

Item 12 - Correspondence

From: [Katherine Vanderhook-Gomez](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 7:02:24 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,
Katherine Vanderhook-Gomez
5329 Allandale Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Rob Cacace](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: loving the new LFP!
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 7:47:09 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,
Rob Cacace
5320 Allandale Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Cynthia Cox](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 9:25:37 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,
Cynthia Cox
5200 Ventnor Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Alan Thompson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 10:33:34 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,
Alan Thompson
5025 Newport Ave
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Joan Barron](#)
To: [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [MCP-Chair](#); [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [MC-LFP](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 10:44:27 AM

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

Hello,

I am a resident of Chevy Chase West and have lived here for over 35 years. My biggest concern with the pilot project on Little Falls is **safety** at the Capital Crescent Trail Crossing. Clearly the road diet has made the crossing safer but the present configuration has not. The previous configuration where pedestrians and bikers(who rarely stop) could cross one lane at a time with the median in between made much more sense. Yes, the cars have to slow down for the raised area at the crossing and stop for folks crossing but often there is a blind spot where both driver and pedestrian/biker can't see one another. I am also concerned that Parks has somewhat disregarded the potential for more traffic along Little Falls once many buildings in Bethesda and the large project at Westward are completed.

I realize that the March 30th meeting concerns the road diet however the subsequent plan for linear park along the unused roadway does come into play. I don't believe it can compare to the other closed roadways like Sligo. That is well used on the weekends, my daughter lives nearby, and is quite long and there are no cars streaming by next to you. This proposed park on Little Falls IF it should attract more people just makes the crossing that much more dangerous as more folks will need to cross over. The connection to this park on the west side of Dorset Ave. is very poor with a narrow sidewalk on the opposite side from where you would enter the park.

Thank you for your time.
Best

Joan Barron
4704 Morgan Drive
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Jeanene Laino](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway linear park is a great idea
Date: Thursday, March 23, 2023 6:46:18 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,
Jeanene Laino
4714 Dover Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Sue Edson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 2:00:47 PM

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

We strongly believe that UNTIL THERE IS AN OVERPASS over Little Falls Parkway that there is no point in discussing any kind of green space, paved space or whatever.....the initial problem of getting pedestrians and bicyclists SAFELY ACROSS THAT ROAD, of however many lanes, needs to be solved first.

Sue and Chuck Edson.....longtime residents of the Town of Somerset.

--

Sue Edson

SKEdson3@gmail.com

From: [Valarie Barr](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Create a Little Falls Parkway linear park, keep the road diet
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 2:26:19 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,
Valarie Barr
2209 Richland Pl
Silver Spring, MD 20910

From: [David Snyder](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Put Little Falls Parkway back the way it was
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 5:28:23 PM

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

As a citizen of Montgomery County, I object to the restrictions on Little Falls Parkway because of safety issues on the parkway itself and danger to runners, bikers, and neighboring communities. Aside from that, it is taking something that was good and making it bad. If you need to spend extra money—which I would ***not*** encourage—please spend it on something that is needed.

I feel great frustration at what is going on. I am a runner, biker, and driver. Running and biking was fine on the trail before the lane closures and the rows of pylons. To the extent there were safety issues, your changes have made them much worse through visual confusion, bottlenecking, etc. Safety is now a serious problem because of your changes. At the same time, there are things in the County that actually do need attention and money. Could you concentrate on those, please, instead of “fixing” things that are not broken?

David Snyder
6105 Ramsgate Road
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Carl Fox](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Keep Little Falls Parkway safe! I support the linear parkway
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 5:38:13 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,
Carl Fox
7710 Woodmont Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814

From: [Katharine Kosin](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Preserve Pedestrian/Biker Access to Little Falls Parkway
Date: Friday, March 24, 2023 9:42:47 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

I live in Bethesda, while my parents live in the Town of Somerset, at the starting point of the Little Falls Parkway closure. As someone who does not drive and who likes to get exercise and go for walks with my mom as a way to spend time together, the closure of LFP has been such a benefit. I regularly walk along that stretch when traveling back from their house to my place. Especially if I am going later/more at dusk, there is more light there than on the CCT, with its tall trees on each side.

This county has traditionally catered far too much to drivers, at the expense of other residents in the county who equally pay taxes and need to get around and have a good quality of life. And anything that can be done to encourage less driving and more green ways of getting around helps the County's climate change mitigation efforts. So I was delighted to hear about the plans to make permanent the closure on the left two lanes.

The Little Falls Parkway roadway reconfiguration has been a success, appropriately balancing driver and non-driver needs.. 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 as I have noted, 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,
Katharine Kosin
4970 Battery Ln
Bethesda, MD 20814

From: [Stephany Chaconas](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: In protest to the Little Falls Parkway plan
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2023 3:40:09 PM

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

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to you in protest of the diminishing of the Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue. This is a totally unnecessary spending of Montgomery County/Maryland taxpayers money. It is also something that most residents in the nearby neighborhoods don't want, as we feel it is not at all needed. I live quite close to the pool on Little Falls Road. I often see drivers trying to decide what to do/which lanes to traverse, while watching out for the pedestrians who travel across the parkway. The whole thing has become quite confusing. I actually saw tire tracks in the center dividing area where small trees have been planted....which probably means that a car managed to be on the closed side of the parkway and had to cut across the dirt to get to the functioning side. I also walk along that area, using the existing sidewalk....which is totally safe from traffic....and rarely see a cyclist or a runner/walker on that closed portion of the parking. This spending to change the original course of the parkway is a total misuse of money that could be spent on so many other repairs and maintenance of parks and other county facilities. As to the gentleman who was killed while crossing the parkway on his bike — PLEASE remember that he was on a recumbent bike and was difficult to see. If needed, one of those blinking light signs could be installed on either side of the parkway where the path crosses all four lanes, which would be of assistance to drivers. Having food trucks and other items placed on the contemplated closed portions of the parkway is way out of line. They are unnecessary, will cause trash to be spread throughout the neighborhoods and along the road, and will cause drivers to take their eyes off the road to observe what is happening on the proposed closed side of the parkway. I ask that you not approve this proposal to close two lanes of Little Falls Parkway. Thank you for your consideration of this request. Stephany Chaconas, Hillandale Road

From: [Stephany Chaconas](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: In protest to the Little Falls Parkway plan
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2023 3:43:13 PM

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

From: Stephany Chaconas <stephanychaconas@gmail.com>
Subject: In protest to the Little Falls Parkway plan
Date: March 25, 2023 at 3:40:02 PM EDT
To: MCP-Chair@mncppc-mc.org

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to you in protest of the diminishing of the Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue. This is a totally unnecessary spending of Montgomery County/Maryland taxpayers money. It is also something that most residents in the nearby neighborhoods don't want, as we feel it is not at all needed. I live quite close to the pool on Little Falls Road. I often see drivers trying to decide what to do/which lanes to traverse, while watching out for the pedestrians who travel across the parkway. The whole thing has become quite confusing. I actually saw tire tracks in the center dividing area where small trees have been planted....which probably means that a car managed to be on the closed side of the parkway and had to cut across the dirt to get to the functioning side. I also walk along that area, using the existing sidewalk....which is totally safe from traffic....and rarely see a cyclist or a runner/walker on that closed portion of the parking. This spending to change the original course of the parkway is a total misuse of money that could be spent on so many other repairs and maintenance of parks and other county facilities. As to the gentleman who was killed while crossing the parkway on his bike — PLEASE remember that he was on a recumbent bike and was difficult to see. If needed, one of those blinking light signs could be installed on either side of the parkway where the path crosses all four lanes, which would be of assistance to drivers. Having food trucks and other items placed on the contemplated closed portions of the parkway is way out of line. They are unnecessary, will cause trash to be spread throughout the neighborhoods and along the road, and will cause drivers to take their eyes off the road to observe what is happening on the proposed closed side of the parkway. I ask that you not approve this proposal to close

two lanes of Little Falls Parkway. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Stephany Chaconas

6655 Hillandale Road
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: lnoonan6226@gmail.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Keep little falls parkway open.
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2023 5:27:52 PM

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

We do not want it narrowed to car. Virtually nobody will use and it is a major detour for us.

Linda Noonan

7121 Darby rd

Bethesda. Md.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Curran Holden](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for Little Falls Parkway Public Hearing
Date: Saturday, March 25, 2023 11:25:11 PM

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

This testimony is from Curran Holden. I live at 4810 Falstone Avenue Chevy Chase MD. I'm submitting this testimony for the March 30th hearing on the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

My name is Curran Holden, and I'm a resident of Somerset, one of the neighborhoods adjacent to the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project. This project, in my opinion, doesn't work on Little Falls, but could be good for other communities in Montgomery County.

The goal of the project, according to the [Montgomery parks website](#), is to "to address concerns with cut-through traffic in adjacent neighborhoods associated with the weekend closures of Little Falls Parkway while retaining space for recreation on the parkway". The problem with the half closure of Little Falls is that it fails to promote recreation and has no other upside. Little Falls Parkway is flanked on both sides by bike paths, one of which is the Capital Crecent trail, so the partially blocked off street just isn't that appealing when compared with the alternatives just a few hundred feet away. Little Falls was only an alternative to the other paths because the entire street was closed.

I don't think this pilot was a complete failure: I haven't noticed the same amount of cut-through traffic as I did during the pandemic, and Little Falls is not (to my knowledge) experiencing serious traffic problems because of the road closure. I simply think that Little Falls is not the place for this. Another project like this should be placed somewhere where options for biking, walking, and other kinds of outdoor recreation are limited and should be done in communication with the communities it will impact. Maybe some kind of form could be made where communities can petition to have something like this set up and then the Board considers the request? I understand if that proposition would be too difficult administratively, but I think it would help to avoid the problems facing the Little Falls Pilot.

I appreciate the Board's time.

Sincerely,
Curran Holden

From: [Carl G Becker](#)
To: [Flusche, Darren](#); [Frank, Andrew](#)
Cc: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: LFP crash data
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 6:25:37 AM

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

Hi Darren and Andrew,

Can you provide me with details of the collision/incident which occurred at the Capital Crescent Trail on Little Falls Parkway in December 2022? Apparently a police report was filed so I'm assuming you can share the details.

Carl Becker

Realtor
Principal Broker
Premier Properties
DC | MD | VA

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

From: [Carl G Becker](#)
To: [Flusche, Darren](#); [Frank, Andrew](#)
Cc: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: LFP crash data
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 6:43:46 AM

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

Darren and Andrew,

Regarding the crash in December, The crash occurred at 7:37am on Dec 1, 2022 between a pedestrian and a vehicle where the driver was found at fault. Police report #HA2449001H, local report #22002092. If you could provide me with the details I would appreciate it.

Can you also provide the details of the crashes which occurred on LFP on Sept 19th and Sept 27th?

Carl Becker

Realtor
Principal Broker
Premier Properties
DC | MD | VA

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

> On Mar 26, 2023, at 12:25 PM, Carl G Becker <carlgbecker@gmail.com> wrote:

>

> Hi Darren and Andrew,

>

> Can you provide me with details of the collision/incident which occurred at the Capital Crescent Trail on Little Falls Parkway in December 2022? Apparently a police report was filed so I'm assuming you can share the details.

>

> Carl Becker

>

> Realtor

> Principal Broker

> Premier Properties

> DC | MD | VA

>

> m: 301 873 3221

> [@CarlBeckerHomes](#)

> [PremierPropertiesDC.com](#)

From: [Rebecca Hanson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I DO NOT support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 10:10:04 AM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Montgomery Parks' proposal for Little Falls Parkway is ill-conceived. Despite its assertions, (i) cut-through traffic is still a problem in adjacent neighborhoods, (ii) the CCT crossing is more dangerous than it was in Phase 1, and it is more dangerous for vehicular traffic. Fire Chief Jones has documented his safety concerns in a letter that will be entered into the hearing record. The Planning Board must ask itself what is Parks' real motivation here? Why is WABA lobbying for the most dangerous trail crossing in Montgomery County? WABA bikers don't even bike on the new open space...it has remained empty for the last six months since it has been open, proving bikers don't want to bike on this tiny stretch. This project has already failed, and will be a public embarrassment for anyone that supports it against the strong opposition against it.

Thank you,
Rebecca Hanson
5424 Falmouth Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Naomi Spinrad](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [MC-LFP](#)
Cc: [councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Friedson's Office, Councilmember](#);
[councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.fani-gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us](#); [Korman, Marc Delegate](#); [Love, Sara Delegate](#); [Marc Elrich](#);
[jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov](#); [Dunn, Pamela](#)
Subject: Reject Little Falls Parkway current road diet - it's unsafe
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 2:18:09 PM

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

Dear Planning Board members:

Please reject the road diet on Little Falls Parkway and restore the median between single lanes in each direction at the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing, and on the Parkway from Dorset to Arlington.

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). This is even more important for cyclists, who often approach the CCT intersection at higher speeds and fail to heed stop signs and signals. As well, 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.**

I am a regular user of the Parkway and the CCT. I don't want to be the pedestrian on the Trail who is injured or killed by the driver on Little Falls who cannot see me because their view is blocked by another vehicle. Nor do I want to be the driver who causes death or injury to a Trail user who is not easily visible or who comes up too fast for me to react safely.

Nor do I want to be the motorist or passenger who suffers a collision on the Parkway because you have unwisely altered the lane configuration, making it confusing and dangerous and more likely to cause a crash. I have already avoided one such collision.

Parks' own presentation showed the success of the previous configuration on Little Falls - no crashes at the CCT intersection in the past three years, and a reduction overall on that block. Why would you approve a change that makes crashes more likely?

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Safety is also an issue at existing Parks facilities in the area, where Parks has failed to provide needed maintenance and repairs. Within the past month, a woman tripped on Little Falls Trail and broke her leg. Earlier, a cancer survivor also tripped on that trail and ruptured breast implants, requiring four surgeries to repair the damage. And a third fell on a tennis court in Norwood Park, because of cracks and undrained puddles, resulting in surgery for a broken wrist. Besides the physical risks to users, maintenance and repair failures present liability risks for Parks. **Parks must devote funds to ensuring its existing facilities here are safe, not to adding new facilities.**

There's no need or demand for a linear park by this busy road. Please reject the current road diet!

Sincerely,
Naomi Spinrad
Chevy Chase West (which is adjacent to Little Falls Parkway)

From: [Mary Cahill](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Lateral park proposal
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 3:01:25 PM

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

I am against the proposal for a “lateral” park along Little Falls Parkway. I would not want to go to a space next to automobile traffic. There is already a park just off the Crescent Trail at Dorset. Don’t waste taxpayers money.
Thanks Mary Cahill 6663 Hillandale Rd. Chevy Chase MD resident since 1986 in this address.
Sent from my iPhone

From: lnoonan6226@gmail.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for hearing.
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 3:59:51 PM

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

Please consider this written testimony

We do not want to narrow or close at any time Little Falls.parkway. Very few people benefit compared to the inconvenience to many. It forced us multiple times on a weekend to drive a long distance around the blockage. You should have stats from the pilot ThSt shows how few use the closed street.

Linda Noonan

7121 Darby Rd

Bethesda

Sent from my iPhone

From: [joann.lang](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 5:29:48 PM

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

To the Chair and Members of the Planning Board of Montgomery County:

As I have mentioned in recent letters to members of the Council, my husband and I are very opposed to the possible changes being proposed for Little Falls Parkway and that you are using our tax dollars to complete the proposed project.

Travel along the parkway is becoming increasingly difficult and frustrating because of traffic congestion during rush hour at the present time. The traffic situation will only worsen once the Westbard realignment takes hold and once federal government employees return to their offices in May. This is particularly disturbing since Little Falls Parkway was constructed as a way to connect west Bethesda to downtown Bethesda easily and prevent dangerous neighborhood cut through traffic.

We believe that the proposed changes, which include an unnecessary Linear Park, do not recognize the safety problems that road restrictions create for surrounding neighborhoods like Kenwood and Somerset. The Parks Department data does not seem to consider the safety issues for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists alike now that opposing lanes of traffic are no longer separated by a median but are now side by side.

As taxpayers we believe that we should be consulted about projects that significantly impact our community. We strongly oppose the proposed changes to Little Falls Parkway.

Sincerely,
JoAnn Lang
(Mrs. Roger H.)
Sumner residents

From: jennysuedailey@aol.com
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Parks and Trails Inventory - Background Information for March 30th Testimony
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 6:15:49 PM

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

Chairman Zyontz and Commissioners,

I am sending an inventory of the recreational and trail sites within the Little Falls Parkway along with my personal comments that describe current opportunities for recreation and walking in this area. I am including a link to Google Maps of this area to give you a good idea of how close the Parks and Trails are to each other. Please take a look as you go through the inventory I listed.

I am aware that the hearing on March 30th is focused on Little Falls Parkway, however, your decision in this matter is critically connected to the proposed linear park there.

I am a supporter of parks and green space for all County residents, but I believe money should be spent where it is needed and beneficial to the neighborhoods. My testimony on Thursday will include my recommendation for your consideration, which is a greatly needed park in another part of our area.

The County Government has adopted a policy of spending money and viewing projects with a concern for equity. The proposed linear park project is not needed or wanted in this area, and it does not pass the test for any formula for equity.

The residents want the Parkway returned to four lanes with the safety configuration at the crosswalk.

Thank you.

Jenny Sue Dunner
5315. Dorset Ave,
Chevy Chase, MD

<https://www.google.com/maps/@38.9753404,-77.1024105,284m/data=!3m1!1e3>

Recreational and Trail Sites:

1. Norwood Park is the largest park in our area and is easily reached by the Citizens from a number of communities.

The Park is 17.13 acres and includes the following: 2 playgrounds, 5 tennis courts, lighted basketball courts, 2 softball fields, a soccer/football overlay field. There are two buildings in the Park. One is for birthday parties and special events and the other building is currently leased by Norwood Daycare. The park was acquired in 1937.

A personal note. My two daughters spent many happy hours in this Park. One not so happy when one of my daughters fractured her arm there. I have not been to the Park in years, however, I understand it is in serious need of maintenance. This is a wonderful park used by so many residents, so Parks spending money here would be quite beneficial and appreciated.

2. Little Falls Park Trail starts at Dorset Ave and Little Falls Parkway and is parallel to the Parkway. When approaching Hillandale Road, the Trail curves to the right and is parallel to Hillandale until just past the entrance to the swimming pool that is on the opposite side of the road. Past that point, the Trail separates and splits in two directions. The Trail goes to the left to Willett Parkway and to the right to Norwood Park.

I have lived in the area for 60 years, and I have always enjoyed seeing someone sitting on the bench on a pleasant day, often with a dog resting or someone just resting and watching the Parkway. The Trail is paved and in need of serious maintenance in several areas; another bench or two would be a welcome addition.

3. Little Falls Stream Valley Park. This Park is identified as being in the 160 acre Little Falls Stream Valley that goes from northern Fairfax Road to MacArthur Blvd. There is a path from the overflow parking lot just past Arlington Road on Little Falls Parkway. One may see the tops of equipment on the children's playground from Arlington Road.

I understand there are two soccer fields in this park. MSI soccer teams have used the fields for practice. This park area is relatively secluded with Arlington Road on one side with a high wall, the parking lot with a fairly high wall of mud, trees and overgrown weeds and the Fairfax Court apartments and town houses surrounding the rest of the area.

It is a wonderful place for children living nearby, except that I understand the fields can become very muddy, and I am sure the area could use some maintenance.

4. Town of Somerset Park. One of the boundaries of The Town of Somerset is alongside the Little Falls Parkway from River Road to about halfway up to Hillandale Rd. The Town has tennis courts, a swimming pool with a building for changing as well as a park. One of the access points to the park is a trail past the swimming pool that eventually leads to Wisconsin Ave. Many of the residents use the Trail to go to Friendship Heights or just for walking in a pleasant, wooded area. The Somerset Park is for the residents of Somerset and the Town is responsible for maintenance. Recently the Trail was named for a long-time former member of the Town Council - Marnie Shaul.

5. Trail Park (also known as Railroad Park) starts at Dorset Avenue and Kennedy Drive and is parallel to the Capital Crescent Trail just a few yards away. There is an impressive jungle gym for children and a lot of green space for kicking a ball around. Many children play in this park along. There is a serious need for more benches given the number of folks who use the area.

6. Little Falls Public Swimming Pool. The pool is on the corner of Hillandale and Little Falls Parkway. As you can imagine, it is very popular in the summer months. There is a parking lot on Little Falls Parkway just past the intersection of the Parkway and Arlington Road. It is full during the summer, especially when there are swim meets held at the pool.

7. Capital Crescent Trail. I think this fine Trail speaks for itself. As a member of the Trail Board, I feel strongly that there should be a clearance of several feet on each side of the Trail and the invasive plants in order for people to be able to safely step aside.

8. Potter Park by the Trail on River Road. This is my favorite. This Park is a wonderful location for all users of the recreational Trail to stop for a rest or with young children to stop and go across the street to McDonald's for lunch or a snack or just picnic in the Park. Whole Foods is on the same side as the Park and is just steps away.

9. Just slightly out of the immediate area is the Edgemoor Park of 2.5 acres. The community of Edgemoor is just on the other side of Bradley Blvd. as one goes north.

10. Willard Avenue Park is on the corner of Willard Ave. and River Road. This Park has access from River Road and is over 9 acres. There is a children's play area and a Trail that goes into the Town of Somerset since Somerset is one of the borders. Many citizens in the Willard Ave. area and Brookdale community as well as some from the apartments in Friendship Heights use this walking Trail.

From: [Mary Speck](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Make Little Falls a Park Again
Date: Sunday, March 26, 2023 8:40:56 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

I support reconfiguring Little Falls Parkway to make it safer for cyclists and pedestrians. I can remember when Little Falls really was a park, so I appreciate efforts to reduce and slow traffic along the roadway.

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. Though I would like you to reconsider keeping the median, so that traffic is separated and it is easier to cross.

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

Thank you,
Mary Speck
5123 Westridge Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [fred.smoak](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Project
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 2:37:42 PM

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

I live just on the other side of Mass Ave from Little Falls. I use the road when I drive, and I frequently cycle in the area. I support keeping the present structure with a few improvements I expect are already in the works. It is far safer for cyclists and pedestrians than in the past. Having more open space for recreation is always a benefit.

If you do have to make a change, may I suggest routing the CCT through the community pool parking lot and cross at the Hillandale light - then back to the CCT. Virtually everybody at Hillandale turns left. Turning right will put you back on Bradley where you just came from. So cyclists and pedestrians could cross there with a minimum disruption to car traffic.

Keeping the current one lane arrangement is fine because traffic must narrow down anyway at Arlington Road.

Frederic M. Smoak

From: [Silver Uke](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway to play outdoors
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 2:19:36 PM

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

Dear friends,

Thank you for considering the need to create more green spaces for people of all ages to recreate along the Little Falls Parkway. I am an avid cyclist, and enjoy the sections closed to automobiles first created during the pandemic.

The single lane closure also safely assists users of the Capitol Crescent Trail across the parkway near our county pool. I frequently travel by car to get to shopping also, and the parkway road diet is still a breeze. Just the other day, I was excited to see a team of people surveying and inspecting the closed off portion of the Little Falls parkway. It is my hope that this safe outdoor space will continue to be used as a park like setting dedicated to walking, cycling, and recreation by people of all ages. I'm an avid believer in the devotion of dedicated volunteers working together to accomplish and manage wonderful spaces made accessible for all.

I appreciate your time and consideration in support of this wonderful project.

Best wishes,

Jennifer Hearn
Bethesda, MD
C&O Canal Trust volunteer Quartermaster Lockhouse 6 along the C&O Canal Towpath

From: [cynthia schollard](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Pilot
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 2:14:54 PM

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

I am writing in support of the new road diet which allocates two lanes to walking and riding.

I live on Dorset in the Somerset area of Chevy Chase at the Little Falls end of the road. I walk or bike to do almost all my errands. I have been using the new pedestrian lanes to walk to Bethesda. The capital crescent - a wonderful and vital trail - does get crowded with a mix of bikes, children and dogs. I am looking forward to the greater green space and recreation events in the new community space.

Additionally, crossing Little Falls at Dorset is much safer with the new road system as previously cars often flew through the red light. Now cars approach the light at a slower speed and, therefore, stop before the light is fully red - not 30 seconds after it is fully red.

Many thanks for your support on this issue

Cynthia Schollard
4906 Dorset

From: [Andrea Cimino](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Comments
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 1:36:12 PM

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

Dear MNCPPC Planning Board,

I am writing in support of the vision to make the Little Falls Parkway pilot more bike and pedestrian-friendly. I am a bike commuter and would like to see you allocate two lanes to biking and walking. Before I moved from North Bethesda to Kensington, my daily bike commute involved a section on LFP and I still find myself in this area sometimes on the weekends, so having a park space with continued bike and pedestrian use of two roadway lanes is important to me. Specifically, I would like to see a linear park in the repurposed bike lanes. Sadly, one of my fellow biking colleagues was hit by a car at the Capital Crescent and LFP intersection. He had a concussion and had to go to the hospital. I worry about my fate there as well.

I have been biking in the Bethesda, Chevy Chase, Friendship Heights, and Kensington areas for more than a decade. I bike because I want to help the environment and wildlife, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, be healthy, save money, avoid contributing to traffic, and also to just have fun outside. I think that citizens like me and my other bike commuting colleagues should be rewarded for wanting to get around in a green and healthy manner. We deserve safer roadways and more bike paths and bike lanes. We should not have to fear for our lives when we bike. The death of US diplomat Sarah Langencamp while she was biking in Bethesda last summer should not be forgotten. Better biking infrastructure can save lives and the environment.

Sincerely,
Andrea Cimino
3913 Hampden St.
Kensington, MD 20895

From: gobbo.mario@gmail.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: the Little Falls Parkway pilot
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 1:13:29 PM

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

I fully support the Falls Parkway pilot!

Sent from my iPhone

From: dozier.dan@gmail.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Multiple Uses of Little Falls Parkway
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 12:01:14 PM
Attachments: [image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)

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

Jeff Zyontz, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

March 27th, 2023

RE: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board Members:

I am one of many who support the Parks Department new design of Little Falls Parkway. We applaud the Parks department for your data-driven, evidence-based approach to increasing multiple uses of Little Falls Parkway (LFP) while improving traffic flow. Along with other residents of the Westbrook and adjoining neighborhoods near the LFP, I fully support the pilot project. It is in the best interest of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike, to increase access to pedestrians and cyclists safely and efficiently, to reduce traffic volume and increase traffic flow.

The current LFP configuration greatly increases our safety during daily walks and bicycle commutes between home and work during rush hour. In 2020, one of us survived a hit-and-run on LFP from behind and was left unconscious on the ground. Capital Crescent is not an alternative route, because it often, depending on the destination, requires traversing River Road along a patently dangerous stretch where a cyclist was tragically struck and killed by a truck in August 2022.

Members of our neighborhood communities used to ride with Ned Gaylin who was struck by a driver and killed in October 2016 while crossing the LFP at the Capital Crescent trail. The Parks department reports no accidents at that crossing

in the last 3 years, since the infrastructure improvements were made in response to the 6 crashes that occurred in 2016, including the fatality of Mr. Gaylin. We encourage the Planning Board to resist the pressure to restore the four-lane speedway for the protection of our lives as community cyclists and pedestrians.

The LFP plan protects children by addressing the need for more sidewalks and protected side paths in our neighborhoods. Pandemic-era children have learned to ride bikes because of the LFP pilot project. People use the non-vehicular lanes to teach children how to ride bikes, given the absence of sidewalks or protected bike lanes anywhere in our neighborhood from Massachusetts Avenue to Dorset. The LFP pilot project is a central location and perfect for children to learn to ride. The Capital Crescent trail is at or above capacity and not a safe access route for young kids learning to ride. We are excited for the opportunity to create safe, healthy, climate-friendly, and bicycle and pedestrian-welcoming neighborhoods.

The LFP pilot project prevents human error from resulting in pedestrian and bicycle fatalities, through its affordable, protective infrastructure improvements. According to the Parks Department's 15 Feb presentation of data on pedestrian use of the LFP since the road diet, daily user counts add up to over 3,000 users per weekend (Figure 1). This pedestrian use is comparable to weekend traffic use on weekends (Figure 2). Moreover, the pilot project maintains safe traffic speeds, reduces traffic volume (by 20-35% since 2016) and supports good traffic flow at under 4 minutes between River Rd. and Fairfax Rd, during peak hour travel time (Figure 3). Such traffic flow and high pedestrian use would increase if the Parks Department added more infrastructure improvements, such as protected side paths (e.g., using flexposts) to extend pedestrian access to the LFP pilot project from River Rd. and Massachusetts Ave.

Thank you for dedicating your time and resources to this commendable effort, it is a phenomenal infrastructure improvement and responsible use of our tax dollars. The availability of safe, open space and improved traffic flow for multiple users drastically increases the value, safety, and livability of our environmentally proactive and family-friendly neighborhood. We look forward to your progress in the next phase of improvements.



Figure 1. User counts at the LFP pilot project

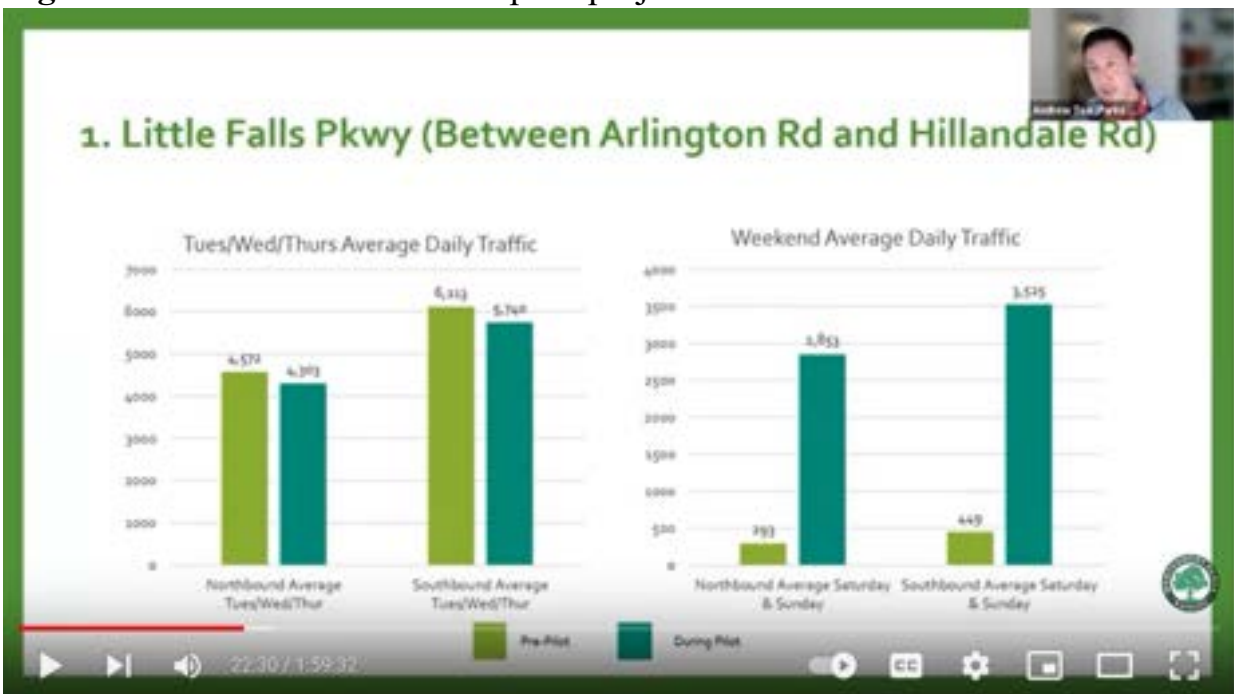


Figure 2. Traffic counts at the LFP pilot project.



Figure 3. Travel times at the LFP pilot project.

Sincerely,

Daniel P. Dozier, 4550 N. Park Ave. #501, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

cc: Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov
councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov
councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov
councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov
Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov
LFP@montgomeryparks.org
hollygoy@hotmail.com

From: [catherine woods](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little falls parkway
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 4:21:35 PM

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

Get rid of the bike lanes. If you haven't noticed NO BODY USES IT! You are causing so much traffic congestion. Also the weather here is terrible. PLEASE STOP THIS MADNESS!

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Rob Wald](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written Testimony: Little Falls Parkway Pilot
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 4:23:36 PM

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

Dear MCP Chair,

I submit this written testimony in support of dedicating two lanes on Little Falls Parkway for walking, biking, and rolling. The Parkway is a popular road for pedestrians and cyclists, like myself, who use it for recreation and simply to get from one place to another. I'm tired of hearing about cars hitting and killing pedestrians and cyclists throughout Montgomery County, including on Little Falls Parkway.

Having safe routes to walk and bike in all neighborhoods of the county will make our community a healthier and more pleasant place to live. Roads are, after all, for everyone, not just for people who drive cars.

Sincerely,

Robert Wald
1729 Dublin Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20902

From: [Amy Hoang Wrona](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Please support the Little Falls Linear Park
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 5:35:34 PM

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

Dear Montgomery County Parks Chair,

I am writing to support the Little Falls Linear Park. My husband and I walk our dogs on this park every day and can see the hope and promise there. I know that the park is not yet finished, and hope that you will not succumb to the NIMBY pressure to eliminate it.

The safety of walkers and bikers will be lessened if you take away this park. It is a fact that traffic is not affected by the lane closure and that no school buses or other emergency vehicles have ever been kept or delayed from their destination because of the road diet.

Please do not take away the park space,

Amy Hoang Wrona
4816 Grantham Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Carly Tu](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; [MC-LFP](#); info@marcelrich.org
Subject: A Letter of Support for the Linear Park Project on Little Falls Parkway!
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 5:38:06 PM

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

Earlier this month, I sent a letter by mail in support of the Little Falls Parkway project. I did not see it included in the Appendix for the upcoming hearing scheduled for 3/30, so I am re-submitting it to you now. Thank you for considering my testimony and I look forward to seeing this linear park develop! -Carly Tu

Carly Tu and Family
5202 Nahant Street
Bethesda, MD 20816

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

Our family bought our home in Glen Mar Park under three years ago. During that time, Little Falls Parkway (LFP) went through several major transitions. It started with Open Parkways during the Pandemic—LFP was closed to traffic all the way to Massachusetts. It connected the Little Falls Stream Valley Park Trail to the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) at Arlington Road—beautiful, walkable, runnable, bikeable loop options from .73 miles to 4.4 miles in length. It celebrated the full beauty of the area's parkland. Then came the popular, weekends-only version that left the .73-mile loop, ending at Dorset, followed by traffic patterns complicated temporarily by the start of the Westbard Square redevelopment. To accommodate recreation and traffic, the Montgomery County Parks Department decided to try something—and narrowed the road capacity from four lanes to two in two distinct phases. During the Parks virtual meeting with the public on February 15, they presented a comprehensive and compelling case to continue with the plan for the Linear Park. As a family who regularly travels through the corridor regularly by foot, by bike, and by car, **we fully support the plan.**

As the weather warms, I see more and more people using the reclaimed road space on LFP and I am reminded that the CCT is woefully undersized for its popularity. That highlights two things for us—a great demand for safe, car-free spaces in our community and a lack of availability of these spaces. This section of road is only .6 miles away from downtown and the Linear Park space helps relieve trail traffic—especially welcomed for us caring for young children who need more safe spaces to practice bike or scooter skills. The linear park can serve a unique purpose for the community—not everyone lives on a cul-du-sac and many of the surrounding neighborhood streets do not have sidewalks, making this kind of childhood activity dangerous. I'm also hopeful that this car-free yet paved space may recapture some of the magic of the Woodmont Streetery from before it was opened back up to vehicle traffic. So much of our public space is dedicated to car-centric, economy-driven travel, and we forget how equally important caregiving, restful, and connective spaces are for the vitality of our community. When I run or bike on the CCT trail, I've noticed that the condensed crossing at LFP feels much safer, and I much prefer it as a driver as well. The safety data from the Parks department confirmed my feelings are rooted

in reality.

As a regular driver and vehicle passenger on LFP, I feel safer due to the reduced speeds, and I have not experienced significant delays or frustrating amount of traffic others have claimed. I am glad to see that students walking across LFP to Washington Episcopal School have a safer experience from calmer, slower traffic. If I have one critique—the pavement southbound on the transition from one to two lanes could be smoothed and finessed.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read and consider this testimony in support of the Parks Department plan for the Little Falls Parkway Linear Park. Unfortunately, due to a scheduling conflict, we are unable to attend the meeting scheduled for March 30.

Sincerely,

Carly Tu and Family, Montgomery County Residents

From: [Monte Fisher](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: YES to the Little Falls Parkway project!
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 6:33:29 PM

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

I strongly support the new linear park on Little Falls Parkway. I do not live in the neighborhood, but I ride in the area frequently on my bicycle, and I support more facilities for bicycles and pedestrians.

Monte Fisher
Twinbrook resident

From: [Molly](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Fwd: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 6:46:17 PM

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

Re-send with email address

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Molly <molly.dambra@gmail.com>
Date: March 27, 2023 at 10:38:04 PM GMT
To: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

I am a resident of Kenwood and want to submit written testimony for the upcoming 3/30/2023 planning board hearing. I have a number of safety and security-related concerns about these changes to partially close little falls parkway. I have had two instances where this put my children in close proximity to an oncoming car, and I am very concerned that children will be hit by cars with these new lane closures. Here are the primary issues:

1. Kenwood does not have sidewalks. Children go for walks every day (walking their dogs, or riding their scooters or bikes) and they cross streets and are now dealing with an increase in cut-through traffic. The closure have pushed cut through traffic through our streets, and many of these cars speed significantly as they rush to their endpoint. My child was almost hit crossing Kennedy drive when these lane closures first happened. This is terribly dangerous and an accident waiting to happen.
2. The development at Westbard is almost certainly going to increase vehicular traffic in the area, making this threat to children (and other vulnerable pedestrians) greater at a time when the county is going to decrease the lanes on LFP? This will push even more cut through traffic onto our streets.
3. The cross-walk on the capital crescent trail is far less safe and much worse visibility, especially for children who are lower to the ground with these changes. My other child was trying to cross and could not see the oncoming car (and it did not seem to see her) because the cross walk is now with no median, and traffic is moving in both directions, blocking views. I grabbed and pulled her back in time. This will not always happen with parents/childcare, and we're endangering our community's children.

Relatedly and lastly, we have been attempting to see the data used to make these decisions, and have not had access. What studies were done on traffic patterns stemming from westward development and how they affect this little falls closure? This is one of many questions our community has. These changes have been met with intense opposition from the citizens who live with them. It is unclear where the support for this comes from, and it is concerning since it does not appear to be the residents affected. We feel unheard, ignored and endangered.

Thank you,
Molly Michael

Molly.dambra@gmail.com

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Valentyn Stadnytskyi](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:09:16 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,
Valentyn Stadnytskyi
261 Congressional Ln
Rockville, MD 20852

From: [Sakshi Tomar](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:09:27 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,
Sakshi Tomar
703 Cobbler Pl
Gaithersburg, MD 20877

From: [Jan Lijla](#)
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Andrew Friedson](#); [Matt Higgins](#); [Cindy Gibson](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway pilot data/ Parks Department Planning
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:47:15 PM

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

To the Montgomery County Planning Board,

I am writing to express my concerns about the Parks Department data analysis regarding traffic on Little Falls Parkway and also to express my concerns about the lack of structured, transparent planning at the Parks Department. I hope that with your oversight over the Parks Department you will help the Parks Department improve its performance in these two areas. I write you from the perspective of an individual who spent her 38 year career in public service; 24 years as a Senior Executive in the Federal civil service, which meant I spent a great deal of time critically reviewing data and staff work.

Parks Department traffic data analysis re: Little Falls Parkway.

I attended the Parks Department February 15 public briefing on LFP traffic data and was surprised by the Power Point slide that showed a decline in traffic on major Bethesda Roads. It was only after the briefing ended that I realized the slide showed substantial declines in traffic for LFP and roads that run roughly North-South, i.e., Wisconsin, River and Massachusetts. Through the State Highway Administration I located traffic data for major Bethesda roads that run roughly east-west, which is the orientation of Little Falls Parkway.

From the SHA data I learned that vehicular traffic did decline substantially on (north south) River Road—by 25% between 2010 and 2020. Traffic on (north south) Massachusetts Avenue declined by 21% between 2010 and 2020. However, traffic on (east west) Bradley Boulevard, which functions as the only alternate road to LFP into downtown Bethesda from Western Bethesda, decreased by only 7% between 2010 and 2020. To me this shows that north-south traffic decreased considerably during the pandemic, but east-west traffic just a little bit, perhaps even within the margin of error. Bradley Boulevard was still busy, even during the pandemic, and my observation is that it is very busy now.

From the State Highway Administration data for Little Falls Parkway, which I was sent by Mr. Sean Emerson of Montgomery Parks, I found strikingly different traffic figures than the data Montgomery Parks provided on February 15. While Montgomery Parks stated that LFP traffic declined by 35% between 2015 and 2022, the State Highway Administration Data shows a decline of 22% between 2015 and 2022.

In brief, in each of the two above examples, Montgomery Parks has provided analysis that show less vehicle traffic on major Bethesda roads and Little Falls Parkway than what a review of the State Highway Administration data shows. I highly recommend that you have an independent analyst review the Montgomery Parks LFP traffic analysis and compare it to independent data sources (such as the State Highway Administration data) before you make a decision on permanently reducing LFP to two lanes. Also, as I saw regarding the chart comparing north-south roads to Little Falls Parkway, which is an east west road—somebody needs to ask **what** is the Parks Department leaving out of the slide?

Parks Department planning process and documents

The Montgomery County Planning Department has an excellent planning process. A general plan is established and under that general policy direction more detailed plans are developed such as Master Plans and sector plans. I am very familiar with the Westbard Sector plan, which was completed in 2016. It was developed with a great deal of community involvement and is a detailed and concrete vision of how our neighborhood will develop.

I have read the Montgomery County Parks Department PROS (Parks, Recreation, and Open Space) Plan 2022 and the PROS 2022 Appendices. The PROS Plan 2022 is very high level and thematic—somewhat like the General Plan—Thrive—for Montgomery County. The PROS Plan 2022 Appendices are an inventory of what is going on in the County. Neither document is detailed, concrete, nor actionable.

This may be why in Bethesda there is such frustration with the Park Department. First Norwood Park was going to have a dog park, then there was a huge outcry from the Community so that plan was dropped. Then the dog park was going to go into the small park at the corner of Willard and River, but that was dropped. Then the Little Falls Parkway Linear park idea was sprung on everyone, again with a huge outcry against it. Montgomery County Parks develops projects again and again, without consulting with the community and without a specific comprehensive and concrete future oriented plan that looks at how all the parks relate to each other or can be integrated.

Perhaps it would be possible for you to have the Planning Department help the Parks Department develop integrated specific strategic parks plans with community input for different sectors of the County (such as Bethesda) that outline how the County's park resources will change or be modified in the future? Oh yes, one more example: on February 15 a questioner asked how the Little Falls Linear Park would relate to the Willet Branch Park (which is in the Westbard Sector Plan) and was told dismissively not to worry about it as that is several years away. Perhaps, but that is why one develops a plan that will last for years and the organization aligns its efforts with that strategic direction. You are the planners, please help the Parks Department learn how to understand and do this.

Congratulations on being a member of the New Planning Board.

Thank you,

Jan Lilja
5509 Kirkwood Drive
Bethesda, Maryland
20816
(301) 229-6846

From: [oaslan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Resident Comments in Support of the Little Falls Parkway Pilot
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:49:20 PM

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

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board Members,

I am grateful to our representatives and responsible agency staff who made the Little Falls Parkway Pilot possible. I am passing through the Little Falls Parkway in three regular instances: (1) for commuting from work by car, (2) for commuting to and from work by bicycle on the Capital Crescent Trail and (3) by taking family walks on both the trail and on the parkway. Even during commuting hours, the one-lane configuration is sufficient for the existing rush hour traffic. The Capital Crescent Trail is significantly safer with the calmer vehicle traffic and the area is much more peaceful for family and dog walks.

We got used to the configuration of the parkway so much in this short time that it is easy to forget the value of the improvement. After attending a soccer game in the Audi Field in downtown Washington DC this past weekend, we realized the value of dedicating part of the roadway to public use as an extension of the park. We were surrounded by multiple-lane roads all around the Audi Field neighborhood, which unfortunately is very stressful even for a walk after the game on a Sunday.

Many thanks for your work and best wishes.

Ozerk Aslan

7005 Whittier Blvd.

Bethesda, MD 2017

301-978-6506

From: [M. Ward](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Put Little Falls on a road diet
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 9:50:02 PM

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

I am writing in strong support of changing Little Falls Parkway from four lanes to two. Please proceed with the pilot of the park that is planned.

This is a heavily used area adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail. I am in favor of this change to Little Falls because I recreate often in the area and find this area to be difficult to navigate due to heavy pedestrian and biking use on the CCT. Expanding the bike options nearby will alleviate congestion and make travel safer and more pleasant for everyone.

Bethesda has had an explosion of density. Please provide this linear park so residents have a place to recreate and commute safely.

Sincerely
Mary Ward
North Bethesda

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Daniel Marcin](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: alisonupstairs@gmail.com; [Seth Grimes](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway: Support bike lanes
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 10:05:33 PM

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

Hello Chair,

Honestly, I don't really give a hoot one way or the other about Little Falls Parkway. I've only ever crossed it on the trail. I've never biked on it and I strongly doubt I've ever been on it in a motor vehicle of any kind. But it's pretty unbelievable to me that there can even be any debate about giving a small scrap of land to non-car traffic when they'll still have lanes and over 99% of road space in a county that declared a climate emergency is for cars. You should be expanding things like LFP, and expanding the Sligo open street to 24/7, instead of giving in to unreasonable demands from people who are just pushing a gas pedal down and complaining about their time behind the wheel. Like I said, I don't care, I'm not going to use it, but just look at the bigger picture here and realize that you should be accommodating pedestrians, bicyclists, scooters, and wheelchairs on every single street countywide, instead of handing everything over to undertaxed drivers.

I don't want to keep writing these stupid emails for every individual street; I just want you to do the right thing and to tell your bosses in Rockville to find some courage to get the job done, make streets safe for everybody, and never bother me about it again.

"Kindest Regards",
Daniel Marcin
1910 Westchester Drive
Silver Spring, MD 20902

--

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

From: [Peter Harnik](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Pilot
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 10:18:32 PM

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

I support the continued operation of Little Falls Parkway as a two-lane, lower-speed parkway, allowing for the use of the other two lanes for walking, bicycling, skating, wheelchair use and much more -- "Little Falls Promenade."

This could be one of Montgomery County's loveliest parks if it weren't so dominated by high-speed auto traffic.

Thank you for your entrepreneurial actions during the pandemic, and please continue the arrangement.

Sincerely, Peter Harnik

--

Peter Harnik
3505 N. 22 St.
Arlington, VA 22207
703-403-6017
peterharnik1@gmail.com

Latest Book -- "From Rails to Trails: The Making of America's Active Transportation Network," U of Nebraska Press. Info [here](#).

From: [Erica Brown](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written testimony for 3/30 hearing
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 10:46:17 PM
Attachments: [testimony.docx](#)

**Testimony for Planning Board meeting on March 30, 2023, regarding Item 12:
Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project**

The Parks Department would like to spend at least \$1–2 million to create a park on Little Falls Parkway. Rather than seeking new projects, they ought to prioritize upkeep on their existing property.

Norwood Park is a good example of a park in need of upkeep. There is an abandoned building in the park, centrally located next to a preschool, whose entrance is rotting and cordoned off with warning tape. Neighborhood residents have been asking Parks to demolish or renovate this eyesore for years now, with no success.

Similarly, the tennis courts at Norwood Park have a standing water problem and are sorely in need of renovation and re-leveling. I slipped on some of that standing water in December while playing tennis on a sunny day, resulting in a broken wrist that required a trip to the emergency room, surgery, and extensive physical therapy. My accident would not have happened if the tennis courts had been regularly inspected and maintained.

Maintenance has clearly not been a priority of the Parks Department. As a result, our public park facilities are falling into disrepair. This is a preventable liability for Montgomery County.

Rather than spend a significant amount of money on the Little Falls project, I urge the Parks Department to dedicate more funds to maintaining its existing facilities.

Erica Brown
4609 Hunt Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Nancy Leopold](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; [David Barnes](#)
Subject: Written testimony on the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project - Agenda Item 12, March 30 2023 Hearing
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 7:37:14 AM

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

Montgomery County Parks
mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Re: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project, March 30 2023 Hearing, Agenda Item 12

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to urge you to halt the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project and return the essential roadway to four lanes except for the stretch between Fairfax Rd. and Hillandale Rd. where the “Road Diet” of two lanes around the median protects pedestrians and cyclists on the Capital Crescent Trail.

My family has lived several blocks north of Little Falls Parkway for 40 years. As downtown Bethesda gets more dense and surrounding streets more congested, it is an important alternative travel corridor to Wisconsin Avenue. We use Little Falls Parkway to travel to D.C., to Sibley Hospital, to Clara Barton Parkway, and elsewhere via River Rd. and Massachusetts Avenue. We walk on it to get to the Capital Crescent Trail where we hike and bike. Since this Pilot started, the drive down Little Falls Parkway south of Hillandale Road has become confusing and dangerous.

The Pilot that extends the “Road Diet” restricting the roadway to two lanes on one side of the median between Hillandale and River Roads should end for several reasons.

1. The Pilot is a “solution” in search of a problem. The real problem of the conflicts between trail users and motorists was reduced by the previous restriction to two lanes (on either side of the median) between Fairfax Rd. and Hillandale Rd. Further protections may be required but making the stretch between Hillandale and River Roads two lanes does nothing to increase the trail users’ safety. (I think the county should revisit the other measures it rejected – stop signs or flashing lights for trail travelers, a bridge – in order to further protect those crossing the street but that’s a discussion for another day.)
2. Data on usage of the roadway during the Open Parkway time -- “Since April 2020, more

than 300,000 users have taken advantage of the Little Falls Parkway Open Parkway program” -- is not an indicator of demand for the Pilot Project. Most or all of those 300,000 users were families and individuals who were delighted to have a safe, open, paved space to play during the Covid lockdown. The Pilot is an essentially different program and usage should be measured since Open Parkways was suspended in spring 2022 at the earliest.

3. No evidence that the community wants the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project has been offered. With Little Falls Park, Norwood Park, the Little Falls Park Trail and the Capital Crescent Trail all bordering Little Falls Parkway, the immediate area has little need for more green, open space. The community requested the extension of Open Parkways, full closure of the road, during the lockdown when the situation was fundamentally different than it is now that almost everyone has returned to normal activities.
4. The linear park won't work. No one wants to play right next to a noisy roadway even with a landscaped buffer – it doesn't feel safe. And there are all the aforementioned safer alternatives for walking, cycling, picnicking and playing.
5. If there is/was a concern about speeding and/or an increase in traffic accidents due to speeding on Little Falls Parkway, the already reduced speed limits are the appropriate measure. Halving the number of driving lanes on a well-traveled road that has had four lanes for decades is a radical step whose impact on drivers as well as trail users should be carefully considered, which it has not been to date.

Please return Little Falls Parkway to its former condition – with two lanes on either side of the median between Fairfax and Hillandale Roads to protect those on the Capital Crescent Trail and four lanes between Hillandale and River Roads.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Leopold
5126 Manning Drive
Bethesda, MD 20814
nleopold@hers.com
301-520-0732

From: [Shereen Rubenstein](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:17:50 AM

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

I just want to chime in, which is rare for me to do on these types of heated issues, but I feel strong enough to have my voice heard. I've lived on Dorset Ave for 21 years and always was perplexed at how empty LFP was at almost all times. The closed lanes have brought me one step closer to walking among nature without being in danger of fast bikes, frustrated by very slow walkers, or tripped up by random tree roots (elbow trail). It's a freeing walkway.

The only day in recent history that cars were backed up to an annoying point was this past Sunday when the weather was gorgeous and it was peak cherry blossom time in Kenwood. How wonderful that so many residents near and far were coming to our area for absolute beauty. We're pretty lucky to live amongst it. Traffic was a pain, for a couple of hours out of a whole year.

I don't see a need for corn hole or food trucks, just less cars and more room to roam outside in our very congested town.

Thanks,
Shereen

Shereen Rubenstein, MSW
Certified Life/ADHD Coach
coachshereen@gmail.com

From: [Roger Cochetti](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: COMMENTS ON LITTLE FALLS PARK PROPOSAL
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:25:29 AM

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

Roger Cochetti
to LFP@MontgomeryParks.org
Mar 2Details

I've been meaning to offer some comments on your proposed asphalt park replacing two lanes of the LF Parkway.

As background

- I've lived within a mile of LFP for about 30 years
 - I raised 2 children on Norwood Drive and used the Park, the Pool, LF Trail and the Crescent Trail for recreation with them every single week for over 10 years
 - I have driven on LFP every week for about 30 years
 - I am an avid hiker and have hiked both trails almost weekly for around 30 years
 - When LFP was closed during the Pandemic, I used it for hiking 2-3 times every week
 - I am an avid bicyclist and bicycle the Crescent Trail on both my manual and electric bike.
 - I have hiked the HighLine Trail in New York City several times
- So I think I have some perspective on the proposal.

While I'm sure that you can find a few local residents who think the proposed park is needed and quite a few people from other parts of MoCo who support it, the overwhelming majority of local residents feel this is a terrible idea; and I agree.

- Regardless of what carefully constructed studies show, I have been in traffic jams hundreds of times on LFP over the past 30 years and -when normal traffic resumes- this will make them much worse: wasting time, gas and adding to pollution and global warming
- The area is blessed with four magnificent parks. While improvements to them should always be studied, adding another at the cost of LFP isn't even in the top 500 improvements that should be considered.
- I'm sure you can find someone from somewhere who would say that Norwood Park is crowded or overused, but anyone who uses the Park knows that there are huge sections of Norwood Park that could be better utilized or opened up if someone feels the neighborhood desperately needs another park.
- Even if anyone thinks that this new park is not for the benefit of the local community, but is for the benefit of MoCo residents from Rockville, Gaithersburg or Silver Spring, where would they park their cars (Metro is more than a mile away)? You'd need a quarter acre parking lot (the two Bethesda Pool lots are nearly full when the pool is open).
- This proposal has nothing in common with New York's HighLine, which is a hiking trail that stretches for miles where tracks used to run.

My suggestion is that if you want to do something constructive for the community, then figure

out a way to extend the Little Falls Trail from Dorset to River so we have full trails on both sides of LFP.

Please put your talent to work on improving existing parks or on the many places in MoCo that may need new parks.

Thanks for your consideration,

Roger Cochetti
www.cochetti.us

From: [Kelly Doordan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re Support for Little Falls Parkway Reduction From Four Lanes to Two Lanes - Mar. 30 hearing
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 1:24:28 PM

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

Dear Planning Board Chair,

I support the Little Falls Parkway Pilot project and support reducing the road permanently from four lanes to two lanes. This project presents a great opportunity to enhance our existing public infrastructure so that more categories of users may access and benefit from active transportation and recreation, including people like children and families who could not otherwise safely use and share vehicle road space or narrow trails.

I support an increase in dedicated, protected, networked, safer bike and pedestrian facilities across the county. My family of young riders benefited from being able to use the temporary Open Parkways to enjoy safely bicycling and learning new active transportation skills. As a result of Open Parkways and related pilot projects to reallocate road space, our family is able to comfortably reach more destinations and better utilize all of the county's great recreational and commercial spaces. Reducing the number of lanes dedicated exclusively to vehicles in order to increase safer family bike and pedestrian pathways complements our County's goals for Vision Zero, Climate Action, and equity. I support reducing the Little Falls Parkway permanently from four lanes to two lanes as one way to realign existing public infrastructure use to meet our current needs.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kelly Doordan
750 Thayer Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

From: [Patricia Johnson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Hedrick, James](#)
Cc: [Friedson, Andrew](#); County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Pamela Dunn](#); marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Delegate Korman](#); [Sara Delegate Love](#); [Ariana Senator Kelly](#)
Subject: Item # 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30th 5:30pm
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 1:24:19 PM
Attachments: [Testimony re LFP video.pdf](#)

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

Testimony re. Little Falls Parkway road constriction and plans for a linear park.

March 30, 2023

ANOTHER WEEKEND AND THE PARKWAY IS EMPTY

Here is a video that shows the Parkway from Oct/2021- June 11-2022. Please click on the arrow and watch.



Planning Board Members: I am a resident of Chevy Chase. The Montgomery County Parks Department began changing Little Falls Parkway, without any warning to the surrounding neighborhoods when a cyclist (on a recumbent bike with his

flag down) was fatally injured on the CCTrail crossing. In 2017 a road diet was installed. When the quarantines of Covid arrived in 2020, LFP was closed to vehicular traffic on weekends from Arlington Road to River Road from April 2020 to December 7, 2020 for Parks' Open Parkways Program. In December 2020, the Parks Department was forced to open the Parkway to vehicular traffic because of a successful lawsuit brought by the Little Falls Place community. In October of 2021, the Parks Department closed it again on weekends from Arlington Road to River Road for the months of October 2021 to June 18th 2022. In June 2022, the "phase 1" of their Little Falls Parkway pilot program began. During that nine months (Oct 2021- June 18, 2022) the neighborhood of Kenwood was inundated with rerouted, cut through traffic at 1000 cars per hour. We have no sidewalks and pedestrians walk and cyclists ride in the streets. I took photographs almost every weekend that the Parkway was closed. I photographed for 9 months. I am presenting a packet of those photographs, time and date stamped, at my in person testimony on Thursday, March 30th before the Planning Board. I have included the video here of those weekends plus pictures of the CCT that was always full. The photos are a good example of the Parkway at all times of day during the weekends it was available for walkers and bikers. The pictures tell a 1000 words: **there were very few people using the Parkway. People prefer to use the Capital Crescent Trail where there is a protective tree canopy. The CCT is much more pleasant and provides cover during all kinds of weather, hot or cold. The CCT also goes somewhere for 11 (3.5 in MoCo) miles. The Parkway was closed for less than a mile and was not used. Vehicular traffic was forced into neighborhoods and the**

CCT was full to overflowing. These photos were taken weekends for 9 months (Oct '21-June 11'22). This photo compilation proves that few pedestrians visited the closed section from Arlington Road to River Road of Little Falls Parkway. The Capital Crescent Trail, 11 miles in total, is where people prefer to be walking and biking. Pix are inserted of the CCT the same weekends the Parkway was closed to show the contrast.

The Little Falls Stream Valley Park is 160 acres. There is no need to close .4 of a mile, a very short stretch of Parkway which is between Dorset Avenue and Arlington Road. It is a road to nowhere. This road diet and linear park generates traffic backups with cut through danger to pedestrians/cyclists in neighborhoods where Vision Zero has not been calculated or considered. The Parkway is not safer, in fact it is more difficult to drive day or night. Vision Zero should be evaluated for the surrounding neighborhoods that are affected by these road constrictions and unnecessary linear park.

I sent emails every weekend with photos attached to Mike Riley, the Director of Parks, and to Andrew Friedson, our County Council District Representative. My headline for each email was : **Another Weekend and Little Falls Parkway is empty. Please restore Little Falls Parkway to the way it was before April of 2020. Keep the Parkway open to its original 4 lanes and reinstate the median at the Capital Crescent Trail Crossing.**

**Sincerely, Patricia Depuy Johnson
5301 Oakland Road
Chevy Chase, Md. 20815**

From: [maggie oconnell](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Support for the Little Falls Parkway pilot
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 10:04:00 AM

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

Hello,

I am writing today to share my support for the Little Falls Parkway pilot program which has allocated two lanes to biking, walking, and rolling. I hope this change becomes permanent as it has created a safer environment for the hundreds of walkers crossing and traveling LFP daily. I believe drivers are driving more safely and slowly with the single lane each way.

Importantly, I live within two blocks from the parkway and drive the parkway daily and have seen NO difference in travel times. I think this pilot program has been a win-win for our community.

Your neighbor,
Maggie O'Connell
301-642-7689

From: [Moyer, Homer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Pete Rizik](#)
Subject: Comments re: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 10:11:16 AM
Attachments: [Little Falls Parkway.docx](#)

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

Comments on the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project are attached and also pasted below. Thank you for considering them and for making them available to those working on or considering this proposal.

Beret and Homer Moyer

Parks Department's Proposed Plan for Little Falls Parkway

Thank you for continuing to receive comments on this plan, and thank you for considering ours. You have obviously worked hard on this plan. Nonetheless, for reasons stated below, we believe that the data you have provided does not support conclusions that you suggest. Rather, they directly undercut two of the three objectives you cite for the plan.

Functioning Roads

How well a road functions depends heavily on how well it handles the traffic flow on the road. A simple comparison of traffic flows between a four-lane divided road and a two-lane road does not capture the impact on traffic congestion. When one forces two lanes of traffic into one single lane of traffic, it increases the length of time it takes a given number of vehicles to cross an intersection, such as the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and Dorset Avenue. Specifically, removing half of the roadway lanes approximately doubles the length of time required for a given number of cars to cross an intersection, or, alternatively, it reduces by half the number of cars that can cross the intersection in a given amount of time.

The result is a significant increase in traffic congestion and vehicle backup. So even if the traffic flow comparisons for Little Falls Parkway presented in the chart you presented in February were apples-to-apples comparisons—which, for reasons noted below, they were not—the result of squeezing two lanes of traffic into one lane is to greatly increase traffic congestion. I saw this yesterday driving north on Little Falls Parkway, when the line of cars coming south could not all cross Dorset Avenue on a single green light. An additional consequence was that for cars going north and wanting to turn left onto Dorset, only one could turn before the light again turned red.

Moreover, the Parks Department data used at its February 15 , which showed “Traffic Volume Trending Down” on Little Falls Parkway, was flawed because it failed to take into account external factors that have had dramatic impacts on traffic flows on Little Falls Parkway and other nearby roads.

The first has been the decline in commuting traffic resulting from the sharp increase in those who have been working at home in response to the COVID health emergency, a factor not in play in the 2016-2019 data. Second, the Westbard Sector Plan underway in 2022 not only reduced the number of commercial establishments remaining open in Westbard, but also closed off access to Westbard from River Road for those businesses that remained open. This, too, has had a major impact on traffic flows on Little Falls and River Road. Third, most of the 2022 traffic flow data on Little Falls was obtained during Phase 1 of the Pilot Program, during which lanes had been reduced from two to one, making Little Falls Parkway a less attractive path south from Bethesda to Massachusetts Avenue, Chain Bridge, and other destinations.

Finally, a clear-eyed look ahead suggests that the notion that vehicular traffic will continue to “decline” is, with all due respect, fanciful. First, the Westbard Sector Plan, which is underway and adjacent to Little Falls Parkway and River Road, forecasts an increase in between 1,134 and 2,500 new residential units. In addition, we invite you to review the UrbanTurf site that lists development projects for Bethesda that are already “on the boards.” See [The 22 New Developments on the Boards For Downtown Bethesda \(urbanturf.com\)](https://urbanturf.com). Excluding the Battery Lane District project, which projects 1,530 new residential units over the next 10-15 years, the remaining 21 development projects in Bethesda anticipate adding more than 5,500 new residential units. These dramatic increases in residential units in the area will have an obvious impact on vehicular traffic in the area and, in particular, on Little Falls Parkway, a main artery connecting Bethesda to River Road, Mass Avenue, and beyond.

The best of the Park Department’s Little Falls Parkway proposals is the reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph, a proposal that might be complemented by active enforcement of that limit.

Considering all of these factors, the negative impacts on traffic congestion by reducing the capacity of a major connecting road from four lanes to two are apparent. Within 2-3 years, the “functioning” of Little Falls Parkway will likely be further diminished, possibly to the point of presenting the Parks Department and all of those individuals and neighborhoods affected with new, costly alternatives to manage traffic congestion.

Preserving Recreational Space

The Parks Department’s third objective invites consideration of whether there is a need for additional recreation space in light of existing recreational facilities, additional ones that will come through the Westbard Sector Plan, and the congestion, costs, and other

consequences of the Parks Department's proposed plan.

Already existing, within steps of Little Falls Parkway between Hillandale Avenue and Arlington Road, are the Bethesda public swimming pool and three separate existing parks, each with playground equipment and facilities. Moreover, the approved Westbard Sector Plan, now being implemented and adjacent to Little Falls Parkway, proposes a new "central civic green," a "neighborhood green," two "active recreation destinations," two new "Urban Greenway" strips, new bike lanes, and a new bike trail loop connecting at each end with the Capital Crescent Trail.

First, just up the hill from the Bethesda public swimming pool on Little Falls Parkway is Norwood Park, a 17-acre expanse that features "two playgrounds, five tennis courts, lighted basketball courts, two softball fields, a soccer/football overlay field, a soccer overlay field, and two park activity buildings." It is readily accessible from the pool, the pool's parking lot, Little Falls Parkway, and the Capital Crescent Trail. Second is the existing park at the corner of Little Falls Parkway and Arlington Road, a park that has both playground equipment and a separate parking lot. Third is "Railroad Park," adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail a half block from the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and Dorset Avenue, which includes playground equipment, open space, and picnic tables.

If the Parks Department nonetheless determines that a fifth recreational space near the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and the Capital Crescent Trail is necessary, the logical place for it would be along Little Falls Parkway north of Arlington Road on the way to Bradley Boulevard. Because so much of the traffic entering and leaving Little Falls Parkway uses Arlington Road, the short stretch of Little Falls Parkway north of Arlington Road is very lightly travelled. In that location, a single lane is sufficient, in contrast to Little Falls between Hillandale Avenue and Dorset Avenue, where Little Falls is much more heavily travelled and where two lanes in each direction are much more needed.

Finally, three lesser criticisms of your analysis: (1) the comparisons with Beach Drive and Sligo Creek are inapt. The portion of Little Falls Parkway affected by the proposed plan has well-developed residential neighborhoods on each side, with relatively little parkland between the road and neighborhoods, whereas the roads in Beach Drive and parts of Sligo Creek are well separated from the adjacent neighborhoods by considerable parkland; (2) you state that the data measuring use of closed lanes of Little Falls Parkway were collected by the Bethesda pool, where there is lots of incidental pedestrian traffic; a more accurate spot for measuring use would be between Hillandale and Dorset, where the closed lanes are typically empty; and (3) there would be value in your comparing the relative benefits and costs of your current plan of reducing by half the lanes for vehicle traffic on Little Falls Parkway in order to create additional "recreational space" with the benefits of alternative, less disruptive proposals together with significant improvements to the popular Capital Crescent Trail, which

are plainly needed and would be highly beneficial.

The plans you have put forward have complicated implications. I hope you will consider the very significant negatives of the current plan, in contrast to the presentations at hearings that have focused exclusively on perceived advantages, often coming across as quite defensive. You have hard jobs, but they require balanced consideration when considering new ideas with far-reaching consequences. Thank you for considering the views offered in this submission.

Beret and Homer Moyer

HOMER MOYER

Senior Counsel | Miller & Chevalier Chartered

900 16th Street NW | Black Lives Matter Plaza | Washington, DC 20006

hmoyer@milchev.com | 202.626.6020 | millerchevalier.com

* * *

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Parks Department's Proposed Plan for Little Falls Parkway

Thank you for continuing to receive comments on this plan, and thank you for considering ours. You have obviously worked hard on this plan. Nonetheless, for reasons stated below, we believe that the data you have provided does not support conclusions that you suggest. Rather, they directly undercut two of the three objectives you cite for the plan.

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How well a road functions depends heavily on how well it handles the traffic flow on the road. A simple comparison of traffic flows between a four-lane divided road and a two-lane road does not capture the impact on traffic congestion. When one forces two lanes of traffic into one single lane of traffic, it increases the length of time it takes a given number of vehicles to cross an intersection, such as the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and Dorset Avenue. Specifically, removing half of the roadway lanes approximately doubles the length of time required for a given number of cars to cross an intersection, or, alternatively, it reduces by half the number of cars that can cross the intersection in a given amount of time.

The result is a significant increase in traffic congestion and vehicle backup. So even if the traffic flow comparisons for Little Falls Parkway presented in the chart you presented in February were apples-to-apples comparisons—which, for reasons noted below, they were not—the result of squeezing two lanes of traffic into one lane is to greatly increase traffic congestion. I saw this yesterday driving north on Little Falls Parkway, when the line of cars coming south could not all cross Dorset Avenue on a single green light. An additional consequence was that for cars going north and wanting to turn left onto Dorset, only one could turn before the light again turned red.

Moreover, the Parks Department data used at its February 15th, which showed “Traffic Volume Trending Down” on Little Falls Parkway, was flawed because it failed to take into account external factors that have had dramatic impacts on traffic flows on Little Falls Parkway and other nearby roads.

The first has been the decline in commuting traffic resulting from the sharp increase in those who have been working at home in response to the COVID health emergency, a factor not in play in the 2016-2019 data. Second, the Westbard Sector Plan underway in 2022 not only reduced the number of commercial establishments remaining open in Westbard, but also closed off access to Westbard from River Road for those businesses that remained open. This, too, has had a major impact on traffic flows on Little Falls and River Road. Third, most of the 2022 traffic flow data on Little Falls was obtained during Phase 1 of the Pilot Program, during which lanes had been reduced from two to one, making Little Falls Parkway a less attractive path south from Bethesda to Massachusetts Avenue, Chain Bridge, and other destinations.

Finally, a clear-eyed look ahead suggests that the notion that vehicular traffic will continue to “decline” is, with all due respect, fanciful. First, the Westbard Sector Plan, which is

underway and adjacent to Little Falls Parkway and River Road, forecasts an increase in between 1,134 and 2,500 new residential units. In addition, we invite you to review the UrbanTurf site that lists development projects for Bethesda that are already “on the boards.” See [The 22 New Developments on the Boards For Downtown Bethesda \(urbanturf.com\)](http://urbanturf.com). Excluding the Battery Lane District project, which projects 1,530 new residential units over the next 10-15 years, the remaining 21 development projects in Bethesda anticipate adding more than 5,500 new residential units. These dramatic increases in residential units in the area will have an obvious impact on vehicular traffic in the area and, in particular, on Little Falls Parkway, a main artery connecting Bethesda to River Road, Mass Avenue, and beyond.

The best of the Park Department’s Little Falls Parkway proposals is the reduction of the speed limit to 25 mph, a proposal that might be complemented by active enforcement of that limit.

Considering all of these factors, the negative impacts on traffic congestion by reducing the capacity of a major connecting road from four lanes to two are apparent. Within 2-3 years, the “functioning” of Little Falls Parkway will likely be further diminished, possibly to the point of presenting the Parks Department and all of those individuals and neighborhoods affected with new, costly alternatives to manage traffic congestion.

Preserving Recreational Space

The Parks Department’s third objective invites consideration of whether there is a need for additional recreation space in light of existing recreational facilities, additional ones that will come through the Westbard Sector Plan, and the congestion, costs, and other consequences of the Parks Department’s proposed plan.

Already existing, within steps of Little Falls Parkway between Hillandale Avenue and Arlington Road, are the Bethesda public swimming pool and three separate existing parks, each with playground equipment and facilities. Moreover, the approved Westbard Sector Plan, now being implemented and adjacent to Little Falls Parkway, proposes a new “central civic green,” a “neighborhood green,” two “active recreation destinations,” two new “Urban Greenway” strips, new bike lanes, and a new bike trail loop connecting at each end with the Capital Crescent Trail.

First, just up the hill from the Bethesda public swimming pool on Little Falls Parkway is Norwood Park, a 17-acre expanse that features “two playgrounds, five tennis courts, lighted basketball courts, two softball fields, a soccer/football overlay field, a soccer overlay field, and two park activity buildings.” It is readily accessible from the pool, the pool’s parking lot, Little Falls Parkway, and the Capital Crescent Trail. Second is the existing park at the corner of Little Falls Parkway and Arlington Road, a park that has both playground equipment and a separate parking lot. Third is “Railroad Park,” adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail a half block from the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and Dorset Avenue, which includes playground equipment, open space, and picnic tables.

If the Parks Department nonetheless determines that a fifth recreational space near the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and the Capital Crescent Trail is necessary, the logical place for it would be along Little Falls Parkway north of Arlington Road on the way to Bradley Boulevard. Because so much of the traffic entering and leaving Little Falls Parkway uses Arlington Road, the short stretch of Little Falls Parkway north of Arlington Road is very lightly travelled. In that location, a single lane is sufficient, in contrast to Little Falls between Hillandale Avenue and Dorset Avenue, where Little Falls is much more heavily travelled and where two lanes in each direction are much more needed.

Finally, three lesser criticisms of your analysis: (1) the comparisons with Beach Drive and Sligo Creek are inapt. The portion of Little Falls Parkway affected by the proposed plan has well-developed residential neighborhoods on each side, with relatively little parkland between the road and neighborhoods, whereas the roads in Beach Drive and parts of Sligo Creek are well separated from the adjacent neighborhoods by considerable parkland; (2) you state that the data measuring use of closed lanes of Little Falls Parkway were collected by the Bethesda pool, where there is lots of incidental pedestrian traffic; a more accurate spot for measuring use would be between Hillandale and Dorset, where the closed lanes are typically empty; and (3) there would be value in your comparing the relative benefits and costs of your current plan of reducing by half the lanes for vehicle traffic on Little Falls Parkway in order to create additional “recreational space” with the benefits of alternative, less disruptive proposals together with significant improvements to the popular Capital Crescent Trail, which are plainly needed and would be highly beneficial.

The plans you have put forward have complicated implications. I hope you will consider the very significant negatives of the current plan, in contrast to the presentations at hearings that have focused exclusively on perceived advantages, often coming across as quite defensive. You have hard jobs, but they require balanced consideration when considering new ideas with far-reaching consequences. Thank you for considering the views offered in this submission.

Beret and Homer Moyer

From: [Jennifer Stoloff](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway pilot project
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 2:37:43 PM

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

I am submitting written testimony about the Little Fall Parkway pilot project. Please keep the pilot going. Using this stretch of road is much safer for everyone, including people in cars. People walking and people riding bikes deserve to have full use of the parkway and to move through this area safely. The pilot shows the road is functioning well with two lanes. It is safer and serves the community well. Please follow Vision Zero principles and keep the current configuration of Little Falls Parkway. I use this area on my bike and find it much easier and safer to navigate with the two -lane configuration.

Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Stoloff
Silver Spring, MD

From: marnieshaul@gmail.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Project
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 10:59:56 AM
Attachments: [Little Falls Parkway Testimony.docx](#)

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

I am attaching my written testimony on the Little Falls Parkway Project as my contribution to the hearing on March 30th.

Thank you for considering my position.

Sincerely,

Marnie Shaul

Resident of the Town of Somerset

Members of the Planning Board

My name is Marnie Shaul and I am a resident of the Town of Somerset and a former President of the Somerset Town Council.

My testimony is in opposition to the current 2-lane configuration and in support of returning Little Falls Parkway to 4 lanes. I am opposed to the 2-lane configuration because I think it is not safe for pedestrians, bikers or automobiles.

Crossing 2 adjacent lanes of opposing traffic makes it harder for pedestrians and bikers to see oncoming traffic. And the current 2-lane configuration is dangerous for drivers, especially in low-light conditions like nighttime or when it's raining. It's also confusing to drivers not familiar with the area. Two retired state highway troopers have told me that "the current 2-lane configuration is an accident waiting to happen." I have also been told that the 2-lane configuration presents challenges in the case of accidents when rescue vehicles are needed; there has been at least one example of the difficulty rescue vehicles have with the 2-lane configuration when someone needed medical attention.

I am pleased that the Parks Department wants to invest in our area and have several suggestions to improve walking and biking conditions on two existing trails:

- The Capital Crescent Trail would be safer and a better experience for all with improved shoulders.
- The asphalt trail on the other side of Little Falls Parkway (The Little Falls Trail) would be safer with resurfacing. Tree roots and weather have heaved some of the asphalt making the surface uneven.

Some have talked about a "new linear park" as a green space for residents of multi-family housing. I am in favor of green space for multi-family residents but again I might suggest:

- Westbard is projected to have hundreds more residents in the near future so providing additional green space in that area, for example along the Willett Branch, would be most welcome.
- Thousands of multifamily units are projected for Downtown Bethesda and adding more green space in that area is essential.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

From: [Avni G](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support Little Falls Parkway pilot project for two lanes and linear park
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:54:56 AM

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

To Montgomery County Planning Board Chair

My testimony for the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project public hearing on March 30, 2023

I strongly support the Little Falls Parkway pilot project to reduce from four lanes to two (one in each direction) between River Road and Arlington Road. I also support the use of the additional lanes on the west side of the two-lane vehicle road creating a linear park with recreational amenities, including benches for seating and games. This new green public park space will be beneficial for the community. It will create a space for physical activity and positive social interactions and increase social cohesion in the community. It will reduce social isolation, in particular for the elderly. Physical activity and positive social interactions are both known factors in improving public health in a community. The construction of a bike lane in this new space will relieve the overcrowded Crescent Trail. I have been living close to Little Falls Park for more than 25 years.

Thank you,

Avni Goksel

Address:

4704 Crescent Street

Bethesda, MD 20816

Cell: 301-642-2831

From: [Holly G](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [MC-LFP](#); Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 12:04:01 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[TestimonyHearingLittleFallsWestbrook230528.pdf](#)

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

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

We applaud the Parks department for their data-driven, evidence-based approach to increasing multiple uses of Little Falls Parkway (LFP) while improving traffic flow. We are residents of the Westbrook and adjoining neighborhoods near the LFP. We fully support the pilot project. It is in the best interest of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike, to increase access to pedestrians and cyclists safely and efficiently, to reduce traffic volume and increase traffic flow.

The current LFP configuration greatly increases our safety during daily walks and bicycle commutes between home and work during rush hour. In 2020, one of us survived a hit-and-run on LFP from behind and was left unconscious on the ground. Capital Crescent is not an alternative route, because it often, depending on the destination, requires traversing River Road along a patently dangerous stretch where a cyclist was tragically struck and killed by a truck in August 2022.

Members of our neighborhood communities used to ride with Ned Gaylin who was struck by a driver and killed in October 2016 while crossing the LFP at the Capital Crescent trail. The Parks department reports no accidents at that crossing in the last 3 years, since the infrastructure improvements were made in response to the 6 crashes that occurred in 2016, including Mr. Gaylin's fatality. We encourage the Planning Board to resist the pressure to restore the four-lane speedway, for the protection of our lives as community cyclists and pedestrians.

The LFP plan protects our children by addressing the need for more sidewalks and protected side paths in our neighborhoods. Our pandemic-era children have learned to ride bikes because of the LFP pilot project. We used the non-vehicular lanes to teach our children how to ride bikes, given the absence of sidewalks or protected bike lanes anywhere in our neighborhood from Massachusetts Avenue to Dorset. The LFP pilot project is a central location and perfect pitch for children to learn to ride. The Capital Crescent trail is at or above capacity and not a safe access route for young kids learning to ride. We are excited for the opportunity to create safe, healthy, climate-friendly, and pedestrian-welcoming neighborhoods.

The LFP pilot project prevents human error from resulting in pedestrian and bicycle fatalities, through its affordable, protective infrastructure improvements. According to the Parks Department's 15 Feb presentation of data on pedestrian use of the LFP since the road diet, daily user counts add

up to over 3,000 users per weekend (Figure 1). This pedestrian use is comparable to weekend traffic use on weekends (Figure 2). Moreover, the pilot project maintains safe traffic speeds, reduces traffic volume (by 20-35% since 2016) and supports good traffic flow at under 4 minutes between River Rd. and Fairfax Rd, during peak hour travel time (Figure 3). Such traffic flow and high pedestrian use would increase if the Parks Department adds more infrastructure improvements, such as protected sidepaths (e.g., using flexposts) to extend pedestrian access to the LFP pilot project from River Rd. and Massachusetts Ave.

Thank you for dedicating your time and resources to this commendable effort, it is a phenomenal infrastructure improvement and responsible use of our tax dollars. The availability of safe, open space and improved traffic flow for multiple users drastically increases the value, safety, and livability of our environmentally proactive and family-friendly neighborhood. We look forward to your progress in the next phase of improvements.

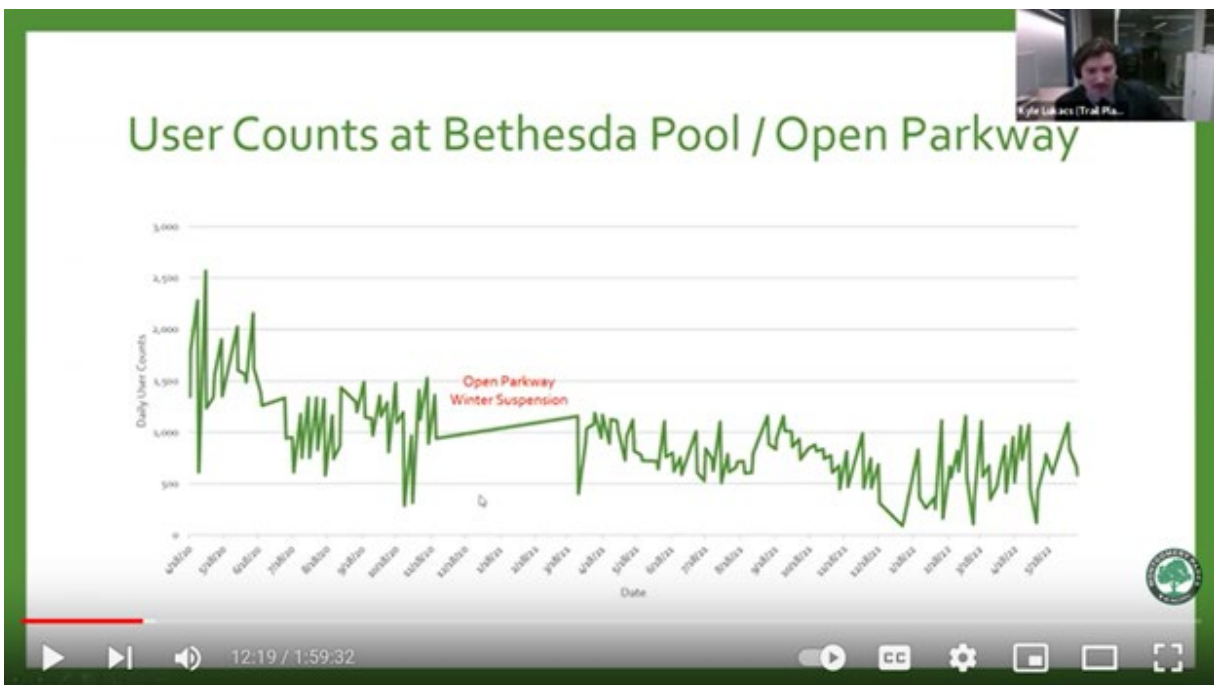


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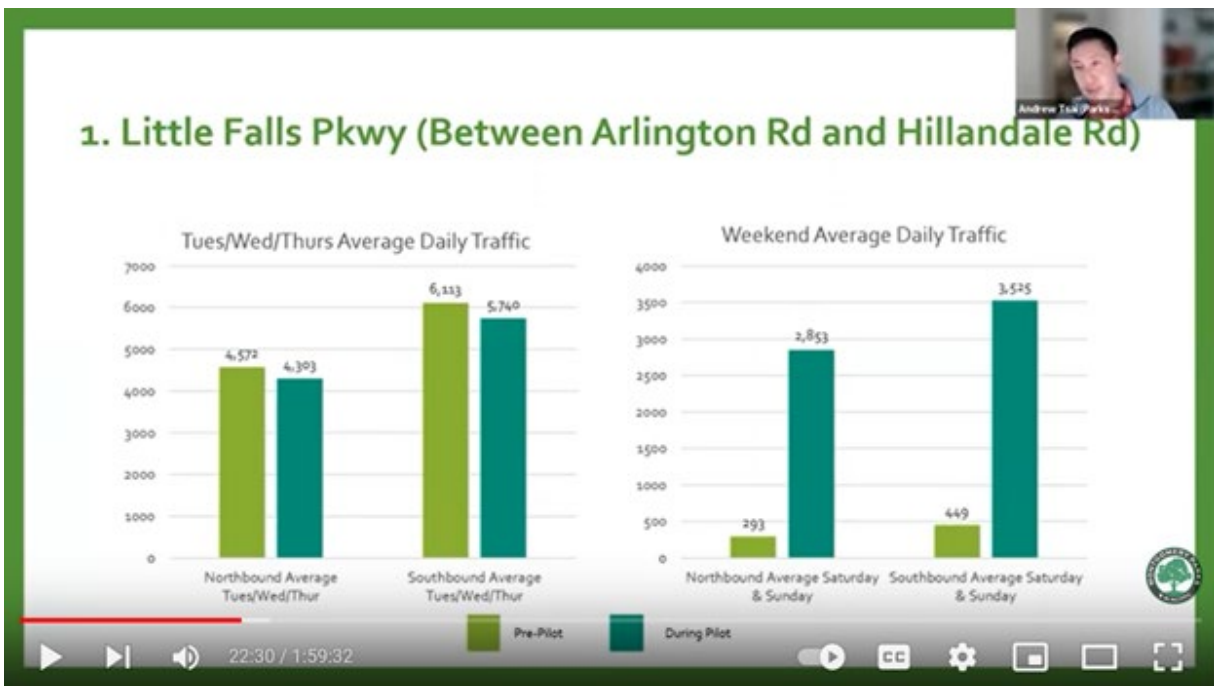


Figure 2. Traffic counts at the LFP pilot project.

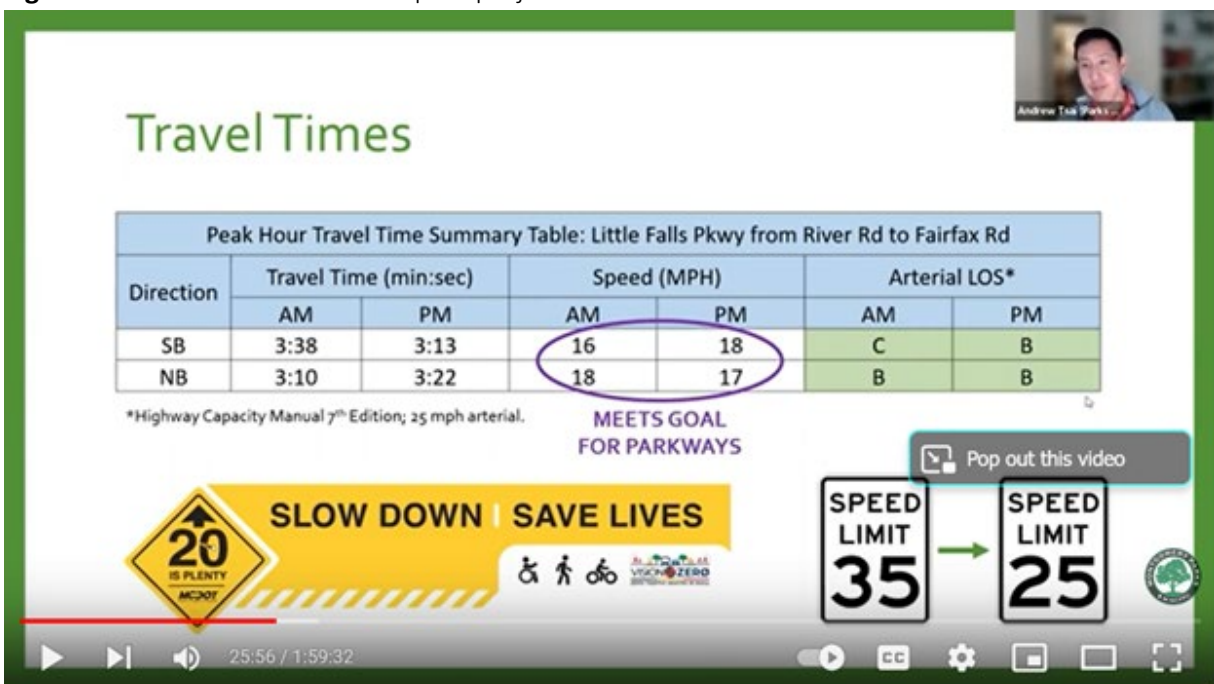


Figure 3. Travel times at the LFP pilot project.

Sincerely,
 Holly Goyert, 5304 Ventnor Rd., Bethesda, MD 20816*
 Daniel P. Dozier, 4550 N. Park Ave. #501, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
 Alexander A. Ferguson, 5105 Allan Road, Bethesda, MD 20816
 Emma Hersh, 4909 Crescent Street, Bethesda, MD 20816
 Eric Wassermann, 5225 Baltimore Ave, Bethesda, MD 20816
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Sarah Morse and David Kathan, 4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

*Please see attached for a PDF copy of this letter.

Jeff Zyontz, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902

mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

RE: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023

March 28th, 2023

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

We applaud the Parks department for their data-driven, evidence-based approach to increasing multiple uses of Little Falls Parkway (LFP) while improving traffic flow. We are residents of the Westbrook and adjoining neighborhoods near the LFP. We fully support the pilot project. It is in the best interest of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike, to increase access to pedestrians and cyclists safely and efficiently, to reduce traffic volume and increase traffic flow.

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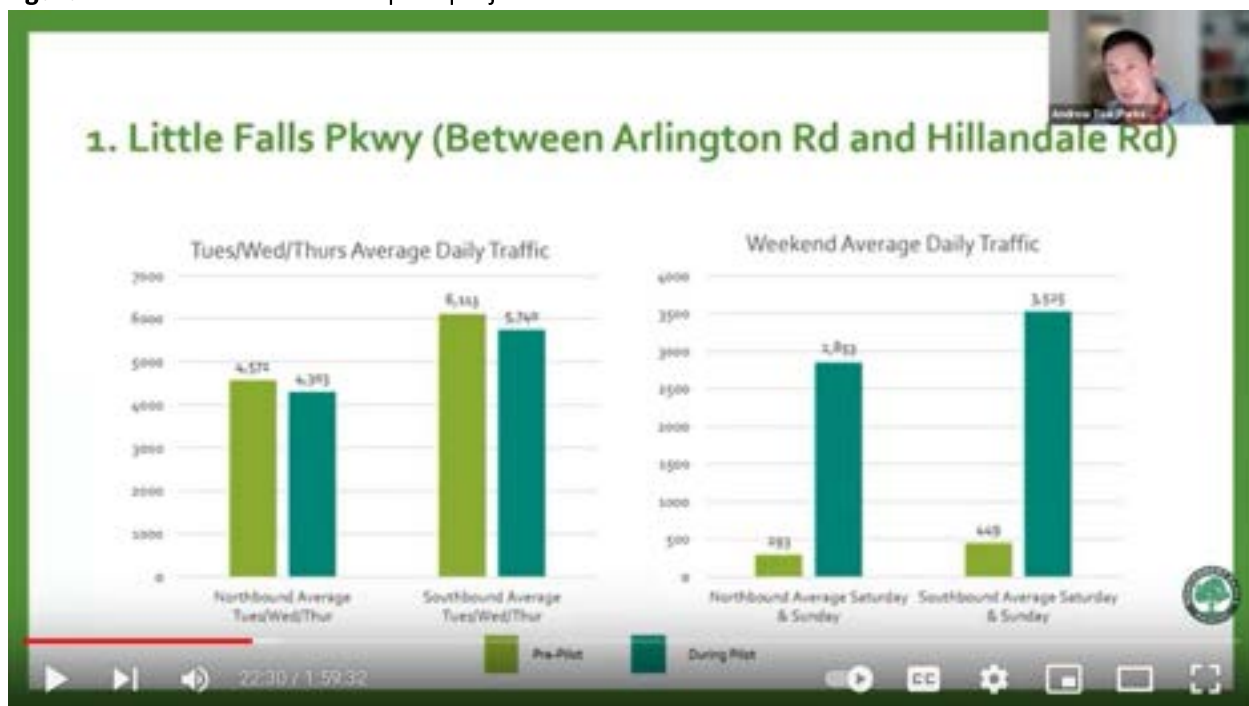


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John Maslin, 5214 Little Falls Dr, Bethesda, MD 20816

Sarah Morse and David Kathan, 4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [David Beaudet](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: little falls parkway pilot project and safety concerns on Conn Ave sidewalks near chevy chase lake
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 12:13:56 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
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[image.png](#)

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

Greetings,

I commute from Kensington to Pennsylvania Ave 3 days per week by bike regardless of weather and my route takes me across Little Falls Parkway twice each commuting day.

The intersection is still very dangerous for pedestrians and bicycles. Let's break it down and look at it from the perspective of a bicyclist.

Approaching from the North, the trail makes a 90 deg turn to the left before crossing the intersection. That's good for slowing down bikes for sure, but it also turns the cyclist AWAY from one of the directions of oncoming traffic. In order to avoid a full stop, that requires the cyclist to both pay attention to their two short / quick 90 degree turns as well as pay attention to traffic they can see AND that they cannot see without averting their gaze to the right to see if there are cars coming. By then, it's a bit late to begin initiating a stop if there is oncoming traffic from the right.

It's less of an issue from the South because both lanes can be seen due to the path being straight.

Let's face the reality of the situation. Bikes DO NOT STOP AT STOP SIGNS AND THEY NEVER WILL IF THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO SAFELY AVOID STOPPING. There is also the unspoken but all knowing cycle / vehicle agreement (for the most part) that vehicles yield to bikes even though the law says they are equal. They are not equal. The law clearly has this wrong and the planning department can help by acknowledging the flaws in the existing traffic laws while creating a safer environment for cyclists.

The ask: MAKE THIS INTERSECTION A MANDATORY STOP SIGN FOR VEHICLES. That might entail having to make the intersection a four way stop due to legal limitations, but the understanding between bikes and vehicles is that bikes won't stop, vehicles will. I suppose alternatively, you could experiment with a sign that reads "STOP for Bikes and Pedestrians" and see how that flies. The cars already do this without the sign but giving cars the legal option to proceed even when there's already a bicycle in the cross walk actually makes for a more dangerous situation. There definitely should NOT be a stop sign in the median for bikes. That's ridiculous. I would encourage everyone on the planning commission to grab your bike and try this out for yourselves at 8am or 5:30 pm on any weekday.

This is a similar situation for the Kenwood crossing just South of Little Falls, but I believe the cars DO have a stop sign there. That intersection works well most of the time despite having more blind spots (fences, foliage, etc.)

In addition, there are a few other dangerous cycling situations that I would appreciate someone look into on the Connecticut Ave sidewalks that I use between Jones Bridge Road and 410 and I'd like to point those out so you can have staff investigate them.

Both sides of Connecticut Ave sidewalk have issues. Let's start with the West side.

West Side:

1. there is a liberty gas station across the street from the chevy chase lake project. The West sidewalk goes all the way to the gas station parking lot and abruptly ENDS at the gas station driveway to make room for their landscaping that goes all the way to the edge of Connecticut Ave. WHY? That just forces me to drive through the gas station parking lot which carries its own risks. Please finish the sidewalk which I note continues up the Hill towards Jones Bridge just after the gas station. Here's an aerial photo of the situation there.



2. Proceeding South, the brush and fence that run next to the stream are quite narrow and the fence is leaning towards the path in some places. If someone fell off their bike here at speed, they would get badly hurt.



3. There are two driveways into the senior residence. The (I assume entrance) is ok although cars do not look for bicyclists when turning in, but this is minor compared to the exit which has a blind driveway. I cannot see cars proceeding towards the exit and they don't completely stop, if they even stop, until they are completely blocking the sidewalk. The cars have no idea that a bicycle is proceeding down the sidewalk either due to a large concrete structure, foliage, and a s-bend in the sidewalk just before the driveway. Take a look at the picture. This driveway clearly needs a mirror installed so that cars can see bikes and vice versa. This is the #1 most dangerous intersection on my entire commute actually. The employees of the senior residence are the worst offenders. They just barrel through the stop sign and make an immediate right on Connecticut without even blinking. I'd like to at least be able to tell they're approaching.





4. Similar issue at the driveway for the country club, but not as severe. Cars frequently block the sidewalk because they can't tell bikes are coming. Both the senior residence and this driveway also need mirrors to alert bicyclists when vehicles are present and vice versa or some other more drastic landscaping changes to increase visibility.



Proceeding to the EAST bound Connecticut Ave sidewalk...

5. The chevy chase lake project seems to have responded to my request to remove sight barriers near the gas station driveway, so that's ok for now, but the construction gate has a permanent fence at right angles to the gate that occludes sight lines and extends nearly all the way out to connecticut ave, forcing peds and bikes to come without a couple feet of the street and there's insufficient space for two parties to pass each other safely in opposite directions. Since gate blocks what's behind it, you can't tell when a vehicle or construction worker are walking towards the street. This is the second most dangerous intersection of my entire 16 mile commute and it's primarily due to lack of visibility.



I mean, common, this is ridiculous. That "New Open" sign should be taken down so we can see through the fence and the last section of it on the right that's got a black and white sign

should be removed completely as it's way too close to the street.

Thanks for giving some of these issues your attention and / or redirecting some of the feedback to the appropriate parties.

Thanks,

Dave Beaudet
3506 Farragut Ave
Kensington, MD 20895

From: [Sarah Morse](#)
To: [Holly G](#)
Cc: [MCP-Chair](#); [MC-LFP](#); [Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov](#)
Subject: Re: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 12:22:24 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)

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

Just to add a little note to this support. On Sunday evening, March 26, I rode home from Bethesda down the abandoned road and there were over 30 people using it, both on foot and on bikes. It has been my experience living right off of Little Falls and Dorset that people are using the abandoned road for recreation, but this is the most I have seen. Nice weather brings out users.

Sarah Morse
4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD

On Tue, Mar 28, 2023 at 12:02 PM Holly G <hollygoy@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

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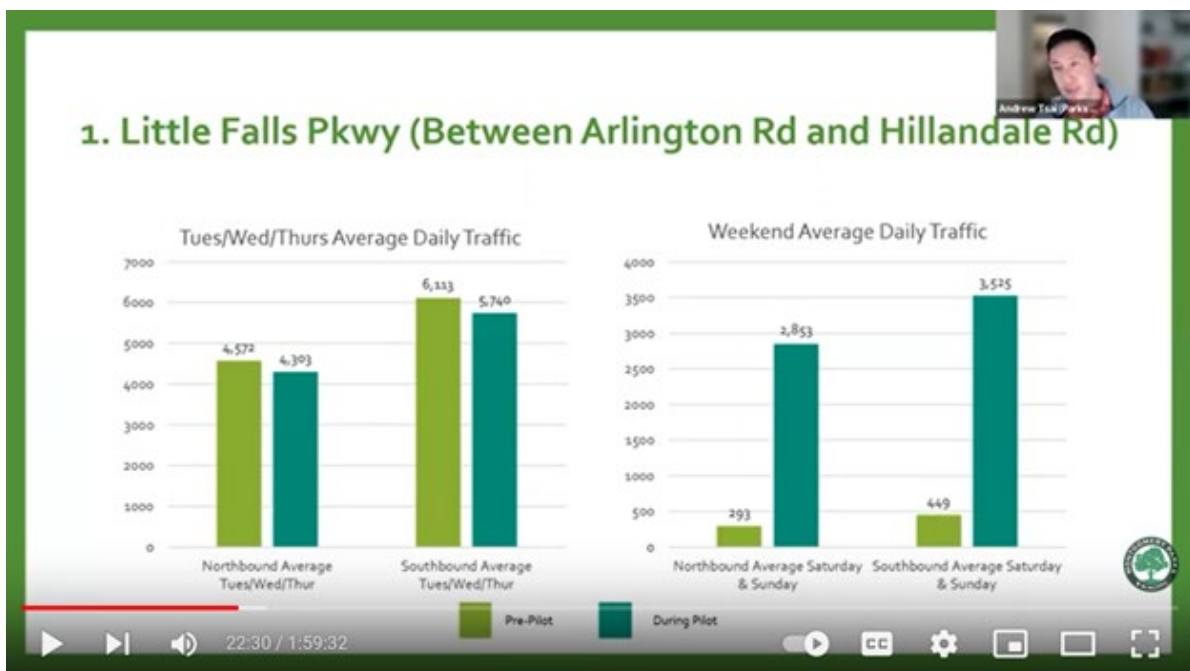


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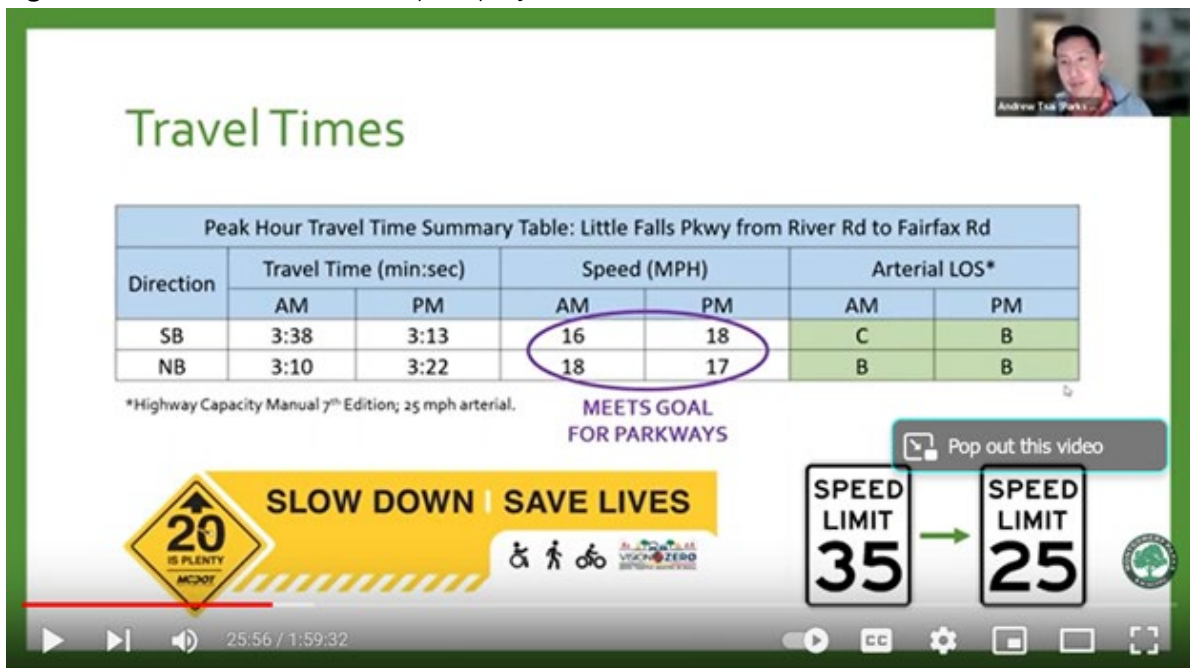


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Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

*Please see attached for a PDF copy of this letter.

--

Sarah Morse

*Support your local watershed group. Visit Little Falls Watershed Alliance online -
www.LFWA.org
Find us on [Facebook!](#)*

From: [Eric Wassermann](#)
To: [Holly G](#)
Cc: [MCP-Chair](#); [MC-LFP](#); [Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov](#); [councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov](#);
[Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov](#)
Subject: Re: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 12:31:05 PM

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

Dear Council Chair and members,

I am resending the letter from Holly Goyert et al., to which I contributed and which I endorse in full. My personal interest is that I was the victim of the mentioned hit and run on LFP and am a regular user of the closed lanes for cycling to and from work elsewhere. The current configuration, while hardly ideal from my point of view, is a significant improvement over the original and has greatly improved my safety and that of other cyclists.

Respectfully,

Eric M. Wassermann, MD
5225 Baltimore Ave, Bethesda

On Mar 28, 2023, at 12:02 PM, Holly G <hollygoy@hotmail.com> wrote:

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

We applaud the Parks department for their data-driven, evidence-based approach to increasing multiple uses of Little Falls Parkway (LFP) while improving traffic flow. We are residents of the Westbrook and adjoining neighborhoods near the LFP. We fully support the pilot project. It is in the best interest of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike, to increase access to pedestrians and cyclists safely and efficiently, to reduce traffic volume and increase traffic flow.

The current LFP configuration greatly increases our safety during daily walks and bicycle commutes between home and work during rush hour. In 2020, one of us survived a hit-and-run on LFP from behind and was left unconscious on the ground. Capital Crescent is not an alternative route, because it often, depending on the destination, requires traversing River Road along a patently dangerous stretch where a cyclist was tragically struck and killed by a truck in August 2022.

Members of our neighborhood communities used to ride with Ned Gaylin who was struck by a driver and killed in October 2016 while crossing the LFP at the Capital Crescent trail. The Parks department reports no accidents at that crossing in the last 3 years, since the infrastructure improvements were made in response to the 6 crashes

that occurred in 2016, including Mr. Gaylin's fatality. We encourage the Planning Board to resist the pressure to restore the four-lane speedway, for the protection of our lives as community cyclists and pedestrians.

The LFP plan protects our children by addressing the need for more sidewalks and protected side paths in our neighborhoods. Our pandemic-era children have learned to ride bikes because of the LFP pilot project. We used the non-vehicular lanes to teach our children how to ride bikes, given the absence of sidewalks or protected bike lanes anywhere in our neighborhood from Massachusetts Avenue to Dorset. The LFP pilot project is a central location and perfect pitch for children to learn to ride. The Capital Crescent trail is at or above capacity and not a safe access route for young kids learning to ride. We are excited for the opportunity to create safe, healthy, climate-friendly, and pedestrian-welcoming neighborhoods.

The LFP pilot project prevents human error from resulting in pedestrian and bicycle fatalities, through its affordable, protective infrastructure improvements. According to the Parks Department's 15 Feb presentation of data on pedestrian use of the LFP since the road diet, daily user counts add up to over 3,000 users per weekend (Figure 1). This pedestrian use is comparable to weekend traffic use on weekends (Figure 2). Moreover, the pilot project maintains safe traffic speeds, reduces traffic volume (by 20-35% since 2016) and supports good traffic flow at under 4 minutes between River Rd. and Fairfax Rd, during peak hour travel time (Figure 3). Such traffic flow and high pedestrian use would increase if the Parks Department adds more infrastructure improvements, such as protected sidepaths (e.g., using flexposts) to extend pedestrian access to the LFP pilot project from River Rd. and Massachusetts Ave.

Thank you for dedicating your time and resources to this commendable effort, it is a phenomenal infrastructure improvement and responsible use of our tax dollars. The availability of safe, open space and improved traffic flow for multiple users drastically increases the value, safety, and livability of our environmentally proactive and family-friendly neighborhood. We look forward to your progress in the next phase of improvements.

<image.png>

Figure 1. User counts at the LFP pilot project.

<image.png>

Figure 2. Traffic counts at the LFP pilot project.

<image.png>

Figure 3. Travel times at the LFP pilot project.

Sincerely,

Holly Goyert, 5304 Ventnor Rd., Bethesda, MD 20816*

Daniel P. Dozier, 4550 N. Park Ave. #501, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Alexander A. Ferguson, 5105 Allan Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

Emma Hersh, 4909 Crescent Street, Bethesda, MD 20816

Eric Wassermann, 5225 Baltimore Ave, Bethesda, MD 20816
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Suzanne Richman, 4712 Overbrook Road, Bethesda, MD 20816
John Maslin, 5214 Little Falls Dr, Bethesda, MD 20816
Sarah Morse and David Kathan, 4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

*Please see attached for a PDF copy of this letter.

<TestimonyHearingLittleFallsWestbrook230528.pdf>

From: [David Johnson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#)
Cc: andrew.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Item#12 Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project/testimony
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 1:10:43 PM
Attachments: [Letter to MC Planning Board 32823.pdf](#)

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

March 28, 2023

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

I respectfully request you vote to abandon plans for the Linear Park and return the 4 traffic lanes to their original configuration north of Dorset Avenue on Little Falls Parkway. My reasoning for this is as follows:

- 1) The road diet, as currently fashioned, is **dangerous**. I have personally experienced a near head-on collision while turning north from Dorset onto Little Falls Parkway, and have since heard from two other citizens of similar experiences of near head-on collisions. A fourth gentleman phoning in to testify at the Public Meeting on February 15 also reported a similar experience, indicating this is an ongoing danger
- 2) Fire and Rescue has apparently found this section of road difficult to negotiate, as Hook-and-ladder trucks are seen routinely cutting through adjacent neighborhoods in an effort to avoid this section of roadway. Also, this section of road north of Dorset has no “break-down lane” on either side to allow ambulances to safely reach an accident, should this occur.
- 3) Traveling in the two lanes going north above River Road, there is no signage indicating that only the left lane will continue above the light at Dorset avenue. This creates a sudden and unforeseen imperative, after a blind curve and just before the light, for cars in the right lane wishing to continue northward, to rapidly jockey for space into the left lane. This is an accident just waiting to happen. Also, traveling south, cars turning right onto Dorset cannot see a bike in the adjacent bike lane that terminates at Dorset Avenue. Whether either travels through the intersection or turns right, an accident is waiting to happen: this is “Zero Vision”, not “Vision Zero.”
- 4) The current crossing at the Capital Crescent Trail actually forces drivers and bikers to play “chicken” with each other, with drivers trying to guess if the bikers will actually stop at the stop signs, and bikers expecting the drivers to stop should they ignore the sign. This is exactly what led to the sole fatality at this crossing, when a biker, in a recliner bike with the flag down, blew by the stop sign in 2017 and struck a car (the driver was not cited). That’s why the Planning Board originally voted 4-1 in June, 2019 to reverse the road diet and have all stop at the light as being true “Vision Zero.”
- 5) Constricting traffic on a main transportation artery between Bethesda and the River Road/Westbard Corridor in the face of the significant coming density is short sighted, especially since no modeling has been done to determine the area’s true transportation needs over the next 5 years. The Bethesda Master Plan calls for 32.5M square feet of new commercial and residential space. The Westbard Development Plan calls for 1.8M square feet (to include 300 apartments above commercial space, 72 townhomes, and a 12 story senior living facility of 112 units—requiring 3 shifts of staffing and ancillary help, as well as daily visiting family and friends, over and above the numbers of daily shoppers and visitors to the other commercial and residential units—in an area with

limited public transportation!). And “Thrive 2050” has determined River Road to be a “Growth Zone!” Parks has stated that traffic along the Parkway has declined by 35% since 2016 (pre road diet and weekend closures, and pre Pandemic—wouldn’t one expect a decline in traffic counts from these three factors?), and assume that the current decline in traffic will be maintained. Their own counts, however, show that the traffic on the Parkway has actually been increasing since July 2022, Metro has recently noted a surge in riders, and government workers have been ordered back to work, all suggesting Parks’ assumptions to be badly in error.

6) There’s no need (or citizen desire) for a “linear park” when it already sits within 160 acres of Little Falls Stream Valley Park, 17 acres of Norwood Park, 3 acres of Little Falls Park, 2 acres of Trail Park, 3 acres of Little Falls SVU Park #1 and #2, and 3.5 miles of Capital Crescent Trail. How can Parks and Planning, in good conscience, stuff yet another “park” into this “over-parked” area, when so many citizens elsewhere in the County are in dire need of parks and green space?

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,

David C. Johnson, M.D.
5301 Oakland Road
Chevy Chase, MD 20815
301-922-3633 (c)

From: [Brian Hunt](#)
Cc: [MCP-Chair](#); [MC-LFP](#); Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Re: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 1:12:45 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[TestimonyHearingLittleFallsWestbrook230528.pdf](#)

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

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

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15 Feb presentation of data on pedestrian use of the LFP since the road diet, daily user counts add up to over 3,000 users per weekend (Figure 1). This pedestrian use is comparable to weekend traffic use on weekends (Figure 2). Moreover, the pilot project maintains safe traffic speeds, reduces traffic volume (by 20-35% since 2016) and supports good traffic flow at under 4 minutes between River Rd. and Fairfax Rd, during peak hour travel time (Figure 3). Such traffic flow and high pedestrian use would increase if the Parks Department adds more infrastructure improvements, such as protected sidepaths (e.g., using flexposts) to extend pedestrian access to the LFP pilot project from River Rd. and Massachusetts Ave.

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Figure 1. User counts at the LFP pilot project.

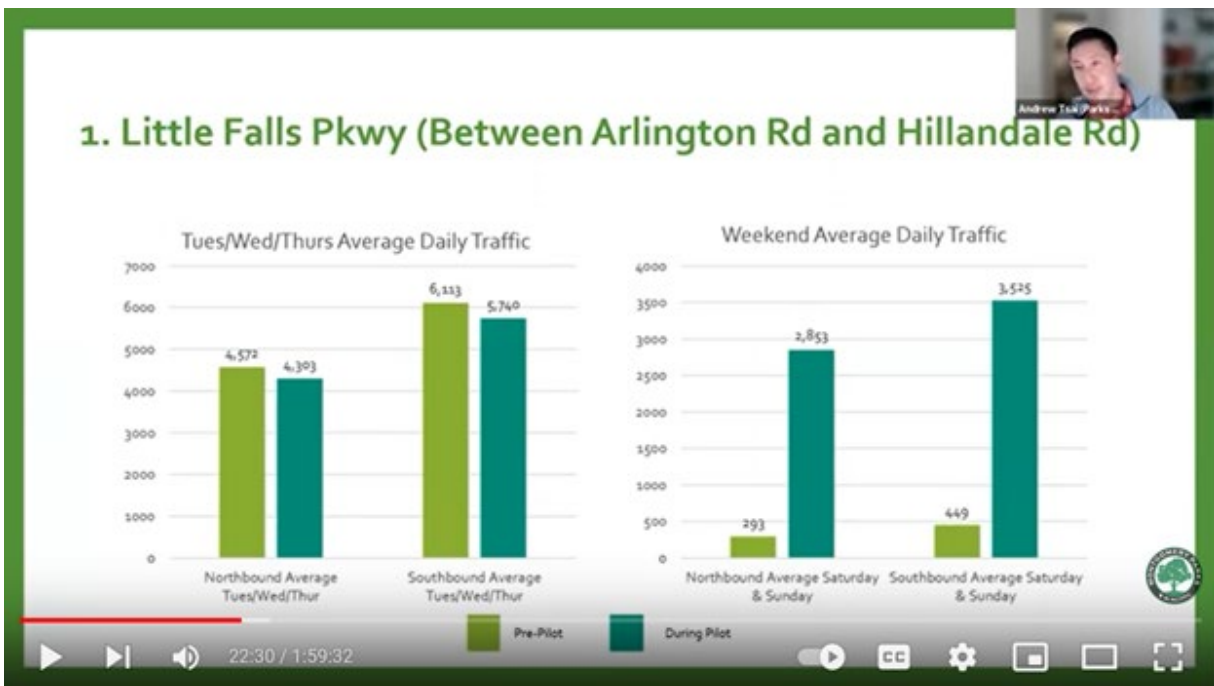


Figure 2. Traffic counts at the LFP pilot project.

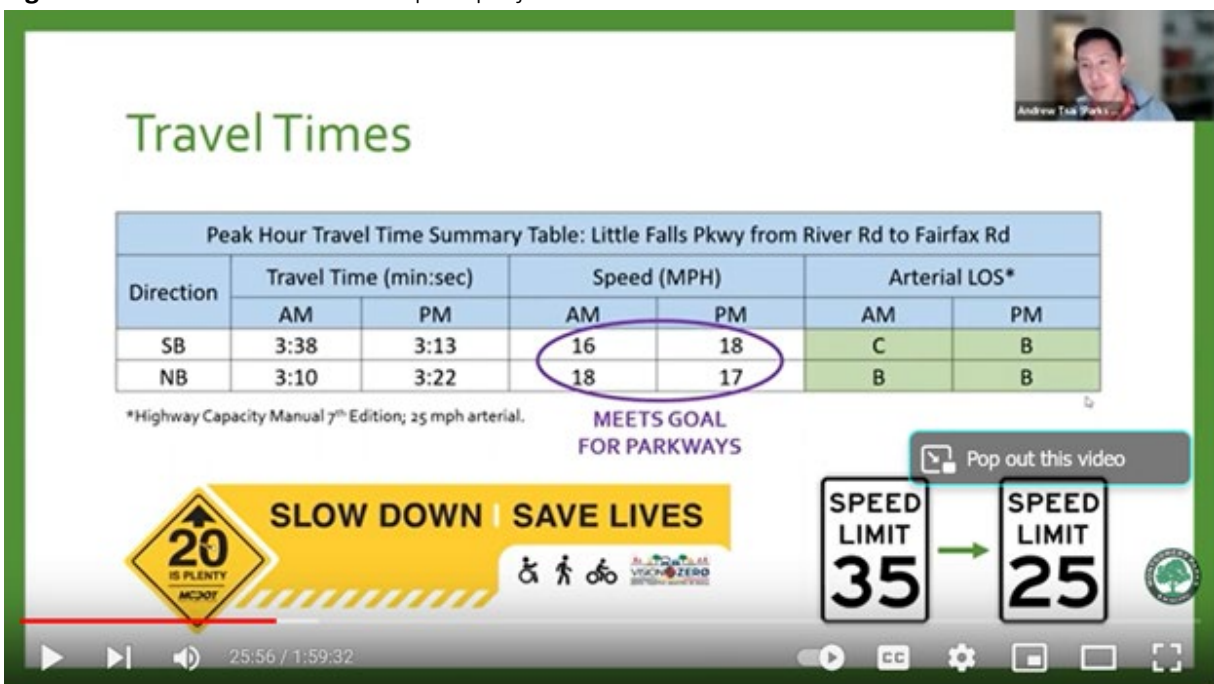


Figure 3. Travel times at the LFP pilot project.

Sincerely,
 Holly Goyert, 5304 Ventnor Rd., Bethesda, MD 20816*
 Daniel P. Dozier, 4550 N. Park Ave. #501, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
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Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

*Please see attached for a PDF copy of this letter.

Brian Hunt

bhunt203@gmail.com | (203) 312-3712

On Tue, Mar 28, 2023 at 12:02 PM Holly G <hollygoy@hotmail.com> wrot

Jeff Zyontz, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902

mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

RE: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023

March 28th, 2023

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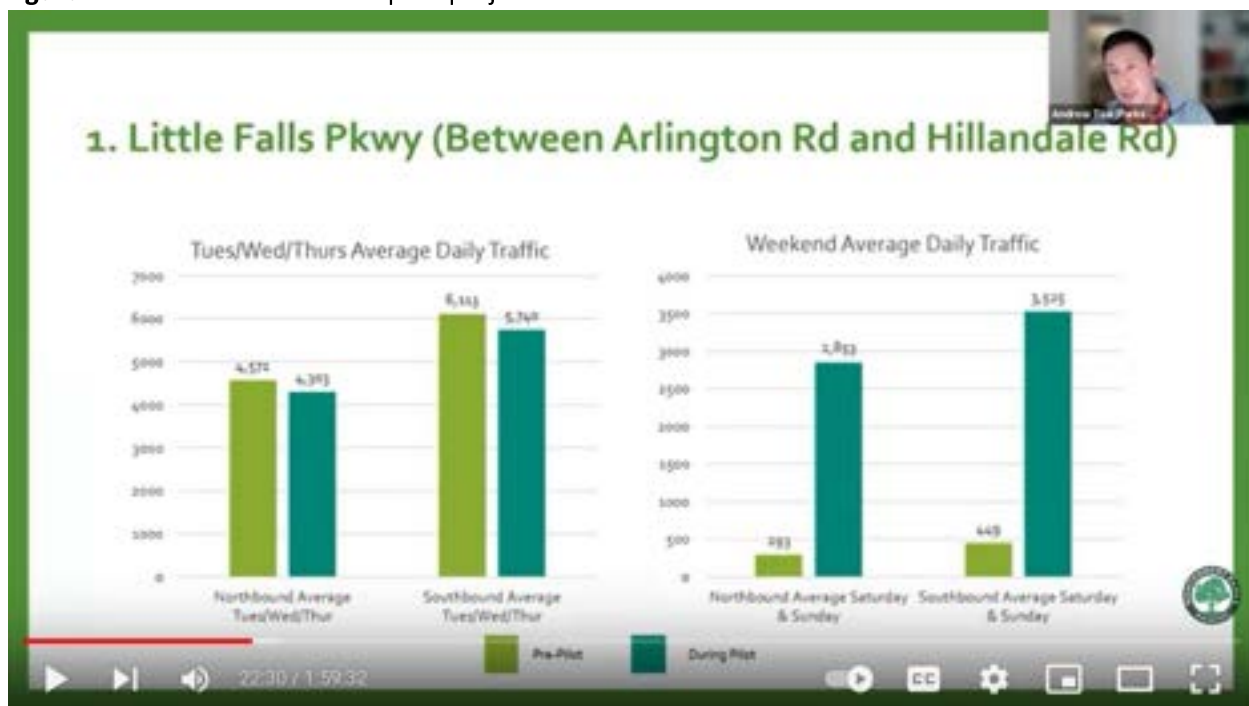


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Sarah Morse and David Kathan, 4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [maggie oconnell](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Support for the Little Falls Parkway pilot
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 1:20:58 PM

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

Hello,

I am writing today to share my support for the Little Falls Parkway pilot program which has allocated two lanes to biking, walking, and rolling. I hope this change becomes permanent as it has created a safer environment for the hundreds of walkers crossing and traveling LFP daily. I believe drivers are driving more safely and slowly with the single lane each way.

Importantly, I live within two blocks from the parkway and drive the parkway daily and have seen NO difference in travel times. I think this pilot program has been a win-win for our community.

Your neighbor,
Maggie O'Connell
7001 Arlington Rd #239, Bethesda, MD 20814
301-642-7689

On Tue, Mar 28, 2023 at 10:03 AM maggie oconnell <ocomaggie1@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello,

I am writing today to share my support for the Little Falls Parkway pilot program which has allocated two lanes to biking, walking, and rolling. I hope this change becomes permanent as it has created a safer environment for the hundreds of walkers crossing and traveling LFP daily. I believe drivers are driving more safely and slowly with the single lane each way.

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Your neighbor,
Maggie O'Connell
301-642-7689

From: [Molly](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 6:38:11 PM

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

I am a resident of Kenwood and want to submit written testimony for the upcoming 3/30/2023 planning board hearing. I have a number of safety and security-related concerns about these changes to partially close little falls parkway. I have had two instances where this put my children in close proximity to an oncoming car, and I am very concerned that children will be hit by cars with these new lane closures. Here are the primary issues:

1. Kenwood does not have sidewalks. Children go for walks every day (walking their dogs, or riding their scooters or bikes) and they cross streets and are now dealing with an increase in cut-through traffic. The closure have pushed cut through traffic through our streets, and many of these cars speed significantly as they rush to their endpoint. My child was almost hit crossing Kennedy drive when these lane closures first happened. This is terribly dangerous and an accident waiting to happen.
2. The development at Westbard is almost certainly going to increase vehicular traffic in the area, making this threat to children (and other vulnerable pedestrians) greater at a time when the county is going to decrease the lanes on LFP? This will push even more cut through traffic onto our streets.
3. The cross-walk on the capital crescent trail is far less safe and much worse visibility, especially for children who are lower to the ground with these changes. My other child was trying to cross and could not see the oncoming car (and it did not seem to see her) because the cross walk is now with no median, and traffic is moving in both directions, blocking views. I grabbed and pulled her back in time. This will not always happen with parents/childcare, and we're endangering our community's children.

Relatedly and lastly, we have been attempting to see the data used to make these decisions, and have not had access. What studies were done on traffic patterns stemming from westbard development and how they affect this little falls closure? This is one of many questions our community has. These changes have been met with intense opposition from the citizens who live with them. It is unclear where the support for this comes from, and it is concerning since it does not appear to be the residents affected. We feel unheard, ignored and endangered.

Thank you,
Molly Michael

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Jennifer Stoloff](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Fwd: Little Falls Parkway pilot project
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 3:55:07 PM

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

Resending my previous email but including my mailing address this time--see below.

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

From: **Jennifer Stoloff** <j@stoloff.com>
Date: Tue, Mar 28, 2023 at 2:37 PM
Subject: Little Falls Parkway pilot project
To: <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>

I am submitting written testimony about the Little Fall Parkway pilot project. Please keep the pilot going. Using this stretch of road is much safer for everyone, including people in cars. People walking and people riding bikes deserve to have full use of the parkway and to move through this area safely. The pilot shows the road is functioning well with two lanes. It is safer and serves the community well. Please follow Vision Zero principles and keep the current configuration of Little Falls Parkway. I use this area on my bike and find it much easier and safer to navigate with the two -lane configuration.

Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Stoloff, PhD
810 Sligo Ave
Silver Spring, MD 20910
202-548-8149

From: [Alex Thier](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I HUGELY support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:08:43 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

I know that many are organizing against this great initiative, but from my conversations and the list serve, I think many many welcome it as well. Please don't succumb to the pressure of those who are rejecting the change with little evidence. 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,
Alex Thier
5615 Warwick Pl
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Cecilia Jones](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:28:28 PM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

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

Thank you,
Cecilia Jones
10302 Duvawn Pl
Silver Spring, MD 20902

From: [Dennis DuFour](#)
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); Marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us; marc.korman@house.state.md.us; sara.love@house.state.md.us; councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov; [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [MC-LFP](#); [Dennis DuFour](#)
Subject: MCPB Hearing March 30, 2023 Item 12 titled Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:41:47 PM
Attachments: [Dennis DuFour written testimony against MCPB March 30, 2023 Item 12 Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project .pdf](#)

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

[Chairman Zyontz](#)

[Attached is my timely written testimony against the Little Falls Pilot Project.](#)

[Please confirm receipt.](#)

R. Dennis DuFour
President
TDEC
8001 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-718-0703 x 301
ddufour@tdec.com
www.tdec.com

TDEC is a HUBZone - SOC II Certified Company.

From: Dennis DuFour <ddufour@tdec.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 2:05 PM
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#) <Jeffrey.Zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>; Marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us; marc.korman@house.state.md.us; sara.love@house.state.md.us; councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov

Cc: MC-LFP <lfp@montgomeryparks.org>; Dennis DuFour <ddufour@tdec.com>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL]-RE: Proposed Hearing on Little Falls Parkway Changes - 3rd request

ok

From: Zyontz, Jeffrey <Jeffrey.Zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>

Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 1:46 PM

To: Dennis DuFour <ddufour@tdec.com>; Marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-
gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us;
marc.korman@house.state.md.us; sara.love@house.state.md.us;
councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov

Cc: MC-LFP <lfp@montgomeryparks.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL]-RE: Proposed Hearing on Little Falls Parkway Changes - 3rd request

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Ms. DuFour,

The Board will be proceeding with the hearing on March 30. No decision will be made by the Board until April 13 at the earliest. I expect staff to present its response to testimony on April 13.

Jeff Zyontz

Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board

Montgomery County Planning Department
2425 Reedy Drive, 14th Floor, Wheaton, MD 20902
MCP-CHAIR@mncppc-mc.org
301.495.4605

From: Dennis DuFour <ddufour@tdec.com>

Sent: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 11:18 AM

To: Zyontz, Jeffrey <Jeffrey.Zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>; Marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-
gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;

councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us;
marc.korman@house.state.md.us; sara.love@house.state.md.us;
councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov

Cc: MC-LFP <lfp@montgomeryparks.org>; Dennis DuFour <ddefour@tdec.com>

Subject: RE: Proposed Hearing on Little Falls Parkway Changes - 3rd request

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

Chairman Zyontz

This is my third request to postpone the meeting you have schedule for Thursday March 30 at 5:30pm regarding changes to the Little Falls Parkway. My first request (below) and second request (also below) are unanswered nor responded to. Montgomery County Parks has 26 pages of questions and comments (attached) they have failed to answer. How can you have a meaningful hearing without all the data available?

Please postpone this meeting until this occurs.

Dennis DuFour

From: Dennis DuFour

Sent: Saturday, March 11, 2023 1:16 PM

To: jeffrey.zyontz@mncppc-mc.org; Marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us;
marc.korman@house.state.md.us; sara.love@house.state.md.us;
'councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov'
<councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Cc: lfp@montgomeryparks.org; Dennis DuFour <ddefour@tdec.com>

Subject: RE: Proposed Hearing on Little Falls Parkway Changes - 2nd request

Chairman Zyontz

This is a follow up request on the email sent to you on the 2nd (see below). As of today, I do

not see answers to questions from the 2/15/2023 meeting on
[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e674c040/I1OP13C5rkmBAboWxi2ltw?
u=http://www.montgomeryparks.org/](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e674c040/I1OP13C5rkmBAboWxi2ltw?u=http://www.montgomeryparks.org/).

The questions need to be answered in order to have a meaningful hearing on the path forward for the parkway.

Please postpone this meeting until this occurs. This will allow time to digest the answers and to get other opinions based on said answers.

Thank you in advance.

Dennis DuFour

From: Dennis DuFour <ddufour@tdec.com>

Sent: Thursday, March 2, 2023 4:33 PM

To: jeffrey.zyontz@mncppc-mc.org; MCP-Chair@mnsppc-mc.org;
Marc.elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov;
Pamela.Dunn@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov;
councilmember.steward@montgomerycountymd.gov; ariana.kelly@senate.state.md.us;
marc.korman@house.state.md.us; sara.love@house.state.md.us

Cc: lfp@montgomeryparks.org; Dennis DuFour <ddufour@tdec.com>

Subject: Proposed Hearing on Little Falls Parkway Changes

Chairman Zyontz,

I see that a hearing is scheduled for March 30, 2023 regarding changes to Little Falls Parkway that include permanent traffic lane removal and a potential new park area. You may know, on February 15th, Montgomery County Parks presented their findings in a meeting titled Little Falls Pilot Project and Traffic Study. Here is a recording to said meeting:

[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e6f4a0ac/y4-kxaxdvUugZWwS3aFI6g?
u=https://youtube.com/watch?v=sWOweqm1XsM](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e6f4a0ac/y4-kxaxdvUugZWwS3aFI6g?u=https://youtube.com/watch?v=sWOweqm1XsM)

A by-product of the meeting was a 26 pages list of questions and comments (attached). I have not seen on [https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e674c040/I1OP13C5rkmBAboWxi2ltw?
u=http://www.montgomeryparks.org/](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/e674c040/I1OP13C5rkmBAboWxi2ltw?u=http://www.montgomeryparks.org/) answers to the questions.

Given this and the vast amount of information to digest I ask that you postpone the March 30, 2023 hearing so that the public can:

1. Get answers to questions posed.
2. Get another opinion on the Parks findings presented in the hearing.

In sum, more time is needed to understand what was presented.

I present this as a Chevy Chase resident and a Bethesda business owner. Please feel free to reach me at the # and email below as needed.

With best regards, I am

R. Dennis DuFour
President
TDEC
8001 Wisconsin Ave
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-718-0703 x 301
ddufour@tdec.com
[https://link.edgepilot.com/s/4c8da358/I-KUgSMieU2xWfC6ByR-NA?
u=http://www.tdec.com/](https://link.edgepilot.com/s/4c8da358/I-KUgSMieU2xWfC6ByR-NA?u=http://www.tdec.com/)

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R. Dennis DuFour
6212 Garnett Drive
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

March 28, 2023

Mr. Jeff Zyontz
Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902
MCP-CHAIR@mncppc-mc.org

Mr. Zyontz:

I am writing as an interested person aggrieved by an action coming before the Montgomery County Planning Board on Thursday March 30, 2023 at 5:30pm listed as Item 12 titled Briefing and Public Hearing: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project. I am against the pilot project and urge you to vote no to this and return the Parkway to its previous state.

I live adjacent to Little Falls Parkway (LFP) and have so for over 40 years. I use the parkway to commute to work, for carpools and to access Bethesda's restaurants and shopping. It's been a valuable road for me. As has the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) which I use at least once a week to walk to work. I know LFP and CCT well and thus why I am writing you.

I am against the project for three reasons. First, the road changes made and proposed to be made permanent are confusing, dangerous and unnecessary. Second, the data Montgomery County Department of Parks "Parks" presented as justification are without basis, filled with duplicates and provided so near to the hearing that no reasonable person could be able to digest all of this information by the time of the hearing. Finally, a linear park won't be used nor will be a value to residents.

Parks could have handled this issue in a simple way by adding a bridge over or a tunnel under CCT. Instead Parks created "interim road diets" coupled with excessive and confusing signage. For example, please see their illustrations presented on pages 15 and 16 of their recommendation submission. If the proposed path and signage doesn't create a "threat scenario" (a Parks term) I don't know what would. I recommend you scrape this plan, return the parkway to its original condition, original signage and serve CCT users with a bridge or a tunnel.

The data presented has no basis and in some cases has not been addressed. As an example, on page 3 of Parks' recommendation they cite a multi-year study that shows a 50% decline in reported crashes. They fail to provide a comparison or a baseline to come to this conclusion. Further Appendix E titled Correspondence Log contains close to 700 emails with multiple submissions from the same people. This needs to be culled through so that the number and

MCPD Meeting

March 30, 2023

Item #12 – Briefing and Public Hearing: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

Page #2

accuracy of who is for this and who is against this is known. As an example in the first 30 emails of people “for” this project 5 of them are duplicates. That’s 16%. If you extrapolate that over 700 emails 112 could have been submitted twice. That said, the source material can’t be trusted.

Further, Parks had a virtual town hall meeting on this issue on February 15, 2023. From that town hall Parks received 22 pages of questions and comments. To date, Parks has not answered any of them. You should be aware of this because I wrote to you three times on this topic. Don’t you need to have all of the information in order to come to a vote?

Finally, the proposed linear park won’t get the users as anticipated. There is not a need nor enough parking. In fact we already have 3 other parks in the area that go unused. The LFP should be returned to its original state and a bridge should be erected over or a tunnel under for CCT users. Left over funds should be used in more needy areas of the County than here.

I am available to discuss this in more detail as needed.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely,

R. Dennis DuFour

From: [Erica Brown](#)
To: mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org
Subject: Written testimony for 3/30 hearing
Date: Monday, March 27, 2023 10:46:17 PM
Attachments: [testimony.docx](#)

**Testimony for Planning Board meeting on March 30, 2023, regarding Item 12:
Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project**

The Parks Department would like to spend at least \$1–2 million to create a park on Little Falls Parkway. Rather than seeking new projects, they ought to prioritize upkeep on their existing property.

Norwood Park is a good example of a park in need of upkeep. There is an abandoned building in the park, centrally located next to a preschool, whose entrance is rotting and cordoned off with warning tape. Neighborhood residents have been asking Parks to demolish or renovate this eyesore for years now, with no success.

Similarly, the tennis courts at Norwood Park have a standing water problem and are sorely in need of renovation and re-leveling. I slipped on some of that standing water in December while playing tennis on a sunny day, resulting in a broken wrist that required a trip to the emergency room, surgery, and extensive physical therapy. My accident would not have happened if the tennis courts had been regularly inspected and maintained.

Maintenance has clearly not been a priority of the Parks Department. As a result, our public park facilities are falling into disrepair. This is a preventable liability for Montgomery County.

Rather than spend a significant amount of money on the Little Falls project, I urge the Parks Department to dedicate more funds to maintaining its existing facilities.

Erica Brown
4609 Hunt Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Kathleen Kenyon](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:51:26 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,
Kathleen Kenyon
4805 Grantham Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Max Teleki](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:52:46 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,
Max Teleki
5522 Warwick Pl
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: chris@arndthome.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [MC-LFP](#)
Subject: Testimony in Support of the current alignment on Little Falls Parkway allowing the continued use and enjoyment by pedestrians, bicyclists, and the public in general.
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 5:30:32 PM
Attachments: [MontCityPlanningBoard-statement-Chris Arndt-LittleFallsParkway.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chair and Planning Board Members:

As someone who commutes by bicycle and who uses cycling as his primary way of recreation and fitness, I would like to convey my strong support of the alignment of Little Falls Parkway with two lanes open for recreation and two lanes open to motor vehicle traffic.

I lived in Kenwood for over twenty years when Little Fall Park was not a park but was a commuter thruway with a great deal of noise and speeding cars. It was dangerous for pedestrians and runners. By any measure, there was little possibility of enjoying the park for any real recreation, and this betrayed its original purpose: to be a park for recreation, rather than a motorway and commuter route.

When I lived in Kenwood I would have supported any measure that would have curtailed the ruinous effects of the auto traffic, and now, by its recent actions, the Montgomery Parks Department has brought its Open Parkways Program to Little Falls Parkway. By their efforts, the Park is a park again, not just a parkway.

The current alignment is much, much safer than the previous alignment where all four lanes of the parkway were taken for motor vehicle traffic. To remind all of us, there have been fatalities of pedestrians and cyclists by motorists with the old alignment. The current alignment is more than an accommodation for motorists; they can continue to drive the parkway, but now in its intended purpose of driving at a slower, safer speed, and more importantly, allowing for more use by the non-driving public: cyclists, walkers, parents with children in strollers, runners, and others. None of this was possible before. I know from my experience of living there.

We cannot go backwards. We cannot imperil pedestrian and cyclist safety. We cannot succumb to the outdated demands from motorists and their polluting vehicles. We cannot go back on our commitments to the original purpose of Little Falls Park as a haven for recreation..

I urge you to approve the current alignment.

Thank you for your consideration. A signed copy in letter form is attached.

Sincerely,

Christopher Arndt*

21090 Sugar Ridge Terrace

Boyd's, MD 20841

Home tel: 301-916-0203

Mobile: 301-502-2299

Office email: carndt@gormgroup.com

Home email: chris@arndthome.com

* a resident of Montgomery County since 1953, with twenty years+ in Kenwood

Christopher P. Arndt

Residence:

21090 Sugar Ridge Terrace

Boys, Maryland 20841

Tel: 301-916-0203

Chair
Montgomery County Planning Board,
2425 Reddie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

March 28, 2023

Re: Testimony in Support of the current alignment on Little Falls Parkway allowing the continued use and enjoyment by pedestrians, bicyclists, and the public in general.

Dear Chair and Planning Board Members:

As someone who commutes by bicycle and who uses cycling as his primary way of recreation and fitness, I would like to convey my strong support of the alignment of Little Falls Parkway with two lanes open for recreation and two lanes open to motor vehicle traffic.

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I urge you to approve the current alignment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christopher Arndt*
21090 Sugar Ridge Terrace
Boys, MD 20841
Home tel: 301-916-0203
Mobile: 301-502-2299
Office email: carndt@gormgroup.com
Home email: chris@arndthome.com

* a resident of Montgomery County since 1953, with twenty years+ in Kenwood.

From: [Don Cuming](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway pilot
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 5:34:14 PM

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

I fully support the continuation of the current configuration of the Parkway. I do not see any need for a four lane road in that area, and don't believe there is any significant cut through traffic in the Kenwood neighborhood. Let's create more recreational space in our Bethesda area that is becoming more urbanized. My understanding is that opposition to the parkway pilot is mainly from well to do Kenwood residents who really don't need recreational space. Also, there is no part of the Kenwood neighborhood that directly abuts the parkway. As someone with some experience in urban transportation I fully support the pilot configuration.

Donald R. Cuming PE

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: john.maslin.castabout.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [MC-LFP](#); Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Holly G](#)
Subject: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 5:40:04 PM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[TestimonyHearingLittleFallsWestbrook230528.pdf](#)

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

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

We applaud the Parks department for their data-driven, evidence-based approach to increasing multiple uses of Little Falls Parkway (LFP) while improving traffic flow. We are residents of the Westbrook and adjoining neighborhoods near the LFP. We fully support the pilot project. It is in the best interest of pedestrians, cyclists, and drivers alike, to increase access to pedestrians and cyclists safely and efficiently, to reduce traffic volume and increase traffic flow.

The current LFP configuration greatly increases our safety during daily walks and bicycle commutes between home and work during rush hour. In 2020, one of us survived a hit-and-run on LFP from behind and was left unconscious on the ground. Capital Crescent is not an alternative route, because it often, depending on the destination, requires traversing River Road along a patently dangerous stretch where a cyclist was tragically struck and killed by a truck in August 2022.

Members of our neighborhood communities used to ride with Ned Gaylin who was struck by a driver and killed in October 2016 while crossing the LFP at the Capital Crescent trail. The Parks department reports no accidents at that crossing in the last 3 years, since the infrastructure improvements were made in response to the 6 crashes that occurred in 2016, including Mr. Gaylin's fatality. We encourage the Planning Board to resist the pressure to restore the four-lane speedway, for the protection of our lives as community cyclists and pedestrians.

The LFP plan protects our children by addressing the need for more sidewalks and protected side paths in our neighborhoods. Our pandemic-era children have learned to ride bikes because of the LFP pilot project. We used the non-vehicular lanes to teach our children how to ride bikes, given the absence of sidewalks or protected bike lanes anywhere in our neighborhood from Massachusetts Avenue to Dorset. The LFP pilot project is a central location and perfect pitch for children to learn to ride. The Capital Crescent trail is at or above capacity and not a safe access route for young kids learning to ride. We are excited for the opportunity to create safe, healthy, climate-friendly, and pedestrian-welcoming neighborhoods.

The LFP pilot project prevents human error from resulting in pedestrian and bicycle fatalities, through its affordable, protective infrastructure improvements. According to the Parks Department's 15 Feb presentation of data on pedestrian use of the LFP since the road diet, daily user counts add

up to over 3,000 users per weekend (Figure 1). This pedestrian use is comparable to weekend traffic use on weekends (Figure 2). Moreover, the pilot project maintains safe traffic speeds, reduces traffic volume (by 20-35% since 2016) and supports good traffic flow at under 4 minutes between River Rd. and Fairfax Rd, during peak hour travel time (Figure 3). Such traffic flow and high pedestrian use would increase if the Parks Department adds more infrastructure improvements, such as protected sidepaths (e.g., using flexposts) to extend pedestrian access to the LFP pilot project from River Rd. and Massachusetts Ave.

Thank you for dedicating your time and resources to this commendable effort, it is a phenomenal infrastructure improvement and responsible use of our tax dollars. The availability of safe, open space and improved traffic flow for multiple users drastically increases the value, safety, and livability of our environmentally proactive and family-friendly neighborhood. We look forward to your progress in the next phase of improvements.

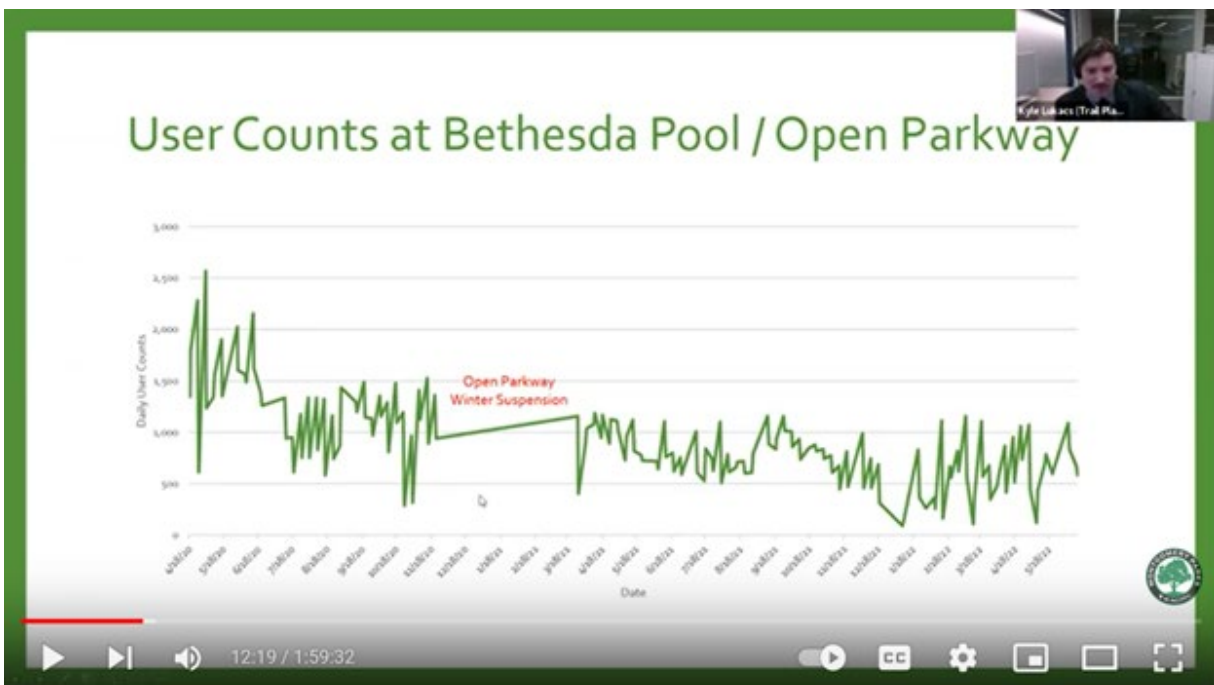


Figure 1. User counts at the LFP pilot project.

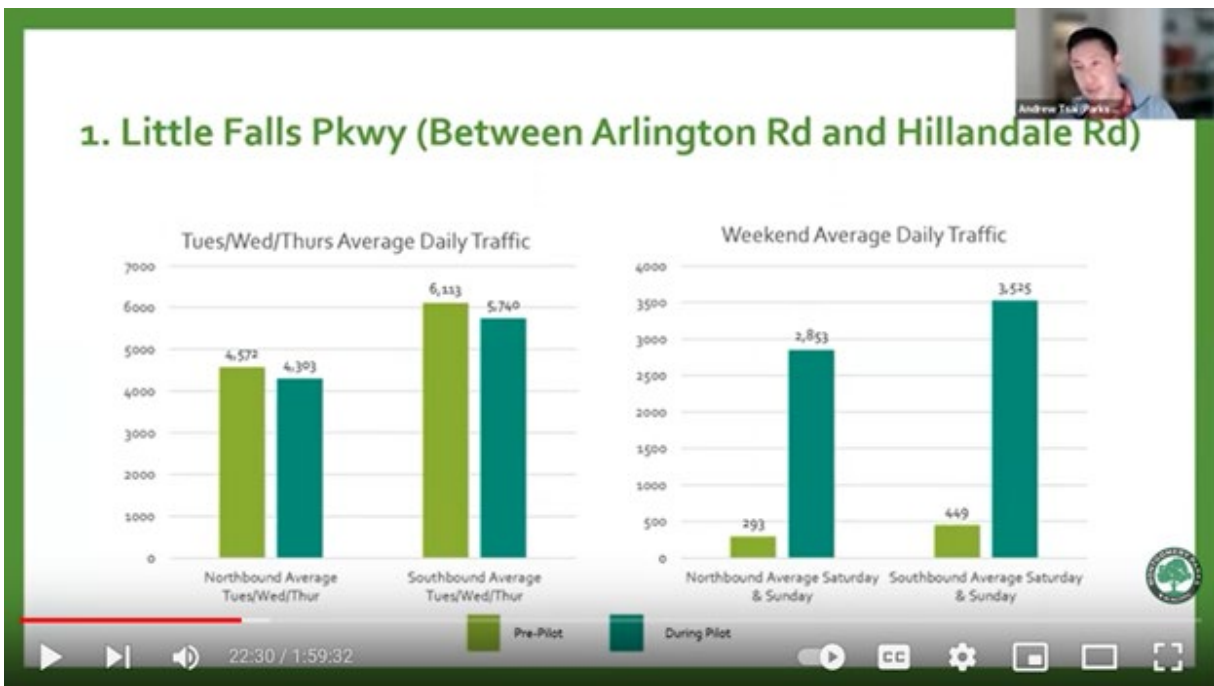


Figure 2. Traffic counts at the LFP pilot project.

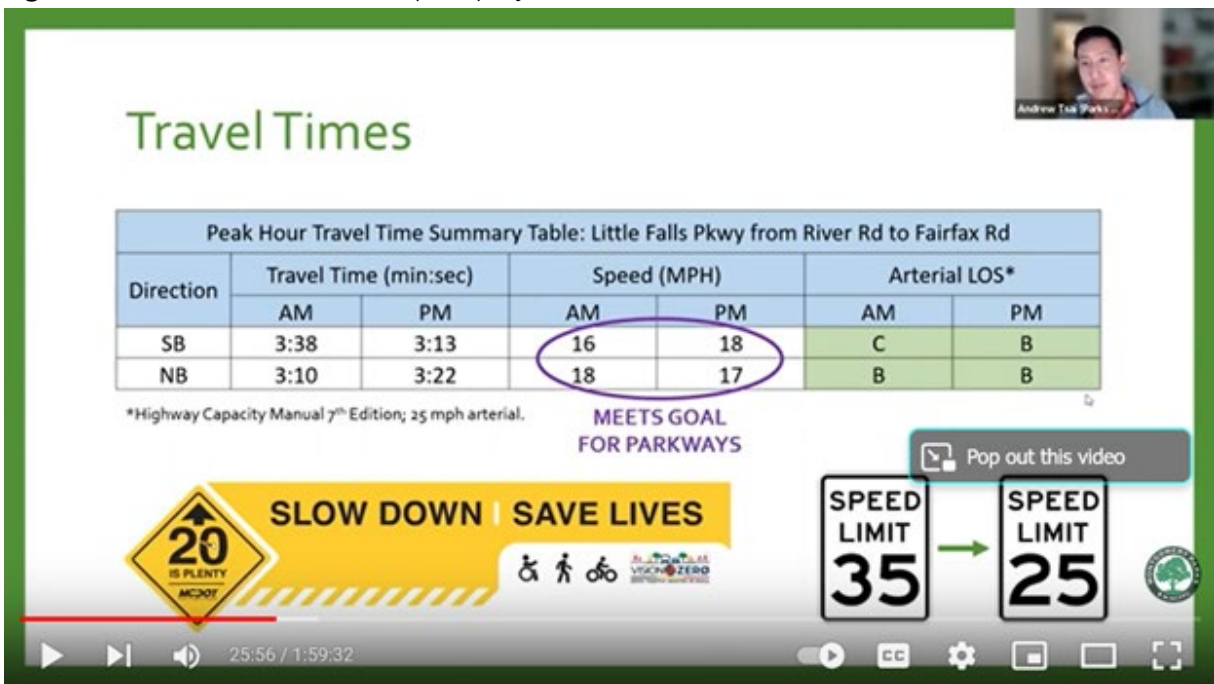


Figure 3. Travel times at the LFP pilot project.

Sincerely,
 Holly Goyert, 5304 Ventnor Rd., Bethesda, MD 20816*
 Daniel P. Dozier, 4550 N. Park Ave. #501, Chevy Chase, MD 20815
 Alexander A. Ferguson, 5105 Allan Road, Bethesda, MD 20816
 Emma Hersh, 4909 Crescent Street, Bethesda, MD 20816
 Eric Wassermann, 5225 Baltimore Ave, Bethesda, MD 20816
 Brian Hunt, 4911 Redford Road, Bethesda, MD 20816
 John C. Drake II, 5210 Little Falls Dr, Bethesda, MD 20816

Karen Thornton, 5005 Allan Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

Alan Bender, 5333 Saratoga Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Suzanne Richman, 4712 Overbrook Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

John Maslin, 5214 Little Falls Dr, Bethesda, MD 20816

Sarah Morse and David Kathan, 4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

*Please see attached for a PDF copy of this letter.

Jeff Zyontz, Chair, Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD 20902

mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

RE: Planning Board briefing and public hearing on Little Falls Parkway pilot project scheduled for Thursday, March 30, 2023

March 28th, 2023

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board:

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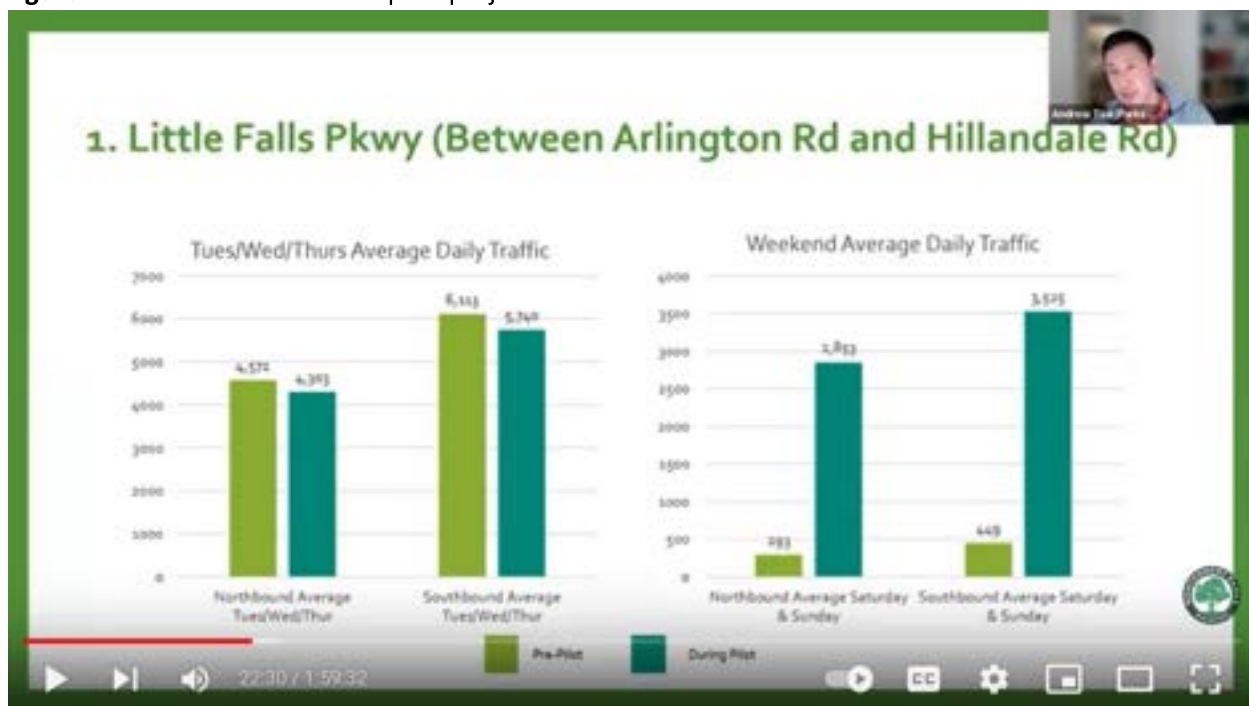


Figure 2. Traffic counts at the LFP pilot project.



Figure 3. Travel times at the LFP pilot project.

Sincerely,

Holly Goyert, 5304 Ventnor Rd., Bethesda, MD 20816

Daniel P. Dozier, 4550 N. Park Ave. #501, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Alexander A. Ferguson, 5105 Allan Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

Emma Hersh, 4909 Crescent Street, Bethesda, MD 20816

Eric Wassermann, 5225 Baltimore Ave, Bethesda, MD 20816

Brian Hunt, 4911 Redford Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

John C. Drake II, 5210 Little Falls Dr, Bethesda, MD 20816

Karen Thornton, 5005 Allan Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

Alan Bender, 5333 Saratoga Avenue, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Suzanne Richman, 4712 Overbrook Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

John Maslin, 5214 Little Falls Dr, Bethesda, MD 20816

Sarah Morse and David Kathan, 4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Jane Gomes, 5300 Wakefield Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Irene Koerner](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 5:57:23 PM

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

Stop messing around with Little Falls Parkway. Return it to 2 driving lanes in each direction with pedestrian and bike lanes on far right side of road.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone
Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: [Alison Gillespie](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: My testimony in favor of the linnear park and two lanes for Little Falls
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 6:27:49 PM
Attachments: [Little Falls testimony Alison Gillespie \(1\).pdf](#)

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Here is my testimony for Thursday, March 30.

Thanks.

Alison Gillespie

I am here tonight to support the changes to Little Falls Parkway, the reconfiguration of the road from four lanes to two lanes, and the creation of a new linear park.

I want to tell you a little bit about myself so that the reasons for my support for this project are clear.

There were no neighborhood parks where I grew up in Baltimore County. The idea was that you had a yard, and you didn't need parks. For my parents and a lot of their age cohort, parks were associated with bums and dirty things, and poor people – as depression babies my parents believed that private yards would keep us safe. We were, instead, bored as hell and stifled as kids.

I am not a very good bike rider because of that. I only began really riding when I was about to turn 50 a few years ago and I wanted to get in shape and overcome some fears I had about riding. I am not fast. My bike is “just okay.” I love it, but I am seriously not cool on my bike.

But I love riding through Bethesda to get to a lot of things that I like doing. There are great trails that connect to things all over the county.

I think there is so much there that make Bethesda livable and wonderful and I often come to meet friends, shop, and eat at restaurants. I am glad to see the high rise buildings going up so close to Metro. I love the changes happening to the area and I welcome all the new housing to our county. But wow, those parks are getting crowded!

This new linear park potentially provides new much needed recreation space in a crowded area. It will also allow the Capital Crescent Trail to function better because it will take pressure off of that trail for those that don't just want to move fast – so those who are handicapped, or less mobile due to age, or those who simply want more space for enjoying quiet respite. And for dorky bike riders like me who really need safe bike lanes.

There are some things that could be tweaked in this proposal – but the lane configuration should stay two lanes. Two lanes makes it safer to drive in a car there. It also makes it safer for riding a bike. And the dorky bike rider in me is really appreciative.

I very much supported Thrive 2050. If we are going to adhere to the principles of Thrive 2050 – and I believe that's important since the council voted unanimously to approve it and it is now the guiding document for our county – then we must think carefully about creating whole communities. It isn't enough to just build more housing. We need to create safe places to walk, to ride bikes, to exercise, to play, and to socialize.

Please vote to support two lanes on Little Falls instead of four and for this new linear park. Thanks for your time and attention.

Alison Gillespie 1826 Brisbane Court, Silver Spring, MD 20902

From: [Julia Steinberg](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 6:34:45 PM

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

Hearing Date: Thursday March 30; 5:30 pm
Item: Traffic Data on Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Mailing Address: 5109 Saratoga Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20816

To the Montgomery Parks Planning Board,

As a frequent cyclist on the Little Falls Parkway, I liked the way the road was laid out before the changes. What I would really like is a barrier next to the shoulders of the Parkway on each side, with widening of the shoulder, continuous from River Road to Bradley Blvd. The part that I ride on the most is from Dorset Avenue to River Road, and I am using the shoulders. I think this route is still safer than using the new bike lanes on River Road with so many cars exiting and entering from businesses. The original layout with a tree barrier for cars going in opposite directions is also safer for motorists.

My observations are that most pedestrians and cyclists continue to use the Capital Crescent Trail rather than the new lanes on the Parkway. In addition, when I enter the parkway from a road such as Hillandale or Bradley Blvd, I am disappointed that the access to the new lanes is blocked by barriers and out of the way or difficult to access. Cyclists are using the full lane as marked of Little Falls between Bradley Blvd. and, approximately the parking lot before Arlington Road. The path on the west side, where the new lanes direct cyclists, is in poor condition, and people don't want to ride on it—including myself.

Thank you,
Julia Steinberg

From: [Patricia Johnson](#)
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](#)
Subject: Item#12: Little Falls Pilot Project, Public Hearing, March 30th 5:30pm
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:10:04 PM
Attachments: [Little Falls Parkway Testimony re Fire and Rescue.pdf](#)
[Letter from Chief Jones Little Falls Parkway.pdf](#)

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Please find enclosed my testimony for Item #12 and attached is a letter from Asst. Fire Chief Jones.

Item# 12 Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

TO: Members of the Planning Board

A February 17th article in the Washington Post about the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project included an interview with Charles Bailey, the operations division chief for MFRS, who said: *"If there were some demonstrable impact to safety then I would be throwing up red flags in the background, and I just don't see them."*

I was able to speak to Chief Bailey shortly after the article was published. I asked him if he knew where this small piece of bollard-filled, jersey-walled roadway was and if he had actually driven it. His reply was *"Sure, it just has a lot of speed bumps on it, what's the problem?"* I asked if he was referring to the Parkway between Massachusetts Avenue and River Road, and he said *"Yes, of course, what are you referring to?"* I told him that the piece of road in question was between Dorset and Arlington Road north of River Road. Chief Bailey admitted that he wasn't familiar with that area of roadway when he made the statement to the Post. I told him that I had reports from MFRS personnel at both Fire Station 6 at Bradley/Wisconsin and personnel at the Glen Echo Fire Station that there was a problem with this roadway. It was too narrow, too circuitous and there was no area to pull off to let emergency vehicles through. I told him that I had an ambulance behind me when traveling south from Arlington Road to Dorset and couldn't pull over to let the vehicle pass until I got to Dorset Ave. I asked him to drive that 0.4 of a mile and see for himself.

Chief Bailey drove the Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Ave. on March 8th. By coincidence I happened to be crossing Little Falls to go on Dorset Ave the afternoon of March 8th and saw an accident in progress. There was a woman lying on the parkway path to the right of the intersection. Fire personnel were on the scene. There was a Fire Chief's SUV parked diagonally on the grass and an ambulance stopped in the roadway. EMT's were bringing in a stretcher and there was a Fire Truck heading north on Little Falls coming from River Road. The fire vehicles were scattered at odd angles on the roadway. There was nowhere to pull off because of the bollards and sharp turn lane. I heard later that Chief Bailey just happened to be the first one on the scene and called in the ambulance from Bethesda and the larger truck from Glen Echo. A woman had broken her leg when she tripped on the untrimmed roots of an old tree on the Parkway.

Chief Bailey called me back that afternoon and spoke to my husband. He said "Tell your wife that she has a point. I am going to talk to my chiefs about this". I spoke to the Chief later and I asked him about the safety of MCFRS to navigate this stretch of road, but he said, *"I am not a traffic /safety expert, so I cannot comment."* He would not testify. I do know what I observed. There is no room to pull emergency vehicles over to get to victims. The bigger vehicle came from Glen Echo using the wider lanes south of Dorset.

Also, I have observed hook and ladder trucks coming through residential neighborhoods to reach River Road instead of taking the Parkway. That stretch of Parkway is too narrow for the big rigs, and ambulances can get held up by traffic in front of them. It can cost precious time.

I also submit to you a letter from Fire Chief Adam Jones, Assistant Chief of the Safety Section for MCFRS. Asst. Chief Jones actually visited the area. He analyzed the current crossing at the CCT, and identified the following hazards and concerns: #1. The removal of the median strip leaves users no place of refuge as they cross. #2. The different vehicle heights, crossing pedestrians and cyclists create blind spots. #3. The narrowed street configuration prior to the crossing may cause emergency response vehicles to avoid the area and to use neighborhood streets to reach an accident more quickly.

I urge all of you to drive this stretch of road as configured, before you vote. It is narrow and dangerous. Open the Parkway to four lanes and reinstate the median for safe crossing at the CCT.

The letter from Asst. Chief Adam Jones is attached to this submission.

Sincerely,
Patricia Depuy Johnson
5301 Oakland Road
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815
Cell#3019225382



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Scott E. Goldstein
Fire Chief

3/16/2023

Good Afternoon,

This letter is in regard to a concern brought to me by residents whom reside in the neighborhood area of Little Falls Parkway. Their specific concern is the newly constructed bike and pedestrian crossing area on Little Falls between Arlington Rd and Hillendale Rd. I was contacted because I am the Assistant Chief of the Safety Section for Montgomery County Fire and Rescue and I was asked to analyze the current crossing configuration for any hazards or concerns.

I have visited the area and watched multiple videos of that crossing and these are what I see as potential Hazards or concerns.

- The removal of the median strip that was previously in place between the 2 lanes of traffic exposes pedestrians and cyclists to an opposing traffic pattern. This leaves users no place of refuge as they cross. The previous configuration allowed people who used the crossing to focus on one vehicle at a time from a single direction.
- The different heights of vehicles that pass through the crossing create a situation where there is dynamic or constantly changing blind spots. These blind spots effect the motorists, the cyclists, and the pedestrian traffic equally. The intermittent line of sight combined with the opposing vehicle traffic can be problematic.
- With the recent adaptation of a narrowed street configuration prior to the crossing there is potential for emergency response vehicles to avoid that area during heavily congested hours of the day. This could result in emergency vehicles as well as civilian commuter traffic utilizing neighborhood streets to reach their destinations in the quickest way possible.

Health & Wellness Section

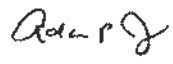
100 Edison Park Drive, 2nd Floor • Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878-3204
240-777-2219 • 240-777-0725 TTY • 240-777-2443 FAX
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

MCFRS drivers are trained professionals and have multiple hours of training on responding to emergencies in a safe and timely manner. Conversely, it is not a good practice for commuters, who we know are already distracted to navigate through residential neighborhoods trying to circumvent traffic slowdowns.

I do realize there are multiple issues associated with traffic movement and pedestrian crossing. At a quick glance, it would seem that a pedestrian bridge would alleviate many of these issues. However, I do realize there are many factors that go into making these complex decisions.

Thank you for taking the time to ask the Safety Section of Montgomery County Fire and Rescue to weigh in on this important community concern. Please understand MCFRS will always respond to the call of the community in a timely, safe, and professional manner. If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me directly.

Respectfully,

Adam P. Jones 
Assistant Chief
Occupational Health and Safety
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
14935B Southlawn Lane, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
240-586-0989



100 Edison Park Drive, 2nd Floor • Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878-3204
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montgomerycountymd.gov/311



301-251-4850 TTY

From: [David Forman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights for the March 30 Planning Board Hearing on Little Falls Parkway
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:33:31 PM

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

Testimony of the Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights for the March 30 Planning Board Hearing on Little Falls Parkway, submitted March 28, 2023

Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (“CCCFH”) is a coalition of neighborhood organizations from 19 communities in and around the Friendship Heights area representing about 20,000 Montgomery County residents. Our neighborhoods immediately surround Little Falls Parkway, and we are the people most directly dependent on and affected by that road. Therefore, the Planning Board should give serious consideration and weight to our views on this issue. Although not unanimous, there is widespread opposition in our communities to the closing of Little Falls Parkway and the planned “linear park.” We have repeatedly expressed our concerns, questions, and opposition to this project. An example is our letter to the Parks Department (“Parks”) on November 28, 2022, which is reproduced at the end of this testimony. The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights is opposed to the current road configuration and opposed to the proposed linear park that is the reason for it.

I. The Current Road Configuration Should Not Be “Permanent”

There is a question whether Parks is asking the Planning Board to vote on a permanent road configuration for Little Falls Parkway or whether it seeks interim approval so that the pilot project for a linear park can be tested. Originally the agenda header was a staff recommendation that the Planning Board should approve “the permanent configuration of two opposing drive lanes along Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue, with future study of repurposing removed travel lanes.” More recently a strikethrough appeared over the word “permanent,” possibly implying that the request for permanence was removed. However, “permanent” appears prominently in the recently posted MCPB Agenda - Little Falls Parkway PB Report March 2023 (Page 36: “Staff recommends making the pilot project permanent, with a few modifications to further improve traffic efficiency and safety.” See also page 1: “STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE the long-term configuration of two opposing drive lanes along Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue.” [“long-term” implies permanence.]) Parks has not responded to requests to clarify this discrepancy. In any event, whether or not the word “permanent” appears, permanence of the road configuration is intended.

The CCCFH is **opposed** to the current road configuration and opposed to the repurposing of the closed lanes. But if the Board

approves this configuration so that the proposed linear park can be given a pilot trial, we implore you **not to designate that configuration as “permanent.”** Instead, Parks should be expressly forbidden from making physical changes in the removed travel lanes that would make their restoration as a roadway inordinately difficult or expensive. Fairness and logic require that current configuration should not now be made unalterably permanent.

First, making the current configuration as permanent is **premature**. The **only** justification for closing the removed travel lanes is to permit a park project. Little Falls Parkway is the major and only convenient road between Massachusetts Avenue and downtown Bethesda. For years it was a safe, well running, and beautiful road. When the covid-19 pandemic forced many people to stay home, Parks closed Little Falls Parkway so that the public could use it for bicycling and walking. After brief initial interest, very few people used the closed roadway, while opposition grew to the great inconvenience caused by the road closing. Strong public opposition continued when the road closing was reduced to weekends and holidays. The current configuration (allowing traffic on 2 lanes while reserving the 2 remaining lanes for recreation) was proposed as a compromise.

With the current road configuration Parks wants to try a pilot project to make a linear park. Thus, permanence for the current configuration is premature because the linear park pilot may fail, leaving us with a diminished roadway having an adjacent unused stretch of

closed road. Could that park be a failure? If judged fairly, failure is quite possible. It is in the wrong place for its proposed uses and is not needed. It is adjacent to the Capitol Crescent Trail which provides wonderful bicycling and walking, is adjacent to the 14-acre Norwood Park which has spacious and beautiful park space, and is near other parks and trails as well. Because of the much better alternatives, hardly anyone currently uses the removed travel lanes of the Little Falls Parkway for recreation.

Parks appears to be desperately trying to find some way to use the deserted lanes as a park, proposing giant chessmen, cornhole games, food trucks, musical events (adjacent to a constantly busy roadway), etc. Some of these ideas are almost ludicrous and are out of touch with the physical location, the demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods, the lack of parking, and the lack of enthusiasm for these activities. So it is quite conceivable that in spite of the best efforts of the Parks Department this park will not be a success. The project should be tied to objective measures of success or failure. If the removed roadway is a failure as a recreational space, there would be no reason for the current traffic configuration to be permanently retained. Retaining the current road configuration in order to evaluate a potential park should not be a *de facto* approval of the configuration forever.

Another reason that the current configuration should not be permanent is that there is widespread local opposition by the people

most affected by the project, the neighbors living close to Little Falls Parkway and persons highly dependent on the parkway for their transportation needs. This is reflected, for example, in the 3,213 residents who have signed a petition (as of 3/28/2023) opposing the current configuration. <https://chng.it/4dXCVh2SDv> Please also see the many letters from the affected communities and individuals. Contrary to repeated contentions by the Parks Department, this specific proposed park is not “popular.” Many neighbors have independently commented that they never see anyone using the removed lanes. Parks dismisses these numerous reports as anecdotal; whether the removed roadway is used by bikers and walkers could best be resolved by new accurate counts.

Opponents of the current configuration include many who would like to see the original 4-lane configuration restored. The original configuration (2 lanes in each direction separated by a wide median and with shoulders) was clearly safer than the current configuration (one narrow lane in each direction facing each other with no median and no possibility to pull off the road in an emergency). The option to restore the original configuration should be available.

A decision about the configuration is also premature because there has been inadequate public input and review of the facts. It appears that Parks had opportunities to present its arguments to the Planning Board staff, since the public listing of this meeting is a “Staff Recommendation.” But has the large volume of questions, concerns,

and complaints that the public submitted to Parks also been fully considered? The Board's decision will depend in great part on traffic data from the Parks that is incomplete, poorly presented, and confusing. Citizens groups will be bringing traffic engineers who will challenge the safety of the current road configuration and other aspects of the Parks studies. There has not been enough opportunity for analysis of this data to make an irreversible decision.

In summary, it would be premature to make the current road configuration "permanent."

II. CCCFH Opposes the Current Road Configuration and The Proposed Linear Park

The CCCFH opposes the current road configuration and the proposed park which is the reason for this configuration. Some reasons for our opposition were stated in several submissions to Parks. One such letter, sent on November 28, 2022, is repeated here:

Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights

November 28, 2022

Dear Members of the Parks Department and the County Council:

The Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights (CCCFH) is a coalition of 19 community organizations with approximately 20,000 residents. We are writing to express our concerns about the ongoing changes to Little Falls Parkway (LFP). Why is the Parks Department continuing to transform Little Falls Parkway into a linear park when the

communities surrounding the Parkway were never asked if this was a needed or wanted amenity? There are important factors that should be examined before more changes to the Parkway are implemented.

1. Traffic: Little Falls Parkway is a main vehicular artery for residents in communities in SW Montgomery County and

Northwest DC to get to downtown Bethesda. These changes narrow the Parkway from 4 lanes to 2 lanes of traffic from Dorset to Arlington Road. The “road diet” has been instated without consideration of the additional future density from significant development in both Westbard as well as the downtown Bethesda area. The Parks Department’s website shows future plans to continue the 2-lane configuration all the way to River Road. Vehicular traffic studies by the Parks Department appear to have been inaccurate and confusing. Requests for more transparent statistics have not been forthcoming. The numbers of pedestrians and bikers recorded that supposedly used the Parkway on weekends, when it was closed until June 2022, do not compute with what community members observed and documented. The counts for both vehicles and pedestrians/bikers are unreliable because there is no baseline measurement. Few people were on the closed Parkway after the first months of Covid had passed. Because of the road restriction, vehicular traffic has been detouring through neighborhoods which have no sidewalks and significant numbers of walkers and bikers that prefer to walk where there is tree canopy. Michael Paylor of MCDOT and Parks Director, Mike Riley have both publicly acknowledged that closing

off one lane in each direction of LFP has resulted in cut through traffic in neighboring communities like Kenwood, Somerset, and Kenwood Forest II. Traffic has also increased on Goldsboro Road between River Road and Bradley Boulevard.

2. Safety: There are safety issues that should be examined closely.

The new configuration and electronic signage are confusing. There have been numerous “near miss” head-on collision situations caused by the changes that take the median strip out of the roadway and now have north and south lanes running side by side. There are also new challenges to bicyclists and pedestrians crossing the reconfigured lanes. Past traffic data shows all pedestrian accidents between River Road and Arlington Road have occurred at intersections. Now there are new traffic backups as cars make way for pedestrians and bicyclists using the Capital Crescent Trail. Someone is going to get hurt. This is not vision zero compliant.

3. Fire and Rescue: Important safety issues have been openly discussed by the Bethesda and Glen Echo Fire Departments who observe that the narrowed lanes create an impediment to reaching a fire or accident quickly and safely. Also, with added density in progress, this situation will get worse.

4. Environment: Does the creation of this linear park meet the Parks Department’s goal of creating natural parks? It is based on the need for green space but will it actually be green? This linear park, which is less than 1/2 a mile, calls for giant chess sets, cornhole games,

benches, ping pong, and picnic tables. The idea is to create an “event space” with food trucks and “acoustic happenings.” Commercial vehicles are not allowed on LFP. People will drive to events and where will they park? Who will maintain and secure the games, benches, and picnic tables? Will there be sanitary amenities like porta potties? Who will clean up? Little Falls Parkway has been designated a flyway for migrating songbirds. How will acoustic events, food trucks, and games impact the nature that now exists? The surrounding communities have not received answers to these questions.

5. This linear park is not needed nor has it been requested.

There is an abundance of green space surrounding this sliver of LFP which is located within the Little Falls Valley Stream Park. This small area has large swaths of green space and trails on both sides of the roadway. On the west side of LFP is the Capital Crescent Trail and Railroad Park. Further down the Capital Crescent Trail is Potter Park. Communities on the east side of the Parkway have a trail that runs from Norwood Park to Dorset Avenue. The website from the Parks Department erroneously states that this park will be “in the heart of downtown Bethesda”. This park is in a residential area, located 2.5 miles from downtown Bethesda. By contrast: there are 15 park and open space projects within the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) that have asked for funding from the Parks Department to offset the 30,000,000 sq.ft. of development that is existing, approved, or planned in the BOZ. Money should be spent there or in other parts of the county that are

asking for green space and told that there are no funds. This location is not within the Equity Focus Area as defined in Thrive Montgomery 2050.

6. Cost: How much is this costing us, the taxpayers? Citizens have repeatedly asked for an accounting as to how much the continued changes to this small stretch of road are costing the County and its taxpayers. We have never received an accounting as to costs over the last 3 years of bollards being moved on a monthly basis, the gates that were constructed, installed, opened and closed twice weekly, the orange cones and barrels that were moved weekly by crews, the changing electronic signs. What is the cost of the traffic studies cited with information that has been confusing and unclear? How much is the cost for the final phase, which includes design, new hardscape, games, tables, and benches?

7. Problems: The taxpayers' money should be spent cleaning up the actual natural problems on Little Falls Parkway. The Capital Crescent Trail is used by tens of thousands. The trail needs to be widened and the shoulders reinforced. Invasive vines which threaten the Parkway itself should be cleared. Dead trees and fallen trunks should be removed. The dead foliage is a danger to those that use the trail. The stream that runs through should be naturalized.

8. Compliance: The Parks Department has not been in compliance with the guidelines implemented by the Capper-Crampton Act of 1930 when this Parkway was designated by the Federal Government. The National Capital Planning Commission requires a

review process before any major changes to the roadways are made. The Parks Department has determined that narrowing the roadway from four lanes to two is not a “major” change. Community members think otherwise. Based on its actions to date, the Parks Department intends to delay all the steps in the review process until June 2023. By that time, when Parks will finally ask for community input, the hardscape will be finished and communities will not have any influence as to the impact of the new traffic lanes or park. It will be a done deal.

9. Lose-lose: Michael Riley, the Director of the Parks Department has described the development of Little Falls Linear Park as a “win-win” situation. This analysis is based on the false proposition that the only alternative is to close the Parkway. But from the surrounding communities’ perspective this is a lose-lose situation. **Lose:**

Neighborhoods get an unwanted amenity in an area that already has an abundance of parkland. **Lose:** Surrounding neighborhoods lose a well used scenic stretch of roadway that is a vital commuter route between the two urbanized areas of Westbard and Bethesda. Neighborhoods get unsafe traffic with cut-through commuters looking for the fastest way to get from Massachusetts Avenue to downtown Bethesda and vice versa. Please take note of our valid concerns. Stop the continuing work on Little Falls Parkway until nearby communities can have an open hearing led by the Montgomery County Parks Department. The Parks Department should respond to our questions and concerns with detailed verifiable data. We need an in-depth discussion of safety issues,

environmental studies, traffic impacts, and a transparent financial accounting for this park, which is not asked for nor needed.

CCCFH website: www.cccfhmd.org

Representing the Communities of Brookdale, Chevy Chase Village, Chevy Chase West, Drummond, 4800 Chevy Chase Drive Condominium, Kenwood, Kenwood Condominium, Kenwood Forest II, Kenwood House Cooperative, Little Falls Place, Somerset, Somerset House Condominiums, Springfield, Sumner Citizens Association, Village of Friendship Heights, Westbard Mews, Westmoreland, Westwood Mews, and Wood Acres

David S. Forman
Chair, Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
5344 Falmouth Road
Bethesda, MD 20816
cell: (202) 294-1426

From: [Patricia Johnson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item #12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project /Hearing March 30, 2022 5:30
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:46:02 PM

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

Please be aware of this petition:

<https://chnng.it/4xqrGB6mB>

From: [Lori Bowes](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway comment
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 8:47:11 PM

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

I write to support two lanes on Little Falls Parkway.

This change from four lanes to two is consistent with recommendations in the county's recently passed general plan, [Thrive 2050](#), the [Vision Zero 2030 Action Plan](#), the [Bicycle Master Plan](#), and the [Westbard Sector Plan](#), which endorsed two lanes of traffic on Little Falls Parkway, as it currently is from River Road to Massachusetts Avenue.

Seems like crashes are an issue
too: <https://mobile.twitter.com/actfortransit/status/1586375034913714177>

Thanks,
Lori Bowes
8106 Roanoke Ave, Takoma Park MD 20912

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Teresa Sparklin](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Linear Park Testimony
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:06:19 PM

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

Hearing Date: 3/30/2023

Topic: Little Falls Parkway Linear Park

To the Chair of the Planning Board,

I am writing today to express my support for the redesign of Little Falls Parkway and hope that you approve the plans presented to you by the Montgomery County Parks Department.

I live in the Kenwood Condominiums, which is at the corner of Little Falls and River Road. My family and my community would be prime users of the planned park. Many of the parks near our building are within other neighborhoods, this park would be one of the closest to our building.

During the pandemic, my husband and I used the road constantly when it was closed. The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) was often packed, so having more space on the road was welcomed! We were disappointed when the road was fully reopened, the CCT was a bit less congested, but still there were a lot of people and high speed bikers on the trail. So instead of walking the trail, we often walked through other neighborhoods since there were still a lot of people and high speed bikers on the trail. The surrounding neighborhoods do not have sidewalks so this isn't always the safest option.

We'd love to have a park nearby where we can walk, play, and relax in the community. As residents of a multi-family building, space is a premium. We have a promenade where residents can enjoy some outside space, but some variety would be ideal. A place people can escape to and interact with people in our larger community is never a bad thing. We are expecting our first child and this park would be perfect for us as it is close by and easily accessible.

I think the compromise of having a park as well as the connector road between River Road and Bethesda was a better plan than the complete shut down of the road. Traffic is still able to get through, and there is still the ability for people to enjoy a new park.

I attended a meeting in the last couple months where I heard some Friendship Heights adjacent community members say some pretty privileged things in the name of "equity" and I know these voices are often the loudest in the room. Some of these included that this area has a "mean income of \$200K", "most people have backyards", and "a lot of people belong to private clubs," all which meant to them that there is no need for new parks. These things were used as a reason as to why people in a more wealthy part of the county don't need parks. They didn't actually believe that it was more equitable to build parks in other parts of the community that might have less personal green space; they just thought these reasons could be used as a way to oppose the building of the park, without just seeming contrary to what

Montgomery County Parks is interested in doing. I want to make sure that these people with the loudest voice, are not the voice of everyone, hence why I am writing this testimony which I hope you consider.

I hope that the Parks Department is able to continue forward with implementing the plan for the Little Falls Parkway linear park with the approval of the Planning Board

Thanks for all the work that you do to make our community a better place!

Teresa Sparklin
5101 River Road, apt 1504 Bethesda, MD 20816

From: jennysuedailey@aol.com
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Parks and Trails Inventory - Background Information for March 30th Testimony
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:07:48 PM
Attachments: [Testimony of Jenny Sue Dunner.docx](#)

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

Chairman Zyontz and Commissioners,

Please find my testimony in the attached document.

Thank you.

Best,

Jenny Sue Dunner

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

From: jennysuedailey@aol.com
To: jeff.zyontz@mncppc-mc.org <jeff.zyontz@mncppc-mc.org>; roberto.pinero@mncppc-mc.org <roberto.pinero@mncppc-mc.org>; shawn.bartley@mncppc-mc.org <shawn.bartley@mncppc-mc.org>; james.hedrick@mncppc-mc.org <james.hedrick@mncppc-mc.org>; mitra.pedoeem@mncppc-mc.org <mitra.pedoeem@mncppc-mc.org>; mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Sent: Sun, Mar 26, 2023 6:15 pm
Subject: Parks and Trails Inventory - Background Information for March 30th Testimony

Chairman Zyontz and Commissioners,

I am sending an inventory of the recreational and trail sites within the Little Falls Parkway along with my personal comments that describe current opportunities for recreation and walking in this area. I am including a link to Google Maps of this area to give you a good idea of how close the Parks and Trails are to each other. Please take a look as you go through the inventory I listed.

I am aware that the hearing on March 30th is focused on Little Falls Parkway, however, your decision in this matter is critically connected to the proposed linear park there.

I am a supporter of parks and green space for all County residents, but I believe money should be spent where it is needed and beneficial to the neighborhoods. My testimony on Thursday will include my recommendation for your consideration, which is a greatly needed park in another part of our area.

The County Government has adopted a policy of spending money and viewing projects with a concern for equity. The proposed linear park project is not needed or wanted in this area, and it does not pass the test for any formula for equity.

The residents want the Parkway returned to four lanes with the safety

configuration at the crosswalk.

Thank you.

Jenny Sue Dunner
5315. Dorset Ave,
Chevy Chase, MD

<https://www.google.com/maps/@38.9753404,-77.1024105,284m/data=!3m1!1e3>

Recreational and Trail Sites:

1. Norwood Park is the largest park in our area and is easily reached by the Citizens from a number of communities.

The Park is 17.13 acres and includes the following: 2 playgrounds, 5 tennis courts, lighted basketball courts, 2 softball fields, a soccer/football overlay field. There are two buildings in the Park. One is for birthday parties and special events and the other building is currently leased by Norwood Daycare. The park was acquired in 1937.

A personal note. My two daughters spent many happy hours in this Park. One not so happy when one of my daughters fractured her arm there. I have not been to the Park in years, however, I understand it is in serious need of maintenance. This is a wonderful park used by so many residents, so Parks spending money here would be quite beneficial and appreciated.

2. Little Falls Park Trail starts at Dorset Ave and Little Falls Parkway and is parallel to the Parkway. When approaching Hillandale Road, the Trail curves to the right and is parallel to Hillandale until just past the entrance to the swimming pool that is on the opposite side of the road. Past that point, the Trail separates and splits in two directions. The Trail goes to the left to Willett Parkway and to the right to Norwood Park.

I have lived in the area for 60 years, and I have always enjoyed seeing someone sitting on the bench on a pleasant day, often with a dog resting or someone just resting and watching the Parkway. The Trail is paved and in need of serious maintenance in several areas; another bench or two would be a welcome addition.

3. Little Falls Stream Valley Park. This Park is identified as being in the 160 acre Little Falls Stream Valley that goes from northern Fairfax Road to MacArthur Blvd. There is a path from the overflow parking lot just past Arlington Road on Little Falls Parkway. One may see the tops of equipment on the children's playground from Arlington Road.

I understand there are two soccer fields in this park. MSI soccer teams have used the fields for practice. This park area is relatively secluded with Arlington Road on one side with a high wall, the parking lot with a fairly high wall of mud, trees and overgrown weeds and the Fairfax Court apartments and town houses surrounding the rest of the area.

It is a wonderful place for children living nearby, except that I understand the fields can become very muddy, and I am sure the area could use some maintenance.

4. Town of Somerset Park. One of the boundaries of The Town of Somerset is alongside the Little Falls Parkway from River Road to about halfway up to

Hillandale Rd. The Town has tennis courts, a swimming pool with a building for changing as well as a park. One of the access points to the park is a trail past the swimming pool that eventually leads to Wisconsin Ave. Many of the residents use the Trail to go to Friendship Heights or just for walking in a pleasant, wooded area. The Somerset Park is for the residents of Somerset and the Town is responsible for maintenance. Recently the Trail was named for a long-time former member of the Town Council - Marnie Shaul.

5. Trail Park (also known as Railroad Park) starts at Dorset Avenue and Kennedy Drive and is parallel to the Capital Crescent Trail just a few yards away. There is an impressive jungle gym for children and a lot of green space for kicking a ball around. Many children play in this park along. There is a serious need for more benches given the number of folks who use the area.

6. Little Falls Public Swimming Pool. The pool is on the corner of Hillandale and Little Falls Parkway. As you can imagine, it is very popular in the summer months. There is a parking lot on Little Falls Parkway just past the intersection of the Parkway and Arlington Road. It is full during the summer, especially when there are swim meets held at the pool.

7. Capital Crescent Trail. I think this fine Trail speaks for itself. As a member of the Trail Board, I feel strongly that there should be a clearance of several feet on each side of the Trail and the invasive plants in order for people to be able to safely step aside.

8. Potter Park by the Trail on River Road. This is my favorite. This Park is a wonderful location for all users of the recreational Trail to stop for a rest or with young children to stop and go across the street to McDonald's for lunch or a snack or just picnic in the Park. Whole Foods is on the same side as the Park and is just steps away.

9. Just slightly out of the immediate area is the Edgemoor Park of 2.5 acres. The community of Edgemoor is just on the other side of Bradley Blvd. as one goes north.

10. Willard Avenue Park is on the corner of Willard Ave. and River Road. This Park has access from River Road and is over 9 acres. There is a children's play area and a Trail that goes into the Town of Somerset since Somerset is one of the borders. Many citizens in the Willard Ave. area and Brookdale community as well as some from the apartments in Friendship Heights use this walking Trail.

Testimony of Jenny Sue Dunner
March 30, 2023

Good evening. My name is Jenny Sue Dunner, and my address is 5315 Dorset Avenue, Chevy Chase MD.

I am aware that this hearing is focused on the proposed lane reduction of Little Falls Parkway. My comments are directed towards the proposed linear park, which is Park's goal if the lanes are permanently reduced.

I am a supporter of parks and green space for all County residents, but I believe money should be spent where it is needed, where it is wanted, and where it is beneficial to the neighborhoods.

The proposed linear park is not needed or wanted by thousands of residents that live near Little Falls Parkway. There are numerous playgrounds, trails and walking areas, all very close to Little Falls Parkway. These many areas offer ample recreational activities for our residents and their children, and they are safe and they don't disrupt other aspects of our community, like traffic and emergency services.

The County Government has adopted a policy of spending money and viewing projects with a concern for equity. The proposed linear park does not pass any test for equity since there are other areas in our County with less or no convenient recreational options.

Close to Little Falls Parkway and much more in need of green space is the Westbard area, which runs adjacent to the Willett Branch and which is considered the primary community asset.

The Sector Plan recommends the naturalization of the Willett Branch, and a Greenway alongside the stream that would start at Ridgefield Rd. and connect to the Capital Crescent Trail would be wonderful. Moreover, when construction is complete there, Westbard will have approximately 100 townhouses and 165 multi-family units in new development, as well as a new 155 bed nursing facility on the corner of Ridgefield and Westbard.

In addition to the many new residents in and near the Westbard development, the projection of development in Bethesda is 8000 additional residential units. Why aren't we focusing on the inevitable future traffic increase on Little Falls Parkway? Why aren't we focusing on developing pocket parks or more green space among the many high-rise buildings in Bethesda?

It is critical that we consider the many more pressing issues, especially safety and traffic issues, and it is critical that a more democratic process is used as we go forward.

Thank you.

From: [Fred Ducca](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony - March 30 meeting on Little Falls Parkway
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:19:08 PM
Attachments: [Questions related to Little Falls Parkway.docx](#)

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

Frederick W. Ducca, Ph.D.

My Background: Ph.D. in Transportation from the University of Pennsylvania, 40 years experience at the Federal Highway Administration and the University of Maryland in traffic modeling and traffic analysis. I am a consultant to the Kenwood Citizens Association and the Sumner Homeowners Association.

Analysis of Little Falls Parkway (LFP)

The analysis presented by Park and Planning for LFP has a faulty data collection effort which neither supports nor opposes the decision to narrow LFP from two lanes in each direction to one lane. The detail below presents the inadequacy of the analysis and what can be done to fix it:

1. **Growth Projections** – The Westbard development and growth in Bethesda will contribute significantly to growth in traffic. In addition Montgomery County has designated River Road a priority area for new development, implying much growth. In what year will this growth affect future traffic on Little Falls Parkway? At the present rate of growth, how much traffic will there be in 2025, 2030? Park and Planning Should estimate future growth in the area and factor that growth into any analysis.
2. **Simulation Models** – Park and Planning ran the Sim Traffic model to understand LFP but did not show results. Further, Sim Traffic was run for the present year but not for future years. Sim Traffic is appropriate to analyze intersections but can't easily analyze traffic in the neighborhoods or on local streets. The following questions should be answered to correct this. What is the coverage area of the models? What growth projections are assumed in the models? What future traffic is projected by the models and in what years? Where is this traffic? What is the impact on local streets? Present and future traffic conditions on the following streets should be identified: Dorset; Kennedy, Lawn and Brookside; Glenbrook; Goldsboro; River road; and Bradley Boulevard. The traffic conditions should cover both current and future years.
3. **Validation of Simulation Models** – How was the accuracy of the simulation models determined? Were they measured against traffic counts, queue lengths and queue duration? What growth projections were used for future year analysis? Growth projections should include impacts on LFP and local streets.
4. **Traffic Growth** - Park and Planning has stated that there is sufficient capacity to absorb additional traffic, up to 30%. Since the area is growing, by what year will the 30% increase occur? If traffic grows by 30%, will that generate cut through traffic into the neighborhoods? Has this been accounted for in the Park and Planning analysis?
5. **Traffic Decline** - Park and Planning has stated that traffic has been declining since 2016. While the traffic counts may show this, what is a substantive explanation? More teleworkers, covid, people working at home, etc.? How has covid played a role in this

decline?

6. **Covid Pandemic** – Measurements have shown that traffic declined across the nation during Covid. This was due in part to school closings, working from home, offices being closed and other factors. Since the end of covid restrictions traffic has increased. How was this change in traffic patterns factored into the Park and Planning traffic estimates during and after covid? Does Park and Planning's estimate that Little Falls Parkway can see a growth in traffic of 30% account for the influence of covid?

Frederick W. Ducca, Ph.D.

My Background: Ph.D. in Transportation from the University of Pennsylvania, 40 years experience at the Federal Highway Administration and the University of Maryland in traffic modeling and traffic analysis. I am a consultant to the Kenwood Citizens Association and the Sumner Homeowners Association.

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1. **Growth Projections** – The Westbard development and growth in Bethesda will contribute significantly to growth in traffic. In addition Montgomery County has designated River Road a priority area for new development, implying much growth. In what year will this growth affect future traffic on Little Falls Parkway? At the present rate of growth, how much traffic will there be in 2025, 2030? Park and Planning Should estimate future growth in the area and factor that growth into any analysis.
2. **Simulation Models** – Park and Planning ran the Sim Traffic model to understand LFP but did not show results. Further, Sim Traffic was run for the present year but not for future years. Sim Traffic is appropriate to analyze intersections but can't easily analyze traffic in the neighborhoods or on local streets. The following questions should be answered to correct this. What is the coverage area of the models? What growth projections are assumed in the models? What future traffic is projected by the models and in what years? Where is this traffic? What is the impact on local streets? Present and future traffic conditions on the following streets should be identified: Dorset; Kennedy, Lawn and Brookside; Glenbrook; Goldsboro; River road; and Bradley Boulevard. The traffic conditions should cover both current and future years.
3. **Validation of Simulation Models** – How was the accuracy of the simulation models determined? Were they measured against traffic counts, queue lengths and queue duration? What growth projections were used for future

year analysis? Growth projections should include impacts on LFP and local streets.

4. **Traffic Growth** - Park and Planning has stated that there is sufficient capacity to absorb additional traffic, up to 30%. Since the area is growing, by what year will the 30% increase occur? If traffic grows by 30%, will that generate cut through traffic into the neighborhoods? Has this been accounted for in the Park and Planning analysis?
5. **Traffic Decline** - Park and Planning has stated that traffic has been declining since 2016. While the traffic counts may show this, what is a substantive explanation? More teleworkers, covid, people working at home, etc.? How has covid played a role in this decline?
6. **Covid Pandemic** – Measurements have shown that traffic declined across the nation during Covid. This was due in part to school closings, working from home, offices being closed and other factors. Since the end of covid restrictions traffic has increased. How was this change in traffic patterns factored into the Park and Planning traffic estimates during and after covid? Does Park and Planning's estimate that Little Falls Parkway can see a growth in traffic of 30% account for the influence of covid?

From: [Heidi Powell](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project hearing 3/30/23
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 9:55:15 PM

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

Dear Chairman Zyontz and members of the planning board:

My husband and I moved into our house on Massachusetts Avenue in 1988. Actually, at the time, it was still my mom's house. Her parents had moved into their new home in 1941; she later inherited her childhood home. We raised our three children here and continue to enjoy all that our neighborhood has to offer, most notably easy access to the Little Falls Stream Valley Park and Capital Crescent Trail.

When Montgomery Parks launched an "Open Parkway" between Mass. Ave. and Arlington Rd. in April 2020, we took full advantage. Two of our children had returned home during the Covid lockdown, and we all welcomed the opportunity to get fresh air and exercise. We were disappointed when the Open Parkway was shortened to extend between River Road and Arlington Road, but we understood that the residents of the condos on Little Falls Parkway had a difficult time entering and exiting their property.

Since then, the Open Parkway keeps shrinking in order to accommodate the demands of residents who insist that they can't live without four lanes, though much of Little Falls Parkway was already two lanes.

I wholeheartedly support the goal of maintaining a safe and functioning road that is aligned with vision zero principles. Montgomery Planning and MCDOT traffic studies confirm that Little Falls Parkway functions well with two lanes. Since April 2020 more than 300,000 users have voted with their feet, roller blades, strollers, and bicycles. Please listen to those users. I would love to see a linear park and I would love to see the Open Parkway expanded to stretch between River Road and Arlington Road.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heidi Powell
5301 Massachusetts Ave.
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Christopher Danley](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 10:21:35 PM
Attachments: [Testimony.pdf](#)

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

Attached please find my written testimony for Item 12 of the March 30 hearing.

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Testimony of Christopher Danley

I am submitting this written testimony as a resident of the Kenwood neighborhood in Chevy Chase. I have read Parks' recommendation regarding Item 12: Briefing and Public Hearing: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project. On page 34 of the recommendation, Parks has one paragraph relating to "Decision Making Authority." Parks admits that its plans for Little Falls Parkway are "subject to review by the National Capital Planning Commission." However, Parks is being less than forthcoming. The National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) has **approval authority** for projects on land in Maryland purchased with Capper-Cramton funds, which includes Little Falls Parkway.

Accordingly, Parks is required to go through a comprehensive approval process before the National Capital Planning Commission in order to implement its proposed changes for Little Falls Parkway. A general overview of the approval process can be found on the National Capital Planning Commission's website: <https://www.ncpc.gov/review/overview/> This approval process includes: 1) a Pre-Submission Briefing; 2) Concept Review; 3) Preliminary Review; 4) Final Review; and 5) a public hearing.

NCPC authority to review and approve projects is not contingent on some arbitrary threshold that Parks has set for itself. Many other governmental entities have recognized NCPC's jurisdiction to approve their projects, whether large or small. The following is a non-exhaustive list of projects from 2014 that NCPC has required to undergo its approval process:

March 6, 2014 – Plans for new trail and sidewalk improvements at Naval Support Activity Bethesda

September 4, 2014 – Plans for a pocket park on Connecticut Avenue in DC

November 6, 2014 – Plans to relocate two golf holes and the restoration of a ball field at Armed Forces Retirement Home

November 5, 2015 – Plans for two temporary parking lots at Fort Belvoir

March 2, 2017 – Plans for extension of the Metropolitan Branch Trail at Fort Totten

April 6, 2017 – Plans for Banneker Park Pedestrian Access Improvements

November 2, 2017 – Plans for stormwater management pond, perimeter fence, maintenance path, and landscaping in College Park

May 3, 2018 – Plans for security bollards at USDA Building

June 7, 2018 – Plans for perimeter fencing project at the National Zoo

April 4, 2019 – Plans for access and safety improvements to Rock Creek Trail Park

June 4, 2020 – Plans for Chevy Chase Circle fountain lighting

September 3, 2020 – Plans for improvements at Carolina Park in DC

December 3, 2020 – Plans for Capital Crescent Trailhead and Staircase Restoration in DC

March 4, 2021 – Plans for trail improvements at Fort Reno Park

July 1, 2021 – Plans for renovation of existing park in DC

July 7, 2022 – Plans for improvements at Cobb Park in DC

The best that Parks can offer about its efforts is that it “has coordinated with the National Capital Planning Commission, and NCPC staff have expressed initial support of the project. Montgomery Parks will continue to coordinate with NCPC as the project progresses.” This vague and ambiguous statement by Parks is probably designed to confuse the reader into believing that Parks has fulfilled its obligations to NCPC. To the contrary, Parks has not submitted any written plans to NCPC much less received approval from NCPC to do anything at Little Falls Parkway. The lack of transparency in Parks’ statement begs other basic questions:

What does “coordinated” mean?

Did Parks contact NCPC through written and/or oral communications?

What exactly did Parks tell NCPC about the “project?”

Is NCPC aware that Little Falls Parkway has already been physically altered?

What does “initial support” mean? Is it in writing?

What exactly did NCPC tell Parks?

For Parks to gloss over such an important issue in one paragraph of a 40-page document before the Planning Board, an oversight authority, is disrespectful at best and deceptive at worst. The Planning Board has within its power the ability to deny the request by Parks to make changes to Little Falls Parkway and to direct Parks to get its project approved by NCPC first. Requiring Parks to be transparent in its efforts to follow the law will underscore the authority and independence of the Planning Board. Further, for all practical purposes, there is no reason why the Planning Board should approve Parks’ proposal before the NCPC has given its approval.

I ask that the Planning Board require Parks to get approval from NCPC for its proposed roadway park before any further action is taken at Little Falls Parkway. To do this, Parks must seek a modification of the Little Falls Stream Valley Park General Development Plan.

Christopher Danley
5814 Hillburne Way
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Ashley Evans](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Supporting the Little Falls Parkway Pilot
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 10:52:43 PM

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

Good evening,

I would like to submit my written comments in support of the pilot project on Little Falls Parkway that reduces the space for cars to two lanes. I live in Takoma Park right next to Sligo Creek Parkway, and the complete weekend closures of that road to traffic have been transformative for my neighborhood's safe access to the outdoors. While the Little Falls Parkway plan is obviously different, slowing down dangerous drivers while increasing the ability of everyone (on foot, bikes, and mobility devices) to get around more safely is crucial and I hope will continue to have similar transformative effects for the local neighborhoods and beyond.

I am expecting my first child in May, and I am looking forward to teaching them how to ride a bike both for fun and for transportation. I hope the Board will support the pilot project to expand access for safe biking and walking on Little Falls Parkway and reduce space for cars to two lanes, so someday soon I can take my child there to see a different part of our county and the wonderful outdoors public space we all share.

Thank you!

Sincerely
Ashley Brookshier
7515 Carroll Ave
Takoma Park MD 20912

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Alison Dewey](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Support for LFP redesign
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:17:57 PM

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

Hello, I am expressing my support for the Little Falls Parkway redesign to help make the trail and roadway safer for all users. I use the trail to travel to work on a weekly basis and I look forward to these improvements.

Thank you,
Alison Dewey
North Bethesda

From: [Richard Mathias](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for LFP hearing March 30
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:37:58 PM
Attachments: [BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD.docx](#)

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

Mr. Mathias signed up to testify in person but is unable to participate either in person or virtually.

Please accept this statement in the hearing record.

**BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY MD
PLANNING BOARD HEARING MARCH 30, 2023**

LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY LANE CLOSURES

TESTIMONY OF RICHARD MATHIAS

PRESIDENT, WESTBARD MEWS CONDOMINIUM

I am Richard Mathias, President of the Westbard Mews Condominium, a group of 36 town-homes located at the corner of Massachusetts and Westbard avenues. Our property's rear side abuts the Capital Crescent Trail and just beyond the trail is the lower portion of Little Falls Parkway. Our residents and neighbors make constant use of both the trail and parkway including the sections between Dorset Avenue and Arlington road where the trail crosses the parkway. Whether from walking or biking on the trail or from driving our cars to/from the Bethesda commercial area, we are very familiar with the safety challenges facing both pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists at the crossing.

This controversy stems from the tragic accident in 2017 when a car struck a person on a recumbent bicycle at the trail crossing. So the basic issue is and must be how to make the crossing as safe as possible. The Parks Department would instead focus on other issues such as its idea of creating a tiny new recreation area that the neighbors oppose. Or its claim that reducing the roadway from four to two lanes will not increase congestion. I believe the fundamental flaw in the Parks Department proposal is that it does not maximize safety.

The safest approach, putting a pedestrian bridge over the road, has been rejected as too expensive. The next best improvement, slightly adjusting the course of the trail to put the crossing at the existing traffic-signalized intersection at Arlington Road, was actually adopted by the Planning Board, with broad public support, in summer of 2019 but then shelved as being too expensive. This reversal, done at a non-public hearing, has never been explained except to say it is too expensive. But it involved only a minor rerouting of a very short section, at level grade, of the current trail.

Instead of those adequate solutions, we now have a proposal that is more dangerous. It is a four-direction crossing that depends on all traffic eye-balling the other three traffic flows with no traffic signals. Motorists must watch pedestrians and cyclists coming across in both directions, while recognizing that many cyclists do not stop at their stop signs. Pedestrians and cyclists must gauge the speed and intentions of motorists looking for an opening in the cross traffic. The proposal also eliminates the median between the two lanes which provided a critical safety space for pedestrians and cyclists to focus on each auto-traffic flow separately and more accurately. Taking out the median also makes driving more difficult for motorists facing traffic coming head-on in the narrow adjacent lane.

Thus, the priority goal of making the trail crossing as safe as possible will not be achieved. The Board should reject the pending Parks Proposal because it does little to reduce the hazards and an obvious, much more effective solution is at hand: use the traffic signals already in place at the Arlington Road intersection.

Richard Mathias 5141 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Shannon Brescher Shea](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Submitted comment on Little Falls Parkway changes
Date: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 11:41:19 PM

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

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board,

Thank you for considering the plans for a linear park on Little Falls Parkway. I strongly support such a linear park and allocating two roadway lanes to bicyclist and pedestrian use. I am a resident of Rockville and a volunteer for the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The parkway intersects with the Capital Crescent Trail, the extremely important connector trail between Montgomery County and Washington D.C. This trail is essential to both sustainable transportation in our region and recreation. It is used by everyone from commuters to small children. Having a safe and slow crossing for this trail is incredibly important. I know in the times that I have ridden on that trail in the past when Little Falls Parkway was four lanes, that crossing was one of the most dangerous and risky.

In addition, repurposing Little Falls Parkway supports the county's very ambitious Bikeway Master Plan and Climate Action Plan. The county needs to move away from transportation run on fossil fuels to come close to meeting these goals.

Lastly, multiple traffic studies show that allocating two roadway lanes for vehicles and two for pedestrians, rollers, and bicyclists actually reduces cut-through traffic in neighborhoods while also safely accommodating vehicle traffic.

Thank you for your time!

Best,
Shannon Brescher Shea

--

Shannon Brescher Shea
Parenting and Sustainability Writer
Pronouns: She/Her
Check out my parenting advice book, [Growing Sustainable Together!](#)
[Blog](#) -- [Facebook](#) -- [Twitter](#).

From: [Elizabeth Hurwit](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony for the Montgomery County Planning Board
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:18:20 AM
Attachments: [Elizabeth Hurwit Testimony for the Montgomery County Planning Board 3.30.23.pdf](#)

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

Hearing Date: March 30, 2023

Hearing Item: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

Please accept the attached testimony (also pasted in below) for the hearing item referenced above.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Hurwit
4521 Dorset Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Testimony for the Montgomery County Planning Board

Hearing Date: March 30, 2023

Hearing Item: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

To Chair Jeffrey Zyontz, Member Shawn Bartley, Member James Hedrick, Member Mitra Pedoeem, and Member Roberto Piñero:

Thank you for accepting my testimony. I write to urge the Planning Board to vote against the permanent road diet between Dorset Avenue and Arlington Road.

My objections are many and begin with **decreased safety**: the pilot configuration (even before the “activation” of the linear park) is less safe than the previous configuration with a median between traffic lanes. The lane shifts confuse drivers, the Capital Crescent Trail crossing is now difficult for pedestrians/bikers and vehicles to navigate, and the tight lanes for cars leave no leeway for emergency vehicles to pass, among other newly created problems.

At the same time, the implementation of a permanent road diet/linear park on Little Falls Parkway before the Westbard development is completed means that the Montgomery Parks **traffic counts are basically irrelevant**, as they look backward (partly during the period of reduced traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic) rather than forward. The completed Westbard development will create 410 apartments and 106 townhomes and, per the county-approved site plan, generate 1,387 new peak-hour trips per day. The intersection of Little Falls Parkway and River Road is projected to reach near-capacity levels (-3%) by 2040, according to the Transportation Policy Area Review test of critical lane

volumes, and that projection assumes the parkway remains four lanes. Meanwhile, redevelopment at Friendship Heights is under way, and over 30 million square feet of real estate is planned for development in downtown Bethesda.

Where will all the cars generated by these developments go? As evidenced by the dramatic increase in cut-through traffic on Hillendale Road after two lanes were eliminated between Hillendale and Arlington Roads, drivers cut through residential neighborhoods to get where they need to go. This plan will thus shift traffic from a commuter parkway to residential neighborhoods.

There is **no good reason** to force that shift. I have heard various rationales for the road diet/linear park, which in the end raise more questions than answers.

- If the idea is to alleviate crowding on the Capital Crescent Trail, then park planners must be expecting people to drive to the linear park--but where will they park? Acoustic concerts, food trucks, and outdoor games tend to take place in summer, and the Bethesda Pool lots will be in high demand then. Cars will have to park on neighborhood streets.
- If the idea is that people will bike and walk to the park, then won't that further overload the Capital Crescent Trail?
- If the idea is to reduce vehicle trips and encourage pedestrian and bike travel to, say, Bethesda, how could a half-mile linear park here accomplish that? Once the linear park is activated, will bikes even be able to ride through the area without interruption?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, why are we spending public funds on 1.4-acre recreational space in a part of the county already graced with a wealth of green space including Norwood Park, the Capital Crescent Trail, the Bethesda Pool, and many neighborhood facilities? **Surely other parts of the county are more deserving of increased parkland.**

Nearby residents did not ask for this road diet/linear park. There was no rash of bicycle/vehicle collisions that needed to be addressed. The last incident (a tragic fatality involving a recumbent bike that did not stop before crossing the parkway) occurred in 2016.

Moreover, when the road diet/linear park was proposed, Montgomery Parks put forth (on its website and in press releases) a timeline much different from what is before you now. The plan called for two full pilot phases and spring 2023 "activation" of the linear park and then time for public input. You are being asked to shortcut that process and answer a narrow question about a backward-looking traffic study that ended in 2022. That is not right or necessary. **Please think more broadly about the consequences of a road change that will adversely affect neighborhoods, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers for years to come.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Hurwit
4521 Dorset Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Testimony for the Montgomery County Planning Board

Hearing Date: March 30, 2023

Hearing Item: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

To Chair Jeffrey Zyontz, Member Shawn Bartley, Member James Hedrick, Member Mitra Pedoeem, and Member Roberto Piñero:

Thank you for accepting my testimony. I write to urge the Planning Board to vote against the permanent road diet between Dorset Avenue and Arlington Road.

My objections are many and begin with **decreased safety**: the pilot configuration (even before the “activation” of the linear park) is less safe than the previous configuration with a median between traffic lanes. The lane shifts confuse drivers, the Capital Crescent Trail crossing is now difficult for pedestrians/bikers and vehicles to navigate, and the tight lanes for cars leave no leeway for emergency vehicles to pass, among other newly created problems.

At the same time, the implementation of a permanent road diet/linear park on Little Falls Parkway before the Westbard development is completed means that the Montgomery Parks **traffic counts are basically irrelevant**, as they look backward (partly during the period of reduced traffic during the COVID-19 pandemic) rather than forward. The completed Westbard development will create 410 apartments and 106 townhomes and, per the county-approved site plan, generate 1,387 new peak-hour trips per day. The intersection of Little Falls Parkway and River Road is projected to reach near-capacity levels (-3%) by 2040, according to the Transportation Policy Area Review test of critical lane volumes, and that projection assumes the parkway remains four lanes. Meanwhile, redevelopment at Friendship Heights is under way, and over 30 million square feet of real estate is planned for development in downtown Bethesda.

Where will all the cars generated by these developments go? As evidenced by the dramatic increase in cut-through traffic on Hillendale Road after two lanes were eliminated between Hillendale and Arlington Roads, drivers cut through residential neighborhoods to get where they need to go. This plan will thus shift traffic from a commuter parkway to residential neighborhoods.

There is **no good reason** to force that shift. I have heard various rationales for the road diet/linear park, which in the end raise more questions than answers.

- If the idea is to alleviate crowding on the Capital Crescent Trail, then park planners must be expecting people to drive to the linear park--but where will they park? Acoustic concerts, food trucks, and outdoor games tend to take place in summer, and the Bethesda Pool lots will be in high demand then. Cars will have to park on neighborhood streets.
- If the idea is that people will bike and walk to the park, then won't that further overload the Capital Crescent Trail?
- If the idea is to reduce vehicle trips and encourage pedestrian and bike travel to, say, Bethesda, how could a half-mile linear park here accomplish that? Once the linear park is activated, will bikes even be able to ride through the area without interruption?

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, why are we spending public funds on 1.4-acre recreational space in a part of the county already graced with a wealth of green space including Norwood Park, the Capital Crescent Trail, the Bethesda Pool, and many neighborhood facilities? **Surely other parts of the county are more deserving of increased parkland.**

Nearby residents did not ask for this road diet/linear park. There was no rash of bicycle/vehicle collisions that needed to be addressed. The last incident (a tragic fatality involving a recumbent bike that did not stop before crossing the parkway) occurred in 2016.

Moreover, when the road diet/linear park was proposed, Montgomery Parks put forth (on its website and in press releases) a timeline much different from what is before you now. The plan called for two full pilot phases and spring 2023 “activation” of the linear park and then time for public input. You are being asked to shortcut that process and answer a narrow question about a backward-looking traffic study that ended in 2022. That is not right or necessary. **Please think more broadly about the consequences of a road change that will adversely affect neighborhoods, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers for years to come.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Hurwit
4521 Dorset Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Steve Shapiro](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: steves@md.net
Subject: WRITTEN TESTIMONY FOR THE MARCH 30, 2023 HEARING ON THE LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY PILOT PROJECT--
AGENDA ITEM 12
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 12:37:22 AM
Attachments: [Stephen M. Shapiro Testimony on Little Falls Parkway for 3-30-2023.pdf](#)

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

Attached is my written testimony for the Planning Board's March 30, 2023 hearing on the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project (Agenda Item 12).

I have signed up to provide oral testimony as well.

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

March 28, 2023

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

Re: TESTIMONY FOR THE MARCH 30, 2023 HEARING ON LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY

Dear Chairman Zyontz and Members of the Planning Board:

I live near the southern terminal of Little Falls Parkway (LFP) at Massachusetts Avenue, and I am writing to express my concerns with the Department of Parks's recommendation to reduce part of the LFP north of River Road to two undivided travel lanes.

The Parkway was designed to be and serves well as a short but critical artery linking the Massachusetts Avenue and River Road corridors with downtown Bethesda. It is not comparable in design or purpose with Sligo Creek Parkway or with Beach Drive. There is no reason to redesign or reduce the speed of Little Falls just to match these other roads. The staff's proposed changes will degrade the safety and efficiency of the LFP, and are not justified by the prospective substitution of the LFP's western road strip with recreational facilities that can be better located near the LFP without sacrificing existing travel lanes.

My comments address two topics:

(1) Safety at the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) Crossing justifies reducing the LFP there to two lanes across a median as an interim measure, but that step alone is not sufficient; and

(2) The benefits of a prospective linear park do not justify the costs of reducing the LFP elsewhere, particularly in light of alternative adjacent park land for any new facilities.

1. The Staff Recommendation Highlights Important Safety Problems with the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) Crossing But Does Not Adequately Address These Serious Problems. Addressing CCT safety is a very different issue from diminishing the LFP to make way for roadside park facilities.

Page 3 of the Staff Recommendation correctly cites the problem of CCT users and motorists attempting to cross this at-grade intersection at the same time. But **while reducing the number of travel lanes to two at the CCT will improve safety, the improvement will be limited. And the reducing LFP travel lanes away from this intersection (i.e., for the length between Dorset and Hillandale Roads) will not improve safety at the CCT crossing.** The current roadway afford a much more logical transition from two to four lanes between Arlington and Hillandale Roads (i.e., near the CCT crossing) than at points further south. Northbound LFP traffic can turn right onto Hillandale Road from the right lane, with the remaining left lane proceeding across the

CCT to Arlington Road (as the road stands now). Southbound LFP traffic is easily kept to one lane as it approaches on Arlington Road (as it is now). The left turn onto the LFP from Arlington would be safer if southbound traffic uses the west strip of road—i.e., on a travel lane that is across the median from northbound traffic. This southbound traffic (on its side of the median) can easily open up to use both southbound lanes after passing the CCT (or Hillandale Road). Transitioning southbound traffic across the median at Dorset is unnecessary, awkward, and dangerous.

Merely reducing the number of travel lanes to two at the CCT crossing, while helpful to safety, still leaves cars and CCT users competing to cross this at-grade intersection at the same time. On days and at times when CCT and LFP usage is high, car traffic will back up, particularly as cars proceed one at a time instead of two at a time. During these high usage times, cars must often pull into the intersection when there is not a trail user directly in front, but still forcing approaching CCT users to stop. It may be impractical for all cars to yield to approaching CCT users at these times—or few cars may ever get through the intersection. And it is an incentive for the next car behind to keep going while CCT users are stopped for the first car to pass. This situation is a tragedy waiting to happen, and the staff recommendation will not sufficiently resolve it.

I have three suggestions here. **The first is to reconsider some pilot of a traffic signal** that was previously considered in 2019. This would be a helpful interim measure **until the at-grade intersection is replaced (with a tunnel or bridge), or moved to a safer location (e.g., at Hillandale Road)**. If redesigning the signal at Arlington Road to accommodate a CCT crossing phase might unduly delay LFP traffic (as was a concern in 2019), such a phase might operate only during times when it is most needed to separate LFP and CCT traffic. Additionally, it might make sense to eliminate the signal's phase (and access) for traffic to and from the segment of LFP north of Arlington Road during those peak times. Far fewer cars use that northernmost segment than use the LFP segments further south or that use Arlington Road. The parking lot off of that northern LFP segment and the adjacent residential streets could still be reached via Glenbrook Road from River Road or from Fairfax Road.

My second suggestion, at least as an interim or pilot measure, is to move the CCT crossing to the north side of the intersection at Hillandale Road, which has an existing signal. Little traffic from Hillandale turns right to go north onto LFP (to conflict with CCT users).

My third suggestion to improve CCT safety is to maintain the existing LFP median at the CCT crossing, even if the LFP travel lanes there are reduced to one in each direction. First, there is often more traffic in one direction than the other, and CCT users may have little or no traffic from one direction to contend with (allowing easy crossing of that lane). Second, while cars will have to look out for trail users from both directions, CCT users with a median need only look for cars travelling in a single direction to cross one lane at a time. Third, the median allows for a safer left turn from Arlington road, as that traffic would not pass as close to northbound LFP traffic as a left turn onto an undivided road would require.

2. The benefits of the linear park proposal do not justify the costs of degrading the LFP, particularly as alternatives exist to add recreational facilities along or near the LFP. The issue of reducing the LFP to one lane in each direction without a median in order to accommodate a linear park, as staff proposes, is a **separate matter from whether to reduce lanes to improve safety at the CCT crossing.** One does not require the other.

First, the LFP segment between Dorset and Hillandale Roads is only about 1/4 mile long. It will be of little use or benefit to bicycle riders, except perhaps small children. And walkers would be adjacent to LFP traffic on the remaining lanes—a closer distance than the walking trails along Sligo Creek Parkway and Beach Drive, and a less pleasant recreational experience than on trails in the area that are further removed from traffic.

Second, alternatives (to taking the roadway) for adding adjacent recreational facilities exist and should be considered by the Planning Board. These would include adding a paved trail in the woods west of the LFP (largely parallel to the CCT). This arrangement would be similar to the very successful and highly used Little Falls Trail that is south of Massachusetts Avenue and parallel to the CCT. Alternative sites for new facilities would also include park land east of the LFP, which includes land by the existing but poorly maintained northern segment of the Little Falls Trail (north of Dorset Road) as well as the large and adjacent Norwood Park—with an existing paved trail to Little Falls Park at Hillandale Road (across from the pool). There is also land west of the northernmost segment of the LFP, across from the parking lot, and east of that segment, which currently has a playground behind the parking lot.

Third, degrading the LFP from a four-lane divided parkway to a two-lane undivided road as proposed will degrade its efficiency and safety. It will not be a “win-win” as suggested by staff. The LFP was designed sixty years ago as a 35 mph artery connecting downtown Bethesda with the River Road and Massachusetts Avenue corridors. It still serves this important purpose today. If it didn’t, or if it were not so important, there would be little local interest in protecting it. I would have no reason to draft this letter or to testify.

There is no good alternative to access downtown Bethesda from these corridors. Alternatives include Western Avenue (in D.C.) to Wisconsin, and Goldsboro Road to Bradley Blvd (and Wilson to Old Georgetown Road). The River Road corridor adjacent to the LFP has substantial commercial and industrial traffic, and is being further developed (Westbard). LFP also serves traffic from Bethesda headed to and from Washington, D.C. via River Road, Massachusetts Ave, or MacArthur Blvd. (via Dalecarlia Pkwy and Sibley Hospital). The southernmost segment of the LFP serves its purpose as a two-lane road. Before the closure of Ridgefield Road (which provided alternate and truck access to River Road) for ongoing Westbard construction, the two-lane segment there was sufficient. That does not mean that a two-lane road will be adequate for the other LFP segments. It was not determined to be adequate sixty years ago. Indeed, about half of southbound LFP traffic turns left (inbound) at River Rd., and only half continues straight onto the southernmost LFP segment to Massachusetts Ave.

The existing median is a significant safety feature of the current LFP. It lowers the risk of head-on collisions. And **the pilot and proposed transition across the median from two**

undivided lanes to four lanes divided lanes at Dorset Road is confusing and dangerous, particularly for drivers unfamiliar with the roadway. The danger is magnified at night, where lighting and signage are not commensurate with the confusion caused by the transition. **Even if there is a justifiable reason to decrease the roadway south of Hillandale Rd. to two lanes, they should remain divided by the current median.** While a two-lane undivided segment and transition might be made safer with better lighting and signage, there is still the initial question of why the four-lane divided parkway should be changed—except as an interim measure near the CCT crossing.

In summary:

- Reducing the LFP in the immediate vicinity of the at-grade CCT crossing to two lanes, while maintaining the median, will increase safety until the at-grade crossing is eliminated. Revisiting a signal at the CCT crossing and/or moving the CCT crossing to the north side of the intersection with Hillandale Road would further reduce CCT conflicts with traffic and improve CCT and LFP safety. The Board should adopt no alternative that precludes returning to the original four-lane road configuration after the at-grade CCT crossing is eliminated.
- Outside of these safety issues at the CCT, there is no sufficient justification for reducing the travel lanes elsewhere or removing the median between traffic lanes. It would degrade the safety and the efficiency of the roadway. There are better alternatives to add recreational facilities than sacrificing travel lanes or the median. A facility on the roadway would have marginal recreational benefit, particularly in light of the better alternative park lands for such facilities. And eliminating the median would degrade safety. There is no reason to make LFP like Sligo Creek Parkway or Beach Drive, and as explained above, there are good reasons not to do so.

Best regards,

/s/

Stephen M. Shapiro, P.E.

5111 Westridge Road

Bethesda, MD 20816

(301) 229-6241

SteveS@md.net

From: [Simon Carr](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: :Little Falls Parkway
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 4:25:23 AM

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

I am writing this as I am out of the US and unable to comment in person at the Planning Board meeting on March 30.

I have been a resident in Montgomery County for 20 years and have driven on Little Falls Parkway numerous times.

I have also cycled on the Capital Crescent Trail and surrounding streets throughout that period. And I have ridden on the two lanes that have been set aside in the current trial

The proposed plan for Little Falls - 2 lanes for traffic, 2 used for recreation - should be adopted. It is safer for anyone using the Capital Crescent Trail than the previous 4 lane pattern. And it opens up more recreation space.

It is true there is some backup of cars at times and slower speeds on Little Falls Parkway. The backup is a minor inconvenience at most and the slower speeds actually a benefit in terms of safety

SIMON CARR

From: [Nina Rubenstein](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Please create a safe Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 5:03:17 AM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Little Falls Parkway reconfiguration has been a success, but there is more to do!

We need more signage at the intersection of the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing with the Parkway.

It might also boost safety to change the pavement type on the linear park. Having the same black asphalt on both the linear park and the road for cars is confusing to cyclists on the CCT (according to my friend who rode her bike on the CCT from Georgetown up to Bethesda last weekend).

Overall the linear park will be great! I have already taken my young kids bike riding on the open parkway -- much more room for them to safely practice riding there compared to the narrower and more crowded CCT.

Montgomery Parks does report, “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,
Nina Rubenstein
5801 Namakagan Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [LYNNE BATTLE](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Lynne Battle's Testimony, 3/30/23, Little Falls Pilot Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 8:19:07 AM
Attachments: [Lynne Battle's 33023 Testimony.pdf](#)

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

Attached is the testimony of Lynne Battle who resides at 5157 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, MD 20816 for the 3/30/23 Planning Board hearing in the matter of the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project. Thank you for the opportunity its to comment.

Lynne Battle
5157 Westbard Avenue
Bethesda, MD 20816

TESTIMONY OF LYNNE BATTLE
LITTLE FALLS PILOT PROJECT
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
MARCH 30, 2023

My name is Lynne Battle and I live in the Westbard Mews townhouses at the corner of Westbard Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue. Little Falls Parkway is immediately behind our homes and I travel on it regularly, often many times a day.

My reasons for opposing the reduction of Little Falls to a 2 lane highway between Dorset Avenue and Hillandale Road are simple:

1. Little Falls Parkway is a vital connector between the Massachusetts corridor and downtown Bethesda. It is well used now, but will be even more necessary after the construction of numerous additional residences in both the Westbard development and in the downtown Bethesda area. As both these redevelopment projects are underway, it is absolutely the wrong time to reduce a large part of Little Falls Parkway from 4 lanes to 2 lanes. Any consideration of such action should await the completion of all this additional density so we can evaluate its impact on traffic along Little Falls Parkway.

2. The current configuration of Little Falls Parkway is dangerous to both motorists and any pedestrians nearby and there is no rational justification for compromising safety. The elimination of the median strip for pedestrians to use as a mid-way stop when crossing Little Falls is extremely dangerous and the awkward shift in the current configuration creates a danger of head-on automobile collisions. The current configuration will present huge problems for emergency vehicles since there are no shoulders for motorists to use to pull off as necessary to allow emergency vehicles to pass. There have already been several near collisions due to this unsafe configuration and at least one instance when the current layout hampered the arrival of an ambulance. This is an accident waiting to happen and the blame will be squarely on the shoulders of the Parks Department, likely resulting in legal action.

3. All of this modification to Little Falls causing traffic dangers is because the Parks Department wants to create a linear park which the local residents don't want. While the open parkway was welcome during the pandemic, the current test reveals very few walkers or

bikers using the space. It makes far more sense to spend the money to adequately maintain and improve current parks in the area. The Westbard Sector Plan called for the “crown jewel” to be the Willett Branch Greenway. There is little evidence that we will get this and any available Parks’ money should be spent there or used to widen and improve the Crescent Trail which desperately needs landscape maintenance due to invasive vines covering bushes and landscaping along the side of the trail.

In short, this is a terrible idea risking harm to motorists and pedestrians for no good reason. The Planning Board cannot afford to make another huge mistake not supported by the public.

From: [Tori Garten](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: More Parks! More Safe Biking! Less carbon! I support Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 8:24:18 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.

This would be so amazing! Outdoor spaces for recreation are so key to a happier and healthier population. Time away from screens, time in nature, a sense of community. It all adds up and creates better lives.

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

Thank you,
Tori Garten
11503 Ashley Dr
Rockville, MD 20852

From: [Rebecca Hanson](#)
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); robert.pinero@mncppc-mc.org; [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Hedrick, James](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project (March 30 Hearing)
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 8:36:51 AM
Attachments: [Written Testimony of Rebecca Hanson Planning Board Hearing March 30 2023.pdf](#)
[Little Falls Letter Chief Jones.pdf](#)

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

Good morning, Planning Board. Attached please find:

1. My written testimony
2. Letter from Assistant Fire Chief Adam Jones dated March 16, 2023, referenced in my written testimony
3. Video showing *no one using the closed lanes* for nine months during the Open Parkways time period, also referenced in my written testimony. <https://youtu.be/-Xeq8aynkpA>
4. Video showing severe traffic backup at the Dorset light *for no reason*, due to the closed LFP lanes, *which are empty because no one is using them*, also referenced in my testimony. <https://youtu.be/njSwHel-Zpc>
5. A link to a petition opposing Montgomery Parks' proposal, which as of this sending has over 3,200 signatures, and continues to grow. <https://chng.it/GBfNz9Z5MK>

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hanson

Co-President, Westmoreland Citizens Association

5424 Falmouth Road, Bethesda, MD 20816

Written Testimony to Montgomery County Planning Board
Opposition to Little Falls Parkway Lane Closures and Linear Park
Submitted March 29, 2023

My name is Rebecca Hanson and I am Co-President of the Westmoreland Citizens Association, a community of almost 1,000 homes that partly abuts the Little Falls Parkway. I've lived here for 20 years and have walked, jogged and biked the Capital Crescent Trail ("CCT"), and driven the Little Falls Parkway ("LFP"), innumerable times.

1. **Montgomery Parks' ("Parks") data is deficient with respect to the safety of the Phase 2 road configuration. Therefore, their claims of safety are unfounded and false.**
 - a. By their own admission, the purpose of Phase 2 was to see if LFP were "functional" with two lanes closed. They never claimed to conduct tests regarding safety for cyclists, pedestrians, or vehicles.
 - b. Parks' presentation claims that reducing speed limits and adjusting traffic signal timing has increased safety. ***But it is the Phase 2 traffic configuration that is resulting in near collisions*** of vehicles with cyclists, joggers and pedestrians at the CCT crossing, and vehicle collisions between Hillendale Road and Dorset Avenue, even at the lower speed limits.
 - c. See the letter from Assistant Fire Chief Adam Jones dated March 16, 2023, which enumerates the hazards of the current traffic patterns and is attached to the email transmitting this testimony.
 - d. Parks data says nothing about the dangers they created by removing the pedestrian median at the CCT crossing. 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).

- e. Parks' data says nothing about the dangers of opposing traffic without a median or adequate shoulders. *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.*
- f. Parks' data says nothing about the inability of emergency response vehicles to access this important artery without pull-over lanes.
- g. As a result, Parks' proposal violates Montgomery County's Vision Zero principles and goals.

2. Parks eliminated the only true safety improvements at the CCT crossing that they implemented in January 2017. The Planning Board should restore it.

- a. In its memo to the Planning Board for the March 30 hearing, Parks shows a 50% crash reduction resulting from the January 17 configuration, which petitioners are requesting we return to.
- b. From page 3 of the memo: *"The safety improvements included an interim road diet that reduced the cross-section of Little Falls Parkway from four lanes to two lanes at the trail crossing, by closing the outside travel lane in each direction. The travel lanes were closed off with chains and flexible posts, and the speed limit was reduced from 35 mph to 25 mph. The grass median dividing the northbound and southbound travel lanes remained. Subsequent traffic study from 2017 through 2019 showed a decrease in reported crashes of over 50% at the crossing and along this Parkway segment."*
- c. The Planning Board should reject the proposal to permanently eliminate this safe configuration and return to the January 2017 patterns.

3. Parks' claim that Phase 2 has "eliminated" adjacent neighborhood cut-through traffic is specious and misleading.

- a. Parks created the original problem of cut-through traffic when it closed all four lanes of LFP during the pandemic. To say that Parks has now solved this problem by closing "only" two lanes of LFP is a specious argument, and cut-through traffic continues.

- b. The only way to eliminate cut-through traffic is to re-open all four lanes of LFP outside of the CCT crossing.

4. The Planning Board should NOT take Parks' traffic data at face value.

- a. Traffic volume data is meaningless without a safety analysis.
- b. The traffic volumes are also meaningless because they fail to take into account future traffic from the 6,300 planned housing units in downtown Bethesda and Westbard.

5. Comparisons to closures of Sligo Creek Parkway and Beach Drive are irrelevant to LFP.

- a. Parks stated that they are treating LFP like Sligo Creek and Beach Drive because they all are two lane roads with 25 MPH speed limits.
- b. But LFP serves a very different functional purpose from Sligo Creek and Beach Drive; i.e., LFP is a thoroughfare carrying commuter, shopping, restaurants and school bus traffic.
- c. It is simplistic for Parks to treat them consistently, for the sake of consistency without regard to safety concerns.

6. The linear park is a vanity project in need of a problem to solve.

- a. Parks never conducted a needs study to justify this park, considering the ample acreage of park and playground space immediately surrounding LFP.
- b. Parks has likened this linear park to transformative infrastructure salvage projects like the High Line in NYC and the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston. LFP can't be less analogous to those projects. Those were innovative, award-winning projects that transformed unusable land into space for the public good.
- c. Taking away an important thoroughfare to create unneeded recreational space will not be successful, award-winning, or transformational.

7. Parks overstates support for the linear park, which is misleading.

- a. In its February 15th presentation, Parks twice cited a petition with 1,900 signatures as “proof” of demand for this new LFP park space for biking, rollerblading, skateboarding, jogging, dog-walking, baby-strolling and Dads teaching kids how to ride bikes.
- b. But since the LFP lanes closed in October 2022, there hasn’t been any such activity on the closed lanes. They lay empty and abandoned, proving there is no demand for this space.
- c. See this video demonstrating the lack of usage: <https://youtu.be/-Xeq8aynkpA> These photos were taken every weekend of the Open Parkways Program for 9 months (Oct ’21-June 11’22). This photo compilation proves that few pedestrians visited the closed section from Arlington Road to River Road. Instead, cyclists and pedestrians were using the CCT, demonstrated by the photos from the same weekends the Parkway was closed.
- d. This video <https://youtu.be/njSwHel-Zpc> show the unnecessary traffic back up at the Dorset light, due to the two closed lanes, which are empty because no one is using them (as shown in background).
- e. Even the photos of Little Falls Parkway on the Parks’ website show no one using the closed, empty lanes!

8. Parks has not demonstrated any need or demand for games, food trucks, porta potties or concerts on LFP.

- a. Just because people are willing to sign a petition supporting a “good idea,” that doesn’t mean they will actually use those amenities.
- b. Parks took *one anecdote* about one Dad using the closed LFP during the pandemic to teach his child how to ride a bike, and suddenly Parks wants a “Traffic Skills Garden” in the linear park.
- c. This and other activities might look good on a powerpoint, but in reality, over the past six months, I haven’t seen one parent on the closed lanes teaching their child how to ride a bike.
- d. There are more suitable places for food trucks and games on the CCT that do not jeopardize safety and disrupt traffic as this plan does (e.g., Neil Potter Park).

9. Parks' has not thought through the maintenance of the games, or the new dangers they introduce to LFP.

- a. Who will put out and put away the games and toys each day?
- b. How often do you plan to replace stolen or vandalized games and toys?
- c. What happens when a cornhole beanbag is thrown into a car windshield?
- d. What happens when a child runs into a cyclist chasing a ping pong ball?
- e. To have children playing right next to bike lanes and car traffic, regardless of speed, is misguided.

10. Parks has not included opposition views in its planning.

- a. From the beginning, Parks' "public outreach" has consisted of telling local residents what they plan to do, without any meaningful input from those affected.
- b. Almost half in the correspondence file that Parks submitted to the written record are against this proposal, but Parks has never meaningfully addressed the opposition's concerns.
- c. This has been a failure in the transparent, democratic process that Montgomery County residents expect from their government officials.

11. As of March 28, not all Planning Board members had visited the LFP area in question.

- a. According to an email from the Planning Board's Principal Counsel dated March 28, not all of the Planning Board members had visited the LFP.
- b. All Planning Board members should visit the LFP site well before its decision on the permanent lane closures and linear park. How can the Planning Board can make such a consequential decision without seeing the actual roadway they are being asked to close, and to witness the potential harms these closures have caused and will continue to cause.



MONTGOMERY COUNTY FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Scott E. Goldstein
Fire Chief

3/16/2023

Good Afternoon,

This letter is in regard to a concern brought to me by residents whom reside in the neighborhood area of Little Falls Parkway. Their specific concern is the newly constructed bike and pedestrian crossing area on Little Falls between Arlington Rd and Hillendale Rd. I was contacted because I am the Assistant Chief of the Safety Section for Montgomery County Fire and Rescue and I was asked to analyze the current crossing configuration for any hazards or concerns.

I have visited the area and watched multiple videos of that crossing and these are what I see as potential Hazards or concerns.

- The removal of the median strip that was previously in place between the 2 lanes of traffic exposes pedestrians and cyclists to an opposing traffic pattern. This leaves users no place of refuge as they cross. The previous configuration allowed people who used the crossing to focus on one vehicle at a time from a single direction.
- The different heights of vehicles that pass through the crossing create a situation where there is dynamic or constantly changing blind spots. These blind spots effect the motorists, the cyclists, and the pedestrian traffic equally. The intermittent line of sight combined with the opposing vehicle traffic can be problematic.
- With the recent adaptation of a narrowed street configuration prior to the crossing there is potential for emergency response vehicles to avoid that area during heavily congested hours of the day. This could result in emergency vehicles as well as civilian commuter traffic utilizing neighborhood streets to reach their destinations in the quickest way possible.

Health & Wellness Section

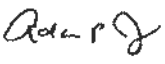
100 Edison Park Drive, 2nd Floor • Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878-3204
240-777-2219 • 240-777-0725 TTY • 240-777-2443 FAX
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

MCFRS drivers are trained professionals and have multiple hours of training on responding to emergencies in a safe and timely manner. Conversely, it is not a good practice for commuters, who we know are already distracted to navigate through residential neighborhoods trying to circumvent traffic slowdowns.

I do realize there are multiple issues associated with traffic movement and pedestrian crossing. At a quick glance, it would seem that a pedestrian bridge would alleviate many of these issues. However, I do realize there are many factors that go into making these complex decisions.

Thank you for taking the time to ask the Safety Section of Montgomery County Fire and Rescue to weigh in on this important community concern. Please understand MCFRS will always respond to the call of the community in a timely, safe, and professional manner. If I can be of any further assistance, please feel free to contact me directly.

Respectfully,

Adam P. Jones 
Assistant Chief
Occupational Health and Safety
Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service
14935B Southlawn Lane, 2nd Floor
Rockville, MD 20850
240-586-0989



100 Edison Park Drive, 2nd Floor • Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878-3204
240-777-2486 • 240-777-0725 TTY • 240-777-2443 FAX
www.montgomerycountymd.gov

montgomerycountymd.gov/311



301-251-4850 TTY

From: [Joel Peters](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 8:39:23 AM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

Little Falls Parkway roadway reconfiguration has been a great 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 drive along Little Falls Parkway every day and the closure of the lane has not affected my commute to Bethesda in any significant way. In fact, I appreciate that the traffic flow is now slower.

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,
Joel Peters
5529 Warwick Pl
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Phyllis Edelman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: March 30, 2023 Item 12: Briefing & Public Hearing Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project TESTIMONY
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:02:27 AM

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

Re: March 30, 2023

Item 12: Briefing & Public Hearing: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

Phyllis Edelman
5810 Ogden Court
Bethesda, MD 20816

Good evening. My name is Phyllis Edelman. I'm a resident of Springfield in Bethesda, and a past president of the Springfield Civic Association.

The public reason for this hearing is the Parks Department is seeking approval from the Planning Board for its unilateral closure of two lanes of traffic along four-tenths of a mile of Little Falls Parkway -- a parkway that is well-used and a vital connection between southwestern Montgomery county and downtown Bethesda.

But I believe what is actually happening at this hearing is that the Parks Department is seeking validation for its single-minded pursuit of the goals it set in its own 2022 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Since the Parks Department's February 15th meeting with the public on the closure -- which, was already in effect since November, 2022 -- **I've been trying to figure out the logic -- if there is any logic -- behind their plan. Why would you want to shut down half of a vital connecting road for our communities?** Keep in mind that the **website of the Parks Department** about the linear park they want to create **went from comparing this pilot project to the High Line in NYC, the BeltLine in Atlanta and the Rose Kennedy Greenway in Boston.** The website now doesn't mention those innovative parks at all. **Now, we're just going to get giant chess pieces, corn hole and some ping-pong tables Parks has in storage.**

I read the 2022 Parks, Recreation and Open Space plan in search of an answer. In it, the Parks Department states that the purposes of parks are to encourage physical activity, facilitate social interaction, and protect the environment.

The plan goes on to say, **“parks should serve multiple functions” by clustering different facilities together to “provide a full range of amenities” for the “diverse interests and needs of our residents.”**

The objective, I gathered, is that the **Parks Department wants to provide something for everyone. And, by providing important amenities like giant chess pieces and corn-hole games along a closed half of this well-used and needed roadway, they hope to attract new users who otherwise would not be lured to visit our nearby parks.**

But let's be real here. Take a look at the area where Parks wants to shoe-horn this haven for giant chess pieces. This is a park-rich area. There's Norwood Neighborhood Park. That's 17 acres of grass, playing fields, trails, playgrounds and all sorts of recreational opportunities. There's the 160-acre Little Falls Valley Stream Park, with its trails that wind through scenic woodlands. And speaking of trails, there is of course, the Capital Crescent Trail, a star of the national rails-to-trails program. In short, the area around Little Falls Parkway is already blessed with bountiful and diverse recreational opportunities.

Now let's for a moment get back to the Parks Department's own Parks, Recreation, and Open Space plan. **Another one of the goals in that plan is to, “prioritize a state of good repair and the physical condition of existing parks and facilities.”** Look at the existing facilities I've just mentioned, and it's clear that Parks has failed to meet its own goal. **Perhaps the \$130,000 Parks admits to having spent to close, open, and close again parts of Little Falls Parkway would have been better spent repairing the tennis courts in Norwood Park or the Little Falls Park Trail on the east side of the Parkway?**

It's also important to note in the PROS plan what Parks says about public input into its decisions. You should read the last eight pages of the plan to get a full picture as to how the Parks Department feels about public input. It says that “while the Parks Department should CAREFULLY weigh neighborhood concerns...this input should be considered in context with the priorities of the department and the county as a whole.” In other words, Parks says “thanks for your input, members of the public, but we're gonna do what WE want to do.” Their first priority is to fulfill their goals, not those of the public.

And in that same document, **Parks makes it clear how it feels about public hearings like this one. They say, “A fundamental weakness of both in-person and virtual meetings, however, is the tendency for this type of engagement to amplify the voices of the people with the strongest – but not necessarily the most representative – opinions.”**

Well thank you, Parks Department, for putting on the record how you really feel about hearing from the people who you ostensibly serve. **I am here today,**

as are the other people testifying, because we expect our opinions to be fairly and objectively considered. And you only have to look at the community-generated petition asking that Little Falls Parkway be restored to four lanes to see that thousands of stakeholders/taxpayers agree.

The Parks Department's lack of respect for public input is evident even in the materials they presented to you in their appendices. Yes, they studied the supposed effects their already-executed plan would have on traffic on the Little Falls Parkway. But what about a formal needs assessment survey of the communities for creating their Chess Piece and Corn Hole park in the first place? You won't find one. **No survey was done by the Parks Department in any of the communities bordering the Parkway** about whether half the parkway should be closed and whether this park is needed. However, **there is a survey put together by residents of the Kenwood community and distributed to many of our communities, which heavily supports reopening Little Falls Parkway to four lanes.** Of course, the Parks Department will heavily deny the validity of anything we, the public, has done.

For my final point, let's turn again to last year's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan. That plan, which I remind you was produced by **the Parks Department itself, emphasizes the need to put, "the right park in the right place."** Well, it's clear that **this is NOT the right park, and this is definitely NOT the right place.**

What IS right is what the residents of all of the communities in the area have made clear they want: **Restoration of the four lane Little Falls Parkway, with safety accommodations made for the road diet at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing.**

Thank you.

From: [Bryce Geyer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: A commuter and park user
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:04:17 AM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

As someone who has to commute on Little Falls Parkway and had to by car because I did not consider it safe to bring by children to daycare by bike on the prior 4 lane road I fully support the improvements to Little Falls park and the narrowing of the Parkway to 2 lanes.

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,
Bryce Geyer
5304 Ventnor Rd
Bethesda, MD 20816

From: [Bryce Geyer](#)
To: [MCP-Chair; councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov;](#)
[Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov;](#)
[Councilmember.Jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov;](#)
[Councilmember.Sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov](#)
Cc: [MC-LFP](#)
Subject: Using Little Falls Liner Park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:13:50 AM

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

Hello all,

I teach how to ride a bike to children and adults from Fairfax VA to Columbia MD. The linear park at Little Falls is the best venue I have used for teaching how to ride a bike. It has wide open space with variable slopes. It has flat run outs that do NOT end with hard stops on curves like many other places. The park is the perfect place to teach children or adults how to ride a bike. I have instructed over 15 kids already at Little Falls as a volunteer and plan to continue to teach neighborhood kids at the linear park. The varying slopes are perfect for riders of sizes from adults to two-year-olds to find the right glide as a beginner and provide various levels of challenge when riders first start to peddle. Anyone can find a slope with the right glide to practice. A place without a curb reduces events associated with curb collisions; going over the handlebars, a handlebar spun into the ribs or the rider landing their genitals on the top tube all of which are painful for an experienced rider but are particularly distressing for a new rider. Most curbs at the end of a slope are also associated with storm drains which can be entrapped in as well as contain metal with sharper corners than the common cement curb rounding. Beginner riders need a wide amount of space to experience turning and correcting, something not provided on bike paths and certainly not provided on crowded bike paths. Using parking lots is unpredictable as it can be interrupted by conflicting events and, even when permitted, random cars may still enter or be left in the way to provide additional risks needing mitigation.

I'd like to thank the employees of Montgomery County Parks for their careful and deliberative collection of data and execution of the county's plan to reduce pedestrian, cyclist and traffic fatalities. I fully support the creation of a permanent linear park on Little Falls Parkway. Separating cars from bike traffic, reducing the lanes pedestrians must cross, creating additional recreation space and not significantly impacting travel times on car commuting is an impressive feat.

Bryce Geyer

5304 Ventnor Rd.

Bethesda, MD 20816

From: pitta-thrower0i@icloud.com
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Agenda Item 12
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:13:53 AM

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

Thank you for considering my written testimony regarding my concerns about the proposed changes to Little Falls Parkway. I live on Kennedy Drive in Kenwood. I am writing for a number of reasons: to express my continued concern about dangerous cut-through traffic in surrounding neighborhoods that puts pedestrians and cyclists at risk, to raise safety concerns about the current lane structure of Little Falls Parkway, to ask that resources be used to maintain and expand the Capital Crescent Trail, and finally to share my concern about the lack of transparency and process around Park's decisions.

Although Parks (Andrew Tsai) has been quoted as stating that the partial closure has "eliminated" cut-through traffic, I assure you that this statement is inaccurate. Although volume has decreased from the deluge of cars and trucks caused by Park's 2020-2022 complete closure of LFP on the weekends, we continue to face dangerous and distracted cut-through traffic that puts walkers and bikers at risk, especially during peak times in the morning and afternoon. We regularly observe cars speeding, driving too close to walkers (there are no sidewalks), and failing to observe stop signs and one way signs. We have been told that navigation apps direct drivers onto Kenwood streets when LFP is slow.

As has been reported to Parks, there have been many close calls and I am concerned that someone will be injured. This situation is contrary to Vision Zero.

There are significant safety issues with the current structure: 1) The intersection of Dorset and LFP - the current alignment makes it dangerous to turn left on Dorset into Kenwood, especially when cars in the opposite left lane are turning left on Dorset into Somerset which blocks the line of sight so that left-turning drivers cannot see cars coming down the hill towards Dorset;

2) One lane in each direction on windy roads without a median is disorienting and dangerous at night. Bright headlights from oncoming cars make it difficult to see, particularly in front of the Crescent Trail

crossing; and 3) I am worried about emergency vehicle access to surrounding neighborhoods as I have heard numerous reports of delays on LFP because of the lack of a shoulder.

I am disappointed by the lack of transparency about Parks's decision making and rationale. A few examples below. At a meeting over a year ago, Mike Riley stated both that CCT would not be expanded and that Parks would not reopen LFP to four lanes on the weekends. Parks also reported in March 2022 that two lanes on LFP would make traffic flow more quickly than four lanes. We now hear that the justification for the partial closure is Vision Zero. Parks is intent on a partial closure and I fear that its data collection and analysis were scoped to support that effort. Finally, it seems disingenuous for Parks to use May 2022 data when LFP was closed entirely as the baseline for comparison and to then credit the partial closure for the reduction in traffic in Kenwood when the weekend increase was directly caused by Parks' decision to close LFP on the weekends.

Thank you for your consideration and attention.

AJ Gross

Chevy Chase 20815

From: [David Cookson](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:45:57 AM

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

Dear Planning Board Members,

I am writing today to support the proposed project on Little Falls Parkway. I am a 20 year resident of Montgomery County and use our parks and parks roadways everyday to walk, bike and drive and the safety of all users is important to me.

This project is an important step in advancing safety for all the users on our transportation system in the county.

I urge the Board to support this project.

Thanks,

David Cookson

202-812-1300

From: [Moraima Solano](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Quieter streets and more open space
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:51:18 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 more much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists, as well as lessening noise on neighborhood streets and creating a healthy community vibe that will hopefully grow as the area continues to grow and thrive. I'm not a big fan of regular food trucks...perhaps on special occasions.

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,
Moraima Solano
4809 Grantham Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Carol Barsha](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:52:10 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,
Carol Barsha
4921 Essex Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Maria Suarez](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 9:59:52 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 drive this road every weeks, and traffic has slowed down which is great. Most importantly, I see people walking and even people in a wheelchair riding the side of the road that is blocked to cars. This is fantastic that handicapped people can be out and about when it is a nice day and get some fresh air. Make more community spaces friendly to everyone.

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,
Maria Suarez
6405 Whittier Ct
Bethesda, MD 20817

From: [Ben Schulman](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Keep Little Falls Parkway Road Diet
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:14:07 AM

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

Good morning,

Please keep this road diet / traffic on one side of the street permanent. It has made this crossing far safer for pedestrians and cyclists like myself who use the CCT, and the car-free road has become an excellent public space.

Best,
Ben

--

Ben Schulman
704-773-4303

From: [Sofia Blake](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:17:39 AM
Attachments: [Testimony, Little Falls Parkway, Sofia Blake.pdf](#)

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

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in response to the proposed pilot project near my neighborhood.

Best,
Sofia Blake

5118 Dalecarlia Drive
Bethesda, MD 20816

March 29th, 2023

Testimony by Sofia Tcherckellova Blake
Co-president, Westmoreland Citizens Association
Testifying as an individual at Briefing and Public Hearing

**Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
scheduled for March 30, 2023**

I am testifying as a **resident of Westmoreland Hills**, a neighborhood less than two miles from Little Falls Parkway (LFP), and the proposed re-configuration of LFP between Dorset and Arlington Avenue.

In addition to my capacity as a resident, I ask you to consider my testimony as representative of a **broader demographic group**. Specifically, I am:

- A female in my early 50s who has living in the area for more than 20 years.
- Mother of three teenage children.
- Married to an avid hiker, biker, and outdoors person.
- Co-president of the Westmoreland Citizens Association with about 1000 households.

After studying Montgomery Park's Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project for a couple of months and after speaking to residents of my community both in my capacity as co-president, resident, and friend, my chief concerns regarding the project relate to the **project's safety, rationale, long-term projections for traffic and usefulness and reliability of data and studies presented by Parks at this moment**.

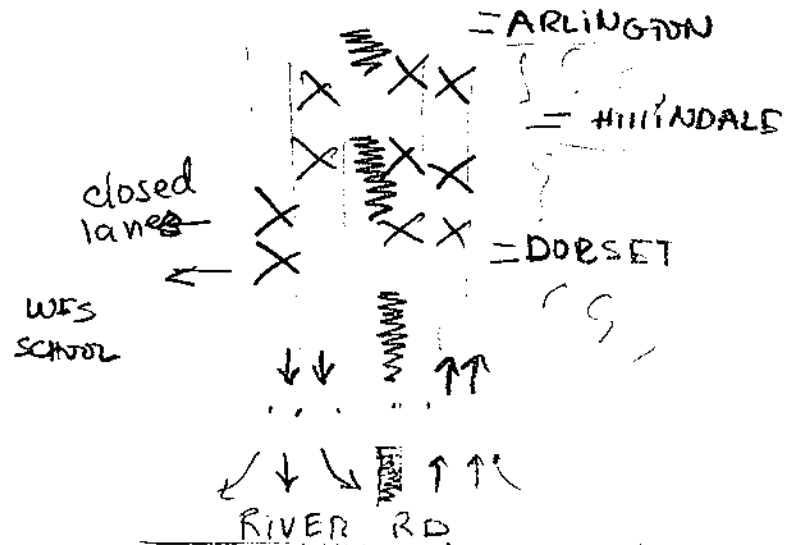
For this testimony, I would like to focus on just two of my objections to the proposed pilot project - **safety and rationale**.

Before I offer you my thoughts on the matter, let me please present a snapshot of the status quo at the moment and express both my relief and surprise that we do not have serious accidents on LFP. **It is a miracle we do not have accidents on LFP right now**, given the absence of signs and clear signals in a rather confusing and complicated traffic pattern. On a couple of occasions, I almost drove in the opposite lane, and a car drove toward me. In a relatively small stretch of LFP, the traffic switches from the two right

March 29th, 2023

lanes to the left two lanes for no obvious reason, and pedestrians or safety cones appear in the middle of the road. The current "pilot" gives me little confidence in the safety of a future setup, which seems to be more dangerous and confusing than what we have now.

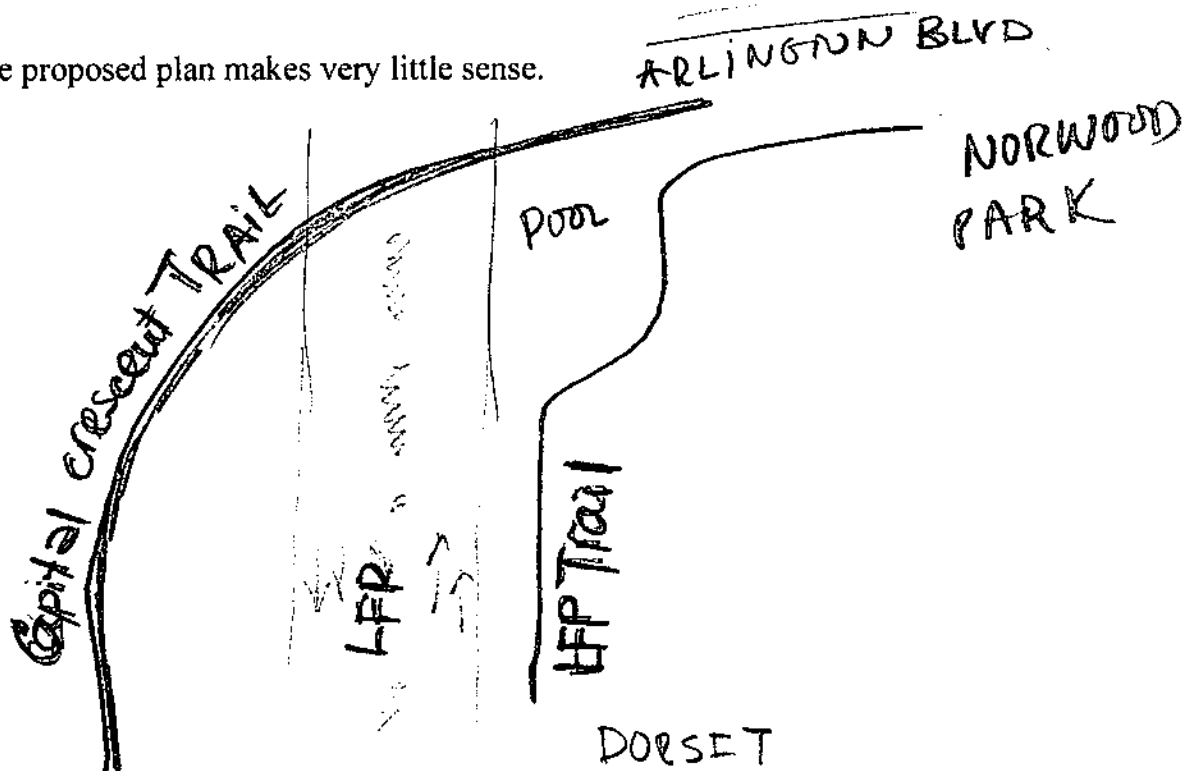
The point is:
It is confusing
and unnecessary



1. Objective & Rationale

For the Planning Board and residents of the area to endorse the closing of two LFP lanes, they need to understand the plan's objective. **What is the rationale for this plan? What is the objective that justifies its budget? How are residents going to benefit from the new arrangement? What problem are we solving?** I have not been able to get an answer to these questions or understand the rationale for the plan.

Here is why the proposed plan makes very little sense.



March 29th, 2023

1. LFP between Dorset and Arlington has **two trails that go almost exactly parallel to the entirety of LFP in that section**. At Dorset, on the east side of LFP, we have the Little Falls Parkway Trail, which goes north, curves to the east of Bethesda Pool and continues toward Norwood Park. On the west side of LFP, we have the Capital Crescent Trail, which crosses LFP to the north of Dorset. So if closing the LFP's two lanes is expected to benefit walkers and bikers, why would we do that when these have two alternative routes just there?
2. If Parks has the budget, and is concerned with parks and outdoor spaces, won't pedestrians, bikers, and residents be better served by Parks **fixing an aging Little Falls Parkway Trail**, which has roots-covered ground and trees that get suffocated by vines?
3. If the objective of the plan is the construction of a linear park, what about **Norwood Park, which is less than a mile**, and has a variety of park facilities? The Capital Crescent Trail has a park along it, not too far from the place too.
4. If the objective is a park, who would use the park, and how would people get to it? At the moment, the only way to get to that section of LFP is either by car or on foot. If by car, where would "park visitors" park? The parking at **Bethesda Pool wouldn't be able to absorb additional volume**. If by foot, the idea that people walking on either trail (Capital Crescent or LFP) would get off the trail to get to an **asphalt linear park by a busy road, seems absurd**.
5. If surrounding communities needed such a park or space, won't they be using it now that two lanes have been closed to traffic for months? **The question of who would use this park remains unanswered**.
6. **Suggestion:** Wouldn't it be more beneficial for surrounding communities for the trails around the park to be spruced up, cleaned up and made safer?

2. Safety

There are a number of safety concerns for drivers, pedestrians, and bikers. Let me mention just a few:

1. **Narrow lanes** for cars going in a single lane close to cars moving in the opposite direction, with **no room to pull over in case of emergency**.
2. **Distracted driving in the context of a "park on the road."** I can imagine drivers looking over their shoulders to "check out" something.
3. If games, food, and more are brought up to that short stretch on the road, more people would be interested in stopping. I imagine **people crossing a busy road** to

March 29th, 2023

get to the other side and cars trying to pull over to “stop for a second,” etc. The proposed configuration leaves no room for errors. Heavier congestion would encourage more people to break the rules - jumping off cars, pulling over somehow, or crossing the street where they are not supposed to.

4. The proposed “park” would be dangerous for pedestrians and bikers. Imagine children playing “in the park” and a biker riding fast on what the biker sees as a “lane.” **Is this a lane or a park - this is bound to create confusion.**
5. As cars pull in and out of the Bethesda pool, they will need to cross a **new pedestrian crossing and two lanes of traffic**. This won't be easy.
6. When cars in either direction want to turn into Hillandale or the pool, **traffic will back up**. Again, not a lot of room to get by.
7. Traffic in the adjacent communities is bound to get heavier as people try to avoid congestion. Neither Kenwood nor Somerset was built with heavy traffic in mind. As more cars go through these neighborhoods, especially Somerset, as people try to get from Wisconsin to LFP, residents will find it harder to get around and walk around. Somerset has an **elementary school where most kids walk to and from**.

Final words:

Many people in my community, myself included, appreciate the work Parks does in maintaining green spaces - trails, parks, playgrounds, and more. As someone born and raised in Europe, the idea of walking around instead of driving is appealing. The issue with the LFP Pilot program is that it has the right idea but at the wrong place and done cheaply. You do not create one thing by destroying something that works well. There are places right around LFP between River and Arlington that can be more walkable or bikeable, perhaps with more sidewalks and better-maintained trails. Our county's resources can and ought to be spent on green projects that will benefit more people without compromising road safety and zero-vision ideals.

From: [Paul Smith](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: I support creating a Little Falls Parkway linear park
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:19:56 AM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

I strongly support the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

We need a safe space for cyclist to share the road with other vehicles. Just as we strive to build safe, well designed roads for cars, we should create appropriately sized and protected lanes for cyclist.

Inadequate bike lanes artificially suppresses bike traffic. Build better lanes and the bikes will come. And along with the bikes, better health, less stress, less traffic, and increased recreational opportunities.

Let's proceed with the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

Thank you,
Paul Smith
7200 Wapello Dr
Rockville, MD 20855

From: [Tina Slater](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: In Favor of Changing Little Falls Parkway to two lanes
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:21:04 AM

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

Dear Chair and Planning Board Members:

I am in favor of the change to Little Falls Parkway from four lanes to two.

Drivers, runners, bicyclists all use the road in its current configuration --- let's make it so all three users can operate on the road, where none gets preference over the other. This is equity, this gives other modes (besides cars) safe access to travel, and this cuts down on emissions. Please support the plan for two car lanes. This is parkland after all – it's not a state highway.

Tina Slater
402 Mansfield Rd
Silver Spring, MD 20910-5515
301-585-5038 landline

From: [Mehdi Dadfarnia](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written Comments in support of the Little Falls Parkway Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:24:50 AM

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

Hearing Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 at 5:30PM EDT

Item: Planning Board Public Hearing - Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project Traffic Data

Mailing Address: 5101 River Rd #1811, Bethesda, MD 20816

The changes undertaken on Little Falls Parkway to reopen one lane in each direction allows vehicular traffic access while also providing additional park space for our whole community. The trails in the area have only grown more popular and adding additional recreational space for our neighbors to enjoy benefits us all. City parks like the one proposed in this project have been shown to increase equitable access to recreational opportunities, continue to increase property values in the neighborhoods surrounding the park, spur community engagement in ADA-accessible spaces, help our community become more resilient to climate change, and promote the opportunity for our neighbors to continue aging in place with dignity. Please continue with the pilot project.

The driving conditions on Little Falls Parkway have for too long been hostile to pedestrians and bicyclists. Enabling multi-modal transportation access on Little Falls Parkway creates a safer community, promotes exercise (tackling our obesity epidemic), and allows community members to engage with each other (tackling our loneliness epidemic).

Mehdi Dadfarnia

From: [Dave Rosner](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: My House is on a Street Next to Little Falls Parkway and I Support the Park and Traffic Calming
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:30:26 AM

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

Dear MoCo Planning Board

I own a home on Greystone Street in Somerset, MD. Our street backs up to Little Falls Parkway.

I strongly support the new lane configuration and the slower traffic speeds it provides.

I support any effort to lower traffic speed and improve pedestrian and bicycle safety, including the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

Thank you for considering my perspective on this.

Thank you,
Dave Rosner
5515 Greystone St
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

From: [Diana Cavenagh](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written Comments in support of the Little Falls Parkway Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:42:51 AM

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

Hearing Date: Thursday, March 30, 2023 at 5:30PM EDT

Item: Planning Board Public Hearing - Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project Traffic Data

Mailing Address: 5101 River Rd #1811, Bethesda, MD 20816

Comments:

Reopening one lane of vehicular traffic in each direction on Little Falls Parkway allows car access while also providing additional park space for our whole community. The trails in the area have swelled in popularity and adding additional recreational space for our neighbors to enjoy will benefit us all. City parks like the one proposed in this project have been shown to increase equitable access to recreational opportunities, continue to increase property values in the neighborhoods surrounding the park, spur community engagement in ADA-accessible spaces, help our community become more resilient to climate change, and promote the opportunity for our neighbors to continue aging in place with dignity. Please continue with the pilot project: our community is not just cars!

Diana Cavenagh

From: [Lloyd Guerci](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#); [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Hedrick, James](#)
Subject: Planning Board Hearing March 30, 2023 item 12, Little Falls Pilot Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:52:14 AM
Attachments: [Testimony L Guerci, Board 3.30.23 item 12.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chair Zyontz and Commisioners:

Attached please find my written testimony.

Thank you for considering it.

Lloyd Guerci
4627 Hunt Ave
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Testimony of Lloyd Guerci
Before the Montgomery County Planning Board
Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
March 30, 2023, Item 12

Chair Zyontz and Commissioners, I'm Lloyd Guerci, a local resident. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The proposed Little Falls Parkway (Parkway) project is governed in part by the Capper-Cramton Act, as amended, and subject to approval by the Montgomery County Planning Board and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) including under the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) and NCPC's regulations and guidance implementing the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (NEPA). 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*; 40 CFR Parts 1501 through 1508; 1 CFR Part 601. The proposed Parkway project is flawed both substantively and procedurally. For the reasons set forth below and others to be advanced in this proceeding, the Planning Board should not approve it, and approval by the NCPC would run afoul of the federal Administrative Procedure Act and guidelines implementing NEPA.

SUMMARY

As discussed below,

- I. Parks Has Not Properly Delineated the Proposed Project
- II. Parks' Approach of Segmentizing the Parkway Road Lanes Elimination/Reconfiguring and Linear Park Projects Is Inconsistent With NEPA
- III. Parks' Proposal Has Significant Negative Traffic Safety Implications
 - A. Conversion of a four-lane divided highway to a two-lane undivided highway significantly increases the likelihood of a crash
 - B. Elimination of a refuge island between the lanes of the Parkway at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing significantly increases the likelihood of a crash

C. There are significant unanswered questions about whether and how the reconfigured Parkway will dovetail and interface with users of the anticipated linear park

- IV. In the Course of Presenting One Proposal to the Planning Board, Parks Has Not Properly Presented Alternatives
- V. Parks Has Not Considered Cumulative Effects
- VI. The Latest CEQ Guidelines on Greenhouse Gas Emission Have Not Been Followed

Conclusion

DISCUSSION

I. PARKS HAS NOT PROPERLY DELINEATED THE PROPOSED PROJECT

To begin, what is before you? As part of providing proper notice, the Parks Department (Parks) should have identified (a) relevant aspects of the Parkway that the Planning Board and NCPC previously approved and (b) Parks' proposed changes to what the Planning Board and NCPC previously approved. Parks has not done so. It has not provided a foundation. It has not identified the changes it previously made to the Parkway without Planning Board and NCPC approval.

Parks has implemented a second (phase II) pilot project on a segment of the Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue that converted a four-lane divided road, with two adjacent northbound lanes separated by a median from two adjacent southbound lanes, to two travel lanes with all vehicles shifted to the previous two northbound travel lanes, providing a single lane of travel in each direction with no median separation. Parks has made physical changes to the Parkway. Parks' Memorandum to the Planning Board (March 30, 2023) describes some physical changes that have been made. Under Current Conditions (pilot project phase II), in the context of the intersection of the Parkway and Hillandale Road, Parks states that additional asphalt pavement was installed along the southbound lane and northbound right turn lanes of the Parkway. p. 15; *see* figure 15. And, Parks says, just north of Dorset Avenue, southbound traffic is re-directed across the grass median to the previous southbound lanes of the Parkway via a new asphalt "crossover." p. 16; *see* figure 16.

If Parks maintained and posted a legitimate administrative record, which it has not done, one would expect that the administrative record would provide the foundation of what the Planning Board and NCPC have approved. Instead of an administrative record, Parks has provided some hand-picked exhibits to support its proposed Parkway project, plus correspondence. In what would be a significant irregularity if the exhibits were considered to be analogous to an administrative record, Parks' exhibits for this Planning Board proceeding exclude photographs, provided by local resident Ms. P. Johnson to Parks officials and staff (Messrs. Riley, Flusche and Frank) over a nine-month period. The photographs debunked Parks' position that, even after people adjusted to the covid pandemic and the novelty of the Parkway closure on weekends wore off, the closed Parkway was heavily used on weekends by pedestrians and bicyclists. Parks' exhibits also exclude responses thereto by Parks personnel.

Parks seeks: Planning Board approval to make the current phase II pilot project configuration permanent with a few modifications; signal timing and intersection improvements; a new turn lane, including shifting a segment of an existing sidewalk along the Parkway; removal of asphalt at various unspecified locations and, subject to future public input and planning processes, repurposing of the previously southbound drive lanes no longer carrying traffic to open park space or other public benefit Parks' Memorandum to planning Board pp. 36-37 (March 30, 2023).

Parks is being evasive on the matter of NCPC approval. While the Capper-Cramton Act uses the word "approved" to describe its level of approval, the word "approved" does not appear in Parks' Memorandum to the Planning Board for this proceeding. Instead, the words "coordinate with NCPC as the project progresses" appear. Parks' Memorandum to the Planning Board p. 34 (March 30, 2023). On the other hand, in the February 15, 2023 public meeting on Little Falls Traffic Studies, one of Parks' slides said: "Montgomery Parks is coordinating with the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) in relation to Capper Cramton Act requirements. Any permanent projects will proceed through NCPC's review process." [Public Meeting Little Falls Parkway Traffic Studies, February 15, 2023 - YouTube](#) (at 38.35 minutes) (emphasis added).

Parks may be retreating from the true nature of its proposal. For this proceeding, as initially posted, the Agenda stated: Staff Recommendation: Approve the permanent configuration of the two opposing drive lanes along Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue, with future study of

repurposing removed travel lanes. Parks revised it to delete permanent: **“Staff Recommendation: APPROVE the permanent configuration of two opposing drive lanes along Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue, with future study of repurposing removed travel lanes.”** (Parks did not respond as of this writing to an email request seeking clarification of this change.) But at page 36 of Parks’ Memorandum to the Planning Board for this proceeding bearing the date of March 23, 2023, the true nature remains in print: “Staff recommends making the pilot project permanent, with a few modifications to further improve traffic efficiency and safety.” Another Parks recommendation is pavement removal, as to which Parks says: “Pavement Removal Making the current roadway configuration permanent would allow for removal of asphalt at various locations.” *Ibid* p. 37.

Parks’ characterization in the Planning Board agenda of what it seeks - APPROVE the configuration of two opposing drive lanes along Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue, with future study of repurposing removed travel lanes - is, in part, a ruse. The closure of two lanes of the Parkway, with proper approvals, provides space on which Parks plans to build a linear park. As stated in Parks’ October 10, 2022 announcement (copy attached):

Montgomery Parks . . . will again reconfigure lanes on Little Falls Parkway(opens in a new tab) for Phase Two of the pilot project(opens in a new tab) to repurpose two lanes of the parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue and create a linear park. Work is scheduled to begin on Monday, October 17, 2022. The new park will add much-needed recreational space in an area where land is at a premium, and adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail – one of the most popular trails in Montgomery Parks’ system. (emphasis added)

On its website Parks said “Why is this being done?” Its answer was in part that “[i]n Phase 2, the capacity of the road will remain as it is under the current pilot project as a two-lane road, but the shifting of lanes will free up space to create a linear park.” <https://montgomeryparks.org/projects/directory/little-falls-pilotproject/> (emphasis added). Figure 13 (p. 14) of Parks’ Memorandum, “Pilot Project Phase II Typical Section” shows the previous southbound lanes closed and a “Linear Park” there. March 30 Memorandum to the Planning Board p. 14; see Appendix D to the Planning Board Agenda, Linear Park Concept Exhibits including an overhead aerial map and images of people at a park.

Parks' recommendations amount to an almost open-ended authorization to itself to undertake further physical changes to the Parkway in the form of pavement removal. Parks describes pavement removal as "making the current roadway configuration permanent would allow for removal of asphalt at various locations, precluding the need for temporary traffic barriers and reducing visual clutter." Parks' Memorandum to the Planning Board (March 30, 2023) p. 37. Significantly, Parks does not describe the locations or say how much, by area or otherwise, pavement it would be authorized to remove.

Parks is bifurcating the approval process to ease the way for it to build a linear park. In this proceeding, Parks proposes approval to remove the previous southbound lanes from the Parkway and pavement removal. Once approved, Parks likely will say, we have this non-utilized, former roadway land that is not used; we can rip parts of the old roadway up. And we want to make a linear park of it.¹ If

¹ There is no need for a linear park. There are two M-NCPPC parks within a short distance from the segment of the Parkway at issue: Norwood Park and Little Falls SVU2 Park. Yet, it is well established that there is a significant shortage of parks and money for parks within growing downtown Bethesda. About five to six years ago, in the course of discussions on the Bethesda Downtown Plan Sector Plan and the Bethesda Overlay Zone, it was recognized that the Bethesda sector does not have much parkland. Some potential park areas are owned by a governmental entity. Some potential areas are private property. One person observed that there is a need for \$110 million for parks. Park impact payments were under consideration. If park impact payments of \$10/sq foot to buy floor area were adopted, that was estimated to generate \$ 40 M over time. Parks Director Riley explained that the Parks budget could not fill the gap. Parks had on the order of tens of millions of dollars for the County annually, which covers acquisition and park development.

The Bethesda Downtown Plan was adopted in May of 2017; parks are discussed at pp. 76-81; https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/BDP-COUNCIL-ADOPTED-MAY2017_SMALL-FOR-WEB.pdf. In the summer of 2017, the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) (ZTA 16-20) was created, with a park impact payment requirement.

To a considerable degree, the anticipations of both the Bethesda Downtown Plan and BOZ are materializing. There is a huge amount of apartment and condominium construction underway and planned in Bethesda. <https://dc.urbanturf.com/articles/blog/the-23-projects-on-the-boards-in-downtown->

Parks says it is not going to build anything on the closed, previous southbound lanes until the linear park (or other open space) is approved, that is another reason to combine any decision to make the Parkway lane reductions permanent and any decision on a linear park into one decision that resolves both.

II. PARKS' APPROACH OF SEGMENTIZING THE PARKWAY ROAD LANES ELIMINATION/RECONFIGURING AND LINEAR PARK PROJECTS IS INCONSISTENT WITH NEPA

Parks' now-proposed approach of separating the Parkway road lanes reconfiguring and linear park projects is inconsistent with the NEPA process. Early in the process, agencies are to consider connected actions consistent with 40 CFR §1501.9. 40 CFR 1501.3(b). Provisions of 40 CFR 1501.9 concerns the scope of issues for analysis.

And, agencies may not segment projects. Agencies are required to evaluate in a single environmental statement proposals or parts of proposals that are related to each other closely enough to be, in effect, a single course of action.

III. PARKS' PROPOSAL HAS SIGNIFICANT NEGATIVE TRAFFIC SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

Traffic safety is subject to a NEPA analysis and substantive review. "Safety considerations should be incorporated into each stage of the NEPA process (project scoping, developing the purpose and need statement, alternatives analysis, etc.) and into each type of NEPA document (categorical exclusions (CEs), environmental assessments (EAs), and environmental impact statements (EISs))." Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Integrating Road Safety Into NEPA Analysis -

[bethesda/18060](#). While there has been important progress toward development of parks on what are now parking lots near the Bethesda Farm Woman's Market, there is a lot to do to create parks and not enough available money. *See*, Bethesda Downtown Plan Annual Monitoring Report pp 24 – 30 (July 2022) <https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/BDP-Annual-Monitoring-Report-PB.pdf>; [Bethesda Park Impact Payment \(P872002\)/Montgomery County Maryland Capital Budget \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](#).

Beyond that, the Capital Crescent Trail is very heavily used and should be widened, given its heavy use. That will require significant funding.

A Practitioner's Primer, [Integrating Road Safety into NEPA Analysis: A Practitioner's Primer - Safety | Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#) (2014)

Parks' proposal fails substantively and procedurally under NEPA. Unquestionably, there are significant safety concerns with the Parkway. There have been crashes involving vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists on the Parkway including one fatal crash. These are documented on Montgomery Planning's Montgomery County Interactive Crash Map.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/vision-zero/montgomery-county-interactive-crash-map/>

A. Conversion of a four-lane divided highway to a two-lane undivided highway significantly increases the likelihood of a crash

Parks has converted a segment of a 4-lane divided road to a 2-lane undivided road and seeks approval for that Phase II action. This reduction of a segment of the Parkway from a divided highway to an undivided highway has significant, negative safety implications. One study noted, "multilane divided roadways were found to be safer than two-way, two-lane roadways in North Carolina, indicated by a 93% reduction in fatal crashes and a 71% drop in property damage only (PDO) crashes. In urban areas, results from previous studies indicated that raised median roadways are 25% to 30% safer than undivided roadways." "Evaluation of the Safety Effectiveness of the Conversion of Two-Lane Roadways to Four-Lane Divided Roadways," p. 41;

<https://www.uwyo.edu/ahmed/Papers/2015%20TRR%20Evaluation%20of%20the%20Safety%20Effectiveness%20of%20the%20Conversion%20of%20Two-Lane%20Roadways%20to%20Four-Lane%20Divided%20Roadways.pdf>

That divided highways are far safer than undivided highways is often addressed in the context of conversion of undivided highways to divided highways. Analyses have indicated that conversion from "most typical" two-lane sections to "most typical" four-lane divided sections appears to result in a crash per kilometer reduction of between 40 percent to 60 percent. For conversions of more extreme configurations (e.g., best typical two-lane to worst typical four-lane or vice versa), crash reductions appear to vary from 10 percent to 70 percent. Thus, conversion to four-lane divided sections appears to result in significant safety benefits. "FHWA, Safety Effects of the Conversion of Rural Two-Lane Roadways to Four-Lane Roadways" p. 5 (1999); <https://www.hsrc.unc.edu/hsis/pdf/99-206.pdf>.

This accepted view that divided roads are substantially safer than undivided roads is sometimes stated in the context of interstate highways. As one State

Director of Traffic and Safety, relying on numbers based on research, observed. “Iowa’s divided, four-lane interstate highways are safer than two-lane undivided highways. By a lot.” (emphasis added). Haws, Dick, “Two-lane highways more dangerous, but I ‘ll still drive them,” Des Moines Register, Aug 7, 2017; [Two-lane highways more dangerous, but I'll still drive them \(desmoinesregister.com\)](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2017/08/07/two-lane-highways-more-dangerous-but-i-ll-still-drive-them/427117001/), Des Moines Register, Aug 7, 2017. Along similar lines, as Gerald Donaldson, senior research director for Advocates for Highway and Auto Safety, said “a two-lane rural road is six to eight times more dangerous than an interstate.” Naylor, Bryan, “Critics Say Roads Safer, But Danger Still Lurks,” NPR, Nov. 24, 2009, [Critics Say Roads Safer, But Danger Still Lurks : NPR](https://www.npr.org/2009/11/24/128044400/critics-say-roads-safer-but-danger-still-lurks).

In short, in view of the substantial safety concerns, the approval of the closure of the two previous southbound lanes in a segment of the Parkway and conversion of the other two northbound lanes (that had been separated from the southbound lanes by a median) to an undivided two-lane highway would be arbitrary and capricious. Any failure by NCPC to fully address this under NEPA would violate NEPA guidelines.

B. Elimination of a refuge island between the lanes of the Parkway at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing significantly increases the likelihood of a crash

Another major problem is the elimination of a refuge island in the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing of the Little Falls Parkway. 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. FHWA, “Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas,” FHWA-SA-21-044, [Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Islands in Urban and Suburban Areas | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwa-sa-21-044/).

A pedestrian refuge island can improve safety and comfort by providing pedestrians with the option of waiting in the median area before beginning the next stage of the crossing. Pedestrian refuge islands can reduce pedestrian crashes by 32%. FHWA, “Pedestrian Island,” [Pedestrian Refuge Island Safe Transportation for Every Pedestrian Countermeasure Tech Sheet \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwa-sa-21-123/); see FHWA, “Step: Improving Visibility at Trail Crossings” page 8 “After” image , [STEP: Improving Visibility at Trail Crossings \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/fhwa-sa-21-123/), Report Number FHWA-SA-21-123 (2021)

The CCT crossing of the Parkway may be viewed in three stages:

- a. Before and at the time in 2016 when a bicyclist on the trail was hit by a vehicle and killed in crossing the Parkway. At that time, the Parkway

was configured as two lanes one way, a refuge island in the median, and two lanes the other way.

- b. Following the bicyclist fatality on the CCT crossing in or about October 2016, Parks created an interim road diet for the crossing. The interim road diet reduced both of the separated two-lane roads of the four lane Parkway to one lane each going north and south, by closing the outside travel lane in each direction. The refuge island in the median remained.²
- c. Parks' changes that began in October 2022. On a segment of the Parkway, the two-lane road going southbound was closed. The other two-lane road was converted to a two-lane undivided highway. The CCT crossing of the parkway was changed. Currently, in the remaining and open two-lane undivided road, at the CCT crossing, there is no refuge island between the two lanes that have traffic in opposing directions.

Parks addresses creating a median refuge at the CCT crossing in a discussion of public input and in its recommendations. It notes that the existing Parkway median between the northbound and southbound lanes functioned as a refuge for trail users prior to the initial road diet and during an earlier phase (Phase I) of the pilot project under which, between Arlington Road and Hillandale Road, one drive lane of the Parkway was closed in the northbound and southbound directions. Parks contends that a median refuge could be assessed as a future improvement at the crossing. Parks' Memorandum to the Planning Board p. 32 (March 30, 2023). It states that it has monitored the trail for safety and that a two-lane configuration, with a 25-mph speed limit and raised crosswalk is demonstrably successful in reducing crashes and conflicts. Parks concludes that it will continue to monitor the safety of the crossing and will assess and implement any additional safety improvements as warranted, such as a median refuge. *Ibid.* p. 37.

There are numerous deficiencies in Parks' position. Its general statement does not describe the monitoring, which did not capture near misses which have been captured on video, including a bicyclist who did not look until entering the intersection and then stops head-to-head with a car. It does not rebut literature sources saying that a median refuge is safer than no refuge. Finally, it is the opposite of proactive; Parks would wait until after something bad happens to improve the CCT crossing with a median refuge.

² As an interim measure, I support this.

In short, in view of the substantial safety concerns, the creation of a two-lane undivided highway without an adequate refuge island between lanes in the Parkway at the CCT crossing is arbitrary and capricious. Any failure by NCPC to fully address this under NEPA would violate NEPA guidelines.

There are other problems with the two-lane parkway configuration that Parks implemented in or about October of 2022. Traffic safety experts and others will address these issues at the March 30, 2023 Planning Board hearing. These include, but not limited to, problems stemming from elimination of the roadway from Hillandale Road and Dorset Avenue that carried southbound traffic which was never before contemplated/presented; lack of a right turn lane at Arlington Road to reduce a multi-lane threat; and a confusing and dangerous roadway configuration, including its configuration from four lanes to two and vice versa.

C. There are significant unanswered questions about whether and how the reconfigured Parkway will dovetail and interface with users of the anticipated linear park.

Parks' proposal seems to assume that its segmented, partial project involving a configuration of two opposing drive lanes on an undivided road and the closure of two lanes along Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue can be settled now and there is no need to consider at the same time issues and potential problems with the full remaking of the Parkway that likely includes a linear park. These include:

- Where will linear park users park vehicles; how and where will people drive to those parking spaces; and what are the safety concerns posed by the interface of vehicle ingress and egress to parking areas and traffic on the Parkway? How does this square with the facts that: there are few parking spaces at the County's Bethesda pool; and the parking lot off the Parkway, north of Arlington Road and labeled "Park and Ride lot for the Capital Crescent Trail" on Google maps already has vehicles from people using the CCT, going to Little Falls SVU park and/or going to the Bethesda pool (*see Parks' memo to the Planning Board for this proceeding at p. 10 and Figure 8*)?

Parks attempts to diminish these substantial concerns about the availability of parking by proffering a "minimal complaints" rationale. Parks says it received minimal complaints about parking to access the Open Parkway when the road was completely shut down, so it does not believe this will be

an issue if the road diet is kept and a linear park is activated. Parks Memorandum to the Planning Board, p. 34. This assumes, without justification, that Parks complaint data base is a sound measuring stick for the availability of parking spaces. Such a data base would under count shortfalls in needed parking spaces. The Bethesda pool is a Department of Recreation facility, not a Parks' facility. A person who was unhappy about parking might tell the pool front desk attendant, rather than call Parks, if they were to say anything at all. There were other problems during the pandemic such as reduced pool hours and partial closures due to a lack of lifeguards, which would have been a direct concern to the pool staff. Many people do not know which entity owns which parking lots in Montgomery County and would not know that Parks owns the one near Little Falls SVU park. Additionally, many people simply do not complain about things to government agencies. Finally, there is general frustration in the County with parking, which would tend to diminish complaints: why bother, as nothing is done to alleviate the problems.

- What problems will be posed by drivers who inevitably will park on the side of the Parkway to go to anticipated food trucks on the Parkway? Given limited Park police resources, isn't this likely to be a real problem?
- How will pedestrians, bicyclists and rollers get to the linear park; what are the safety concerns posed by traffic on the Parkway; and how will they be addressed?
- How will the safety of children, who inevitably will run after balls, etc., in playing on the linear park be assured, given that the park will be near the Parkway.

IV. IN THE COURSE OF PRESENTING ONE PROPOSAL TO THE PLANNING BOARD, PARKS HAS NOT PROPERLY PRESENTED ALTERNATIVES.

Identification and consideration of alternatives are centerpieces of NEPA implementation unless a categorical exclusion has been justified. NEPA requires the evaluation of reasonable alternatives that would accomplish the underlying purpose and need of a proposed project. Under NEPA, a "no action" alternative must be considered. Reasonable alternatives mean a reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, and meet the purpose and need for the proposed action.

In 2019, the Planning Board considered several alternatives. These were:

- Alternate A. The existing southbound travel way is removed completely, and the northbound travel way is converted to bi-directional traffic flow resulting in one travel lane in each direction with no median. p. 18.
- Alternate B shifts the CCT to the existing signalized intersection at Arlington Road and Little Falls Parkway. p. 19.
- Alternate C is a grade-separated trail crossing via a pedestrian bridge over Little Falls Parkway. p. 20
[Parks Memorandum of May 23, 2019, Facility Plan Recommendation for Capital Crescent Trail Crossing at Little Falls Parkway Safety Improvements Project, for Planning Board Hearing of June 13, 2019; a copy is in Appendix F to the March 30, 2023 Planning Board Agenda]

The Planning Board voted for Alternative B –crossing at the intersection of the Parkway and Arlington Road, where there is a traffic light, and without the road diet. It may be noted that Parks’ memorandum for the March 30, 2023 Planning Board hearing does not fairly characterize the June 2019 decision.³

In a later (Sept. 12, 2019) Planning Board session on capital improvement projects (closed to public testimony) the Board, presented with a cost estimate for the project, deferred the project crossing at the traffic signal and retained the temporary two lane Parkway road diet at the CCT crossing with improvements to the crossing platform.

³ As to the Planning Board decision, Parks states that 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. pp 4, 12. This was not simply a matter of a study; there was a decision. As the Washington Area Bicyclist Association characterized it: on June 13th the Planning Board chose to restore Little Falls Parkway and remove a successful road diet, detour the trail to the traffic signal at Arlington Road, and study an expensive bridge crossing over the widened Parkway. As Greater Greater Washington described it in part: the Montgomery County Planning Board voted to add two lanes back to Little Falls Parkway at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing and reroute the trail crossing to Arlington Road a few yards away.

While NEPA guidance emphasizes consideration of alternatives, there has been no such consideration since the late spring and summer of 2019. Parks has scuttled its previous approach of presenting alternatives.

At the very least the Planning Board should consider (a) a bridge for the CCT over a 4-lane Parkway; (b) the configuration adopted by the Planning Board in June of 2019 of moving the CCT crossing of the Parkway to the traffic signal at Arlington Road and the Parkway, and retaining a 4-lane Parkway, (c) a road diet with a reduced cross-section of Parkway from four lanes to two lanes at the CCT crossing, with the outside travel lane in each direction closed, and reopening of all four lanes of the Parkway between Hillandale Road and Dorset Avenue (this is essentially the configuration that emerged from the September 12, 2019 Planning Board session on capital improvement projects but was changed by the May 2022 pilot project phase I changes), (d) Parks' phase I pilot project configuration with the road diet at the CCT crossing and one lane each of the previous southbound and northbound lanes closed and retention of the median, and (e) Parks' proposal (partially phase II pilot project) of closing the southbound lanes and having two travel lanes with all vehicles shifted to the previous two northbound travel lanes, providing a single lane of travel in each direction, with no median separation, BUT with (this is not in Parks' proposal) a refuge island between the lanes at the CCT crossing. Alternative (e) should not be considered until a proposed use of land that is made available by any closed lanes is presented to the Board. The Planning Board needs to consider the no action alternative as well.

V. PARKS HAS NOT CONSIDERED CUMULATIVE EFFECTS

NEPA guidance also calls for consideration of cumulative effects. Cumulative effects are impacts which result from the incremental consequences of an action when added to other past and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Cumulative effects analysis requires the consideration of the effects of multiple projects in concert. This is not limited to proposed actions, but may include other reasonably foreseeable actions. The consideration of possible secondary or cumulative effects should begin in the planning stages of the highway project development process. [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\) and Transportation Decisionmaking | Environmental Review Toolkit | FHWA \(dot.gov\)](#)

A relevant cumulative impact is the impact of traffic from reasonably foreseeable development authorized by the Westbard Sector Plan, the Bethesda Downtown Sector Plan (2017) and that may be expected under the recently adopted Thrive Montgomery 2050 general plan. While Parks has presented traffic counts, it has not properly considered growth in the area. The Westbard Sector

Plan (2016) provides for numerous residential units. The 1982 plan build out which was not fully implemented would have been 1134 units; the 2016 Westbard Sector plan was 2500 units. Westbard Sector Plan page 8. The cap on development in the Bethesda Overlay Zone (BOZ) limits the total density of existing, approved and new development to 32.4 million square feet of gross floor area. The remaining available BOZ Density in downtown Bethesda as of April 2022 was 3,049,100 square feet. *See*, [Bethesda Downtown Plan Annual Monitoring Report July 2022 \(montgomeryplanningboard.org\)](https://montgomeryplanningboard.org) at p. 15.

More broadly, Thrive Montgomery 2050 (adopted 2022) designated River Road as a corridor, from the Beltway to the DC- Montgomery County's boundary. pp 40 – 42.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/2022/Draft%20for%20Resolution%20-%20Thrive%202050%20clean%2010_17_22.pdf

Development is likely to occur. “[A] major part of the Thrive Montgomery 2050 growth map is built on corridors.” “[T]hey’re also central to accommodating the County’s future growth in a more efficient and sustainable way.” *See*, [Corridor Planning](https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/corridor-planning/), <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/corridor-planning/>. The development is likely to create substantially more residential units than the existing single-family residences. In fact, Montgomery Planning’s Attainable Housing Strategies Initiative FAQs say: “Will apartment buildings be allowed in my single-family neighborhood.” Answer: “The preliminary Attainable Housing Strategies recommendations would allow small apartment buildings only along BRT [Bus Rapid Transit] Corridors plus River Road and Connecticut Avenue.” (emphasis added), <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/housing/attainable-housing-strategies-initiative/>. While this is not resolved, it is fair to say that significant development in the local area is very likely over time. And, the Little Falls Parkway is a collector road and would bear considerable traffic from Bethesda heading south in part because of congestion on Wisconsin Avenue at Friendship Heights. It would also bear traffic from Massachusetts Avenue, Westmoreland, Westbard and River Road areas heading north. *See*, Maryland SHA functional classification map.

<https://maryland.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html?layers=65394a03f36c412eb1160bea52c6c9ec>

VI. THE LATEST CEQ GUIDELINES ON GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSION HAVE NOT BEEN FOLLOWED

CEQ’s updated NEPA Guidance on Consideration of Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate Change recommends that agencies leverage early planning

processes to integrate greenhouse gas emissions and climate change considerations into the identification of proposed actions, reasonable alternatives (as well as the no-action alternative), and potential mitigation and resilience measure. 88 Fed. Reg. 1196, 1198 (Jan. 9, 2023). When the Parkway is congested and more congested from ongoing and future development, drivers spend more time behind the wheel, and go from the fuel-efficient driving conditions of moving traffic to fuel consumptive conditions of congested traffic. This increases emissions of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, which in the aggregate is a major contributor to climate change.

CONCLUSION

The Planning Board should defer making a decision in this proceeding and combine it with one on a Parks-proposed use of any lanes of the Parkway that are closed.

If the Board proceeds to a decision, it should consider reasonable alternatives, including (a) a bridge for the CCT over a 4-lane Parkway; (b) the configuration adopted by the Planning Board in June of 2019 of moving the CCT crossing of the Parkway to the traffic signal at Arlington Road and the Parkway, and retaining a 4-lane Parkway, (c) a road diet with a reduced cross-section of Parkway from four lanes to two lanes at the CCT crossing, with the outside travel lane in each direction closed, and reopening of all four lanes of the Parkway between Hillandale Road and Dorset Avenue (this is essentially the configuration that emerged from the September 12, 2019 Planning Board session on capital improvement projects but was changed by the May 2022 pilot project phase I changes), (d) Parks' phase I pilot project configuration with the road diet at the CCT crossing and one lane each of the previous southbound and northbound lanes closed and retention of the median, and (e) Parks' proposal (building on the phase II pilot project) of closing the southbound lanes and having two travel lanes with all vehicles shifted to the previous two northbound travel lanes, providing a single lane of travel in each direction, with no median separation, BUT with (this is not in Parks' proposal) a refuge island between the lanes at the CCT crossing. Alternative (e) should not be considered until a proposed use of land that is made available by any closed lanes is presented to the Board. The Planning Board needs to consider the no action alternative as well.

The Planning Board should put safety concerns above Montgomery Parks' desire to make park modifications and create an unnecessary park on the now closed, former southbound lanes of the Parkway. While a bridge for the CCT over the Parkway is the best and safest long-term option, in the short term, the Board

should adopt alternative (b) above and, if not alternative (b), then alternative (c). If the Planning Board has inclinations toward Parks' recommendation, i.e., alternative (e) above, the Planning Board should defer making a decision in this proceeding and combine it with a later one that includes Parks-proposed use of any lanes of the Parkway that would be closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Lloyd Guerci 4627 Hunt Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

[Little Falls Parkway, Parks' October 10 2022 announcement]

October 10, 2022

[Announcements & News](#), [Press Releases](#)

The project aims to develop a linear park on two lanes of the four-lane parkway.

WHEATON, Md. – [Montgomery Parks](#)(opens in a new tab), part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, will again reconfigure lanes on [Little Falls Parkway](#)(opens in a new tab) for [Phase Two of the pilot project](#)(opens in a new tab) to repurpose two lanes of the parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue and create a linear park. Work is scheduled to begin on Monday, October 17, 2022. The new park will add much-needed recreational space in an area where land is at a premium, and adjacent to the Capital Crescent Trail – one of the most popular trails in Montgomery Parks' system.

The ultimate planned linear park will be located on a portion of Little Falls Parkway that was previously part of Montgomery Parks' [Open Parkways program](#)(opens in a new tab) between River Road and Arlington Road (1.3 miles). That portion of the Open Parkways program was suspended last summer, to study the operational effects of permanently reducing a segment of the Parkway from four lanes to two. Phase One of the pilot project implemented a road diet from Arlington to Dorset, with one lane in each direction and a median in the middle of the traffic flow. MCDOT and Parks independently completed several rounds of traffic counts during Phase One of the pilot and determined that Little Falls Parkway functioned well with two lanes, allowing the project to proceed to Phase Two.

During Phase Two, both directions of the remaining two lanes of traffic will move onto the east side of the median between Arlington and Dorset, currently used for northbound traffic. This realignment will eliminate vehicles in the current southbound lanes while maintaining the other two lanes of Little Falls Parkway for vehicles. Montgomery Parks and MCDOT will continue to independently evaluate the effects of the two-lane reduction on traffic operations on both the parkway and neighboring streets. The roadway shoulders will remain closed until the southbound lanes are safe for community use.

In the spring, Montgomery Parks plans to launch a temporary linear park in the southbound lanes between Arlington and Dorset, with space for walking and biking as well as programming that includes games, events, and tables with seating. Once the temporary linear park is in place, the public will have an opportunity to provide feedback on Phase Two of the Little Falls Parkway Linear Park pilot project.

“We are excited to build on the success of our Open Parkways Program and repurpose traffic lanes to provide additional recreational space for park users,” said Mike Riley, director of Montgomery Parks. “We believe that Phase Two of this pilot will show that Little Falls Parkway can continue to function well for motorists with two lanes while

allowing bicyclists, pedestrians and other park users to enjoy a new linear park, unlike anything that exists in our park system today.”

The Open Parkways program launched at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide more outdoor space for recreation and exercise by closing portions of three parkways to vehicles on weekends. Since its inception, hundreds of thousands of visitors have used the Open Parkways and the program remains popular. The other two open parkways, Sligo Creek Parkway and Beach Drive will not be affected by the Little Falls Parkway pilot program.

Learn more about the [Pilot project online](#)(opens in a new tab).

About Montgomery Parks

Montgomery Parks manages more than 37,000 acres of parkland, consisting of 420 parks. Montgomery Parks is a department of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC), a bi-county agency established in 1927 to steward public land. M-NCPPC has been nationally recognized for its high-quality parks and recreation services and is regarded as a national model by other parks systems. [Montgomery Parks](#)(opens in a new tab)

Accessibility

Montgomery Parks, part of The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, encourages and supports the participation of individuals with disabilities. Please contact the Program Access Office at 301-495-2581 (Voice), MD Relay 7-1-1 or 800-552-7724 or [Email Program Access](#) (opens in a new tab) to request a disability modification. Visit [Program Access](#) (opens in a new tab) for more information.

###

From: [Stacey Wolf](#)
To: [Zyontz, Jeffrey](#); [Piñero, Roberto](#); [Pedoeem, Mitra](#); [Bartley, Shawn](#); [Hedrick, James](#)
Cc: councilmember.glass@montgomerycountymd.gov; [Councilmember Andrew Friedson](#); councilmember.albornoz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.fani-gonzalez@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.jawando@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.katz@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.luedtke@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.mink@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.sayles@montgomerycountymd.gov; councilmember.stewart@montgomerycountymd.gov; Jamie.raskin@mail.house.gov; County.Council@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: March 30, 2023 MCPB Item: 12 Little Falls Parkway
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:26:24 AM
Attachments: [Pasted Graphic.tiff](#)
[Pasted Graphic 3.tiff](#)
[Pasted Graphic 1.tiff](#)
[Pasted Graphic 4.tiff](#)
[Pasted Graphic 2.tiff](#)
Importance: High

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

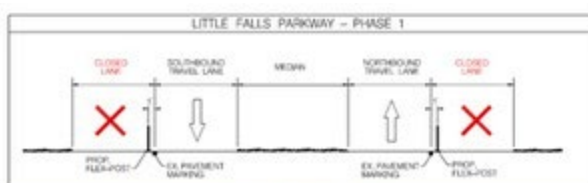
Dear County Leaders:

On behalf of the Bradley House Community, we urge you to reinstate Little Falls Parkway as a 4-lane road with a median, so that we can stop detouring out of the way to Willard Ave. or Goldsboro Rd. to reach establishments on River Road due to the lack of safety we feel on Little Falls Parkway and its' many reiterations. We also request that proper tree-root work, resurfacing, and maintenance is completed on the Little Falls Park Trail (that runs parallel to Little Falls Parkway and Hillandale Roads) from Dorset all the way to Norwood Park, so this park space can be utilized safely and for recreational purposes. Additionally, we request that the Capital Crescent Trail is widened, appropriately, due to its' usage, so this trail can continue to be utilized for recreational purposes, as well!

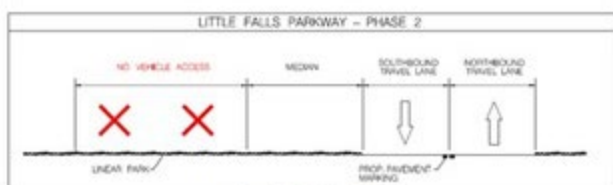
Little Falls Parkway is a main vehicular artery for residents in communities in SW Montgomery County and Northwest DC to reach downtown Bethesda. The "road diet" that narrowed the Parkway from 4 lanes to 2 lanes of traffic from Dorset to Arlington Road was installed without consideration of the additional future density from significant developments in Westbard and downtown Bethesda. The Parks Department's website shows future plans to continue the 2-lane configuration beyond the current configuration (known as Pilot Project Phase 2), all the way to River Road. Vehicular traffic studies by the Parks Department appear skewed. The number of "users" (pedestrians and cyclists) recorded that supposedly used the "Open Parkway", when it was closed to vehicles (April -December 2020) during the height of the pandemic vs. community members observations and documentation from October 2021 - mid-June 2022 (the last day the Parkway was fully closed to vehicles on the weekends) vs. the "road diet" (only 1 lane open in each direction) vs. "Pilot Project Phase 1" in May 2022, do not show statistics that are equal in measure. Furthermore, pedestrian and cyclist use of the Parkway between Mass Ave. to Arlington on the weekends through fall 2020 vs. usage after that until the current project began are not comparing "apples to apples," as the data for 2020 is not comparable with any later data because of the previously Mass Ave.-River Rd. segment of the "Open Parkway" program.



p.2 image (March 30, 2023 memo to MCPB from Joshua Arnett, P.E.; Kyle Lukacs, AICP; and Andrew Tsai, P.E.)



p.5 image (March 30, 2023 memo to MCPB from Joshua Arnett, P.E.; Kyle Lukacs, AICP; and Andrew Tsai, P.E.)



p.6 image (March 30, 2023 memo to MCPB from Joshua Arnett, P.E.; Kyle Lukacs, AICP; and Andrew Tsai, P.E.)

Table 3: Summary of Traffic Count Conditions

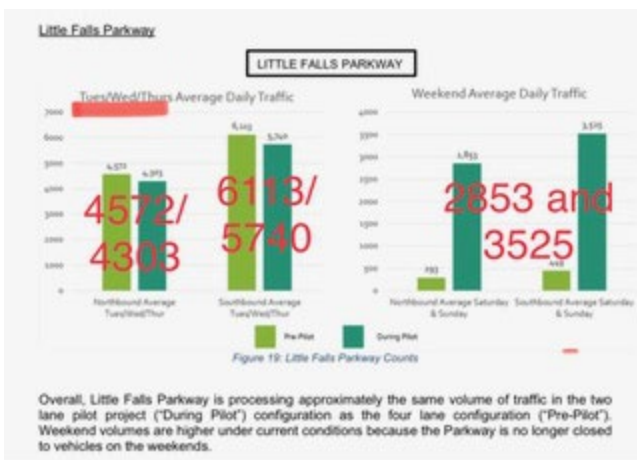
Count Date	Phase	Configuration	Median Separation	School in Session	Open Parkway Days
5/2022	Open Parkway	Two Lanes in Each Direction	Yes	Yes	Saturday - Sunday
7/2022	Pilot - Phase I	One Lane in Each Direction	Yes	No	Suspended
9/2022	Pilot - Phase I	One Lane in Each Direction	Yes	Yes	Suspended
12/2022	Pilot - Phase II	One Lane in Each Direction	No	Yes	24/7

There are safety issues that should be closely examined and further evaluated, as related to Little Falls Parkway.

- 1. Creating Unsafe Situations for County Residents and Guests:** As a result of the latest configuration, along with the lack of reflective material on blockades, and electronic signage that can be confusing for those unaware of the modifications; specifically at dusk and into the night, neighbors have reported numerous “near miss” head-on collision situations. The changes that take the median strip out of the roadway and have the north and south lanes running side by side make collisions even more likely. There are also new challenges for bicyclists, pedestrians, and people pushing strollers in effort to cross the reconfigured lanes without any median. Previous traffic data shows all pedestrian accidents between River Road and Arlington Road have occurred at intersections. Now, there are new traffic backups, as cars make way for pedestrians and bicyclists crossing the Capital Crescent Trail; it’s like “playing frogger” and someone is bound to get hurt. In practice, this cannot possibly be considered Vision Zero compliant. “A critical tenet of Vision Zero is acknowledgement of the reality of driver, pedestrian, and bicycle behavior and to design safety improvements that reduce the possibility of a sever injury even if one or more parties makes a mistake...” (p.32 chart March 30, 2023 memo to MCPB from Joshua Arnett, P.E.; Kyle Lukacs, AICP; and Andrew Tsai, P.E.).
- 2. Fire and Rescue Concerns:** Important safety issues have been openly discussed by personnel at the

Bethesda and Glen Echo Fire Departments who observe that the narrowed lanes create an impediment to reaching a fire, injured person, or accident quickly, efficiently, and safely. If an emergency vehicle needs to make its way through this section, the only option for vehicles in one lane is to go “off-roading” onto the grassy area, toward the actual trail, where residents could or would be using this space recreationally; while cars in the opposite direction would be “locked” in their lane due to the “bollards” (or a future “wall”). Emergency vehicles would be unable to move, as described as an ambulance stuck in traffic for three signal cycles. As density continues to be added in Westbard and downtown Bethesda, traffic on the Parkway will increase, and Parks does not adequately take this into account, as they have failed to do appropriate simulations.

3. **Misconstrued Data:** The road restrictions encourage vehicular traffic to continue detouring through neighborhoods that have no sidewalks. Michael Paylor of MCDOT and Parks Director, Mike Riley have both publicly acknowledged that closing off one lane in each direction of LFP has resulted in cut-through traffic in neighboring communities like Kenwood, Somerset, and Kenwood Forest II. Traffic has also increased on Goldsboro Road between River Road and Bradley Boulevard; but data has not been collected on Goldsboro. The data presented on February 15 appears incomplete and “cherry-picked” to support Parks’ goal of making the “road diet” permanent, rather than accurately presenting the full data (collection from all 7 days, rather than 3 weekdays compared to the 2 weekend days), and taking into account current shifts and potential future changes in traffic levels on the Parkway, as a result of increased residential building in Westbard and downtown Bethesda, and the shift to full or hybrid office work for federal employees and others.



p. 21 Chart (March 30, 2023 memo to MCPB from Joshua Arnett, P.E.; Kyle Lukacs, AICP; and Andrew Tsai, P.E.)

Again, on behalf of the Bradley House Community, we urge you to reinstate Little Falls Parkway as a 4-lane road with a median, so that we can stop detouring out of the way to Willard Ave. or Goldsboro Rd. to reach establishments on River Road due to the lack of safety we feel on Little Falls Parkway and its’ many reiterations. We also request that proper tree-root work, resurfacing, and maintenance is completed on the Little Falls Park Trail (that runs parallel to Little Falls Parkway and Hillandale Roads) from Dorset all the way to Norwood Park, so this park space can be utilized safely and for recreational purposes. Additionally, we request that the Capital Crescent Trail is widened, appropriately, due to its’ usage, so this trail can continue to be utilized for recreational purposes, as well!

Please see map images below regarding the specific trails referenced.



Thank you for your time,

Stacey

Stacey Band

Vice President of External Affairs

Bradley House Condominium Association

From: [John](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: In support of the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:27:49 AM

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

Good morning,

I am in favor of the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project changes. I live in the Saybrooke community of Gaithersburg, MD. I regularly cycle throughout Montgomery County for exercise both on paved trails, within street bike lanes, and along the Capital Crescent Trail. Further, maintaining cyclist and pedestrian safety is paramount.

Sincerely,
-John Woodward

From: [Ronit Aviva Dancis](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Pro Road Diet & More Parks On Little Falls
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:30:06 AM

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

Hello,

The Parks Department's exciting work on Little Falls Parkways has resulted in

- saved lives via provided safer streets
- at zero cost, created more recreation and park space in an urban area where parkland costs \$10 million per quarter acre
- reduced weekend traffic on nearby neighborhood streets

It's a groundbreaking precedent that makes me proud to be a Montgomery County resident. The potential for expanded recreation, parks and public space not just in Bethesda, but in other urban areas, is enormous. Please make it permanent.

Sincerely,

Ronit Aviva Dancis
8708 1st Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

From: [evangeline barnes](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Written testimony in connection with March 30 meeting to consider proposal to close portion of Little Falls Parkway permanently
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:30:58 AM
Attachments: [LFP2.pages](#)

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: [JOHN STEWART](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Item 12: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:37:39 AM
Attachments: [Tesimony of John Stewart March 30, 2023 Agenda Item 12.pdf](#)

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

Attached is my written testimony for the March 30 Hearing on the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

Thank you,
John Stewart
4823 Dorset Avenue
Somerset, MD 20815

TESTIMONY OF JOHN STEWART
Montgomery County Planning Board Meeting
March 30, 2023
Agenda Item 12

My name is John Stewart. My family and I have resided at 4823 Dorset Avenue in the Town of Somerset since 1992, and resided on Langdrum Lane in Chevy Chase West for the ten years prior to that. We have thus lived within a block of Little Falls Parkway for over 40 years.

I am testifying to support the restoration of Little Falls Parkway to four lanes except at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing, where it should be restored to the separated-lane configuration that existed before the current design. I believe the continued closure of this well-used roadway would be an arbitrary abuse of governmental authority, given the absence of any significant public benefit from the continued closure and the safety risks that would result from the proposed permanent reconfiguration of the roadway.

I urge the Board to reject Montgomery Parks's plan for a continuation of its ill-considered project and to direct the immediate return of Little Falls Parkway to four-lane vehicular traffic except at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing.

I will testify in particular about a personal experience with impediments to Emergency Services due to the roadway's modified configuration.

PARKS'S ARBITRARY ACTION IN CLOSING THE PARKWAY HAS MISLED THE BOARD AND THE PUBLIC INTO ADDRESSING THE WRONG QUESTION

Parks unilaterally adopted a road diet on Little Falls Parkway after the Pandemic, without ever putting the question to the affected citizens of Montgomery County. It simply announced its Phase 1 and Phase 2 Pilot configurations, based, I believe, on its stated positions that it "owns" the Parkway¹ and that people always want more parks.²

As a result of Parks's preemptive action, the question now presented to the Board has become, in effect, the *post hoc* low bar of whether the "Pilot" has proved so unworkable that it should no longer be allowed to continue. Parks thus presents data that show only that the closure of the lanes has not been a disaster so far. But from a Planning perspective, Parks should instead be required to show first that there is a need, or at least a substantial public benefit, that outweighs the significant public detriments of

¹ <https://montgomeryparks.org/projects/directory/little-falls-pilotproject/> "As the owners of Little Falls Parkway, Montgomery Parks is the lead for coordinating this effort".

² February 15, 2023, Public Meeting, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWOwegm1XsM> at 36:20. ("as a park professional . . . we hear every day, certainly every week, the need for more parks . . .") The Parks representative stated that such a need comes up in surveys, but no survey was done regarding the proposed permanent closure of half of Little Falls Parkway.

closing a roadway that has been well-used for decades and will need to accommodate even more traffic in the years to come. That it cannot do.

NO NEED FOR THE REDUNDANT “LINEAR PARK” HAS BEEN SHOWN

Little Falls Parkway has for many years served the important function of allowing traffic to move from Massachusetts Avenue and River Road to Arlington Road and into Bethesda without going through the surrounding residential streets. There is no suggested rationale for destroying this important public resource except to accommodate the ill-defined “Linear Park” proposed by Montgomery Parks.

But there is no conceivable need to build such a park on this roadway. The proposed park would lie immediately between, and within mere yards of, **TWO** already-existing **LINEAR PARKS**, the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Trail. These trails are both beautiful, and are (unlike the proposed new “park”) safely separated from car traffic by broad wooded areas. Both of those existing parks are in need of proper maintenance and improvements, which would be a far more effective use of our taxpayer dollars than building the ill-conceived new “park.”

Our family has been walking and biking the Little Falls Trail and the Capital Crescent Trail (at least after the freight trains stopped running) for over 40 years. We walk and bike to Bethesda, to Norwood Park, and in the other direction to Little Falls Stream Valley Park. Our kids learned to ride bikes and rollerblade and skateboard just fine, without needing to close Little Falls Parkway to do so. These same trails and parks are equally available by foot or bike to all residents, including apartment dwellers, of Bethesda, Westbard, and beyond. The idea that there is a need for a third “linear park,” given the trails and parks we already have right here, is simply absurd.

The representatives of the Parks Department reported in the public meeting on February 15 that they received almost 1,900 requests to reinstate the “Open Parks” closure of the Parkway, without disclosing whether they had also received any negative comments from the public. Parks has now submitted a few hundred mostly copy-and-paste emails supporting the proposed project, which assert that “the reconfiguration creates much-appreciated safe recreation space for walkers, rollers, and bicyclists.” Others assert, contrary to general observation, that they already use the closed roadway for walking or biking every day. But none of these commenters explain why they do not instead use the far safer alternatives of the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Trail, and thus do not establish a need for a redundant new “linear park.” There has been commentary about how busy the Capital Crescent Trail is, but the new “park” cannot even be used for through-biking (as if yet a third bike path were even needed), since it terminates before Dorset, leaving only a dangerous path to connect back to the Capital Crescent Trail. And the Little Falls Trail, which I walk multiple times a week, already provides an alternative that is significantly underused, in my frequent experience.

PARKS'S PROPOSED CONFIGURATION IS FAR MORE DANGEROUS

It is self-evident that the tight two-way traffic configuration now in place between Arlington and Dorset is more dangerous than four traffic lanes separated by a median. The sudden lane shifts north of Dorset and the new lane-narrowing south of Dorset are also more confusing and dangerous than the decades-old four-lane configuration. In addition, I know from frequent personal experience that the left turn from southbound Arlington Road into a stacked narrow lane of unpredictably stopped cars at the Capital Crescent Trail is often perilous. And Parks's proposal ultimately to install children's play facilities in the "linear park" would introduce new safety risks, given that the closed roadway would intersect with the still active roadway at four or five locations (near Fairfax, Arlington, Hillandale, the crossover bridge, and Dorset). Our other two immediately adjacent linear parks are far safer, given that they are completely insulated from traffic by extensive woodland. In addition, several children's playgrounds adjacent to but protected from Parkway traffic already exist, at Norwood Park, west of Arlington Road, and north of Dorset next to the Capital Crescent Trail. We have taken our children and now grandchildren to these much safer parks.

EMERGENCY SERVICES VEHICLES WILL BE IMPEDED

One issue of particular concern is the potential impact on emergency services in Somerset, as to which no proper analysis has been done. It was reported in the February 15 meeting that the Police and Emergency Services departments were asked about the reconfiguration of the Parkway and they saw "no concern."³ The Park Police representative acknowledged that Little Falls Parkway was "not the exact same," but still explained her lack of concern by saying that other parkways and two-lane roads were passable. Surely, however, a more serious evaluation of this actual roadway needs to be performed before such an important safety concern is so blithely dismissed.

Much of the discussion on both sides of this issue has been based on generalized speculative assertions. But my wife and I had the unfortunate experience of being in the back of an ambulance one afternoon in early rush hour in late September during Phase I, on our way from Westbrook Elementary to Suburban Hospital, with my wife bleeding from a serious head wound suffered in a fall. The ambulance made it from Massachusetts to River and then to Dorset just fine, because cars were able to pull over on the shoulders to let it through. But when we moved to the backed-up road-diet section between Dorset and Arlington Road, the ambulance was forced to a stop several times. That's because there is inadequate room to pull off the roadway in that section. As I could see behind us through the window, cars had to pull onto the grass down towards the trees, because there is no shoulder on that side. (At the time, plastic stanchions blocked the right side of the traffic lane, but even in Phase II, there is only a very small and intermittent shoulder on that northbound side.) We eventually got through and my wife was treated at the hospital. But a cavalier "we see no concern" is a wholly inadequate governmental response to the question of whether emergency vehicles will be unduly hampered as a result of the "Linear Park" roadway closure. At

³ February 15, 2023, Public Meeting, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWOWegm1XsM> at 1:43:05, 1:44:20.

the least, more consideration would need to be given to modifications of the remaining roadway to ensure there is adequate room for cars to pull over throughout the entire run.

THE PLANNING BOARD SHOULD DENY PARKS'S REQUEST AND REOPEN LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY

I fully support public policy goals aimed at increasing green space and reducing automobile use in our county. But this proposal will do neither. At least some portion of the "Linear Park" would remain paved under the Parks proposal, and there will be more rather than fewer cars, because Parks proposes to create "destination" amenities (like cornhole, giant checkers and food trucks) that are presumably intended to induce more people to drive to it and park somewhere nearby.

The Montgomery Parks Linear Park plan would unjustifiably eliminate an important public resource, without any offsetting public need or significant benefit. I strongly oppose the continuation of the project and request the Planning Board to order the immediate restoration of the Parkway to its pre-Pandemic configuration.

Thank you,

John Stewart
4823 Dorset Avenue
Somerset, MD 20815

From: [Anne Bowen](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:44:36 AM

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

Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

Submitted by Anne Bowen, 5203 Abingdon Rd, Bethesda, MD

The changes to the Little Falls Parkway have generated a potentially dangerous configuration. In addition, the proposed ‘linear park’ makes no sense in this location. The communities affected have not been polled to see if there is any interest in having a ‘linear park’ on the now closed paved roadway.

Historically, Little Falls Parkway has been the primary route into Bethesda from the communities in the southwestern corner of Montgomery County and adjacent DC residents. It is also a primary commuter route for people living in Virginia and working in Bethesda. As communities (i.e., Westbard and Bethesda) continue to expand, the need for this efficient and safe route will only grow.

During the initial stages of Covid when everything was shut down and people, who had to distance themselves from others by 6’ and were desperate to get out and get some exercise, it made sense to close the Parkway on weekends.

Once the Covid restrictions were relaxed, it made no sense to keep the Parkway closed on weekends. This closure left access to Bethesda from the southwestern area of the county with limited options: A) go through the neighborhoods, B) take Western to Wisconsin through Friendship Heights, or C) take either Massachusetts or River to Goldsboro to Bradley. These alternatives led to dangerous traffic issues in the neighborhoods and added to the CO₂ emissions.

Under the current converted configuration, the opposing lanes of traffic on the former northbound lanes present a very real possibility of a collision, either head-on or sideswipe, especially at night. There is no place for traffic to pull off to the side to allow for emergency vehicles to get through. And there is no ability to pull over off the road in the event of a mechanical issue or other emergency.

Those of us who use the Parkway on a regular basis have noted that that there is minimal usage of the closed southbound lanes. Often, we see no one utilizing the space.

The lane conversion has also created a dangerous crossing for the Capital Crescent Trail. Prior to closing the southbound lanes, walkers and bikers could check traffic each direction separately, utilizing the median. Now, they must evaluate traffic coming from opposing directions concurrently. There is a reason that pedestrians are not supposed to cross mid-block on busy streets and it has everything to do with safety.

Next, there is the question -- how are people supposed to come to the 'linear park' (assuming that they are not immediate neighbors)? There is no public transportation to the area so that people must get there by other means. The Pool parking lot is always totally full during the season, with the overflow being absorbed by the 'Park and Ride for Capital Crescent Trail' lot. Therefore, parking in these lots cannot be counted on. Most people will need to find parking in the local neighborhoods, which creates its own safety issues as we learned from what happened in Kenwood when the Parkway was closed on weekends.

Then there is the issue of people accessing the 'linear park.' Unless they can walk or bike to it via the Capital Crescent Trail, they will need to walk from wherever they parked their cars. It will be necessary for these pedestrians to safely cross 2 lanes of opposing traffic with narrow shoulders. It is a given that there will be accidents -- either a pedestrian being hit or cars colliding to avoid hitting a pedestrian.

Given the anticipated growth in the area, it makes absolutely no sense to take a safe and efficient access route into Bethesda out of commission. The Little Falls Parkway should be returned to its original configuration and purpose. The monies could be better spent in ensuring that there is a safe Capital Crescent Trail intersection.

From: [David Kathan](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: My testimony on Item 12 at the March 30 Planning Board -- Little Falls Parkway
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 11:54:18 AM
Attachments: [LFP Testimony.docx](#)

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

I have attached my written testimony in support of the road diet proposed by Montgomery Parks. I have also signed up to speak in person.

David Kathan
4920 Dorset Ave, Chevy Chase, MD 20815

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David Kathan
dkathan@gmail.com

Testimony in Support of Road Diet on Little Falls Parkway

David Kathan

Montgomery Planning Board Item 12

March 30, 2023

I would like to express my support for Park's plan to reduce Little Falls Parkway (LFP) from 4 lanes to 2 lanes between Arlington Rd. and Dorset Ave. I have a unique perspective based the location of my house, my active use of the Little Falls Parkway by automobile, and by foot or by bicycle, and my past testimony about the Little Falls Parkway and the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) crossing. I would like to make three points about Park's proposal on traffic, safety of Little Falls Parkway and the CCT crossing, and the planned linear park.

First, my house is few yards from the intersection of Dorset Ave. and Little Falls Parkway in the Town of Somerset. I have a front row seat to observe traffic on Little Falls Parkway and on Dorset Ave before the pandemic, during the pandemic closures, and during the current road diet. Prior to the pandemic, traffic on Little Falls Parkway flowed smoothly, but at high speeds, and Dorset Avenue had its usual high level of cut-through traffic. During the pandemic closures, Dorset Avenue in front of my house had less traffic -- Somerset residents used other exits out of Town. Under the current road diet, I have not observed any change in traffic on Little Falls Parkway or Dorset from pre-pandemic levels. Nor have I witnessed any increased traffic or traffic tie-ups on Little Falls Parkway. Traffic data presented by Parks supports and confirms my observations about traffic.

Second, the current two-lane configuration is safe for automobiles, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The average speed of automobile traffic is lower – late night drag races are a thing of the past. Traffic flows smoothly, or at least at the same level as pre-pandemic. I use Little Falls Parkway by car many times a week to get to Bethesda and points north, and have not experienced any delays or traffic. A two-lane road is actually easier to cross as a pedestrian or a cyclist, and the closed section of the parkway provides a safe space for pedestrians and bicyclists. With regards to the CCT crossing at Little Falls Parkway, I use this crossing frequently by foot and by bicycle and I have never felt unsafe. I believe that the two-lane configuration for the crossing is safer because trail users can see both lanes of the traffic at the same time, plus drivers have a visual clue that they need to stop if the other lane is stopped for a trail user. My support for the current configuration is significant because I testified before the Planning Board in the past arguing for a shift of the CCT crossing to the controlled intersection at Arlington Road because of my safety concerns. While I still support such as shift, I now believe that the two-lane configuration is sufficiently safe. Safety data presented by Parks supports and confirms my observations. Parks' data show lower average speed and no accidents at the crossing for the last several years.

Third, I am fully in support of the addition of the new open, and hopefully green, space that will be created in the next phase of the Little Falls Parkway redesign. I understand that the design and need for a linear park is not subject to review at this hearing, but I see this as one of the major benefits of the road diet. I cannot believe that people are arguing that we have enough parks and we don't need another. We live in a densely populated part of Montgomery County, covered by too much impervious surfaces. To preserve the health of our environment and the health of the Little Falls watershed, Potomac River, and the Chesapeake Bay, we need to reduce impervious surfaces. I hope that in the next phase of the planning for Little Falls Parkway will include the removal of asphalt from the now unused portion of the Little Falls Parkway.

From: [Debbie Heller](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Debbie Heller](#)
Subject: Re: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project: resubmitted testimony from Debbie Heller
Date: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 2:05:48 PM
Attachments: [Debbie Heller Little Falls testimony-1.pdf](#)

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

Dear Ms. Coello:

Thank you for letting me know that you did not get my attachment of the testimony I submitted. Here is again, I hope this works! I especially appreciate you reaching out about this as I know you must be very busy with people sending in testimony.

All my best,
Debbie

On Wed, Mar 29, 2023 at 12:33 PM MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Good afternoon Ms. Heller,

May you please resubmit your testimony attachment? Your initial email didn't have a compatible attachment.

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: Debbie Heller <debbielheller@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2023 10:57 AM
To: MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org>
Cc: Debbie Heller <debbielheller@gmail.com>
Subject: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

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

Hello:

Please accept my testimony for the Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project.

Sincerely,

Debbie Heller

4803 Falstone Avenue

Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815



Little Falls Parkway Testimony for Planning Board March 29, 2023.docx

**Debbie Heller
4803 Falstone Avenue
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815**

Testimony for the Montgomery County Planning Board

Hearing Date: March 30, 2023

Hearing Item: Little Falls Parkway Pilot Project

To Chair Jeffrey Zyontz, Member Shawn Bartley, Member James Hedrick, Member Mitra Pedoeem, and Member Roberto Piñero:

My name is Debbie Heller, and I am a resident and an elected town council official from the town of Somerset. I have lived in Somerset for 38 years.

I am speaking today to urge you to **vote against** the permanent road diet between Dorset Avenue and Arlington Road.

I have several objections to the road diet, but today I will talk about the most important objection and that is safety. Taking away the median and cutting the lanes from four to two is confusing and has caused the northbound traffic to back up all the way to Dorset Avenue, thus encouraging traffic to cut through the town of Somerset on Dorset Avenue.

Dorset is bookended between Little Falls Parkway and Wisconsin Avenue; it is the perfect cut through to get to Wisconsin Avenue from Little Falls Parkway especially when it is **backing up** as it does to accommodate the crossing at the Capital Crescent Trail. With the Little Falls Parkway reduced to two lanes, more cut-through traffic is a guarantee. The Parks department presented data to the Planning Board to suggest that there has been no increase in cut-through traffic since the road diet has been in place, but their data is flawed. The future traffic count assessment is inadequate. It was done during the Covid pandemic when we were all driving less. When the Westbard development is completed, it will create 410 new apartments and 106 townhouses. How can that not impact the traffic on Little Falls Parkway? The study also ignores major development underway or zoned/proposed in downtown Bethesda, Friendship Heights and along River Road. Bethesda alone is slated to have 6000 new apartments!

I am not sure if you know this, but the Somerset Elementary school is embedded in the town of Somerset.

Currently, the school has 330 students and 55 staff members. But this school is under capacity right now due to boundary changes this year. Its actual capacity is 516 students, and it is expected that enrollment will increase over the next years to reach capacity again.

Children travel to school by either walking, driving, or taking the school bus. There are four school buses that enter the neighborhood on Dorset Avenue. Dorset is a narrow street that has traffic in both directions. It can be challenging to get to the school because of all the cars dropping off students. In addition, cut-through traffic from Little Falls Parkway adds to the congestion, not to mention our own residents who enter and leave the neighborhood. We have always had a lot of traffic; this is not new. What is new is that there is even more traffic since the Little Falls Parkway configuration changed.

Another problem is that to get to the school and leave the school you must take Dorset Avenue. There is no way around that. The congestion is bad, and it is dangerous especially to the children who walk to school.

There are too many cars that travel on Dorset Avenue during the prime morning time to be able to ensure that children can get to school safely. Cars cutting through the neighborhood come speeding over the speed bumps and run the stop signs. Cars are not the only ones to travel very fast on Dorset Avenue, bikers do the same. Just last week I drove behind a biker on Dorset Avenue during the morning school rush. When I got to the red light at Dorset and Wisconsin avenue, I was the fourth car back in the line. The biker that was in front of me rode around the waiting cars in the opposing lane and when he got to the light which was still red, he went around the cars to turn right onto Wisconsin Avenue, but just as he was turning right a school bus was turning onto Dorset and the bus driver missed the biker by maybe a foot! The bus driver had to stop short to avoid hitting the biker. It was a tragedy in the making.

Dorset Avenue always had a lot of cars traveling on it during the morning rush hour, but now we have even more cars! The Parks department will tell you that the traffic has not increased, but I live there, and I am going to tell you that I know first-hand that is not true.

Cars, buses, bikes, and children on a narrow street that now has more cars and congestion than ever is a recipe for tragedy. Please reinstate Little Falls Parkway to its original four lanes so that Dorset Avenue will have less cut-through traffic and help keep all of us safer. Thank you.