

My testimony on April 8, 2024 is submitted to bring to the attention of Montgomery County Council the *significant diminishment of the Rock Creek Trail*, specifically the section from Franklin Street/Beach Dr Bethesda entrance to Knowles Avenue in Kensington. From research I have learned that the initial construction of the Rock Creek Trail began in 1972 and the section of the Trail that I am most familiar and concerned with is in Rock Creek Stream Valley 3 that was finished in 1977. It is unclear to me what type of maintenance schedule exists. The time has come to bring to the attention of the Montgomery Parks overseers the neglect and sad condition of a 40+ year old trail used daily year round by a significant number of Maryland residents. In my 24 years of nonstop usage of this section of the Rock Creek Trail there are always people on it. I wish to extend an invite to a member in leadership on the Montgomery County Council to a walk on this section of the Rock Creek Trail with me to see firsthand the current state of this trail. It will be found concerning and a clear safety hazard.

My beliefs on the Rock Creek Trail are about Safety, Volume of frequent users and the overall toll deterioration, weather and time have taken on this trail. This county asset trail is sought out and enjoyed by Our County by a wide gamut of Maryland residents (babies in carriages, toddlers, teens, middle agers, seniors). *A continued side stepping of support/upkeep responsibilities of this asset is reckless, unwise and inconsiderate.*

I have walked this trail for over two decades, many times weekly. The Rock Creek trail was never done properly at the gate as trails in Virginia have been constructed. A Band-Aid approach is historically what has been done since inception to attempt to mend the cracks, holes, bumps and rubble this trail has. *This trail needs to be replaced* and needs to be constructed like the ones in Virginia, along the lines of the WO&D trail or the bike trail that goes from Memorial bridge to Mt Vernon.

Our Maryland Rock Creek trail has pot holes, cracks, bumps, stretches submerged underwater after a rain, and tree roots pushing up the asphalt. The trail has *Not withstood the test of time. In its present state it makes walking on it more of an obstacle course than a relaxing walk through nature.* All users Must be looking down to avoid a turned ankle, fall, bike tire puncture or broken bone. The trails in Virginia to my knowledge are the same as they were in the 70's and are still in good condition. The WO&D is smooth, nice, wide. If Montgomery county is going to put down a new Trail we need to do it Right the first time so it will last and be a proper ROI. I believe VA did their Trails like a road with a substrate and ballast/ sub base with the asphalt on top. I believe the Rock Creek Trail in Montgomery county was built by just bulldozing and then putting asphalt down.

To my understanding Mr. Elrich has cut the budget request for Parks. That is concerning as this worthy investment in Montgomery County is not receiving the priority it warrants. *This minimalist view of Park priority is profoundly uncaring and sad* to Many residents of this area of Montgomery County. I am positive if I was to look at the content of the MC Capital budget I would find items of less value that could be demoted below this *overdue* trail safety upgrade. It is well established from medical literature that being in nature is life enriching, a lifestyle asset and a positive part to a healthy life.

One has to believe that the pictures provided as evidence are compelling and hit a nerve.

I wholeheartedly believe that this trail is a resource that is consistently sought out from the volume of people I witness using this trail, some traveling from other Maryland cities as well as others coming from DC.

I trust the council will use its authority and influence to bring forth a reconstruction of this Trail to ensure the safety and proper living quality Montgomery County residence expect and require. I await a close end timeframe when this past-its-prime trail will be redone.

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