

Washington Grove, MD 20880  
February 21, 2021

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County Executive Marc Elrich  
Members of the Montgomery County Council  
Stella Werner Council Office Building  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20850

Christopher Conklin, Director  
Montgomery County Department of Transportation  
101 Monroe Street  
Rockville, MD 20850

Re: Comments about the Planning Department's Public Hearing Draft of the Shady Grove Sector Plan Minor Master Plan Amendment ("Plan Amendment") / MCDOT Washington Grove Connector Project

Dear County Executive Elrich and members of the County Council, and Director Conklin:

I am a resident of Washington Grove and would like to bring to your attention some troubling and inaccurate provisions in the Plan Amendment -- provisions that fly in the face of the dedicated work of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MCDOT) and to which I strenuously object. **These Plan Amendment provisions are effectively an end-run around critical work done over the past couple of years by MCDOT, working with Washington Grove residents and the surrounding community, to establish the best possible location for a badly needed pedestrian and bike connector between Washington Grove and the Shady Grove Metro.**

## Locations within the Plan Amendment of the Offensive Provisions

- **On page 131, Table 3: Existing and Proposed Bikeway Network**, includes a recommendation to create an off-street pedestrian and bikeway that would go from Brown Street (note my street address!) in Washington Grove to the Crabbs Branch Road/Amity Drive roadway extension. The table refers to this as the “Piedmont Crossing Local Park Trail”.
- **On page 131, Table 4: Amendments to the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan**, includes a recommendation to remove from the existing Master Plan a recommendation to create a sidepath bikeway along Oakmont Avenue from Central Avenue to Shady Grove Road. The reason provided in the table is that the current focus for connecting to Washington Grove is at Brown Street rather than along Oakmont, since Brown Street is safer.
- **On page 130, Map 53: Existing and Proposed Bikeway Network**, shows an off-street trail proceeding from the future Crabbs Branch Road/Amity Drive roadway extension to the end of Brown Street in Washington Grove (shown in green below):



### Why These Provisions are Troubling and Offensive

The Shady Grove Metro Station was completed in 1984. Washington Grove is less than a mile and a half from the Metro, and yet for the past 37 years, there has been no safe way for Grove residents to safely walk or bike to the Metro. At long last, we have the chance to establish a safe connection and reduce the number of daily vehicle trips to the Metro.

For over a year, Washington Grove’s government and residents have been working with the MCDOT on the [Washington Grove Connector Project](#), which would establish that connection. MCDOT has held two public meetings with the

community to discuss the connector; currently we are discussing three possible options. [You can view these three options on this PDF.](#) Only one of these options connects with Brown Street. Of the other two, one does not connect with Washington Grove at all (it connects just outside of the Grove), and the third option connects with Washington Grove on Ridge Road. **BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN DECIDED.**

And yet the map on page 130 of the Plan Amendment, and the text on page 131, imply that a decision has been made, bypassing all of the MCDOT and community work. They assume that one of the three options has already been selected, thereby disrespecting the efforts of both MCDOT staff and Washington Grove government and residents, and ignoring the fact that the location of the connector is still in discussion.

If this is the case, then all of the continuing discussions between MCDOT and the community are for naught. If MCDOT ever in the future informs the community that we are bound by the sole option presented in the current version of the Plan Amendment, and that the other options we are currently discussing have been discarded because they are not reflected in the Plan Amendment, then the community will lose trust and confidence in MCDOT's good faith efforts to work with the community.

Master Plans carry a great deal of weight in MoCo planning. If a particular planning option is reflected in a Master Plan, then the consideration of all other planning alternatives discussed in the past is usually forgotten and/or ignored. The Shady Grove Master Plan should **not** reflect that a particular path/location for this Connector Project has already been selected. **It has not;** just ask the MCDOT.

The provisions on pages 130-131 of the current draft of the Plan Amendment indicate that, at best, the Planning Department has failed to communicate with MCDOT how the Plan Amendment will affect MCDOT's work; at worst, the Planning Department has willfully ignored this work.

In addition,

- Table 4 on page 131 should not remove the possibility of a bikeway along Oakmont Avenue, since the City of Gaithersburg is still considering linking a pedestrian and bikeway to the Metro via Oakmont Avenue.
- None of the text, descriptions or drawings in the Plan Amendment should indicate any relationship between the Connector Project on the one hand, and the possibility of a Crabbs Branch Way-Amity Drive roadway extension on the other hand, as they currently do. MCDOT has indicated that the two projects (i.e., a pedestrian/bicyclist route, and a road) are completely independent of each other.

### How Does the Plan Amendment Need to Be Revised?

- **On page 130, Map 53: Existing and Proposed Bikeway Network**, should reflect the three different MCDOT options for an off-street trail from Crabbs Branch Road to Washington Grove or to areas immediately adjacent to the Grove, rather than just one option.
- **Page 131, Table 3: Existing and Proposed Bikeway Network**, should read in the “Piedmont Crossing Local Park Trail” row: “Piedmont Crossing Local Park Trail | At or near Washington Grove boundaries | Crabbs Branch Road | Off-Street Trail | Proposed”
- **On page 131, Table 4: Amendments to the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan:** the “Oakmont Avenue” row should be deleted.

Respectfully,



Christine Dibble