

**Robert Nelson’s Testimony to the Montgomery County Council at the  
Public Hearing on the Spending Affordability Guidelines for the FY23 Capital  
Budget and the FY23-28 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)  
September 21, 2021**

I’m Robert Nelson, resident of Goshen and former Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board.

The County Council needs to consider raising the Spending Affordability Guidelines for the FY23 Capital Budget and the FY23-28 CIP funding to make Montgomery County more attractive for business investment. Several affordability indicators used in the calculations are up significantly. Taxable real property values are up 9 percent in Maryland for each of the past two years. The availability of state funds will be increasing as well as an influx in funding from your colleagues in Washington. According to the White House the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal will invest \$110 billion of new funds for roads, bridges, and major projects...” “The Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal will grow the economy, enhance our competitiveness, create good jobs, and make our economy more sustainable, resilient, and just.”

So why are the proposed Spending Affordability Guidelines declining from FY23 to FY24 and remaining flat for six years?

The backlog of projects in the fastest growing region of the county, the Upcounty, is enormous:

- employment centers
- expansion of school capacity
- permanent fire stations and police stations
- reconstruction of crumbling roads and replacement of failing bridges
- an extension of Metrorail north of Gaithersburg with the quality of the Purple Line
- transportation infrastructure promised for decades including the completion of the Eastern Arterial (M-83)

Thrive 2050 does not address the challenges facing the Upcounty and would be disastrous for Montgomery County to implement. Urbanizing the Upcounty would just exacerbate existing problems and make it more difficult for Upcounty residents to reach their jobs. The Upcounty already has the most affordable housing so that residents of all socio-economic levels can feel at home. Is it equity to continue to allow Upcounty’s pressing needs to go unfulfilled?

It’s 280 days until next year’s primary election and I’m sure that Upcounty voters want to see a change from being viewed as the county’s stepchild to a full participant with one-third of the county’s population.

*[Specific Capital Improvement Projects are identified in my attached testimony from April 8, 2021]*

**Robert Nelson’s Testimony to the Montgomery County Council at the  
Public Hearing on the FY 2022 Operating Budget  
and Amendments to the FY21-26 CIP  
April 8, 2021**

I’m Robert Nelson, resident of Goshen and former Chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board. With interest rates at record lows and the probability that there will be infrastructure funding available from the Biden administration, let’s complete Capital Improvement Projects that have been promised for years and even decades. I commend the emphasis on public safety repairing failing and functionally obsolete bridges. The 50-year old Brink Road Bridge replacement (CIP 509132, P502104) is one of those identified, but is not scheduled for replacement until 2026.

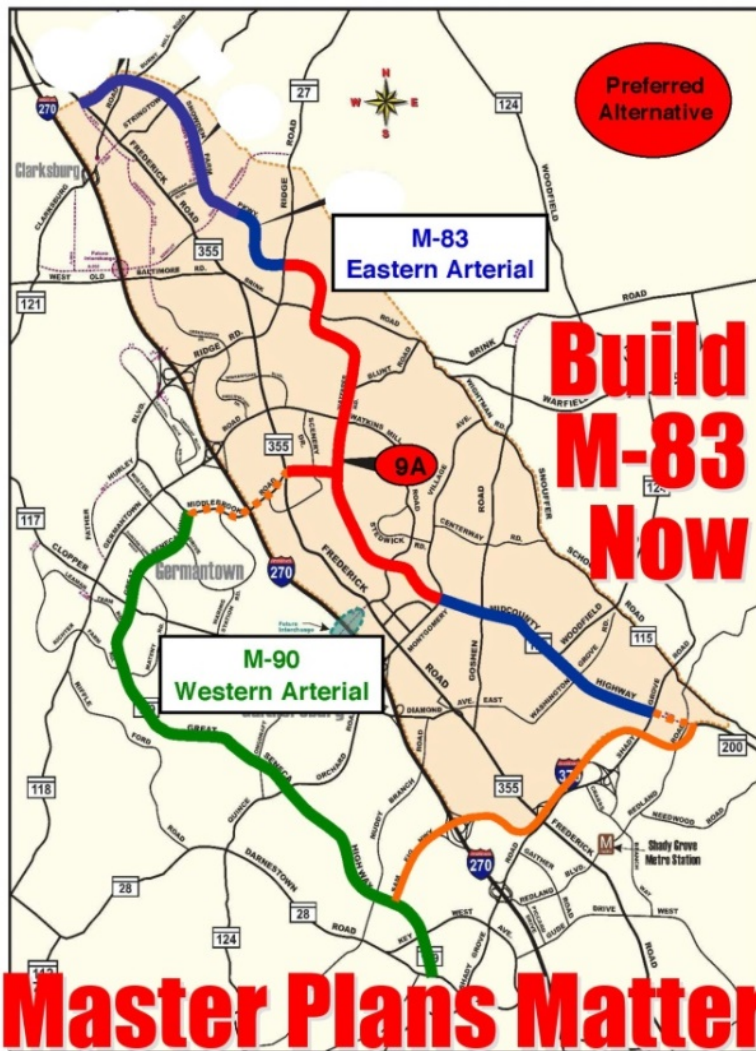
During a study in 1999-2001, Goshen Road had 102 reported accidents. The rate of collisions was twice the statewide average and pedestrian-related accidents were five times the statewide average. Twenty years later Goshen Road still has no shoulders, no sidewalks and no bike lanes and the Goshen Road CIP (P501107) has no funding.

We’ve been waiting for decades for a permanent 6<sup>th</sup> District Police Station (P470301) and the current completion date has been pushed off until 2025. “The current facility is in rented space and lacks several features of a modern police station, including reinforced interview rooms and a dedicated sally port.”

I do **not** support the Dorsey Mill Road Bridge (P501906) or MD 355 BRT (P502005). BRT for the Upcounty will not be as beneficial nor as efficient as completing the Mid-County Highway on the Master Plan Route and utilizing conventional bus transportation on the high-speed highway. The speed limit on the Mid-County Highway would be 55 mph while MD 355 slows to 30 mph in certain areas. **The Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board has recommended restoration of the Mid-County Highway (M-83) to the FY21-26 CIP.**

A Racial Equity and Social Justice evaluation of the minority communities such as Stewartown or Prathertown would probably show that there is major negative community impact due to not having sidewalks on Goshen Road and major traffic intrusion and congestion for not completing the Master-Planned 5.6-mile gap in the Mid-County Highway.

## Build M-83 now on the Master Plan Route!



Completed Sections of Eastern Arterial – Snowden Farm Parkway and Midcounty Highway  
Preferred Alternative to complete Eastern Arterial – Alternative 9A, Master Plan Route  
Western Arterial – Great Seneca Highway  
Connections; East to West, and both highways to the ICC. Solid-completed, Dashed-planned

*Recognizing that transportation is the #1 concern of Montgomery County residents, the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board and Upcounty residents have been clamoring for the county to invest in north/south corridor transportation improvements. Four to six additional travel lanes could be made available if the Snowden Farm Parkway in Clarksburg were connected to the Mid-County Highway in Gaithersburg. A bus on the completed highway would have a travel time of less than half of the CCT. Current construction cost estimates for building the 5.6-mile gap are about \$300M.*

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