

Item 5 - Correspondence

From: [Goshen Association](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Aldrich, Stephen](#)
Subject: Testimony for Jan.11th Agenda, MR2024002-Brink Road Bridge
Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 10:28:31 AM
Attachments: [BridgeRenovaton.GGCA \(1\).pdf](#)

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Dear Sir or Madam:

Please see attached written testimony on the above referenced Agenda Item #5 from The Greater Goshen Civic Association.

Let me know if there is any other procedure we need to follow in order to get this testimony posted.

Thank you,

The Greater Goshen Civic Association

To Whom It May Concern,

The Greater Goshen Civic Association in conjunction with its members and residents would like to bring to the attention of the Montgomery County Planning Board some concerns regarding the upcoming renovation of the Brink Road Bridge which is on a Boulevard and serves as an area connector road.

1. Per the plans shared at a UCAB meeting within the past 2 years, the designs shown on their presentation to UCAB have changed from the current plans shared with GGCA.
 - a. No pedestrian walkway is shown on the current plans as they were discussed and shown at the UCAB meeting. Without this walkway or non-buffered sidewalk or bike lane, there will continue to be no safe way for people parking on Brink Rd to cross the bridge to connect to the park entrance. It is GGCA's request that the plan for renovation have safe egress for pedestrians and bicyclists to cross the bridge. Currently the narrow bridge allows no egress for bikes or pedestrians in a safe and effective manner with traffic. We request that the planning board add this back to the plans. Under Bill 22-24. Sec.49-31 classification of roads: Brink Rd is considered a Boulevard and Wightman Rd is considered an Area Connector in the Agricultural Reserve that serve as a residential area connector road which requires accommodations for safe egress for pedestrians, bicycles, and transit users. Furthermore these roads are within the reconstruction of the bridge plan and therefor under Art.2 Road Design and Construction Code Sec.49-25 Complete streets policy and standards, the planning, design, and construction of transportation facilities in the public, right of way, shall be designed so that the safety and convenience of all intended users of the roadway system (inclusive of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, automobile drivers, commercial vehicles, etc)... is accommodated and expands the connectivity for users while ensuring access, convenience, safety and investment of resources are equitably applied.
 - b. The parking area has changed from near the northeastern entrance to the Seneca Valley hiking trail (off of Brink Rd) which had a 15 car parking capacity and turn around for egress to the corner of Wightman (South) and Brink Road, on property that is currently residentially owned by a community member. The new proposed plan has no turn around capability but instead egress is having parked cars exiting the parking area by backing onto the most heavily trafficked area of Wightman and Brink where currently a three way stop exists. The GGCA have three concerns with this new proposed plan:
 - i. Having parked cars back into a heavy traffic pattern is not safe
 - ii. It will require the relinquishment of owned by property by one of our members
 - iii. Since any new lot area will not be monitored by police we are requesting it be closed at dusk as the Milton Kaufmann Park up the road from this intersection is or it will promote loitering and possible illegal activities that may have a direct effect on surrounding neighbors.
 - iv. The Milton Kaufmann Park has a large parking area and is within walking distance of the Brink Road Bridge and park. This is a unique situation in Montgomery County to have two parks that close to each other, yet it is too dangerous to walk from one park to the other. The GGCA has previously requested sidewalks between the two areas so that pedestrians and bicyclists

can use both parks, not to mention that the Senior Housing across from Milton Kaufmann can actually cross the road safely and utilize either park. Additionally, there are trails connecting Milton Kaufmann Park to Montgomery Village shopping and public transit.

2. Safety issues that currently exist with traffic patterns and increased traffic due to the significant increase in residential housing in Clarksburg and Montgomery Village over the past 10 years, have caused our residential area connector to become overpopulated with traffic that it can't hold. According to Bill 24-22 Section 49-30 the Director of Transportation must consider installing traffic calming and bicycle and pedestrian-friendly designs features on any residential /country area connector including but not limited to, traffic circles, speed humps and other methods. Pedestrian refuge islands have been installed Northbound Wightman to Brink Rd as egress progresses down a steep winding hill to the Seneca Valley park entrance. These soft traffic calming measures have not reduced speeding, but instead serve as sign holders and islands for cars to get lodged on from driving over them at excessive speeds. We lost 4 signs within 40 feet of each other due to speeding vehicles and drag racing. Wightman road has been approved for a Safety Camera according to the MCPD. Even after countless requests to have a speed camera erected, none have been erected even temporarily. There has been no speed enforcement and speeders know it. Meanwhile the proposed designated parking area in the current plan is where park patrons cross double yellow lines to make U Turns in front of on-coming traffic driving 10-20mph in excess of the speed limit which should be 25mph not 35 mph. Based on these circumstances GGCA recommends the following:
 - a. A round about or traffic light be placed at the intersection of Brink and Blunt with egress for the bridge
 - b. Speed bumps installed on the hill going to the park entrance.
 - c. Speed limit reduced to 25 mph from Warfield Rd to the intersection at the bridge.
 - d. Hard wired speed cameras be place on the steep hill by the park entrances to deter racing, speeding and red-light jumping (if a traffic light is installed). This would also be a good area to have a camera showing traffic patterns for the county since it is a heavily traveled bridge and highly accident prone.

3. The last noise study for the planning of the bridge renovation was conducted in 2015 by Gannett Fleming where they attested that the project is in compliance with MoCo's Noise Ordinance, Section 31(b) of the County Code and is consistent with the MoCo Dept of Parking and Planning Noise Guidelines. The GGCA would like to bring to the attention of the Planning Board that from 2010 to 2020 the number of residential homes in Clarksburg increased by 15,000 residences of which a significant portion of those residences use our residential area connector to access Counties North and East of us including Montgomery village residents which have also been on the incline due to new homes and developments being built. Had the Master Plan been followed with the Intercounty Connector (M-83), our Brink Road Bridge would not be in disrepair, and our residential area connector would not be accident ridden. The GGCA requests that a more recent noise study be conducted to ensure that the project plan is still in compliance with MoCo's Noise Ordinances.

4. In line with statement number three (3) GGCA suggests a traffic study be made prior to the renovation of the bridge (as the last traffic study made available to us was also from 2015) to ensure that a partial or full shutdown during construction will be successful and that detours will not be rerouted through our residential communities within our Association parameters, specifically Warfield Road and Blunt Road. GGCA would also like to understand how the flow of traffic will continue if there is a partial shutdown of the bridge during construction whereby Brink Rd (west) and Wightman Rd (north) merge into one egress onto Brink West where the bridge is located.
5. Construction. GGCA requests information on where construction equipment will be stored during the construction phase and what the designated egress will be for construction vehicles for dumping, delivering, or excavating and how they will affect the residential communities in the Association geographical area. The GGCA asks that the planning department be mindful of the impact of the noise, pollution, and safety hazards that these large construction vehicles have on our resident's properties. We are interested in the mitigation efforts to reduce the harmful impacts from these vehicles.
6. From a State Police Initiative in June of 2023 in response to the GGCA's request to reduce the amount of heavy commercial trucks that use our residential area connector as a highway in order to escape weigh stations on 70 and 270, of the 32 vehicles stopped in 4-hour time frame – 24 Equipment violations were handed out to unsafe commercial trucks. These trucks drive more than the speed limits posted headed East and West on Brink to and from the bridge and have damaged the bridge to disrepair. Once this bridge is renovated and becomes wider, what traffic calming methods will be introduced to deter speeding and deter these trucks from again degrading the useful life of the bridge? What will the maximum weight limits be on the bridge?

We appreciate the opportunity to request information and have our concerns reviewed and attended to as part of the planning process for the renovation of the Brink Rd bridge. Our concern for the safety of our residents, our patrons to our historic landmarks and park resources within our community, and the reduction of our accident ridden residential area connector are of primary importance. This bridge renovation is long overdue, especially when looking at the poor rating this bridge has been graded over the past 5 years. We want to see this project be successful on many levels which include resolving more than renovations but equity in safety for pedestrians, bicyclers, and traffic.

Thank you,

The Great Goshen Civic Association

From: [Christel Bivens](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Fwd: Brink Road Bridge Renovation, Montgomery County MD Testimony
Date: Wednesday, January 10, 2024 10:08:49 AM
Attachments: [BridgeRenovation.CB.docx](#)

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

This is my 2nd attempt in submitting this testimony I am getting errors when using the provided email address.

Sincerely,

Christel Bivens
Owner
Between the Fences, LLC
Providing "Christel" clear strategic solutions

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

From: **Christel Bivens** <contactbivens@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, Jan 10, 2024 at 10:05 AM
Subject: Brink Road Bridge Renovation, Montgomery County MD Testimony
To: <mco-chair@mncppc-mc.org>

To Whom It May Concern,

I respectfully submit this testimony for the planning meeting tomorrow January 11, 2024, at 7 pm on the bridge renovation on Brink Road, Germantown, MD. Since I am on travel through Friday, I doubt I will be able to attend the meeting in person.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my concerns and suggestions about this renovation project and feel free to contact me if further discussion of points are of interest. I am here to serve.

Sincerely,

Christel Bivens, CPA
21026 Blunt Rd, Germantown, MD 20876
2nd VP UCAB
contactbivens@gmail.com
240-988-0819

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Christel Bivens. I reside on the corner of Brink and Blunt Road in Germantown, less than a quarter mile from the Brink Road renovation planned in 2025-2026. I serve on the UpCounty Citizen Advisory Board, where I served as the Chair for the Land and Use Committee and currently serve as the 2nd Vice President. I am also a member of the Greater Goshen Civic Association. I have been a Montgomery County Resident my entire life, born and raised, so Montgomery County and my community matter to me greatly.

Having been a resident of Germantown for nearly half my life (in the same residence), I have seen how Germantown has grown both in residential population and corresponding traffic. What once used to be rural road, Brink Rd has become a highly traveled area connector. Upon deciding to live here, I researched the area, the schools, the road systems, purchased a copy of the Master Plan since I saw the blue Intercounty connector sign on western Blunt Rd by Watkins Mill Rd, met with park and planning, did all my due diligence to make sure I knew what I was buying as my lifelong home. I had expected at the time to have M-83 built when the Intercounty connector was built with 370. I am dismayed that the County has let our people down and thought it okay to divert overpopulated traffic on our residential roads that were never intended to have the traffic we are seeing daily. I can personally attest by taking decibel tests over the past 26 years that noise pollution, traffic pollution and unsafe speeding have infiltrated our once quiet Brink Road. Instead, this road has been riddled with accidents and has become the intercounty connector itself leading Clarksburg to Columbia and 370 via Snouffer School Rd, and Montgomery Village to Clarksburg. I have seen the Brink Road bridge deteriorate from Seneca Creek floods, heavy commercial truck crossings, and miles of backup from traffic it never intended to tolerate. I am happy to see that the bridge will be renovated for safety purposes. But safety has more levels than the safety of the bridge's foundation. It also includes the safety of pedestrians, bicyclists, and park/agricultural reserve patrons (who can't use the antiquated bridge in its current condition). I am hoping with my testimony that these areas of focus will be considered as the planning process moves forward.

Currently Brink Rd and Blunt Rd (where I live) is one of the highest accident-prone intersections in Germantown. One only needs to ask MCPD and they will verify. There are at least 2-3 reported accidents per week on our residential area connector and hundreds of near accidents (most of which occur in three places along Brink Rd (Intersections with Blunt Rd, Wildcat Rd, and at the bridge on Wightman Rd). Most of this is attributed to speeds more than 50 mph down and a steep hill that leads into a blinding turn which ends into the Brink Road Bridge. For decades this road was 40mph and until recently through my efforts and with the support of Councilmembers Balcolm and Luedtke and County Executive Elrich, I was able to get the speed reduced to 35mph (although Mr. Elrich told Mr. Paylor of MCDOT to reduce it to 30mph and add speed cameras). BUT it does no good to reduce a speed limit if it is not enforced. So, what does this have to do with the renovation? Well preface I believe is good to understand the situation surrounding a renovation and with these facts, my concerns can be more easily be understood. Thank you for giving me the venue in which to express these concerns.

1. I am concerned about the partial closure of the bridge (or full closure) and the county's plans on detours. The last crossroad on Brink Rd East (prior to the bridge) is Blunt Road (the highest accident-prone intersection on this area connector). Blunt Rd runs from North to South. North Blunt - towards Davis Mill Road and Huntmaster Rd which are rural rustic roads, inclusive of the

old Davis Mill historic landmark, where there are road areas where two cars can't pass each other at the same time. South Blunt - towards Watkins Mill Rd and Wayfayer Way which includes a very steep windy narrow road that is difficult to maneuver two cars past each other at the same time. Large commercial trucks (and 18 wheelers) can't make it through these roads. This cannot become a detour for safety reasons and for residential peace. Waze has already detoured traffic on these narrow rustic streets which has caused an increase in accidents. If the bridge is anticipated in closing down, how long will the closure be, where will the detours be, and when will residents receive notice?

2. With regard to a partial closure I am concerned about traffic taking alternative routes using Blunt Road as the detour, and how the county anticipates egress at the 3 way intersection from Brink Rd going West and Wightman going North and egressing into Brink West. What are the planned time delays be in instituting a traffic light that allows egress in all three directions? What are the delays expected in each direction and how will traffic be diverted to surrounding roads (primarily Blunt Rd). What signage will be added to the roadways well in advance of the significant delays during the bridge development? What traffic study is the planning board using for these measures?
3. Renovating Brink Road bridge according to the plans recently shared with GGCA (which has changed from the plans shared with the UCAB – those included sidewalks which the new plan removed), includes widening the bridge and from what I understand from MCDOT adding a 3 way stoplight. Without hard traffic mitigations at the intersection of Blunt Rd and Brink Rd, traffic will increase in volume and in speed and more complicated and life-threatening accidents will occur. Before the bridge renovation, MCDOT must put in a 4 way stop at Brink and Blunt Road and enforce speed reduction prior to the intersection (East). If the MCDOT places a stop light at bridge intersection it will increase speeds coming down Wightman crossing the bridge to Brink Rd, around a blind turn that quickly places you at a the Blunt Rd intersection. Blunt Rd can't tolerate a stop light; it will only increase speeds up and down. Traffic must stop at this intersection ALWAYS. A four-way stop MUST be implemented prior to the bridge renovation. This will also slow traffic as it approaches the bridge which will make speeds safer for pedestrians and bicyclers that come to that area to use the park hiking trails. It is also imperative to put hard traffic modifications on Wightman Road (what is in place now – pedestrian islands on the shoulder – do nothing to slow down traffic only cause speeding cars to land in neighborhood yards and mull down county signs) to reduce speeds to make it safe for pedestrians to cross the road. Perhaps speed bumps can be installed within 1000 feet of the intersection on Brink Rd (West) and Wightman Rd (North).
4. According to the new plan, there is a car parking area designated at the corner of Wightman and Brink Roads. It looks like 10 parking spaces without a turnabout. These spaces seem to be pull in spaces from Wightman, without a place to back out and turn around. On any nice spring day, one can witness patrons coming from the park and return to their cars to make illegal (crossing double lines) u-turns into on-coming traffic on the Wightman hill because there is nowhere to turn around. The idea of the parking area where it is currently situated on the plan will simply not work with the current traffic patterns. Having a parking lot open after dusk will also surely

bring unwanted loitering as well, unless Montgomery County plans of having it locked at dusk and a count camera installed to monitor traffic and loitering. This will be a request by the residents. The original plans shown UCAB had parking on the north entrance of the trail on Brink Road. I recall seeing it as a long parking lot with ample spaces and space to turn around with egress onto Brink Rd. Perhaps if the current parking area on the plan was a safe circle place for patrons to turn around it would be more beneficial, but egress still makes no sense coming out at the intersection. This will become accident prone. Rather than putting in a 3 way stop, the only good traffic mitigation for turnarounds and slowing traffic down is a traffic circle, similar to what was implemented on Watkins Mill Rd and Brink Rd.

5. Pedestrian sidewalks and bike lanes have been removed. During the UCAB meeting, it was discussed that the widening of the Brink Road bridge would allow safe travel for pedestrians and bicyclists. I do not see this being shown any longer. According to Bill 24-22 when renovations occur, improvements should be designed so that the safety and convenience of all intended users of the roadway system (including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, automobile drivers...and emergency service vehicles) is accommodated. I don't see this in the current plans.
6. I noticed that the noise and traffic study form which the plan was developed was from 2015. Clarksburg has almost doubled in size, increased by 15,000 residents in the past 10 years and Montgomery village continues to expand with new developments where the old golf course was and across the street from it, not to mention the new town center going in where Lake Forest used to be. All these new residents use our residential area connector (Brink Rd/Wightman Rd) to move between the counties and down counties because 355 and 270 are overpopulated. I would request that another traffic study from 27 & Blunt Road to Wightman Road & Warfield be completed as well as a noise study. According to my readings the noise decibel level exceeds the noise ordinance during high traffic times and late at night when drag racing and commercial 18 wheelers barrel up and down Brink Road. With the widening of the bridge, I can't imagine the noise decibels going down or being within limits.
7. Due to the construction in Montgomery Village – heavy dump trucks run up and down Brink Road sometimes as many as 30 in an hour. It is disruptive, it destroys our roads, it is noisy. While I understand progress, I would like to understand the routes the planning board is agreeing to for these commercial vehicles that will be working on the renovation.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my concerns and have them reviewed by the planning board when planning the Brink Rd Bridge renovation. My concern for the safety of our community coming in and out of our neighborhoods and using our community areas, the patrons who come to see and use our natural resources and parks, and the increase in safety measures to reduce the number of accidents on our residential area connector, is paramount. I am a very involved citizen; I would gladly volunteer my time for any planning process in hopes that my ideas and concerns could help make this renovation successful on many levels while addressing multiple problematic areas. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christel Bivens
21026 Blunt Rd, Germantown, MD 20876
contactbivens@gmail.com
240-988-0819

From: [Tim Barry](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Replacement of Brink Road Bridge No. M-0064 Over Great Seneca Creek - Mandatory Referral, MR 2024002: Testimony of Tim Barry, 21400 Blunt Rd
Date: Tuesday, January 9, 2024 5:12:11 PM

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

Good morning. My name is Tim Barry and I live at 21400 Blunt Rd which is at the intersection of Brink and Blunt Rds, the first intersection west of the bridge. I have lived at this location for 35 years so I am very familiar with much of its history, current condition and traffic use. For background, I am a retired professional civil engineer, who practiced primarily in the design and construction of buildings and related civil improvements.

When we first moved to our home, Brink was a country road. With the development of the Milestone area, the Father Hurley I270 exchange, Clarksburg and Damascus, the use of Brink has changed dramatically. **It is now an important upper County east-west trafficway and integral in the lives of commuters, not just immediate to the Goshen area but also a very large tributary area.** When the decision was made not to construct the M83, over time the development of Clarksburg and points west has resulted in a steady stream of traffic for much of the day. At morning rush hour it is typical for commuters to be in a line of cars extending from the bridge west to beyond Kaul Lane, a distance approaching a half mile. In the evening, the backup is on the other side of the bridge extending east from the bridge on Wightman Rd to beyond Warfield Rd, a distance somewhat less but still over 1/4 of a mile. To close the bridge will involve a major disruption to many in upper Montgomery County.

However, I am aware of the poor condition of the bridge based on MoCo's relatively frequent repairs and the urgent need to replace. So the following comments and observations are intended to aid MoCo DOT in accomplishing these goals in a timely and appropriate manner. Specifically:

1. MINIMIZE THE CONSTRUCTION DURATION - This bridge closure is no minor disruption. MoCo leaders will be hearing from more unhappy citizens far beyond Goshen than they perhaps realize if this project is not executed in an efficient and timely manner. Our experiences in this area relative to MoCO DOT improvement projects have been mixed. Wildcat Road was closed for an exceptionally long period (Over a year?) for relatively minor drainage improvements. The Snouffer School Rd improvement project lasted at least three years. **SUGGESTION: CONTRACT FOR A CONSTRUCTION DURATION OF NO LONGER THAN FOUR MONTHS, ENFORCED WITH APPROPRIATE PENALTY/BONUS CONTRACT PROVISIONS.**

2. RESTRICT HUNTMASER BRIDGE - I understand that the current plan is to study rerouting provisions further. Of particular note is the potential impact to the bridge over Great Seneca Creek at Huntmaster and Davis Mill Rds. This is a single lane bridge with an exceptionally difficult approach on one side. It will not support any significant volume of traffic, plus is subject to flooding. Rather than take the path noted on the initial study through Montgomery Village, much of the traffic will instead, if allowed, use this bridge. **SUGGESTION: RESTRICT THE HUNTMASER BRIDGE TO LOCAL TRAFFIC**

ONLY.

3. VERIFY EMS SERVICE - For years, local EMS has been provided out of Laytonsville. Closure of the bridge will make this impractical. **SUGGESTION: VERIFY EMS SERVICES TO AREAS WEST OF THE BRIDGE.**

4. ACCIDENT MITIGATION - The Brink and Blunt Rd intersection is particularly notorious for traffic accidents (This intersection is just west of the current limits of construction for the bridge replacement.). Absent a major redesign of that intersection, reducing speeds in that area will go a long way towards reducing accidents. **SUGGESTION: EMPLOY RUMBLE STRIPS FROM KAUL LANE WEST OF THE BRIDGE TO THE BRIDGE, SIMILAR TO THEIR USE ON THE GOSHEN AND BRINK RDS INTERSECTION. SIMILARLY, USE THESE STRIPS ON THE WIGHTMAN ROAD SIDE. FOR TRAFFIC THAT HAS CROSSED THE BRIDGE AND IS HEADING WEST, EMPLOY TRAFFIC CAMERAS OR OTHER SPEED REDUCTION MEASURES.**

5. DESIGN SUGGESTIONS -

- Properly light the intersection, pedestrian areas and parking lot on the east side of the new bridge.
- Prohibit left hand turns during commuting hours out of the new parking area.
- Three way stops are very uncommon in MoCo. Traffic is typically confused when they are ready to turn as to who has right-of-way and which direction the opposing car is turning. Place signs encouraging traffic to use turn signals to minimize confusion and speed traffic flow.

Lastly, I want to thank MoCo DOT for paving Blunt Rd this past summer. Everyone did a terrific job.

Thank you for your consideration. Note that earlier I had scheduled to present this testimony in person. However, I will not be able to attend. If you have any questions concerning this testimony, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Tim Barry
21400 Blunt Rd
Germantown, MD 20876
January 11, 2024**