

## Bethesda Girl Gets County To Build Pedestrian Path

by [Aaron Kraut](#) | February 21, 2014 at 10:45 am | 948 views | [4 Comments](#)



An 11-year-old Bethesda girl used a petition and some help from the County Council to convince Montgomery County's Department of Transportation to install a new walking path near her house.

Lilah Katz went to neighborhood 4th of July picnics, the Bethesda Central Farm Market and stood out on the path to get more than 400 signatures on a petition that urged the county to renovate the muddy walking path between Cornish Road and Glenbrook Road.

Last Friday, DOT sent Katz a letter saying an investigation spurred by her action recommended replacement of the existing path. The county will begin to build a new five-foot wide concrete path that meets ADA standards this spring.

"At first, when I started this whole thing I thought I was going to get maybe 100 signatures if I got lucky," Katz said. "It got bigger than I thought it would. At that point, I tried not to get my hopes up."

Even after the petition and a story on her effort in [The Gazette](#), Lilah and her dad Michael hadn't heard back. Michael Katz said he saw Councilmember Roger Berliner at a recent community meeting, Berliner got his staff involved and the process was jump-started.

Lilah Katz said she's been using the path her whole life, pretty much every day.

The winding stone and dirt route connects many in the neighborhood to downtown Bethesda. Katz, a student at Pyle Middle School, said she takes it to the Bethesda Library, religious school and as a biking connection to the Capital Crescent Trail.

When the path is hard to navigate because of rain, snow or darkness, the trip from Cornish Road to downtown Bethesda via car is 1.4 miles.

DOT also said its Traffic Engineering and Operations Division will do an investigation to see if lighting is feasible.

"Your interest for improving the safety of pedestrians in your community is appreciated," read the official letter.

Berliner tweeted out his congratulations to Katz on Thursday:

The petition drive became something of a summer break project. She tried door-knocking, which didn't work as effectively with people on summer vacations. She also sat out on the path with a book, then made her case to anybody passing by.

"I've known for a while that a lot of people are unhappy with this path, so I decided if everyone else is just going to deal with it, I should do something," Katz said. "I'm really excited."

As for her future goals, Katz said her foray into local civic activism could lead to more interest in government, or maybe not.

"I still don't know, but at this point, I want to do something to help people when I get job," Katz said. "Well, people or animals."

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