

Item 7 - Correspondence

From: [Steve Daitch](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Bowie Mill Bikeway MR2023016
Date: Monday, February 5, 2024 5:03:38 PM

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

I am very opposed to this proposed bikeway. As an avid cyclist 4 to 5 days per week, I can assure you that I would never use a dangerous bike path when the road is adjacent. I am also puzzled as to why we would spend valuable resources such as this when there are so many more things that these funds could support. I feel the only time a bike path like this; for bikes, pedestrians, and pets, is necessary is when there is no road adjacent for cyclists, such as the Crescent Trail. I will still ride on Bowie Mill Road for my own protection. What good is 3.3 miles of bikeway? What happens at Muncaster Mill or Rt. 108? Finally, what happens during construction? Road contractors almost never take adequate measures to protect the public during construction. We are unprotected from flying debris. Drivers will be more distracted by construction and put cyclists and pedestrians at a higher risk.

If the County is dead set on building this bikeway, would it not be more prudent to build it on the other side of Bowie Mill? The Fraley Farm development will have a significant number of new houses that would be able to access this without crossing Bowie Mill.

These funds would be far better spent on mental health assistance or feeding the needy (I feel this way because I work with Meals on Wheels, and we could certainly use additional funds).

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Steve Daitch
17825 Bowie Mill Road
Derwood MD 200855

From: [Joan Junker](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Bowie Mill Bikeway
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 9:18:51 AM
Attachments: [Bowie Mill Bikeway Junker.pdf](#)

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Good Morning,

Please see attached letter concerning the Bowie Mill Bikeway.

Thank you.
Don and Joan Junker

Sent from my iPhone
>

February 7, 2024

Montgomery County Planning Department
M-NCPPC
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: MCPB Item 8
Bowie Mill Bikeway MR2023016 and Preliminary/Final Water Quality Plan

Montgomery County Planning Board,

My wife and I live at 17859 Bowie Mill Road, one of many properties along the south side of Bowie Mill Road that will be directly impacted by construction of the proposed shared use path. We have lived here since the mid-1970's, so we know the area and Bowie Mill Road far too well.

We do not completely oppose this project, but we do have many concerns. I understand that the Planning Board only provides recommendations on the Mandatory Referral portion of this project, so many of my objections are aimed at MCDOT. However, I believe the Board will benefit from hearing residents' concerns before giving their seal of approval on the associated Water Quality Plan.

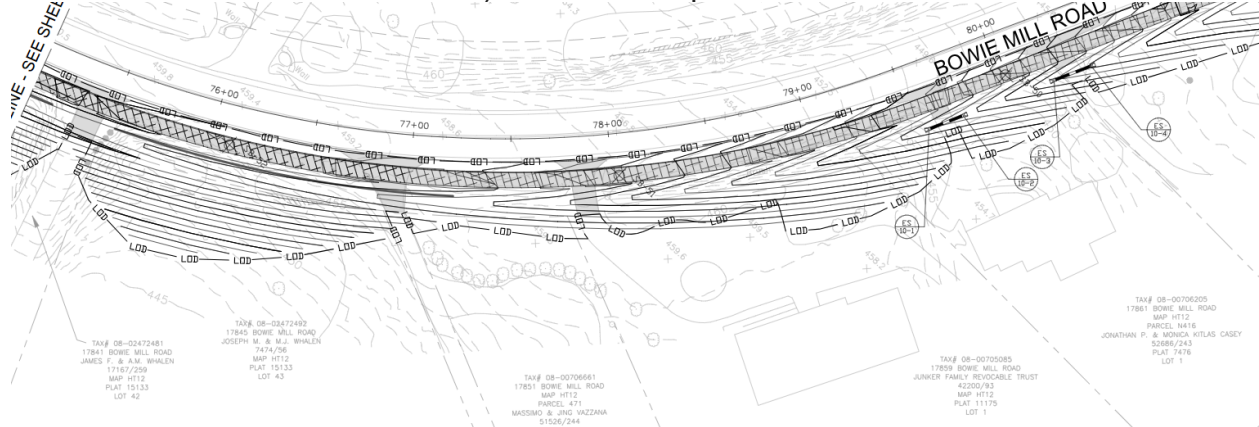
Outreach and transparency

Based on the staff report, this project is at 60% design, significantly further in the process than the typical 35% design. Generally, I would consider more information a benefit, but not when the affected property owners haven't been consulted since 2018, other than a mailer stating (not asking) that surveys may be coming onto our property to check markers. At 60% design, one would think that MCDOT would have been in direct contact with homeowners, especially when the plans show impacts such as grading across their front yard, overlapping their wellheads and large sections of their driveway and parking area. The notes on the plan that I found the most disturbing were the ones that say "**Proposed Fee Simple Right-Of-Way**"... meaning they plan on purchasing part of me and my neighbors' property. Yet this has not been mentioned to us!! Also, the plans show 40-foot slope and grading easement as if they exist today. Those easements were temporarily granted at record plat for the reconstruction of Bowie Mill Road in the 1960's and 1970's. Most of those easements expire once the road is complete. They are not perpetual.

Inconsistency

The impacts are hard to see since the regrading is not shown on any plans, other than an obsolete Sediment and Erosion Control Plan approved in January **2020**. At 60% design, why don't any of the plans on your DAIC site match?? Why hasn't MCDOT's website for this project been updated in years? Has the Board seen the

extent of the proposed grading?? If it looks anything like the old Erosion plan (that doesn't match the current MR set) here's a little peak:



SC-14 ESC Plan

Unfortunately, the Limits of Disturbance on the more recent Mandatory Referral plan looks like the impact may be even more vast.

I'm not asking for a massive retaining wall, and highway barriers that would greatly impact property values, but can't they grade in a way that doesn't impact residents as much? Not to mention, they plan to remove all of the mature trees on my property and the two properties to the east, some of the largest on the road. If the design and cross section is driven by the posted speed limit, then reduce the speed limit. Speed is a major issue on this road, which has led to numerous accidents, some resulting in death. Reducing the speed will actually make a difference and be consistent with the Montgomery County's Vision Zero initiative.

Short and long-term impacts

Constructing this path will have short- and long-term effects on us, the peaceful enjoyment of our property, and the value of our property. In the short-term, we will have to deal with construction in our front yard, road closures and inevitable frustration while try to access our home during construction. We also do not know if regrading and excavating the existing 9-10 foot steep slope along the road will affect our well water, since the wellhead is within the Limits of Disturbance.

We have a large parking area in front of our house that we installed to provide parking and maneuvering space for my Big Band, which includes 5-10 musicians, and all sorts of instruments. This takes space, some of which MCDOT plans to remove. The proposed fee-simple acquisition of my property, which I have not agreed to, is also of great concern. A fee-simple purchase would alter my lot, and any other lot MCDOT plans to purchase a piece of. It would leave our lot areas reduced which could limit the ability (at permit) to build or add an addition, especially the smaller properties. Not to mention, future resale of a "legal non-conforming" property does not sound appealing. And I assure you, the "fair market value" MCDOT intends to offer for any property they purchase will not make up for the loss in resale value. Being branded a legal non-conforming property will be a permanent stain on our property title.

Long-term maintenance

Even if I can get past the removal of the large trees along the road (which add property value), what about the maintenance? MCDOT will replace the affected section of individual driveways they rip up, but who will repair the rutted asphalt in 4-5 years when the web of large existing roots decomposes and leaves valley running through the driveways? Also, property owners with this new path running along their frontage will not be required to maintain it. I'm a Navy veteran and my wife and I are getting up there in age. Am I now expected to hire someone to clear the snow from the path before getting fined by the county? That's not in my current budget and we are on a fixed income. We have already had to absorb an increase in our property taxes.

If this path must be built, please consider putting it on the other side of the road, where there is ample right-of-way and fewer impacted homeowners, or at least help reduce the impact on private property.

I will say that while the use of pervious pavement sounds like a good idea for water quality, I sincerely hope MCDOT will be required to maintain it (it's not simple), and the burden will not fall on the property owners. Also, 8 feet is more than wide enough for people to pass one another on a path, even for bikes, strollers, and dogs on leashes. The natural surface trails in the parks are significantly narrower in some places and they appear to work perfectly fine. Please do not expand this miniature road/path any wider than necessary.

Thank you for your time.

Don and Joan Junker

From: [willie price sr](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Bowie Mill Road Bikeway[11578].docx
Date: Wednesday, February 7, 2024 12:37:22 AM
Attachments: [Bowie Mill Road Bikeway\[11578\].docx](#)

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INPUT FOR THE BOWIE MILL ROAD BIKEWAY

My concerns for this project is manifold, however, focused primarily on the final section from the intersection of Gelding Lane, Briars Rd. and Bowie Mill Road to Route 108.

This segment is a very narrow high traffic section, although it has a posted speed of 30 miles per hour, most often traffic speed is greater than 50 miles per hour. There is no on street parking, so taking more of the driveways will be markedly restricted to our residences.

The Proposed Project

The five foot border with 8 foot bike path would move traffic to close to our houses. Since my house (18523 Bowie Mill Rd. Olney, MD 20832) is at the lowest point in this block and has regular storm water management issues, (storm drain backup with street flooding), this project will aggravate this issue.

The suggested **alternative** solution would be: abandon the final section of the bike path at the 4 way stop sign from Gelding Lane and Briars Road to Route 108.

- a. Reroute North on Gelding Lane to Route 108 (less traffic available right of way with fewer houses).
- b. Briars Lane South to Queen Elizabeth Dr. with bikes accessing Route 108 and Morning Wood Drive, using full lanes through the development.

Rerouting at this intersection would solve major issues and concerns: available egress with less traffic and no appreciable effect on parking and access for the final section of the Bowie Mill Bike Path to Route 108.

From: [Kathleen Reitz](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Glazier, Eli](#)
Subject: Bowie Mill Bikeway #MR2023016 February 8th hearing
Date: Tuesday, February 6, 2024 6:51:16 PM
Attachments: [Bowie Mill Bikeway bikeway mr.pdf](#)

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

Please confirm receipt. This is intended to be testimony for the hearing on Feb 8th. Thank you,
Kathleen Reitz

February 6, 2024

Montgomery County Planning Department
M-NCPPC
2425 Reedie Drive
Wheaton, MD 20902

Re: Bowie Mill Bikeway# MR2023016 and Preliminary/Final Water Quality Plan

To Whom it May Concern:

We have lived at 17833 Bowie Mill since 1987. Our property appears on pages PS 10-11 of the design drawings presented to the public. These are shown here:

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/Resources/Files/BowieMillRd/BowieMill_Roll_Map-Sheet%202.pdf)

[dte/Resources/Files/BowieMillRd/BowieMill_Roll_Map-Sheet%202.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/Resources/Files/BowieMillRd/BowieMill_Roll_Map-Sheet%202.pdf) and here:

https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Attachment-A_Corridor-Engineering-Drawings_1-25-24.pdf

While we understand this project is already funded, we have serious objections to this plan both as residents and as taxpayers. This may be our one chance to voice our objections. We urge the County to reduce the project to shoulder construction on both sides of Bowie Mill Road.

The notice for this hearing was unacceptably short. We received the post card notice in the regular mail on January 29th, a mere 1.5 weeks before the hearing. The title of the agenda item suggests that this is intended as a perfunctory hearing about water quality with the decision to proceed with the project at its current scope a done deal. (You will see later in this letter that we have significant concerns about water quality.) We think there was a preliminary public meeting in 2018, but since this was just an overall idea at that time, it would not have been possible for the residents to have any meaningful input. We expected a more definitive and timely notification than a post card regarding such significant issues. We would have stated our objections earlier had it seemed possible to make our voices heard to decision makers. Perhaps we should be blaming MCDOT for this?

BIKEWAYS CONCEPT

It is easy for citizens to respond to Wish List surveys and ignore practicalities, and for the first time we notice that there was such a survey. Since 80% of respondents did not live on Bowie Mill, I suspect that most of them are part of the bike advocacy lobby in the county, most of whom who may never pedal up and down our road. They will not share the burden that the proposed bike path will cause to residents, similar to the traffic disruption that shoehorning bikeways onto existing roadways have caused elsewhere in the county, with little or no resultant bicycle use.

Where are the studies which show that the bikeway on Needwood Road, which destroyed the scenic view along the lake, has been worth the money? Have there been user counts? How about elsewhere in the County, such as on Old Georgetown Road? Where is the cost/benefit analysis of the enormous sums spent for bikes?

While we think that safe places to ride bikes both for recreation and transportation are desirable amenities, in practice they must be weighed against other priorities and with deep respect for the taxpayers, since even Montgomery County has a finite source of funds. These should only be on roadways where it makes practical sense, not wish list sense, and where more than one or two people per day in nice weather will use it. While it would be safer than shoulders, who is going to push a stroller even on a separated path with no shade next to this dangerous road in a lightly populated community? The level of discomfort would be only marginally reduced, especially for the people who have seen the periodic wrecks on the curves. As for commuters, the Metro station is nearly 6 miles distant from our home and it would take a good cyclist a sweaty half hour, with all the other uncertainties of adding a bike leg to a commute. Few will do that most days even if they don't work from home. Have recent work habits rendered these multi-modal ideas moot in parts of the County?

Road bikers will continue to use the road. They don't want to contend with walkers or street trees which are inevitably not trimmed high enough for safe passage. We speak from personal experience. On the other hand, those who will ride consistently would be very happy with shoulders. This is a heavily traveled road, not a scenic byway like Beech Drive.

Design - Why not shoulders? Why on the south side?

We strongly urge the addition of shoulders where there are none, which would save money and spare Bowie Mill residents from serious disruption, while meeting the desire for bicycle travel between Olney and the Metro. Most of the survey work would still be useful. Please note that there are sidewalks in many areas where they make sense. In fact, the proposed design calls for the removal of ones which were installed recently by developers, no doubt as a condition for subdivision rights. Those costs were baked into the prices of those homes. What a waste!

Bowie Mill Road is not a new road carved out of farmland like the Travilah area, where brand new rights of way wide enough for paths safely away from the road are easy to design and paid for by developers. The plan forces in something that doesn't fit.

Why our side of the road? That's not a NIMBY comment, it is a taxpayer comment. More houses directly front Bowie Mill on our side of the road and there is more undeveloped property on the other side. Right now there is an active subdivision plan in which developers would be asked to make proffers because of the development's increased traffic burden on our roads. Why pick the side with the greatest negative impact and the most expensive condemnations in places where is only a 60 foot R-O-W and with some houses already very close to the busy road? That destroys their value far more than a per square foot price for the land can possibly compensate. Furthermore, I see some wells close to the road on some of those properties.

Safety for pedestrians and cyclists:

The curves on Bowie Mill have a long and serious accident history. Adequate banking on curves is missing, for one thing. If there are cyclists or pedestrians there at the wrong time, they will be trapped at the top of a retaining wall unable to escape an out of control vehicle without the installation of major significant and ugly barriers. Anybody familiar with our road will think twice about choosing this route for a relaxing walk. We never even walk to our mailbox without making certain of a break in the traffic as it is. Vehicles will continue to slide off the road and onto the path and perhaps breach any rail at the retaining wall, as they have breached the current guardrails.

Impacts

We met with a county employee at our property during the summer and were shocked at the scale of this project and its negative consequences to us as well as to our neighbors. Although we asked, it did not seem possible to work with designers to come up with a less harmful plan to our property, despite some obvious ideas we mentioned, including scaling back to shoulder improvements or whether to consider a slope rather than a wall. We were told there would be a meeting with the residents in the fall. If there was, we did not see any notification for it.

Here are our more specific objections. We are speaking primarily about the stretch between Muncaster Mill Road and the power lines since there are already many improvements north of there.

1. A stand-alone multiuse path is too expensive and too intrusive. Because of the nature of our community, it will get very light use and not be worth the money. This is not a “build it and they will come” scenario.
2. It would be far better to add shoulders to the road on both sides where there are none. This would also make it safer for motorists. *That* would be a good multi use plan.
3. With respect to the design, we see serious problems for us and our immediate neighbors. At present we have a bank of low maintenance wild trees and brush shielding the sight of the road and partially mitigating the noise. Despite conflicting drawings, as seen in the links provided, it appears that there is a proposed retaining wall of substantial height in front of our property and the 2 adjacent lots. Besides the presence of an unsightly wall, this will create numerous problems and future expense even if we ignore the construction nightmare. Has Planning seen the present grades and the consequent height of this wall? We think the grade difference is well over ten feet.
4. Drainage: There is a culvert which dumps onto our property after it drains the other side of the road. It often turns into a rushing stream that has cut a deep ravine running down to the creek. With a wall, instead of water from our side of the road running down a slope with trees and brush to slow and absorb it, the water will be funneled into that same culvert or elsewhere, forcing us to take more water running more forcefully and in greater volume, causing greater erosion and run off and eventually dumping into the creek. Our domestic water well and that of 17825 are both very close to the road.

5. Will this force the mailman to be further out into a dangerous road at each box? Have you run this plan by the USPO for approval? We think they would prefer shoulders.
6. There will be a negative impact on our egress ramp to the road, which is shared by 3 lots. If it must be rebuilt with a shorter and steeper slope, it will cause us difficulties in the winter and make the access via the existing easement to the ramp from the undeveloped 17845 (Lot 41) lot untenable.
7. With regards to the adjacent 17845 (finished lot 41), the area reserved for the septic field is very close to the area which would be impacted by construction. Any adverse impact here could be considered a taking. Who is going to mow the new grass strip and shovel snow and gravel from the bike lane? Will there be more trees growing into the powerlines? We should not be burdened in perpetuity by this luxury project.
8. Will there be a special assessment in the form of a front foot benefit?
9. The North Branch Trail cuts across Bowie Mill down by the creek. inexplicably, they did not cut the newer trail on the east side to align with the older trail on the west. It misses by a substantial distance. It would be easier and cheaper to correct that mistake in the woods than create a mess along Bowie Mill. Of course, shoulders would make walking or riding along the road to make the connection a lot safer than it is now.

In conclusion, we would like to voice our objections to this project and ask it to be changed to shoulders only. We suspect that all the residents here would be grateful for that far less invasive improvement. The shoulders could be constructed of permeable materials since water quality really is an important issue. The mailman likely would appreciate this also. If you must continue, we would very much like to be consulted as to the design and impact on our property.

Sincerely,

Marvin and Kathleen Reitz
17833 Bowie Mill Road
Derwood, MD 20855
240-463-0044
kreitz@reitzstuff.com

cc: Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Montgomery County Executive and Council

From: [Glazier, Eli](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: FW: questions on bowie mill bikeway
Date: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 10:59:20 AM
Attachments: [image.png](#)
[image.png](#)
[Bowie Mill MR Staff-Report 2-8-24 Final \(1\).pdf](#)
[Attachment-A Corridor-Engineering-Drawings 1-25-24.pdf](#)

From: Casey Daniels <cs.dnls@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 31, 2024 10:39 AM
To: Glazier, Eli <eli.glazier@montgomeryplanning.org>
Cc: Dave Moldover <dave@dancejamproductions.com>
Subject: questions on bowie mill bikeway

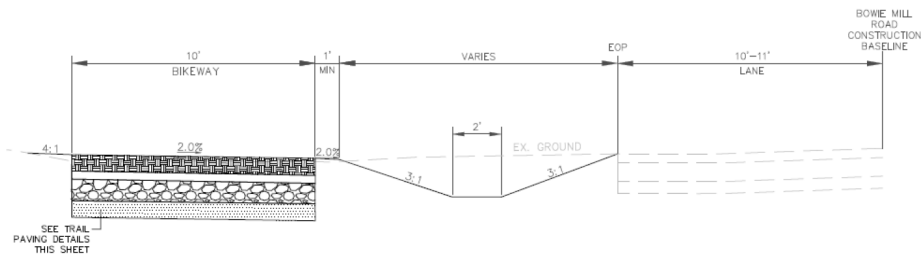
[EXTERNAL EMAIL] Exercise caution when opening attachments, clicking links, or responding.

Hello!

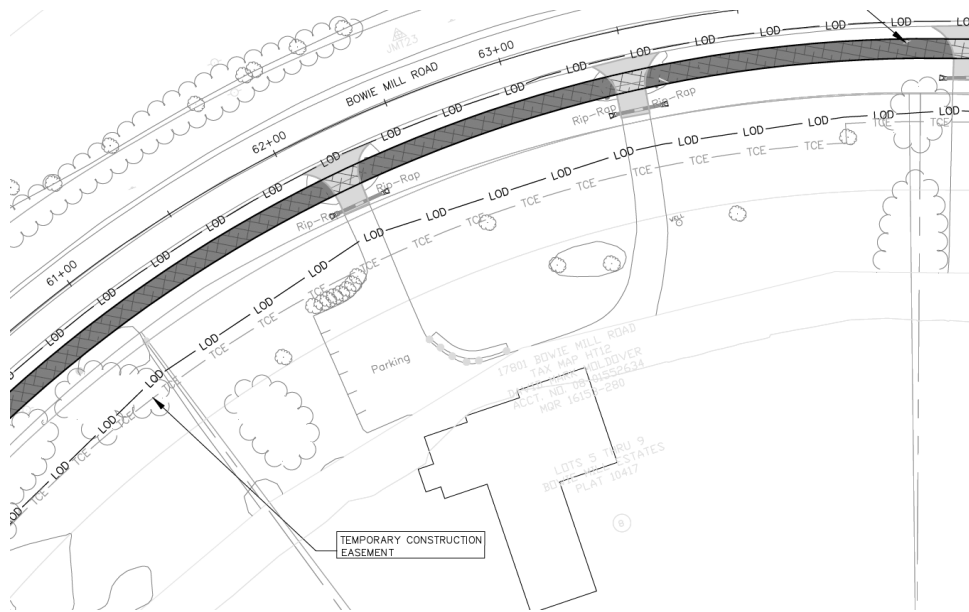
Dave and I live at 17801 Bowie Mill Rd, and have a few questions about the bikeway:

(1) Fig 3 from the staff report shows the bikeway being separated by a ditch, presumably the same ditch that is already there?:

Figure 3: Typical Section outside of Special Protection Area



However the schematic in Attachment A (our house on pg 10 is shown) shows the culverts/ditch between our house & the new path, can you please clarify whether the ditch will separate us from the path, or the path from the road?



(2) We have an invisible fence for our dog, the construction will wreck it. Will Montgomery County fix the damage?

Thank you!,
Casey

--
Casey Moldover

Cherrywood Homeowners Association, Inc.

P.O. Box 159

Olney, Maryland 20830

January 22, 2024

Chair

Montgomery County Planning Board

2425 Reedie Drive, 14th Floor

Wheaton, MD 20902

Dear Chair of the Planning Board:

The Cherrywood Homeowners Association is a 606-unit homeowners association located in Olney, Maryland. The purpose of this letter is to render comments on the proposed Bowie Mill Bikeway.

First off, we are relieved to learn that this project will have no impact on automobile lanes or speed limits along Bowie Mill road. We do not support compromising automobile lanes for bike lanes.

The most concerning part of this project is that along a 3.3 mile stretch of roadway this 10 foot bikeway will replace four acres of porous surface with impervious surface including 1.48 acres of forest land. CE Elrich just spoke at the MoCo Civic Federation earlier this month about our inadequate sewer system whose pipes are no longer big enough to handle the storm water runoff. Replacing acres of porous surface with impervious concrete is only going to make flooding worse downstream unless proper adjustments are made. We don't have the expertise to evaluate this problem, but trust that MCDEP will insure the additional runoff is addressed.

Our biggest complaint about this project is the plan to replace the 1.48 acres of forestland "by purchasing the appropriate reforestation credits in the DOT Damascus Snow Forest Bank" (p24). How does "purchasing credits" in Damascus help the lost forest area in the down County where the forest area is being extinguished? Just last week, the County Council unanimously passed bill 40-23. Council President Friedson said "Adjusting the fee structure will help us plant more trees IN OUR NEIGHBORHOODS, improving air quality, reducing heat islands, and enhancing quality of life." How does buying "credits" in a Damascus forest help the air quality of the area of the County where the trees are to be removed? According to the staff plan, "the Applicant is required to reforest a suitable area at a 2:1 rate for each acre of forest removed." We maintain that forest should be replaced in the same area to help maintain the local air quality, not in Damascus, Poolesville, or the agriculture reserve.


The Cherrywood Homeowners Association has 4+ acres of "open space" forest that is in a state of rapid decline. We've had to remove dozens of trees that have been killed by the ash borer and lost many others due to wind damage or just old age. The overabundant deer eat or destroy any immature trees and the floor of the forest has been overrun with tall Japanese stilt grass that further inhibits seeds from reaching the ground and growing into mature oxygen-exchanging bushes and trees. Even the deer won't eat the Japanese stiltgrass, a noxious weed on the State

list. In short, we are losing our forest and it makes no sense to take more of our local forests and move them to Damascus. We volunteer this open space for local forest replacement.

Adjacent to our open space forest is another 4+ acres of County-owned storm water management pond that is adjacent to about 10 acres of a PEPCO power station. We maintain that the forest removed along Bowie Mill Road should be replanted locally in some of the places we mentioned above as well as other open space that are associated with other local HOA open space plots. More than likely other local forested open space areas are suffering from the same fate as the trees in our forest. We need more trees down County, not in Damascus.

It appears that the environment's worst enemy is the County itself. This plan seems to replace trees in Olney with "credits" in Damascus. What exactly is a tree "credit" anyway and how does it differ from replacing real trees at the required 2:1 rate in Olney or at \$470 per tree adjusted for inflation as in Bill 40-23? We ask that this portion of the Bikeway plan be rewritten to require the majority of trees removed for this bikeway be replaced within a five miles radius from the area where they were removed.

Sincerely,



Paul F. Jarosinski
President

Cc:
Councilmember Dawn Luedtke
Eli Glazier

From: helene.rosenheim@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Daniel Rubenstein](#); [GOCA Info](#)
Subject: Support of Mandatory Referral No. MR2023016
Date: Monday, January 22, 2024 10:21:59 AM

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

I am writing on behalf of the Greater Olney Civic Association, an umbrella association of homeowners and civic associations in the greater Olney area in reference to the Bowie Mill Bikeway project, Mandatory Referral No. MR2023016.

Our Association continues to support this bikeway project as an important piece of the overall bikeway network throughout Montgomery County, and particularly, in the Olney area. Daniel Rubenstein will be testifying at the public hearing on January 25th to provide further details regarding GOCA's continued support and minor proposed amendments to the current project plans.

Helene Rosenheim
President, Greater Olney Civic Association
www.goca.org
301 774-6774
(301) 956-3283

From: helene.rosenheim@verizon.net
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Mailing address for the Greater Olney Civic Association for Mandatory Referral No. MR2023016
Date: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 9:48:43 AM

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

The Greater Olney Civic Association recently submitted an email in support of the Bowie Mill Bikeway, Mandatory Referral No. MR2023016 that did not include our association's mailing address.

Our mailing address is: GOCA
PO BOX 212
Olney, MD 20830

Thank you, Helene Rosenheim
President, Greater Olney Civic Association
301 774-6774
(301) 956-3283