

Testimony of David Stopak
Shady Grove Master Plan Amendment Hearing before County Council
February 23, 2021

Written version of my oral testimony

My name is David Stopak. I live in Washington Grove on Brown Street. The Shady Grove Master Plan envisions a bike and pedestrian path connecting Washington Grove to the Metro. I support such a connection, and the Town is working with MCDOT to figure out its location.

In Tables 3 and 4 of this ammendment -- Brown St is specifically called out as the site for the bike connector to the Town. This is inappropriate and should be removed from the sector plan. Washington Grove is adjacent to, but outside the sector. We are a separate municipality with our own independent planning authority. Park and Planning has no jurisdiction within the Town.

The Town is currently working directly with MCDOT to determine the best location of a bike path link to the Town. The Town will decide which alternatives are preferred and work with MCDOT. It is premature and inappropriate for the County's Master plan to depict the exact route the connection should take in the Town.

But the plan does something else new and unacceptable. Oakmont Avenue is a heavily used connecting road that is within the Sector plan. Oakmont is on the west side of the railroad tracks, while the Town, and the proposed Metro bike connector, are located on the east side of the tracks. Oakmont has been unsafe for pedestrians and bikes for decades. The tables in this amendment state that all bike passage on Oakmont be transferred to Brown Street -- sending an arterial level of traffic to a narrow residential street, not within the sector.

Improvements for both pedestrians and bikes are desperately needed on the Oakmont corridor. They are complicated and may be done less expensively as properties are developed in the future. This plan needs to provide that vision for Oakmont, and not transfer that future use across tracks, onto a narrow street not up to county standards, within a town outside its plan area.

We urge that Brown Street be removed from both tables, specifically, that Table 3 remove Brown Street and instead insert "to the boundary of Washington Grove", and that Table 4 remove its reference to Oakmont. If it wants to list the Crabbs Branch link to the Town it should say: link from Crabbs Branch to the boundary of Washington Grove.

Simply Leaving the 2006 plan intact with respect to bikeways near Washington Grove would solve all of this.