

From: [Jeff Griffith](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Cc: [Kira Lueders](#)
Subject: Documents submitted regarding Beach Drive Open Parkway 2025 Program Update, agenda item on October 30, 2025
Date: Sunday, October 26, 2025 9:07:37 PM
Attachments: [PRA Comments on Montgomery Parks Staff Report .pdf](#)
[Statement to the Planning Board October 2025 .pdf](#)

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TO: Chair Artie Harris, Vice Chair Josh Linden, Board Members Mitra Pedoeem, James Hedrick, and Shawn Bartley

The Parkwood Residents Association [PRA] is submitting two documents related to the Montgomery County Planning Board's meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 30, 2025, agenda item #8, [Beach Drive Open Parkway 2025 Program Update – Friday Closure Alternatives](#) .

The first document, entitled ***Comments on Montgomery Parks Staff Report***, offers our comments specifically on the analysis of alternatives prepared by Parks' staff and made available to the public on October 24, 2025. The PRA is also submitting a companion statement entitled ***Residents of Parkwood Request that Beach Drive be Eliminated from the Open Parkway Program on Fridays***, which provides additional justification for our request. Both documents are attached to this email.

We will attend the meeting in person so we can listen to your discussion of our concerns and hear your decision. If you want to ask us any questions directly, we would be happy to respond (very briefly, of course).

Kira Lueders, President
Jeff Griffith, Vice President
Parkwood Residents Association

From: [Jeff Griffith](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Automatic reply: Documents submitted regarding Beach Drive Open Parkway 2025 Program Update, agenda item on October 30, 2025
Date: Sunday, October 26, 2025 9:15:07 PM

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Per your request regarding proper noticing requirements for written testimony, I am submitting the following:

Jeffrey Griffith

[REDACTED] Kensington, MD 20895

email: [REDACTED]

phone number: [REDACTED]

On Sun, Oct 26, 2025 at 9:07 PM MCP-Chair <mcp-chair@mncppc-mc.org> wrote:

Thank you for contacting the Planning Board Chair's Office. This confirms receipt of your message for distribution to appropriate staff to review. If you have submitted an inquiry, we will respond in a timely manner. You may also leave a voice message at (301) 495-4605 and a staff member will return your call.

IMPORTANT: If you have submitted written testimony for a Planning Board item, please be sure to include your mailing address to satisfy proper noticing requirements. If this was not already included, please reply to this email with that information. Written testimony submitted before the deadline of 12pm, two business days before the scheduled Planning Board meeting, will be distributed to the Board and staff and included in the public record. Written testimony received after the deadline will only be distributed to staff to review.

For more information about the Chair's Office, please visit:

<https://montgomeryplanningboard.org/>

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Jeff

Comments on the Montgomery County Staff Report
Beach Drive Open Parkway 2025 Program Update – Friday Closure Alternatives

Submitted on behalf of the Parkwood Residents Association

Kira Lueders, President

Jeff Griffith, Vice President

The Parkwood Residents Association [PRA] has two major concerns with the staff analysis of the Beach Drive Friday closure alternatives.

1. Staff Recommendation

Parks staff recommend that the Board review public input and make a determination to either:

- 1) Eliminate Friday Open Parkway to address neighborhood vehicular concerns while maintaining Saturday and Sunday, or
- 2) Delay the start time of the Friday Open Parkway to 12:00 PM.

Parkwood residents have voted strongly in three separate polls in favor of option 1, eliminating Open Parkway on Friday. As the staff report notes, residents have also voted strongly in support of Open Parkways on Saturday and Sunday.

The alternative to delay the start time until 12:00 PM did not receive a favorable rating from any of the respondent groups in Parks' survey – Montgomery County residents, residents in zip codes 20895 and 20814 listed separately [the two zip codes that cover Parkwood], and Full Results, which includes residents from DC and Virginia. [See Table 3, page 7 of the staff report.]

Given these survey results, combined with the report itself which noted that "...many stated that the delayed start time did not do enough to mitigate the core problems surrounding the Friday closure and that [the 12:00 PM] option would still interfere with Friday evening commutes" [page 10 of the staff report], we see no basis for the Board to accept this option. **We therefore urge the Board to reject it.**

The first option listed in the staff summary – eliminate Friday Open Parkway DID receive positive ratings from the three most important groups – Montgomery County residents and residents in zip codes 20895 and 20814, who are the people most negatively affected by the closure. [See Table 4, page 8 of the staff report.]

As the staff report itself says, **"Eliminating Friday is the only alternative to be rated favorably on average when looking at the Montgomery County and local 20814 and 20895 zip code results."** [See page 8 of the staff report.]

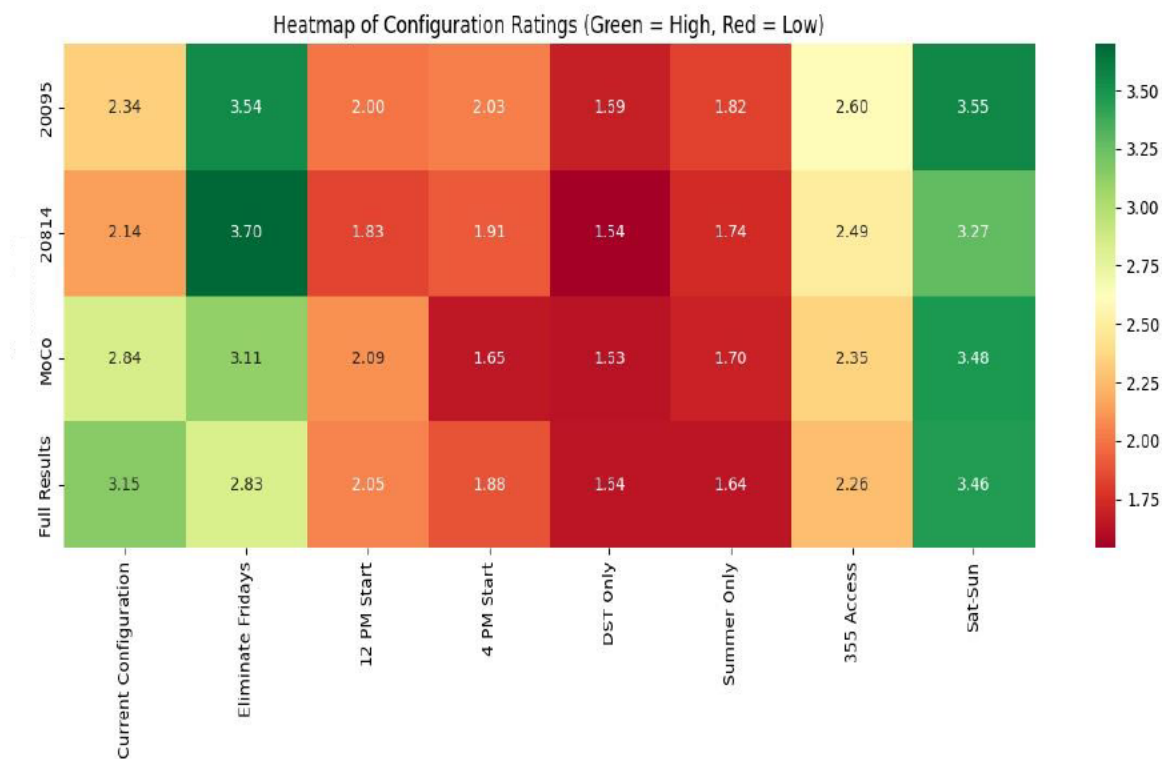
We urge the Board to accept this option.

2. Inclusion of residents not in Montgomery County

At its June 12, 2025 meeting, Planning Board members specifically referred to the importance of hearing from other residents of Montgomery County. However, the Parks survey was open to the public and residents in DC and Virginia also voted. They are included in the group listed as *Full Results* in the staff report data tables. We do not think the views of this group should be considered in a decision that burdens Montgomery County residents, who are the ones who experience the negative impacts and are strongly opposed to closure.

We welcome the residents of Virginia and DC who enjoy the Open Parkway program on Saturdays and Sundays. Parkwood residents have always appreciated the program and have continued to support it on weekends and holidays even when the Board voted to open a section of Beach Drive 24/7 in response to requests from the residents of Byeforde/Rock Creek Highlands.

We urge the Board to consider only the votes of the residents of Montgomery County on this issue.



[Source: Parks 2025 Survey]

Residents of Parkwood Request that Beach Drive Be Eliminated from the Open Parkway Program on Fridays

Parkwood residents' support for Open Parkways

The residents of the Parkwood community have always supported the Open Parkways Program, especially the closure of Beach Drive on Saturdays/Sundays and holidays. Even after the Board opened the section of Beach to cars from Connecticut Avenue to Cedar Lane in June 2024 at the request of the residents of the Byforde/Rock Creek Highlands neighborhood for safety reasons, Parkwood voted to keep the section adjacent to its neighborhood closed to cars on weekends.

But Parkwood residents are strongly opposed to the closure of Beach Drive from Cedar Lane to Knowles Avenue on Fridays, a normal working day. Nearly 80% have voted in two separate surveys held a year apart to open the road to cars.

Reasons for residents' opposition to closure on Fridays

- **Safety:** MCDOT data shows many more cars passing through the narrow streets of Parkwood on Fridays. Some of these cars originate and drive through Parkwood to get to work because Beach is closed on a work day. The net result, as MCDOT data confirmed, is much more traffic on key roads in Parkwood. This creates safety conditions antithetical to Vision Zero.
- **Longer commuting times through greater congestion:** Residents now experience significant additional driving time to get to work and return home because the routes they must take on Fridays are along far more crowded roads. Estimates vary, but some have cited an additional 30-45 minutes.
- **Environmental impact:** Residents' added travel time results in more cars going longer distances, thereby further polluting our air and impeding the county's goal of reducing GGEs by 80% in 2027.
- **Low use:** The number of residents whose travel is greatly disrupted by the Friday closure far exceeds the number of cyclists, who comprise 87% of the users, by a factor of 4-5 to 1. The majority of these bicyclists continue riding on the sections of Beach Drive that are open to cars after they leave the closed section. Result: Many residents face longer and more challenging commutes so a handful may bike on a two mile stretch of Beach Drive [We know because we have counted them].

Assessment of alternatives

None of the alternatives proposed in the Parks survey except opening Beach to cars all day on Fridays addresses residents' concerns. Furthermore, residents of Montgomery County, in addition to those in Parkwood also favor opening Beach to cars.

1. Later closure times:

- a. ***Children still walk home or are picked up from KPES in the afternoon.*** A noon or 4:00pm closure does not address any of the safety issues that this

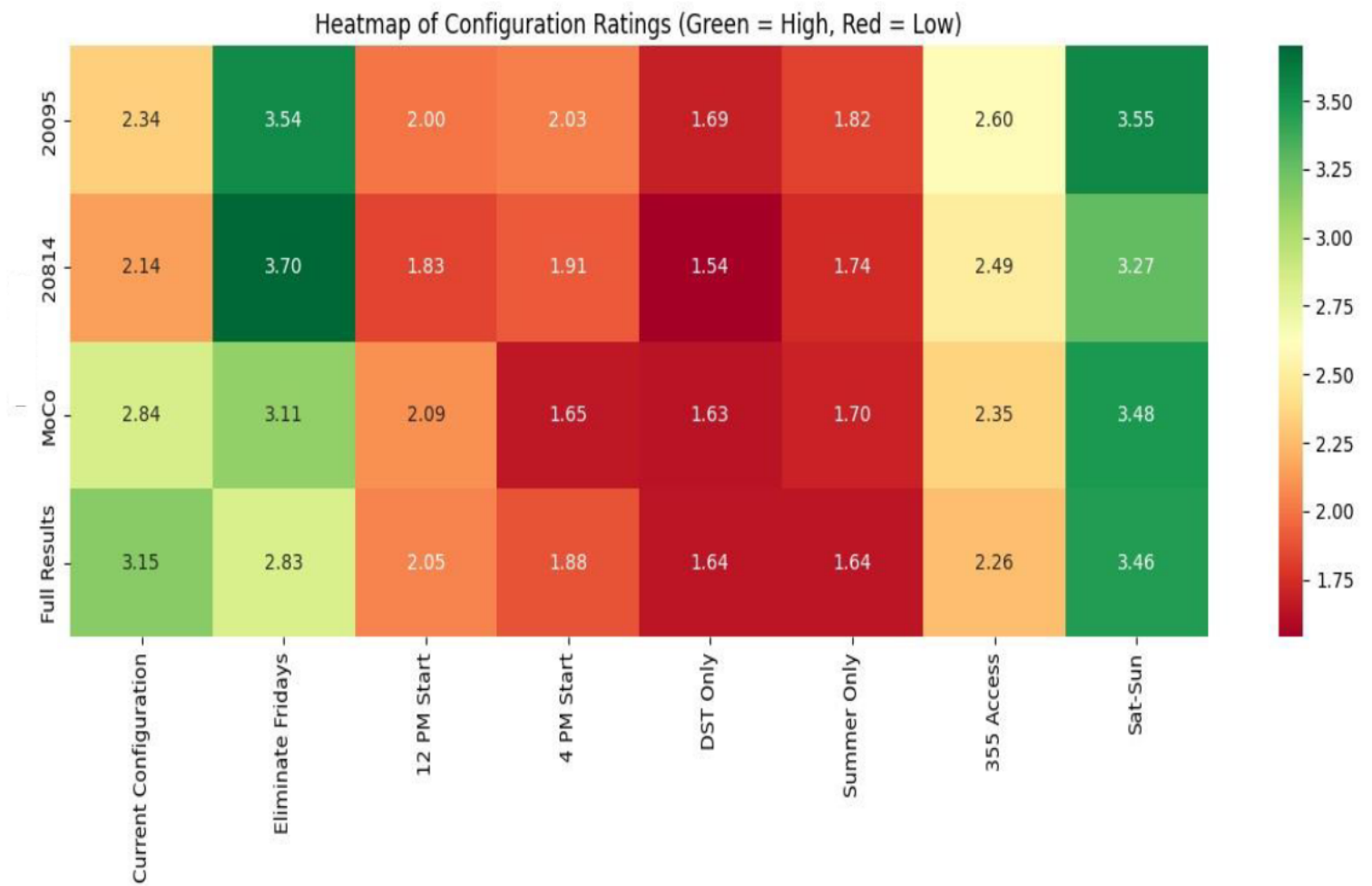
entails, nor does it support Project Zero. Even before the Friday closure went into effect, the county was concerned enough about pedestrian safety to undertake a study of sidewalks, especially for school children, along with other traffic calming options. Because of the seriousness of traffic in Parkwood and the need for a safer walkshed, the county is currently assessing the most effective methods of implementing a variety of safety measures. The closure of Beach on Fridays has added to traffic in Parkwood and made the need for more such measures imperative, as the children walking home from school in the afternoon can attest.

- b. **More drivers use Beach during the evening rush hours than in the morning rush hours.** Therefore, closure at noon or later would still cause havoc for the hundreds of commuters who must use the already overcrowded intersections at Parkwood/Knowles and at Cedar/Parkwood to get home during the late afternoon and early evening. Cyclists and pedestrians using Beach during these hours number a few dozen.
2. **Seasonal closure [Summer or all Daylight Saving Time].** During the hottest months of the year, i.e., summer, there are far fewer walkers and bicyclists. March and November, while still in Daylight Saving Time, are often cold enough to discourage use. ***Pedestrian/bicyclist use of the park is highly dependent on weather.*** But drivers still face the same traffic challenges throughout the year regardless of the weather or the season.
3. **Access to 355.** Pedestrians and bikers would enter Beach from Cedar but could then encounter cars from Franklin to the 355 exit/entrance at Grosvenor Lane before continuing on the closed section to Knowles. This would be a confusing situation for both drivers and pedestrians and a potentially ***dangerous option.***
4. **Opinions of other County residents.** The Planning Board asked Parks to gather the views of others in Montgomery County as well as those in Parkwood regarding the options. The results of Parks' survey confirmed that **the option to open Beach Drive to cars on Friday all day is the only one favored not just by Parkwood residents but also by the county residents who chose to give their zip code.** The option to keep it closed had a higher rating only when anyone could vote, **including those who do not live in the county.** See the chart at the end.

Conclusion

The Friday closure has caused many unintended and unanticipated negative consequences. It has frustrated residents for over a year and has made our lives unnecessarily more complicated and difficult. We love our parks, but on Fridays the closure of Beach Drive has become a source of great aggravation.

We ask the Montgomery County Planning Board to grant our request to keep Beach Drive closed to cars on weekends and holidays but to eliminate it from the Open Parkway program on Fridays and reopen it to cars on that workday, as supported by Parks' survey.



[Source: Parks 2025 Survey]

Submitted by
 Kira Lueders, President
 Jeff Griffith, Vice President
 Parkwood Residents Association

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: PRA Position Regarding Beach Drive Closure on Fridays
Date: Monday, October 27, 2025 12:16:56 PM

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MoCo Planning Board,

The abject disrespect this board has demonstrated on the matter of OPENING BEACH DRIVE ON FRIDAYS is disrespectful and shocking.

I have lived in Parkwood for over 2 decades. **The number of people on Beach Dr on Fridays when it is closed to drivers is miniscule.** The number of residents who use BEACH Drive for vital life commuting IS SUBSTANTIAL,

EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK Beach Drive is a vital road for all the MoCo residents who live surrounding Beach Drive for many miles in every direction . **Stop being SO Patronizing to the handful of bicyclists who frequent Beach Drive.** These individuals routinely do NOT Obey street signs/stop signs and are not in any way mindful of the reckless behavior their biking brings to our community.

This decision is serious and seriously overdue to be made right. If you believe residents will not decide to move from MoCo over this closure you are MISTAKEN. Some already have and more are set and ready to.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Request to keep Beach Drive open on Fridays
Date: Monday, October 27, 2025 9:58:56 PM

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Dear Planning Board Chair and Members,

Chairperson: Please distribute this email to the Planning Board Members. We understand you will be meeting on Thursday to reconsider keeping Beach Drive open on Fridays again between Cedar Avenue and Knowles Avenue. We agree with the Parkwood Residents Association to keep Beach Drive open on Fridays submit the attached photo of typical Friday back-ups for those traveling south on Route 355 trying to turn left onto Cedar (typically coming from the Beltway.) I took this picture on June 6, 2025. Look closely, the traffic to turn left actually goes even further than the photo shows. We, as many in our community, have been stuck in this Friday back-up numerous times, and it can take three to five light chance cycles to make it through the intersection. Without access to Beach Drive from Route 355 North to Franklin Street, we go from having three ways to get to our community from the beltway (via Strathmore, Beach, and Cedar) to two heavily trafficked routes. The back-ups on eastbound Strathmore are also getting worse on Fridays, and Strathmore Road now even has one lane typically closed due to housing construction on the old Holy Cross property. We literally cannot get back to our neighborhood on Fridays. Please, please consider opening Beach drive back up on Fridays. Very few bikers take advantage of this closed portion of Beach Drive on Fridays as they work during the day too. Thank you.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED] (Members of the Parkwood Residents Association)

[REDACTED]

Kensington, MD 20895

[REDACTED]



From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Re: Open Beach Drive
Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 7:37:23 AM

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Address: [REDACTED] Bethesda, MD 20814

[REDACTED] LEED AP ID+C, NCIDQ
[REDACTED]

On Tue, Oct 28, 2025, 6:30 AM [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> wrote:
To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to urge you to reopen Beach Drive to traffic. The current road closure is redirecting a significant volume of vehicles onto streets closer to an elementary school, creating a serious safety hazard for the many children who walk to and from school in our community.

To protect these children, I strongly request that Beach Drive be reopened.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] LEED AP ID+C, NCIDQ
[REDACTED]

From: [Kira Lueders](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Fw: Statement from Parkwood Residents Association-Beach Drive
Date: Tuesday, October 28, 2025 11:23:47 AM

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Planning Board Chair and Members -

As President of the Parkwood Residents Association, I wanted to follow up on our previous submissions in advance of your meeting on Thursday, October 30. To be clear, the PRA believes that the only alternative, developed by Parks staff, that is acceptable is eliminating Beach Drive from the Open Parkways Program on Fridays. Delaying the Friday closure for vehicles to 12:00 Noon is unacceptable to our residents and is unsupported by all the surveys conducted. Thank you.
Kira Lueders

From: [Joan McDermott](#)
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Beach Drive Open Parkway, Item 8 special request
Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 7:44:24 AM

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Dear Mr. Harris,

To be included in testimony for Thursday, October 30th, this message was due yesterday at noon. If you see this message before your meeting tomorrow, I ask you to consider my neighborhood's concerns. Monday morning I received Kyle Lukacs report and I thought about how the Open Parkway program affected us here in Kensington Estates. Monday night we learned of a death in the family, however, and I spent all of Tuesday contacting family and making plans. My message is very simple:

Residents of Kensington Estates are deeply concerned about safety on Parkwood Drive. A group of people have joined our Safety and Traffic Committee in the last month to lobby for measures to lower speeds on Parkwood Drive. Frustrated drivers are reckless. The most egregious driving behavior, however, is that of one or more drivers who have driven around the gate at Franklin Avenue during Open Parkway hours. I understand there have been close calls with people on Beach Drive. That information came to me through the President of the Rock Creek Palisades Civic Association. Her friend said by email that she saw a car on two Fridays at about 6:30 PM.

We will address the gate bypass with Montgomery Parks, but the flagrant violation of road closure reveals how frustration on the road leads to danger. A child's life can be lost all too suddenly. I ask you to leave Beach Drive open to traffic from Monday to Friday, all year long.

Thank you very much,
Joan McDermott

Joan McDermott, President
Kensington Estates Civic Association

[REDACTED]
Kensington, MD 20895

Home: [REDACTED]
Cell: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MCP-Chair](#)
Subject: Please Keep Beach Drive Open on Fridays
Date: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 9:50:43 AM

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I live off Grosvenor Lane and use Beach Drive each Friday for recreation, jogging and biking. I lived for 30 years in Parkwood so know the neighborhood well.

PLEASE KEEP BEACH DRIVE OPEN ON FRIDAYS. It provides a safe space for recreation, biking, jogging and walking.

Please note the following:

- **Surveys showing support for closing Beach drive are skewed toward the opponents of closure.** THE ONLY WAY I LEARNED THAT OPENING BEACH DRIVE TO TRAFFIC IS UNDER REVIEW WAS FROM A RESIDENT OF PARKWOOD PUSHING FOR OPENING THE ROAD. MANY USERS ARE COMPLETELY UNAWARE THIS IS BEING CONSIDERED.
- Parkwood residents seem to oppose any traffic measure that inconveniences them, even when these proposals by the Planning Dept increase safety for pedestrians or bikers or other users and have minimal traffic impact. Its the case with this proposal, or the reconfiguration of the intersection of Grosvenor, Beach and Rt 355 (losing the slip lane), or putting in sidewalks in the neighborhood. They seem to have little interest in the safety of rest of the broader community that utilizes the Park.
- They may abut the Park, but the Park is for everyone.
- Why would we prioritize cars over pedestrians and bikers? I thought the county was trying to reach a balance.
- Its one day a week!
- Yes, as the Planning report showed, many bikers access Beach from the portion of Beach that is Open and so opening Beach might not discourage ridership. But that's the

case even on weekends. As a biker, I can tell you its nerve-wracking biking on those open portions of Beach when cars are allowed – and dangerous. **No bike lane, and not even a curb lane.** So keeping beach closed is a big safety issue and provides a safe space for car-free biking.

- As the Dept Report states, any increase in traffic on Parkwood is neighborhood traffic, not cut-through. “The closure of Beach Drive slightly increases local neighborhood traffic along Parkwood Drive, and traffic to and from Kensington Parkwood Elementary School is a factor in traffic patterns when Beach Drive is closed. **No increase in “cut-through” traffic was discerned from the traffic counts.**” (Page 13, June 5 Planning Dept Report)

Thank you

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD

20814