

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]; [Talisha Searcy](#); [Jessica Landman](#); [Roger Schlegel](#); [Cindy Dyballa](#); [Kurt Gilbert](#); [Cara Honzak](#); [Amy Wesolek](#); [Robert DiSpirito](#)
Subject: Maple Avenue Connectivity MR2025001 May 29, 2025 Public Hearing
Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 10:26:41 AM
Importance: High

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Maple Avenue Connectivity Project

Comments for Montgomery County Planning Board Hearing May 29,2025

Mandatory Referral Number MR2025001

Agenda Item 9

Via electronic mail to mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

May 27, 2025

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed project. I have reviewed the materials available from MNCPPC and the City of Takoma Park with a focus on the environmental impacts of the proposed project. The material in the mandatory referral record raises several significant issues including conflict of interest, potential for impacts, and lack of public outreach. Before any further action on this project, it should be remanded to the applicant for resolution of these issues.

The applicant is the City of Takoma Park. The City of Takoma Park also approved the Storm Water Management Concept Plan. Allowing the applicant to act as its own regulator is a conflict of interest. Although the City is competent to approve or disapprove such plans, this action erodes public trust and gives the appearance of a hidden agenda. The Board should require this approval to be withdrawn, and the stormwater management conditions to be evaluated by an independent entity such as the Montgomery County Department Of Permitting Services.

The information in the stormwater concept plan is incomplete and inadequate. The public record contains no drawings available showing existing stormwater conditions or projected conditions under the proposed plan. The existing stormwater management system is extremely complex along Maple between Old Philadelphia and Sherman and will not protect public safety during a major storm event. Most importantly, this project lies within two flood plains and parts of the project area are subject to chronic flooding. This information is known to the applicant yet was not even mentioned in the concept plan. Flooding in these areas will be hazardous to pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists and mitigation measures may be needed to protect users of this project. The concept plan should be remanded to the applicant to acquire the necessary drawings and to include a flooding analysis, with proposed mitigation

measures as appropriate. This is an excellent opportunity to upgrade the storm water system in this area to handle the anticipated severe weather that accompanies climate change.

The health, safety, and environmental impacts of construction of this project on residents, Piney Branch Elementary School students, the City of Takoma Park Community Center and police station as well as vehicular traffic should be assessed. These impacts include equipment safety, road closures and restrictions, air pollution from construction vehicles, and particulate runoff into Sligo Creek.

The applicant submitted a Forest Conservation Exemption request, and a waiver (No. 42025100E) was granted. However, no information is available in the record regarding the existing urban forest or the condition of the forest after implementation of the proposals. The urban forest in Takoma Park is in a state of decline as shown by remote sensing. Applicant should provide the necessary documentation including a Tree Protection Plan and show how this project will be consistent with urban tree canopy goals.

Despite the fact that the Mandatory Referral Narrative (01-DESC-MR2025001) asserts that “The City has conducted a vigorous public outreach program”, there was a total absence of outreach regarding important environmental considerations. Neither residents nor local stakeholder groups were notified or allowed to participate in decisions regarding stormwater management, flooding, tree canopy, or the impacts of construction. In fact, the stormwater management concept plan and forest conservation approval documents were not made public until the mandatory referral docket was published and are still not available on the Takoma Park website. Flooding along Maple Ave is a major concern of Takoma Park residents. The applicant is aware that there are non-governmental organizations that view these subjects as a high priority, yet there was no outreach to these groups. The Board should require that the public be involved in these important decisions.

[REDACTED]
7708 Takoma Avenue
Takoma Park MD 20912
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair; jessical@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:jessical@takomaparkmd.gov)
Subject: Maple Avenue Connectivity Project – Support for Crosswalk and Pedestrian Refuge at Old Philadelphia and Maple Avenue
Date: Sunday, May 25, 2025 9:12:03 AM

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Re: Maple Avenue Connectivity Project – Support for Crosswalk and Pedestrian Refuge at Old Philadelphia and Maple Avenue

My name is Amber Bell, and I live at the intersection of Maple/Old Philadelphia, Takoma Park. I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed crosswalk and pedestrian refuge at the intersection of Old Philadelphia and Maple Avenue, as part of the Maple Avenue Connectivity Project.

As a parent of children who walk to school and a long-time resident, I am very familiar with this stretch of Maple Avenue. Many children walk along this route to and from school, and large groups in afterschool programs regularly cross Maple from the park to reach Valley View and Willow. Yet, this section currently lacks effective traffic calming measures, making it unsafe, especially with cars often driving very fast between the traffic light at Philadelphia and the speed bump south of Valley View.

Specifically, a speed hump was removed during a previous renovation decreasing the safety of the neighborhood. I have seen cars speeding to make the light numerous times, and without the additional traffic reduction measures, you are endangering the lives of children and pedestrians in the area.

Reintroducing a crosswalk and adding a pedestrian refuge island at this intersection is a much-needed step toward ensuring the safety of children and other walkers.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and for your commitment to improving pedestrian safety in our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
7418 Maple Ave
Takoma Park, MD, 20912

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[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: My comments on Maple Avenue Connectivity Project in Takoma Park
Date: Saturday, May 24, 2025 9:40:21 PM

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Maple Avenue Connectivity Project

Subj:

Comments for Montgomery County Planning Board hearing on May 29, 2025

Mandatory referral number: MR2025001

Agenda Item 9

By [REDACTED]
218 Grant Avenue
Takoma Park MD 20912-4234

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sent by email to:

mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Dear members of the Montgomery County Planning Board:

Thank you for inviting comments on these proposals.

I have many questions to ask about the Maple Avenue connectivity project.

The Montgomery County Planning Board and Montgomery County Council not long ago approved the Takoma Minor Master Plan Amendment (MMPA). The new zoning allows mixed-use buildings of up to 150 high at ten sites along either side of Maple Avenue between Philadelphia Ave. and Sligo Creek.

County planning staff in their presentations to the Takoma Park City Council

estimated that there could be a net increase of 4,000 housing units in the MMPA area. The MMPA did not make specific estimates of the infrastructure and services that would be needed to support this development, only a laundry list of many things it suggested might be good ideas. Nor anything but very rough cost estimates of these; nor who would provide them; nor did it provide any money for such infrastructure and services; nor where the money should come from. It left it to others to figure out those things. The Planning Board said the zoning categories authorized along Maple Avenue would be similar to the zoning in downtown Bethesda near the METRO stop. Very high density. The first floors of these buildings could be commercial use, including businesses, stores, sidewalk cafes, etc. On-site parking requirements might be near zero; so we don't know where people would park, or what kinds of turning movements are going to be occurring.

There are so many unanswered questions it is very difficult to comment on these connectivity proposals and how they might or might work in this area.

How does the planning for the connectivity project relate to those ten sites along Maple Avenue where buildings can be up to 150 feet tall?

How many children does the Planning Board expect to be walking up and down along Maple Avenue as a result of the zoning changes it made, in addition to the children who are already walking along Maple Avenue?

The Montgomery County School Department is currently doing a feasibility study related to PBES. (Piney Branch Elementary School.) They have their own projections of student enrollment. How will the County Planning Board's "connectivity project" relate to planning for PBES?

Has county Planning Board staff given its estimates (of additional housing units) to the people who are working on the PBES feasibility study and discussed them with the school, and with the PBES feasibility study staff? I have attended several of those meetings and those planners didn't seem to be very aware of the huge impact these new developments could have on this area. Is there any coordination here? If not, why not?

Has the Planning Board talked to either the Takoma Park police department or the crossing guards about where they think pedestrian and vehicular traffic ought to be improved for the purpose of not only “connectivity” but for the safety of the children and other members of the public who will be walking and driving along Maple Avenue?

Has the Planning Board talked to other officials of the City of Takoma Park? The City Manager, the deputy city managers, the head of the department of housing and development in the city? What do they think about this connectivity project? Do the County’s plans fit in with the city’s public safety, development plans, and local street planning?

Assuming that there might be another ten new high-rise buildings along Maple Avenue over the coming 5-10 years, how will the connectivity project relate to those buildings? They would be allowed to have commercial activities on the ground floor, such as restaurants, sidewalk cafes, etc. Will the sidewalks in the connectivity plan along Maple Avenue be designed to accommodate such uses? If so, will there still be enough room for children and others to walk there safely? On which side of the street will sidewalks be? Both sides? Maple Avenue is not very wide. Where will the residents of those new buildings park? Will they be required to have onsite parking? If not, where will those people park? How will that parking pattern relate to traffic on the street, turning movements, parking in nearby neighborhoods, etc.?

If there is a lot of additional construction along Maple Avenue as these new buildings are built, how will that relate to the timing of the Maple Avenue connectivity plan? Which will come first? Will we get new sidewalks that will all be torn up when the new buildings are put in? When any new water and sewer or stormwater lines are put in? When PEPCO puts in new lines?

Who will be expected to pay for the connectivity changes that the project might recommend? Will the Planning Board provide any new money for this, or just say, “these are what we think are good ideas, and now it’s up to somebody else to figure out how to pay for this?” Who would be responsible for actually doing

these things and making these changes? The City DPW? The County DPW?
Who?

Please tell us these things now. Otherwise it is impossible for people in
Takoma Park to comment meaningfully on these proposals, in my opinion.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]

218 Grant Avenue

Takoma Park MD 20912-4234

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Testimony in support of Maple Ave Connectivity Project (hearing date May 29, 2025)
Date: Saturday, May 17, 2025 9:24:50 PM

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

Hello,

I'm a resident of Takoma Park, in the neighborhood of Maple Ave. I write in support of the **Maple Ave Connectivity Project**, scheduled for hearing on **May 29, 2025**. I often walk along Maple Ave with my young daughter (aged 2), as it is a route to several neighborhood playgrounds and schools. It's a heavily trafficked road, and I strongly support the measures, particularly those intended to improve traffic calming. I'm grateful for the measure to install a pedestrian refuge on Old Philadelphia Ave, add a sidewalk in front of the shops on Sherman Ave and cross walk on Lincoln Ave, and the numerous proposals for curb extensions. I also appreciate the proposed bike lanes, which will help improve bicyclist safety, an important measure to reduce carbon emissions.

Thank you for your consideration.

[REDACTED]
212 Dogwood Ave
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reedie Drive, Wheaton, MD
Artie Harris, Chair

VIA EMAIL: Mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org

Re: Maple Avenue “Connectivity” Project, MR 20250001

Dear Chair Harris and members of the Board

I am not a planning expert, but I am somewhat of an expert on traffic and parking conditions in the “upper Maple” section of the proposed project. While for selfish reasons I would prefer less traffic and car use on Maple, I know enough about Ride-On and MCPS bus use and the intermittently very heavy demand for parking in the area around the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church (TPPC) and its associated day care center and rec center to know that the proposal is impractical and will do more harm than good. Because it is also unnecessary for bicyclists, who already have a marked shared lane one block away on Cedar Avenue, I urge the Board to deny the proposal.

SUMMARY

- Maple Avenue is a Ride On bus route and a route for MCPS buses. It is an important corridor for lower wage workers who live in the high-rise buildings on lower Maple to get to their jobs. Even now, buses get stuck. The proposed chicanes will make things difficult for contractors, tree work, moving vans, even if one assumes better compliance with parking restrictions in the designated shared lane areas than experience suggests.
- TPPC is major community hub, hosting a day care/after care center and gym facility. **It has no visitor or staff parking.** There is heavy parking demand near TPPC during day care drop off and pick up hours, and not infrequently cars are parked all down Maple on both sides, leaving a single travel lane and traffic jams during TPPC and rec center events. The City’s limited parking study was not designed to capture the heavy but intermittent use.
- The nearby metro station is the primary means of low carbon emissions commuting from Takoma Park, not bicycling. There is a designated bike lane on Cedar (one block from Maple for cyclists to ride to the metro station.
- The proposed upper Maple project will impede bus traffic and significantly reduce visitor parking which is already scarce. Cyclists passing through, not residents, are the ones who want this project.

When we moved to Maple Avenue over twenty years ago, we hadn’t realized that it was so much busier than the parallel streets: Holly and Cedar on one side, and Willow and Spruce on the other. There were two reasons. First, Maple is a Ride-On bus route connecting to Takoma metro station, and a route for MCPS buses heading to area schools. Several years ago, Ride-On switched from smaller to full size buses on this route. On many occasions I have seen buses get

stuck because a dumpster or a large vehicle is parked on one side and a car is parked on the other. Second, the Takoma Park Presbyterian Church (TPPC) is a large facility that offers many community programs and events as well as occasional weddings and funerals, hosts a day care center and a recreation center and has **no visitor or staff parking**. While the church is close to the metro, most visitors (and day care staff) still drive, with the result that during events both sides of the street are filled with parked cars, reducing Maple to a single lane. I have repeatedly seen traffic jams with opposing lines of cars unable to move.

The upper Maple portion of the project covers the 7100 block which begins at the intersection of Maple and Carroll in DC. TPPC is located at the intersection of Maple and Tulip and the intersection is often a hectic scene in the mornings at day care drop off and evening pick up since there is no parking or driveway area. Then there is one long block (numbering 7200-7400) from Tulip to Philadelphia Avenue, which at that point is Rte. 410. The block is interrupted on one side by Valley View and on the other by old Philadelphia, both at the bottom of a steep hill. During church services and events, parking demand tends to be highest close to the Tulip intersection but often stretches all the way down the Maple Avenue hill to Valley View. The proposed chicanes and shared lanes will significantly diminish the amount of parking available to accommodate TPPC activities, including in the immediate vicinity of the day care center where demand is most intense. That is likely to make pick up and drop off even more chaotic on days than it already is as parents jockey for nearby spaces.

What makes Maple Avenue special (and sought after for both bicyclists and buses) is that it is the only through street crossing Philadelphia Avenue and directly connecting the area near the metro station to lower Maple where there are a number of high rise apartment buildings, and beyond that Sligo Creek Park and the former Washington Adventist Hospital (WAH) site. That makes Maple a vital corridor for people taking the bus or driving to work from the lower (northern) Maple area. It seems likely that further development on that side of Takoma Park, including the former WAH site will increase demand for bus and car transportation along Maple. Maple also connects to the two elementary schools (one on lower Maple and the other on Philadelphia), the middle school (on Piney Branch) and Blair High School. There has been a Blair bus stop at Tulip and Maple for as long as I can remember.

What I understand to be the impetus for the “connectivity” project is that, as the only through street, Maple connects into Aspen Street at the metro tracks and, via Aspen, to Blair Road or Rock Creek Park. It is a desirable route for bicycle commuting to downtown DC and recreational cycling from DC to Sligo Creek Parkway. Maple has no special value for cyclists heading to the Takoma metro station, which is off Cedar Avenue and served by a marked bicycle lane. From my conversations with the consultants working on the original proposal, the proponents seem to have been unaware of the Ride-On bus route and the intermittent but heavy parking demands associated with events at TPPC facilities.

While I support the proposed work on lower Maple which will make the area more attractive and improve pedestrian safety near Piney Branch Elementary School, the proposed work on upper Maple will benefit only through bicycle traffic, to the detriment of residents, pedestrians and neighbors who travel by bus. The planning question is whether to give priority to the cyclists over the other uses. It does not make any sense to shift the Ride-On bus route from Maple to another street, and as long as Maple is a bus route, the chances of regular

obstructions and jams is very high. The consultants who looked at parking also did not measure or otherwise take into account the intermittent but heavy parking demand associated with TPPC. (I saw the video of the parking “study” presented to the City Council which assessed parking at other times and ignored information from residents). There really aren’t other places for TPPC visitors to park, especially on Sundays when there is high demand for visitor parking throughout the neighborhood because of the Farmer’s Market. New apartment construction in the area (mostly on the DC side) has reduced the availability of parking in the neighborhood, and the proposed EYA development on the metro parking lot site will create further pressure on parking on the streets near Maple if it is built (both by eliminating the metro parking lot and creating demand for parking by visitors to residents of the development). Moreover, it’s quite clear that many people will park illegally rather than walk a block or two. Since they currently block driveways and intersection sightlines and park in front of fire hydrants to stay closer to the TPPC facilities, I don’t have much reason to think they won’t park in the shared lane areas designed to allow traffic to flow across from the proposed chicanes. Aspen Street, in DC nearby has chicanes, but the stretch of Aspen between Blair and Georgia does not carry bus traffic or experience heavy parking on both sides of the street, except for the block close to Piney Branch during services at the church on that corner. (We used to live nearby and go through often). So the simplest answer is that the project just won’t work, unless you think of bringing traffic to a standstill as a form of “calming,” which is not the impression I get from frustrated drivers.

Even if it came down to balancing interests, I think that the interests of the apartment dwellers on lower Maple to be able to get to the metro station by bus or wherever they are going by car should take precedence over bike commuting to DC or recreational biking from DC to Sligo Creek. As to the former, I have noticed an increase in bicycle commuting over the years, but it is still very limited. And much of the increase I have observed is in the form of e-bikes that could easily manage a slightly less direct route (over Cedar, for example). And no matter how strongly one feels about reducing carbon emissions and car use (I agree strongly but don’t have much hope given our current national energy policy), the salient fact is that the metro system, not bicycle, is the primary means of commuting around the DC area without cars. There’s not much use in having a bicycle in downtown DC and because of the time and distance involved in comparison to metro, cycling from Takoma Park will always be a relatively limited option. Cyclists who want to commute to DC can use the marked lane a block away on Cedar, and the same is true for recreational cyclists who want to ride from DC to Sligo Creek. The slight gain in convenience for cyclists of being able to stay on Maple is hardly enough to justify the loss to folks who are trying to get to work, many of them who have to travel substantial distances on public transportation and don’t have a lot of leeway about when they get to work. And while it may be out of favor to consider economic and social inequity, I do think the fact that the costs of disrupting traffic from lower Maple to the metro station or to DC will be borne by people who tend to have less income and fewer alternatives, many of whom are first generation residents, counts in favor of giving priority to them rather than to bicycle riders who are making commuting or recreational choices, no matter how fervently one may want to expand cycling.

I have heard from some neighbors (although not from anyone who lives on Maple) that they support the project because it makes it hard for cars and drivers, which presumably is a strategy for reducing car use. But the effect of this project will not only make it hard for people who choose to drive to commute rather than take metro (or bike) to come to the Takoma historic district, despite its proximity to metro. It will also make it hard for people using public

transportation to get to the metro, kids trying to get to school, and contractors and plumbers, electricians and other service contractors who will get caught in jams and will be unable to park. And it will make things hard for residents who will have to deal with a lot of illegal parking by visitors who won't or can't find a legal space and with the congestion when the street is filled to capacity. Moreover, given the develop the former WAH site, it seems unwise to make Maple Avenue unsuitable for bus transportation that would link that development to the metro system.

My impression is that the "connectivity" sought in this project has nothing to do with the desires of Maple Avenue residents; its proponents launched it without knowing about bus routes and parking demand and have failed to collect and present the information necessary for the City to make sound judgments about competing uses. A quieter Maple would be nice, but its not realistic. The last point I'll make is that from the perspective of residents crossing the street with kids and dogs, e-bike commuters are almost as bad as cars because they go pretty fast and don't stop or signal, so making Maple Avenue an e-bike thoroughfare is not going to make things better for pedestrians.

I urge the Board to deny approval of the project.

Respectfully submitted,


7211 Maple Ave.
Takoma Park, MD 20912

Cc: Jessica Landman
Takoma Park City Council
Ward One

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: May 29 - Maple Ave Connectivity Project Comments
Date: Thursday, May 22, 2025 10:09:02 PM

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Hello

I'm submitting this email as my written comments for the meeting on May 29th regarding the Maple Ave Connectivity Project. My mailing address is 7300 Maple Ave, Takoma Park, MD 20912.

As a concerned citizen who lives on Maple Ave, I'd like to express my full support for this project. Projects like this are exactly what we need in Takoma Park. I'm the father of a 2 year old girl with another on the way. We need to do whatever we can to make our most vulnerable citizens feel safe. Cars routinely speed down our street and I'm sick of seeing it. There is no merit to the argument that we need to protect parking. Every single house on this street has a multi car driveway. It is not Takoma Park's responsibility to provide ample more free parking for people who don't even live on Maple. I applaud the team who have spent months studying and designing this project. Please don't let a vocal minority derail this work. They do not represent the voices of the many parents who don't have the time or energy to come out and show our support.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Comments on Maple Ave Connectivity Project
Date: Tuesday, May 27, 2025 10:21:42 PM

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

Hello,

I hope it is not too late for my comments to be considered. I am a Takoma Park resident writing to share my support of the overall plan for the Maple Ave Connectivity Project. However, I have significant concerns about the plan to stop the protected bike lane directly in front of the entrance to Piney Branch Elementary School.

The plan currently calls for curbside parking, with a painted bike lane immediately in between the parking and the car travel lane. This design is completely at odds with the purported project goal, to create safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. It will create dozens of unnecessary daily conflicts between drivers and cyclists - who will often be some of our smallest, least confident riders. I foresee the painted bike lane creating a false sense of security (especially right after a properly protected lane in the preceding blocks) for elementary school students biking to/from school, with drivers of today's big SUVs being unable to see them as they pull out of their parking spaces. Conflict areas like this are exactly why I would tell my child to bike on the sidewalk, which then creates problems for pedestrians - further underscoring how counterproductive this piece of the design is.

Please encourage Takoma Park to find a new design for this section and install a continuous protected bike lane along Maple Ave from Philadelphia to Hilltop. At minimum, the protected bike lane must be continued in front of the school entrance. We should not compromise safety for the convenience of a handful of drivers who want to park immediately in front of the school or community center.

Thank you for your time!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone