

Item 8 - Correspondence

From: [Jay Everhart](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Submission of written testimony regarding item #8 on 20 July 2023 meeting
Date: Wednesday, July 19, 2023 9:24:18 AM
Attachments: [Written testimony on item #8 for 7 20 2023 parks and planning meeting.pdf](#)

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

Dear Chairman Harris,

Attached is written testimony on CRABBS BRANCH WAY EXTENSION AND WASHINGTON GROVE CONNECTOR TRAIL – STUDY UPDATE, item #8 on the July 20th Planning Board meeting.

Yours truly,

Jay Everhart
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18 July 2023

Montgomery County Planning Board
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3760

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

I am writing regarding item #8 on the July 20th Planning Board meeting agenda in which two reports are linked: CRABBS BRANCH WAY EXTENSION AND WASHINGTON GROVE CONNECTOR TRAIL – STUDY UPDATE

WASHINGTON GROVE CONNECTOR

I have advocated for a shared use path between Washington Grove (WG) and Crabbs Branch Way since moving to WG 7 years ago. In fact, on our first morning in town, I walked with my dog the short distance from the southern end of Brown Street to the end of Crabbs Branch Way and wondered why there was not already a permanent path. Fortunately, the shared use path, now known as the WG Connector, was then included in the Montgomery County Bicycle Master Plan and later as a Tier 1 project. Furthermore, funds were designated for the project. At a special WG Town Meeting, nearly 80% of attendees voted in favor of the Connector between Brown St and Crabbs Branch Way and it was subsequently endorsed unanimously by our Town Council. Design work by Montgomery County Department of Transportation (DOT) did not begin until June 2022. At an April 2023 public presentation by DOT, Town residents strenuously objected to the 15% design plan largely because it tied the shared use path to a proposed road between Amity Drive and Crabbs Branch Way (more about the road below). The Town considers two out of six recently proposed routes as the best alternatives, with a preference for one (Figure 1).

Building the WG connector is not just a matter of improved non-vehicular transportation and recreation in the center of the county that is now divided by an interstate. It is also a matter of racial and ethnic equity. The surrounding jurisdictions of Rockville and Gaithersburg are among the most ethnically diverse and multicultural in the entire country. The WG Connector will be a route between these communities and to the Shady Grove Metro station, which would be just a mile from the Connector. It would be most unfortunate to further delay this important connection in a part of the county that is sadly deficient in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and is also where persons of color constitute a majority of the population. We hope that this route will be reviewed favorably and that the full design will be completed forthwith.

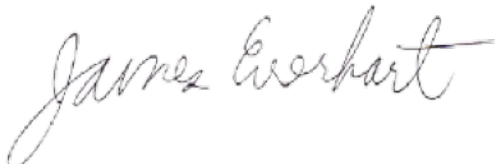
CRABBS BRANCH WAY EXTENSION

This road would be built between the ends of Amity Drive and Crabbs Branch Way across unspoiled Piedmont Crossing Local Park. DOT has estimated that the road would cost \$3 million though it is currently unfunded. This road was inserted into the Shady Grove Master Plan with minimal justification. By DOT's own estimates, it will do little to reduce the relatively

brief delays at nearby intersections. The only significant traffic improvement offered by the road would be to residents near the east end of Amity. And those who live along Amity will see a major increase in traffic going by their homes. Thus, it is a mystery how planning staff can state that the traffic analysis supports the road extension. It will also not provide improved access to Piedmont Crossing Local Park, which is already accessible by paths from 3 directions. Just 26 acres, a significant chunk of the park would be eliminated by a road across its widest part. In the attached aerial photograph (Figure 2), one can see that a road between Amity Drive at the top right of the photo and Crabbs Branch Way at the bottom left would bisect the park. To destroy park land in Montgomery County in this day and age requires a compelling argument, which has not been made.

Tying the WG Connector to the roadway would delay the Connector's completion by years. The roadway would also be inconsistent with stated planning goals of Montgomery County. For example, Thrive Montgomery states that its "focus on a compact form of development with a mix of uses supported by transportation systems that make alternatives to driving practical and attractive are essential pieces of any comprehensive strategy to fight climate change." Building a road across the Piedmont Crossing Park would encourage driving and discourage alternatives. Furthermore, the future high level of traffic on the existing section of Crabbs Branch Way will put cyclists and pedestrians at risk where they need to cross the road. Thus, the Crabbs Branch Way Extension would be inconsistent with the County's goal of eliminating "all transportation-related roadway fatalities and severe injuries."

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James Everhart". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name and address.

James Everhart
118 Grove Ave, #266
Washington Grove MD 20880

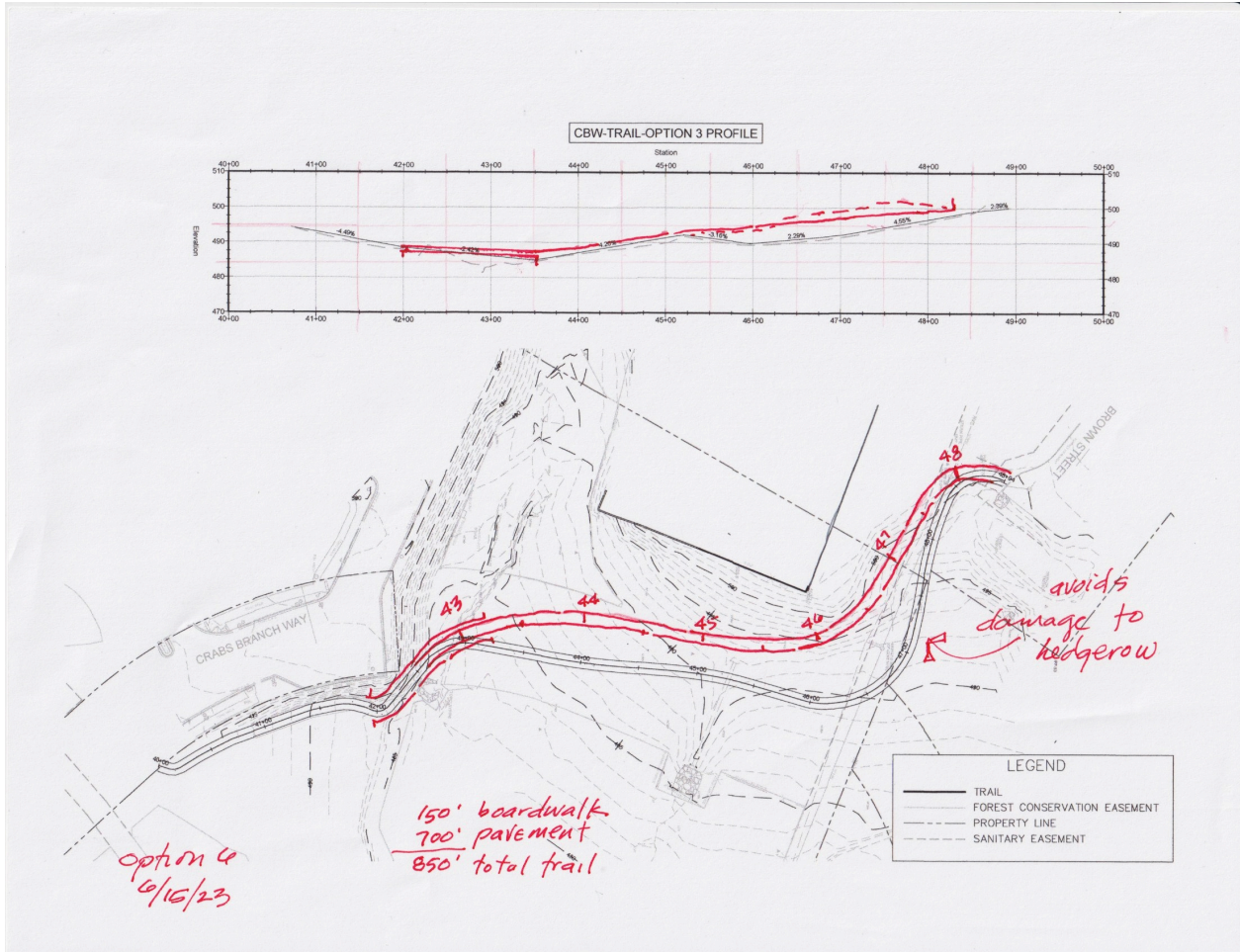


Figure 1. Preferred route of Washington Grove Connector between Brown St on the right and Crabbs Branch Way on the left.



Figure 2. Aerial view of Piedmont Crossing Local Park. The end of Amity Drive is in the upper right and Crabbs Branch Way in the lower left.