

From: [Anne-Marie Fendrick](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Love 2 lanes on Little Falls!
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:00:43 PM

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

Thank you, Parks Department and MCDOT for moving Little Falls Parkway from 4 lanes to 2.

We are long-time Kenwood residents and live on one of the blocks most affected by cut-through traffic between Little Falls and River Road, and have not seen any increase in traffic with this lane reduction. (This may need to be revisited once Westbard/Ridgefield Road reopens.)

The Crescent Trail is a victim of its huge popularity, and is not safe for children biking, parents with strollers, or anyone else moving erratically or slowly. The Little Falls park, especially if extended south to Dorset, would provide kids and teenagers a safe parallel route to get to Bethesda.

We hope you keep Little Falls two lanes, and extend it to Dorset.

Thank you,
Anne-Marie Fendrick

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Leanne Tobias](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony on Little Falls Parkway from Leanne Tobias Representing Springfield Civic Association
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:01:51 PM
Attachments: [LFP Written Testimony.docx](#)
[6 Neighborhoods - LFP Impact Survey \(FINAL - Data as of Feb 28 2023\).pdf](#)
[Springfield - LFP Impact Survey - All Responses \(FINAL - Data as of Feb 28 2023\).pdf](#)
[Springfield - LFP Impact Survey - Q5 and Q7 Other Specify \(FINAL - Data as of Feb 28 2023\).pdf](#)
[LFP Short Testimony.docx](#)

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

Chair Zyontz and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

Leanne Tobias, Zoning Officer and Board Member, will represent the Springfield Civic Association at the March 30 hearing on Little Falls Parkway.

As requested, for delivery by 12 noon on March 29, attached are:

- 1)Written Testimony and Community Survey Attachments (8 minute version)
- 2)Oral Summary (3 minute version)

I will deliver the testimony that fits the time that I am allotted on March 30.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Planning Board.

Leanne Tobias
202-355-5270
leanne.tobias@malachitellc.com

Attachments:

**LEANNE TOBIAS
ZONING OFFICER & BOARD MEMBER
SPRINGFIELD BETHESDA CIVIC ASSOCIATION
LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY
WRITTEN TESTIMONY
to the
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD
March 30, 2023**

Little Falls Parkway: Against No-Median Configuration and Permanent Lane Closures

This written testimony is submitted by Leanne Tobias, Zoning Officer and Board Member of the Springfield Civic Association (SCA). SCA represents over 650 families in the Springfield neighborhood of southwest Bethesda. We urge the Planning Board to defeat the proposal reducing Little Falls Parkway (LFP) to 2 opposing lanes with no median.

LFP is Springfield's major connection to downtown Bethesda. We rely on LFP to reach work, school, health care, business services and recreation.

For safety and mobility, we ask that LFP be immediately restored to 2 lanes with a central median. Longer-term, we support reinstating 4 lanes on LFP between Hillandale Road and Dorset Avenue — 2 in each direction with a central median.

Community Opinion. Our position on LFP is based on a new community survey (attached) — unlike the approach of Montgomery Parks, which has yet to poll or systematically consult affected neighborhoods. Broad consultation with residents is needed to restore confidence in Montgomery County's planning process. We hope that the Planning Board will carefully consider this survey as a quantitative reflection of public opinion. Going forward, we hope that the Planning Board extends the use of surveys and focus groups to other land use decisions.

We also refer the Planning Board to the Change.org petition prepared by the Little Falls Parkway Neighborhood Coalition, <https://www.change.org/p/let-s-make-little-falls-parkway-safe-again>, which had attracted over 3,200 signatures as this testimony was being submitted at on March 29.

Community Survey. With respect to the community survey, respondents are 631 residents of 6 neighborhoods surrounding LFP, including Springfield. At the 90% confidence level, combined results for all 6 neighborhoods are accurate within +/- 3 percentage points; results for Springfield are accurate within +/- 8 percentage points.

As shown below, approximately 80% of respondents in Springfield and in all 6 neighborhoods oppose the LFP configuration and permanent lane closures; some 84% believe that

Montgomery Parks has not adequately consulted residents. Under 20% support the proposed linear park.

	Springfield (N=104)	6 Neighborhoods (N=631)
Lane closures:		
Bad idea	80.8%	79.2%
Insufficient consultation by Parks	84.2%	83.9%
Favor Linear Park	16.5%	17.9%

SCA Concerns on LFP. SCA has a number of significant concerns with the proposed reconfiguration and downsizing of LFP. Our concerns are enumerated below.

Safety. Springfield residents love parks and open space, but public safety comes first. The current configuration of Little Falls Parkway (2 opposing lanes, no median) is unsafe:

•There is nowhere for drivers and bicyclists to pull over for emergency vehicles.

According to Assistant Chief Adam Jones of Montgomery County Fire and Rescue, this may cause emergency vehicles to detour to neighborhood streets in peak hours. See the letter to the Planning Board from the head injury victim whose ambulance was delayed multiple times on LFP when motorists were unable to pull over.

•The new configuration makes LFP more difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross safely, due to blind spots created by vehicles of different heights. Fire Chief Jones reports that “constantly changing blind spots” affect “the motorists, the cyclists, and the pedestrian traffic equally. The intermittent line of sight combined with the opposing vehicle traffic can be problematic.” Videos submitted to the Planning Board substantiate this.

•The new configuration is more difficult for drivers to navigate safely, especially at night and in poor weather. We ask the Planning Board to review the many letters from residents reporting near collisions under the current road pattern.

Mobility. We urge the Planning Board to require a more thorough simulation of future traffic volumes and delays for LFP and surrounding roads. **The current Parks analysis relies heavily on pandemic-era traffic data and addresses neither post-pandemic traffic patterns nor the impact of the 8.5 million square feet of nearby development underway or already zoned. In addition, the Parks analysis shared with the public on February 15 appears inconsistent with State Highway Administration data for LFP, and seems to substantially overstate the decline in traffic volumes.**

Maintaining 4 lanes on LFP is crucial because 8.5 million square feet of development are underway or zoned in the immediate vicinity.

The more than 5.5 million square feet approved and under development, include:

- 3.9 million square feet in downtown Bethesda.
- Over a million square feet in Friendship Heights; and
- 650,000 square feet at the Westbard project in our Springfield community.

Approximately 3 million additional square feet are zoned, including:

- 2.1 million square in downtown Bethesda.
- ~800,000 square feet at Westbard, on the Bowlmor and Residences at Capital Crescent Trail sites.

In addition, projects to be built in the newly-designated Thrive 2050 Growth Corridor on lower River Road will add to dense development in the immediate area.

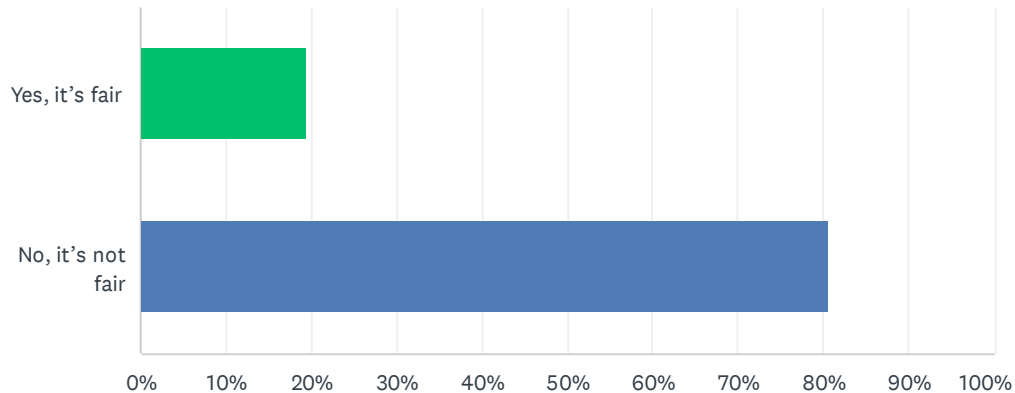
Even with limitations on parking ratios, these density increases will add thousands of vehicles to our roads. Cutting LFP from 4 to 2 lanes under these conditions will:

- Increase congestion on major arteries**, including Wisconsin Avenue, River Road, Massachusetts Avenue, Bradley Boulevard and Goldsboro Road.
- Encourage area consumers to shop in DC, avoiding businesses in Bethesda.**
- Increase cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods.**

Budget Concerns. The Springfield community is grateful for every dollar spent on public parks. That said, **the funds for the proposed linear park would be better spent on other important recreational priorities, including the creation of the Willett Branch Greenway in Westbard, a centerpiece of the 2016 sector plan, widening and maintaining the Capital Crescent Trail and maintaining Little Falls Trail.** Implementing these projects will benefit bicyclists, walkers and families more than the creation of a new linear park of under 1.5 acres.

Q1 Do you think it's fair that The Montgomery County Parks Department made the decision to move forward with their Linear Park plan without adequate input from the very neighborhoods most affected by this decision?

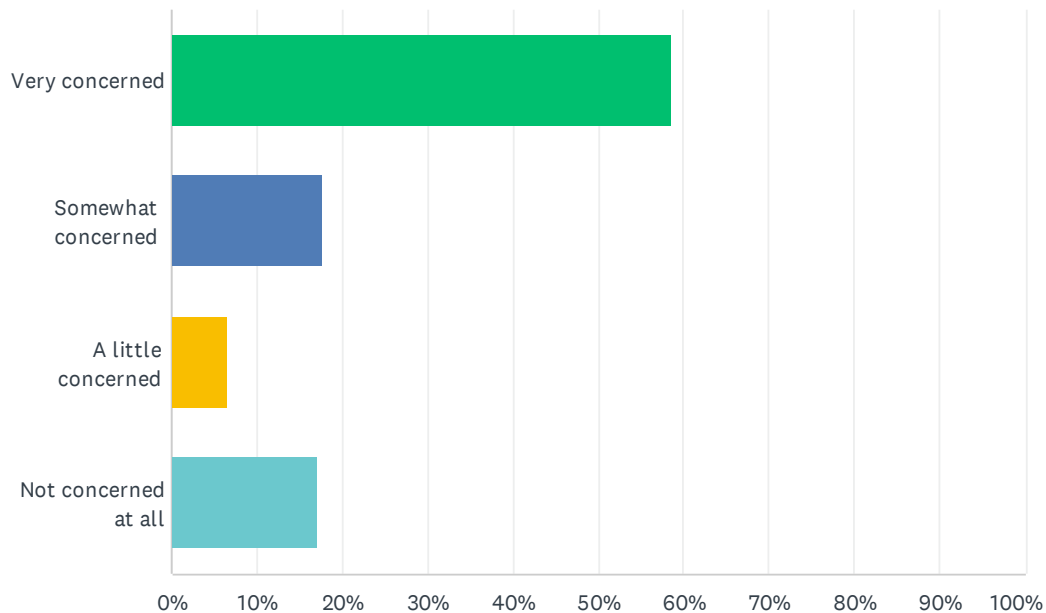
Answered: 622 Skipped: 9



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes, it's fair		19.45%	121
No, it's not fair		80.55%	501
TOTAL			622

Q2 If Montgomery Parks' current plan comes to fruition, how concerned are you about its effect on you and your family, including pedestrian safety or traffic?

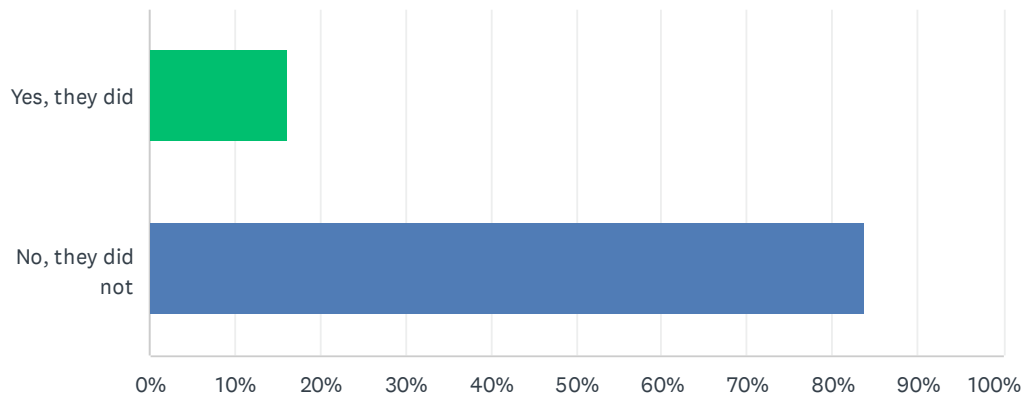
Answered: 629 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very concerned	58.66%	369
Somewhat concerned	17.65%	111
A little concerned	6.68%	42
Not concerned at all	17.01%	107
TOTAL		629

Q3 Do you think Montgomery Parks took the proper and necessary community consensus-building steps to understand residents' thoughts and needs?

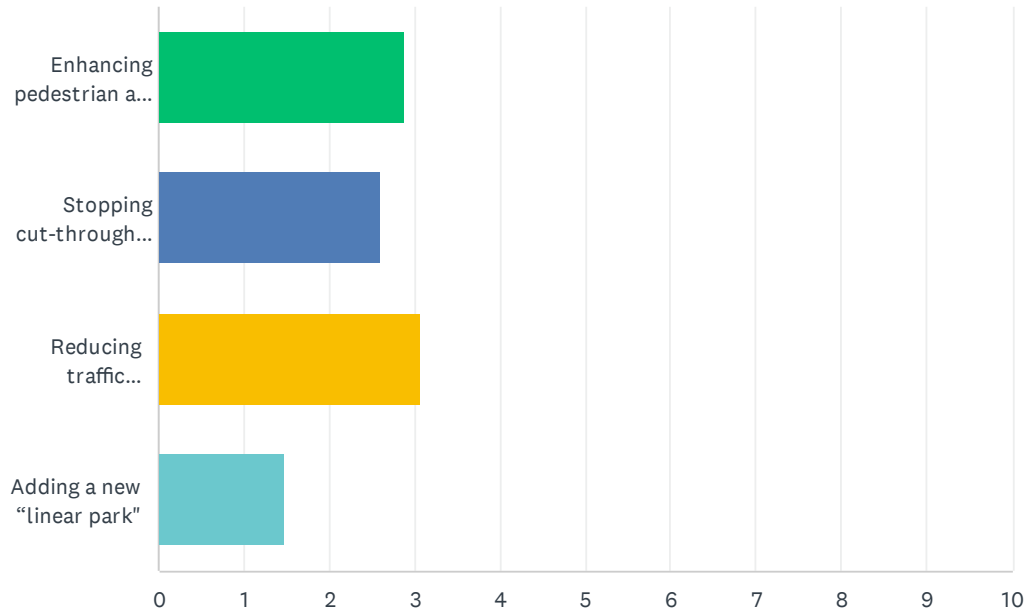
Answered: 620 Skipped: 11



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, they did	16.13%	100
No, they did not	83.87%	520
TOTAL		620

Q4 Given what you know about this situation, please rank the following in order of importance to you. (1=Most Important; 4=Least Important)

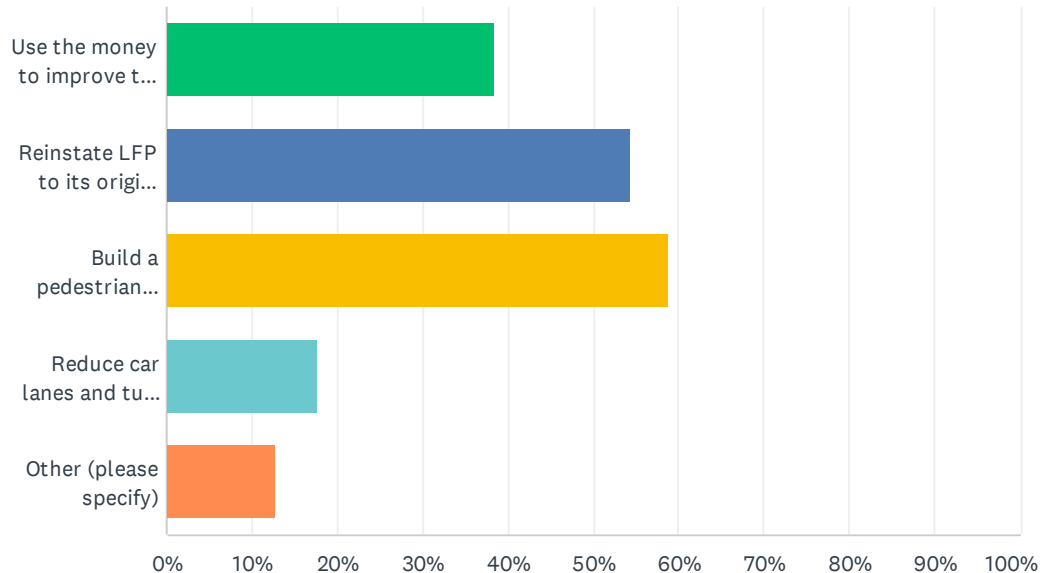
Answered: 622 Skipped: 9



	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Enhancing pedestrian and bicyclist safety	31.67% 190	27.67% 166	37.50% 225	3.17% 19	600	2.88
Stopping cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods	17.30% 105	37.40% 227	33.77% 205	11.53% 70	607	2.60
Reducing traffic congestion	46.77% 282	23.71% 143	18.57% 112	10.95% 66	603	3.06
Adding a new "linear park"	6.37% 39	10.13% 62	8.99% 55	74.51% 456	612	1.48

Q5 In your opinion, which option(s) below is(are) the best plan to improve Little Falls Parkway ("LFP")? (Please select any or all that apply.)

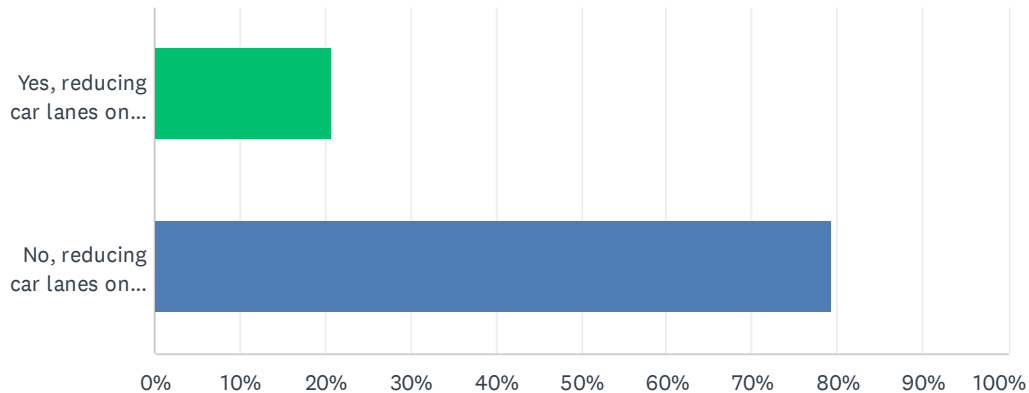
Answered: 630 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Use the money to improve the Capital Crescent Trail	38.41%	242
Reinstate LFP to its original (pre-Covid) four-lane condition	54.29%	342
Build a pedestrian bridge over LFP where the Capital Crescent Trail intersects the LFP and restore the road to four lanes	58.89%	371
Reduce car lanes and turn the western lanes into a "linear park" (the current plan pursued by Montgomery Parks)	17.78%	112
Other (please specify)	12.70%	80
Total Respondents: 630		

Q6 Given we will have a significant increase in the number of residential dwellings in Westbard and in downtown Bethesda (and resulting major traffic increase), do you think reducing Little Falls Parkway's number of car lanes was a sound planning decision?

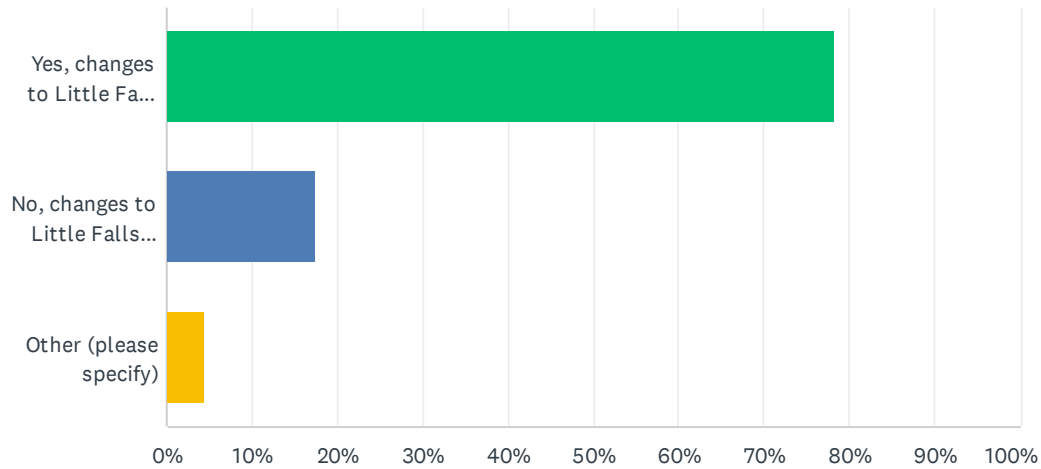
Answered: 626 Skipped: 5



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, reducing car lanes on LFP is a good plan	20.77%	130
No, reducing car lanes on LFP is a bad idea	79.23%	496
TOTAL		626

Q7 Would you be in favor of delaying Montgomery Parks' planned changes to LFP pending further studies and a formal Planning Board hearing to get community input on the record?

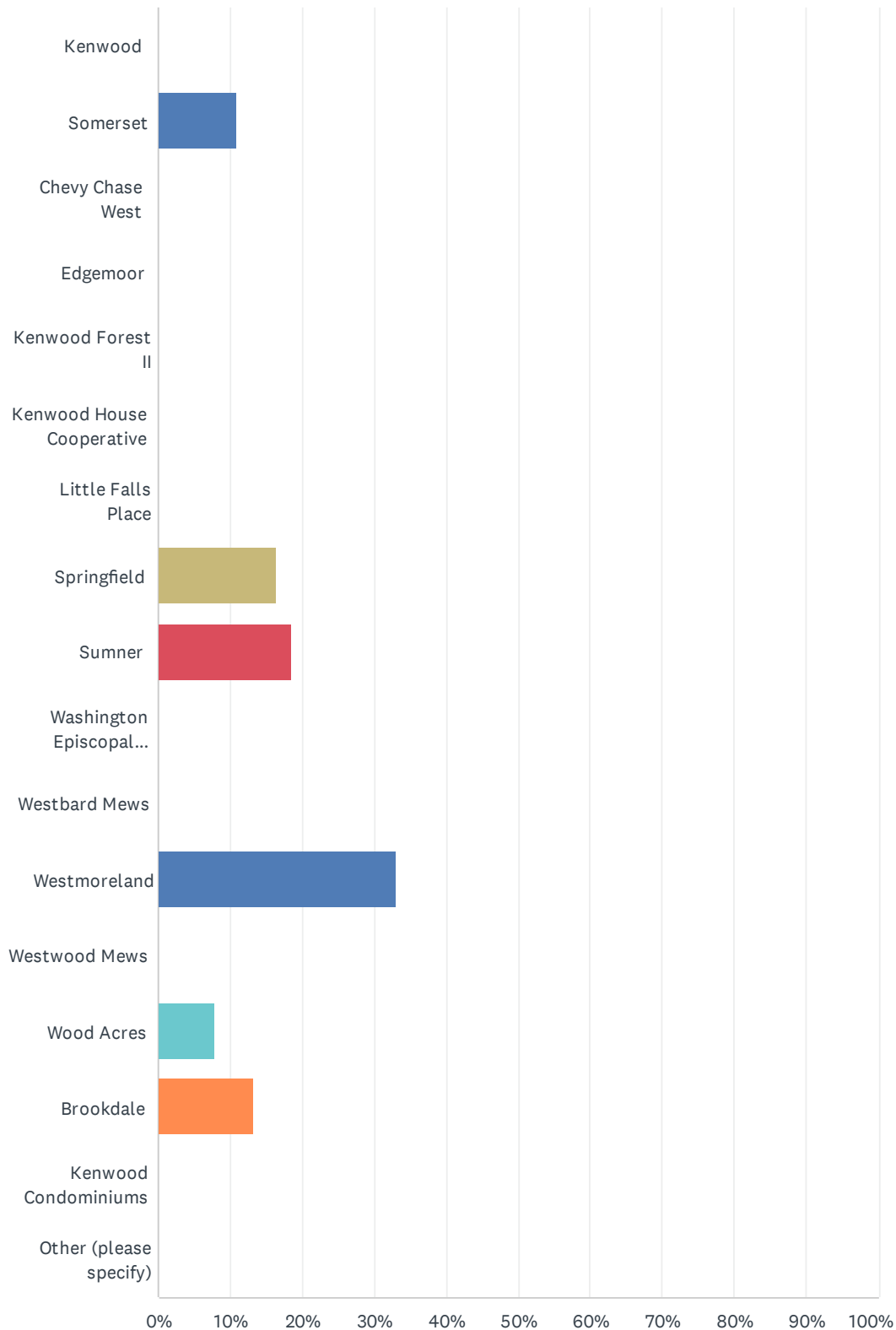
Answered: 627 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, changes to Little Falls Parkway should be delayed until further study	78.15%	490
No, changes to Little Falls Parkway should go ahead as planned	17.38%	109
Other (please specify)	4.47%	28
TOTAL		627

Q8 In which community / neighborhood do you reside?

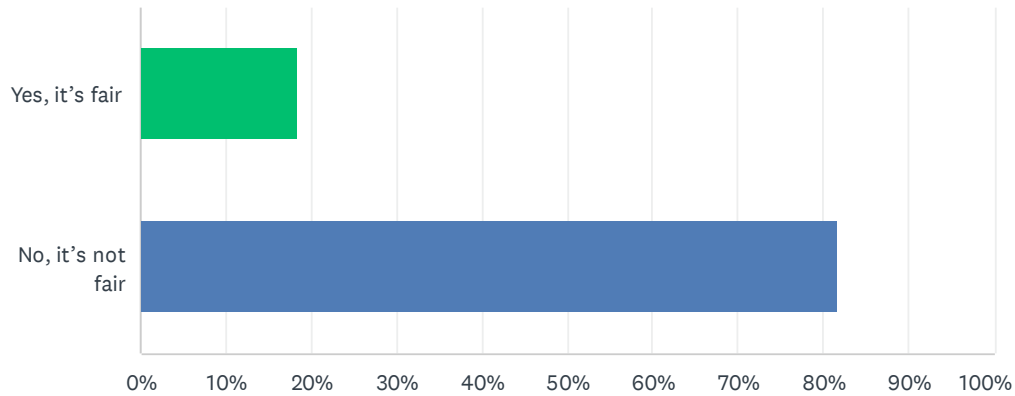
Answered: 631 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Kenwood	0.00%	0
Somerset	10.94%	69
Chevy Chase West	0.00%	0
Edgemoor	0.00%	0
Kenwood Forest II	0.00%	0
Kenwood House Cooperative	0.00%	0
Little Falls Place	0.00%	0
Springfield	16.48%	104
Sumner	18.54%	117
Washington Episcopal School families	0.00%	0
Westbard Mews	0.00%	0
Westmoreland	32.96%	208
Westwood Mews	0.00%	0
Wood Acres	7.92%	50
Brookdale	13.15%	83
Kenwood Condominiums	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		631

Q1 Do you think it's fair that The Montgomery County Parks Department made the decision to move forward with their Linear Park plan without adequate input from the very neighborhoods most affected by this decision?

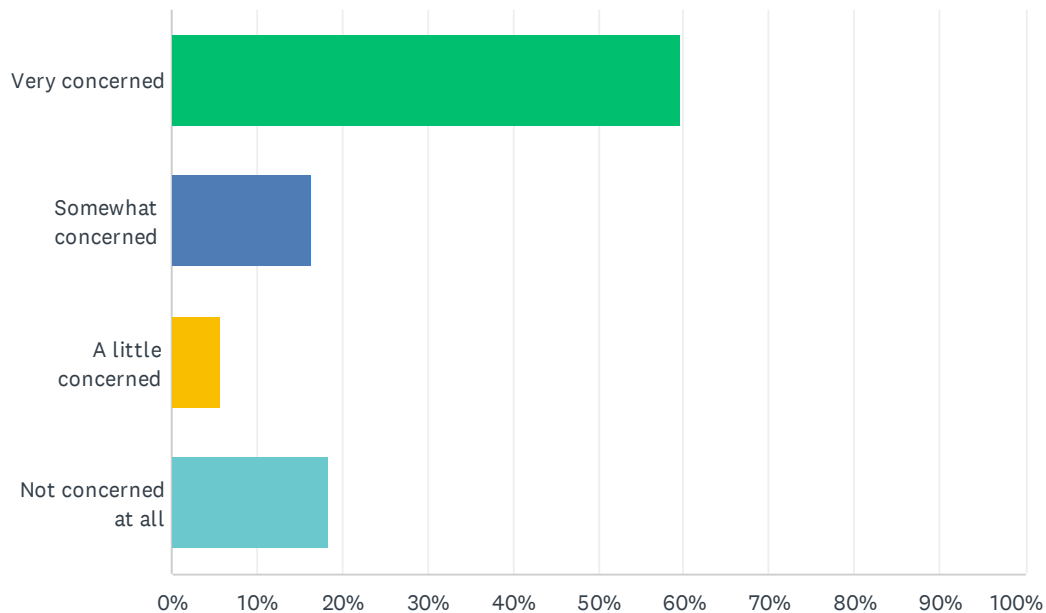
Answered: 104 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes, it's fair		18.27%	19
No, it's not fair		81.73%	85
TOTAL			104

Q2 If Montgomery Parks' current plan comes to fruition, how concerned are you about its effect on you and your family, including pedestrian safety or traffic?

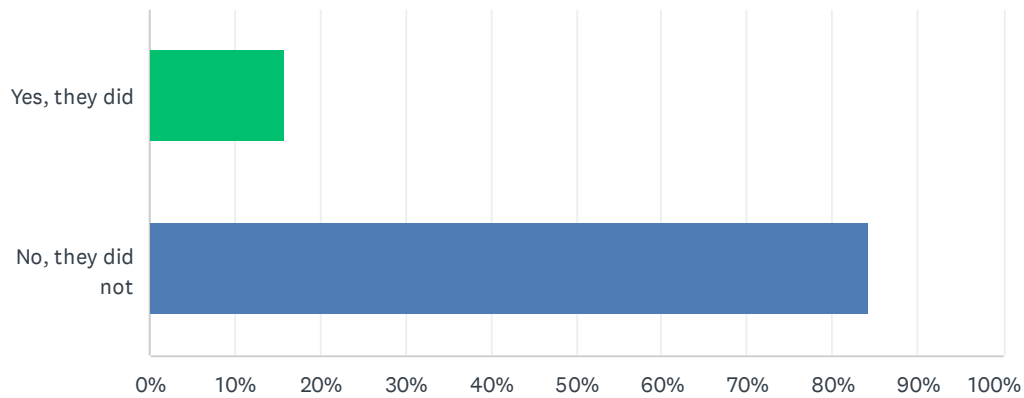
Answered: 104 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very concerned	59.62%	62
Somewhat concerned	16.35%	17
A little concerned	5.77%	6
Not concerned at all	18.27%	19
TOTAL		104

Q3 Do you think Montgomery Parks took the proper and necessary community consensus-building steps to understand residents' thoughts and needs?

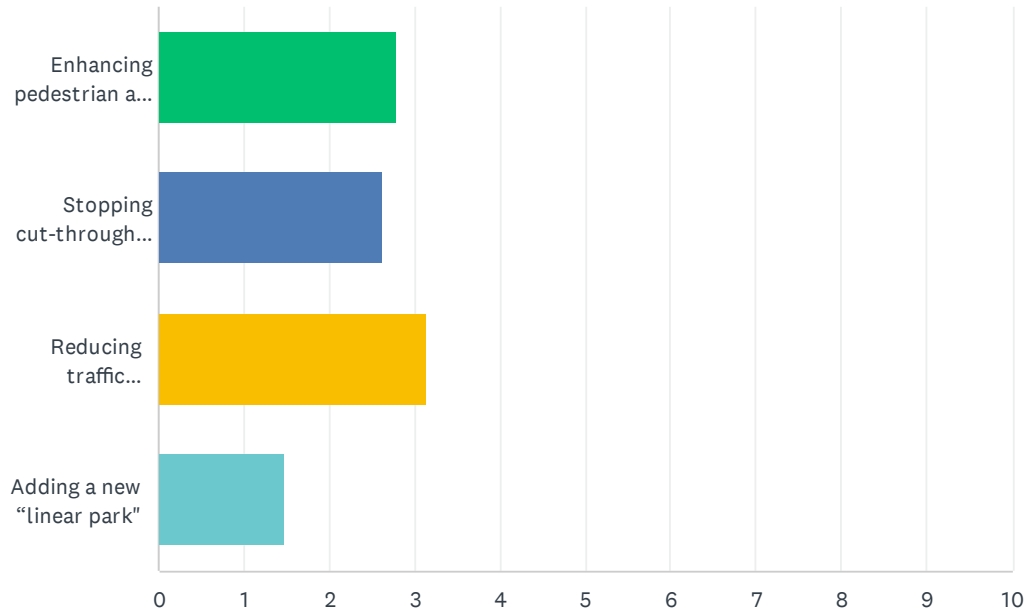
Answered: 101 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, they did	15.84%	16
No, they did not	84.16%	85
TOTAL		101

Q4 Given what you know about this situation, please rank the following in order of importance to you. (1=Most Important; 4=Least Important)

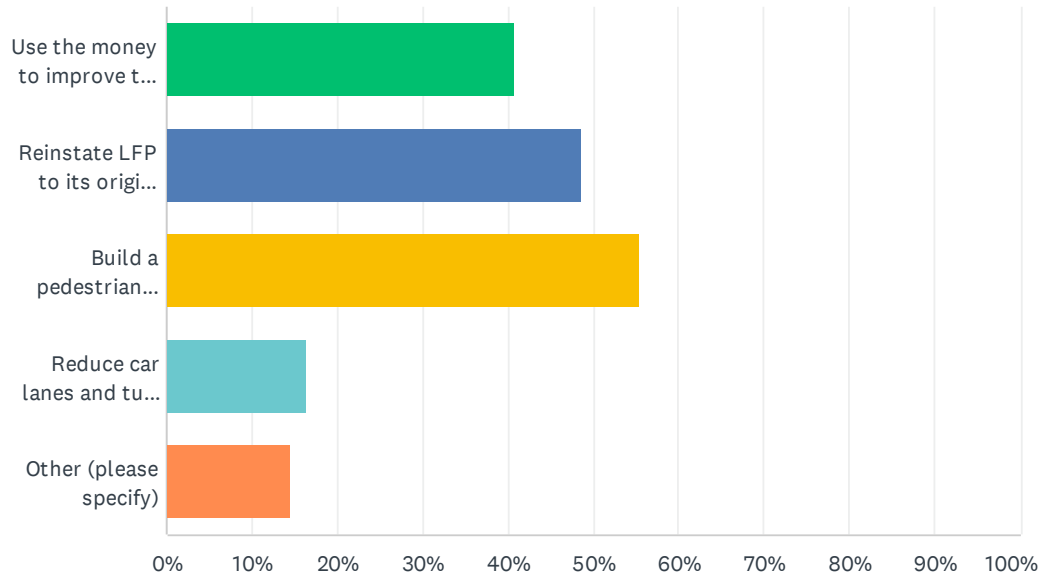
Answered: 101 Skipped: 3



	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Enhancing pedestrian and bicyclist safety	25.00% 23	33.70% 31	36.96% 34	4.35% 4	92	2.79
Stopping cut-through traffic in residential neighborhoods	23.96% 23	27.08% 26	36.46% 35	12.50% 12	96	2.63
Reducing traffic congestion	47.92% 46	26.04% 25	16.67% 16	9.38% 9	96	3.13
Adding a new "linear park"	7.07% 7	8.08% 8	10.10% 10	74.75% 74	99	1.47

Q5 In your opinion, which option(s) below is(are) the best plan to improve Little Falls Parkway ("LFP")? (Please select any or all that apply.)

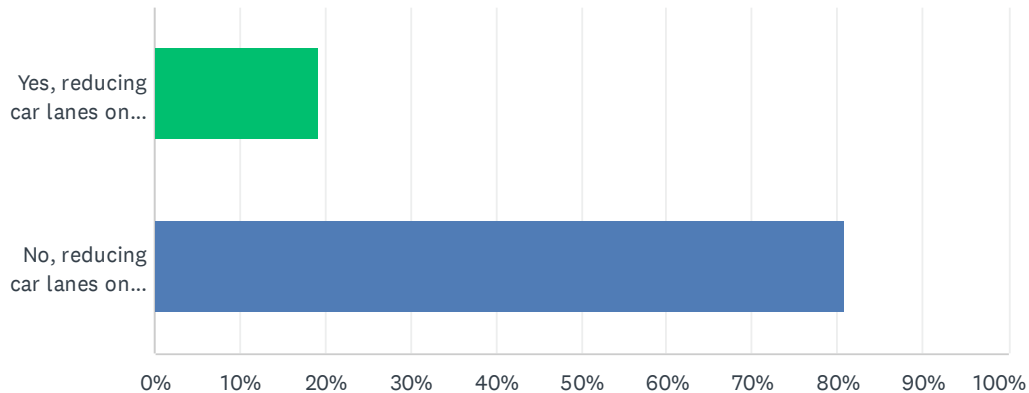
Answered: 103 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Use the money to improve the Capital Crescent Trail	40.78%	42
Reinststate LFP to its original (pre-Covid) four-lane condition	48.54%	50
Build a pedestrian bridge over LFP where the Capital Crescent Trail intersects the LFP and restore the road to four lanes	55.34%	57
Reduce car lanes and turn the western lanes into a "linear park" (the current plan pursued by Montgomery Parks)	16.50%	17
Other (please specify)	14.56%	15
Total Respondents: 103		

Q6 Given we will have a significant increase in the number of residential dwellings in Westbard and in downtown Bethesda (and resulting major traffic increase), do you think reducing Little Falls Parkway's number of car lanes was a sound planning decision?

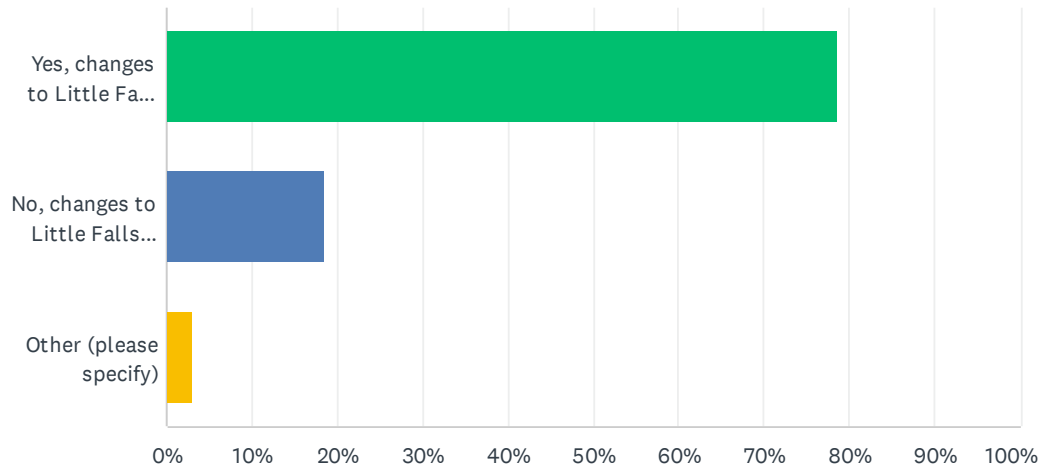
Answered: 104 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes, reducing car lanes on LFP is a good plan		19.23%	20
No, reducing car lanes on LFP is a bad idea		80.77%	84
TOTAL			104

Q7 Would you be in favor of delaying Montgomery Parks' planned changes to LFP pending further studies and a formal Planning Board hearing to get community input on the record?

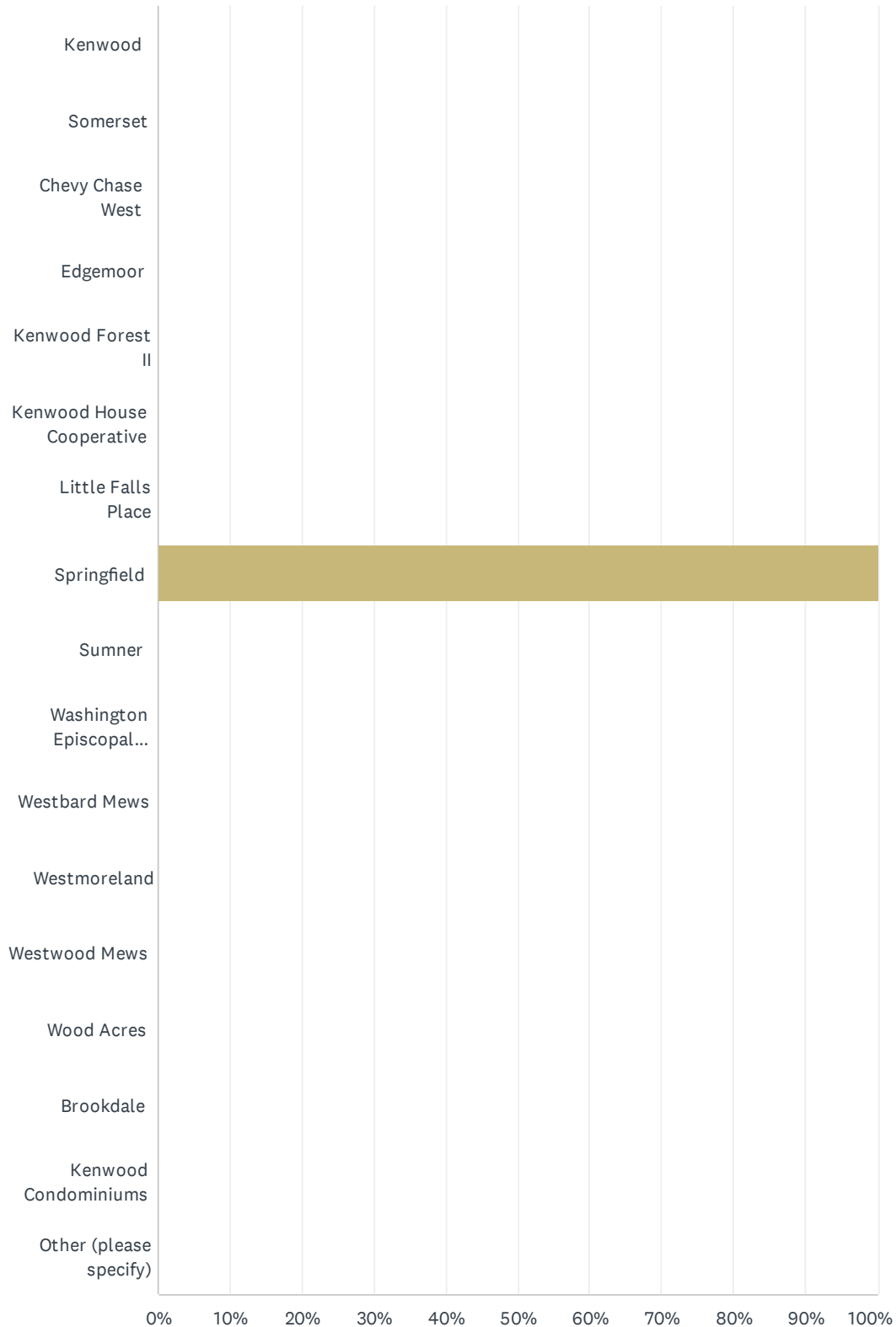
Answered: 103 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, changes to Little Falls Parkway should be delayed until further study	78.64%	81
No, changes to Little Falls Parkway should go ahead as planned	18.45%	19
Other (please specify)	2.91%	3
TOTAL		103

Q8 In which community / neighborhood do you reside?

Answered: 104 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Kenwood	0.00%	0
Somerset	0.00%	0
Chevy Chase West	0.00%	0
Edgemoor	0.00%	0
Kenwood Forest II	0.00%	0
Kenwood House Cooperative	0.00%	0
Little Falls Place	0.00%	0
Springfield	100.00%	104
Sumner	0.00%	0
Washington Episcopal School families	0.00%	0
Westbard Mews	0.00%	0
Westmoreland	0.00%	0
Westwood Mews	0.00%	0
Wood Acres	0.00%	0
Brookdale	0.00%	0
Kenwood Condominiums	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
TOTAL		104

Answers to “Other (please specify)” for Q5 and Q7

(FINAL – Data as of Feb 28 2023)

Q5. In your opinion, which option(s) below is(are) the best plan to improve Little Falls Parkway ("LFP")? (Please select any or all that apply.)

Other (please specify): 15 Responses

- Reduce Springfield cut through traffic due to westward development
- Close it on weekends, as was done during days of quarantine.
- Use the money to build a meditation/reconciliation park at the site of the former black cemetery now covered by a H.O.C. Parking lot.
- Keep two lanes from river to Hillendale, make mandatory right turn on Hallendale, straight on little falls, little falls can only be one lane at the trail. Two lanes traffic never stopped. A bridge on the trail will never work and we all know it.
- Maintain the road diet and still build a CCT trail bridge over LFP.
- Use the LFP to make surrounding neighborhoods safer. We have seen both an uptick in traffic, road rage directed at neighborhoods by drivers, and other safety concerns.
- Build the CCT bridge and construct the linear park.
- Close the whole thing to cars permanently and turn it into a proper park
- Install street lighting on LFP and pedestrian walk ways.
- Keep road diet in place. Add protected bike lanes on River Road between LFP and Springfield.
- Create linear park with fitness trail / equipment and skate park
- Enforce the stop sign and other laws so bikes don't blow through them on the trail and cause accidents.
- Closing of one lane in each direction at the crossing of the trail seemed to work well.
- Remove speed bumps
- Use money and time to make streets safer for bikers in areas that are actually dangerous, and keep cars out of neighborhoods.

Answers to “Other (please specify)” for Q5 and Q7

(FINAL – Data as of Feb 28 2023)

Q7. Would you be in favor of delaying Montgomery Parks' planned changes to LFP pending further studies and a formal Planning Board hearing to get community input on the record?

Other (please specify): 3 Responses

- Yes, it should be delayed with serious consideration given to pedestrians in their neighborhoods (who live here and pay taxes here) are considered following ALL the development in the area.
- Move forward -- with fitness trail / outdoor equipment and skate park.
- I'm not interested in delaying their stupidity - I want it rejected now

**LEANNE TOBIAS
ZONING OFFICER & BOARD MEMBER
SPRINGFIELD BETHESDA CIVIC ASSOCIATION
LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY
TESTIMONY
to the
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD
March 30, 2023**

Little Falls Parkway: Against No-Median Configuration and Permanent Lane Closures

I'm Leanne Tobias, a Board Member of the Springfield Civic Association, which represents over 650 families in Springfield, Bethesda.

Little Falls Parkway is Springfield's major connection to Bethesda's downtown.

SCA asks that LFP be immediately restored to 2 lanes with a central median. Longer-term, we support reinstating 4 lanes between Hillandale Road and Dorset Avenue.

Our position is based on a new community survey — unlike Parks, which has yet to systematically consult affected neighborhoods.

The survey includes residents from 6 neighborhoods surrounding LFP, including Springfield. Almost 80% of respondents oppose the current LFP configuration and permanent lane closures. Under 20% support the linear park.

We oppose the Parks proposal for several reasons:

The current configuration of Little Falls Parkway is unsafe:

- There is nowhere to pull over for emergencies.** The public record reports a head injury victim whose ambulance was delayed multiple times because traffic couldn't pull over.

- The new configuration makes LFP difficult to navigate safely.** Montgomery County Fire Chief Adam Jones warns of "constantly changing blind spots" that affect motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. We ask that the Planning Board review the many letters reporting near collisions.

Second, we're concerned about the accuracy of Parks' traffic analysis and urge additional studies.

The Parks analysis fails to address emerging post-pandemic traffic increases and the 8.5 million square feet of development pending in downtown Bethesda, Friendship Heights and at Westbard — 5.5 million square feet underway and 3 million square feet zoned. Thrive 2050 has also designated lower River Road as a Growth Corridor, which will add additional dense development to the immediate area.

Cutting LFP from 4 to 2 lanes under these conditions will:

- increase congestion on Wisconsin Avenue, River Road and other major arteries;
- encourage consumers to shop in DC, avoiding Bethesda; and
- increase neighborhood cut-through traffic.

Finally, the funds for the proposed linear park would be better spent on more important recreation priorities, including the proposed Willett Branch Greenway and improving the Capital Crescent and Little Falls Trails.

Thank you.

From: [Michael Larkin](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Keep Little Falls Parkway at Two Lanes
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:31:42 PM

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

Good Afternoon Planning Board Members,

My name is Michael Larkin, and I am a resident of Silver Spring. I strongly support keeping two lanes on Little Falls Parkway and not returning to four lanes. Although I do not own property or rent near Little Falls Parkway, I am on the Capital Crescent Trail almost every weekend. I use the trail for both recreation and to go grocery shopping or complete other errands. Using the trail to do my everyday tasks is not just pleasant but walking and biking on the trail is a healthy, efficient, and legitimate form of transportation.

Before the current road diet, I was almost hit by a car several times at the crosswalk on Little Falls. The safety and functionality of Little Falls for all road users cannot be solely determined by how many people were hit by a car. The reduction of lanes and resulting lower vehicular speeds reduces the probability of a near hit turning into a death or injuries requiring a long recovery period.

I know you have received many comments from property owners in the Little Falls Parkway area opposing the road calming measures. When offering my perspective on this issue, I have often been asked with an accusatory tone, "Where do you live." My honest response to this question is I live in Montgomery County, and the last time I checked Montgomery County does not have passport control on the J2 bus that takes me from Silver Spring to Bethesda. The last time I checked, I am required to pay taxes. The last time I checked, the parks and roads are for everyone. The current two lanes configuration considers the interests of all road users. Please acknowledge that walking and biking are legitimate forms of transportation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael Larkin

My name is Marsha Barnes. I live in Bethesda and frequently use the Little Falls Parkway to access shops and professional offices in Bethesda. Thank you taking time to hear from citizens about the Parks proposal before you today.

The current configuration, taking a portion of the Parkway from four lanes to two, reduces safety, increases traffic back-ups, curtails traffic between the Massachusetts Avenue corridor and Downtown Bethesda and encourages cut-thru traffic in adjacent neighborhoods. What I have observed, and traffic experts confirm, is the Capital Crescent trail crossing has become more dangerous as traffic back-ups create a blind spot for cyclists. A return to a configuration with one lane on either side of the median affords cyclists and pedestrians greater visibility and makes them more visible to motorists.

For those driving on the restricted Parkway, there are several dangerous spots. Drivers suddenly swerve left when they realize they are being forced to turn right onto Dorset because their traffic lane is ending. The zig-zag as one is traveling from Arlington Road toward River seems to challenge many motorists, even at the new reduced speed limits. While you have been told that cut-thru traffic has been reduced, those who live in Kenwood and Somerset have, as you will hear, or be able to read, a far different lived-experience.

More troubling to me is that the proposal before you is just the first step in a Parks Department plan to reconfigure the Parkway to create a so-called “linear park.” While I applauded Parks for closing the Parkway to cars when there was little traffic during the pandemic, that was then. The plan they envision fails to take into account the reality of now. The Little Falls Parkway is an artery between the Massachusetts Avenue corridor and Bethesda with its shops, restaurants, and professional offices. Additionally there is school traffic in both directions. Unlike the pandemic period when people were staying home, now there is vehicle traffic. Rather than flowing smoothly, the lane constriction causes traffic to back up and this encourages cut-thru work arounds.

The Planning Board has approved numerous ambitious plans for increased housing in Bethesda and in the Westbard Sector. As this new housing comes online, I think it would be shortsighted to imagine that there will not be an increase in traffic. Yet the Parks plan ignores this, noting that “it doesn’t do traffic, it does parks.” Yet, within a park is a significant roadway. It seems to me that there is a need for balance between increased traffic and those using the park area. The ultimate goal of this Parks plan doesn’t provide that.

The Parks Department is already the steward of a linear park running from MacArthur Boulevard to Fairfax Road. The one hundred and sixty acre park includes portions of the Capital Crescent Trail and all of the Little Falls Parkway. I

was fortunate to grow up in a city with parks designed by Frederick Law Olmstead. I really like parks and my appreciation was shaped by my experience of those parks which accentuate natural beauty. As a retiree, I walk in in a county park or a national park each and every day. Lest that sound like hyperbole, I have a dog, so inclement weather doesn't keep me away. The Parks Department has opportunities to improve features in its existing linear park, while returning the Parkway to its function of moving traffic. For example, residents have not been shy about encouraging Parks to make improvements to the very popular CCT, to improve foot trails in the park, or to make the greening of the Willett Branch a reality. My own experience trying to get repairs made to some dangerous stairs into the Little Falls Valley Stream Park makes me wonder whether Parks has adequate budget and staffing to care for current parks.

The Parks Department has stated that approximately 40% of Bethesda residents do not have their own backyards. Thus, it seeks to provide outdoor space to recreate. Soon there will be a new park replacing current surface parking lots behind the Farm Women's Market. This new park will be very close to a number of new high-rise mixed use developments. The new park will require creativity, funding, and staffing. Ideally there will also be input from near-by residents as to what they would like to see in this new park.

In thinking about what Parks has in mind with its plans for Little Falls Parkway, I am struck by the fact that their plan exchanges a well functioning roadway for a small recreational area. This would be across from the popular Bethesda pool and near a large playground. It would be close to a community of town houses with ample green space, some low rise housing surrounded by greenery, and single family neighborhoods. The new park slated to replace the surface parking lots just off of Wisconsin Avenue is within walking distance of many of the new high-rise residential buildings, built, under construction, or authorized. It is my understanding that the decision to turn parking lots into park space was very much in keeping with the Parks Department's admirable goal of providing green space and space to recreate for those without backyards. I wonder if it doesn't make more sense to incorporate what Parks has in mind for is "linear" recreation area into the planned for park just off of Wisconsin Avenue in closer proximity to greater housing density.

I ask that the Planning Board veto the permanent closure of two lanes of the Little Falls Parkway, with the exception the CCT crossing. A veto will put a stop to the proposed so-called linear recreation area which lacks strong public support.

From: [Robert Pestronk](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Narrowing
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 1:34:05 PM

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

Hi...

I support the road diet proposal for Little Falls Parkway.

I found these data quite compelling when I heard them presented to the Parks Board some weeks ago.

Some have questioned the time period during which they were collected but I suspect with respect to injury and mortality they would be even worse during non-pandemic times.

I think in this case and from personal experience, slowing traffic down and adding park space is a good idea awkward to some as it may be.

The added lanes are a great space for a dog park with no immediate neighbors to bother and between Willard Avenue and Norwood Parks which should satisfy the desire for dog recreation in this part of the County.

Time necessary to drive between River Road or Kenwood to Bethesda won't increase markedly.

It's also a nice statement by Parks and Planning that our automobile-obsessed culture which has been dominant since the early 1900s is being given a lesser priority.

Even with two lanes, a green country setting for drivers is maintained. Not to mention the positive impact on climate change and carbon production reduction from slower speeds.

While ping pong balls might not fly straight or true unless in a tent, other uses proposed would be helped by a narrowing, especially from March to November if some compromise or further piloting of the year is desirable.

The diet has saved me from injury numerous times at the pool crossing.

I use this route for walking, biking and driving several times a week.

Robert Pestronk
4701 Willard Avenue
Apt 1733
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Please excuse any inadvertent typos, unintended inflection, or inference. If you are not the intended recipient of this message, please notify me and delete this message from all files and folders.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jane Lyder](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Please make the new Little Falls Parkway configuration permanent
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 3:07:45 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

I support the Little Falls Parkway reconfiguration. And I am grateful to the County planning staff who helped develop it. Recently I have been bombarded by requests to sign petitions opposing the change. Most of them include inaccurate information and raise fears where they aren't warranted. And most of them are from people over the age of 65 who want nothing to change.

Montgomery Parks reports, "results of multiple traffic studies show that the reconfigured lane set-up reduces cut-through traffic in neighborhoods surrounding Little Falls Parkway, maintains a safe Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing, and safely accommodates vehicle traffic." And the reconfiguration creates much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists.

I support next steps, in particular, creating a "linear park" in the repurposed roadway with recreational amenities, to be accessible to park users seven days a week.

Finally, our planning for the future shouldn't be based on petition numbers. The County has hired experienced planners and traffic engineers and others to develop a vision for the future. Please don't let it get derailed by a minority of naysayers.

Thank you,
Jane Lyder
5104 Wehawken Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Anjum, Mahnoor](#)
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Spielberg, Debbie](#); [Tibbitts, Dale](#); [Wellington, Meredith](#); [Iseli, Claire](#); [Hartman, Ken](#); [Conklin, Christopher](#)
Subject: CE Letter regarding Little Falls Parkway
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 5:00:43 PM
Attachments: [CE Letter Little Falls Parkway.pdf](#)

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

Good afternoon,

Attached please find the County Executive's letter regarding Little Falls Parkway.

Thank you,

Mahnoor Anjum (She/Her)

Senior Administrative Aide

Office of the County Executive

101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor

Rockville, MD 20850

Email: mahnoor.anjum@montgomerycountymd.gov



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<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

March 29, 2023

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

Dear Chair Zyontz and Members of the Planning Board:

I am writing to ask the Planning Board to postpone a decision, now scheduled for April 13, regarding permanent closure of two lanes of Little Falls Parkway until the consequences of such that decision is fully understood and communicated. I heard from numerous concerned residents and recently visited the site, and understand that there are many procedural and substantive complexities to this issue. Additionally, many residents do not understand why the expansion of park and trail amenities is needed or desirable in an area that already benefits from substantial trails and parks facilities.

The permanent closure of two lanes raises serious safety concerns which require further review and examination. Users of the Capital Crescent Trail have told me they feel less comfortable and less safe with the reconfigured trail crossing. They speak of a higher concentration of traffic and the need to judge gaps in approaching traffic from two directions at the same time. In the previous configuration, each direction could be judged separately since the roadway was divided by a median, a configuration that appears to be preferred by residents.

There are also concerns about emergency vehicles cutting through neighborhood streets as a bypass to Little Falls Parkway when slow moving traffic occurs on the Parkway. Residents say they have seen an increase in emergency vehicles going through their neighborhoods, which is dangerous for both pedestrians and bicyclists.

I understand long-term studies to assess the transportation impact of future development, which rely on Little Falls Parkway, have not yet been conducted. I believe it is essential to study a 2035 scenario that includes buildout in both Bethesda and Westbard. Major development may increase traffic demands and require increased bus service between Westbard and Bethesda. Little Falls Parkway is the most realistic route to make this connection.

Chair Zyontz and Members of the Planning Board

March 29, 2023

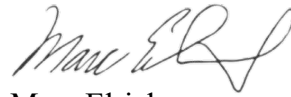
Page 2 of 2

As you may know, the process around changes to Little Falls Parkway has been contentious for many years, beginning with the past Planning Board's choice to ignore its own 4-1 decision on June 13, 2019, to modify the Capital Crescent Trail crossing of Little Falls Parkway, where a bicyclist was struck and killed by a driver.

In conclusion, the current plan to close two lanes permanently raises concerns from safety, emergency service, access, and process perspectives. I believe that a decision to permanently close two lanes cannot be supported with the information you have available at this time. Such a decision is better informed by a thorough review of a 2035 scenario and discussion with careful consideration given to residents and public safety agency concerns.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marc Elrich".

Marc Elrich
Montgomery County Executive

From: [Molly Medlin](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: LFP written testimony: 5214 Oakland Road, Chevy Chase, MD. 20815
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 5:16:07 PM

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

> My family has lived in Kenwood since 2019. After the closure of LFP, I have experienced two incidents on each side of my block which has 10 houses. One was a collision of cars at the intersection of Oakland Road (stop sign) and Brookside Drive (no stop sign), my street was blocked with emergency vehicles so I drove the other way hoping someone was not injured "too bad" even though there was an ambulance. On the other side of my block, my neighbor's daughter was nearly hit by a car while crossing the street after playing in the playground. This occurred at the intersection of Oakland Road and Kennedy, cars can park on side of Kennedy. My neighbor is my friend and she vomited after the incident from shock. It was heartbreaking even though her daughter wasn't hit by the car.

> Thank you for opening one lane on LFP but I'm writing because of my experiences since one lane opened. The trucks, vans, and cars have drivers who seem to be distracted while looking on their devices. They are sometimes stopped in the middle of the road searching for street signs. As you know Brookside doesn't connect River and Bradley so you have to turn onto some street. The drivers who know our roads seem to drive high speeds on Brookside, Dorset and Kennedy. Kennedy has cars parked on the side, and one way signs, so it's like playing a game of chicken with oncoming traffic. These are my personal experiences, and I appreciate your time and efforts as you consider the whole situation.

>

> Molly Medlin
> 301-919-2007

From: [Caroline Springer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 5:21:58 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Little Falls Parkway roadway reconfiguration has been a success. Montgomery Parks reports, “results of multiple traffic studies show that the reconfigured lane set-up reduces cut-through traffic in neighborhoods surrounding Little Falls Parkway, maintains a safe Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing, and safely accommodates vehicle traffic.” And the reconfiguration creates much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists.

I support next steps, in particular, creating a “linear park” in the repurposed roadway with recreational amenities, to be accessible to park users seven days a week.

Please count me as a Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project supporter.

Thank you,
Caroline Springer
4824 Dorset Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Justin Liu](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Support of the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 5:47:36 PM

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

Hello,

My name is Justin, and I am an avid biker and have been a Bethesda resident for most of my life. Having biked 1000+ miles in Montgomery County specifically, I strongly support the pilot project based on my personal observations and experiences, in addition to the official traffic studies presented.

First, I believe the new configuration will be safer for everyone. When there are a lot of cars on a 2+ lane road with an unprotected pedestrian crossing, it can be hard for drivers to see pedestrians trying to cross. And as a driver and pedestrian, I have witnessed several near-accidents due to this limited driver visibility caused by this road layout. Fortunately, over time, I have noticed that many of these risky crossings have been converted into two-lane roads or have had crosswalk signals installed. I am hoping Little Falls Parkway can be made safer in the same manner, especially since the Arlington Road intersection is surrounded by a park and pool - places of gathering for families and children.

My second reason for support is that the new lane layout seems logical. Both the northern and southern ends of the section of road in question are already two-lane roads, and if the new data shows that there is no negative effect on traffic, it makes sense to have consistency, like on Beach Drive.

I believe the new design will encourage and allow residents to make use of the space, which seems like the next step to take for a greener future. It's hard for people to walk or bike or ride electric scooters when there is no space. But when the space is there, people will use it. I am both a driver and a biker - since the data shows traffic is not negatively impacted, I am excited to support the pilot project and look forward to living in a greener, biker-friendly, and safer county.

Thank you,
Justin

9706 Holmhurst Road,
Bethesda, MD 20817

From: [stephen.springer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 6:35:01 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Little Falls Parkway roadway reconfiguration has been a success. Montgomery Parks reports, “results of multiple traffic studies show that the reconfigured lane set-up reduces cut-through traffic in neighborhoods surrounding Little Falls Parkway, maintains a safe Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing, and safely accommodates vehicle traffic.” And the reconfiguration creates much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists.

I support next steps, in particular, creating a “linear park” in the repurposed roadway with recreational amenities, to be accessible to park users seven days a week.

Please count me as a Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project supporter.

Thank you,
stephen.springer
4824 Dorset Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Stephen Ashurst](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I Support a Redesign on Little Falls Parkway
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 7:48:15 PM

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

Dear Chair of the Montgomery County Planning Board,

I support reducing the lanes to two, one in each direction, along Little Falls Parkway. The crossing of the Capital Crescent Trail with the current configuration is so much better and safer.

I routinely use the CCT for recreational riding and have a little kids that will ride with me sometimes. I want a safe manageable crossing and the pilot project has certainly helped enable that.

I wish this would be done more often throughout the county also.

Thanks,
Steve Ashurst
Burtonsville, MD, 20866

From: [Sharon Whitehouse](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written Testimony for hearing on Little Falls Parkway Parks Proposal March 30, 2023
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 11:31:36 AM
Attachments: [Testimony on Parks Proposal Re Little Falls Parkway.pdf](#)

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

Please find attached my written testimony. Could you please distribute it to all members of the planning board?

I reside at 4800 Jamestown Rd, Bethesda, MD 20816. I have lived at that address since 1985.

Thank you very much,

Sharon Whitehouse

Sharon B. Whitehouse
301-229-3203
Mobile: 202-321-5459

Testimony on Parks Proposal Re Little Falls Parkway

March 30, 2023

I served as president for the past three years on the board of the Westmoreland Citizens Association which has a membership of 986 households along the Massachusetts Avenue corridor from Westmoreland Circle to Little Falls Parkway. I have lived in my home for 38 years, and my husband grew up in the same house since he was two years old. He is now 68 and, like many residents in our neighborhood, is now physically unable to ride a bicycle or walk very far, certainly not to Bethesda from our neighborhood. We are regular users of the Little Falls Parkway and are both opposed to the Montgomery Parks proposal, as are an overwhelming majority of the residents of Westmoreland. I will address why it is a terrible idea to (1) reduce the number of lanes from four to two between Dorset and Arlington Road and (2) install a linear park.

First, the four-lane Little Falls Parkway was built in the 1930s for the purpose of making it possible for people to drive in vehicles to the businesses in Bethesda for work or shopping. It has served this purpose well for more than eight decades. Montgomery Parks has offered no data or rationale that provides a good reason to change the original purpose of the road. In fact, there is more

reason than ever to keep the road four lanes rather than reduce it to two, especially given that the Westbard and Friendship Heights development plans will add 2,000-3,000 dwelling units which will greatly increase traffic on the parkway. I am sure you have the statistics on the exact numbers already approved. The people who will purchase those units will primarily be using cars to get to the businesses in Bethesda. They are not going to choose bicycles as their primary mode of transportation to reach those destinations. The result of narrowing the lanes to two rather than four will be to create daily back-ups and delays and increase the number of car and bicycle accidents. Significantly, it will restrict the ability of rescue squads, police cars, fire trucks, and other first responders from getting to accidents.

The configuration of the lanes from Arlington Road to River Road from four lanes to two lanes and back to four lanes is unnecessarily confusing and unneeded. After several years of distracting bollards and narrowing the parkway to two lanes at the Crescent Trail Crossing over the parkway near Arlington Road, now all of the bollards are gone and the road is four lanes at that point. What was the purpose of the original configuration for the years when it was a great annoyance to drivers with the bollards making it even more difficult to see people in the crosswalk? Now all of that has been taken down, and pedestrians and

bicyclists have to cross four lanes of traffic without any median strip to provide safety halfway across. There are better solutions, such as a pedestrian bridge over the parkway which solves the existing safety problem.

Second, the installation of a linear park alongside the parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue defies reason and logic. The proposal is unsafe, costly, and unsightly. Parking to use is a serious issue. The parking lot at the Bethesda Pool across the street is packed full during the season. The linear park being proposed was not requested by anyone who resides in our neighborhoods for which the parkway was built but appears to be a concept proposed by unelected Parks personnel who envision Bethesda becoming another Silver Spring or Rockville. It is not a model that our residents are seeking to follow. In addition, the county has plenty of parks and trails in our area. The Capital Crescent Trail and Parkland Trail are 100 feet away from the parkway on either side, and Norwood Park (a 17-acre park) and Westmoreland Park are available for safe use. The distraction of having a linear park with games, food trucks, skateboarders and the like alongside moving traffic is unsafe for both drivers and people using the park. A ball or other piece of recreational equipment could go into the street and cause an accident for a car and driver and the child running after the ball. It is also doubtful that people are going to actively use a

park in such a location. Again, residents are not requesting it and have many other alternatives. It will turn what was previously a lovely, efficient parkway into an eyesore and traffic jam to be avoided. The funds required to build the park could be put to better use to improve the existing trails and parks. Montgomery Parks has given no good reason for why a linear park is needed.

Is it fair to the high tax-paying residents of Montgomery County whose salaries they pay to have an unwanted plan forced upon them? Do they live here and experience what we do? We have had the clear impression that the unelected employees who have come up with these plans do not care what we want or what we think about their unreasonable proposal. Our elected officials, on the other hand, who have an obligation to be responsive to their constituents, are being told that we do not want this proposal. Over 3,000 residents have objected to it in the short time that has been allowed to gather opinions. They are asking for it to be returned to its original state of four lanes and for no linear park to be built. We are asking you, the Planning Board, to make the decision to vote down this proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sharon B. Whitehouse

From: [Public Testimony](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: FW: Submit Written, Audio or Video Testimony [#3003]
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 12:18:14 PM

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

From: Wufoo <no-reply@wufoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:47 PM
To: Public Testimony <Public.Testimony@montgomerycountymd.gov>;
Subject: Submit Written, Audio or Video Testimony [#3003]

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

First name *	Pete
Last name *	Rizik
Address	<input type="checkbox"/> 6204 highland drive Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815 United States
Phone Number	(202) 841-0043
Email *	pdrizik@gmail.com
Date of Public Hearing *	Thursday, March 30, 2023
Hearing Topic (e.g. Bill 16-20, Operating Budget, Capital Improvements, etc.) *	Little Falls PARKway lane closure causes safety problems elsewhere.
Type of testimony *	Document
Attach a document file in .pdf or .docx format. Limit 25 MB. *	<div></div> mar_30_testimony_2023_paper.docx 18.43 KB • DOCX



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<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

PAPER SUBMISSION

Peter D Rizik, President of the Kenwood Citizens Association, speaking for 290 homes adjacent to LFP, is OPPOSED to the Road Diet and to the Linear Park. The underlying issue is how to proceed with a project that supports VZ and its underlying objectives of safety. The recommendations before the Planning Board are to permanently close 2 of the 4 lanes of LFP. The problem is that not only will you then create OTHER safety problems of cut through traffic in adjacent neighborhoods (many visitors – no sidewalks), but you will also create a motorist safety problem on LFP.

We have seen NO studies that address the tradeoff between balancing the safety of pedestrians using multi-modes of transportation with the safety of motorists on the road-dieted LFP, or with the needs of elderly residents who cant skateboard to work, or the market, or to their doctor appointments.

- ✓ (LESS SAFE) Reducing to 2 lanes in the current configuration means driving without a median strip. The Federal Highway Administration has determined that the **head-on crash rate for divided roads is 30% lower than for undivided roads, and total crash rate is 42% less.**
- ✓ (LESS SAFE) Reducing to 2 lanes in the current configuration means walking without a median strip where CCT cross LFP. According to the US Department of Transportation, "**For pedestrians to safely cross a roadway, they must estimate vehicle speeds, determine acceptable gaps in traffic based on their walking speed, and predict vehicle paths. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.**" (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/medians-and-pedestrian-refuge-islands-urban-and-suburban-areas>, October 2022).
- ✓ (LESS SAFE) Walking in kenwood, and other neighborhoods that will see more cut thru traffic will become treacherous. A Dec 2022 LFP Road Diet survey indicated that high percentages of neighborhoods were consistently **showing “some concern” to “deep concern” about safety:** Springfield – 79%, Woodacre – 91%, Sumner – 93%, with Kenwood at 80% having **“deep concern”**.

The Parks Department has ignored community need and been less than transparent. The same Dec survey on the LFP Road Diet and Linear Park showed a high percentage of homeowners feeling Parks didn't confer with citizens –Springfield – 79%, Woodacre – 93%, Sumner – 94%, Kenwood- 98%. The Feb 15 virtual Town Hall lacked basic information, and left many pointed questions unanswered, with no apparent follow-up. It is no wonder that the NEW Planning Board is facing thousands of ANGRY homeowners, complain letters, signs, petitions, and a lawsuit.

The safety problems are REAL. The concerns have been voiced. The next issue will be dealing with future liabilities - for Parks, for Montgomery County, and now for the PB.

From: [Jon Miller](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 12:23:02 PM
Attachments: [LFPadvocacy.pdf](#)

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

Please consider incorporating the attached into the record.

Thank you,
Jon Miller

TO: Montgomery Planning Board
RE: Little Falls Parkway, Bethesda
DATE: March 29, 2023

I am writing to voice my support for a reconsidered and more comprehensive solution for the Little Falls Parkway, as County Executive Marc Elrich recently advocated on WAMU - one that fairly balances the needs and wants of all park users - motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. A reconsidered design must address:

- the appropriate use of the parkway vehicular right-of-way
- development of a safe crossing design of the Capital Crescent Trail (Trail) and Little Falls Parkway (LFP)

The current design favored by Montgomery Parks is flawed in its concept in several ways, which is why reconsideration is the right course of action:

- 1) ***There is no need for additional park facilities in this vicinity.*** Norwood Park is large (an order of magnitude larger than the linear park) and proximate. The proposed uses contemplated for the linear park can easily be accommodated at Norwood. Storage and maintenance facilities already exist at Norwood.
- 2) ***This investment can be better spent in needier areas of the County.*** There are undoubtedly many needs for additional recreational facilities in Montgomery County, but this part of Bethesda simply isn't one of them. Montgomery Parks may have been enticed by the relatively modest investment required to develop a linear park, since the LFP land is already owned, but the fact remains that the investment, however modest, is far better made in areas of the County with insufficient or deficient facilities; especially given that Norwood is minutes away.
- 3) ***Vehicular traffic flow on Little Falls Parkway is adversely impacted by the current road diet, even before additional development is in place.*** Traffic studies commissioned by Montgomery Parks are able to show that technically acceptable levels of service remain after the road diet, but they also show that these service levels are ***degraded*** in several cases (as a result of the road diet). More significantly, the traffic studies fail to account for the projected vehicular traffic between Westbard and Bethesda, as a result of the imminent Westbard development.
- 4) ***Montgomery Parks has wrongly concluded that the road-diet solution to the Trail crossing is the only solution available.*** While the road diet between Hillandale Road and Arlington Road has been successful in eliminating crossing accidents, Montgomery Parks has prematurely concluded that the LFP road diet therefore must remain in any scenario. What truly 'must remain' is the elimination of crossing accidents. There are other ways to accomplish this important Vision Zero goal, while still meeting the needs of trail users and motorists.

The following aspects should be incorporated into a reconsidered design:

- A. **Maintain the four-lane vehicular roadway from River Rd. to Arlington Rd.** to enable smooth traffic flow between Westbard and Bethesda, especially in light of pending development at Westbard.
- B. **Develop a safe, signalized Trail crossing at Arlington Road.** This requires minor Trail realignment and adaptation of the existing Arlington Road signal.
 - 1) A signalized crossing is the safest way to address this crossing. It eliminates the current uncertainty caused by passive signage - whether a driver or biker is going to stop, what to do when users are visibly approaching, but not immediately in the crossing, etc.
 - 2) To bicyclists who might lament the addition of a potential red light on the Trail (rather than the current yield/cross situation), signalized Trail crossings are already used in Bethesda, approximately 2,000 feet further north.
 - 3) Citizens have repeatedly favored this solution. When informally polled about Trail crossing alternatives in Community Meeting #1 (6/13/18), diversion of the Trail to the Arlington Road intersection was the most popular alternative. At the Open Town Hall forum (Nov 2018 – Feb 2019), citizens ranked a bridge crossing as the most preferable. Given the prohibitive expense of a bridge, it seemed logical that the County would then implement the second-most preferred solution, which was a signalized crossing at Arlington Road. The road-diet option was ranked third by Town Hall participants, receiving only 16% of the vote, yet the County inexplicably championed this solution over the stated preferences of its affected citizenry.
- C. **Incorporate the best linear park ideas at Norwood.** Montgomery Parks should keep the momentum of their initiative moving forward and incorporate their ideas at Norwood Park.

A balanced and comprehensive approach to park use can deliver the best consensus solution for all parties involved.

Jon Miller
4916 Redford Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Carl Becker](#)
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Marc Korman](#); [Ariana Senator Kelly](#); [Sara Delegate Love](#); [Marc Delegate Korman](#); [marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Meredith Wellington](#); [Friedson, Andrew](#); [County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Pamela Dunn](#); [Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov](#); [Weisbroth, Nina](#); [Kathleen.Connor@mail.house.gov](#); [Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Coello, Catherine](#)
Subject: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 3:51:10 PM
Attachments: [Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by Carl Becker.pdf](#)

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

 [Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by Carl Becker.pptx](#)

Montgomery County Park and Planning Board,

Please find enclosed my testimony for Item #12 (in PDF and PowerPoint formats). I will testify in person this evening. I would also like to show a YouTube video which forwards from TakeBackLFP.net

Thank you,

Carl Becker
Board Member
Sumner Citizens Association
4905 Brookeway Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-873-3221

Little Falls Parkway

- 1) The Current Road Configuration should NOT be permanent
- 2) Sumner Opposes the Current Road Configuration and The Proposed Linear Park

Almost 3,500 have signed the Petition in opposition

Please read this presentation and watch the four enclosed video clips
for reasons why we should revert back to the “Road-Diet”

By Carl Becker
Sumner Board Member
301-873-3221

Vision Zero:

“Montgomery County is the first suburban county in the United States to commit to Vision Zero: a national initiative to eliminate pedestrian and bicyclist traffic fatalities and conflicts, while increasing safe, healthy, and equitable mobility for all pedestrians. **A key principle of Vision Zero is “human life takes priority over mobility and other objectives of the road system.”** – page 3 of Little Falls Facility Plan Recommendation from MoCo Parks

In other words: Safety should come first before prioritizing “activation” of 1 acre of roadway that is already surrounded by hundreds of acres of park.

Why the “Road-Diet”

- Prior to the Road-Diet, According to Parks Facility Plan report, “LFP allowed for the multiple-lane threat scenario – a recognized traffic safety problem”. A multiple-lane threat crash involves a driver stopping in one lane on a multilane road to permit pedestrians/cyclists to cross, and an adjacent oncoming vehicle striking the pedestrian who is crossing in front of the stopped vehicle. This crash is due to the initial stopped vehicle obscuring the view of the second advancing vehicle who subsequently fails to yield. **Multi threat crossings also occur when pedestrians dart-out from behind parked cars which are adjacent to crossings, or when vehicles are trapped because of a signal change or are backed up because the flow of traffic has stopped.**
- This is a **very different crossing than the typical mid-block crosswalk** because Montgomery Counties busiest trail sends 2000-5000 pedestrians and bicyclists (often at speed) across multiple lanes of traffic with 11,000-14,000 vehicle trips per day. Up to 400 pedestrians cross per hour according to MoCo Parks



The “Road Diet” was in place up until about six months ago. Little Falls Parkway was narrowed to two (still separated) vehicle lanes at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing and widened to four lanes south of Hillandale road.

From the MoCo Parks Facility Plan Recommendations Memo to the Planning Board dated May 23, 2019: “In January of 2017, Montgomery Parks implemented a Vision Zero-based interim **road diet** along Little Falls Parkway to increase safety for trail users crossing the roadway in response to the fatal crash”.. “The speed limit was reduced to 25 mph. The grass median dividing the northbound and southbound travel lanes remained.” .. “The interim road diet **eliminated the multiple-lane threat condition**, while simultaneously slowing vehicle speeds along Little Falls Parkway.”

The current configuration (the right turn lane hasn't been installed yet)



< only 2 lanes to Dorset was not proposed in any of Sabra's designs or Parks' community meetings

The Multiple-Threat Crossing is back!

Compared to the Vision-Zero compliant “road-diet” that was in place for 5 years, The current Linear Park roadway design is more dangerous, and less Vision-Zero, because Pedestrians & bicyclists now:

1. Cross two lanes at once.. instead of crossing one lane at a time
2. Look both ways while crossing.. instead of looking one way
3. Can no longer stop in a protected median or refugee island
4. Routinely face multi-lane threats. The previous Road-Diet was credited for “eliminating” the multiple-lane threat.
5. Have half as much distance, when southbound on the trail, to be seen by southbound vehicles. The “Jogged trail crossing” parallel to roadway makes it harder to see southbound vehicles. (complicated by blind spot from shrubs & padded post)

<https://youtu.be/L5CjR9JPCYg> (1:45)

The Jog in the Trail Crossing

Coming from Arlington Road, The drivers view of southbound bicycles is problematic:

- Brush obscures the view of southbound Bicyclists
- Bicycles travel at speed, parallel to southbound vehicles on LFP and then make an abrupt right turn across the vehicle lanes almost always with complete disregard for stop signs.
- Bicyclists sometimes don't look right until they are in the crossing (watch the less than 2 minute video again: <https://youtu.be/L5CjR9JPCYg>)

This extremely dangerous design forces pedestrians, bicyclists and drivers to make split second decisions. Moving the southbound vehicle lane to the opposite side of the median would give drivers twice as much time to see the southbound bicyclist. And the bicyclist would be easier to see because the bicyclist would be traveling perpendicular to the vehicle for about twice as far. The southbound bicyclist could make a safer crossing if they didn't have to look right until reaching the divided median.

The driver who collided with the bicyclist in 2016 wasn't charged because the bicyclist ran the stop sign. Can't we devise a safer design that doesn't rely on Bicyclists respecting stop signs? Young kids see adults run Stop signs then follow the adult without looking. I am concerned for all children. Doesn't disregard for signs and signals indicate this is a poor design?

And the Linear Park design is even more dangerous than the pre-2016 multiple-lane threat...

The current trail crossing across two lanes of undivided roadway is more dangerous than the pre-2016 four lane crossing for the same factors which make it more dangerous than the Road-Diet roadway design (which led to the death of a bicyclist in 2016) plus its even worse now because pedestrians and bicyclists:

1. Face multi-lane threats from both directions because traffic backs up now in both directions. The vehicle creates the threat by being involuntarily stopped past the trail crossing.
2. More frequently face multi-lane threats - Vehicles involuntarily create multi lane threats because they are routinely backed up. Previous multi-lane threats were less frequent because vehicles usually stopped upon seeing the crossing pedestrian.
3. Have half as much distance to be seen by vehicles when southbound on the trail.
(complicated by blind spot from shrubs & padded post)

A Right Turn Lane won't fix the Multi-Threat

Adding a right turn lane at Arlington road will reduce northbound backups as long as right turns on red are allowed, but southbound backups will still occur because LFP is just one southbound lane from Arlington to Dorset Ave - the 2019 roadway designs showed 4 lanes south of Hillandale and never contemplated 2 lanes there.

- Southbound Backups at CCT: https://youtu.be/v4pO_pxDhf8
 - 0:00 Cars pull into grass to allow Emergency Vehicles through
 - 0:06 South-bound chicane, 2:46 confused driver in chicane
 - 0:27, 1:08, 2:52, 6:26 (side-view) South-bound back-ups creating "Multi-Lane Threat"
 - 4:47-6:26, 8:48- Bikes running stop sign, Bikes not looking north until crossing
 - 7:10 Traffic backed up both directions then Biker passes thru
 - 13:03 Accelerating Jeep almost hits biker
- Southbound Backups at Dorset Ave: <https://youtu.be/njSwHel-Zpc>

These videos were taken on cold days in fall/winter. Interactions will increase in warmer months as pedestrian volume increases.

Linear Park – Solution for imaginary problem

Little Falls Stream Valley Park totals around 160 acres and connects to other large area parks such as Norwood Park and Westmoreland Hills Park. Southern Bethesda has around 200 acres of contiguous park land connecting dozens of neighborhoods and the Crescent Trail.

Why is creating 1 acre of park with no parking next to passing vehicles so important when we already have 200 acres of Park? Widening the CCT has been on Parks radar for over 5 years.. Why hasn't it been widened?

The Open Parkway (area where Linear Park is now) was almost always empty and was grossly underutilized: <https://youtu.be/-Xeq8aynkpA>

[illegible]

Figure 10: Alternate A: Permanent Road Diet (As Presented At Community Meeting #2)

Proof the democratic process failed

- The current roadway alignment more resembles alternative A except none of Sabra's designs proposed halving vehicle lanes south of Bethesda Pool - **Parks slipped in this significant change which causes more delays and subjects drivers to a more dangerous undivided roadway with confusing chicane** – This attempt to implement the current Linear Park design proves **the democratic process has failed here.**
- According to Parks, Alternative A “permanently eliminates the multiple-lane threat potential, while the removal of the wide median provides a further safety benefit by simplifying the driver’s decision-making for when to yield the right-of-way to trail users in the crossing or approaching the crossing”. **Parks is implying that a median or pedestrian island is more dangerous - This contradicts further slides from the USDOT/FHA and as documented by my videos.**
- **And Parks ascertainment that the multi-lane threat is “permanently eliminated” is wrong as we see from my videos.** Narrowing the parkway south of Hillandale has caused traffic to back-up in the south bound direction and the multi-lane threat to reappear. Backups will increase as users cross from Bethesda pool to the Linear Park, especially in warmer months. We’ll soon have three pedestrian crossings in one block.
- **ALMOST 3,500 people have signed the online Petition in opposition to the current roadway configuration and Linear Park - TakeBackLFP.com**

Alternative B (also 4 lanes to Dorset)

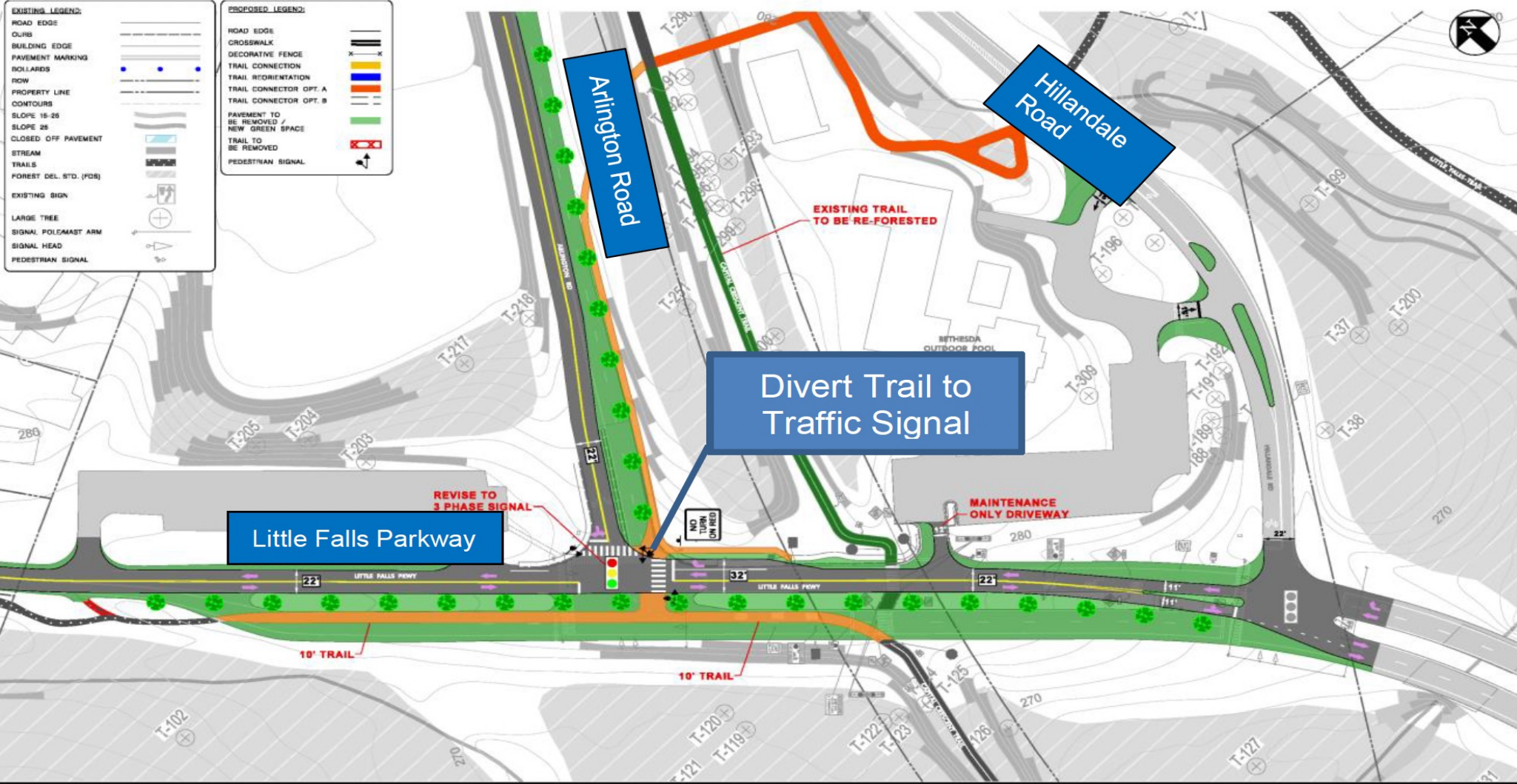


Figure 11: Alternate B, Trail Reorientation to Arlington Road Signal

Unpacking Alternative B - From Page 4 of MoCo Parks March 30, 2023 Memo

“With the success of the road diet at the CCT crossing in improving trail user safety, Parks presented a Facility Plan recommendation to the Montgomery County Planning Board in June 2019 to build upon the interim road diet with a permanent two-lane Parkway cross-section from Arlington Road to Hillandale Road. The May 2019 County Planning Board memorandum, *Facility Plan Recommendation for Capital Crescent Trail Crossing at Little Falls Parkway Safety Improvements Project*, contains additional information and concept plans. The Planning Board asked Parks to study re-alignment of the CCT trail crossing to the intersection with Arlington Road, with an improved pedestrian signal. The requested re-alignment had been studied during development of the facility plan but was ultimately **not recommended by Parks staff due to increased travel delays for vehicles as well as trail users**. ~ Per the 2019 Facility Plan, re-aligning the trail to the Arlington Road signal requires a dedicated pedestrian crossing only phase **that increases delays and travel times for all users**”

- The above reasoning is not logical. Why is a pedestrian crossing phase/signal worse than the current two lane, mid-block crossing? Mid block crossings are not safer than crossings at intersections. There should be no excuse to prioritize a mid-block crossing when a signalized crossing at an intersection is reasonable to achieve.
- Parks is trying to implement a plan that wasn't even proposed in 2019. Instead of reducing vehicle lanes for just one block as previously proposed in Alternatives A&B (Arlington to just before Hillandale) **vehicle lanes were halved for half a mile of roadway (Arlington to Dorset Ave), a dangerous chicane was added which was never part of previous Sabra designs, the roadway is now undivided, and traffic now backs up in both directions during commuting hours. The point: The current roadway design is even less sensitive to travel delays, pedestrian, and vehicle safety.**
- The current Linear Park design presents vehicles with 4 stopping points in about two blocks: 1) Pedestrian path across LFP at the SVU Park, 2) Arlington Road Traffic Light, 3) Capital Crescent Trail Crossing, and 4) Hillandale Road traffic light (where another people choice or goat path might inevitably be created from the Bethesda Pool parking lot to the Linear Park). Alternative B would have had just 3 stopping points by consolidating the trail crossing to Arlington Road.
- This is the busiest pedestrian path in the county where pedestrians cross Little Falls Parkway very frequently and where Bicyclists exhibit absolute disregard for stop signs. There has to be a better way!
- **Having bicycles and pedestrians cross an intersection while vehicles are stopped at Arlington Rd would make Alternative B MORE efficient than Alternative A for vehicles and much safer than bikes running stop signs while crossing two lanes and looking both directions.**

Page 26 - 5,100' in 4:36/4:38 (peak) is 12.5mph avg

Table 5: AM Peak hour Southbound Fairfax Road to MD 190 River Road

Run #	Travel time
1	0:03:38
2	0:03:14
3	0:04:36
4	0:03:54
5	0:02:49
Average	0:03:38

Table 6: PM Peak hour Northbound MD 190 River Road to Fairfax Road

Run #	Travel time
1	0:04:38
2	0:03:03
3	0:03:57
4	0:02:42
5	0:02:29
Average	0:03:22

*LFP has 6 lanes approaching River Road:

2 northbound

2 southbound

1 left onto River

1 right onto River

- **Parks did not measure actual vehicle speeds, only averages.**
- **That's almost 5 minutes to travel one mile (5,280')**
- Or half the posted speed limit (avg)
- Times 3 & 1 are an Inferior level of service (LOS) Backups causing "Multi-lane threats" at trail crossing
- Not based on Spring/Summer data when increases in pedestrian volume will have greater impact on vehicle flow, increase backups, cause more threats, and increase trip times.
- This had been a 35mph roadway for most of its existence

PARKING, ADA/HANDICAP COMPLIANCE

- “There are currently two parking lots adjacent to the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project. One is at the Bethesda Pool and another north of Arlington Road. Parks received minimal complaints about parking to access the Little Falls Parkway Open Parkway when the road was completely shut down, **so we do not believe** this will be an issue if the road diet is kept and a linear park is activated. As part of the public engagement for any future park in this area, Parks will evaluate parking demand and look to improve pedestrian and bicyclist access.”

A Linear Park will create another dangerous parkway crossing (although utilization will be disappointing).

”parks will evaluate parking demand” - There is no provision for safe parking or ADA compliance, the pool lot gets packed in summer, and therefore future parking issues cannot be solved.

Vision Zero deserves better than “We Believe”

Lets return to a divided Little Falls Parkway

- According to the US Department of Transportation, "**For pedestrians to safely cross a roadway, they must estimate vehicle speeds, determine acceptable gaps in traffic based on their walking speed, and predict vehicle paths. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.**" (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/medians-and-pedestrian-refuge-islands-urban-and-suburban-areas>, October 2022). - The CCT crossing now forces pedestrians to cross two lanes at once.
- The Federal Highway Administration has determined that the **head-on crash rate for *divided* roads is 30% lower than for undivided roads, and total crash rate is 42% less.**

The first bit is from DOT, as you can see. The second is from various state highway departments, citing the FHA as their source.

With a median or “refuge island” at the trail crossing

“A Pedestrian refuge island is typically constructed in the middle of a 2-way street and provides a place for pedestrians to stand and wait for motorists to stop or yield while enhancing visibility of crossing pedestrians. This countermeasure is highly desirable for midblock pedestrian crossings... Median islands may also be a candidate treatment for uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on 3-lane or 2-lane roads... Consideration should be given to creating a two-stage crossing with the island to encourage pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time and look towards oncoming traffic before completing the second part of the crossing. The minimum pedestrian refuge island width is approximately 6 feet. “

https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/Webinar_PBIC_080918.pdf

Refuge Island

Enhances visibility of crossing pedestrians


Allows pedestrians to break up long crossing distances

Can reduce pedestrian crashes by 32%




Image: Bellevue, WA (Dan Burden, PBIC Image Library)

From the USDOT / FHA:



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

OFFICE OF SAFETY
Proven Safety Countermeasures



Safety Benefits:

Median with Marked Crosswalk
46%
reduction in pedestrian crashes.²

Pedestrian Refuge Island
56%
reduction in pedestrian crashes.²

Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas


A **median** is the area between opposing lanes of traffic, excluding turn lanes. Medians in urban and suburban areas can be defined by pavement markings, raised medians, or islands to separate motorized and non-motorized road users.

A **pedestrian refuge island** (or crossing area) is a median with a refuge area that is intended to help protect pedestrians who are crossing a road.


Pedestrian crashes account for approximately 17 percent of all traffic fatalities annually, and 74 percent of these occur at non-intersection locations.¹ For pedestrians to safely cross a roadway, they must estimate vehicle speeds, determine acceptable gaps in traffic based on their walking speed, and predict vehicle paths. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Transportation agencies should consider medians or pedestrian refuge islands in curbed sections of urban and suburban multilane roadways, particularly in areas with a significant mix of pedestrian and vehicle traffic, traffic volumes over 9,000 vehicles per day, and travel speeds 35 mph or greater. Medians/refuge islands should be at least 4-ft wide, but preferably 8 ft for pedestrian comfort. Some example locations that may benefit from medians or pedestrian refuge islands include:

- Mid-block crossings.
- Approaches to multilane intersections.
- Areas near transit stops or other pedestrian-focused sites.



Example of a road with a median and pedestrian refuge islands. Source: City of Charlotte, NC



Median and pedestrian refuge island near a roundabout. Source: www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

For more information on this and other FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures, please visit <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/> and https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/step/docs/techSheet_PedRefugeIsland2018.pdf.

FHWA-SA-21-044

ZERO IS OUR GOAL
Eliminating traffic deaths

Safety Benefits:

Median with Marked Crosswalk
46%
reduction in pedestrian crashes.²

Pedestrian Refuge Island
56%
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Example of a road with a median and pedestrian refuge islands.
Source: City of Charlotte, NC

More from US Dept of Transportation / FHA

- According to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (March 2020) Pedestrians 2018 data, NHTSA:
 1. “Pedestrian crashes account for approximately 17 percent of all traffic fatalities annually, and **74 percent of these occur at non-intersection locations. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help** improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time. “ – We had a median and island. Lets get it back!
 2. “Transportation agencies should consider medians or pedestrian refuge islands.... Traffic volumes over 9,000 vehicles per day. Medians/refuge islands should be at least 4-ft wide, but preferably 8ft...example locations that may benefit include Mid-block crossings.” – LFP does 11-14K cars

From PedBikeInfo.org

- In roadway configurations with 2 or more lanes that don't have a raised median, The USDOT Federal Highway Administration, pedestrian crash counter measures always recommends a “pedestrian refuge island”; see page 16. Not only should we have divided lanes, the median should be raised as this will slow the speed of bicycles crossing into the next lane.
- A Pedestrian refuge island is typically constructed in the middle of a 2-way street and provides a place for pedestrians to stand and wait for motorists to stop or yield while enhancing visibility of crossing pedestrians. This countermeasure is highly desirable for midblock pedestrian crossings... **Median islands may also be a candidate treatment for uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on 3-lane or 2-lane roads...** Consideration should be given to creating a two-stage crossing with the island to encourage pedestrians to **cross one direction of traffic at a time and look towards oncoming traffic before completing the second part of the crossing**. The minimum pedestrian refuge island width is approximately 6 feet.
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Don't trust the "Recommended Facility Plan"

- Page 34, In conclusion "Vision Zero represents a paradigm shift in traffic policy, stating that pedestrian and bicyclist severe injuries or fatalities are unacceptable, and **putting the onus on system designers rather than road and trail users to ensure a safe transportation system**. By removing the multi-lane threat, slowing vehicles, and reducing confusion between trail users and motorists, the ~~Recommended Facility Plan~~ **Road-Diet** will significantly increase safety and meet Montgomery County's Vision Zero policy." (replaced Facility Plan with Road-Diet)

As shown in these videos and supported by the provided documentation from various authorities on transportation design, the current "Linear Park" design **re-introduced the multi-lane threat** which presents:

- a more dangerous trail crossing to pedestrians and bicyclists
- a more dangerous undivided roadway for drivers, their passengers, and emergency vehicles or first responders.

And the **current design is Less Vision Zero** – We went from a divided roadway to an undivided roadway.

LETS RETURN TO VISION ZERO – WHICH FOR NOW IS “THE ROAD DIET”

In Parks recommendation on Page 36 -

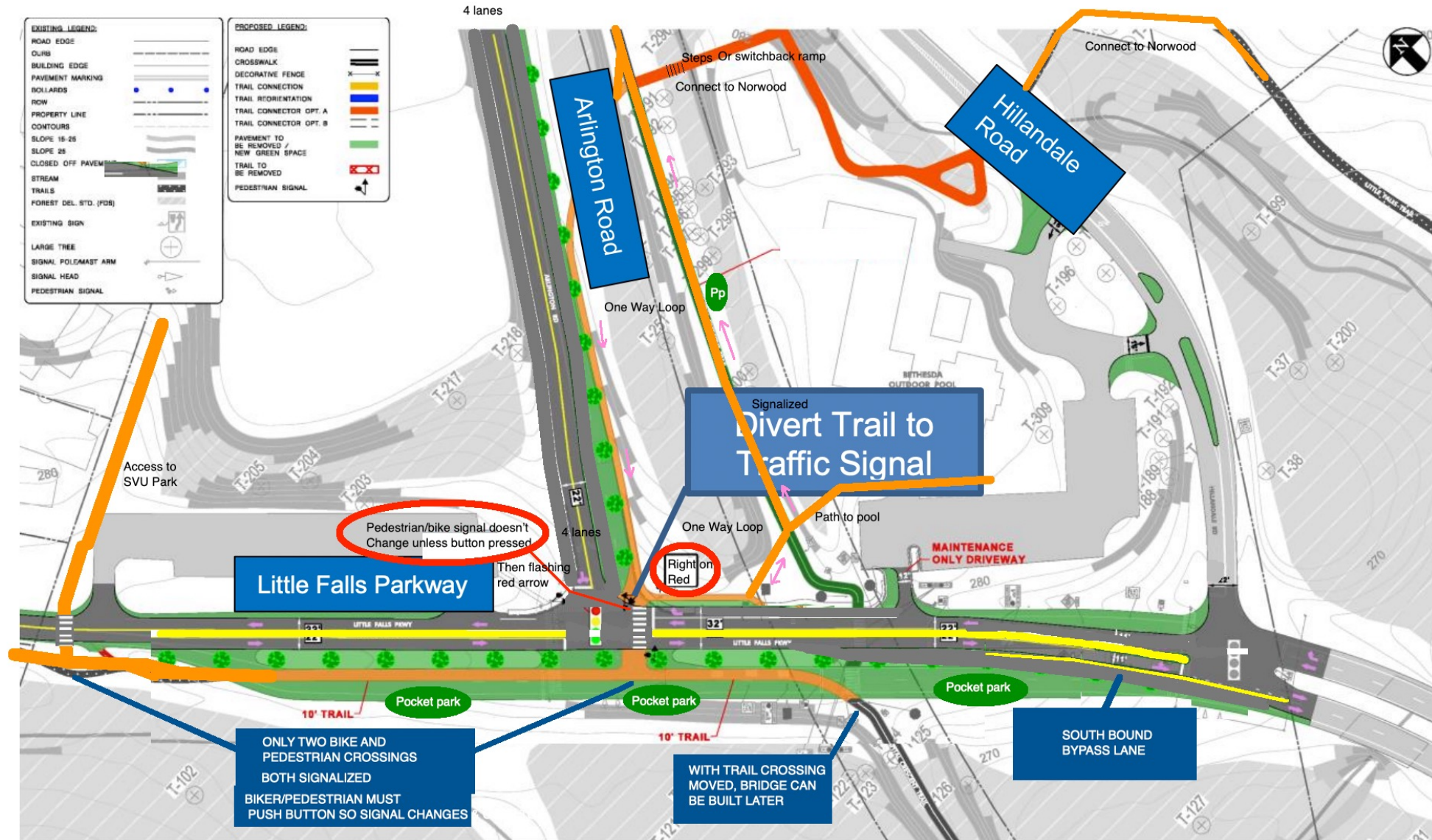
“There has been a significant reduction in crashes along LFP and at the CCT crossing since the interim road diet was implemented in 2017 (and zero accidents since the raised crosswalk was installed in 2020), showing significantly improved safety consistent with Vision Zero policy.”

Please SHOW US THAT SAFETY COMES FIRST FOR ALL RESIDENTS: Pedestrians, Bicyclists, and Vehicles

When reverting back to the Road-Diet, Lets also consider:

- Making the median crossing angled so pedestrians and cyclists look into traffic
- Adding rumble strips so bicyclists slow down (or respect the stop sign) prior to crossing LFP

Then lets Re-Consider Alternative B, but improved



Divided roadway = safer

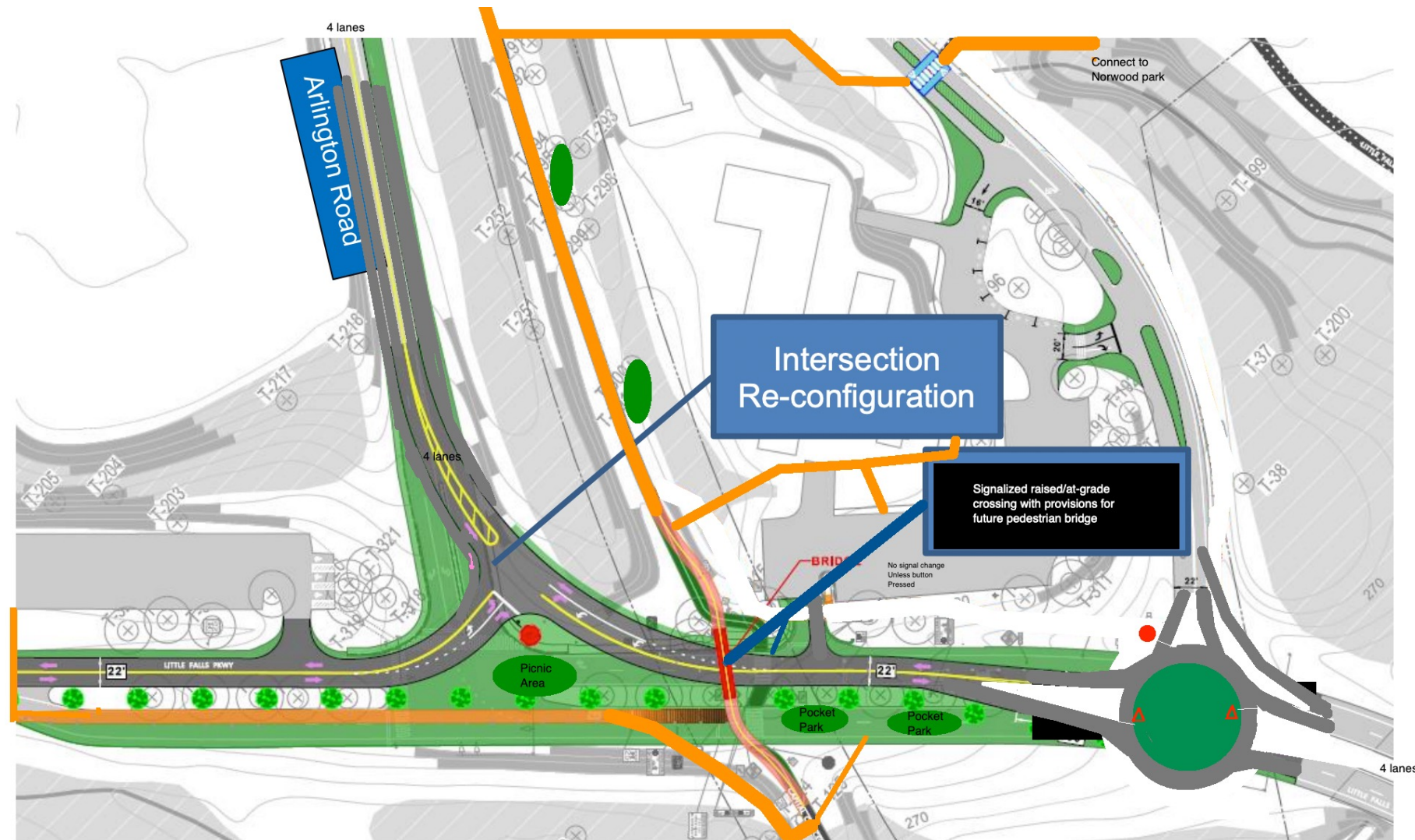
Linear Park to the left of pool = better location ...or running loop

Several pocket parks

Strategically located pedestrian crossings

Pedestrian crossings aligned with traffic signal for less delay, and signalized so no more bikes running stop signs

Or this improved Ultimate Plan...



Which costs a lot,
but this is the
busiest pedestrian
trail in the county

From: [Leanne Tobias](#)
To: [Carl Becker](#)
Cc: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [Marc Korman](#); [Ariana Senator Kelly](#); [Sara Delegate Love](#); [Marc Delegate Korman](#); [Marc.Elrch@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Meredith Wellington](#); [Friedson, Andrew](#); [county.council@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Pamela Dunn](#); [Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov](#); [Weisbroth, Nina](#); [Kathleen.Connor@mail.house.gov](#); [councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Coello, Catherine](#)
Subject: Re: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 3:58:53 PM
Attachments: [LFP Final Short Testimony .pdf](#)
[Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by Carl Becker.pdf](#)

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

Thanks to Carl for sharing his testimony— much appreciated.

FYI, Attached is Leanne Tobias's testimony for the Springfield Civic Association

Leanne Tobias
202-355-5270
leanne.tobias@malachitellc.com

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 30, 2023, at 3:50 PM, Carl Becker <carlgbecker@hotmail.com> wrote:

 [Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by Carl Becker.pptx](#)

Montgomery County Park and Planning Board,

Please find enclosed my testimony for Item #12 (in PDF and PowerPoint formats). I will testify in person this evening. I would also like to show a YouTube video which forwards from TakeBackLFP.net

Thank you,

Carl Becker
Board Member
Sumner Citizens Association
4905 Brookeway Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-873-3221

**LEANNE TOBIAS
ZONING OFFICER & BOARD MEMBER
SPRINGFIELD BETHESDA CIVIC ASSOCIATION
LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY
TESTIMONY
to the
MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PLANNING BOARD
March 30, 2023**

Little Falls Parkway: Against No-Median Configuration and Permanent Lane Closures

I'm Leanne Tobias, a Board Member of the Springfield Civic Association, which represents over 650 families in Springfield, Bethesda.

Little Falls Parkway is Springfield's major east-west road connection to Bethesda's downtown.

SCA asks that LFP be immediately restored to 2 lanes with a central median. Longer-term, we support reinstating 4 lanes between Hillandale Road and Dorset Avenue.

Our position is based on a new community survey — unlike Parks, which has yet to systematically consult affected neighborhoods.

The 631 person survey includes residents from 6 neighborhoods surrounding LFP, including Springfield. Almost 80% of respondents oppose the current LFP configuration and permanent lane closures. Some 84% believe that Montgomery Parks has not adequately consulted residents. Under 20% support the linear park. Results are accurate within 3 percentage points at the 90% confidence level.

	6 Neighborhoods (N=631)	Springfield (N=104)
Lane closures:		
Bad idea	79.2%	80.8%
Insufficient consultation by Parks	83.9%	84.2%
Support Linear Park	17.9%.	16.5%

Margin of
Error (90% +/-3% +/-8%
Confidence
Level)

We oppose the Parks proposal for several reasons:

The current configuration of Little Falls Parkway is unsafe:

- There is nowhere to pull over for emergencies.** The public record reports a head injury victim whose ambulance was delayed multiple times because traffic couldn't pull over.

- The new configuration makes LFP difficult to navigate safely.** Montgomery County Fire Chief Adam Jones warns of "constantly changing blind spots" that affect motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. We ask that the Planning Board review the many letters reporting near collisions.

Second, we're concerned about the accuracy of Parks' traffic analysis and urge additional studies.

The Parks analysis appears inconsistent with State Highway Administration data for LFP, relies heavily on pandemic-era traffic data and addresses neither emerging post-pandemic traffic patterns nor the 8.5 million square feet of development pending in downtown Bethesda, Friendship Heights and at Westbard — 5.5 million square feet underway and 3 million square feet zoned. Thrive 2050 has designated lower River Road as a Growth Corridor, which will add additional dense development in the immediate area.

Cutting LFP from 4 to 2 lanes under these conditions will:

- increase congestion on Wisconsin Avenue, River Road and other major arteries;
- encourage consumers to shop in DC, avoiding Bethesda; and
- increase neighborhood cut-through traffic.

Finally, the funds for the proposed linear park would be better spent on more important recreation priorities, including the proposed Willett Branch Greenway and improving the Capital Crescent and Little Falls Trails.

Thank you.

Little Falls Parkway

- 1) The Current Road Configuration should NOT be permanent
- 2) Sumner Opposes the Current Road Configuration and The Proposed Linear Park

Almost 3,500 have signed the Petition in opposition

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And the Linear Park design is even more dangerous than the pre-2016 multiple-lane threat...

The current trail crossing across two lanes of undivided roadway is more dangerous than the pre-2016 four lane crossing for the same factors which make it more dangerous than the Road-Diet roadway design (which led to the death of a bicyclist in 2016) plus its even worse now because pedestrians and bicyclists:

1. Face multi-lane threats from both directions because traffic backs up now in both directions. The vehicle creates the threat by being involuntarily stopped past the trail crossing.
2. More frequently face multi-lane threats - Vehicles involuntarily create multi lane threats because they are routinely backed up. Previous multi-lane threats were less frequent because vehicles usually stopped upon seeing the crossing pedestrian.
3. Have half as much distance to be seen by vehicles when southbound on the trail.
(complicated by blind spot from shrubs & padded post)

A Right Turn Lane won't fix the Multi-Threat

Adding a right turn lane at Arlington road will reduce northbound backups as long as right turns on red are allowed, but southbound backups will still occur because LFP is just one southbound lane from Arlington to Dorset Ave - the 2019 roadway designs showed 4 lanes south of Hillandale and never contemplated 2 lanes there.

- Southbound Backups at CCT: https://youtu.be/v4pO_pxDhf8
 - 0:00 Cars pull into grass to allow Emergency Vehicles through
 - 0:06 South-bound chicane, 2:46 confused driver in chicane
 - 0:27, 1:08, 2:52, 6:26 (side-view) South-bound back-ups creating "Multi-Lane Threat"
 - 4:47-6:26, 8:48- Bikes running stop sign, Bikes not looking north until crossing
 - 7:10 Traffic backed up both directions then Biker passes thru
 - 13:03 Accelerating Jeep almost hits biker
- Southbound Backups at Dorset Ave: <https://youtu.be/njSwHel-Zpc>

These videos were taken on cold days in fall/winter. Interactions will increase in warmer months as pedestrian volume increases.

Linear Park – Solution for imaginary problem

Little Falls Stream Valley Park totals around 160 acres and connects to other large area parks such as Norwood Park and Westmoreland Hills Park. Southern Bethesda has around 200 acres of contiguous park land connecting dozens of neighborhoods and the Crescent Trail.

Why is creating 1 acre of park with no parking next to passing vehicles so important when we already have 200 acres of Park? Widening the CCT has been on Parks radar for over 5 years.. Why hasn't it been widened?

The Open Parkway (area where Linear Park is now) was almost always empty and was grossly underutilized: <https://youtu.be/-Xeq8aynkpA>

Alternative A (&B) from 2019 had...

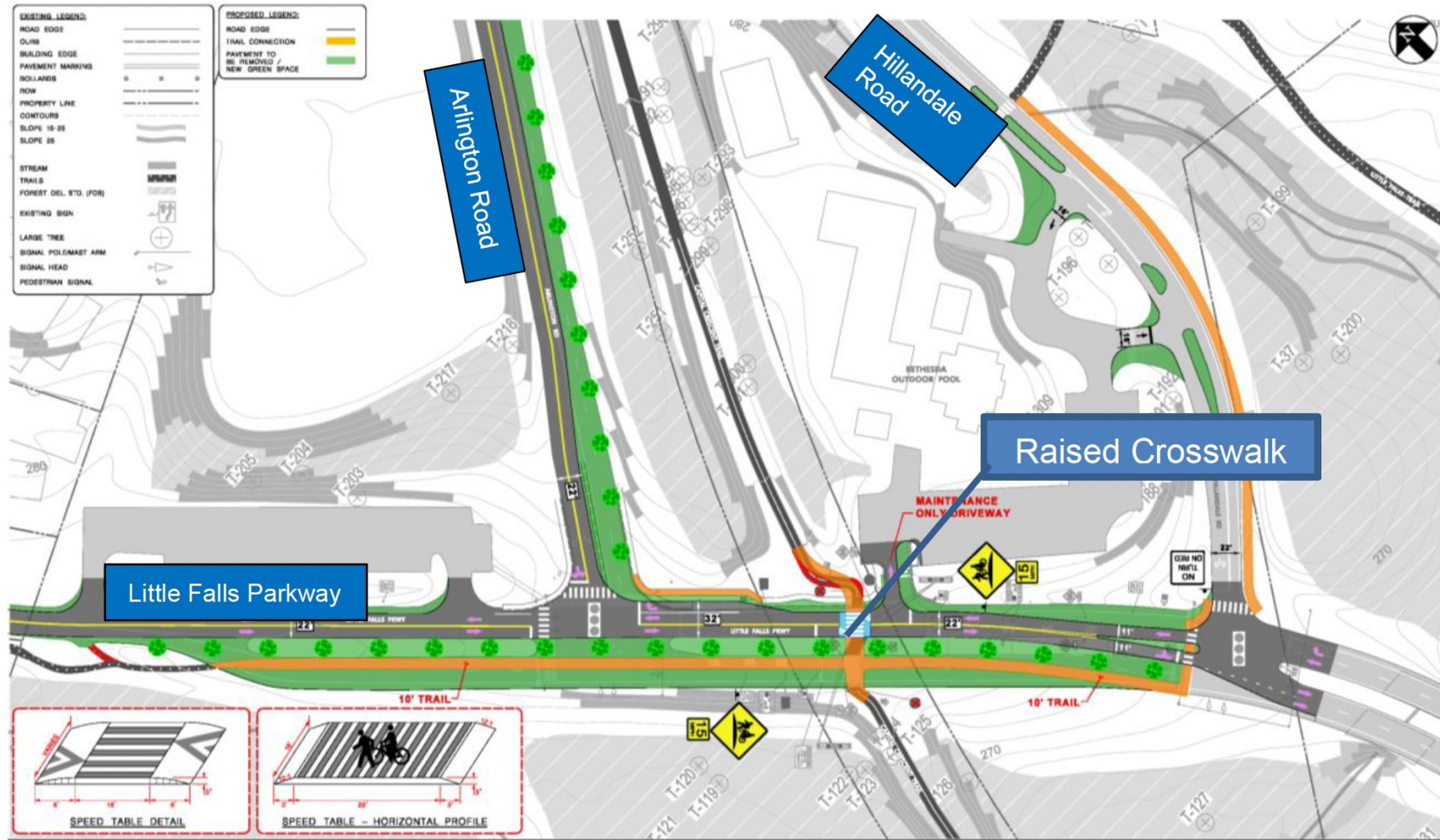


Figure 10: Alternate A: Permanent Road Diet (As Presented At Community Meeting #2)

....4 lanes
to Dorset

Proof the democratic process failed

- The current roadway alignment more resembles alternative A except none of Sabra's designs proposed halving vehicle lanes south of Bethesda Pool - **Parks slipped in this significant change which causes more delays and subjects drivers to a more dangerous undivided roadway with confusing chicane** – This attempt to implement the current Linear Park design proves **the democratic process has failed here.**
- According to Parks, Alternative A “permanently eliminates the multiple-lane threat potential, while the removal of the wide median provides a further safety benefit by simplifying the driver’s decision-making for when to yield the right-of-way to trail users in the crossing or approaching the crossing”. **Parks is implying that a median or pedestrian island is more dangerous - This contradicts further slides from the USDOT/FHA and as documented by my videos.**
- **And Parks ascertainment that the multi-lane threat is “permanently eliminated” is wrong as we see from my videos.** Narrowing the parkway south of Hillandale has caused traffic to back-up in the south bound direction and the multi-lane threat to reappear. Backups will increase as users cross from Bethesda pool to the Linear Park, especially in warmer months. We’ll soon have three pedestrian crossings in one block.
- **ALMOST 3,500 people have signed the online Petition in opposition to the current roadway configuration and Linear Park - TakeBackLFP.com**

Alternative B (also 4 lanes to Dorset)

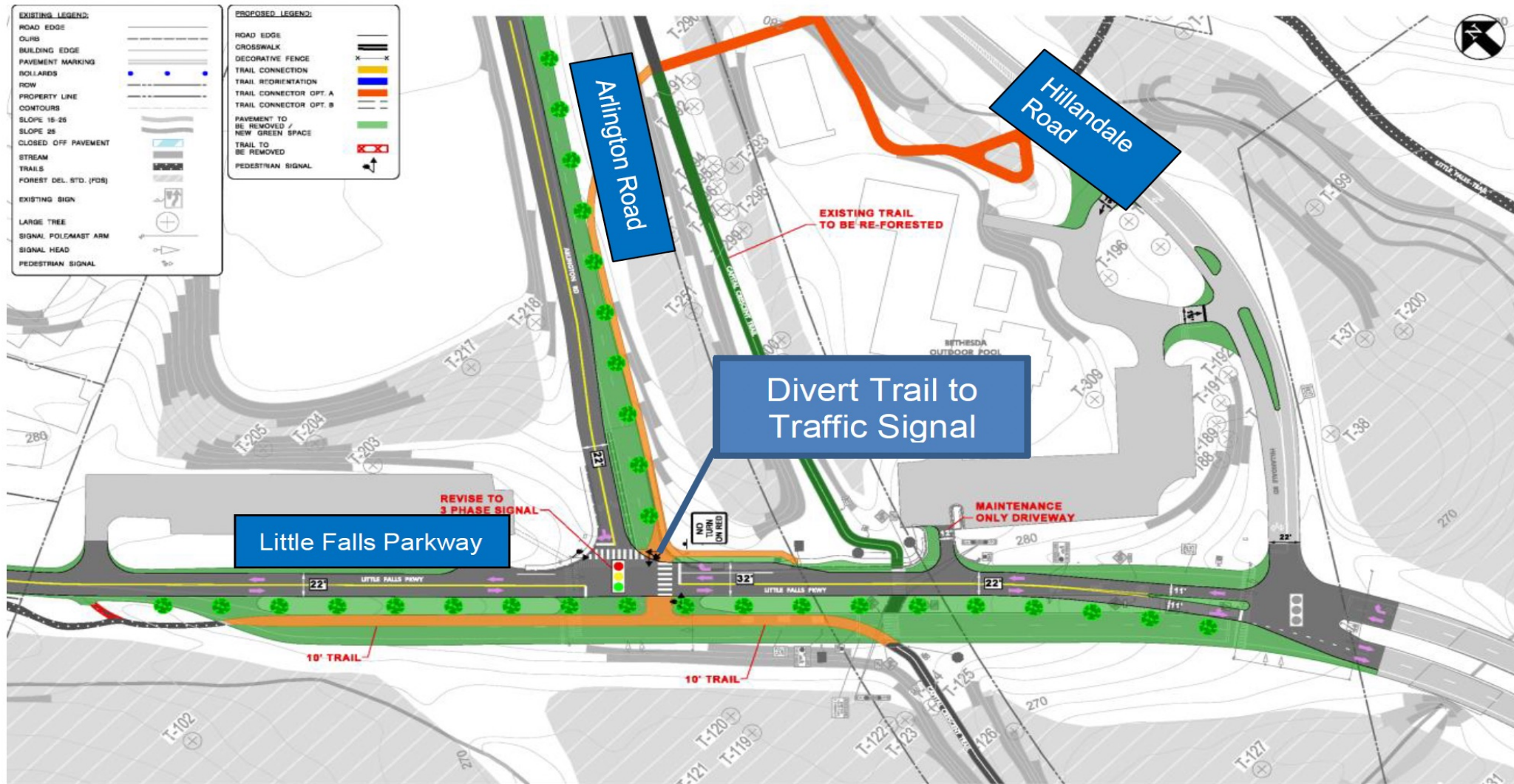


Figure 11: Alternate B, Trail Reorientation to Arlington Road Signal

Unpacking Alternative B - From Page 4 of MoCo Parks March 30, 2023 Memo

“With the success of the road diet at the CCT crossing in improving trail user safety, Parks presented a Facility Plan recommendation to the Montgomery County Planning Board in June 2019 to build upon the interim road diet with a permanent two-lane Parkway cross-section from Arlington Road to Hillandale Road. The May 2019 County Planning Board memorandum, *Facility Plan Recommendation for Capital Crescent Trail Crossing at Little Falls Parkway Safety Improvements Project*, contains additional information and concept plans. The Planning Board asked Parks to study re-alignment of the CCT trail crossing to the intersection with Arlington Road, with an improved pedestrian signal. The requested re-alignment had been studied during development of the facility plan but was ultimately **not recommended by Parks staff due to increased travel delays for vehicles as well as trail users**. ~ Per the 2019 Facility Plan, re-aligning the trail to the Arlington Road signal requires a dedicated pedestrian crossing only phase **that increases delays and travel times for all users**”

- The above reasoning is not logical. Why is a pedestrian crossing phase/signal worse than the current two lane, mid-block crossing? Mid block crossings are not safer than crossings at intersections. There should be no excuse to prioritize a mid-block crossing when a signalized crossing at an intersection is reasonable to achieve.
- Parks is trying to implement a plan that wasn't even proposed in 2019. Instead of reducing vehicle lanes for just one block as previously proposed in Alternatives A&B (Arlington to just before Hillandale) **vehicle lanes were halved for half a mile of roadway (Arlington to Dorset Ave), a dangerous chicane was added which was never part of previous Sabra designs, the roadway is now undivided, and traffic now backs up in both directions during commuting hours. The point: The current roadway design is even less sensitive to travel delays, pedestrian, and vehicle safety.**
- The current Linear Park design presents vehicles with 4 stopping points in about two blocks: 1) Pedestrian path across LFP at the SVU Park, 2) Arlington Road Traffic Light, 3) Capital Crescent Trail Crossing, and 4) Hillandale Road traffic light (where another people choice or goat path might inevitably be created from the Bethesda Pool parking lot to the Linear Park). Alternative B would have had just 3 stopping points by consolidating the trail crossing to Arlington Road.
- This is the busiest pedestrian path in the county where pedestrians cross Little Falls Parkway very frequently and where Bicyclists exhibit absolute disregard for stop signs. There has to be a better way!
- **Having bicycles and pedestrians cross an intersection while vehicles are stopped at Arlington Rd would make Alternative B MORE efficient than Alternative A for vehicles and much safer than bikes running stop signs while crossing two lanes and looking both directions.**

Page 26 - 5,100' in 4:36/4:38 (peak) is 12.5mph avg

Table 5: AM Peak hour Southbound Fairfax Road to MD 190 River Road

Run #	Travel time
1	0:03:38
2	0:03:14
3	0:04:36
4	0:03:54
5	0:02:49
Average	0:03:38

Table 6: PM Peak hour Northbound MD 190 River Road to Fairfax Road

Run #	Travel time
1	0:04:38
2	0:03:03
3	0:03:57
4	0:02:42
5	0:02:29
Average	0:03:22

*LFP has 6 lanes approaching River Road:

2 northbound

2 southbound

1 left onto River

1 right onto River

- **Parks did not measure actual vehicle speeds, only averages.**
- **That's almost 5 minutes to travel one mile (5,280')**
- Or half the posted speed limit (avg)
- Times 3 & 1 are an Inferior level of service (LOS) Backups causing "Multi-lane threats" at trail crossing
- Not based on Spring/Summer data when increases in pedestrian volume will have greater impact on vehicle flow, increase backups, cause more threats, and increase trip times.
- This had been a 35mph roadway for most of its existence

PARKING, ADA/HANDICAP COMPLIANCE

- “There are currently two parking lots adjacent to the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project. One is at the Bethesda Pool and another north of Arlington Road. Parks received minimal complaints about parking to access the Little Falls Parkway Open Parkway when the road was completely shut down, **so we do not believe** this will be an issue if the road diet is kept and a linear park is activated. As part of the public engagement for any future park in this area, Parks will evaluate parking demand and look to improve pedestrian and bicyclist access.”

A Linear Park will create another dangerous parkway crossing (although utilization will be disappointing).

”parks will evaluate parking demand” - There is no provision for safe parking or ADA compliance, the pool lot gets packed in summer, and therefore future parking issues cannot be solved.

Vision Zero deserves better than “We Believe”

Lets return to a divided Little Falls Parkway

- According to the US Department of Transportation, "**For pedestrians to safely cross a roadway, they must estimate vehicle speeds, determine acceptable gaps in traffic based on their walking speed, and predict vehicle paths. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.**" (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/medians-and-pedestrian-refuge-islands-urban-and-suburban-areas>, October 2022). - The CCT crossing now forces pedestrians to cross two lanes at once.
- The Federal Highway Administration has determined that the **head-on crash rate for *divided* roads is 30% lower than for undivided roads, and total crash rate is 42% less.**

The first bit is from DOT, as you can see. The second is from various state highway departments, citing the FHA as their source.

With a median or “refuge island” at the trail crossing

“A Pedestrian refuge island is typically constructed in the middle of a 2-way street and provides a place for pedestrians to stand and wait for motorists to stop or yield while enhancing visibility of crossing pedestrians. This countermeasure is highly desirable for midblock pedestrian crossings... Median islands may also be a candidate treatment for uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on 3-lane or 2-lane roads... Consideration should be given to creating a two-stage crossing with the island to encourage pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time and look towards oncoming traffic before completing the second part of the crossing. The minimum pedestrian refuge island width is approximately 6 feet. “

https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/Webinar_PBIC_080918.pdf

Refuge Island

Enhances visibility of crossing pedestrians

Allows pedestrians to break up long crossing distances

Can reduce pedestrian crashes by 32%




Image: Bellevue, WA (Dan Burden, PBIC Image Library)

From the USDOT / FHA:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

OFFICE OF SAFETY
Proven Safety Countermeasures



Safety Benefits:

Median with Marked Crosswalk
46%
reduction in pedestrian crashes.²

Pedestrian Refuge Island
56%
reduction in pedestrian crashes.²

Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas


A **median** is the area between opposing lanes of traffic, excluding turn lanes. Medians in urban and suburban areas can be defined by pavement markings, raised medians, or islands to separate motorized and non-motorized road users.

A **pedestrian refuge island** (or crossing area) is a median with a refuge area that is intended to help protect pedestrians who are crossing a road.


Pedestrian crashes account for approximately 17 percent of all traffic fatalities annually, and 74 percent of these occur at non-intersection locations.¹ For pedestrians to safely cross a roadway, they must estimate vehicle speeds, determine acceptable gaps in traffic based on their walking speed, and predict vehicle paths. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time.

Transportation agencies should consider medians or pedestrian refuge islands in curbed sections of urban and suburban multilane roadways, particularly in areas with a significant mix of pedestrian and vehicle traffic, traffic volumes over 9,000 vehicles per day, and travel speeds 35 mph or greater. Medians/refuge islands should be at least 4-ft wide, but preferably 8 ft for pedestrian comfort. Some example locations that may benefit from medians or pedestrian refuge islands include:

- Mid-block crossings.
- Approaches to multilane intersections.
- Areas near transit stops or other pedestrian-focused sites.



Example of a road with a median and pedestrian refuge islands. Source: City of Charlotte, NC



Median and pedestrian refuge island near a roundabout. Source: www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burden

For more information on this and other FHWA Proven Safety Countermeasures, please visit <https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/provencountermeasures/> and https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/step/docs/techSheet_PedRefugeIsland2018.pdf.

FHWA-SA-21-044

ZERO IS OUR GOAL
Eliminating traffic deaths

¹ National Center for Statistics and Analysis, (2020, March). Pedestrians: 2016 Data Traffic Safety Facts Report No. DOT HS 812 880. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.
² Desktop Reference for Crash Reduction Factors, FHWA-SA-08-011, September 2008, Table 11.

Safety Benefits:

Median with Marked Crosswalk
46%
reduction in pedestrian crashes.²

Pedestrian Refuge Island
56%
reduction in pedestrian crashes.²

Transportation agencies should consider medians or pedestrian refuge islands in curbed sections of urban and suburban multilane



Example of a road with a median and pedestrian refuge islands.
Source: City of Charlotte, NC

More from US Dept of Transportation / FHA

- According to the National Center for Statistics and Analysis (March 2020) Pedestrians 2018 data, NHTSA:
 1. “Pedestrian crashes account for approximately 17 percent of all traffic fatalities annually, and **74 percent of these occur at non-intersection locations. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help** improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time. “ – We had a median and island. Lets get it back!
 2. “Transportation agencies should consider medians or pedestrian refuge islands.... Traffic volumes over 9,000 vehicles per day. Medians/refuge islands should be at least 4-ft wide, but preferably 8ft...example locations that may benefit include Mid-block crossings.” – LFP does 11-14K cars

From PedBikeInfo.org

- In roadway configurations with 2 or more lanes that don't have a raised median, The USDOT Federal Highway Administration, pedestrian crash counter measures always recommends a “pedestrian refuge island”; see page 16. Not only should we have divided lanes, the median should be raised as this will slow the speed of bicycles crossing into the next lane.
- A Pedestrian refuge island is typically constructed in the middle of a 2-way street and provides a place for pedestrians to stand and wait for motorists to stop or yield while enhancing visibility of crossing pedestrians. This countermeasure is highly desirable for midblock pedestrian crossings... **Median islands may also be a candidate treatment for uncontrolled pedestrian crossings on 3-lane or 2-lane roads...** Consideration should be given to creating a two-stage crossing with the island to encourage pedestrians to **cross one direction of traffic at a time and look towards oncoming traffic before completing the second part of the crossing**. The minimum pedestrian refuge island width is approximately 6 feet.
- https://www.pedbikeinfo.org/pdf/Webinar_PBIC_080918.pdf

Don't trust the "Recommended Facility Plan"

- Page 34, In conclusion "Vision Zero represents a paradigm shift in traffic policy, stating that pedestrian and bicyclist severe injuries or fatalities are unacceptable, and **putting the onus on system designers rather than road and trail users to ensure a safe transportation system**. By removing the multi-lane threat, slowing vehicles, and reducing confusion between trail users and motorists, the ~~Recommended Facility Plan~~ **Road-Diet** will significantly increase safety and meet Montgomery County's Vision Zero policy." (replaced Facility Plan with Road-Diet)

As shown in these videos and supported by the provided documentation from various authorities on transportation design, the current "Linear Park" design **re-introduced the multi-lane threat** which presents:

- a more dangerous trail crossing to pedestrians and bicyclists
- a more dangerous undivided roadway for drivers, their passengers, and emergency vehicles or first responders.

And the **current design is Less Vision Zero** – We went from a divided roadway to an undivided roadway.

LETS RETURN TO VISION ZERO – WHICH FOR NOW IS “THE ROAD DIET”

In Parks recommendation on Page 36 -

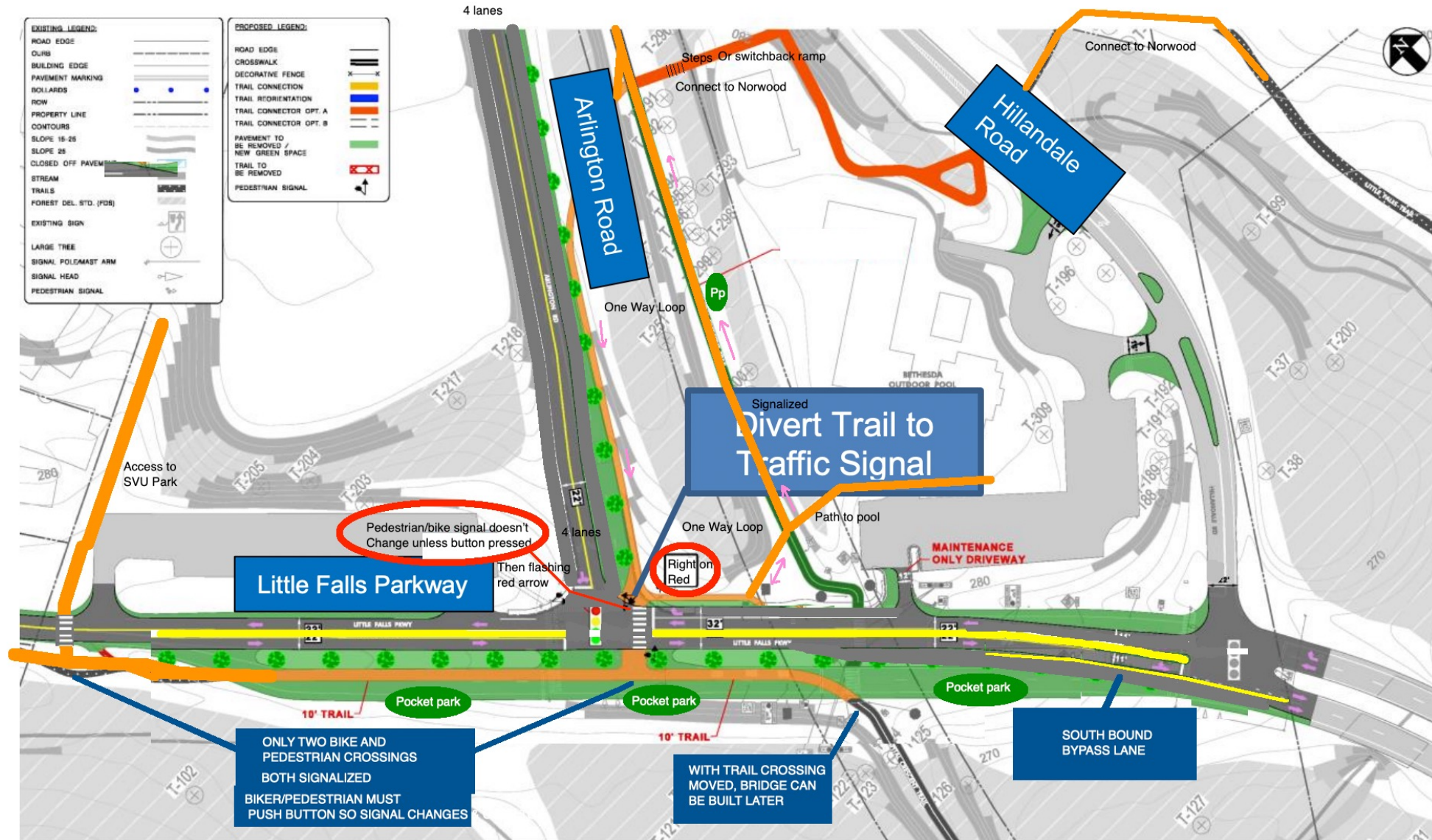
“There has been a significant reduction in crashes along LFP and at the CCT crossing since the interim road diet was implemented in 2017 (and zero accidents since the raised crosswalk was installed in 2020), showing significantly improved safety consistent with Vision Zero policy.”

Please SHOW US THAT SAFETY COMES FIRST FOR ALL RESIDENTS: Pedestrians, Bicyclists, and Vehicles

When reverting back to the Road-Diet, Lets also consider:

- Making the median crossing angled so pedestrians and cyclists look into traffic
- Adding rumble strips so bicyclists slow down (or respect the stop sign) prior to crossing LFP

Then lets Re-Consider Alternative B, but improved



Divided roadway = safer

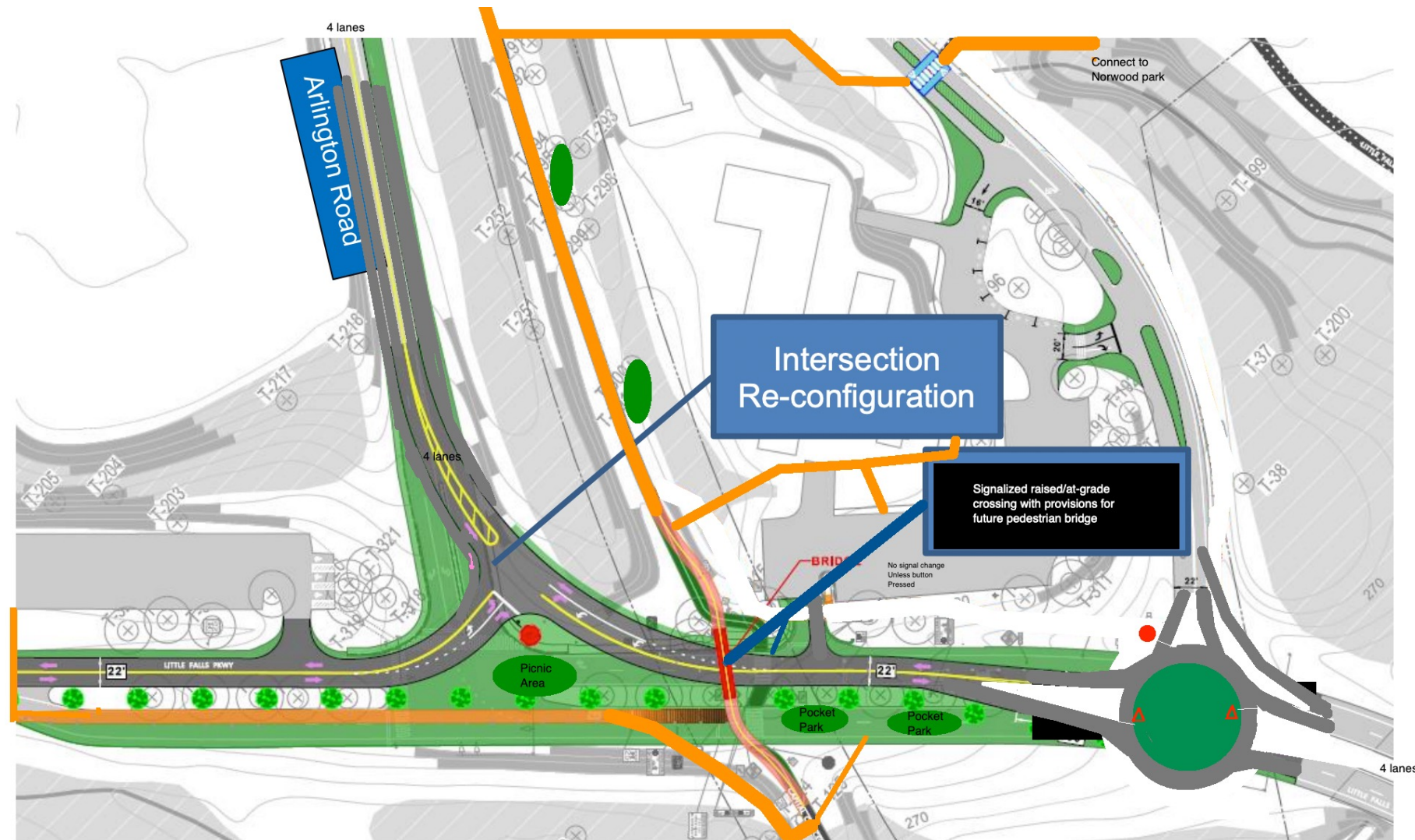
Linear Park to the left of pool = better location ...or running loop

Several pocket parks

Strategically located pedestrian crossings

Pedestrian crossings aligned with traffic signal for less delay, and signalized so no more bikes running stop signs

Or this improved Ultimate Plan...



Which costs a lot, but this is the busiest pedestrian trail in the county

From: [Joan Sergay](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Supporting the Little Falls Parkway Pilot
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 4:18:46 PM

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

Hello,

I'm a Bethesda native who lives right off Little Falls Parkway. I'm writing in support of the pilot program. The ability to use the space to walk, run, and bike is not only pleasurable - it is a matter of safety on a very dangerous road that has historically been fatal. Please prioritize pedestrians and bikers over drivers.

Thank you,
Joan Sergay

From: sergaya@aol.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: In support of the pilot program for Little Falls Parkway
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 4:22:00 PM

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

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a Bethesda resident who lives near Little Falls Parkway. I am writing in support of the pilot program. The ability to use the space to walk, run, and bike is not only pleasurable - it is a matter of safety on a very dangerous road that has historically been fatal to both people and animals. Please prioritize pedestrians and bikers over drivers!

Sincerely,

Amy Reichert

From: [Amy Reichert](#)
To: sergaya@aol.com; [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: In support of the pilot program for Little Falls Parkway
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 6:03:51 PM

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

Sent from my iPhone

On Mar 30, 2023, at 4:21 PM, sergaya@aol.com wrote:

To Whom it May Concern,

I am a Bethesda resident who lives near Little Falls Parkway. I am writing in support of the pilot program. The ability to use the space to walk, run, and bike is not only pleasurable - it is a matter of safety on a very dangerous road that has historically been fatal to both people and animals. Please prioritize pedestrians and bikers over drivers!

Sincerely,

Amy Reichert

5211 Worthington Drive

Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Nicolas Lloreda](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: We give full support to creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 9:26:30 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Little Falls Parkway roadway reconfiguration has been a success. Montgomery Parks reports, “results of multiple traffic studies show that the reconfigured lane set-up reduces cut-through traffic in neighborhoods surrounding Little Falls Parkway, maintains a safe Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing, and safely accommodates vehicle traffic.” And the reconfiguration creates much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists.

I support next steps, in particular, creating a “linear park” in the repurposed roadway with recreational amenities, to be accessible to park users seven days a week.

Please count me as a Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project supporter.

Thank you,
Nicolas Lloreda
4813 Falstone Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [TOsumi](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [MC-LFP](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Project - tonight's hearing
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 11:24:36 PM

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

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

I am a Bethesda resident who virtually attended tonight's public hearing and I want you to know that I support the Little Falls Parkway Project. I am an avid cyclist and, because of the changes to Little Falls Parkway, I am now able to safely bike on the Parkway, and I see more and more cyclists gaining confidence and doing the same.

In listening to the testimony tonight, I was impressed by the planning and study that went into this project and the analysis presented. The bottom line is that this plan increases everyone's safety while properly maintaining vehicular flow and this single fact - which is supported by actual, real evidence - should be the deciding factor. It seems almost silly to state the obvious: slowing down traffic and reducing car lanes makes everyone safer.

In tonight's meeting, those opposing the plan made no actual counter-arguments to the safety argument. Instead, they focused their ire on the "wastefulness" of possibly opening up a linear multi-purpose park. This is simply a distraction but I do find it fascinating that there exists in Bethesda people who sincerely believe (stated over and over) that Bethesda has too many parks. Every post-pandemic poll in existence - from the local to the national level - shows overwhelming majorities do not agree with this opinion at all. I suppose it is not surprising that many of the people making this argument live in wealthy, traffic-controlled neighborhoods and enjoy ready access to a spacious backyard. In fact, many of these people grew up in an era when driving your car on a parkway was considered a healthy way to enjoy nature.

But the world is changing. Bethesda is changing and it will (hopefully) include people with new and fresh ideas. If we are to thrive in the future we need to start building now for more density, and provide for more healthy transportation options and public spaces.

On a personal note, time and again I've seen naysayers proven wrong. I lived in Seattle in the 1990s when the Burke Gilman Trail, one of the earliest rails-to-trails, was being built. It was implemented because people (and leaders) had the vision to imagine a larger community that didn't yet exist. And now it does, and the BGT is so popular that it's virtually impossible to buy a house along its path. Now, everyone claims that they were always for it.

Thank you for hosting the public hearing tonight. I learned a lot.

Sincerely,

Tim Osumi

From: [Carl G Becker](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Coello, Catherine](#)
Cc: [Young, Kimberly](#); [Thompkins, Melissa](#)
Subject: Re: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm
Date: Friday, March 31, 2023 5:32:33 AM

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

Hello Catherine and Chair Zyontz,

Much of what Parks staff said in their testimony conflicts with:

- 1) documents US Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration published in numerous technical reports; which I linked in my 25 page power point presentation but was not able to cover in my presentation.
- 2) testimony from traffic engineer Neil Parrett. Was his testimony received in time?
- 3) what my four YouTube videos show but couldn't begin to explain but would like to. They are linked in my 25 page PP.
- 4) documents previously published by Parks! As explained in my PP.

I'm wondering where we go from here. I need to know if the testimony I submitted online will be reviewed by the Planning Board. Can I request individual followup meetings with Planning Board members? A group meeting?

I'd also like to be involved with Parks Staff in devising a better plan. I have so much time invested in taking videos, analyzing traffic patterns, and researching online. Many of the ideas and analysis provided by Parks staff makes we wonder if they have ever been to the site during rush hour! My family lives so close to this park and trail crossing and use it daily with my two young boys and toddler daughter... my videos speak volumes but I've seen several more frightening near collisions between cars and bikers at the trail crossing that I don't have on video. If a child followed an adult across the current two lane parkway crossing, likely running a stop sign, then there is a good chance they get hit by a vehicle. The previous divided roadway was much safer. Having to look only one way at a time was safer. To argue the opposite is insanity! Blind spots exist now, both northbound and southbound. The slower traffic crawls, the more chance for multi lane threats from blind spots. And these blind spots aren't because of driver error like they were in 2016. They are inherent when a backed up car stops past the trail crossing just as an oncoming vehicle approach's from the opposite direction. I've seen several adults come within a foot or two of hitting a vehicle.

I met with Bob Turnbull last May and showed him around 3 miles of dirt goat trails / peoples choice paths in little falls park. These trails are used by thousands of pedestrians on a weekly basis but parks doesn't maintain them. The problem is that trees often fall and block the paths which causes pedestrians and mountain bikers to create new paths around the fallen trees, which creates more disturbance to the land. If parks were to maintain these trails then the trails would be safer (many dangerous hanger trees loom over these paths), the user experience would be improved, and then parks could put these paths on their website for more people to use at no cost other than maintenance! Parks told me that they don't have the bandwidth to maintain these trails. I was deflated to hear this, especially in light of their pursuit of this silly linear park. They'd rather mess up a critical roadway which only increases the amount of

nearby parkland by 1/2%, yet they don't want to be able to share 3 miles of amazing pathways!

Carl Becker

Realtor
Principal Broker
Premier Properties
DC | MD | VA

m: 301 873 3221
@CarlBeckerHomes
PremierPropertiesDC.com

On Mar 30, 2023, at 10:43 PM, Carl Becker <carlgbecker@hotmail.com> wrote:

Thank you, Catherine, for making my materials available this evening from the laptop. That was a hi-tech setup you all have! And a first for me. Were my materials and testimony submitted in time to go "on-record" for item 12?

Carl Becker

Realtor
Principal Broker
Premier Properties
DC | MD | VA

m: 301 873 3221
@CarlBeckerHomes
PremierPropertiesDC.com

On Mar 30, 2023, at 4:24 PM, MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Good afternoon,

I am confirming receipt of your presentation. We will have a copy saved for the record, and it will be available to you to control as you give your testimony before the Board. Please note, per the Chair's discretion, group representatives will have 5 minutes to testify, and individuals will have 3 minutes to testify.

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

From: Carl Becker <carlbecker@hotmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 3:50 PM

To: Zyontz, Jeffrey <Jeffrey.Zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>; Piñero, Roberto <Roberto.Pinero@mncppc-mc.org>; Pedoeem, Mitra <Mitra.Pedoeem@mncppc-mc.org>; Hedrick, James <James.Hedrick@mncppc-mc.org>; Bartley, Shawn <Shawn.Bartley@mncppc-mc.org>; MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>

Cc: Marc Korman <mkorman@gmail.com>; Ariana Senator Kelly <ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us>; Sara Delegate Love <sara.love@house.state.md.us>; Marc Delegate Korman <Marc.Korman@house.state.md.us>; marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Meredith Wellington <meredith.wellington@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Friedson, Andrew <andrew.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; Pamela Dunn <Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Weisbroth, Nina <Nina.Weisbroth@mail.house.gov>; Kathleen.Connor@mail.house.gov; Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>

Subject: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm

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

[<~WRD3605.jpg>](#)

[Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by Carl Becker.pptx](#)

Montgomery County Park and Planning Board,

Please find enclosed my testimony for Item #12 (in PDF and PowerPoint formats). I will testify in person this evening. I would also like to show a YouTube video which forwards from TakeBackLFP.net

Thank you,

Carl Becker
Board Member
Sumner Citizens Association
4905 Brookeway Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-873-3221

<Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by Carl
Becker.pdf>

From: [TJ Moore](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Friday, March 31, 2023 6:00:39 AM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Little Falls Parkway roadway reconfiguration has been a success. Montgomery Parks reports, “results of multiple traffic studies show that the reconfigured lane set-up reduces cut-through traffic in neighborhoods surrounding Little Falls Parkway, maintains a safe Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing, and safely accommodates vehicle traffic.” And the reconfiguration creates much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists.

I support next steps, in particular, creating a “linear park” in the repurposed roadway with recreational amenities, to be accessible to park users seven days a week.

Please count me as a Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project supporter.

Thank you,
TJ Moore
4847 Bayard Blvd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Cynthia Rubenstein](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Friday, March 31, 2023 11:24:34 AM

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz,

I'm writing today to express my hope that the Planning Board will approve moving forward with a lane reduction (road diet) for a section of Little Falls Parkway. This approval would allow Montgomery Parks to create over an acre of new park space in an urban area without the need to purchase new parkland.

The addition of this new park space would bring opportunities for Montgomery County parks users from across the county: riding bikes, walking, relaxing, playing games, enjoying nature, etc.

I am a frequent Montgomery County parks user and live near two-lane Sligo Creek Park. I clearly see the value-add for Montgomery County parks users if there is a reduction to two-lanes and new parkland is created on Little Falls Parkway.

This is a rare opportunity to add multi-use park space in a dense urbanized area of our county. This is a "no-brainer."

Sincerely,

Cynthia Rubenstein

575 Thayer Avenue, #201

Silver Spring, MD 20910

From: [Neil Parrott](#)
To: [Coello, Catherine](#)
Subject: Fwd: Little Falls Parkway - Engineering Report March 20, 2023
Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 3:30:30 PM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[Brudis Engineering Report March 30 2023.pdf](#)

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

Good afternoon, Catherine,

Thank you for sending information for tonight's meeting. I read that this is late, but I am hoping you can provide the following attachment to the Planning Commission Members. I will also bring hard copies of the report.

The attached is a copy of a traffic study that we just completed for Little Falls Parkway. I'd also like this information to get to the members for the April 13th Montgomery County Planning Commission Meeting.

Thank you in advance for your help,
Neil

<!--[if !vml]->

<!--[endif]>

Neil C. Parrott, P.E., PTOE
Traffic Engineering Division Director
BRUDIS & ASSOCIATES, INC.
11000 Broken Land Parkway Suite 450
Columbia, Maryland 21044
O: 410-884-3607 ext. 285
C: 240-313-5493

BAI complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and will afford minority firms the full and fair opportunity to submit a proposal and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

Little Falls Parkway

TRANSPORTATION ANALYSIS

March 30, 2023

Submitted by:



Brudis & Associates, Inc.
Consulting Engineers

Little Falls Parkway Transportation Analysis

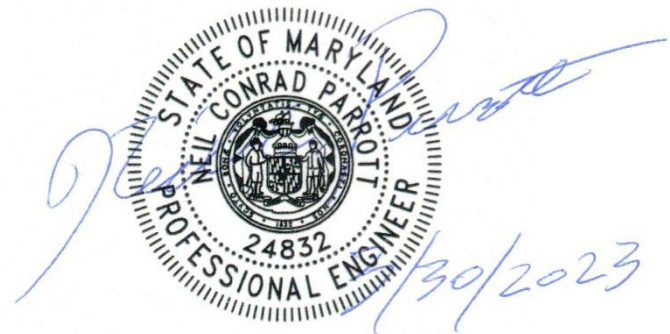
Executive Summary

Little Falls Parkway has undergone significant changes since a bicycle fatality occurred at its crossing of the Capital Crescent Trail in 2016. The change implemented in January of 2017 has had the most beneficial results by increasing safety without reducing capacity of the roadway.

However, the changes implemented in 2022 resulted in a 33.7% reduction of traffic using the parkway. The change to bi-directional traffic on one side of the median made in October of 2022 has decreased the safety and capacity along Little Falls Parkway.

In particular, safety at the Capital Crescent Trail has been decreased by forcing pedestrians and bicyclists to cross 24 feet of traffic moving in both directions instead, of 12 feet of traffic at a time only having to look in one direction. The new configuration results in sight-distance concerns that did not exist in the previous configuration.

The 2022 changes should be reversed to increase safety, to return capacity to the roadway, and to increase the aesthetics and original intent of the roadway. In addition, *efforts should continue to be made to increase, not decrease, the safety of the Capital Crescent Trail crossing of Little Falls Parkway.*



Submitted by:



Brudis & Associates, Inc.
Consulting Engineers

Introduction and Project Overview

Little Falls Parkway from MD 191 (Bradley Blvd.) to MD 190 (River Road) has undergone significant changes since 2017 after having remained in the same configuration for 60 years. The Montgomery County Planning Board is now considering making the recent changes permanent and is seeking public comment.

This transportation analysis is being put together on behalf of the Kenwood Citizens Association and the Town of Somerset in order to provide a fresh look at the changes from professional engineers that have not been involved in the changes to this point. To conduct the analysis, past data has been utilized including traffic and pedestrian counts, crash history, and analyzing past traffic studies in the area. In addition, new data was collected, on-site observations by a professional engineer at different times and on different days were conducted, and computer simulation analyses have been completed.

Historical Perspective and Comment

The section along Little Falls Parkway being analyzed was constructed in 1957, going from Bradley Blvd. to River Road. The photo on the right is from the 1959-1960 Fiscal Year Report for the Maryland National Capital Park and Planning Commission. The report indicates that the roadway was built to “open new areas of the scenic park” and to “improve circulation in the Bethesda Community.”¹

Driving in and around the Bethesda area shows that improved circulation is very much needed. Data shows that this traffic relief is needed as nearby intersections are operating at a failing level-of-service with a high number of crashes. The past planners accurately projected into the future realizing that this stretch of Little Falls Parkway would be needed to provide relief to other over-capacity roadways and to provide access to important park amenities in the area like the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT), the Bethesda Pool, and Little Falls Stream Valley Park.



Development of park areas depends to a great extent on providing good access roads. The Commission has constructed almost 18 miles of park roads to pave the way for more intensive use of park facilities. During the last fiscal year a half-mile extension of Little Falls Parkway from River Road to Massachusetts Avenue was begun. This project, as shown in the two photos on this page, will not only open up new areas of the scenic park but will improve traffic circulation in the Bethesda community. Future plans call for extension of the parkway to MacArthur Boulevard where it will be connected to the George Washington Memorial Parkway. The initial one-mile stretch of parkway was constructed from Bradley Boulevard to River Road in 1957. Arrow on the aerial photo shows the path of the half-mile extension now underway.

¹ <https://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/transere/te1/te38/000000/000008/1960%20annual%20report.pdf>

The National Park Service Website indicates that, “Parkways are beautifully designed roads and often include pull offs where visitors can enjoy scenic views.”² In fact, as originally designed, Little Falls Parkway was a beautifully designed road which has pull-off points on its northern and southern ends.

Unfortunately, the current roadway restrictions severely limit the purpose of the roadway. Instead of creating a relaxing and beautiful trip that provides relief to the nearby roadway system, it is now a confusing roadway with traffic control devices that don’t meet parkway aesthetic specifications and limit travel along the roadway by intentionally removing traveled lanes and turning lanes, making them a less desirable travel option.

Roadway Progression

2016 Fatal Crash Starts the Process:

Little Falls Parkway has experienced many changes beginning in 2017 and progressing until the roadway condition that exists today. The incident that started the process was a fatal crash involving a bicyclist and a car at the crosswalk where the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crosses Little Falls Parkway near the Bethesda Pool.

One reason that a crash could occur along a four-lane roadway could be that the outside lane sees and stops for the bicyclist or pedestrian, but the motorists in the inside lane doesn’t see the person and strikes them. Vision 0 suggests that crossings should be limited to one lane in each direction if possible to reduce this type of crash from occurring. This logic contributed to Montgomery Parks closing the outside lane in both directions along Little Falls Parkway at the CCT. The revised lane configuration is shown in Figure 1.

At this point, it is important to study the actual reason for the fatal crash to see if the roadway changes could have prevented the crash. After an investigation into the crash, in December of 2016, Ramon Korionoff, a spokesman for the Montgomery County State’s Attorney’s Office indicated that, “This is a tragic case where two senior citizens crashed at an intersection.”

The crash investigation found that the driver was not at fault, that no other cars were in the area at the time of the crash, that the bicyclists did not slow down or yield the right-of-way, and that sight distance to the very low recumbent bike was restricted by a guardrail.³



Figure 1: First Phase of Little Falls Parkway Roadway Modifications

² <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/transportation/parkways.htm>

³ <https://moco360.media/2016/12/14/no-charges-to-be-filed-against-driver-who-struck-cyclist-at-capital-crescent-trail-crossing/>

Since the issue was a bicyclist not obeying the law in addition to experiencing restricted sight distance, it does not appear that the restrictions at the intersection would have prevented this crash unless it increased the sight distance for the motorists and bicyclists as they approached the crossing.

Covid-19 Shutdown:

The condition in Figure 1 lasted from January of 2017 until Spring of 2020 when Covid-19 restricted travel and most people were either working from home or not working. At that time, the parks department closed Little Falls Parkway vehicular traffic, opening it towards the end of that year during the weekdays.

Road Restriction Extended from the CCT Area to Dorset Avenue:

On June 18, 2022, another change was made. This change extended the single lanes along northbound and southbound Little Falls Road from the area of the CCT all the way south to Dorset Avenue. Instead of about a 250-foot restriction, designed to increase safety at the CCT crossing of Little Falls Parkway, this change restricts approximately 1700 feet, severely changing the characteristic of the roadway. In this configuration, traffic was open on the inside lane on either side of the median with the outside lane closed to traffic, but open to bicyclists and pedestrians.

It should be noted here that while the roadway outside lanes were open to bicyclists and pedestrians, there is not evidence that this was used by them. This is not surprising given that the nearby CCT is a well-liked bicycle and pedestrian trail that runs parallel to Little Falls Parkway for the parkway's entire length.

Road Restriction Relocated to Close the Southbound Lanes of Little Falls Parkway and Make the Northbound Lanes Bi-directional:

On October 17, 2022, all vehicular traffic was shifted to the northbound side of the median with the other side of the median open for bicycle and pedestrian traffic. This configuration is shown in Figure 2.

This is the condition that exists in the area today and is being considered a pilot program possibly to be implemented as a permanent condition.

Being implemented in October and going through the winter, this pilot program has not yet been analyzed thoroughly. The busiest time for Little Falls Parkway and the CCT is in the late Spring to Early Fall when the CCT is used at its maximum extent and when the outdoor Bethesda Pool is open. Making a decision to keep this as a permanent condition at this time is premature and does not allow for observations during the busiest time of the facilities, when safety can best be analyzed.



Figure 2: Southbound Lanes of Little Falls Parkway Closed and Northbound Lanes converted to bi-directional traffic.

Traffic Counts

New traffic counts were conducted along Little Falls Parkway on March 7, 2023, to compare the current traffic using the roadway to the counts performed at various times or to the Montgomery Parks traffic study. Figure 3 shows each of the counts along Little Falls Parkway.

It should be noted that the 2023 count was performed in another location which would have more traffic than at the previous location since it is south of Hillandale Road. Even so, the rate of increase in traffic more than exceeds the new traffic that would enter the roadway at Hillandale Road.

The June 2017 count is by far the lowest, and the March 2023 count is by far the highest, showing a steady increase in traffic utilizing Little Falls Parkway in spite of the road restrictions. The July count is highlighted in red to show that this was the first count performed after the road restriction was extended from the CCT to Dorset Avenue. Compared to the May count, this represents a 33.7% reduction in traffic just 2 months, as motorists tried to use other routes.

| | <u>Between Arlington Rd.
and Hillandale Rd.</u> | | | | | <u>Between Hillandale
Rd. and Dorset Ave.</u> |
|-------------------------|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|---|
| | Pre Covid (Jun- 2017) | May-
22 | Jul-
22 | Sep-
22 | Dec-
22 | Mar-23 |
| NB 7a -7p total | 2409 | 3914 | 2635 | 3102 | 3540 | 4772 |
| SB 7a - 7p total | 3203 | 5295 | 3465 | 4261 | 4587 | 5569 |

Figure 3: Traffic Volume Counts/Red Highlight is First Count after Road Restriction Extended to Dorset Rd.

Since that time, the traffic utilizing Little Falls Parkway has continued to increase as more and more people are returning from working from home during the Covid-19 shutdown to going back to the office to work. Noticing this steady increase in traffic from even before Covid-19 shows that this roadway is an important arterial in this area.

If the roadway restrictions were not in place, it is very likely that more traffic would safely use the roadway, perhaps as much as the 33.7% drop that occurred in July of 2022. If that were to occur, other failing and congested intersections in the Bethesda Area would experience relief, would improve their level of service, and would increase safety at those intersections.

Synchro Analysis

Using data collected in December of 2022, a computer analysis model was created for intersections in the area of Little Falls Parkway and along Little Falls Parkway. The Synchro reports for each of the intersections can be found in Appendix 2, and a summary of the results is provided in Figure 4.

The Level of Service (LOS) is measured on a scale from A to F, where “A” represents the least delay and “F” the most. For traffic impact studies with new developments, the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) requires that each of the intersections maintain an LOS of D or better.

The results show that major delays exist at the MD 191 (Bradley Blvd) intersection with Arlington Road and also at Little Falls Parkway at MD 190 (River Rd.) The model does not take into account delays occurring at other intersections that affect the isolated intersections. Observations show major delays in the morning and evening peak periods along MD 190 (River Road) which would make those study intersections operate in a worse condition than is shown in the Synchro analysis.

| Intersection | AM LOS | PM LOS |
|---|--------|--------|
| MD 191 (Bradley Blvd) at MD 614 (Goldsboro Rd.) | C | C |
| MD 191 at Glenbrook Rd. | B | B |
| MD 191 at Arlington Rd. | F | F |
| MD 191 at Hillandale Rd. | B | B |
| Little Falls Parkway at Arlington Rd. | B | B |
| Little Falls Parkway at Hillandale Rd. | A | A |
| Little Falls Parkway at Dorset Ave. | A | A |
| Little Falls Parkway at MD 190 (River Rd.) | C | D |
| MD 190 at Brookside Dr. | B | B |

Figure 4: Synchro Analysis Summary

The above summary of the intersections of Arlington Road and Hillandale Road at Little Falls Parkway is not showing the effect of the significant pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the Capital Crescent Trail that occurs between those two intersections. Observations show that in peak periods, these three crossings of Little Falls Parkway, two intersections and the CCT, cause additional delay that is not reflected in the model.

In addition, queues often extend from the signalized intersections back to or near the CCT. These queues can reduce the sight distance for motorists and trail users since the queued vehicles near the trail restrict the sight distance for the opposite direction approaching the CCT.

These analyses also show the level of service using the 2022 count data. This does not reflect the future traffic in the area which will be significant, given the planned growth in the Bethesda growth area, as well as the growth occurring and planned to occur in the Westbard Area of Montgomery County.

Vehicle Crash Analysis

Vehicle crash data was obtained from Montgomery County for Little Falls Parkway between Fairfax Road on the north end and MD 190 (River Road) on the south end. The data encompassed vehicle crashes occurring along this section of Little Falls Parkway from January 2015 to December 2022.

| <u>Little falls Pkwy Intersection</u>
<u>Crash Type</u> | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | Total |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Straight Movement Angle | 3 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 21 |
| Single Vehicle | 9 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 22 |
| Same Direction Rear End | 2 | 6 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 21 |
| Same Direction Rear End Left Turn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Same Direction Both Left Turn | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Head on Left Turn | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Same Direction Sideswipe | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Same Direction Right Turn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Same Direction Left Turn | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Opposite Direction Sideswipe | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Angle Meets Right Turn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Other | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Total | 18 | 20 | 6 | 12 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 12 | 88 |

Figure 5: Vehicular Crash Data

Crash data for the study intersections is summarized in Table 5. In total, eighty-eight (88) crashes were reported over the eight-year period. The reported vehicular-only crashes included (21) straight movement angle, (22) single vehicle, (21) same direction rear end, (1) same direction rear end left turn, (2) same direction both left turn, (3) head on left turn, (1) same direction sideswipe, (1) same direction right turn, (4) same direction left turn, (1) opposite direction sideswipe, (1) angle meets right turn and (10) other type collisions.

It appears that the change implemented at the CCT in January of 2017 had a positive impact in reducing crashes along the corridor. The changes following that initial change did not have any measurable effect. The most recent change to bi-directional traffic along Little Falls Parkway occurring on the northbound side of the median was implemented late in 2022. That change has not been in place long enough to determine its effect on crashes either up or down.

Pedestrian and Bike Crash Analysis

Pedestrian and bike-crash data were also obtained from Montgomery County for the section of Little Falls Parkway between Fairfax Road on the north end and MD 190 (River Road) on the south end. The data encompassed all bike crashes occurring within the study intersections from March 2015 to June 2022. The Crash data for the study intersection is summarized in Figure 6.

As in the vehicular crash data results, the changes implemented in January of 2017 seem to have had an effect to reduce crashes in the corridor. The other changes seemed to have no effect on crashes, but the latest change implemented late in 2022 has yet to be determined if it will have a detrimental affect on crashes or not.

| <u>Little Falls Pkwy Intersection</u>
<u>Crash Type</u> | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | Total |
|--|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Straight Movement Angle | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Same Direction Rear End Left Turn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Other | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 6 |
| Total | 2 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 16 |

Figure 6: Pedestrian and Bike Crash History

Roadway Section

Between Fairfax Road on the north end and MD 190 (River Road) on the south end, Little Falls Parkway was designed to be a divided parkway with two lanes in each direction with a 20-foot grass median. The section has four-foot outside shoulders.

Between MD 190 (River Road) on the north end and MD 396 (Massachusetts Ave.) on the south end, Little Falls Parkway was designed to be a bi-directional roadway. It has 12-foot lanes with 6-foot outside shoulders.

These roadway sections are shown in Figure 7. The current lane use along Little Falls Parkway from Dorset Ave. to Arlington Road has all of the traffic on the northbound side of the roadway. In the

current configuration, the northbound side has been converted to bi-directional traffic where the southbound lane has no shoulder and the northbound lane has a four-foot shoulder.

This configuration violates the design intention of the roadway and causes problems when a vehicle becomes disabled or when emergency vehicles need to get through the section with cars not being able to effectively move out of the way.

This new configuration also violates driver expectancy, especially for northbound motorists who feel and observe that both lanes of the roadway are designed to go north. Especially for unfamiliar motorists, this can lead to confusion. At night and in rainy conditions, the double yellow line can become obscured and to the unfamiliar motorists, this could lead to them using the leftmost lane to go north, setting up the potential for collisions.

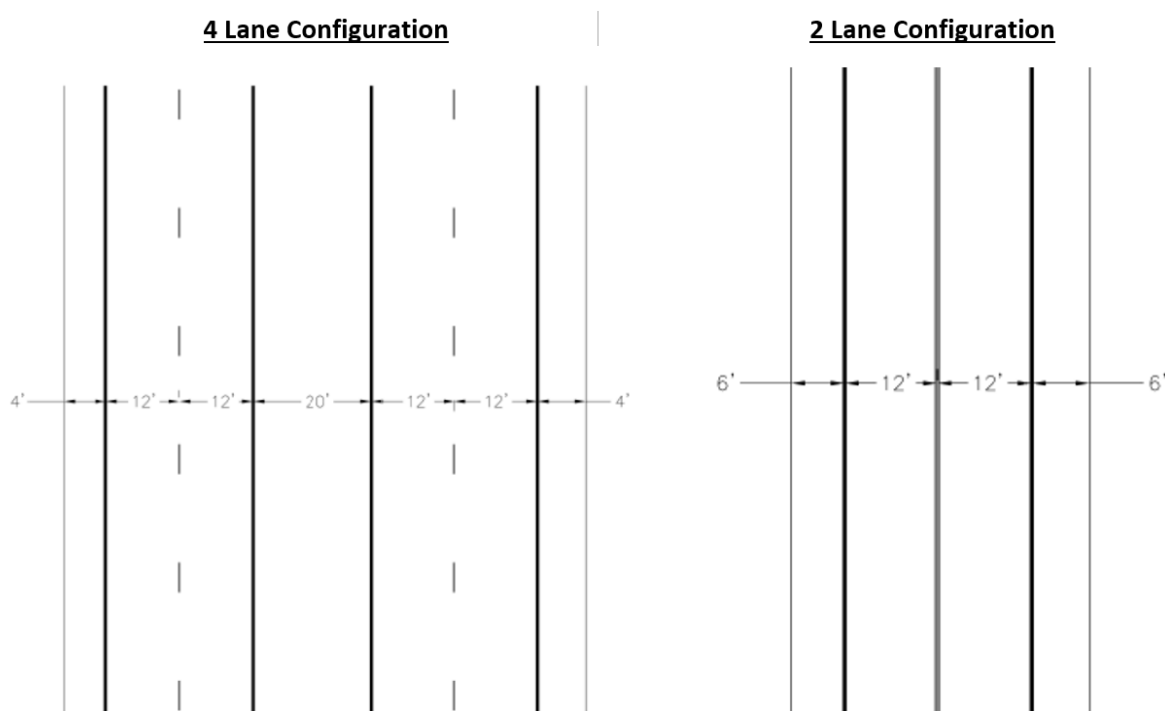


Figure 7: Little Falls Parkway Lane Use Design

Field Observations

Field observations were performed on a typical weekday during the morning, mid-day, and evening peak periods and on a typical weekend day with good weather conditions in March of 2023. The following is a brief summary of points for the study area:

- The observations show that MD 190 (River Road) is very congested as motorists travel mostly west in the morning to get to the I-495 interchange and in both directions in the afternoon. The intersection of Little Falls Parkway and MD 190 is congested, and turning lanes could be extended to better accommodate the traffic along the parkway.

- The lane-use change that occurs along Little Falls Parkway just north of Dorset Ave is unexpected. Especially for northbound motorists, it is unexpected that southbound motorists are traveling on the northbound side of the divided highway.
- Markings that were used in previous configurations were not removed and can cause driver confusion. Like right-turn arrows in a thru lane, pavement markings are lacking in some areas.
- The aesthetics of what was once a beautiful parkway are diminished by the increased traffic control devices.
- The right turn from northbound Little Falls Parkway to go east along Hillandale Road is very narrow and short. Only about 9-feet wide, compared to the 12-foot lanes, it is 85-feet long with a 45-foot opening taper.
- The side of the road that is closed is not easily accessible to bikes and pedestrians.
 - There were barriers that made it difficult for bikes to make their way onto the parkway.
 - The closed section was not used by bicycles or pedestrians except for three pedestrians in the morning who were also walking in the Kenwood Community.
 - In the afternoon peak period, a bicyclist was observed riding along Little Falls Parkway in the area of the closed road, but was riding in the traveled portion of the roadway, not the closed-lane section.
- Data that was collected included speed data along Little Falls Parkway. This speed data shows that the 85th% speed along the roadway is 37.24 MPH. The 85th% speed is the speed where only 15% of the motorists would be going above this speed and is often used as a measure to help set the speed limit along roadways.
- The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) is consistently used throughout the day. During the peak hours, southbound motorists often back up from Hillandale Road to the CCT, and northbound motorists back up from Arlington Road to the CCT. When this occurs, sight distance is obstructed at the CCT.
 - Note: this sight distance concern would not exist in the 2017 condition where the Little Falls Parkway traffic was provided on each side of the 20 foot median.

Recommendations and Alternatives

Based on the findings of the past history and the observations at the current time, it appears that the change in 2017 had a positive impact on increasing safety without having a negative impact on the road use or capacity along Little Falls Parkway. The change in June of 2022 did have a severe, negative impact on the road usage by reducing the trips along the road by 1/3. It also caused the roadway to go against the original intent and design of Little Falls Parkway.

The change in October of 2022 maintains the problems with the reduction in traffic, but also creates safety problems. The crossing at the CCT is no longer as safe as it was since all traffic exists on one side of the median. This results in sight-distance concerns. In addition, now instead of crossing a 12-foot roadway and only having to look one direction, pedestrians and bicyclists have to cross 24 feet of traffic and have to pay attention to two directions of travel at the same time.

Based on these findings, we recommend returning to the 2017 configuration where bi-directional travel never goes to just one side of the roadway. Instead, there is a safe, 20-foot median separating both directions of travel allowing for safer crossings for pedestrians and bicyclists at the CCT. This will increase visibility for pedestrians and bicyclists while reducing the pavement they need to cross.

In addition, there is no benefit to restricting 1-lane of traffic in each direction from Hillandale Road to Dorset Blvd. This section should be reopened to allow two lanes of traffic in each direction. This change would be more logical to motorists and reduce human-factors concerns. It would return the roadway to be more aesthetically pleasing, as was the original intent of the road, and it will increase capacity allowing motorists to return to this important transportation link. This, in turn, would reduce traffic at other key locations where capacity and safety are an issue in a very congested area of the state.

In addition, in order to further increase safety at the CCT, two alternatives in addition to the configuration that was implemented in 2017 are provided.

The first alternative is a low-cost alternative that would provide signal control at the CCT. This alternative is shown in Figure 8. This alternative relies on going back to the configuration started in 2017 and instead of keep the CCT crossing where it exists currently, it shifts the crossing to the intersection of Arlington Road. The pavement from the outside lane could be converted to a marked pedestrian path, and a new crosswalk on the south side of the intersection of Little Falls Parkway at Arlington Road would be installed to allow for crossing of pedestrians and bicyclists. The CCT would need to have a small section constructed in order to connect with the existing path.

Having the pedestrian traffic cross at a signalized intersection will increase safety by giving pedestrians the right of way for one of the traffic signal phases. It would also increase traffic capacity because there will no longer be vehicles stopping for pedestrians at the old CCT crossing.

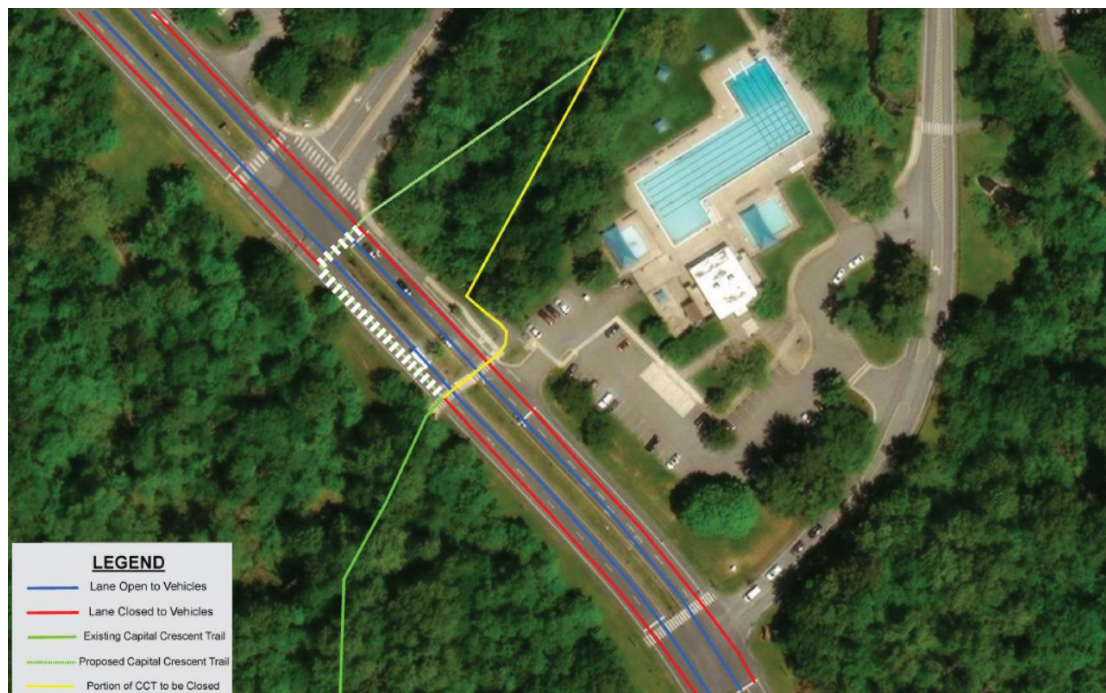


Figure 8: Alternative 1

The second alternative is like the first in that it provides signal control for the CCT. This time, instead of shifting north, the CCT shifts south to use the signal at the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and Hillandale Road. This alternative is shown in Figure 9.

This alternative maintains the safety and capacity advantages that are provided in Alternative 1. It does require more realignment of the CCT in the area, but may be beneficial since it provides a more direct connection to the Bethesda Pool and the Little Falls Park Trail.



Figure 9: Alternative 2

Worst Alternative from a Safety, Capacity, and Aesthetic Point of View

Of all of the alternatives presented, by far, the worst alternative is to leave the roadway in the condition it was changed to in October 2022. While this alternative may allow for a linear park, it deviates from the purpose of Little Falls Parkway, it significantly reduces capacity on the roadway, it violates drive expectancy, and it endangers pedestrians and bicyclist by decreasing safety at the CCT crossing of Little Falls Parkway.

If this alternative is pursued, more data should be collected before making this a permanent condition, and the decision should wait until that data is collected. Crashes should be observed and recorded for at least one year after the October 2022 change was installed. This would include crashes at the CCT crossing as well as along Little Falls Parkway. In addition, observations should be performed when the Bethesda Pool is open and Little Falls Parkway and CCT are in the height their seasonal use. Updated turning-movement counts should also be performed at key intersections, and planned growth should be taken into account to see how the reduced capacity along Little Falls Parkway affects the roadway network in the region.

Conclusion

Little Falls Parkway has undergone significant changes since a bicycle fatality occurred in 2016. The change in January of 2017 has had the most beneficial results by increasing safety without reducing capacity of the roadway. The changes in 2022 resulted in a 33% reduction of traffic using the parkway. Traffic has increased since then most likely as a result of more people using the roadways in the area as more people are returning to work in the office instead of at home, but not as much as if the road restrictions were not in place.

The change in October of 2022 has decreased the safety at the Little Falls Parkway and Capital Crescent Trail crossing by making pedestrians and bicyclists have to cross 24 feet of traffic moving in both directions instead of 12 feet of traffic at a time only having to look in one direction. The new configuration results in sight-distance concerns that did not exist in the previous configuration.

The October 2022 change should be reversed to increase safety. In addition, the roadway restriction going to Dorset Avenue resulted in a 1/3 reduction of traffic. Little Falls Parkway is an important arterial serving the region, and capacity should be returned to the roadway by opening up the lanes to reinstate the 2017 condition.

In addition, it is in the best interest of the drivers and the pedestrians to have a signalized crossing for the CCT. The most cost-effective method would be to have the trail traffic cross at one of the two nearby intersections, Hillandale Rd or Arlington Rd. Having trail traffic cross at a signal would increase the safety for motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclist at the CCT.

From: [Catherine Mann](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Friday, March 31, 2023 3:48:34 PM

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

Hi,

As a lifelong MoCo resident and someone who works two jobs in downtown Bethesda and has to commute there on a daily basis, I strongly oppose the Pilot Project for Little Falls Parkway. The lane closures have made traffic untenably slow at best and dangerous at worst. I am at a loss as to why there needs to be a “linear park” when the Crescent Trail already exists running parallel to the parkway and provides the same exact route to bikers and pedestrians without the added hazard for cars. While I wholeheartedly believe in creating walkable environments that are not dependent on car travel, this project clearly will not reduce car dependence and creates safety concerns for cars, cyclists, and pedestrians. To be blunt, this entire endeavor strikes me as an ego-driven project by local government officials that do not care about me as a worker or a taxpayer.

I wish you well,
Catherine

From: [J Geraci](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Korman, Marc Delegate](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Friday, March 31, 2023 5:03:53 PM
Attachments: [RE Little Falls Parkway.msg](#)
Importance: High

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

Do not proceed with this project and revert back to 4 lanes. You have provided no solid evidence whatsoever of improvement from the original status quo of four lanes. Soon, traffic patterns will change dramatically, making a 4 lane LFP even more crucial to citizen needs.

My request for projections in support of a cost-benefit analysis or risk analysis have not been answered (see attached) because you lack the wherewithal to develop a rational with projected return, which is done all the time for other government programs. Perhaps you flat out do not care how taxpayer monies are spent due to your budget maximization preferences or for that matter, who would be at increased harm and risk due to this proposed project.

Keep in mind the many stakeholders in this project.

Thank you.

Joseph Geraci
301-254-4838 mobile

From: [J Geraci](#)
To: [Korman, Marc Delegate](#)
Subject: RE: Little Falls Parkway
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)

Marc and Joseph, Thanks for responding. Please bear with me in my somewhat lengthy response.

The current analytics emphasize apparent present conditions with little to no foresight on a future that brings significantly increased traffic to River Road and arteries based on Westbard development completion and continued growth in Bethesda. To extrapolate future use of Little Falls Parkway (LFP) based on pandemic experience or guess-timates based on biased observations and questionable data is frivolous.

Prior to retirement, I managed Capital Planning and Investment Control (CPIC) for the US Dept of the Treasury and IRS. It was a program that started under the Bush administration and supported greatly during the Obama administration. At the core of this program was cost-benefit analysis (CBA). CPIC and CBA are now always used for spending accountability across all government agencies, including:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Forest Service (USDA)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Many of the complex operational functions of these agencies are accounted for under the Montgomery County Parks organization, which is a most important organization.

Return on Investment became a focus because government project resources and taxpayer dollars are “never enough”. Prior to CPIC and CBA, project costs were often underrepresented. Estimates were based on well-intentioned gut feel by experts, using years of operational experience, and interpreting data outliers. An example of gut feel is the survey/petition data of 1,900 non-randomized local LFP folks, as being the definition and rationale of public good.

Prior to CPIC, economic opportunity costs and economic “negative externalities” were often absent from analyses. In a nutshell, opportunity costs are \$’s forgone for doing a project that can no longer be spent on other, perhaps more important projects.

I happen to be greatly concerned about the environment and a park lover and of course have a few opinions of where to spend hard earned taxpayer dollars. For example, put the \$ into improving the Capital Crescent Trail, which have 3 entrances ~25 yards from LFP or directly intersecting it and restore LFP to status quo. But my opinion should be tested for public good worth/value, prior to conducting a pilot and them proceeding based on apparent spurious results.

Of course, there are many more people that live around and frequently use LFP that far exceeds 1,900 folks. including Bethesda, Westmoreland Circle, etc. This creates

several economic negative externalities, which are significant costs of doing business to a large user base of the Montgomery county citizens, who may not choose to speak up. Opportunity costs and negative externalities are significant and must be identified, quantified, and analyzed, especially when spending any amounts of the people's money. CBA is not easy but doable in highly important in government agencies such as Montgomery County Parks, required for accountability. Often, better, and more sound alternatives result.

The existing project is an excellent example of how not to spend. Safety of bikers, pedestrians, autos are important but significantly misrepresented, using existing statistics. So many environmental interventions impact the validity and analysis of that data. For instance, use of pandemic years numbers that are biased versus the "norm", which also needs further assessment. Forecast or "eyeballing use" depends on the subjectivity of the person, no matter how experienced. Safety is impacted by many factors not addressed in the study. For instance, well-planned improvements to the Capital Crescent Trail could reduce the impact of pedestrian and bike traffic, by perhaps lengthening the Trail beyond the Arlington Road intersection, to an already existing single-lane crossing that could be greatly improved.

Bottom-line is that short-sighted solutions to public welfare, absent a well-thought through Cost-Benefit Analysis may cause far more harm than good. Please restore LFP to status quo 4 lanes and consider other relevant/common sense alternatives.

Thank you for your consideration.

Joseph J. Geraci

From: Korman, Marc Delegate <Marc.Korman@house.state.md.us>

Sent: Friday, February 17, 2023 10:47 AM

To: 'J Geraci' <joegeraci@msn.com>

Subject: FW: Little Falls Parkway

Mr. Geraci,

I forwarded your question to Parks staff and received the response copied below.

All the best,

Joseph Swit

Chief of Staff

Office of Delegate Marc Korman

House Majority Leader

6 Bladen Street, Room 350

Annapolis, MD 21401

Cell: 410-409-1047
Office: 301-858-3649

From: Figueredo, Miti <Miti.Figueredo@montgomeryparks.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2023 8:43 PM
To: Korman, Marc Delegate <Marc.Korman@house.state.md.us>; Flusche, Darren <Darren.Flusche@montgomeryparks.org>
Subject: FW: Little Falls Parkway

Joseph, Darren forwarded this email to me. Several commenters during last night's meeting posted the same question in the Q&A.

Cost benefit analyses are sometimes used to rank options, where there are defined, agreed-upon costs and benefits. However, they are rarely – if ever – used to decide whether to move forward with a project like this one, where the benefits include increased road safety and the experiential value of additional recreational space, which is hard to quantify. That said, we have been open about costs incurred thus far, which amount to \$140,000 to shift the lanes. If the Planning Board agrees to continue moving forward with the pilot project, we would incur some additional short-term costs to activate the space – probably in the tens of thousands of dollars. Compared to the cost of acquiring and developing new urban parks, which run in the millions of dollars in this area, this is extremely cost-effective. Before we move forward with any permanent plans for that space, we would develop detailed cost estimates through concept and preliminary design and then would have to seek capital budget approval. For now, though, let's assume the cost of shifting the lanes and implementing a temporary park costs about +/- \$200,000.

To put this in perspective, consider the following qualitative comparisons:

- The cost to nearby neighborhoods affected by cut-through traffic was very high for the full weekend closures of LFP
- The traffic data show that the current configuration has improved safety, which is a significant benefit to the community
- Traffic data show there are few delays during peak hours resulting in minimal inconvenience costs to drivers
- The environmental benefit of removing asphalt and remediating some of the damage of the original road construction (which would only happen once a decision were made to move forward with a permanent park) is high

While these are not easily quantifiable costs or benefits, they were taken into account by Parks leadership in deciding to pursue the pilot project, and will be considered by the Planning Board in deciding whether to make the two-lane configuration permanent between Arlington and Dorset and move forward with the temporary park activation. If a decision is made to pursue a permanent park at this location, the Planning Board (and the Council) will ultimately have to approve it through the capital budget process.

I hope this is helpful. Let me know if you have any questions.

Miti Figueredo | Deputy Director

Montgomery Parks | The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Mobile: 240.397.1372 | Office: 301.495.2554

2425 Reedie Drive, 12th Floor | Wheaton, MD 20902

MontgomeryParks.org



@MontgomeryParks

From: Korman, Marc Delegate <Marc.Korman@house.state.md.us>

Sent: Thursday, February 16, 2023 12:15 AM

To: Flusche, Darren <Darren.Flusche@montgomeryparks.org>

Subject: FW: Little Falls Parkway

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

Darren,

Please see below. Is the information the constituent is requesting available?

Thanks,

Joseph Swit

Chief of Staff

Office of Delegate Marc Korman

House Majority Leader

6 Bladen Street, Room 350

Annapolis, MD 21401

Cell: 410-409-1047

Office: 301-858-3649

From: J Geraci <joegeraci@msn.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 14, 2023 10:10 PM

To: andrew.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; Korman, Marc Delegate
<Marc.Korman@house.state.md.us>; Mike.Riley@montgomeryparks.org;
stephanie.Dickel@montgomeryplanning.org; KWoodroffe@mdot.maryland.gov;
Lucy.Shaw@mail.house.gov

Subject: Little Falls Parkway

Hello,

I looked on-line and could not find the cost-benefit analyses for either the pilot or project, regarding Little Falls Parkway. Where might I find one or both?

Thank you.

Joseph J. Geraci

From: [Carl G Becker](#)
To: [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Vaia, Emily](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Councilmember Office](#); [Councilmember Glass's Office](#); [Councilmember Albornoz's Office](#); [Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Mink@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Balcombe@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [County Council](#); [cexschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov](#)
Subject: Fwd: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm
Date: Saturday, April 1, 2023 9:08:44 AM

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

Good morning Planning Board Members,

I witnessed several of you touring the Linear Park yesterday around 4pm with Mike Riley, Andy Frank and other Parks Staff. Thank you for listening to our testimony but I am hereby requesting the opportunity to present the rest of my 25 page PowerPoint presentation and YouTube videos, as well as meet you in person at the Capital Crescent trail crossing; If Montgomery Parks has the opportunity to sell you on their ideas, then it's only fair that local residents are afforded the same opportunity.

Could we meet at the Capital Crescent Trail Crossing sometime this coming week during the morning and evening commutes? If you would prefer to meet one or two at a time so there is not a quorum then that would be fine with me.

I am also waiting on a response to my email below. I'm available by phone to discuss the below email if it's easier.

Thanks for your service, and your consideration!

Carl Becker

Realtor
Principal Broker
Premier Properties
DC | MD | VA

m: 301 873 3221
@CarlBeckerHomes
PremierPropertiesDC.com

Begin forwarded message:

From: Carl G Becker <carlgbecker@gmail.com>
Date: March 31, 2023 at 5:32:24 AM EDT
To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>, catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: "Young, Kimberly" <Kimberly.Young@mncppc.org>, "Thompkins, Melissa" <melissa.thompkins@mncppc-mc.org>

Subject: Re: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm

Hello Catherine and Chair Zyontz,

Much of what Parks staff said in their testimony conflicts with:

- 1) documents US Department of Transportation / Federal Highway Administration published in numerous technical reports; which I linked in my 25 page power point presentation but was not able to cover in my presentation.
- 2) testimony from traffic engineer Neil Parrett. Was his testimony received in time?
- 3) what my four YouTube videos show but couldn't begin to explain but would like to. They are linked in my 25 page PP.
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I'm wondering where we go from here. I need to know if the testimony I submitted online will be reviewed by the Planning Board. Can I request individual followup meetings with Planning Board members? A group meeting?

I'd also like to be involved with Parks Staff in devising a better plan. I have so much time invested in taking videos, analyzing traffic patterns, and researching online. Many of the ideas and analysis provided by Parks staff makes we wonder if they have ever been to the site during rush hour! My family lives so close to this park and trail crossing and use it daily with my two young boys and toddler daughter... my videos speak volumes but I've seen several more frightening near collisions between cars and bikers at the trail crossing that I don't have on video. If a child followed an adult across the current two lane parkway crossing, likely running a stop sign, then there is a good chance they get hit by a vehicle. The previous divided roadway was much safer. Having to look only one way at a time was safer. To argue the opposite is insanity! Blind spots exist now, both northbound and southbound. The slower traffic crawls, the more chance for multi lane threats from blind spots. And these blind spots aren't because of driver error like they were in 2016. They are inherent when a backed up car stops past the trail crossing just as an oncoming vehicle approach's from the opposite direction. I've seen several adults come within a foot or two of hitting a vehicle.

I met with Bob Turnbull last May and showed him around 3 miles of dirt goat trails / peoples choice paths in little falls park. These trails are used by thousands of pedestrians on a weekly basis but parks doesn't maintain them. The problem is that trees often fall and block the paths which causes pedestrians and mountain bikers to create new paths around the fallen trees, which creates more disturbance to the land. If parks were to maintain these trails then the trails would be safer (many dangerous hanger trees loom over these paths), the user experience would be improved, and then parks could put these paths on their website for more people to use at no cost other than maintenance! Parks told me that they don't have the bandwidth to maintain these trails. I was deflated to hear this, especially in light of their pursuit of this silly linear park. They'd rather mess up a critical roadway which only increases the amount of nearby parkland by 1/2%, yet they

don't want to be able to share 3 miles of amazing pathways!

Carl Becker

Realtor
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Premier Properties
DC | MD | VA

m: 301 873 3221
@CarlBeckerHomes
PremierPropertiesDC.com

On Mar 30, 2023, at 10:43 PM, Carl Becker
<carlgbecker@hotmail.com> wrote:

Thank you, Catherine, for making my materials available this evening from the laptop. That was a hi-tech setup you all have! And a first for me. Were my materials and testimony submitted in time to go "on-record" for item 12?

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m: 301 873 3221
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PremierPropertiesDC.com

On Mar 30, 2023, at 4:24 PM, MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Good afternoon,

I am confirming receipt of your presentation. We will have a copy saved for the record, and it will be available to you to control as you give your testimony before the Board. Please note, per the Chair's discretion, group representatives will have 5 minutes to testify, and individuals will have 3 minutes to testify.

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

From: Carl Becker <carlgbecker@hotmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 3:50 PM

To: Zyontz, Jeffrey <Jeffrey.Zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>;
Piñero, Roberto <Roberto.Pinero@mncppc-mc.org>;
Pedoeem, Mitra <Mitra.Pedoeem@mncppc-mc.org>;
Hedrick, James <James.Hedrick@mncppc-mc.org>; Bartley,
Shawn <Shawn.Bartley@mncppc-mc.org>; MCP-Chair <mcp-
chair@mncppc-mc.org>

Cc: Marc Korman <mkorman@gmail.com>; Ariana Senator
Kelly <ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us>; Sara Delegate Love
<sara.love@house.state.md.us>; Marc Delegate Korman
<Marc.Korman@house.state.md.us>;
marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Meredith
Wellington
<meredith.wellington@montgomerycountymd.gov>;
Friedson, Andrew
<andrew.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>;
County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Pamela Dunn <Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov>;
Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Weisbroth, Nina
<Nina.Weisbroth@mail.house.gov>;
Kathleen.Connor@mail.house.gov;
Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; Coello,
Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org>

Subject: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing,
March 30, 5:30pm

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

<~WRD3605.jpg>

[Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by](#)

[Carl Becker.pptx](#)

Montgomery County Park and Planning Board,

Please find enclosed my testimony for Item #12 (in PDF and PowerPoint formats). I will testify in person this evening. I would also like to show a YouTube video which forwards from TakeBackLFP.net

Thank you,

Carl Becker
Board Member
Sumner Citizens Association
4905 Brookeway Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-873-3221

<Opposition to Linear Park roadway Configuration by
Carl Becker.pdf>

From: [Carl G Becker](#)
To: [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Vaia, Emily](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Councilmember Office](#); [Councilmember Glass's Office](#); [Councilmember Albornoz's Office](#); [Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Mink@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Balcombe@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [County Council](#); [cexschedule@montgomerycountymd.gov](#)
Subject: Re: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm
Date: Saturday, April 1, 2023 9:20:19 AM

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

Also, 3,500 residents have signed the Petition in opposition to the current configuration of Little Falls Parkway and are against the Linear Park. Visit: [TakeBackLFP.com](#)

Carl Becker

Realtor
Principal Broker
Premier Properties
DC | MD | VA

m: 301 873 3221
[@CarlBeckerHomes](#)
[PremierPropertiesDC.com](#)

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DC | MD | VA

m: 301 873 3221
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PremierPropertiesDC.com

Begin forwarded message:

From: Carl G Becker <carlgbecker@gmail.com>
Date: March 31, 2023 at 5:32:24 AM EDT
To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>, catherine.coello@mncppc-mc.org
Cc: "Young, Kimberly" <Kimberly.Young@mncppc.org>, "Thompkins, Melissa" <melissa.thompkins@mncppc-mc.org>
Subject: Re: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm

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The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning
Commission

Montgomery County Chair's Office

2425 Reedy Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902

Main: 301-495-4605 | Direct: 301-495-4608

www.MontgomeryPlanningBoard.org

From: Carl Becker <carlbecker@hotmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 3:50 PM

To: Zyontz, Jeffrey <Jeffrey.Zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>; Piñero, Roberto
<Roberto.Pinero@mncppc-mc.org>; Pedoeem,
Mitra <Mitra.Pedoeem@mncppc-mc.org>;
Hedrick, James <James.Hedrick@mncppc-mc.org>; Bartley, Shawn

<Shawn.Bartley@mncppc-mc.org>; MCP-Chair
<mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Cc: Marc Korman <mkorman@gmail.com>;
Ariana Senator Kelly
<ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us>; Sara
Delegate Love <sara.love@house.state.md.us>;
Marc Delegate Korman
<Marc.Korman@house.state.md.us>;
marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Meredith Wellington
<meredith.wellington@montgomerycountymd.gov>;
Friedson, Andrew
<andrew.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>;
County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Pamela Dunn
<Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov>;
Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Weisbroth, Nina
<Nina.Weisbroth@mail.house.gov>;
Kathleen.Connor@mail.house.gov;
Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Coello, Catherine <catherine.coello@mncppc-
mc.org>
Subject: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project,
Public Hearing, March 30, 5:30pm

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

[<~WRD3605.jpg>](#)
[Opposition to Linear Park roadway](#)
[Configuration by Carl Becker.pptx](#)

Montgomery County Park and Planning Board,

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(in PDF and PowerPoint formats). I will testify in
person this evening. I would also like to show a
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Thank you,

Carl Becker
Board Member
Sumner Citizens Association
4905 Brookeway Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816
301-873-3221

<Opposition to Linear Park roadway
Configuration by Carl Becker.pdf>

From: [Maura Mahoney](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Pls. keep Little Falls Parkway to two lanes
Date: Saturday, April 1, 2023 1:04:14 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Little Falls Parkway roadway reconfiguration has been a success. Montgomery Parks reports, “results of multiple traffic studies show that the reconfigured lane set-up reduces cut-through traffic in neighborhoods surrounding Little Falls Parkway, maintains a safe Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing, and safely accommodates vehicle traffic.” And the reconfiguration creates much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists.

We do support the road diet. It would be great if this could be green space. That said, I don't think the plans for a linear park have been well thought out. Where will people park? We would not want to increase parking issues in the nearby neighborhoods of Somerset and Kenwood. Where will the garbage go from the planned food trucks? The garbage can at the corner of Dorset and Little Falls was overflowing for days after the cherry blossom weekend -- this could be a real draw for rats and other vermin.

I also think we could still use a bridge at the CCT crossing -- bicyclists and joggers never stop at the stop sign. It remains dangerous, and will only become more so if more people are crossing Little Falls to get to the linear park.

That said, we do support the road diet.

Thank you,
Maura Mahoney
4705 Dorset Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: brianberns@gmail.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Saturday, April 1, 2023 4:55:36 PM

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

I watched the recent hearing on the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project with interest, and would like to make the following comments:

1. The current configuration of the intersection with the Capital Crescent Trail is unacceptably dangerous. Several reasonable alternatives have been proposed. Please pick one and implement it ASAP, before someone else gets killed. (Personally, I think a pedestrian bridge is the best idea. Since there are several other such bridges already on the trail, building another one seems quite feasible.)
2. The idea of a new “linear park” is nonsensical, since the area in question is already surrounded by parks. It won’t even be possible to teach children to ride bicycles in such a park once the cornhole games are installed.
3. The real (but mostly unspoken) reason for the lane reduction on LFP is to reduce the public’s dependency on automobiles – the idea being that if we make it more difficult for people to drive, then they will drive less. However, without providing alternative means of transit, this is clearly hostile to the public’s interest and wishes. Not everyone can ride a bike for daily travel. At the very least, this idea needs to be surfaced and debated democratically, rather than foisted on the public without their consent by unresponsive bureaucrats.

Sincerely,
Brian Berns
4918 Brookeway Dr.

From: [Jack Cochrane](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway should be a two-lane road
Date: Sunday, April 2, 2023 10:48:10 PM

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

Montgomery County Planning Board
Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

Dear Members of the Planning Board,

I'm writing to express my strong support for the Little Falls Parkway road diet that would keep it as a two-lane road, not a four-lane road. Traffic volume on the parkway simply does not warrant a four lane design. But eliminating the extraneous two lanes will greatly enhance safety where the Capital Crescent Trail crosses the road.

When pedestrians (or bicyclists) must cross multiple roadway lanes at once, there's a significant risk that a driver in one lane will stop to let the pedestrian cross but a driver in the adjacent lane won't stop because their view of the pedestrian is screened by the stopped car. This "multiple lane threat" has resulted in multiple trail fatalities in the county in recent years. That includes one and possibly both pedestrian fatalities where the Bethesda Trolley Trail crosses Tuckerman Lane, in 2019 and 2022. It also includes one and possibly both bicyclist fatalities where the Matthew Henson Trail crosses Veirs Mill Road in Aspen Hill, in 2015 and 2016.

The Capital Crescent Trail is one of the 3 or 4 most important hiker-biker trails in Montgomery County. It's a tremendous recreational facility, and it also serves as a transportation artery for bicyclists in a smart growth area where bicycling is to be encouraged. Let's keep the trail safe.

Sincerely,

Jack Cochrane
7121 Thomas Branch Drive
Bethesda, Maryland 20817

From: [Naomi Spinrad](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#)
Cc: [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#); councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov; ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us; [Korman, Marc Delegate](#); [Love, Sara Delegate](#); sarah.wolek@house.state.md.us; [Marc Elrich](#)
Subject: Reject Little Falls Parkway Road Diet
Date: Monday, April 3, 2023 4:50:17 PM

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

Dear Chair Zyontz and Planning Board Members:

Regarding the presentation by Parks and the hearing on March 30, 2023 on Little Falls Parkway, I am bringing to your attention a number of discrepancies and misstatements by Parks. **Please take time to be sure you understand what was included in Parks' statements and data and what was not. Your careful consideration should persuade you to reject the road diet because it is dangerous, poorly conceived, not justified, and will raise liability risk for the Board and Parks.**

1. Parks claimed that nearly 41% of Bethesda's population lives in high rises and implied that they would all be users of a proposed linear park.

Parks failed to define "Bethesda" - that is, whether this percentage refers to all of Bethesda or just the area within the Bethesda Downtown Plan boundaries. Within downtown Bethesda virtually everyone lives in an apartment and the proportion in high rise multifamily structures increases with each of the 23 new buildings built and under construction, with more to come. Parks appears to expect this linear park of less than half a mile in length to attract many residents of the broader Bethesda area, despite the fact that there are many other parks that actually have space and facilities for children to run around and play.

As well, the site of the proposed linear park is 0.8 mile from Bethesda Row, 1.3 miles from Veterans Park, and 1.5 miles from Battery Lane. According to the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), "Planners assume that on average, a person can be expected to walk about ten minutes to get to a destination.... That's typically about a half mile in a straight line." Note that pedestrians typically outnumber cyclists as measured by the counter at Ourisman Plaza by 3-to-1 or more.

Other parks and amenities are much closer to the majority of multifamily housing: Battery Lane Park, Caroline Freeland Park, Elm Street Park, Veterans Park, and the soon-to-be expanded Norfolk Streeter, each with various amenities and proximity to restaurants. In the next few years the Farm Women's Market and the surface parking lots between Willow and Leland and Walsh streets will be redeveloped into a 3.5-acre park and an updated retail landscape. Parks has hired a consulting landscape architect who will be responsible for most of the park design here. What Parks is proposing at the Little Falls Parkway will rarely be appealing enough to attract visitors who generally will need to drive to the proposed linear park.

2. Parks repeatedly claimed their measurements show "users" - 300,000 users of the Little Falls Parkway during Open Parkways, multiple charts including in their headers "user counts" at various times and places. That's wrong and misleading.

The 300,000 figure suggests that more than a quarter of Montgomery County's population of 1.1 million walked or biked on the Parkway during the Open Parkways program there. However, the counters don't measure users, they

measure trips or incidents. The claim that 300,000 discrete individuals used the LFP is not credible. The chart "2022 LFP User Counts at Bethesda Pool" similarly suggests that there were days where nearly 1000 people walked or biked the Parkway, but that doesn't take into account that people come - and go.

In addition, there is a huge discrepancy between what Parks says the counters measured and what people who have observed the closed lanes have seen. I walk by the Bethesda Pool, cross Dorset Avenue at LFP, and use the Little Falls Trail almost daily. The most people I've ever seen at one time on the closed lanes is 5, and that was on Sunday, March 26, when Kenwood was hosting its annual Cherry Blossom event and its streets were closed to all vehicles other than residents. In addition, Parks failed to provide any data for usage during the pilot period.

I reviewed Mead and Hunt December 1, 2022 turning data for the three primary intersections and found these totals for its trip count at 15-minute intervals throughout the day, from which usage can be inferred, as all the cyclists, pedestrians, and vehicles counted either turned onto or from LFP between Dorset and Arlington or did not:

- 8 total bicycles all day at LFP/Hillandale, 3 pedestrians, and 12,767 vehicles

- 86 total bicycles using the intersection at Dorset/LFP (28 continuing on Dorset), 379 pedestrians, and 14,440 vehicles

- 26 total bicycles, 0 pedestrians, and 9,238 vehicles using the Arlington/LFP intersection.

This does not support assertions that hundreds or thousands of people are using the closed lanes or that there is need or demand for a park here.

3. Traffic counts - and claims that traffic has decreased by 30-35% on Little Falls Parkway - fail to take into account the effect of Covid and the resulting government shutdown, as well as shutdowns at businesses dependent on the government.

MyMCMedia reported in September 2022 that "Just over 37% of residents in Montgomery County worked remotely last year. The findings resulted from the 2021 American Community Survey, which provides annual estimates based on questionnaires filled out by roughly 3.5 million American households. Three of the top five work-from-home counties in the nation in 2021 were in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. The District had the highest proportion of people working from home. Fairfax County, Va., ranked fourth at 37.2% and Montgomery County rounded out the top five." It is likely that this percentage is even higher in this down-county area because of its easier access to the regional job center in DC. An order by the federal government to return to offices, whether full time or hybrid, is likely to negate the claimed decline in traffic.

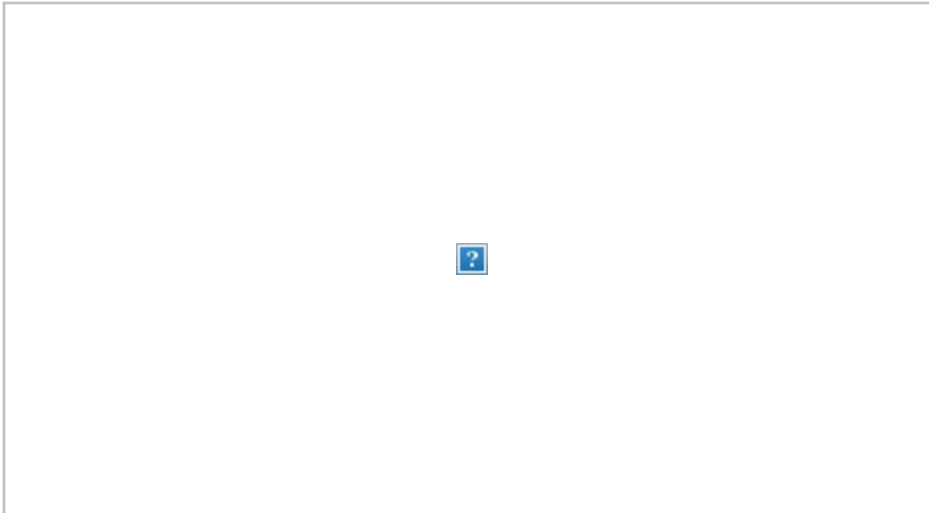
And, as pointed out by many witnesses at the hearing and in written comments, significant increased density in downtown Bethesda and Westbard will increase traffic even more (see the next item). Parks' claim that there is adequate cushion for some unstated future period is wrong, or reflects a failure to do necessary simulations, or is a deliberate lie.

4. Parks' conclusion that traffic analysis of development proposals will ensure against future congestion on LFP as a result of planned development in Bethesda and Westbard is flawed and wrong.

Although each development application is analyzed for traffic impact, *there is no cumulative analysis of traffic impact of all development in the pipeline – each application is considered as if it were the only contributor to traffic.* In addition, LFP between Dorset and Fairfax is not within any recent master or sector plan, further diminishing the value of traffic analysis of a single application. Parks has not provided any information on projected traffic use when Westbard and Bethesda are built out, nor has it considered that there have already been suggestions to raise the cap on Bethesda development.

5. Parks is misinterpreting its data on accidents at the LFP/CCT crossing.

(This chart is also available as an attachment to this email.)



The data in this chart show a decline from a maximum of 6 crashes at the LFP/CCT intersection in 2016 (one fatal but no fault found by the driver) to 0 in 2020, 2021, and 2022. For all but 2+ months in 2022, the LFP/CCT configuration was one lane southbound/approximately 12' median/one lane northbound. Does the Planning Board really want to experiment with this new, undivided road when the previous configuration is a clear Vision Zero success? If you break it, you own it; in addition to risking human life and safety you risk opening the Board and Parks to claims of willful negligence as there has been extensive testimony, including from independent traffic consultants, that the current configuration is unsafe.

6. Parks has provided no data supporting the closure of one lane in each direction between Hillandale and Dorset, and failed to systematically seek information from Parkway users, including nearby residents, about their experience here.

Parks cited a number of master plans in its presentation as justification for a road diet here, including the loss of the median. However, we have been told repeatedly that master plans, and functional plans, are aspirational. Parks has not provided data on accidents or speeding or any other problem with four lanes here. We have heard unverified claims of drag racing on the parkway. I live close enough to hear children playing at the Bethesda pool; in nearly 30 years I've never heard sounds of drag racing. Have there been arrests? Accidents? Parks has presented no statistics on either. If there is a need, have other traffic-calming measures been considered?

On the other side of the coin, Parks has failed to systematically seek information from Parkway users about how they use the parkway. There was some oral and written testimony about people changing their shopping and restaurant habits, going to northwest DC rather than Bethesda. What about parents who work in downtown DC or downtown Bethesda and have to pick up children from after-school programs at Somerset ES, Westland MS, the Washington Episcopal School, and others further afield, for whom Little Falls Parkway was the most efficient way to do this? You have testimony from one resident about his own experience in an ambulance. You have a letter from one senior member of MCFRS, and first-person testimony about statements by another, both stating their view that LFP presents real problems for emergency vehicles and response.

Testimony of any sort that suggests the closure is affecting emergency response times is serious enough that you should press harder for information that goes beyond whether emergency vehicles can fit in the traffic lanes. This is another area where the Board and Parks may be risking claims of willful negligence.

7. Parks makes specious comparisons between LFP and Sligo Creek Parkway and Beach Drive, and other two-lane undivided roads.

Sligo Creek Parkway has a number of intersections, driveways, shoulders, and parking areas that allow vehicles to move over for emergency vehicles. Beach Drive from the DC line to Knowles Avenue (2.9 miles) is closed to motor vehicles on weekends, and the curving, narrow nature of the Beach Drive makes nearby roads like Connecticut Avenue and Rockville Pike better choices for emergency vehicles. Even two-lane residential streets have intersections and driveways, and often shoulders, that allow vehicles to move over for emergency vehicles.

8. Parks ignores findings and recommendations of the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration regarding pedestrian islands and medians.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, **"For pedestrians to safely cross a roadway, they must estimate vehicle speeds, determine acceptable gaps in traffic based on their walking speed, and predict vehicle paths. Installing a median or pedestrian refuge island can help improve safety by allowing pedestrians to cross one direction of traffic at a time."** (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/medians-and-pedestrian-refuge-islands-urban-and-suburban-areas>, October 2022). This is even more important for cyclists, who often approach the CCT intersection at higher speeds and fail to heed stop signs and signals.

The Federal Highway Administration has determined that the **head-on crash rate for *divided* roads is 30% lower than for undivided roads, and total crash rate is 42% lower.** (<https://www.dot.ga.gov/GDOT/pages/Medians.aspx>). For pedestrian crashes, the rate can be as much 56% lower if a pedestrian island is present (<https://highways.dot.gov/safety/proven-safety-countermeasures/medians-and-pedestrian-refuge-islands-urban-and-suburban-areas>).

USDOT also states that "The design [of pedestrian islands] must accommodate pedestrians with disabilities." Making Parks facilities more available to those with disabilities is also a goal of Thrive Montgomery 2050, yet this is not addressed at all by Parks.

This is yet another area that could result in claims of willful negligence.

8. Parks in its presentation spoke of 24/7 recreational use of the proposed linear park.

Seriously? Round-the-clock use of a small park in the middle of a residential area that includes single-family homes, townhouses, and apartments, with no commercial activities in the immediate area? Other parks are open from sunrise to sunset, unless facilities are lit. The County has noise regulations; surely Parks isn't proposing to allow noise louder or longer than what the County allows?

9. Parks has embraced claims that this linear park is a good place for people to learn how to ride bikes.

For generations children and adults have learned to ride bikes in parking lots, on neighborhood streets, on sidewalks. In this area many also have learned all along the Little Falls Trail, including on the section by Norwood Park, although now that trail is too full of cracks and tree roots to be a great place for this. But the trail could and should be repaired and maintained for use by everyone. My earlier written comments noted some severe injuries on the Little Falls Trail.

10. Parks failed to tell the Board that it expects parking for visitors to the linear park and restroom facilities to be at the parking lot for the Bethesda pool.

The pool lot when the pool is open is always full and pool visitors also use the lot on the other side of Arlington Road, known as the spillover lot. Park visitors will have to use portapotties near the pool lot; there's currently one there but Parks says it can add more. Both of these will add pedestrians to the traffic intersections at LFP and

Hillandale and LFP and Arlington, as well as the CCT crossing. This is a recipe for more congestion and less safety, and a compelling argument that this is not the right place for a park.

11. As members of the Planning Board, you must closely examine the data Parks has presented and be sure you understand what time periods and road configurations are being discussed.

Residents requested traffic and usage data from Parks when Councilmember Friedson and Parks presented this idea to a small group from three communities in March 2021. It took months to receive the data and a briefing. Despite having a few weeks more than other residents to analyze and evaluate the data, residents have found it overwhelmingly inconsistent, unclear, and ultimately unreliable for anyone studying the data with an open mind. For example, data from different road configurations are dumped together. It is difficult to sort out data from one counter location from another - there is no analysis of how usage changed when the Mass Ave to River Road segment was dropped. I have already, in section 2, referenced the Mead and Hunt study of December 1, 2022.

In summary, Parks has at least been sloppy in its presentation and analysis of data. It appears that Parks selected only what supported its recommendation for approval.

Finally, I am compelled to share with the full Planning Board comments from a meeting attended by Mr. Zyontz, Director Riley, Deputy Director Miti Figueredo, another resident of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase area, and myself. Mr. Riley stated that he was the only person who knew what the county needed in parks. He may indeed have a bird's-eye view, but that doesn't mean he has a ground-level view. For that, the traditional method of public input, prior to a proposal and decision, is vital – yet Parks failed to engage with the larger community. At that same meeting, Mr. Riley stated, regarding engagement with residents in Bethesda and Chevy Chase, that a few residents who oppose everything "rile up" their civic associations and communities, implying that those in opposition have not thought through, or are incapable of independently thinking through proposals and that comments in opposition reflect the views of an activist few, not of the many. I refer you to the petition requesting a return to a four-lane road with a median from Dorset to Hillandale, and a two-lane road with a median/pedestrian island at the CCT crossing. That petition currently has more than 3,600 signatures, far exceeding the number of form letters you have received from supporters of the linear park. (Full petition available at <https://www.change.org/p/let-s-make-little-falls-parkway-safe-again>; this screenshot is also attached to this email.)

Let's Make Little Falls Parkway Safe Again!



3,626 have signed. Let's get to 5,000!

alexia Harris signed 25 minutes ago

Adam Jessell signed 33 minutes ago

Thanks to your support this petition has a chance at winning! We only need 1,374 more signatures to reach the next goal - can you help?

Take the next step!



Little Falls Parkway Neighborhood Coalition started this petition to Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board Jeffrey Zyontz and [4 others](#)

PETITION TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD FOR HEARING MARCH 30, 2023

Safety is more important than new park space on Little Falls Parkway.

The Planning Board should restore the pedestrian median at the Capital Crescent Trail ("CCT") crossing of Little Falls Parkway ("LFP") and keep one lane closed on each side (see photo above for requested configuration).

- The current lane closures have introduced new accident risks for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. [Click here to see for yourself.](#)
- Restoring this configuration improves safety because pedestrians and cyclists could cross one direction of traffic, pause in the median, and cross the other direction of traffic.
- The current configuration is a mixed-threat crossing, which forces pedestrians and cyclists to cross two directions of traffic at once.
- The current configuration creates blind spots from vehicles backed up from the removal of the right turn lane at Arlington Road.

The Planning Board should reopen all four lanes of LFP between Hillandale Road and Dorset Avenue because:

Thank you for your careful attention to this issue. Please vote to reject the road diet.

Sincerely,

Naomi Spinrad

4810 DeRussey Parkway

Chevy Chase MD 20815

Let's Make Little Falls Parkway Safe Again!



3,626 have signed. Let's get to 5,000!

 alexa Harris signed 25 minutes ago

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PETITION TO MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD FOR HEARING MARCH 30, 2023

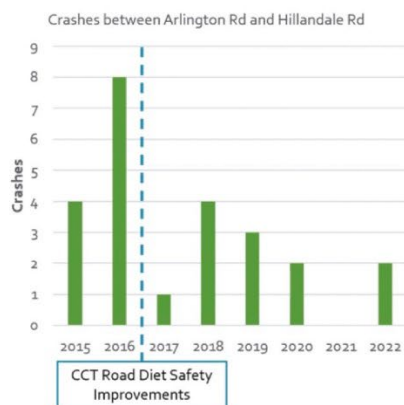
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The Planning Board should reopen all four lanes of LFP between Hillendale Road and Dorset Avenue because:

Crash Data



From: [Steve Shapiro](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS ON LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY -- AGENDA ITEM 12 HEARD ON MARCH 30, 2023
Date: Monday, April 3, 2023 11:52:47 PM
Attachments: [Supplemental Testimony on Little Falls Parkway for 4-4-2023.pdf](#)

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Attached are my supplemental comments on Little Falls Parkway, agenda item 12 heard on March 30, 2023.

The Chair extended the record for further comments through April 4, 2023, as the Board will further consider this agenda item at its meeting on April 13, 2023.

Best regards,

Stephen M. Shapiro, P.E.

5111 Westridge Road

Bethesda, MD 20816

(301) 229-6241

SteveS@md.net

STEPHEN M. SHAPIRO, P.E.

5111 Westridge Road, Bethesda, Maryland 20816

(301) 229-6241; SteveS@md.net

April 3, 2023

Mr. Jeff Zyontz
Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, MD 20902
Via E-Mail

Re: SUPPLEMENTAL COMMENTS ON LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY

Dear Chair Zyontz and Members of the Planning Board:

I am writing to offer supplemental comments, further to my testimony at the March 30 hearing on Agenda Item 12. These comments address the timing of the Board's consideration of the prospective abandonment of Parkway lanes, and of the prospective placement of recreational facilities on or in place of those travel lanes. These comments also address the concurrent reduction of the speed limit and the placement of speed humps on the southernmost segment of the Parkway.

I did not realize prior to last week's hearing that the proposed abandonment of Parkway travel lanes between Dorset and Arlington Roads is proceeding ahead of the proposal to place recreational facilities comprising a linear park on those travel lanes.

It would not be logical for the Board to make a decision that imposes the long-term transportation and safety ramifications of reconfiguring the Parkway before the Board first (or concurrently) determines that the public benefits of the proposed linear park justify those ramifications. The benefits of placing the linear park on the Parkway should have to far outweigh the benefits obtainable by placing the prospective recreational facilities on other park lands adjacent to or very near the Parkway lanes. As I noted at the hearing, there is a lot of park land east and west of the Parkway north of Dorset.

Concurrent with the ongoing pilot on Parkway segments north of Dorset, the Parks Department has implemented other changes to the southernmost segment of the Parkway between Massachusetts Avenue and River Road. Specifically, Parks has reduced the posted speed limit from 35 to 25 mph, and installed several speed humps rated for 20 mph. If many such humps are needed to limit the speed, it can suggest that the new posted speed is too low for the road's design. In this case, only other factors not present here, such as roadside businesses or homes, might justify a limit below the road's design.

The roadway was designed for 35 mph, and Parks staff reviewed (and reconfirmed) the safety of this segment at that speed when minor changes were implemented to accommodate the new intersection at Willet Bridge Road. This was about 10 years ago. Parks staff mentioned at that time that they were surprised that the Parkway had a 35 mph speed limit, while other Parkways (Sligo and Beach Drive) have a 25 mph limit.

As I urged in my testimony, the purpose and design of the other Parkways should not be determinative in justifying changes to Little Falls Parkway outside of engineering factors that truly justify such changes here. The only part of the southernmost segment that might justify a 25 mph limit (and a single 25 mph road hump) is near the end of the southbound lane at Massachusetts Avenue. This might well be justified in light of the evolving parking area adjacent to the southbound lane at Massachusetts Ave. The rest of the segment between River Road and Massachusetts Avenue should be at least 30 mph, with no speed humps set below that limit. Outside of the aforementioned parking area, there is nothing on either side of the Parkway except Willet Bridge Road (just south of River Road). This segment would be safer at 30 mph than comparable nearby roads. Examples include Mass. Ave. between Sangamore Rd. and Goldsboro Rd (30 mph), Goldsboro Rd. between MacArthur Blvd. and River Rd. (35 mph), and MacArthur Blvd. between the D.C. line and Great Falls. These other streets have comparable or more intersections, road-front businesses and homes, and curves than on this segment of the Parkway. This segment of the Parkway should not restrict travel speed to 20-25 mph only or primarily because Sligo Creek Parkway has a 25 mph limit.

Unless engineering considerations demonstrate that 30 or 35 mph is less appropriate for this segment of the Parkway than on comparable nearby roads, the Parkway limit south of River Road should be restored to at least 30 mph, except in the southbound lane where it approaches the parking area at Mass. Ave. Only a single 25 mph road hump should be placed in the southbound lane approaching the parking area. Other road humps in this segment should be removed, particularly where they are rated below the posted limit.

Best regards,

/s/

Stephen M. Shapiro, P.E.

5111 Westridge Road

Bethesda, MD 20816

(301) 229-6241

SteveS@md.net

From: [Peter Gray](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Riley, Mike](#); [Flusche, Darren](#)
Subject: Planning Board Testimony - March 30, 2023 - Little Falls Parkway plan
Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 7:36:23 AM
Attachments: [Montgomery Planning Board Testimony - March 30, 2023 Hearing - Little Falls Parkway.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chair Zyonts,

Attached is testimony on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association.

--

Peter A Gray
Montgomery County Organizer
Washington Area Bicyclist Association
Email: peter@waba.org
Phone: (202) 970-6816
Pronouns: he/him
Find us on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram - @wabadc

WABA's advocacy work is possible thanks to the financial support of our members. [Join](#) or [Donate](#) Today!



Montgomery Planning Board Testimony - March 30, 2023 Hearing - Little Falls Parkway

My name is Peter Gray and I am testifying on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and the 1300+ WABA members who live in Montgomery County, plus the additional thousands of other County residents who have joined in actions in support of better bicycling in the region.

In December 2016, Ned Gaylin was out enjoying the Capital Crescent Trail on his bicycle, as many thousands do every year. As he crossed Little Falls Parkway, with its four lanes of car traffic, he was tragically killed. The Parks department acted swiftly to avoid the dangers of that crossing by putting the Parkway on a road diet, reducing the number of car lanes to one in each direction.

Today, the Planning Board has a decision to make - whether to make that road diet a permanent one, and make that deadly crossing permanently into one that is safe for all users of the Parkway and of the Trail. WABA implores the Planning Board to affirm the plan of Montgomery Parks staff, to keep the trail safe and to leave the road diet in place.

It is distressing to see that some residents choose to advocate for a return to the dangerous set of circumstances that led to Ned Gaylin's death based on emotion alone, while rejecting the actual empirical data that real life traffic studies that show that the road diet has, in fact, not created any measurable traffic congestion! Moreover, the slight inconvenience of some people driving through the stretch of the Parkway involved is weighed as more important than making the Trail intersection with the Parkway safe for all.

In deciding what to do here, the Planning Board should follow the data that can lead to only one result. Make the road diet permanent, while also providing an additional outdoor park resource for the Bethesda area.

From: [Phyllis Edelman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Riley, Mike](#); [Flusche, Darren](#)
Cc: [Andrew Friedson](#); Evan.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Will Jawando](#)
Subject: Parks that Would Make a Difference -- not on Little Falls Parkway
Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 12:16:52 PM

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

Dear Planning Board Chair Zyontz and Parks Director Riley,

If the Parks Department wants to take an idea from NYC and use it in Montgomery County, I suggest you read the attached article and consider pop-up parks in areas where there a) aren't any parks within a 10-minute walking distance or b) where the parents of children might not have the time to take their children to the park because of work responsibilities.

According to the article this is pretty economical, would give the Parks Department ideas as to where parks are really needed, and would focus their efforts in areas where people could really use parks and recreation equipment -- and away from Little Falls Parkway, which most of us really want as a 4-lane divided Parkway.

Thanks for considering this.

Sincerely,
Phyllis Edelman

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/01/nyregion/street-lab-open-streets-nyc.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>