

Appendix G

County Council Historical Correspondence

- July 2019 County Council Transportation & Environment (T&E) Committee Letter to Montgomery County Planning Board
- County Council Approved MNCPPC FY21-26 CIP Budget Removing Capital Crescent Trail at Little Falls Parkway Project from CIP (P872103), applicable pages only
- June 2021 County Council *Support for Continuing Open Streets* Resolution (19-892)



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENT (T&E) COMMITTEE

July 31, 2019

Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Commissioners of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

On June 13, 2019 the Board voted to eliminate the road diet on Little Falls Parkway and to instead reroute the crossing of the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) to the intersection of Arlington Road. This was an alarming decision and we hope that as the facility plan process continues, you will take pedestrian safety precautions into consideration.

In 2016 the Montgomery County Council passed a resolution committing the County to Vision Zero, a policy framework that aims to reduce traffic-related fatalities to zero. A key principle of Vision Zero is that "Human life takes priority over mobility and other objectives of the road system."¹ As the most heavily used trail in the County (2,000-4,000 users daily), creating the safest possible crossings of the Capital Crescent Trail is critical to our Vision Zero plans.²

The Little Falls Parkway and Capital Crescent Trail intersection is heavily used by bikers and walkers. In October 2016, Ned Gaylin was struck by a driver and subsequently killed while he was riding his bicycle crossing this intersection. Shortly after this fatality, the Parks Department narrowed the road to two lanes and lowered the speed limit to 25mph, while they studied a longer term solution to the conflict. The road diet slowed vehicular speeds to an average 17mph, eliminated the multiple lane threat, and encouraged bicyclists to slow down.

The decision was lauded in the County's Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan as a prime example of how to improve a dangerous crossing.³ In the two years before the road diet was instituted, there were 12

¹ Montgomery County Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan, Page 1. November 2017:
https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/Resources/Files/Montgomery_20County_20Vision_20Zero_2020Year_20Action_20Plan.pdf

² The 2016 resolution led to the creation of the County's Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan, which recommended the County evaluate and improve trail crossings so that vulnerable users can cross safely. See IBID, Page 19

³ Montgomery County Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan, Page 20. November 2017:
https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/Resources/Files/Montgomery_20County_20Vision_20Zero_2020Year_20Action_20Plan.pdf

crashes between trail users and motorists.⁴ In the 2+ years after the road diet was instituted, there has been an over 50% reduction in crashes, with, most importantly, no fatalities.

In considering longer term plans for the crossing, Parks staff recommended Alternative A, which retained the road diet and further improved the crossing. However, the Board chose a configuration that restored four lanes of traffic and moved the crossing to the intersection at Arlington Road.

When you receive the facility plan for this configuration, I urge you to look closely and consider the following questions:

Is it safer?

Trail users will now have to cross four lanes of traffic (~80ft) instead of two (~24ft) even though Park’s staff explicitly stated, “Crossing two lanes is always safer for trail users than crossing four lanes,”⁵ because of the longer crossing distances and faster motorist speeds. In addition to the high vehicle speeds, the four lane crossing of the CCT and Little Falls Parkway was unsafe because it caused a particular problem where a motorist in one lane yields to a crosswalk user, but blocks the view of a motorist in the next lane who neglects to stop and then crashes into the crosswalk user.

What are the impacts?

To make the signalized crossing safer, it will need to be changed so that pedestrians and bikers have more time. Will this additional delay cause more drivers to use neighborhood roads than the existing road diet? MCDOT is presently working to install traffic calming features that will reduce the desire by drivers to go around the road diet feature. We may be able to address the concerns that have been raised about traffic.

What does it cost?

The existing road diet may have a lesser impact on surrounding areas than the Board’s solution. It also has a minimal cost. Given our County’s many other Vision Zero priorities, including on the Capital Crescent and Metropolitan Branch trails, how would you prioritize spending on this change relative to other trail crossings and Parks projects?

We are concerned that removing the road diet is a setback for Vision Zero and further puts pedestrians and bicyclists at higher risk. We need to strengthen, not weaken, our commitment to Vision Zero.

Thank you for your careful consideration of these views.

Sincerely,



Tom Hucker
Councilmember (District 5)
Chair, T&E Committee



Hans Riemer
Councilmember (At Large)
Member, T&E Committee



Evan Glass
Councilmember (At Large)
Member, T&E Committee

⁴ Montgomery County Parks Department Staff “Facility Plan Recommendation for Capital Crescent Trail Crossing at Little Falls Parkway Safety Improvements Project,” Page 22. May 23, 2019:

<https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Capital-Crescent-Trail-Little-Falls-Parkway-Facility-Plan-Report.pdf>

⁵ Montgomery County Parks Department Staff “Facility Plan Recommendation for Capital Crescent Trail Crossing at Little Falls Parkway Safety Improvements Project,” Page 23. May 23, 2019:

<https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Capital-Crescent-Trail-Little-Falls-Parkway-Facility-Plan-Report.pdf>

Resolution No: _____
Introduced: _____
Adopted: _____

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: County Council

SUBJECT: Approval of the FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Program, and Approval of and Appropriation for the FY 2021 Capital Budget of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Background

1. As required by the Maryland Code, Land Use Article, Section 18-104 and Section 18-112, the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission sent to the County Executive an FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Program and an FY 2021 Capital Budget for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission.
2. Section 302 of the County Charter requires the Executive to send to the County Council by January 15 in each even-numbered calendar year a 6-year CIP, which the Executive did on January 15, 2020 for the 6-year period FY 2021-2026. Section 302 requires the affirmative vote of at least 5 Councilmembers to approve or modify the Executive’s Recommended CIP. After the Council approves a CIP, Section 302 permits the Council to amend it at any time with the affirmative vote of at least 6 Councilmembers.
3. Section 303 of the Charter requires the Executive to send to the Council by January 15 in each year a Recommended Capital Budget, which the Executive did on January 15, 2020.
4. As required by Section 304 of the County Charter, the Council held public hearings on the Capital Budget for FY 2021 and on the Recommended CIP for FY 2021-2026 on February 5 and 6, 2020.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution for the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission:

1. For FY 2021, the Council approves the Capital Budget and appropriates the amounts by project shown in Part I.

2. The Council reappropriates the appropriations made in prior years for all capital projects:
 - a) except as specifically reflected elsewhere in this resolution;
 - b) in the amounts and for the purposes specified in the Approved CIP for FY 2021-2026; and
 - c) to the extent that those appropriations are not expended or encumbered.

3. The County appropriation for Acquisition: Non-Local Parks and Legacy Open Space includes:

P998798	Acquisition Non-Local Parks-County Current Revenue-General	\$200,000
P018710	Legacy Open Space-County Current Revenue-General	\$200,000
P018710	Legacy Open Space-County G.O. Bonds	\$436,000
	(\$100,000 of G.O. Bonds appropriation is for Personnel Costs)	

The County will contribute the following amounts for non-local park projects:

County G.O. Bonds	\$6,330,000
County Current Revenue-General	\$3,513,000

4. The Council approves the projects for the FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Program as presented in the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission FY 2021 Capital Budget and the FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvements Program (November 2019), with the exceptions attached in Part II. Those projects are approved as modified.
5. The Council approves the close out of the projects in Part III.
6. The Council approves the partial close out of the projects in Part IV.
7. If a sign recognizing the contribution of any Federal, State, or local government or agency is displayed at any project for which funds are appropriated in this resolution, as a condition of spending those funds each sign must also expressly recognize the contribution of the County and the County's taxpayers.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council



Capital Crescent Trail Crossing at Little Falls Pkwy (P872103)

Category	M-NCPPC	Date Last Modified	05/16/20
SubCategory	Development	Administering Agency	M-NCPPC
Planning Area	Bethesda-Chevy Chase and Vicinity	Status	Preliminary Design Stage

Total	Thru FY19	Est FY20	Total 6 Years	FY 21	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	Beyond 6 Years
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EXPENDITURE SCHEDULE (\$000s)

TOTAL EXPENDITURES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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FUNDING SCHEDULE (\$000s)

TOTAL FUNDING SOURCES	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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APPROPRIATION AND EXPENDITURE DATA (\$000s)

Appropriation FY 21 Request	-	Year First Appropriation	
Appropriation FY 22 Request	-	Last FY's Cost Estimate	-
Cumulative Appropriation	-		
Expenditure / Encumbrances	-		
Unencumbered Balance	-		

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

THIS PROJECT WAS NOT APPROVED FOR THE FY21-26 CIP.

The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) is the most popular shared-use trail in Montgomery County, connecting Washington, D.C. with Silver Spring. In Bethesda, the CCT crosses Little Falls Parkway, a four lane, Park-owned road. The crossing has been the site of numerous incidents, including a bicyclist fatality in 2016. In 2017, M-NCPPC implemented an interim road diet to reduce vehicle speeds, increasing safety at the crossing. This project is to design and construct permanent safety improvements for the trail crossing. Staff facility plan recommendation was presented to Planning Board in June 2018, which subsequently approved diversion of the Trail to the intersection of Little Falls Parkway and Arlington Road to cross with the traffic signal, and re-open all four lanes of Little Falls Parkway to vehicle traffic.

DISCLOSURES

A pedestrian impact analysis will be performed during design or is in progress.

COORDINATION

Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Department of Permitting Services, Planning Department, Planning Board, Coalition for Capital Crescent Trail, Park Police, County Fire Rescue Services.

Resolution No.: 19-892
Introduced: May 27, 2021
Adopted: June 15, 2021

**COUNTY COUNCIL
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

Lead Sponsor: County Council

SUBJECT: Support for Continuing Open Streets

Background

1. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Montgomery Parks launched the Open Parkways program, closing portions of Sligo Creek Parkway, Little Falls Parkway, and Beach Drive to vehicle traffic on weekends to allow pedestrians and bicyclists to use these facilities in a safe and socially-distanced manner.
2. As of April 2021, Montgomery Parks reported 624,000 pedestrian and bicyclist trips during the Open Parkways periods.
3. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation began the Shared Streets program to close select County roadways to vehicle traffic to allow residents and businesses to engage in safe and socially-distanced in-street activities such as walking, biking, outdoor dining, and retail activity.
4. The Shared Streets effort includes partnerships with the Bethesda Urban Partnership, Urban Districts, Regional Services Centers, the State Highway Administration and other entities to set up outdoor dining spaces in roadways to support curbside and carryout dining at local restaurants facing indoor capacity restrictions due to the pandemic.
5. Outdoor dining and activity areas in roadways include the Bethesda Streeterly, Wheaton Streeterly, Silver Spring Streetdine, and Newell Street Temporary Neighborhood Park Expansion as well as spaces supported by other jurisdictions including Gibbs Street in the City of Rockville, the Takoma Park Streeterly in the City of Takoma Park, and the Germantown Streeterly at BlackRock.
6. Shared Streets included at least eight Temporary Neighborhood Greenways that welcomed pedestrians and bicyclists while limiting vehicles to local traffic only so residents have more space for outdoor activity and physical distancing.

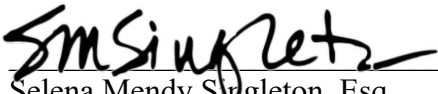
7. At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Park Service closed the portion of Beach Drive in Washington, D.C., near the Montgomery County border to vehicle traffic to allow residents from the Montgomery County and the District to use the road for socially-distanced recreation.
8. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided jurisdictions around the world a chance to rethink how public spaces are best used and how they may be repurposed to better promote community health and vibrancy.
9. The County Council has strongly supported the various aforementioned Open Streets efforts by advocating for them, communicating them to the public, and through direct financial aid such as Resolution 19-690 – a \$1.25 million special appropriation to assist with the purchase of equipment to winterize the Streeteries and other outdoor dining areas.
10. The return of vehicles to Open Streets would eliminate the ability for residents to use the spaces for walking, biking, and supporting local businesses.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Council supports the continuation of Open Streets – including but not limited to Open Parkways, Shared Streets, Streeteries, Temporary Neighborhood Greenways, and the Beach Drive closure in Washington, D.C. – and will support efforts by County and non-County agencies or organizations to enhance these programs as appropriate.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Selena Mendy Singleton, Esq.
Clerk of the Council