is safe to do so.**

In addition to looking at what other agencies can do better, **the Planning Department should closely examine which of its own policies may adversely affect pedestrians.** Several years ago when I was leading the Countywide Transit Corridors Functional Master Plan, buried in the numbers in how peak-hour Level of Service (LOS) for Policy Area Mobility Review was determined, I found that there was no upper limit to the free flow auto speed used for the off-peak period; this essentially let speeding drivers set our benchmark for success. But those drivers, often on state roads with long stretches of open roadway at night, could be driving at speeds that, in a crash, would be lethal to a pedestrian crossing the road. Setting the off-peak speed bar too high not only makes our roadway system operations look worse than they really

are, but in some cases unnecessarily show the need for wider roads and/or intersections. The latter may not only make conditions worse for pedestrians directly, but also create expensive candidate capital projects that will compete with pedestrian and bike projects for funding.

The data used for determining LOS should reflect only legal behavior and the maximum speed used for the off-peak speed should be the lower of the posted speed, the statutory speed, and the target speed in the Road Code. (Since MSHA has been lowering speed limits on some state highway segments in Montgomery County, those changes should be kept up to date in the Planning Departments database.) **Where the 85th percentile speed exceeds the posted speed, measures should be proposed to bring it down, such as allowing off-peak parking, narrowing lanes to construct bike lanes and/or create buffers for sidewalks, and adjusting traffic signal timing to discourage speeding.**

Enclosed with this letter are a list of additional detailed comments on the many recommendations made in this master plan, but I would like to emphasize one issue that MSHA must address: **MSHA's longstanding practice of violating Maryland's own version of the national policy on lane striping obscures the presence of unsignalized intersections and is the biggest insidious safety hazard to pedestrians on state highways that serve as our major transit corridors.**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Public Hearing Draft.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Cole  
1228 Dale Drive  
Silver Spring, MD 20190

Enclosure

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March 15, 2023

Enclosure for letter to Chair Zyontz  
Re: Public Hearing Draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan

Please consider the following additional detailed comments in the context of my letter to you on this date. Recommendation numbers from the Public Hearing Draft are provided where they would be useful.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Master Plan should include a list of all references that were used in the creation of this master plan and that *should* be used in the master plan's implementation. The Complete Streets Design Guide (CDSG) is a very useful reference to promote a more pedestrian-friendly environment. I note that there are 29 references to the CDSG in the master plan text but there is not a single reference to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO's) A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets, despite the fact that the interpretation of AASHTO's guidance by county and state engineers over the years has been the source of tremendous disagreement with planning staff and with pedestrian advocates. The disagreements have been due in part to organizational inertia – “we've always done it this way” – but also because of individual engineers' lack of understanding of the flexibility in that document but sometimes even the existence of other AASHTO documents such as the Roadway Lighting Guide and the Roadside Design Guide, or guidance from the Federal Highway Administration and USDOT.

To make progress, we need to be able to speak the same language and, where we have disagreements, to resolve them on a general basis rather than an eternal project-by-project basis, which wastes time and resources and often has an unsuccessful result. The Complete Streets Design Guide is a useful document for engineers and designers to take advantage of the flexibility in law, tech guides, etc. and is a good reference, but **particularly where State policy or practice conflicts with federal or nationally accepted policies and practices, those primary references should always be cited as the source material.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goals 1 and 3 should be swapped to place “Enhance Pedestrian Safety” in the #1 slot.

## INTRODUCTION

The references to schools in this document appear to be focused solely on Montgomery County Public Schools and not include private schools or any colleges, including the multiple campuses of Montgomery College and other colleges in Montgomery County. The travel mode choices and pedestrian facility needs of those users likely differ greatly from MCPS students. For example, Montgomery College's Silver Spring/Takoma Park campus is in a very urban environment on a state highway; despite the school's being on one side of the road and restaurants and retail on the other side of the road, neither of the two intersections most convenient for that pedestrian traffic is signalized on this six-lane undivided roadway and neither of the signalized intersections in either direction has a protected pedestrian phase.



## **RACIAL EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

To ensure that we achieve a pedestrian system that accommodates everyone to the best of our ability, **all projects should include meeting ADA Best Practices as a goal rather than just the minimum required by ADA.** Aiming for the minimum, as we most often do now, ensures that when we fall short because of site-specific problems we end up with a sub-par system that operates poorly for those with physical handicaps.

The number of barriers is also important in determining whether a trip is considered feasible or not. For example, even where the right-of-way exists to offset a sidewalk from the roadway to ensure a level sidewalk, a sidewalk at the curb line is often built, forcing the sidewalk to go up and down at each driveway; the prospect of negotiating a wheelchair down a long block of 15 driveways with two ramps at each is daunting even if technically feasible. We must do better to have a truly equitable system.

## **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The existing conditions section should include data on speeding citations, illegal right turns, red light running, and violations of a pedestrian's right-of-way, and a survey of lighting conditions.

## **DESIGN, POLICY AND PROGRAMMING**

This section title and recommendations should be reordered to reflect each subject's proper importance and what issues particular agencies or organizations need to lead/address; policy and the law are most important.

## **POLICY**

### **Statutory**

#### **Maryland Vehicle Law (MVL)**

MVL classifies each area by its type and level of development and sets a statutory speed for divided and undivided roads in each; this speed limit may be modified within certain limits based on an engineering study. In addition, the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways includes a list of target speeds for roads in Urban Road Code Areas. As development has occurred over time, the posted speeds for roads for some areas may no longer reflect their current development.

Using MSHA's Highway Location Reference as a base, the Pedestrian Master Plan should include in its section on existing conditions a table that shows where current posted speeds exceed those statutory speeds and/or target speeds and request from MSHA or MCDOT, as applicable, a written justification for the higher speed. If the reasons are not sufficient, the current speed limits should be lowered. After an assessment of the roads in the list, Planning staff should recommend changes to the law as necessary to ensure that the roads in Montgomery operate safely.

#### **Funding Pedestrian Enforcement**

Consideration should be given to discussing with the State Delegation the possibility of allocating the fines collected for pedestrian violations to pedestrian enforcement and pedestrian improvements rather than going into the state's general coffers as with other traffic violations.

## Montgomery County Zoning Code

B5b: Rather than “encourage” ped-scale lighting, the Zoning Code should require it where it would be beneficial.

A speed limit of 5 mph should be set for scooter users on public sidewalks to ensure pedestrian safety.

## Other policies and standards

### **Unsafe Intersection Striping on State Highways**

Maryland’s approved version of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices calls for lane lines to be discontinued at every intersection unless there is a particular hazard but in practice, MSHA typically ignores “minor” by carrying the normal lane line striping on state highways through such intersections without a break, obscuring even the presence of an intersection. **This is an insidious violation of federal and Maryland policy that places pedestrians in particular danger by decreasing driver awareness.** As an example, in the 1 1/4-mile segment of Colesville Road (US 29) Capital Beltway and Spring Street, there are thirteen intersections where the normal lane striping is shown without a break that would alert drivers on US 29 to the presence of pedestrians, who actually have the right of way at these locations, or even of other vehicles turning from those side streets. At South Noyes Drive, a crosswalk was installed opposite the former Silver Spring Library mostly on top of one set of lane lines, diminishing its warning effect to drivers. While the law says that pedestrians have the right of way to cross US 29 at any of these intersections, the lane striping signals to drivers that they have an unimpeded path.

To the west at Noyes Drive and Georgia Avenue (MD 97), MSHA installed a crosswalk at the Woodside Synagogue in the response to a couple of serious pedestrian crashes several years ago. A warning sign and lane markings were installed 400 feet in advance of the crosswalk but the lane lines that obscure the presence of this intersection and five other intersections between Spring Street and 16<sup>th</sup> Street were left intact, diminishing the safety of the crosswalk installation.

In addition to an inherent lessening of safety by not providing information to drivers, the lack of warning of potential conflicts likely leads to increased operating speeds on these state highways. **Carrying normal lane striping through intersections should be discontinued immediately as a practice and existing such markings should be removed as soon as possible. Only where necessary in unique circumstances should dotted lane extension markings be installed per the diagram in Recommendation P-7a on page 109.** Speed and crash studies should be performed before and after this pavement marking removal to document its effect.

### **Lighting Policy**

A driver’s quick reaction to the presence of a pedestrian in the roadway is based on two things: expectation and actual perception, but perception at night is often hindered because of poor lighting. Montgomery County provides continuous lighting of its roadways as a rule but MSHA’s policy is to light intersections only and then not even every intersection; unsignalized intersections are frequently not lighted. **This policy has no engineering basis but serves only as a cost-containment policy.**

When the Montrose Parkway interchange was built on MD355 more than a decade ago, so street lighting was proposed by MSHA for several hundred feet because there were no intersections, which for the purpose of the project they defined as the ramp termini on Montrose Parkway below MD355. The only light for pedestrians on the sidewalks would have been from passing cars and the moon. Montgomery County contributed \$1 million to ensure that adequate lighting would be provided, as the County has also done on other state projects. If MSHA's position is that local jurisdictions should provide the funding for street lighting, that's a matter for discussion and negotiation, but **MSHA's policy must be changed to provide adequate lighting as part of all capital projects to ensure the safety of all users of the road.**

B-5: The title of this section should be revised to Lighting for Roadways, Intersections, and Pedestrian and Bike Facilities.

B5a: Lighting standards for roadways, intersections and trails already exist, as prepared by AASHTO and IESNA; these are the policies that should be used. We should first determine whether our roadway lighting levels are up to current technical standards before asking pedestrians about their satisfaction with street lighting.

MCDOT's lighting policy requires continuous lighting along roadways but the lighting levels of roadways and intersections should be correlated with the AASHTO Roadway Lighting Guide. Beyond meeting the necessary lighting levels, the exact location of light standards is important because a light between the driver and the pedestrian will enable the driver to discern the colors of the pedestrian's clothing; a light behind the pedestrian will result in the driver seeing only a silhouette until his vehicle's headlights light the pedestrian in the roadway. **In addition to correlating with AASHTO, MCDOT's lighting policy should include locating luminaires to improve driver perception of pedestrians in the roadway as well as enable pedestrians to be seen by drivers before they enter the roadway.**

## DESIGN

### Community Involvement

B-1b: Community involvement needs to be at the beginning of the design process but in terms of decision-making, the design team needs to ensure that the legal and technical requirements are met before putting a proposal back in front of the public. Asking abutting property owners how new sidewalks should be constructed is often met with the answer that the project should have as little effect on their perceived property as possible. But property owners often think that their property extends to the edge of the roadway even when their actual property line is ten to fifteen feet closer to their house. Public engagement needs to start with ground rules that reflect the County's road standards that are the result of years of Planning and Executive Branch staff work and Planning Board input to ensure public safety for all users of the right-of-way; exceptions can be made but should be well documented. The ideas and requests of private property owners are important but the greater public good of any project must be the ultimate goal.

### Guardrail Design

Guardrail installation in Montgomery County is often flawed to the detriment of safety. The location of guardrail in areas where there is a sidewalk should be between the road and the sidewalk per AASHTO recommendations (as referred to in Recommendation P-7c.) The purpose

of this guidance is to protect both drivers and pedestrians. The guardrail is intended to redirect errant drivers back onto the roadway, which a guardrail will do effectively if it is at the edge of the roadway. If the guardrail is placed behind the sidewalk, it will guide vehicles along the sidewalk until the driver regains control, potentially hitting any pedestrians on the sidewalk in the meantime. Guardrail is also often installed too close in front of a fixed object such as a utility or light pole; hindering the guardrail's ability to flex after a crash and potentially leading the vehicle into the object.

There are abundant examples of these basic elements of guardrail design not being followed along State highways, County roads and even park roads in Montgomery County. One example of the latter is along the short distance of Sligo Creek Parkway between just west of Brunett Avenue and US 29 where there are three segments of guardrail built behind Sligo Creek Trail rather than between the road and trail; there is a segment of newly built trail that was built too close to the roadway where guardrail should have been installed; and there is **a segment of guardrail on Sligo Creek Parkway at the culvert opposite Brunett Avenue has several posts were left out, rendering the guardrail completely useless in terms of driver safety.**

In the fairly recent repaving of the intersection of US 29 and Sligo Creek Parkway, a guardrail was installed behind the sidewalk at the southwest corner of the intersection to protect the traffic signal controller; there is evidence that the guardrail was hit soon after installation. While the traffic signal controller remained undamaged, what would have happened had there been trail users waiting at the corner to cross US29? This intersection also has both speeding problems and frequent red light-runners; the guardrail should have been installed where it would have protected pedestrians also.

**MSHA, MCDOT and Parks should explain their guardrail design policies, consider providing employee training in guardrail design, and reorganize their review processes to avoid such problems in the future.**

### **Sidewalk Width**

The wording on Safe Routes to Schools' website echoes AASHTO's recommendation for wider sidewalks along arterials: "Sidewalks with a width of eight to ten feet or more should be built where there is no sidewalk buffer along an arterial street and along roads adjacent to school grounds where large numbers of walkers are expected." This advice should be coordinated with the County's road standards but is on the right track. We should ensure that sidewalks along roadways classified as arterials and higher have adequate space for pedestrians.

The reasons for deviations from the County's road standards and ADA Best Practices should be made part of the project record and made publicly available. All too often with retrofit projects, there is a tendency to start not even with the appropriate road standard on whose creation and adoption a lot of staff time and legislators' time has been spent, but to minimize the footprint of the project to reduce impacts on residents' perceived property line. While a smaller footprint may be more acceptable to the abutting property owner, the pedestrian space is often the loser by means of a much narrower landscape panel separating them from traffic or by that panel's complete elimination. There may be sufficient reasons for making such a decision, but written documentation is needed to deter such decisions being made just because it's politically easier in

the moment and the decision-makers (Planning Board and County Council) should be aware of the trade-offs being made.

Also, a minimum unencumbered width should be set for sidewalks in commercial areas. While the sidewalks in the Silver Spring CBD were constructed to be the entire width from the curb to the building face, entrance sheds, crowd railings, tables and seating have been placed on a permanent basis and sometimes obstructs even the minimum width required by ADA.

### **Crosswalks and stop bars**

B-3b: Some discussion should be added to this section about crosswalk width and the crosswalk's relation to stop bars. Wider crosswalks than standard should be provided where needed to accommodate users in commercial areas, near schools and where the crosswalk is part of a named trail.

Also, Section 3B.18 of the Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices requires that the front edge of stop bars be located a minimum of four feet from the outer edge of crosswalks. Poor drivers frequently overshoot the stop bar and partially block the crosswalk, causing pedestrians to divert around vehicles and eliminating the safety zone for pedestrians, particularly small children who may not be visible immediately in front of a vehicle. Four-foot separation is required as a minimum, but a greater distance should be provided where there are large numbers of pedestrians, near elementary schools where young children are shorter and therefore less visible to drivers, and in areas where drivers frequently overshooting the stop bar demonstrate that there is a need. I note that a separation of approximately twelve feet was provided in the recent installation of the new traffic signal and crosswalk on Colesville Road (US 29) at Granville Drive/Hastings Drive, an appropriate design response to reflect the presence of higher speed traffic near the Capital Beltway exit ramp.

### **Median pedestrian refuges**

AASHTO recommends providing a median pedestrian refuge island on multi-lane roads where the crossing distance is greater than 60 feet. Refuge islands are highly desirable for midblock pedestrian crossings on roads with four or more travel lanes, especially where speed limits are 35 mph or greater and/or where annual average daily traffic (AADT) is 9,000 or higher. They are also a treatment option for uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on 3-lane or 2-lane roads that have high vehicle speeds or volumes. When installed at a midblock crossing, the island should be supplemented with a marked high-visibility crosswalk.

### **Pedestrian Level of Comfort (PLOC)**

The discussion of PLOC is somewhat confusing because in the Plan four potential scores are used but the PLOC methodology in the appendix uses six. Recommendation B-1d states that new and reconstructed sidewalks should achieve at least a "somewhat comfortable" rating, which is a pretty mediocre goal. Recommendation B-1d should be reworded to require that new and reconstructed sidewalks achieve at least a "comfortable" rating as part of capital improvement and private development projects (using the six-level methodology.)

### **Roadway Resurfacing**

**All pavement resurfacing projects should ensure that ADA requirements are met within their project limits and opportunities for increasing pedestrian safety should be pursued. In**

1993, the US District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania found in *Kinney v. Yerusalim* that agencies are required bring roads up to ADA standards when they are being repaved. I had a discussion with SHA sometime in the late 90s concerning this case but never got a straight answer on this as to whether they agreed that they were required to follow this decision. At the time, the intersection of 16th and E-W Hwy was being upgraded but the non-ADA-compliant SE corner, which requires users to go up or down steps to get to the roadway, was not fixed because of the expense to fix the problem. Current guidance from USDOJ and FHWA is essentially the same as what the court required in 1993.

Even though the intersection of 16th and E-W Hwy has been recently repaved and restriped, the stairs remain. The new intersection striping was redone about three times; the final striping reduced the roadway width of 16th St, but pedestrian refuges were not constructed on the north and west legs even though they could easily have been accomplished with minimal expense, particularly on the north leg which has much higher pedestrian traffic. These refuges should be pursued to benefit the hundreds of pedestrians that use this intersection daily going between the Silver Spring Metro Station and the apartment complexes on all four corners of this intersection.

**Provide additional traffic control devices where needed to ensure the effectiveness of No Right Turn on Red restrictions and reduce the need for enforcement.** The signalization of right-turning northbound traffic from Georgia Avenue to Colesville Road has been in place for years but is frequently violated, sometimes by multiple vehicles at a time and sometimes even by drivers turning from the second lane of Georgia Avenue to get around cars that are appropriately stopped by a red turn arrow. The installation of a near-side turn arrow would likely be beneficial in getting more drivers to stop but the construction of a traffic island to separate right-turn traffic should also be considered. There are too many pedestrians crossing at this intersection that are exposed to drivers operating illegally and unsafely.

#### **Other design issues**

One item that is associated with the state's control of highways is that their standard curb height is 8" whereas Montgomery County's is 6". The higher curb height requires longer handicap ramps and therefore has a greater likelihood of impinging on the grades of adjacent sidewalks.

**Where state roads pass through CBDs and other areas with large groups of pedestrians, a 6" curb height should be used.** This conversation with MSHA needed to make this change does not have to wait for a transfer of control.

Pedestrian safety should be evaluated at all unsignalized intersections and bus stops on arterial highways and greater and additional signalized intersections provided as needed. Crossings should be identified for every bus stop and ensure that all appropriate safety measures are in place (crosswalk striping, lighting, handicap ramps, sufficient sight distance & appropriate operating speeds.)

Sidewalks should be built on the intersecting streets of all arterials and roads of a higher classification. Drivers leaving these major roadways often continue to drive at a higher than appropriate speed that is incompatible with pedestrians walking in the roadway.

B-3a: The graphic shown is useful but should be modified to show one of the ramps occurring on a curved sidewalk section to forestall any misunderstanding that these ramps can only be constructed on a straight section of curb. Traffic engineers at MCDOT used to operate under this misunderstanding with the result being that only single ramps were built at the apex of intersection corners for many years. Using a more adaptable illustration would help to avoid future misunderstandings. This illustration should also show one side having both a sidewalk and a landscape panel since the wide sidewalk from curb to property line generally only occurs in business districts.

## OPERATIONS

### Traffic Signal Operation

#### Which is our true priority, safety or reducing congestion?

A longtime feature of the annual Road Show to discuss the proposed State budget has been to begin the discussion on transportation by saying that safety is our highest priority, and then everyone mostly talks about new roadway capacity projects. **If pedestrian safety is the highest County priority, traffic signalization phasing and timing decisions should be made on that basis.**

DC's operation of 16th Street handles large rush hour traffic flows into and out of the District but still manages to have good pedestrian crossing times, and in the off-peak the traffic signal system is timed to keep speeds low. While Montgomery County for the most part does not have a grid street network like the District does, MCDOT should investigate the potential for controlling speeding problems by adjusting traffic signal cycles.

B-2a: Major trail crossings should also be added to the list of locations needing automatic traffic signal recall as they most often have a high number of users.

P-2e: I had a discussion years ago with MCDOT staff about the need to get longer crossing times in the Silver Spring CBD during the noontime lunch rush. Their answer was that longer times couldn't be provided because the cycle length was shorter than it was during the AM and PM peak periods. The longer peak cycles were designed to maximize vehicle throughput during the peak but drivers would not want to wait longer at a red light during the off-peak, a very car-centric decision; this should be reevaluated and longer ped times provided when pedestrian traffic is high and vehicular traffic less. **The Plan's recommendations for more pedestrian crossing time but not increasing traffic signal cycle lengths need to be reconciled.**

**Evaluate traffic signals in CBDs to optimize their operation and provide additional pedestrian crossing time where possible.** Three examples of suboptimal operation in the Silver Spring CBD that would benefit from better timing or phasing:

- At the intersection of Georgia Avenue and Cameron Street, southbound traffic receives a red signal so that northbound traffic may continue but there are frequent periods when there is no northbound traffic in sight down to Colesville Road, prompting some pedestrians to cross against the signal.

- The intersection of Colesville Road/Georgia Avenue is an important intersection that poses pedestrian safety challenges but two potential opportunities: when the DON'T WALK comes on for the south leg of Georgia to accommodate the left turn from southbound Colesville, the DON'T WALK comes on for the north leg of Georgia too, unnecessarily cutting the walk short when there's no conflict. Also, when the green and arrow comes on for northbound Georgia, traffic is held at the ped crossing at Ellsworth leaving a longish gap when no traffic is turning right onto Colesville. The arrow turns red just as the held traffic reaches the intersection, frustrating most drivers but encouraging some to just run the light and endanger pedestrians.
- The intersection of Fenton Street and Ellsworth Drive has a protected phase to allow pedestrians to cross Fenton Street, but the DON'T WALK on Ellsworth stays on even though there's no conflict. The operation should be changed to a protected all-walk. Also at this intersection, despite the permanent closure of Ellsworth between Fenton and Georgia, the DON'T WALK signal still operates when the other segment of Ellsworth has a green signal; the ped heads on the non-operational segment should be removed or covered. The DON'T WALK phase is sensibly ignored by adults but the message given to children that it's okay to ignore the signal sometimes is not one that encourages safe behavior.

**Consider creating a database of the pedestrian timings at each intersection including what walking speed the crossing time was based on.**

**Where accommodating pedestrian volumes adversely affects traffic operations or provides a less-than-desirable pedestrian accommodation, an assessment should be made of adjacent unsignalized intersections to see whether providing an additional signalized crossing for pedestrians would alleviate the problem.** Example: The crossing of Georgia Avenue (US29) at East-West Hwy (MD410) in front of Montgomery College is a five-legged intersections that often doesn't work well for pedestrians or drivers. Two intersections just south of this location, King Street and Jesup Blair Drive, would provide much safer pedestrian crossing opportunities if they were signalized and would improve access to the college and Jesup Blair Park, in addition to removing many potential conflicts at E-W Hwy.

### **Permits and Franchises**

We should ensure that permitted uses don't degrade the sidewalk, such as outdoor seating, entrance structures, ropes/railings, and scooter and bike parking. For example, while most of the Covid-era outdoor seating has been removed in Silver Spring, the sidewalk is still constricted by permanent or semi-permanent shelters at restaurant and club entrances, sometimes with ropes/railings beyond that shelter, reducing the usable width of the sidewalk. Scooters being left scattered on the sidewalk pose a frequent tripping hazard as well as an obstacle for those with handicaps. Consideration should be given to empowering County Parking Enforcement personnel to give appropriate tickets to property owners and scooter companies to reduce these nuisances.

Where new homes are built on already platted lots, including those where an older home is demolished, and where existing homes are undergoing a significant renovation, the building



permit should require that a sidewalk be built to current standards along the street frontage in all areas where the zoning supports this construction.

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### **Maintenance**

Sidewalks should be checked every two years to ensure that adjacent landscaping has not encroached on sidewalks and paths. Where encroachments occur, adjacent property owners should be notified that vegetation should be removed within two feet of the sidewalk or path.

Park trails have become increasingly subject sediment and debris washed up on the pavement from more frequent and severe storms. This sediment and debris is often swept to the lower side of the trail, resulting in ponding on the trail that becomes an obstacle for users, often for days after the storm. Park maintenance policies should be changed to ensure that sediment and debris is moved to a location that maintains positive drainage for the trail.

EA-6c: Bring park trails up to ADA standards and ensure adequate temporary accommodation during repairs. While there is likely a problem with bringing some of the existing local connections to park trails up to ADA standards, the main paved trails should be accessible to all at a minimum. As one example of an existing problem, Sligo Creek Trail between Colesville Road and the Beltway has substandard cross-slopes that do not meet ADA standards and makes its use difficult for people with mobility problems even though it is otherwise a heavily used downcounty facility.

MA-4: Revise snowplowing policies to ensure that pedestrian crossings and transit stops are kept clear of snow. While roads are plowed in the order of their importance, the area in front of the curb radius at intersections is often left unplowed, making crossings difficult and potentially unsafe for pedestrians, particularly those without the physical agility to climb over mounds of snow, some of which last for days during which they may turn into a block of ice.

MA-2d: I agree that the County should take on the responsibility for clearing snow on the major transit corridors. This is most needed where sidewalks are directly adjacent to curbs since the snow plowed from the roadway now ends up on the sidewalk where it become the responsibility of the adjacent property owner to remove it, so rather than remove the snow from a five-foot width of sidewalk they now have to do that plus remove the snow from up to three lanes of traffic.

### **Maintenance of Traffic During Construction**

Ensure that approved maintenance of traffic plans in regard to pedestrian accommodation during construction are followed but also improved. The MCDOT division chief in charge of design should be required to sign off on all diversions of pedestrians during construction, as well as diversions from ADA Best Practices and diversions from county roadway standards. Detailed reasons should be included with the package submitted for sign-off.

As an example of the need for temporary ADA-accessible accommodation for park facilities, the Sligo Creek Trail bridge at Garland Avenue was closed to trail traffic for several months last year. While there were signs on the bridge saying it was closed, there was no advance notice of

the closure, which created a big potential problem for mobility-impaired people approaching from the south, and there was no alternative accommodation.

Violations of approved plans are rampant with unexpected sidewalk closures, lack of handicapped access, and other unsafe conditions; these conditions are easily seen as part of the construction at the Planning Department's former headquarters at 8787 Georgia Avenue and the storage area allowed in the Spring Street median drastically reduces the sight distance of pedestrians approaching the marked crosswalk at Woodland Drive. All worksites should be required to post a contact name and number at the Department of Permitting Services along with a link to the approved traffic plan.

In addition to ensuring that the contractor doesn't violate the approved plan, more care needs to be taken in the approval of the plan itself. For example, the restarted Purple Line work has been active on Bonifant Street for many months with the segment west of Georgia Avenue completely closed to traffic and the segment east of Georgia Avenue restricted to eastbound traffic only. Yet the pedestrian signals to cross Bonifant at Georgia have not been modified at all, forcing pedestrians to wait unnecessarily or encourage them to violate the DON'T WALK because there is no longer conflicting Bonifant Street traffic.

### **Enforcement**

More automated enforcement is needed, particularly with red-light-running where there are higher numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists. **Red light cameras should be installed at all major trail crossings at signalized intersections.**

But automated enforcement should augment rather than replace in-person enforcement. Since cameras to enforce speeding violations come with a 12 mph "grace" allowance before a ticket is given, reliance on cameras has likely adversely affected driver culture since speeding within this allowance is seen as being able to be done with impunity, making a big difference in pedestrian safety. A pedestrian who is hit by a vehicle going at the speed limit of 30 mph has approximately a 40% chance of being killed whereas a vehicle going 42 mph (12 mph over the limit) has an 80% chance of being killed. Supplementary in-person police enforcement is needed to reinforce the posted speed limit. Other methods of improving the usefulness of cameras should be considered such as keeping a log of ALL speeding violations and having MCPD contact the worst repeat offenders.

The recent bill to prohibit stops of drivers by police for "minor" infractions is generally a good idea, but the question of when such infractions should be addressed needs to be answered. For example, the bill would prohibit stops for window tinting but often tinting can be so dark as to prevent anyone outside from seeing who is in the car and whether the driver is paying attention to the road in front of them. This lack of visibility presents a problem for pedestrians trying to meet the eyes of the driver, as they should do when crossing in front of a car. To resolve this problem, as well as to avoid the danger to a policeman approaching a stopped car, **Montgomery County should consider enlisting parking enforcement personnel to ticket obvious window tinting violations when a vehicle is parked, avoiding confrontation.**

Periodically, police will have a special enforcement action (Street Smart) intended to move the needle on pedestrian safety. This is inadequate. The police department needs to have a force

dedicated to pedestrian and traffic safety so that its sole responsibility is to keep the county on target for VisionZero. In addition to drivers' obvious disregard for keeping crosswalks clear and safe is their disregard for the law prohibiting the use of handheld cellphones, with the result that their inattentiveness puts others in danger, unprotected pedestrians most of all. The assessment of the adequacy of police enforcement of pedestrian safety needs to be focused on the reduction of pedestrian collisions and fatalities not on tickets given or hours spent on enforcement; the latter shows only the level of effort not the level of success.

If VisionZero is going to be successful, it's not enough to make the policy and design changes recommended in the draft Pedestrian Master Plan, the County needs to take a position of Zero Tolerance of the many daily incursions on pedestrian space and safety. Police need to begin to ticket drivers for their not stopping at the stop bar and partially or completely blocking the crosswalk. The latter forces pedestrians to uneasily use the sliver of crosswalk that may remain while walking mere inches from the bumper of a car whose driver may inattentively release his foot off the brake or forces them to walk in the roadway beyond the crosswalk to close for comfort to running traffic on the intersecting street.

### **PROGRAMMING**

The cost to pedestrians of not creating a much safer environment will be obvious in the number of pedestrian-related crashes, injuries and fatalities, but it also needs to be obvious to the agencies and department heads who are most directly responsible for success, the MC Police Department and the MC Department of Transportation. The proportion of these agencies' budgets allocated to pedestrian safety needs to increase every year that Vision Zero goals are not met. Continued failure must result in a change of leadership of these departments. The cost of failure should not continue to be borne solely by pedestrians.

---

Email

# Fw: Notice of Public Heari...

Owner

 MCP...



Email

From

 Ria Malinak

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Fw: Notice of Public Hearing: Pedestrian Master Plan

Date Sent

Date Received

2/14/2023 9:26 AM

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

I watch with interest as the county works to make our county more pedestrian-friendly. A walking/biking path along Falls Road has been in the proposed phase since 2004 when I purchased my home. Here we are in 2023, and it is still just a plan without any funding. None of the people who live along Falls Road north of the Potomac Village (our shopping area) are able to walk to/from our shopping area: Falls Road lacks a shoulder, the yards slope down onto the road, traffic volume makes it difficult to cross to the other side where walking would be safer.

Meanwhile those who live East, West or South of Potomac Village (with much less residential density) were gifted a wide walking/biking path years ago. Now as we compete for funds with the entire county, we can be assured to never have our walking path built.

Please move the Falls Road walking path project up in the priority list. We have been waiting for 19 years.

**Ria Malinak**

240-605-9642 cell

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

To: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>

Sent: Monday, February 13, 2023 at 12:04:31 PM EST

Subject: Notice of Public Hearing: Pedestrian Master Plan

Good morning,

# Montgomery County Planning Board

# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

**Name of Plan: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing Draft**

**Date: March 23, 2023, 6:00pm**

On March 23, 2023, the Montgomery County Planning Board will conduct a public hearing on the Public Hearing Draft of the Pedestrian Master Plan. The public hearing will be conducted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor auditorium of the M-NCPPC Wheaton Headquarters Building, 2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, Maryland at 6 p.m. Public hearing participants will be able to attend in-person or virtually. Please visit <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/> for updates on the public hearing.

The Pedestrian Master Plan, developed by the Montgomery County Planning Department, is the first countywide plan in Montgomery County to make recommendations to improve the pedestrian experience in a holistic way. An important element in the county's 2017 Vision Zero Action Plan, 2021 Climate Action Plan, and Thrive Montgomery 2050, the recently adopted General Plan, the Pedestrian Master Plan documents the pedestrian experience in Montgomery County today and makes recommendations in line with national and international best practices to make walking safer, more enjoyable, and more accessible in the years ahead. The Public Hearing Draft Plan is available at [www.montgomeryplanning.org/walkinghere](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/walkinghere).

**Community members can provide written, video and audio testimony. Those wishing to testify at the public hearing, either in-person or virtually, are requested to sign up beginning a month prior to the hearing. To check the approximate hearing time, or to sign up to testify, go to <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/agendas/>. For questions regarding the hearing or to sign up to testify, please send an e-mail to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org) or call 301-495-4605.**

**Written comments must be submitted no later than 12 noon on Wednesday March 22, 2023 to be forwarded to the Planning Board in advance of the public hearing. Written testimony may be submitted to: Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board, 2425 Reedie Drive, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor, Wheaton, Maryland 20902; forwarded via email to [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org) or faxed to 301-495-1320.**

**The public hearing record will stay open until April 6, 2023 at 5 p.m., subject to Planning Board approval. Written comments received between now and the close of the record will be considered by the Planning Board as part of its review of the Public Hearing Draft Plan during its work sessions starting on or after April 13, 2023.**

**For more information about the Plan, please visit [www.montgomeryplanning.org/walkinghere](http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/walkinghere) or contact Eli Glazier at 301-495-4548 or [eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org). Thank you for your interest in Montgomery County's pedestrian-friendly future.**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the participation of individuals with disabilities in its programs and facilities. For support in using facilities, staff support or adaptive equipment, please contact the M-NCPPC Montgomery County Commissioners' Office, at least a week in advance of a meeting or event, at (301) 495-4605 or at [mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org). Maryland residents can also use the free *Maryland Relay Service* for assistance with calls to or from hearing or speech-impaired persons; for information, go to [www.mdrelay.org/](http://www.mdrelay.org/) or call (866) 269-9006.

*You are receiving this email because your address was submitted to a list of Home Owners Association and Civic Association email addresses for notification purposes.*



## Eli Glazier

Planner III

Countywide Planning and Policy Division

Montgomery County Planning Department

2425 Reedie Drive, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor | Wheaton, MD 20902

[Eli.Glazier@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:Eli.Glazier@montgomeryplanning.org)

o: 301.495.4548

### Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
<a href="#">image001.png</a>	10,663	
<a href="#">image002.png</a>	845	
<a href="#">image003.png</a>	942	
<a href="#">image004.png</a>	967	
<a href="#">image005.png</a>	827	
1 - 5 of 5 (0 selected)		Page 1



## Email

# Pedestrian issues

Owner

 MCP...



### Email

From

 Steve Warner

To

 <MCP-Chair MCP-Chair>;  MCP-Chair #;  MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Cc

Bcc

Subject

Pedestrian issues

Date Sent

Date Received

2/25/2023 9:32 AM

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



I am a homeowner off Georgia Avenue near Dale Drive as the traffic lights at both Seminary Road and Place are not sequence or times as the Seminary Road changes before Seminary Place as cars pour across on Red lights at Seminary Place as the state needs to correct it.

Not pedestrian friendly

Steve Warner

Silver Spring

### Attachments

File Name	File Size (Bytes)	
 There are no Attachments to show in this view. To get started, create one or more Attachments.		

0 - 0 of 0 (0 selected) Page 1



**Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1**

From: [Kelly Banuls](#)  
To: [MCP-Chair](#)  
Subject: Testimony for Planning Board  
Date: Monday, February 20, 2023 12:01:02 PM  
Attachments: [Persimmon Tree Petitions.pdf](#)

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

Dear Board Members,

I am writing as a follow up to my upcoming testimony on March 23rd. On behalf of our neighborhood, I am reaching out to formally request the installation of a cross walk on the corner of Caraway and Persimmon Tree Rd, in Cabin John, MD.

There is a school bus stop at this location with children and young adults crossing each morning and afternoon. Cars constantly speed up and down Persimmon Tree Rd, making this an unsafe situation for all.

We have spoken as a community, and this topic has been raised by neighbors over the past many years with absolutely no response. We have signed petitions within the community, please see the attached documentation. These petitions were collected and reflect the severity and need for a crosswalk at this location.

We understand that an investment is required for such improvements, but would like to make the Board aware that handicap accessible ramps already exist on both sides of the street, which we understand is one of the largest parts of the investment. We also understand that the Board is reviewing and considering some other critical pedestrian needs and believe that this is a small ask that could have a huge impact on the safety and well-being of the children throughout our community.

A speed study was conducted several years ago during Covid, when traffic was minimal and did not accurately reflect current speeds and patterns. We appreciate your time and support.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Kelly Banuls  
6613 Persimmon Tree Rd  
Cabin John, MD 20818

Attachment C: Complete Written Public Testimony  
Pedestrian Master Plan Work Session #1

From: [Robin Gaster](#)  
To: [Glazier, Eli](#)  
Subject: Trees  
Date: Thursday, March 9, 2023 3:11:51 PM

---

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

I walk a lot around DTSS, and the destruction of trees related to the purple line will make the walk along wayne ave - a major throughfare - pretty unpleasant in the summer. Trees make a difference to walking around here - and should be in the master plan.

thanks

Robin

---

Robin Gaster Ph.D (he/him)  
Nonresident Senior Fellow, [ITIF](#)  
Visiting Scholar, George Washington University  
Institute of Public Policy  
240-462-4462  
[LinkedIn](#)  
[Calendly](#)

## BYEFORDE-ROCK CREEK HIGHLANDS CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

April 6, 2023

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

Mr. Jeff Zyontz

Acting Chair Montgomery County Planning Board M-NCPPC

2425 Reddie Drive 14th Floor

Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Pedestrian Master Plan Public Hearing March 23, 2023 -- First Supplement to  
Written Testimony of the Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands Citizens Association

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of The Planning Board:

The Byeforde Rock Creek Highlands Citizens Association, Inc. (BRCH) hereby submits this first supplement (Supplement) to the written testimony submitted March 21, 2023 (BRCH Written Testimony) and oral testimony provided at the public hearing on the Pedestrian Master Plan on March 23, 2023 (3/23/23 Public Hearing).

Subsequent to the 3/23/23 Public Hearing, the BRCH received from Montgomery Parks (through Montgomery DOT) on April 5, 2023, a revised draft of a "Parks/DOT Beach Drive Culver Street Barrier Plan (Revised Culver Plan). A copy of the Revised Culver Plan is attached and this Supplement provides additional written comment/testimony from BRCH regarding the Revised Culver Plan as it pertains to the proposal in section B-4g of the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan to make (we presume holiday and weekend) closures of certain sections of Beach Drive permanent. It is our understanding that the Planning Board is scheduled to conduct a working session on the Pedestrian Plan with Parks (and hopefully DOT) on April 13, 2023. We believe it is incumbent upon the Planning Board to fully explore at that working session, in addition to the issues raised in our earlier written and oral testimony, the issues we raise below with respect to the Revised Culver Plan.

### MCParks Should be Required to Follow MCDOT Guidance for Traffic Abatement and Signage

As stated in the BRCH Written Testimony, on January 3, 2023, MCDOT submitted to MCParks a revised detour proposal to, among other things, address collateral traffic concerns on Culver Street when Beach Drive is closed on weekends and holidays. The revised detour proposal from MCDOT included a suggestion for barricades and "no through traffic" signage at Connecticut Avenue and Culver Street and the Cedar Lane and Delmont Street intersections. After meetings between MCParks and MCDOT regarding the revised detour plan, on April 5, 2023 MCParks provided MCDOT with, among other things, the MCParks Revised Culver Plan. Also on April 5, 2023, MCDOT provided the BRCH with a copy of the Revised Culver Plan.

MCDOT recommended that every Saturday (and holiday) morning MCParks place "Type 3" barricades with "no through traffic" signage at the Connecticut Avenue and Culver Street and the Cedar Lane and Delmont Street intersections and that the barricades be removed every Sunday (and holiday) evening. The Saturday morning and Sunday evening placement/removal would coincide with the lowering of gates closing beach drive to vehicular traffic. MCParks informed MCDOT and the revised Culver Plan reflects that MCParks did not want to install and remove barriers. Rather, MCParks has proposed "Triton style" barriers and that these barriers be placed at the recommended locations, 24 hours per day seven days per week. This is just one more example of MCParks refusing to follow the expert traffic related recommendations from MCDOT.

The 6/10 Mile Section of Beach Drive Between Connecticut Avenue and Cedar Lane Should Be Removed from the MC Parks Weekend/Holiday Closure Plan

If it is too burdensome for MCParks to place and remove barriers on Culver Street each time they raise or lower the gates on Beach Drive between Connecticut Avenue and Cedar Lane, there is an easy solution that has also been recommended by MCDOT and suggested in our BRCH Written Testimony. MCParks should be directed by the Planning Board to close Beach Drive only between Cedar Lane and Knowles Avenue. The 6/10 of a mile section of Beach Drive between Connecticut Avenue and Cedar Lane should be removed from the Beach Drive closure plan and remain open 24 hours a day/seven days a week (other than weather condition/safety related closures). As MCDOT has suggested to MCParks, leaving this .6 mile stretch of Beach Drive out of the closure plan would resolve most, if not all, of the neighborhood concerns raised regarding the proposal to close portions of Beach Drive every weekend and holiday. The BRCH agrees with MCDOT that keeping the section of Beach Drive that runs parallel to and the length of Culver Street between Connecticut Ave. and Cedar Lane) open 24/7 resolves the safety concerns we have raised with section B-4g of the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan.

As a Lesser Alternative, MCParks Should Be Directed to Place and Remove Barriers to Culver Street Every Saturday Morning and Sunday Evening

If for some reason the Planning Board does not instruct MCParks to only close Beach Drive between Cedar Lane and Knowles Avenue, then MCParks should be required to follow the other MCDOT guidance and install the barriers every Saturday (and holiday) morning and remove the barriers every Sunday (and holiday) evening. MCParks already has personnel who lower and raise the gates on beach Drive at these times and it should not be burdensome or cost prohibitive to incorporate the Culver Street barrier placement and removal into the MCParks weekend/holiday closure protocol. Permanent barrier placement creates some traffic concerns of their own and may not be acceptable to a majority of the BRCH residents. Moreover, permanent barrier placement at the entrances to Culver Street in BRCH would be an obstacle for Montgomery County school buses which use these same entrances to facilitate pick up and drop off of Montgomery County school students (empty MC school buses also use

Culver Street instead of Beach Drive or Saul Road and the BRCH will address this concern separately with MC Public Schools' administration). Placing the barriers on Culver Street only when Beach is closed would not interfere with MC Schools student busing operations.

### Conclusion

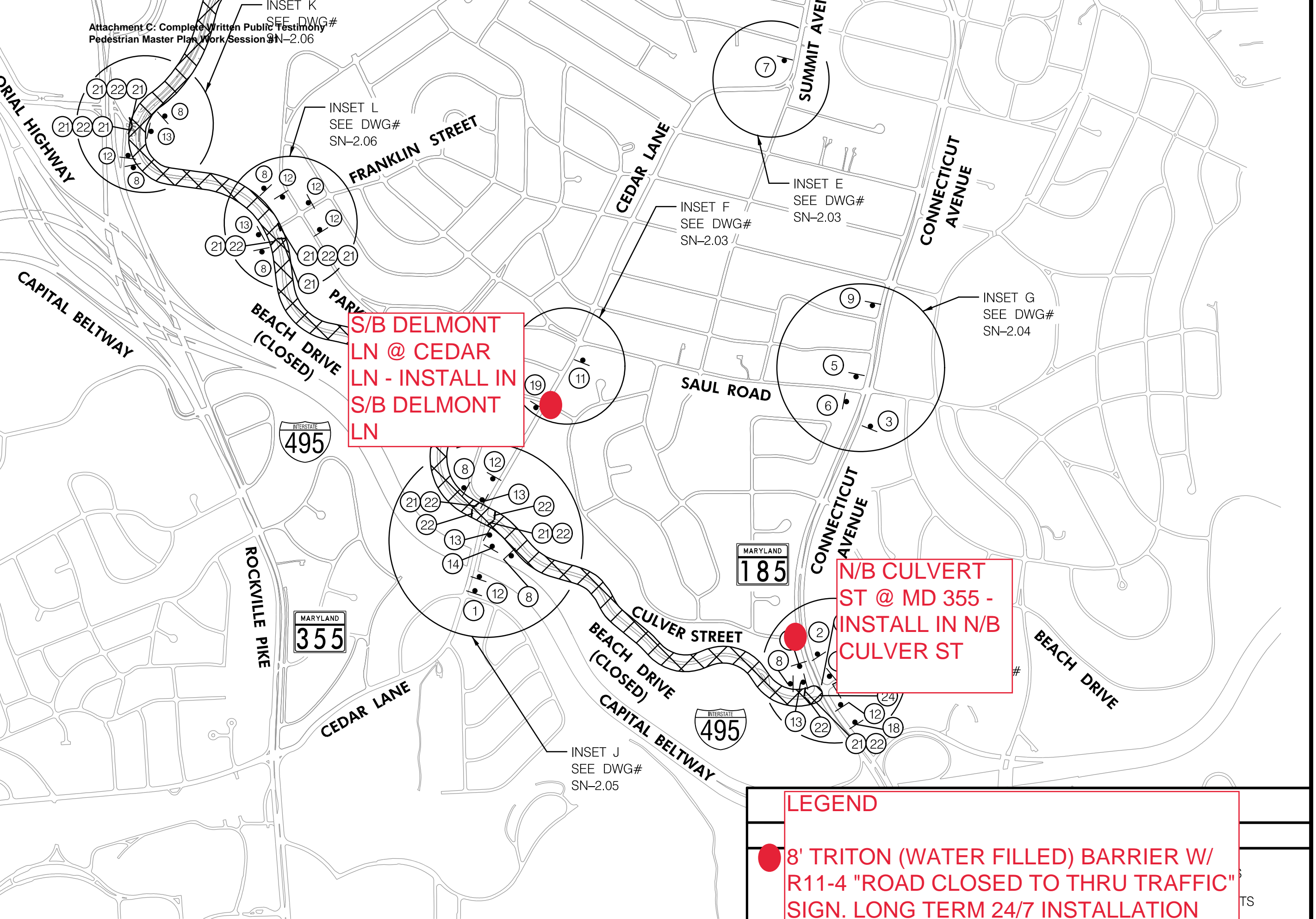
Based on the foregoing supplement, in addition to the requested relief set forth in the BRCH Written Testimony and included in the oral testimony at the 3/23/23 Public Hearing, the BRCH requests that Planning Board approval of section B-4g of the proposed Pedestrian Master Plan be contingent upon MCParks removing the .6 mile section of Beach Drive between Connecticut Avenue and Cedar Lane from the closure plan. Or, as a lesser alternative and at a minimum, that MCParks be required to follow MCDOT guidance and place and remove barriers at the entrances to Culver Street in BRCH at the beginning and conclusion of each Beach Drive weekend/holiday closure.

We appreciate your time and consideration.

Submitted by:

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**S/B DELMONT LN @ CEDAR LN - INSTALL IN S/B DELMONT LN**

**N/B CULVERT ST @ MD 355 - INSTALL IN N/B CULVERT ST**

**LEGEND**

● **8' TRITON (WATER FILLED) BARRIER W/ R11-4 "ROAD CLOSED TO THRU TRAFFIC" SIGN. LONG TERM 24/7 INSTALLATION**

REVIEW AND APPROVAL	
Project Manager	Date
Construction Manager	Date
Park Manager	Date

ISSUED FOR PROCUREMENT ON _____		
REVISIONS		
Rev. No.	Date	Description

# OPEN PARKWAYS SIGNING IMPROVEMENTS

## BEACH DRIVE CLOSURE & TRUCK RESTRICTIONS

DWG. #  
**KP-01**  
 SHT. # 02 of 13  
**PLAN SHEET**

Patricia M. Mulready, M.S.,M.Phil.

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Silver Spring, MD 20910

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April 6, 2023

ADDITIONAL WRITTEN COMMENTS FOR PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN (POST 3/23/23 HEARING)

The following are comments on the entire draft Plan, which I read in full. This includes issues I didn't have time to remark on during the 3/23/23 Public Hearing.

Again, my main concerns are there is NO MENTION OR RESPECT FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS OR PROPERTIES and the proposed DEVASTATION OF FORESTED PARKS and WETLANDS. Additional information to the points I made at the Hearing follow these general comments.

I am handicapped and may need to use a scooter or wheelchair in the next few years. However, I would NOT expect trees/plants to be cut down or bridges put in wetlands so I could access them. I have not seen in 6 years a single person walking on the sidewalks which caused >1 acre virgin forest dieback along Capitol View Ave and Stoneybrook.

Far more lives would be saved – as indicated in the Draft -- if the money was spent on:

- REPAIR ALREADY EXISTING SIDEWALKS

For example, I helped two blind people walk from the front of the former P&P Building to the auditorium entrance – couldn't believe how many hazards there were, including cracks that jutted up.

- SHORTEN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN CROSSWALKS (already in Plan)
- RECOGNIZE WHERE CROSSWALKS ARE REALLY NEEDED

I.e., connecting the bus stops on Connecticut Avenue in Kensington between Knowle's and Plyer's Mill Rd. Have at least 4 crosswalks at each corner instead of 3 (which adds significant time and distance to get across the street so people jaywalk).

- STUDY WHY CURBS LAUNCH CARS UP ONTO SIDEWALKS AND INTO BUILDINGS BEFORE BUILDING MORE SIDEWALKS ON NARROW STREETS

Several people have been killed or seriously injured in MoCo while walking on sidewalks because of this.

- INCREASED TRAFFIC CAMERAS AND RECORDATION TAXES ARE INAPPROPRIATE FUNDRAISERS

MoCo public school system is already planning on using Recordation Taxes to fund new schools and repair old ones. It's already very difficult to pay for closing costs on expensive homes here. People are opposed to traffic cameras as revenue generators – several lawsuits about this have forced MoCo to say such cameras are not used for such purposes – and prove it.



- REDESIGN THE CROSSWALKS WITH PLASTIC/METAL POST LANE MARKERS TO MAKE IT EASIER TO CROSS STREETS
- 2-1/2' SIDEWALKS ARE ON MANY STATE ROADS. IF CAN BE INSTALLED ON RT. 28, KNOWLE'S AVE, ETC., THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED ON HISTORIC, RURAL, ESTABLISHED NEIGHBORHOODS, ETC., ROADS
- THE MOST SUITABLE MATERIALS SHOULD BE USED FOR SIDEWALKS, AS MENTIONED BY ONE OF THE PEOPLE WHO TESTIFIED. THESE SHOULD USUALLY BE PERMEABLE TO ALLOW FOR APPROPRIATE WATER RETENTION IHN NEIGHBORHOODS

New materials are being constantly developed with amazing properties. Concrete is extremely unsustainable, especially it's impact on emissions, climate change, and increasing temperatures.

- HAZARDOUS BICYCLES AND MOTORIZED SCOOTERS

There is already a Bicycle Master Plan. I don't understand why they and motorized scooters and bicycles are included in a Pedestrian Master Plan and suggest the name of this document be changed to fully inform people that it isn't just about walking and moving around in slow motorized wheelchairs.

As I mentioned at the Hearing -- I've experienced and seen far more close calls between pedestrians and people riding bicycles, skateboards, and scooters than cars.

- NO MENTION OR RESPECT FOR HISTORIC DISTRICTS OR PROPERTIES

Historic districts and buildings show what was and should remain as they are, especially when there are walkable alternate routes close by. This is especially true when 100+ year old trees will be killed in order to put in sidewalks – removing green canopy and water retention cooling the black paved roads, homeowners' properties, and surrounding areas. Some of these areas include protected wildlife, such as nesting pileated woodpeckers which have longstanding nests. Temperatures around our neighborhood are typically 15° less than surroundings so this isn't theoretical. This also pertains to rural areas.

German arborists' research has shown that killing one tree causes "forest dieback" – the other trees around it also die. This is shown in what was called "highly successful sidewalk project" by MoCo's head of sidewalks. This was >1 acre of virgin woods – including >3' diameter old growth trees -- and now it's gone for sidewalks almost no one uses.

Historic districts should generally not have sidewalks put in – they are indicators of what was. Many houses don't have any RoWs or <15' (see photo). But if they are they should be treated equally. Poorer, diverse ones shouldn't be punished with ADA impermeable sidewalks which actually destroy >15' while areas like Brookeville Rd in Chevy Chase have 2-1/2' permeable ones which don't kill trees and maintain the look of the neighborhood. Brookeville did sidewalks correctly and other historic districts should be allowed to do the same (especially when no RoW in front of houses).

The County's engineer spoke at a CVPCA meeting and said, "You can have trees or you can have sidewalks but you can't have both." He and his team also said any damage to property or legally

required “improvements” such as retaining walls must be paid for by the homeowners. So the idea is you come to our homes, kill all our landscaping and 100+ year old trees that we've spent thousands of dollars to maintain, rip up our driveways, and then install retaining walls and/or water retention amenities we don't want – AND EXPECT US TO PAY FOR IT!!! Then shovel snow for neighbors who don't use the sidewalks they said they wanted!!!

The idea of putting lit ADA impermeable sidewalks onto existing paths will cause homeowners to block the paths. This happened in CVP... ironically people who wanted yard destroying sidewalks along CVA didn't want paved paths in their backyards...

Item B5-a&b: who is going to pay for lighting on private property plus mitigate environmental impacts?

As was done on Knowle's Ave in Garrett Park – cutting down 2-3' diameter trees and replacing them with saplings and fake historic street lights doesn't provide shade for decades.

- DEVASTATION OF FORESTED PARK LANDS

Such sidewalks and bridges into the back areas of parks, forested areas, and wetlands defeats the purposes of those areas which include protection of wildlife, etc. Lighting hurts biological clocks for animals and plants.

- WALKING TO SCHOOL

On a different subject, which is walking 1-2 miles to school each way>> ideally students would walk together but bullied and unpopular kids – or those from families parents don't approve of – won't be included. This could be dangerous for any student but for female students they are likely to be harassed. I have female friends from 14 to mid-80s and all get verbal sexual comments yelled at them and many of us are physically assaulted when bumped into, etc. Also, you are asking pre-teen and teenage girls to walk this distance when they are menstruating. For some this may not be a problem but for many it could be horrible. And remember that not all parents allow daughters to use Western sanitary products.

- SMALLER SCHOOLS WITHOUT HUGE FOOTPRINTS

Good idea.

In conclusion, I recognize the hard work which went into the Draft Pedestrian Master Plan. However, what might be appropriate for new development areas is not necessarily so for historic districts and buildings and established neighborhoods. There are areas in North Potomac where entire neighborhoods paid for beautiful cherry trees which line the streets. Other neighborhoods are growing bee gardens along their streets. Should these be killed off when there are no or very few accidents along those roads? In my opinion your efforts should be focused on the main roads where multiple people have been killed, such as Georgia Ave.

Thank you.