

McCray, Tiara

From: abk656 (null) [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 5:19 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: We Strongly Support the Petition to Permanently Close Westbard Ave at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray,

My family and I have lived on Westbard Avenue for over 40 years. We have always worked productively with the traffic commission and appreciate the time and effort extended to us to help ensure that the 5500 block of Westbard remains a safe residential block.

Reckless, excessive traffic has been a worsening and continuing problem for our street. Repeated County studies and subsequent efforts to ameliorate the situation have not been successful. Once recent example, of which there are many, occurred when a driver entering Westbard at River Road at such a reckless high rate of speed hit the median strip (installed for the purpose of slowing traffic) so violently that his car was towed away. This median strip also serves as our pedestrian crosswalk for families, children, and pet walkers who come from throughout the entire area including nearby apartments and adjoining neighborhoods.

We applaud the decision the County has made to permanently close Westbard Ave. This decision that was included in the Masterplan addressing the massive redevelopment of Westbard has already taken years of study which determined that this action is appropriate to ensure the safety of all drivers and residents and to protect the residential zoning restrictions that prohibit the volume of traffic that we have endured. To make another important point, please note that even with the obstructed ability to make what is a clearly marked illegal left turn onto westbound River Road, there are countless vehicles so recklessly disregarding the law that they pull into River then drive the wrong side of the road to access the median so they can head west on River. There have been countless accidents at this intersection and absolutely nothing has curtailed illegal left turns.

My family and I applaud the decision the County has already made after thorough studies and with transparency to our Civic Association and County residents that closure is the right thing to do and will ultimately benefit all of our community.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Alicia and Farid Khadduri

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 9:20 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: christopher.conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov;
Marc.Elrigh@montgomerycountymd.gov; Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Andrew Benner, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Best regards,

Andrew Benner
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Alison McCaul [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 14, 2023 8:05 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Martien
Subject: PETITION TO CLOSE WESTBARD AVENUE

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To Whom It May Concern:

This email is to express an urgency to permanently close Westbard Avenue. We have been residents on this street since 2008. We know first hand the dangers of drivers using Westbard Ave as a cut through to the shopping center. There has been a total disregard for speed limits (despite the speed bumps), oversized trucks illegally using Westbard, ignoring the 7-9am no right turn onto Westbard from River Rd, as well as illegal left turns from Westbard onto River Rd. There are small children who live on this street. This blatant disregard by drivers pose a huge risk to hurting (or worse) young children who play and/or walk home from school onto Westbard. It is imperative that this be taken seriously and thought put into the risks of reopening Westbard Ave to non-residents. With the new realignment, there will be ample space for trucks and drivers to access the shopping center via River Rd onto the new Ridgefield Ave.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Kind regards,
Alison McCaul and Martien van Nieuwkoop
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Bob Gerard <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 11:40 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: PETITION TO CLOSE WESTBARD AVENUE

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Sir/Madam:

We have been living in our home at [REDACTED] since 1996. Over that period we have seen the quality of life and the condition of the street deteriorate due to the heavy volume of traffic, mostly illegal cut-through commuter traffic in the morning and again in the evening.

Commuters flowing down River Rd into DC in the mornings illegally use Westbard Avenue to cut through to Mass Ave and continue their commute into the District. This occurs in spite of a sign on River Rd prohibiting right turns onto Westbard during the morning rush-hour. Scofflaw after scofflaw daily ignores this sign. I have called the Bethesda police station multiple times pointing out these infractions and the police have rarely responded. I recall only one or two instances over the years where the police set up traps to ticket the illegal right-hand turners onto Westbard Ave. In short, there is minimal enforcement. I expect that even with the realigned Westbard Ave, there will still be hundreds of commuters who would rather use old Westbard avoid a traffic light on their way to Mass Ave.

During evening rush-hour traffic these same scofflaws take a right turn onto Westbard Ave from Mass Ave and then ignore the sign at the intersection of Westbard Ave and River Rd prohibiting a very dangerous left turn onto River Rd. to continue their commute. That dangerous turn takes them across two southbound lanes of River Rd to merge with heavy, rush-hour traffic proceeding outbound on River Rd. Even with the realigned Westbard Ave, I anticipate there will still be heavy traffic on the old Westbard Ave to go make an illegal left turn onto River in the hopes of shaving a few seconds of commute time by avoiding a traffic light.

To further discourage commuters from taking the above-mentioned dangerous turn onto River Rd, the county constructed a traffic island on Westbard Ave where it meets River Rd. Once again, I have seen one scofflaw after another ignore a warning sign at Westbard and (the former) Ridgefield, proceed down Westbard, drive around the traffic island and sprint across two lanes of traffic on River Rd to turn left.

Development of the Westbard shopping center is going to include construction of hundreds and hundreds of new residential units and well over a thousand new residents.

There will be 60-70 new townhouses built in the shopping center existing parking lot facing the Kenwood Place Condominium.

The Manor Care lot at the former corner of Westbard and Ridgefield will become a townhouse development with up to 40 units.

The Westwood II site is proposed as an assisted living facility. Perhaps not many cars among the residents, but staff will

bring cars to the neighborhood.

Other construction of hundreds of rental units is planned all along Westbard Ave and also in other areas of the existing shopping center parking lot. The newly realigned Westbard should be able to handle the greatly increased traffic volume heading to/from River Road. There is no good reason to keep the old Westbard and River intersection open as it would serve little useful purpose other than to encourage continuing illegal turns.

I urge the County close the existing Westbard Avenue at its intersection with River Rd. If Westbard is not closed at River Rd, then traffic on Westbard Avenue has the potential to reach increasingly dangerous levels, further pollute the air, make Westbard more unsafe for the young children living here, further raise noise levels, and deteriorate the quality of life both for those now living on Westbard Ave and those who will soon be moving into new homes on the existing Westbard Ave.

Respectfully,

Robert Girouard/Julie Satterfield

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD 20816

Re: 5500 Westbard Avenue Block - Road Closure AB-786

Dear Councilmembers:

My name is Ben Kayden, and I am a resident on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. My address is [REDACTED], Bethesda, MD. I live here with my wife and our four year old son. We are expecting our second child in October.

My wife and I are providing this written testimony to emphasize how crucial it is for the County to grant the petition to permanently close the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue where it currently meets River Road. When we bought our house in April 2022, it was with the understanding that the intersection of Westbard and River would be closed once the newly aligned Westbard Avenue was finished. We had this understanding because (1) it is clearly and explicitly called for by the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan, (2) it was universally acknowledged that our block, when opened to cut-through traffic, was dangerous to the community, and (3) there would be no logical reason to allow cut-through traffic on our block when Westbard Avenue was being realigned specifically to provide appropriate traffic flow to and from Westbard and River.

Plain and simple, we would not have purchased this home if the Sector Plan did not call for the closure. We relied on the County's strong indication in the Sector Plan that it would close the intersection. If we had appreciated there was a long fight ahead, and the possibility that the County would not follow its Sector Plan, we would not be living in this house because we would not want to subject our children to the noisy and dangerous cut-through traffic that persisted prior to the closure of this block. Right now, although we live with the daily and heavy construction activity right on our door step, we can at least feel comfortable that our son can walk across the street without the risk of large trucks racing dangerously down the road.

While it would be absolutely detrimental to the quality of life and safety on our street if the intersection reopened, as noted above, another salient point is the fact that the intersection is in fact no longer needed. The newly aligned Westbard Avenue was built specifically in order to address traffic flow in this neighborhood. Why would anyone want to subject our residential block to cut-through traffic when there is no reason for it? Please keep in mind that granting our block's petition will not result in some sort of quiet, calm oasis on our street, as we have years of development activity ahead to deal with. Instead, granting the petition will only ensure that the County has lived up to its proposal in the Sector Plan and that we have eliminated an unnecessary, detrimental impact to the 24 families living on our block.

The residents on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue – that is, the residents most directly impacted by the opening/closure of the intersection – unanimously support the closure. I hope the Councilmembers stand behind us as those most impacted by the petition. We continue to live through the upcoming years of construction in connection with the redevelopment of Westbard Square. If the intersection reopens, our residential street will turn into a highway for the redevelopment, which will totally negate the entire purpose of the Westbard road realignment.

Please lend your support in granting the petition to permanently close the intersection.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ben Kayden and Allison Gross

[REDACTED], Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: Benjamin Mann [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 2:25 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: AB 786

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I just realized that, technically, I have not submitted my own letter of support for the closure of the northwest terminus of Westbard Ave and River Road. Please include this letter in the public record.

I am strongly in favor of this petition for permanent closure, and I hope that the county will approve it.

Benjamin Mann
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Bridgette Zou [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 12:21 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Personal note re: [REDACTED] Westbard Ave Street Closure (thank you)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Good Afternoon,

My name is Bridgette Zou, and I live at [REDACTED].

Thank you in advance for taking the time and consideration to read my email. Westbard Avenue and the Bethesda community have played a huge role in my life, and I hope you and your fellow county members will continue to represent and uphold measures that make this a wonderful and safe community.

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection.

Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. Our neighbors are our extended family and our Westbard community is incredibly strong and vibrant. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue where there is a traffic signal.

Having spent 18+ years on Westbard Avenue, I can attest to the **urgent need to restrict traffic through this street**. For decades, motorists have sped down this street, ignoring signs, even when there have been parked police cars to monitor its entrance/usage (I have personally witnessed this on several occasions). Our community has employed a range of measures to increase awareness and education including increased speed signage and speed bumps, but none have resulted in meaningful changes in motorist behavior, especially when it comes to speeding.

Despite these additions, even during the current temporary closure (that includes two 10" long concrete barriers and a 6" high construction sign declaring "street closed at end"), motorists are **STILL** attempting to shortcut through the street driving **40+ miles** only to U-Turn at the end and speed back to the intersection. The noise is palpable throughout the street and on several occasions I've heard screeching tires grinding to a halt and wide bend U-turns onto driveways where there are countless blindspots.

When the street reopens, what is to stop motorists from continuing to behave in this reckless manner if even during its closure they are still choosing to ignore county ordinances and state safety laws?

It is dangerous and reckless and poses a seriously growing threat to the families that live on the street since it's clearly an issue that motorists have chosen to ignore and will continue to unless decisive and permanent action is implemented.

I understand that the permanent closure was agreed upon during the negotiation process back in 2016, and is to be made good/completed after the road realignment is complete. I am writing to revisit this agreement and express that I **firmly hope** that the Montgomery County policymakers will live up to the commitments they've made.

I was raised in Montgomery County, cast my first vote down the street at the county library, learned to ride a bike on its sidewalks, was allowed to trick or treat by myself for the first time (up and down Westbard Ave!), and continue to patronize its local businesses...all in hopes of continuing to create a Montgomery County that is a welcoming, safe, and vibrant place to build a thoughtful life.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and are the beating heart of Westbard Avenue and its community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have additional questions,
Bridgette Zou

[Redacted]

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Bridgette Zou

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

McCray, Tiara

From: Colin Helmer [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2023 4:45 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: 5500 Block of Westbard Ave.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray:

I've been told that you are collecting community input regarding the proposed closure to through traffic of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. I would like to add my voice to those supporting this change.

I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood, which includes the 5500 block of Westbard Ave. As you know, the residents of that block have asked to have the intersection with River Road closed off to traffic, making it into a cul-de-sac. I live on Cromwell Drive, a few blocks away, but I support this proposed change. Once Westbard Ave. has been realigned to have a smoother connection with River Road (work which is currently underway), there will be no need for through traffic to use the 5500 block to get to the Westbard Shopping Center or to connect to Massachusetts Ave. To continue to subject this residential block to flow through traffic after the realignment seems unreasonable to me. No through driver will be inconvenienced if the block is closed off from River Road and the residents should be able to enjoy a quieter life.

I would add, if you are not already aware, that this change was envisioned in the County's Westbard Sector Plan, issued in 2016. You can find the plan here: https://montgomeryplanning.org/community/westbard/documents/westbard_for_web9.1.pdf On page 37, the plan "endorses the permanent closure of the residential portion of Westbard Avenue between River Road and Ridgefield Road at the River Road end." It's clear that closing this block of Westbard made sense to the drafters and approvers of the County's masterplan for the Westbard Sector. Nothing has changed since then to diminish the desirability of this long planned change. I hope the County will implement the plan it approved seven years ago and close the River Road end of this residential street.

Colin Helmer
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: C W [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 4:35 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: Fwd: Street Closure Petition

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Cynthia Werth
[REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Benjamin Mann [REDACTED]
Date: Sun, Sep 17, 2023, 4:26 PM
Subject: Re: Street Closure Petition
To: Cynthia.Hens@gmail.com [REDACTED]

Hi Cynthia! If you didn't copy and paste the below letter to the county officials (whose email addresses also can be copy-pasted below), it'd be a HUGE help to me, my kids, and all the other families on our block if you could take a few seconds and shoot over that email this evening.

I hope you've had a restful weekend!

---Ben

On Sat, Sep 16, 2023 at 7:41 PM Benjamin Mann [REDACTED] wrote:
Cynthia,

It was great meeting you today. Thank you so much for signing the petition to close Westbard Avenue to through-traffic.

Please keep in touch, I think it's important to maintain communications amongst neighbors. You can always reach me at this email address, or via phone at [REDACTED]

As I mentioned today, the county takes more notice of written letters of support than they do of petition signatures. If you'd be willing to send the below letter to the Montgomery County officials responsible for making this decision, it would make a huge difference. **You can just copy and paste the below text**, or you can write your own letter. Either way, it'll make it harder for the county to ignore us.

The public hearing is this coming Tuesday, so I hope you'll send the message when you receive this email.

Thanks again, and have a great weekend.

---Ben Mann
[REDACTED]

Please email the text below to the following people:

TO: Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov

CC: christopher.conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov; Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov

Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Gary Stanley, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Cynthia Werth
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Konners <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 2:36 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Petition to Close Westbard Avenue

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

This is in support of the closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road, as part of the Westbard Square project.

I was a supporter of the Westbard development years before the first shovel went into the ground. While some neighbors were paying lawyers to fight the proposal, I tried to convince doubters of the benefits that would be brought by a 21st century reimagining of this underutilized space. One advantage of the improvement was the closure of Westbard Avenue which, I understood, was part of the overall plan.

Despite the speed bumps, the 5500 block of Westbard had been used as a cut-through for drivers exiting or entering River Road. Though it might have been handy for residents, the downside -- regular transiting by drivers from outside the area -- was a high price to pay. The block serves its purpose as a residential street, but it should not be called upon to act as a throughway bringing with it additional traffic, noise, pollution, and danger.

I strongly urge the County to keep to its word and provide for the closure of Westbard.

Calvin Konner
Owner, [REDACTED] Westbard

McCray, Tiara

From: Catherine Padley [REDACTED] >
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 4:31 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Roads

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Catherine Padley, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Catherine Padley
[REDACTED]

Catherine Padley

McCray, Tiara

From: Drew Flood/USA [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 12:53 PM
To: McCray, Tiara; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Westbard Ave-River Road intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Drew Flood, and I live at [REDACTED].

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Drew Flood
[REDACTED]
Chevy Chase MD
20815

Drew Flood
Vice Chairman
Capital Markets

||
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

||


||
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

||
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Dan Geldon [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 8:37 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Dan Geldon, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Dan Geldon
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Dan Stillman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:23 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Dan Stillman and I live at [REDACTED].

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Dan Stillman

[REDACTED]
Rockville, MD 20854

McCray, Tiara

From: David Wade [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 10:53 AM
To: McCray, Tiara; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County Dept of Transportation and Councilmember Friedson: I know you are busy but thank you in advance for reading and considering this note appropriately.

My name is David Wade, and our family has lived in the Springfield neighborhood for seven years now. Our two sons go to Wood Acres Elementary school, and they regularly have playdates with friends/classmates who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

We live on Cromwell Drive, and although the temporary detour plan related to the road realignment construction has caused a sharp increase in cut-through traffic in front of our home, we appreciate what the County has done to preserve safety amid the disruption and know that when the detour plans ends and the newly realigned Westbard Avenue opens, our traffic will return to normal.

Still, knowing what we've seen since the construction, it has really sunk in that our neighbors and our kids' closest friends on the 5500 block of Westbard could really have a mess on their hands. It isn't hard at all to imagine that there will be a huge spike in traffic cutting through their block (and trying to avoid the traffic light on River) to get to the new Westbard.

We wouldn't ever want our friends and neighbors on the 5500 block of Westbard to resume suffering through thousands of cut-through vehicles every day. We especially want our children to be able to have playdates at their friends' houses over there without having to worry about their physical safety, especially when they're riding bikes and playing games .outside over there.

I know that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan called for a permanent closure to occur once the road realignment is completed. We hope you will please follow through on that promise which benefits the entire neighborhood, and approve the petition for permanent road closure. Everything we love about living here - how our kids make best friends at Wood Acres school and then play with them most days and weekends after school - hinges on safety. Your commitment to keeping that safe, neighborhood feels means the world to us.

Thanks for your consideration.

David

David Wade
[REDACTED]

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I have been a resident of [REDACTED] Westbard Avenue for almost 30 years. I strongly support implementing the 2016 Sector Plan and closing Westbard Ave at River Road.

During the time I have lived on Westbard Ave, several measures have been taken to reduce the volume and speed of cut-through traffic from River Road to the Westbard Shopping Center and beyond to Northwest DC. None of these measures have had much, if any, effect. The “No Right Turn 7-9” sign on River Road is largely ignored (as shown by the large number of cars pulled over by police during sporadic enforcement); the “No Left Turn” sign on Westbard is not at all observed by traffic going onto River Road; and the “No Thru Trucks Over ¾ tons” sign is frequently unheeded by large tractor trailers and other trucks. Physical modifications to the intersection, meant to deter the dangerous left turn onto River Road may have made the intersection even more unsafe.

As these measures were ineffective, in 2016 the Springfield Civic Association supported the closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road, and the Planning Commission included this recommendation in the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan. With the completion of the direct approach to the Westbard Shopping Center nearing completion, now is the time to put this into effect. There is no new motive that I am aware of to ignore the Sector Plan and decline implementation.

The additional residential development and expanded retail at the Westbard shopping Center will produce a large increase in commercial and personal vehicles. The newly aligned Westbard Avenue from River Road to the shopping center will likely take part of this additional traffic. But the temptation for drivers to cut through our residential block to avoid one red traffic light (which can be viewed by drivers travelling eastward on River Road) would be impossible to curb.

Other streets in the Springfield neighborhood will likely benefit from the newly aligned Westbard Avenue, as Ridgefield Rd will no longer be a worthwhile cut-through to the Westbard Shopping Center, and Springfield Rd-Cromwell Drive to Massachusetts Avenue would be a long detour, with the newly aligned Westbard Avenue available. Some residents in Springfield seem to equate closing Westbard and River Road with the road closures and detours in the area during the construction period that generated cut-through traffic in the Springfield neighborhood. Implementing the Sector Plan and closing off the block to cut-through traffic is a very different measure, with no apparent effects on neighboring streets. The County now has an opportunity to make a concrete contribution to pedestrian safety by following through on closing the street, as had been envisioned a few years ago.

Eduard Bos

[REDACTED] Westbard Avenue

I am writing in strong support of the petition to close the intersection between the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue and River Road. With the advent of the apps Waze and GoogleMaps, this intersection has become a common cut through for people traveling to and from the Westbard Shopping Center to River Road and for commuters traveling between Massachusetts Avenue and River Road. Attempts to control traffic along the 5500 block of Westbard have proven ineffectual over the years. Before that portion of Westbard Avenue was closed due to construction, in the morning, cars turned right onto Westbard to cut off a portion of River Road, ignoring the prohibition not to do so between 7 and 9 a.m. Over the years, the few times that there have been police enforcement, many cars were caught in violation of the prohibition, and many more were warned by Waze and GoogleMaps that police cars were in the area, thus negating any future deterrent benefit of having the police there in the first place. Cars and trucks also turn left at the intersection notwithstanding the sign indicating that no left turns are permitted. I have personally been behind many vehicles dangerously turning left onto River Road.

It is unlikely that these issues will be alleviated by the new configuration of Westbard Avenue, because Waze and GoogleMaps will continue to suggest the 5500 block of Westbard and River Road as a preferred shortcut. The heavy traffic that is likely to resume through the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue, if the intersection with River Road is not permanently closed, will cause unnecessary traffic accidents for both pedestrians and drivers.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Ellen R. Edmond

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, Maryland 20816

September 7, 2023

TO: Ms. Tiara McCray
Acting Chief, Property Acquisition
100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor
Gaithersburg, MD 20878

FROM: Ferne E. Broderick


Subject: Re:Permanent Closure Case AB 786
(Westbard Ave at River Road)

Dear Ms. McCray:

My family has been at this address for over 60 years. During recent years for many drivers it is the Westbard speedway, even ignoring the speed bumps.

When we moved in, the builder told us the entrance was not going to be cut through.

You would not imagine the number of cars that are still coming through this entrance even with the partial barrier warning that it is closed to other than residents.

Please close down the Westbard speedway.

Very truly yours,

Ferne E. Broderick

Ferne E. Broderick


McCray, Tiara

From: D J <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 1:12 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Petition to permanently close Westbard Ave at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Subject: Petition to permanently close Westbard Ave at River Road

Montgomery County, MD

Dear Tiarra McCray,

This letter is to draw the attention of the Montgomery County Government to the importance of the **official petition AB-786** for the permanent closing of the old intersection at Westbard Ave & River Rd. Recent Montgomery County Planning Board Staff Report concluded that both condition of the County Code sections 49-62 are met as per our petition AB-786: Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection is no longer necessary for public use, and closure is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents.

The **2016 Westbard Sector Plan** states: "*This Plan endorses the permanent closure of the residential portion of Westbard Avenue between River Road and Ridgefield Road at the River Road end. The closure should not occur until the existing Westbard Road/River Road intersection is realigned to intersect River Road with a right-angled turn. The closed end should have a 3-inch-high mountable curb to allow emergency vehicles to access the block from River Road. The closed end should be reconstructed to create a turnaround. Action on this closure is predicated on the submittal of a formal neighborhood application for street closure in accordance with Chapter 49 of the County Code, and its subsequent approval by the County Council.*"

Upon the opening of new intersection at River Road and Ridgefield Road, expected in about two months, my wife and I wish to voice our strong support to continuation of the closure of the 5500 Westbard Ave block in order to cut through traffic (which has been in effect since June 2022) by closing the old Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection. The objective of our petition is to limit cut-through traffic on our residential block as approved in the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan and multiple subsequent approvals including the realignment of Westbard Ave & Ridgefield Rd. The newly aligned River Road Ave & Ridgefield Rd intersection will have safer permanent turning lanes and stoplights for entry to/from River Road, and is the intended route for cut-through traffic to use.

The old intersection of Westbard Ave & River Rd was dangerous with speeding vehicles from River Road, a 4-lane divided highway where speed limit is often ignored. From that traffic pattern vehicles including trucks were making sudden turn to residential road Westbard Ave. with a blind spot and no stoplight at the intersection. Since my house is located near the intersection of Westbard Ave. and River Road I observed that many drivers ignore existing "no left turn" sign to River Road; hence, a belief that placing new traffic signs on the intersection will resolve the problem and prevent new traffic accidents is unrealistic and simply will not work. I have been living with my wife on this address for 25 years - long enough to witness multiple vehicle accidents when trying to make right turns from River Road on Westbard Ave, and road backups from vehicles trying to turn left on River Road from Westbard Ave. Furthermore, these vehicles continue to speed on the 5500 Westbard Ave block, jeopardizing the safety of the residents, which include many children and elderly adults. I understand that MC Department of Transportation has already conducted recent studies, both in 2017 and 2020, with the results confirming the dangerous issues on the 5500 Westbard Ave. block.

My wife and I together with my neighbors in the 5500 Westbard Ave. block count on Montgomery County understanding of our legitimate concerns and expect MC support of our petition AB-786 to permanently close Westbard Ave. at River Road.

Sincerely,
George Jovanovic

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816
[REDACTED]

September 15, 2023

Dear Ms. McCray:

I have lived at the corner of [REDACTED] 24 years (my wife and her parents lived in it the previous 27 years). I am writing on behalf of wife, Penelope Mickum, and myself to oppose permanent closure of Westbard Road at River Road. Please include this letter as part of the AB 786 hearing record.

This letter opposes implementation of AB 786, which would result in permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road. By any calculus, consideration of permanent closure is premature and unwarranted. No decision regarding closure at River Road should be made until the County has time to study the new traffic patterns and evaluate them. On a more fundamental level, the County's default position should always be to keep streets open, absent pressing, demonstrable need. There has been no such showing. The new design was designed to alleviate the back-ups that that caused traffic problems on the 5500 block of Westbard. My understanding is that the 5500 block would flow on to a feeder street (the same for Ridgefield Road) before accessing the new roadway, making cut through traffic all the more unlikely.

At a minimum, data is necessary to evaluate whether e newly-realigned Westbard Avenue, which allows River Road traffic to go left at River and (what used to be) Ridgefield Road (extended), without stopping at the light and allows sufficient space for the large, 18-wheeler trucks to turn left without causing the back-ups that caused drivers to cut through the 5500 block in the first place. It may well be that the new design completely alleviates traffic on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue, thereby obviating the problem entirely. At this time, the County cannot answer this question.

The County must evaluate the impact permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road would have on adjacent streets like Ogden, Springfield, Cromwell, Devonshire, and the Springfield neighborhood in general before any decision is made. As above, any such study should allow for the establishment of new traffic patterns and the impact of forthcoming residential construction related to Westbard Square.

No one contests that recent detours have changed traffic patterns in the Springfield neighborhood, causing traffic problems. In recognition of these problems, quantifiable data should be obtained and evaluated before closing off the ingress and egress of a neighborhood road permanently. Recent examples of problems include (1) the closing of Westbard Avenue initially diverted thousands of vehicles per day, including heavy trucks, to Ridgefield Road, a situation alleviated only by making Ridgefield Road temporarily one way; (2) the changes in traffic patterns due to the Westbard Avenue closure have imposed an unacceptable cut-through traffic burden on Ogden Road, a small street with limited capacity. Recent review indicates that over 80% of this Ogden Road cut-through traffic has been speeding, presenting a safety hazard; and (3) the Westbard Avenue closure has shifted additional traffic to Springfield Drive and

Cromwell Drive. This situation is potentially hazardous because Wood Acres Elementary School is located one block away, and children walk the street on their way to school. Further impacting Wood Acres Elementary School, cut-through traffic from River Road also turns left on Devonshire (closer to the light at Goldsborough), where traffic wends its way to Cromwell, where drivers turn right to get to MacArthur Blvd, passing directly in front of the school in the process.

The County also needs to assess the impact that new residential development will have on the neighborhood. The proposed new development includes a senior living center with 90 parking spaces and, more significantly, more 300+ condominiums and townhomes in Westbard Square and on what has been the lower, extended Ridgefield Road at River Road. This new construction will significantly increase traffic volume in the area of Westbard Avenue, and is likely to affect traffic conditions on surrounding streets. Closing Westbard Avenue at River Road should be evaluated only after new residential density has been considered and taken into account.

The petition to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road was submitted by a group representing the 24 homes on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. The Springfield Civic Association, which represents the approximately 650 homes in the Springfield neighborhood — including the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue — was not informed of the road closure petition and was not consulted in its drafting. The Springfield Civic Association and the residents of Springfield should be given an opportunity to express their views on AB 786 before this consequential decision is made.

Again, my wife and I oppose AB 786 as premature for the reasons set forth above. Additional traffic studies to assess the impact of the realigned Westbard Avenue and traffic associated with the opening of the new Giant store should be undertaken. Additional County studies should include estimates of the traffic impact of significant residential development at and near Westbard Square. These studies are a necessary predicate to evaluate whether AB 786 would adversely affect the Springfield neighborhood. In addition, the views of the Springfield Civic Association and the residents of the broader Springfield community should be fully considered.

Sincerely,

George and Penny Mickum

████████████████████
Bethesda, MD 20816

████████████████████
████████████████████

McCray, Tiara

From: Gabriela Romo <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 11:34 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Vote

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello,

I can't be in the hearing about the

Closure of Westbard Ave at River Rd

But I want to vote (if possible) against it.

It causes to drive extra miles, which in turn causes more pollution for residents in Bethesda.

Thank you,
Gabriela Romo
[REDACTED], Bethesda, MD 20816

Sent from my iPhone

From: Glen W. Sutcliffe [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 1:11 PM
To: Paylor, Michael L. <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Marc Elrich <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Strongly oppose closing of Westbard Avenue at River Road.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

The Honorable Mssrs. Paylor, Conklin, Friedson and Elrich,

I live on Springfield Drive, the first home off River Road. I am very familiar with the increased traffic that has been brought to my street by the Westbard development work. By comparison, another street close to Springfield Drive, Westbard Avenue, is wide enough to have easy parking on both sides of that street and plenty of auto travel space between the parking's solid white lines and double yellow lines. MDOT is considering a petition to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road. **We strongly oppose this request.** If Westbard Avenue at River Road were to remain closed once Ridgefield Road is reopened, Ridgefield Road and the adjacent cross-streets mentioned previously will again see a significant increase in cut-through traffic. The reasons Westbard residents are seeking relief from cut-through traffic are equally (if not more) applicable to residents on and near Ridgefield Road. Yet by requesting permanent closure of Westbard at River, Westbard residents are seeking to unfairly place ALL of the traffic burden on residents on and near Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive and Ogden Road. Public Safety considerations alone should dissuade MDOT from closing Westbard. Over 40 school aged children live along Ridgefield Road between Springfield and Westbard, and countless more walk daily to bus stops on Ridgefield Road. Ridgefield and its nearby cross-streets have three bus stops (none are on Westbard between Ridgefield and River) and closure would again place numerous school children in the middle of this unsafe traffic pattern. Elementary

school children walk to Woodacres Elementary School along Ridgefield Road and its cross streets as well as along Springfield Drive and Cromwell Drive. Pedestrian and bicycle Ridgefield Road is **not wide enough** to handle such traffic as **it is barely 27 feet wide** and contains several curves and hills – whereas Westbard is a **four-lane 45 feet wide** straight “AVENUE.” It is by far the widest street in the Springfield neighborhood. Yet the closure of Westbard at River Road will keep traffic off of this significantly safer Avenue and force traffic onto narrower winding roads where pedestrians will be at significant risk. In order to ensure that ALL residents of Springfield on roads that will be affected by cut-through traffic heading to and from Westbard Square are as safe as possible, we urge you to move on the following:

1. WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN PERMANENTLY OPEN AT RIVER ROAD, OR
2. AT A MINIMUM, WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN OPEN AT RIVER ROAD PENDING A FULL EVALUATION OF TRAFFIC AND POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ROAD SAFETY MEASURES, WHICH EVALUATION SHALL BE CONDUCTED NO EARLIER THAN THE COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE WESTBARD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER AND TOWNHOMES, AND
3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD

Thank You,
Glen W. Sutcliffe
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816
[REDACTED]



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Huaying Peng [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 1:33 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Support for closing the old Westbard Ave to the River road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi,

My name is Huaying Peng, and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Huaying Peng
[REDACTED]

Potomac, MD 20854

McCray, Tiara

From: Heidi Schadler [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 2:46 PM
To: McCray, Tiara; Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher
Subject: Proposed Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road by the Residents of the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I am writing in strong support of the Springfield Civic Association's letter dated July 25, 2023 addressed to Artie Harris, Chair and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board and to submit my written testimony in opposition to the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue. I moved to Ogden Road in the Springfield neighborhood in July 2018 for the quaint community full of families, friends, and the walking proximity to Wood Acres Elementary School and Wood Acres Park.

Unfortunately, since the construction of Westbard began, Ogden Road has become one of the main throughways between Massachusetts and River Road. Despite posting multiple signs urging drivers to slow down and the prevalence of small children on a narrow street that does not have sidewalks, what once was a quiet neighborhood street has become a genuine hazard zone.

Multiple times I have had cars nearly hit me while I try exiting my driveway. Additionally, there have been instances where cars circle around me between the stop signs to move faster. I have held my breath in fear as I see my neighbors with small children or walking dogs pull them back from the street when commuters cut through the street as if they were still on a main arterial road. A permanent closure without a thorough traffic study and input by all ALL neighborhood residents, the MCDOT, the police and the Planning Board is premature since construction is not complete with the realignment and reopening of Ridgefield Road. Please consider the danger you are putting our community and residents in.

Respectfully,
Heidi Schadler
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: Raymond Hylton Sr <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 12:10 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Judith Hylton
Subject: Closing Westbard Ave

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My wife and I are residents of Bethesda living at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We are writing in support of the petition to urge the County to close the existing Westbard Avenue intersection with River Road.

Here are my reasons:

1. We have children and elderly people at various times of the day playing or walking along the street. Even with existing traffic during the construction phase, the cars and trucks drive at an unsafe speed. Closing one end of Westbard prevents a disaster, death, or injury.
2. Rerouting traffic to the soon-to-be-completed Westbard shopping center will not impede or create traffic delays. One report I read says the new intersection is only <0.25 miles (or <30 seconds) further east on River Road, with safer turning lanes and stop lights for entry to and from River Road.

For the sake of children and our senior citizens, please close Westbard Ave where it intersects with River Rd.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ray and Judith Hylton

McCray, Tiara

From: Conklin, Christopher
Sent: Thursday, September 7, 2023 3:27 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: FW: Closure of Westbard at River? Please reject this petition

For the record.

Christopher Conklin, Director
Montgomery County Department of Transportation
240-777-7198

From: John Begert [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 7, 2023 3:26 PM
To: Paylor, Michael L. <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Marc Elrich <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Closure of Westbard at River? Please reject this petition

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I live at [REDACTED] and have faced the challenges of the Westbard redevelopment the last few years. I support the redevelopment and the progress of better amenities for our community.

However, I think its absurd the county is considering closing an egress to River Road for the convenience of a handful of residents on that street. I have young kids and to move more vehicles into our roads and not exiting to larger roads like River Road seems to be the opposite of logic from a traffic planning perspective.

Please reject this silly favorable petition for a few homeowners and please look out for all of the Springfield Community.

Thanks.

John Begert



John Begert

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Janice D'Arcy [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 4:39 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Acting Chief McCray,

My name is Janice D'Arcy, and I am a resident of the Wood Acres neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. As we near road construction completion, I stand with my neighbors in asking that the endorsement be honored. We all understand that River Road is a major thoroughfare and the need for traffic to swiftly and safely move through this section of Montgomery County. However, we do not want to open this small, neighborhood road to that sort of traffic. The road is not equipped to handle cut-through traffic and the safety risk is immense for all involved.

I applaud the way the project has been handled so far and am glad the new road is being built to accommodate the anticipated residential and commercial demand - with wide lanes and a traffic light. The intersection which I refer has just two small lanes and no traffic signal. Ensuring that the existing and new traffic follow the safest route necessitates blocking thru-traffic access to the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

Thank you,
Janice D'Arcy
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Jarrod Gillam [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 11:21 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Jarrod Gillam, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Jarrod Gillam
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Hasan Javadi [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 20, 2023 2:54 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: 5500 Block Westbard Ave/River Road closure

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Acting Chief Miss McCray,

I hope this letter finds you in good health and high spirits. My name is Hassan Javadi Tabrizi, and I am writing to you as a long-standing resident of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. Having moved to Montgomery County from Piedmont, California 32 years ago, I bought a home at [REDACTED] and established roots for my family. In that time, my wife Nahid and I have grown to cherish our home and our neighborhood and we have dutifully paid our dues and taxes over all these years.

My wife and I are now over 80 years old. In these advanced years, we find ourselves facing some challenges that have prompted me to reach out to you for assistance. I was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease 6 years ago, and for health reasons, my daily walks on my street are essential for my physical and mental well-being. Given my condition, I require a quiet and safe environment to navigate in and it is in my best health interest that the road closure from Westbard onto River road be made permanent. Additionally, I should like you to know that my wife is also struggling with hearing issues and the constant traffic noise will pose a noticeable threat to her hearing health.

Furthermore, our responsibilities extend beyond our own needs. We occasionally care for our two young grandsons, whose safety is of paramount importance to us as well as the safety of other small children on our street. Unfortunately, the incessant traffic and its inherent risks will certainly jeopardize their well-being and safety.

It has come to my attention that the residents of our block have submitted a collective letter outlining the concerns of our community. For decades, the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue has borne the brunt of cut-through traffic, resulting in unsafe conditions, sleep disturbances, and numerous traffic accidents and recorded incidents. The proposed permanent road closure, as stated in the residents' letter, aims to safeguard the health, safety, and well-being of the residents of Westbard. This aligns with the provisions of the test in 49-63(c)(2) of the Montgomery County Code.

As the realignment of Westbard Avenue approaches its completion in September 2023, our neighborhood eagerly anticipates improved traffic patterns and safety measures. The temporary closure of the River-Westbard intersection during this period has demonstrated the viability of alternative routes and emergency access arrangements.

Given the circumstances and the exhibited success of alternative routes for emergency vehicles, I implore you to consider the community's plea for the permanent closure of the River-Westbard intersection without the stipulation of a 3-inch mountable curb. This permanent closure would not only ensure the physical safety of residents but also reduce noise pollution and deter speeding by those who desire a quick cut-through for illegal left turn access onto River Road.

In light of the forthcoming completion of the Westbard Avenue realignment project, which holds the promise of improved traffic flow and safety, I kindly request your support in expediting the closure process. Our advanced age, health conditions, and commitment to our family's well-being make this matter of utmost importance to us.

I am hopeful that your consideration and assistance will lead to a safer and more peaceful environment for the residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. Please feel free to contact me at [REDACTED] if you require any additional information or would like to discuss this matter further.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and I eagerly await your response.

Sincerely,

Hassan Javadi Tabrizi Resident, [REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Joseph Kaufman [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2023 3:54 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Comment Solicitation - AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave @ River Rd.)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello Tiara McCray,

I live in Woodacres in Bethesda, MD. I strongly oppose the application from 5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association (the "Applicant"), for the permanent closure of a public right of way at the northwestern terminus of Westbard Avenue at River Road in the Westbard area of Bethesda.

I request this comment be made part of the hearing record.

The application is fatally flawed because it improperly fails to consider (1) safety; (2) efficiency; (3) environmental impacts; and (4) wasteful disregard of tax dollars.

First, permanent closure impairs safety of pedestrians, bikers, and especially children because vehicular traffic that would normally travel down River and turn into the new Westbard will -- if the application is granted -- take a "shortcut" or diversion through Springfield Drive. These are local roads with no sidewalks where kids play and families walk. They are not designed for heavy vehicular traffic in the same way River Road is designed.

Second, closure is not efficient because drivers will have to waste time by going a further and less efficient route to get to Westbard.

Third, the extra mileage driven adds unnecessary environmental impact.

Fourth, closure wastes taxpayer dollars as the county has largely completed the new right of way so to now close it would be a waste.

--

Joseph M Kaufman
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Julie S [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 12:57 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Support for the closure of Westbard Ave and River Rd intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms McCray,

My name is Julie Satterfield. My husband and I are the homeowners of [REDACTED] We have lived in this house for more than 25 years. Our home is exactly at the crossroads of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road. We have witnessed cut-thru speeding commuters morning and evening for years.

I would like to add my voice of strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue - River Road intersection. Permanent closure of this intersection will improve traffic safety for motorists—particularly those on River Road who are often put in a highly dangerous situation by the illegal turners coming out of the old Westbard—and cyclists and pedestrians by appropriately channeling all traffic through the newly realigned and enhanced Westbard Avenue about 300 meters (less than ¼ mile) away. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard - River intersection. The newly realigned road has vastly improved visibility, accessibility, pedestrian accommodations, is much safer for all users and clearly fits with Montgomery County's Vision Zero policy. Trucks in particular will have no need to try to enter or exit the old Westbard Avenue - River Road intersection again.

It is my understanding that Montgomery County negotiated the permanent closure of the old Westbard - River intersection with residents in 2016. Residents were assured at the time this closure would happen after completion of the road realignment project. I want to be able to trust that my local government will adhere to its past promises, as well as those it will make in the future.

It is my strong belief that closure of the old Westbard - River Road intersection will cause no added traffic burden whatsoever to other neighbors in our community. There will be no reason for any driver on River Road to travel to the Giant shopping center other than by the newly realigned road. For example, drivers are not going to be turning on Springfield and then turn left to drive all the way down Ridgefield to get to Giant. This route and similar supposed cut-thru routes will be overly cumbersome detours and make little driving sense. I believe the idea that there will be an increased traffic burden elsewhere in the neighborhood is misguided and not well thought out. The road redesign should nearly eliminate the dangerous neighborhood cut-thru traffic on other residential streets.

Please approve the closure of the intersection of the old Westbard Avenue and River Road to help promote the County's Vision Zero policy to eliminate severe traffic accidents, and to protect the safety of our friends, family, and neighbors who live in and transit near this part of Westbard.

Sincerely,

Julie Satterfield
[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD 20186

McCray, Tiara

From: Simon, Jim [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 3:05 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

As a resident of the Springfield neighborhood, I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

The new road from River Road to Westbard will have 5 lanes' width, a traffic signal, very wide sidewalks, and excellent lighting. The intersection which the petition seeks to close does not favorably compare on safety features. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

By contrast, there is not a need for the Westbard–River Road intersection to remain open. The new road provides the best avenue for both thru-traffic and local traffic. As someone who lives not on that block but in the neighborhood, I see no downside for traffic circulation in closing this intersection. To the contrary, I can understand why many residents of that Westbard block are concerned about the safety of thru-traffic. A reasonable cost-benefit analysis strongly favors closing the Westbard-River Road intersection.

Moreover, I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. So the residents are asking only that this promise be kept.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

James Simon
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Conklin, Christopher
Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 8:19 PM
To: Jeri Weaver; Paylor, Michael L.; McCray, Tiara
Cc: Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich
Subject: Re: Threatened Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road

Dear Jeri -

I have copied Tiara McCray so your views can be included in the record. No decision will be made until all of the community input is received in writing or by spoken testimony by the deadline established by the hearing officer.

Sincerely

Chris Conklin
MCDOT Director

Sent from a mobile device

From: Jeri Weaver [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 5:09:03 PM
To: Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Paylor, Michael L. <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Marc Elrich <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Threatened Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Gentlemen,

I know there is strong campaign of the residents of Westbard Avenue to close their street to all traffic (except that belonging to the residents of their street).

As one of many residents whose streets would be negative affected by such a closure, I am opposed to that proposal.

First, There is NO NEED for the Westbard closure. Like all of us, the proponents of that closure would like less traffic on their street. But that does not justify closing the street! The only reasons I've seen are (1)that they were told/promised that it would happen and (2) that they fear an increase in truck traffic. These are weak reasons that don't justify closing a main street.

Second, When a street is closed, the traffic doesn't just disappear; it moves onto other streets. People on Ridgefield, Ogden, and Springfield are constantly complaining about the increase in traffic on their streets too. (In fact there is talk of people on Ogden Road wanting to close their access to and from River Road too!) It is not feasible to close streets just because people want less traffic. The overflow traffic will just move to other neighborhood streets.

Closing the portion of Westbard that connects River and Ridgefield would certainly create a peaceful street for those 25 residents, but it would set a dangerous precedent and create a domino effect with increased traffic on at least three other neighborhood streets.

--

Jeri Weaver

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Jen 95 [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 9:46 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Westbard Ave. River side to be closed

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Jennifer and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Jennifer Zeng
[REDACTED]

Rockville, md 2854

McCray, Tiara

From: Kathryn Spindel <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, August 9, 2023 7:45 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Closure of Westbard at River Road

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello Tiara McCray

I have registered to attend the Zoom meeting on September 19 regarding this issue.

My concern that I would like to be addressed is the illegal left turns made onto Little Falls Parkway at Massachusetts Avenue during the “no-left turns” time restrictions because the drivers can no longer access River Road via Westbard.

Sincerely
Kathryn Spindel

Sent from my iPhone

McCray, Tiara

From: Kamil Dybczak [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 4:09 PM
To: McCray, Tiara; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Glass's Office, Councilmember; Albornoz's Office, Councilmember; Jawando's Office, Councilmember; Sayles's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich
Subject: Petition to permanently close the intersection of River Road and Westbard Avenue

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To Montgomery County DOT, Montgomery County Council, and Montgomery County Executive:

My name is Kamil Dybczak, and I have lived at [REDACTED] since 2014. I am writing to express my strong support for the petition to permanently close the northwest terminus of our block, where it intersects with River Road.

When the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan was being written, the residents of our block asked our county government representatives to finally come up with a solution to the thousands of cars and trucks that speed down our block every day.

We were told that the county government had agreed on a compromise with our neighborhood advocates: The block could be converted into a cul-de-sac, but this could not occur until the realignment of Westbard Avenue and Ridgefield Road is completed. We knew that this would mean years of continued living with the cut-through traffic, but there was light at the end of the tunnel. We trusted that Montgomery County would follow through, do the right thing, and protect our block from the heavy traffic which has been a constant here for so many years.

Now the road realignment is almost complete and I am writing to ask you, the policy makers of Montgomery County, to honor this commitment. Please show that we were right to trust you when you told us that this would happen.

I have two young daughters, ages 11 and 13. Both of them walk down this block every day to get to and from their school and after-school activities. I do not want to have to continue to worry about their physical safety, with huge trucks and cars rushing over the speed bumps, to and from River Road.

This is an issue of tremendous importance to me and to all of my neighbors on this block.

Please approve the petition to permanently close the intersection of River Road and Westbard Avenue.

Thank you,

Kamil Dybczak
[REDACTED]

**Statement on behalf of the Council of Unit Owners of Kenwood Place Condominium
Association**

**by The Board of Directors, President,
Phillip D. Pradier**

Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Phillip Pradier, the President of the Board of Directors at Kenwood Place Condominium, [REDACTED]. Today, I'm here to represent our Association and all our homeowners. I want to be unequivocal: We are adamantly against the proposed closure of the northern section of Westbard Avenue at River Road. We strongly urge the Department of Transportation to reject this application.

Our Condominium Association shares the most extensive property border with the upcoming Westbard Square development. Our building comprises 174 condominium units, including six commercial units that house small businesses. Currently, our community consists of around 400 residents. However, the neighborhood's population will increase by 750 additional people upon completing the new development and associated housing.

Public safety and accessibility are paramount concerns, not just for us but for our neighboring communities as well. Emergency medical personnel and first responders must have unimpeded access to respond to potentially life-threatening situations. Any hindrance to emergency access and inadequate routes to and from the new development is unacceptable. We must address these serious concerns to avoid placing an impossible burden on our community.

Additionally, the proposed construction of a senior living facility directly across from Westbard Square raises the prospect of increased demand for emergency services. Considering these critical concerns, we vehemently oppose the closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road in Bethesda.

To add to our concerns, it seems only fair to allow the Kenwood Place Condominium unit owners to have the same freedom to access their properties through all the routes available to them as they did when they initially purchased their homes and before the development construction began. Similarly, the small businesses operating in our building should be able to provide their customers with the same access they've always had, both before and after construction began.

We wholeheartedly appreciate the time you provided Kenwood Place Condominium to hear our concerns and allow our Association to voice its stance. We trust that you will give our position the thoughtful consideration it deserves.

Thank you.

McCray, Tiara

From: Kate Marshall [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 11:54 AM
To: McCray, Tiara; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: support for reopening Westbard Avenue-River Road Intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray,

My name is Katherine Marshall and I live at [REDACTED].

I am writing to express my dismay that the county is considering a permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. I'm shocked that the neighborhood would organize such a "not in my backyard" campaign that will limit access to commercial retail and grocery stores for the greater community. This seems like a circumstance where a wealthy neighborhood is campaigning to limit access to their public street, negatively impacting the people and communities who live in nearby apartment buildings, as well as the businesses that they can easily reach on foot.

My family has stopped visiting the Westbard shopping center because of how difficult it is to reach with the current road closure, so I believe this will have a permanent negative impact for retailers in that location.

If pedestrian traffic is a concern, I strongly support installing better sidewalks and speed bumps, implementing parking restrictions, and/or adding an additional traffic light, as needed, and **not** supporting NIMBY urban planning policies.

Katherine Marshall

From: Krupa <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, August 14, 2023 1:12 PM
To: Paylor, Michael L. <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Marc Elrich <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: board@springfield20816.com <board@springfield20816.com>
Subject: Opposition to Permanent Closures of Westbard Avenue & River Road Intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello,

I am writing to request a denial of the 5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association's request to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road near the Westbard Square construction.

This biased petition by this unsanctioned "Civic Association" serves only one purpose: selfishly shield themselves from *any and all* traffic expected by the eventual opening of the new Westbard Square, by putting significantly more residents, pedestrians, and children in harms way.

We, residents of Montgomery County, rely on you to represent our needs. The Springfield Civic Association, which represents and includes the 5500 Block of the Westbard Avenue, submitted the [following letter](#) to the planning board to block this drastic and unfair measure. Furthermore, the Planning Staff's professional recommendation also suggested delaying closure until after the realignment of Westbard Avenue is completed in order to study this intersection and to respond appropriately to updated traffic patterns (see [Staff Report](#)). **Why would you entertain the "5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association" over the Springfield Civic Association (which includes Westbard avenue between River and Ridgefield) and your own Planning Staff?**

Due to the road closures of Westbard Ave at River Road and River Road last year, the Springfield neighborhood - especially Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Road and Ogden Road - had been inundated with a constant stream of trucks and a large volume of commuter vehicles trying to access the open part of Westbard Avenue to either get to the Westbard Square or Massachusetts Ave. The detour plan directing commuters/trucks to use Goldsboro or Little Falls Parkway or to Massachusetts to Westbard Avenue had in effect failed to divert the traffic away from the neighborhood, and county police have confirmed their inability to enforce the detour plan. **Ridgefield Road, a narrow and hilly residential street, without permit parking required to park on either side of the street, was bearing the brunt**

of the cut through traffic, making it difficult to leave homes and creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians and children.

On the contrary, Westbard Avenue is a flat, 45 feet wide road, with permit parking on both sides and numerous speed bumps. It has clear line demarcations separating sides of the road, and is undeniably better equipped to handle this volume of traffic without putting pedestrians, children, or vehicles in harms way.

Westbard Ave at River Road should be permanently reopened at the very least so that Ridgefield, Springfield, Cromwell, Ogden and Westbard are equally sharing the volume of traffic during the road realignment.

By requesting permanent closure of Westbard at River, Westbard residents are seeking to unfairly place *all* of the traffic burden on residents on and near Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive, and Ogden Road.

Public safety measures alone should dissuade MDOT from closing Westbard at River. Over 40 school aged children live along Ridgefield Road between Springfield and Westbard. Ridgefield and neighboring streets have three bus stops (Westbard has none) and placing numerous children in the middle of unsafe traffic patterns (evidenced last year) is unfounded. There are significantly more houses impacted on Ridgefield, Cromwell, Springfield, and Ogden than on Westbard. Not to mention, most neighborhood pedestrians utilize Ridgefield Road between Springfield and Westbard to access the Westbard Square shopping center.

Closing this road will *also* lead to an inundation of random civic associations petitioning self-serving measures. For example, what's to stop the creation of a "Springfield Drive Civic Association" from petitioning closure of Springfield Road between Cromwell and River Roads? What's to stop "Ridgefield Road Civic Association" from unanimously petitioning for permanent closure of the Ridgefield at Westbard? When will it end?

Please block the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue & River Road intersection.

Thank you,
Krupa Parikh



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Lhochheiser [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 13, 2023 10:12 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Permanent Closure of Westbard

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray,

I would like to strongly disagree with any effort to permanently close Westbard Ave at River Rd. The temporary closure has placed a burden on me and I assume many of my neighbors in terms of reaching the Westbard Giant and adjacent shops . If this were made permanent, I believe it would adversely affect both the commercial stores there and the community. The primary problem is much of the traffic from River Rd would be directed onto Little Falls Parkway which has recently been narrowed , has had its speed limit lowered and has had three new speed bumps added. Clearly, this is an effort to slow and lessen traffic on this road between River and Massachusetts Aves. These recent changes may have been necessitated in part because of increased traffic due to the temporary Westbard closure . Furthermore, it makes sense for there to be more than one significant way to get into the new Westbard commercial area- but this plan funnels traffic onto residential streets (Massachusetts Ave , and also Western Ave) rather than River - which is highly commercial for several blocks right around that area.

In addition, exiting Westbard onto Massachusetts is a problem if going north or west from that area. For several hours in the morning and again in the late afternoon, there is a “no left turn “sign onto Little Falls heading back to River. One has to either travel much farther up Massachusetts to Westmorland Circle (which is crowded and tricky for many to navigate) and then across Western Avenue - already heavily used and again, residential. The other choice is to make a u- turn on Massachusetts (dangerous) or cut through a residential neighborhood. I should add that i don’t live on these streets or in the potential cut-through neighborhood but rather close to Friendship Heights.

However, I have used that Giant rarely during this period and would be discouraged from using it in the future if this were a permanent change. I’m not sure who this change would benefit - but it’s not the residents or stores in this area.

Thank you for passing my concerns along to the committee .

Lisa Hochheiser

[REDACTED]
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Mann Residence
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Telephone
[REDACTED]

August 20, 2023

Tiara McCray
Montgomery County, Maryland

by email only to Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov

re: AB-786: Permanent Closure of
Westbard @ River"

Dear Ms. McCray:

I want to support this petition.

When my husband told me the closure may not happen, I felt compelled to write this letter.

Some of the most important people in my life live on this block of Westbard and I am surprised there is even a question about permanently closing this street to the cars and trucks still now illegally using this street to get somewhere a few minutes earlier.

Life and health is all we wish for. Please consider this in making the decision.

Thank you,

Linda Stargatt Mann



McCray, Tiara

From: Lee Janger [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 7:19 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; board@springfield20816.com; Marc Elrich
Subject: Written submission for the September 19th Council Hearing Re: Westbard Ave
Attachments: Petition Opposing the Closure of Westbard Avenue .pdf

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Ms. McCray,

I wish to submit the attached petition with signatures from approximately **80 households** in the Springfield neighborhood of Bethesda for the September 19th hearing by the Montgomery County Council.

The petition seeks the following relief:

1. Westbard Avenue remain permanently open at River Road, or
2. At a minimum, Westbard Avenue remain open at River Road pending a full evaluation of traffic and potential additional road safety measures, which evaluation shall be conducted no earlier than the completion of construction of the Westbard Square shopping center and townhomes, and
3. In any event, traffic safety measures be implemented to slow and deter traffic in the Springfield neighborhood.

Respectfully submitted,
Lee Janger

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

We, the undersigned residents of the Springfield community of Bethesda, MD, who each live on or adjacent to Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive and Ogden Road, submit this petition and seek the following relief.

The redevelopment of Westbard Square and the closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road for the last year during the redevelopment process brought about tremendous traffic and road hazards to the Springfield community of Bethesda.

Springfield residents, especially those living on and near the above-mentioned streets, were subjected to horrific and dangerous traffic conditions during redevelopment. Those circumstances have been well-documented and described to the Planning Board, Regency, and MDOT. MDOT repeatedly rejected requests to improve the safety conditions in the Springfield neighborhood.

Residents of Springfield continue to be very concerned about the volume and types of transportation that travel through our narrow, suburban roads, where homes with children and school bus stops are located.

Now, MDOT is considering a petition to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road. We strongly oppose this request. If Westbard Avenue at River Road were to remain closed once Ridgefield Road is reopened, Ridgefield Road and the adjacent cross-streets mentioned previously will again see a significant increase in cut-through traffic.

The reasons Westbard residents are seeking relief from cut-through traffic are equally (if not more) applicable to residents on and near Ridgefield Road. **Yet by requesting permanent closure of Westbard at River, Westbard residents are seeking to unfairly place ALL of the traffic burden on residents on and near Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive and Ogden Road.**

Public Safety considerations alone should dissuade MDOT from closing Westbard. Over 40 school aged children live along Ridgefield Road between Springfield and Westbard, and countless more walk daily to bus stops on Ridgefield Road.

Ridgefield and its nearby cross-streets have three bus stops (none are on Westbard between Ridgefield and River) and closure would again place numerous school children in the middle of this unsafe traffic pattern. Elementary school children walk to Woodacres Elementary School along Ridgefield Road and its cross streets as well as along Springfield Drive and Cromwell Drive. Pedestrian and bicycle

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

traffic to Westbard Square as well as the Capital Crescent Trail travel on Ridgefield Rd.

Ridgefield Road is not wide enough to handle such traffic as it is barely 27 feet wide and contains several curves and hills – whereas Westbard is a four-lane 45 feet wide straight “AVENUE.” It is by far the widest street in the Springfield neighborhood. Yet the closure of Westbard at River Road will keep traffic off of this significantly safer Avenue and force traffic onto narrower winding roads where pedestrians will be at significant risk.

In order to ensure that ALL residents of Springfield on roads that will be affected by cut-through traffic heading to and from Westbard Square are as safe as possible, we petition that:

- 1. WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN PERMANENTLY OPEN AT RIVER ROAD, OR**
- 2. AT A MINIMUM, WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN OPEN AT RIVER ROAD PENDING A FULL EVALUATION OF TRAFFIC AND POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ROAD SAFETY MEASURES, WHICH EVALUATION SHALL BE CONDUCTED NO EARLIER THAN THE COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE WESTBARD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER AND TOWNHOMES, AND**
- 3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD.**

SINCERELY,

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|-------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Kara Kerwin | [REDACTED] | <i>Kara Kerwin</i> |

Date

9/1/23

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

That:

1. WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN PERMANENTLY OPEN AT RIVER ROAD, OR

2. AT A MINIMUM, WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN OPEN AT RIVER ROAD PENDING A FULL EVALUATION OF TRAFFIC AND POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ROAD SAFETY MEASURES, WHICH EVALUATION SHALL BE CONDUCTED NO EARLIER THAN THE COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE WESTBARD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER AND TOWNHOMES, AND

3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD.

Date

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------|
| SAEED BSSANLOU | [REDACTED] |  | 8.12.23 |
| JON SHAFAR | [REDACTED] |  | |
| Kim Shanta | [REDACTED] |  | |
| Taiyeba Granier [REDACTED] | [REDACTED] |  | 8.12.23 |
| Bill SILVERMAN | [REDACTED] |  | |
| Nancy Rhodes | [REDACTED] |  | 8-12-23 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

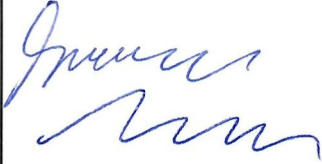




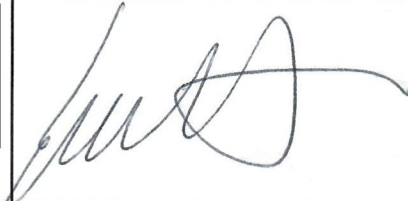
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3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD.

Date

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------|
| GRAEME MCVIE | [REDACTED] |  | 8/12 |
| JACK #Family HERMES | [REDACTED] |  | 8/12 |
| LOVE FAMILY | [REDACTED] |  | 8/12 |
| PABLO ACOSTA & FAMILY | [REDACTED] |  | 8/12 |
| NATHANIEL and LILIAN MILLER | [REDACTED] |  | 8/13 |
| Ted HERMES | [REDACTED] |  | |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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Date

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Louise H Patterson | [REDACTED] | [Signature] |
| DAVID CASTAGNETTI | [REDACTED] | [Signature] |
| Rita Ramalho Chamon | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/13 |
| Knipa Parikh Kunal Khosla | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/14 |
| Jason A. Griffin | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/26/23 |
| Dan Leraman | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/26 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Glen Sutcliffe (owner) | [REDACTED] |  |
| Marie Sutcliffe (owner) | a a |  |
| RICHARD BRYAN | [REDACTED] |  |
| Chang Meng | [REDACTED] |  |
| Radhika & Rajesh Sinha | [REDACTED] |  |
| Katharine Peters | [REDACTED] |  |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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- 3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD.**

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------------|
| TOM GERTH | [REDACTED] |  | 8/26 |
| Kathryn and Alex Moore | [REDACTED] |  | 8/26 |
| NAT MAUKUS | [REDACTED] |  | Aug 26, 2023 |
| Tom Spranger | [REDACTED] |  | 8/26/23 |
| Megan Giles | [REDACTED] |  | |
| Apare Ramo | [REDACTED] |  | 8/26/23 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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- 3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD.**

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|---------|
| Eric Bell Rapti Goonesekere | |  | 8/27/23 |
| WILLIAM WALKER | |  | 8/27/23 |
| LARRY COPE | |  | 8/27/23 |
| Joseph Kemp | |  | 8/27/23 |
| PAUL MALONEY | |  | 8/27/23 |
| Jeri Weaver Bob Weaver | |  | 8/27/23 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Andrea Mangum | [REDACTED] | Andrea J. Mangum Aug 27, 2023 |
| CAROLYN HARRIS | Carolyn [REDACTED] | Carolyn D. Harris 8/27/23 |
| DILANI PATHIRANA | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/27/23 |
| GREGORY B CULVER | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/27/23 |
| SHEKIL CHRISTMAS | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/27/2023 |
| STEVE SAYER | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/27 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

That:


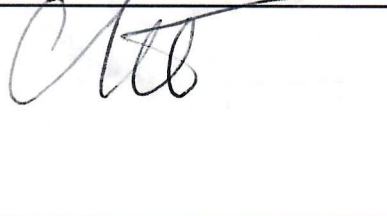

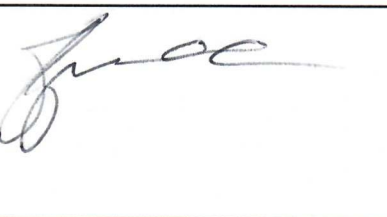
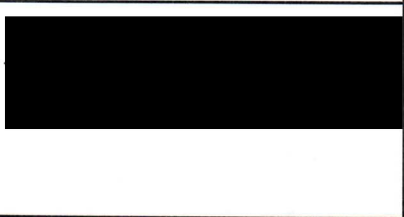
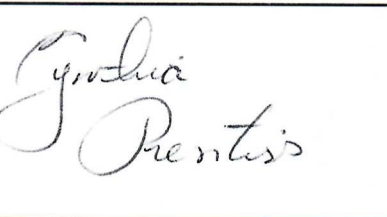
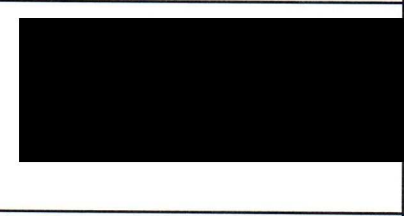


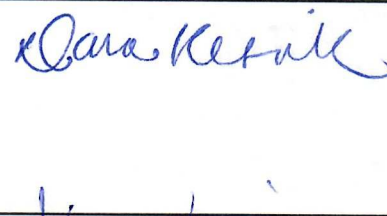
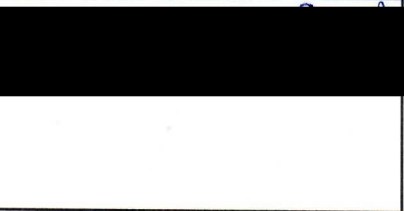

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2. AT A MINIMUM, WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN OPEN AT RIVER ROAD PENDING A FULL EVALUATION OF TRAFFIC AND POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ROAD SAFETY MEASURES, WHICH EVALUATION SHALL BE CONDUCTED NO EARLIER THAN THE COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE WESTBARD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER AND TOWNHOMES, AND
3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD.

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| John Gardin | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/27 |
| Chris Bridgeman | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/27/2023 |
| KRISHNA, VANI MURTHY | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/28/23 |
| Erin Frenchy | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/28/23 |
| Monica Zaccavelli Daroli | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/28/2023 |
| Heather Gordon | [REDACTED] | [Signature] 8/28/23 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| CHRIS GILBERT |  |  |
| Eli Barnes |  |  |
| Cynthia Prentiss |  |  |
| Eric Gold |  |  |
| Dana + Josh Resnik |  |  |
| XXXXXXXXXX |  |  |

8/30/23

9/2/23

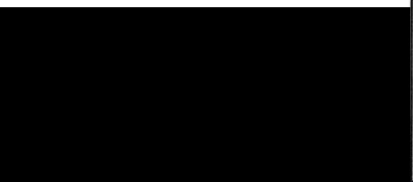
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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|---|--|---|
| Maniel Penberth |  | MSPenberth 8/28 |
| Anthony Hansel |  | Anthony |
| Sarah Searls |  |  |
| Wesley Herr |  | |
| John Begert |  | JBegert 9/2/23 |
| Kim Pomponi Nick Pomponi + 4 boys |  | KLPomponi 9.22.23 |

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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---|----------|
| Hallie Werbel | [REDACTED] |  | 9/2/23 |
| Marcia Griffiths | [REDACTED] | Marcia Griffiths | 9/2/23 |
| Hilary Gerzhoy | [REDACTED] |  | 9/3/23 |
| Peter O'Connell | [REDACTED] |  | 9/3/23 |
| Sebastian Torres | [REDACTED] |  | 9/3/2023 |
| M. Robinska | [REDACTED] |  | 9/3/23 |

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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature | Date |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|---|--------|
| Betsy Dodson | [REDACTED] |  | 9/1/23 |
| THOR HEADLEY | [REDACTED] |  | 9/2/23 |
| Eddie Melchior | [REDACTED] |  | 9/2/23 |
| Jeff Schnitt | [REDACTED] |  | 9/2/23 |
| Elizabeth Spriggs | [REDACTED] |  | 9/2/23 |
| Margaret Hogan | [REDACTED] |  | 9/2/23 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|------------------|
| TRISTAN WALKER | [REDACTED] |  | Sept. 12 2023 |
| LEE & FRANZ JANIGER | [REDACTED] |  | 9/13/2023 |
| David & Nancy Parent | [REDACTED] |  | 9/13/23 |
| Elisabetta Cavegion | [REDACTED] |  | 9/13/23 |
| Mumm Vera | [REDACTED] |  | 9/13/23 |
| Leanne Tobias | [REDACTED] |  | 9/13/23 |

PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

traffic to Westbard Square as well as the Capital Crescent Trail travel on Ridgefield Rd.

Ridgefield Road is not wide enough to handle such traffic as it is barely 27 feet wide and contains several curves and hills – whereas Westbard is a four-lane 45 feet wide straight “AVENUE.” It is by far the widest street in the Springfield neighborhood. Yet the closure of Westbard at River Road will keep traffic off of this significantly safer Avenue and force traffic onto narrower winding roads where pedestrians will be at significant risk.


In order to ensure that **ALL** residents of Springfield on roads that will be affected by cut-through traffic heading to and from Westbard Square are as safe as possible, we petition that:

1. WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN PERMANENTLY OPEN AT RIVER ROAD, OR

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SINCERELY,

| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---|
| AMEEKA SINGH | |  |



PETITION FOR WESTBARD AVENUE OPENING AT RIVER ROAD

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| Print Name | Address (and email if desired) | Signature |
|------------|--|---|
| ALOK SINGH |  |  |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Mann Residence
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, Maryland 20814

Telephone
[REDACTED]

August 20, 2023

Tiara McCray
Montgomery County, Maryland

by email only to Tiara.McCraymontgomerycountymd.gov

re: AB-786: Permanent Closure of
Westbard @ River"

Dear Ms. McCray:

I want to personally say that I wholeheartedly support this petition.

As a grandfather of 3 children growing up on the 5500 block of Westbard (and son and daughter-in-law), I have personally witnessed, before the detours started, how dangerous the cut-through traffic is on this block.

As a long time Montgomery County lawyer, I am also aware that the master plan calls for this permanent closure, and have always assumed the County will follow through on this.

With the massive improvements now made (and to be made in the future), to the Westbard interchange, *not following through with this would be making a previously bad situation many, many times worse*. In fact I can easily say that not closing the block at River will permanently expose our family and friends to a clear known danger.

Please enter this as public written testimony,

Thank you,

Lawrence P. Mann

McCray, Tiara

From: Leanne Tobias [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 8:44 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Marc Elrich; Friedson, Andrew
Subject: AB 786: Oppose Permanent Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road Pending Further Study

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray:

I write today in my personal capacity as a decades-long resident of Ridgefield Road in the Springfield neighborhood of Bethesda. Please include this letter in the AB 786 hearing record.

Closure is Premature. This letter is to oppose AB 786, the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road, as premature. A decision on AB 786 should not be made until traffic studies have:

1)Evaluated the effectiveness of the realigned Westbard Avenue in diverting traffic from the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue, the block abutting Westbard Avenue at River Road. This evaluation should be conducted, at minimum, several months following the completion of the Westbard Avenue realignment and the opening of the new Giant at Westbard Square -- that is, in mid-2024 or later -- in order to account for the establishment of new traffic patterns. The impact of forthcoming residential construction related to Westbard Square (see below) should also be considered.

2)Evaluated the probable impact of the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road on adjacent streets and on the Springfield neighborhood generally. Again, such studies should await the establishment of new traffic patterns following the completion of the Westbard Avenue realignment and the opening of the new Giant at Westbard Square (mid-2024 or later.) As noted later in this letter, the impact of forthcoming residential construction related to Westbard Square should also be considered.

Springfield Neighborhood Traffic Problems. The key reason to oppose the closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road at this time is the fact that recent detours have caused substantial and continuing traffic problems in the Springfield neighborhood. In light of these problems, careful study is needed before closing another through street. Recent problems include the following:

- The closing of Westbard Avenue initially diverted thousands of vehicles per day, including heavy trucks, to Ridgefield Road, a situation alleviated only by making Ridgefield Road temporarily one way.
- The changes in traffic patterns due to the Westbard Avenue closure have imposed an unacceptable cut-through traffic burden on Ogden Road, a small street with limited capacity. Recent review indicates that over 80% of the Ogden Road cut-through traffic has been speeding, presenting a safety hazard.
- The Westbard Avenue closure has shifted additional traffic to Cromwell Drive. This situation is potentially hazardous because Wood Acres Elementary School is located there.

Assess Impact of New Residential Development. The new Westbard Square development, scheduled for completion in 2026, will include a senior living center with 90 parking spaces and, more significantly, 300+ condominiums and townhomes in Westbard Square and on what has been lower Ridgefield Road at River Road. This new construction will significantly increase traffic volume in the area of Westbard Avenue, and could affect traffic conditions on surrounding streets. The impact of closing Westbard Avenue at River Road should be evaluated in the context of this new residential density.

Lack of Neighborhood Representation. The petition to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road was submitted by a group representing only the 24 or so homes on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. The Springfield Civic

Association, which represents the approximately 650 homes in the Springfield neighborhood — including the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue — was not informed of the road closure petition and was not consulted in its drafting. The Springfield Civic Association and the residents of Springfield should be given an opportunity to express their views on AB 786 before this consequential decision is made.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. Again, I oppose AB 786 as premature. Additional traffic studies should be conducted in mid-2024 or later, to assess the impact of the realigned Westbard Avenue and traffic associated with the opening of the new Giant store. Additional evaluation should including forward-looking estimates of the traffic impact of forthcoming residential development at and near Westbard Square. These studies are needed to evaluate whether AB 786 would adversely affect the Springfield neighborhood. In addition, the views of the Springfield Civic Association and the residents of the broader Springfield community should be fully considered.

Sincerely,

Leanne Tobias

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Linda Zhou [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 12:04 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Conklin, Christopher
Subject: Westbard Avenue-River Road Intersection Closure

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray,

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Best,
Linda Zhou

McCray, Tiara

From: Meryl Abel [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 5:46 PM
To: McCray, Tiara

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Meryl Abel, and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Meryl Abel
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Mary Bissell [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 5:35 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: christopher.conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Mary Bissell, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Mary Bissell
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Milena [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 3:11 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Nahid Javadi; Hasan Javadi; Masoud.Javadi
Subject: Permanent Closure of Westbard Avenue/River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Mrs. McCray: My name is Milena Castulovich-Javadi. I used to be a resident of both 5500 Westbard Avenue as well as a resident of the building complex at 5300 Westbard Circle. In total I lived close to a decade+ on Westbard Avenue and it is a place that remains near and dear to me as my parents in law continue to live on the street at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. I mentioned earlier how I have lived on the street myself and am absolutely convinced that the closure is both necessary and integral to the safety of the residents on the street. I visit my parents-in-law every year and since the road was closed, and the traffic was rerouted, it was clear to see that it is not necessary to have it be opened. Since the traffic flow was changed, drivers and pedestrians have all become used to the new routes. In the years since that occurred, there has been a mental reeducation of how traffic should flow that makes no sense undoing now most especially, as everyone can remember how cars used to zip through at high speeds to make illegal turns onto River Road that resulted in danger to oncoming traffic as well as to pedestrians and residents of the area trying to go about their daily lives. To me, it is obvious that there is zero benefit lost in maintaining the closure and the existing road flow but that there could be, a very REAL loss in reopening it. Safety being the primary casualty.

It is my understanding that in 2016, the county was able to negotiate the permanent closure with the residents, and that the closure was to remain after the road realignment was completed. I hope that Montgomery County will maintain the status quo and honor to what was originally agreed now that we find ourselves at this point where it seems the original agreement might be set aside.

I humbly ask that you please be instrumental in approving the permanent closure, so that the safety of my parents-in-law (who are in their 80s) and the wellbeing of residents (old and young) in the area, be better assured. Kind regards from an old resident and continuing visitor,

Milena Castulovich-Javadi
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

McCray, Tiara

From: Conklin, Christopher
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 8:11 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Fwd: Opposition to Permanent Closures of Westbard Avenue & River Road Intersection

Chris Conklin
MCDOT Director

Sent from a mobile device

From: Meng Chang [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 7:35:36 PM
To: Paylor, Michael L. <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Marc Elrich <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: [REDACTED] >
Subject: Opposition to Permanent Closures of Westbard Avenue & River Road Intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I am a resident of [REDACTED].
([https://www.google.com/maps/search/\[REDACTED\].+l?entry=gmail&source=g](https://www.google.com/maps/search/[REDACTED].+l?entry=gmail&source=g)) I am writing to request a denial of the petition to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road. Also known as 5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association's request to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road is unfair to the rest of the neighborhood and for that reason untenable.

Last year, due to the road closures of Westbard Ave at River Road, the residents of Ridgefield Road, overwhelmingly bore the brunt. Trucks, large volume of commuter vehicles and never-ending vehicles cut through Ridgefield Road trying to access the open part of Westbard Avenue to either get to the Westbard Square or Massachusetts Ave. The results:

- 1) It made it very difficult to leave my home and get out of my driveway.
- 2) The cut through vehicles were very impatient, either they ignored the NO TURN ON RED sign, then made an illegal turn creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians, children or bikers.
- 3) or the drivers were pressing the car horns pushing the cars in front of them to make a turn on red. The constant annoying car horns noise can be harmful and take a toll on individual health, increasing cholesterol, blood pressure and heart rate.
- 4) Ridgefield Road and neighboring streets have three bus stops. During school years, 3 pick ups in the morning and 3 drop offs in the afternoon for elementary, middle and high schools children that put numerous children in the middle of unsafe traffic patterns, it is very wrong.
- 5) Westbard Avenue is THE widest street in the Springfield neighborhood with double yellow lines and sidewalks on both sides. All other streets in Springfield are narrower, without any sidewalks and witness heavy pedestrian or bicycle traffic.

Based on the experience that we had encountered last year, permanent closure of Westbard Avenue & River Road intersection is not an option at this time. Again, it will be very unfair to the residents on Ridgefield, Springfield, Cromwell, Ogden.

Westbard Ave at River Road should be permanently reopened so that Ridgefield, Springfield, Cromwell, Ogden and Westbard are equally sharing the volume of traffic during the road realignment.

Please block the petition to permanently close Westbard Avenue & River Road intersection.

Thank you

Meng Chang



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Michael Chen-Young [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 10:09 PM
To: McCray, Tiara; Conklin, Christopher
Cc: Marc Elrich; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Glass's Office, Councilmember; Jawando's Office, Councilmember; MCP-Chair; Benjamin Mann; Cynthia Green; Phyllis Edelman; MChenyong; Michael Chen-Young
Subject: Written Support for the Road Closure hearing September 19th Council Hearing Re: "old" Westbard Ave & River Rd
Attachments: Summary support for 5500 Westbard Ave Block petition for Road Closure AB-786 2023-09-17.pdf

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear MCDOT Director Conklin & Ms. McCray,

Thank you for both of your and other colleagues time in listening to all of the residents of the 5500 Westbard Ave block and other interested parties regarding our **5500 Westbard Ave Block Civic Association's Petition for the PERMANENT CLOSURE OF WESTBARD AVENUE AT RIVER ROAD AB-786**.

My name is Michael Chen-Young, a 25-year resident at what one could call "Ground Zero" of this "old" intersection of Westbard Ave, as my home is directly at this corner of [REDACTED]. My wife and I have been an active community members and advocates for our entire neighborhood, constructively engaged with multiple stakeholders in helping craft the balanced outcome of the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan and the many subsequent hearings in its enactment. I most recently testified at the MC Planning Board hearing on Thursday July 27, 2023, again stressing the importance of this road closure to protect the **residents of our short residential block who face the disparate impact from the dangerous cut-through trucks and cars**. I am signed up to again testify in this Tuesday's MCDOT hearing under Executive Order No. 136-23.

I try to approach any topic, especially one for which people may be passionate, with a calm and respectful mindset, and to clarify the facts of the matter in simple terms. The short presentation attached to the email will be the basis of my testimony on Tuesday, which focuses on the primary facts surrounding the debate, namely the only possible usages of the "old" Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection, namely:

- 1) Intersection Use Case #1: Eastbound River Road cut-through vehicles wanting to turn right on Westbard Ave
 - 2) Intersection Use Case #2: Northbound Westbard Ave cut-through vehicles heading towards River Rd
- while comparing to the alternative usage of the "new" intersection with River Road only ~10 seconds away intended to handle the dangerous cut-through trucks and cars.

Please find the attached supporting testimony reflective of the above approach that I will use in Tuesday's hearing:

- **Summary support for 5500 Westbard Ave Block petition for Road Closure AB-786 2023-09-17.pdf**

I've also read most of the letters of opposition (and know many of these neighbors). I know many of the Springfield Civic Association (SCA)'s Board members and was a part of the SCA Traffic Committee through August 2022. It's unfortunate that there isn't 100% alignment on this matter, and when you speak to many, it's primarily due to other upper neighborhood streets experiencing an increase in cut-through traffic during the road re-alignment construction and feeling the 5500 Westbard Ave block is reason for their cut-through traffic, and as such, re-opening the "old" Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection is only fair without factoring in the disparate impact on us and that the "new" intersection only ~10 seconds away was designed to take the cut-through traffic.

Thus, some Springfield residents, notably none of which live on the 5500 Westbard Ave block hence don't seem to fully understand the issue, have opposed the Westbard Sector Plan 2016 enactment to close this old dangerous "old" Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection forever. They wrongly cast the scenario as "*Westbard residents are seeking to unfairly place ALL of the traffic burden on residents on and near Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive and Ogden Road*" while also asking that "*in any event, traffic safety measures be implemented to slow and deter traffic in the Springfield neighborhood [of which Westbard Ave is a part]*".

But when one moves away from just fear, and looks at the facts of the only possible uses of the "old" intersection to turn from River Rd on to Westbard Ave and vice versa, the thought process becomes clearer. Clear thinking recognizes the danger of this "old" intersection and that it was intended to be replaced by the better "new" intersection only ~10 seconds away. The outcome should be the same as found in the thoughtful Westbard Sector Plan, supported by the MC Planning Board's recent votes 5-0 in favor of the closure even temporarily while MCDOT researches the permanent closure. The MC Planning Board Staff experts confirmed that that the "full or partial closure of Westbard Avenue meets the necessary findings for Section 49-63" and concluded that this "old" Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection is both:

- 1) no longer necessary for public use, and
- 2) closure is necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the residents

I personally walked through with several SCA Board members these facts, and none of them could disagree with the facts and use cases. **And that's why you do not see any opposing letter to our petition try to argue on the facts, but instead the approach is a familiar DC-area "slow no" by "asking for a study, after all construction in complete several years in the future."**

We hope our county decision makers will instead look at the facts, and **protect the residents of the 5500 Westbard Ave block face the disparate impact from the dangerous cut-through trucks and cars going through this "old" dangerous intersection.** The enactment of the Westbard Sector Plan 2016 to close this "old" Westbard Ave & River Rd dangerous intersection and re-direct traffic to the "new" intersection on ~10 seconds away will result in improved traffic measures for Westbard Ave and the overall Springfield neighborhood.

You already have numerous records of the danger of this intersection. Living at "Ground Zero", I see so many of the dangers, violations despite signage, accidents, and also having my cable and telephone lines torn down from tall trucks. I've copied a few of them from slide 5 of my short presentation, and will be available to discuss any more with you if you'd like.





Best regards,
Michael Chen-Young

[Redacted signature block]

Confidentiality Statement: This email may contain attorney-client privileged or confidential information. It is for the sole use of the intended recipient(s). If you have received this transmission in error, immediately notify us and delete this message permanently from your systems.

Support for the 5500 Westbard Ave Block's Petition for the PERMANENT CLOSURE OF WESTBARD AVENUE AT RIVER ROAD AB-786



CLOSE “old” dangerous intersection
with TEMPORARY design until a
PERMANENT design is implemented

Direct cut-through traffic to the
“new” intersection only ~10 seconds
away from the “old” intersection



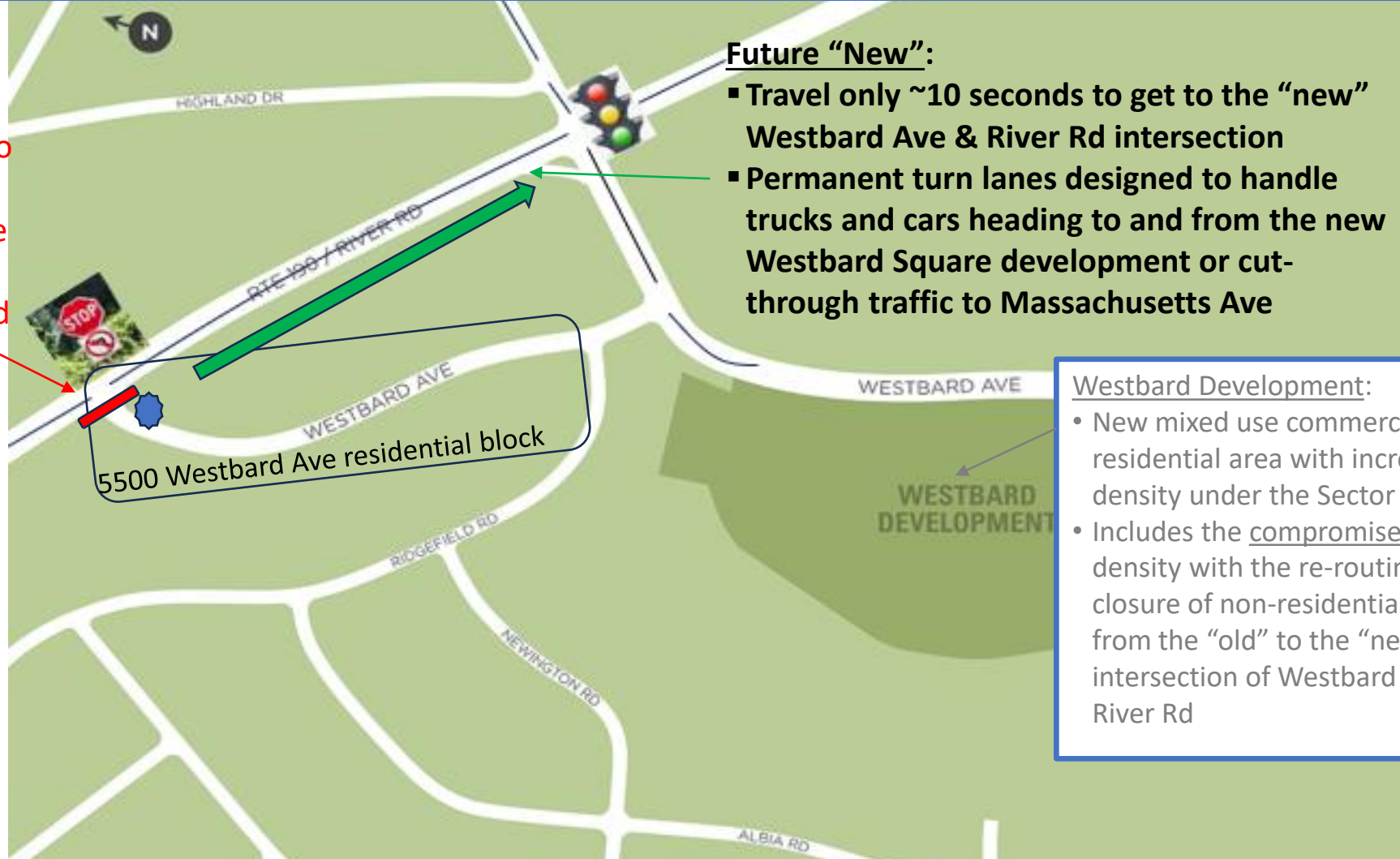
September 17, 2023

Overview Map

Summary Petition under Hearing AB-786:

- Permanently close “old” Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection per 2016 Westbard Sector Plan agreement to prevent the dangerous truck and car cut-through of the short residential 5500 Westbard Ave block
- Re-direct these non-residential trucks and cars to the “newly” aligned Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection only ~10 seconds away that is designed to handle this non-residential cut-through traffic

Current “Old”:
Dangerous intersection with No Left Turn from the “old” Westbard Ave intersection on to River Rd westbound



Future “New”:

- Travel only ~10 seconds to get to the “new” Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection
- Permanent turn lanes designed to handle trucks and cars heading to and from the new Westbard Square development or cut-through traffic to Massachusetts Ave

Westbard Development:

- New mixed use commercial & residential area with increased density under the Sector Plan
- Includes the compromise of higher density with the re-routing and closure of non-residential traffic from the “old” to the “new” intersection of Westbard Ave & River Rd

Intersection Use Case #1: Eastbound River Road view of cut-through vehicles wanting to turn right on Westbard Ave

A long due process has occurred between ALL parties – residents, developers, MCDOT, MC Planning Board, and MC Councilmembers leading to the compromises in the Westbard Sector Plan 2016. Subsequent hearings and approvals of re-alignment plans to build the “new” intersection removed the need for this “old” dangerous intersection.



“New” intersection only ~10 seconds further east on River Rd:

- Designed to make the “old” dangerous intersection obsolete
- Permanent curved turning lane to handle trucks and cars
- Stop-light which enables better traffic control
- Upon turning right, multi-lane on to Westbard Ave to reach either the newly construction at Westbard Square, or continuing to Massachusetts Ave

“Old” dangerous Westbard Ave intersection:

- 1) partially blind intersection (with multiple accidents) for vehicles traveling east on River Rd after having passed the Springfield Dr intersection that has a stop-light
- 2) by the time drivers reach this “old” intersection, they are often still speeding above the 35 MPH limit
- 3) multiple studies with history of illegal turns at this “old” intersection by large trucks and cars, despite signage restrictions

Intersection Use Case #2: Northbound Westbard Ave: “to-be” view of cut-through vehicles heading towards River Rd

Path A: cut-through vehicles turn left to drive through the “old” 5500 Westbard Ave residential block, only to find “No Left Turn”

Path B: cut-through vehicles keep straight with 2 lanes to the nearer “new” intersection to a stoplight supporting safe Left turns

Path A: Turn left to drive through the “old” 5500 Westbard Ave residential block to get to the “old” intersection at River Rd, only to find the “No Left Turn”

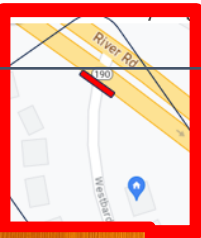
- Once vehicles get to that “No Left Turn” at the “old” intersection, they will either
 - (a) try to ignore the sign and make the dangerous left turn into the blind speeding traffic, or
 - (b) try to perform a dangerous U-turn to head back the other way on the residential block (with more speed), or
 - (c) queue in a long backup of vehicles to make the only legal right-turn on River Rd which takes them back to the “new intersection” but heading in the opposite desired direction, forcing dangerous U-turns on River Rd



Path B: “New” intersection straight ahead

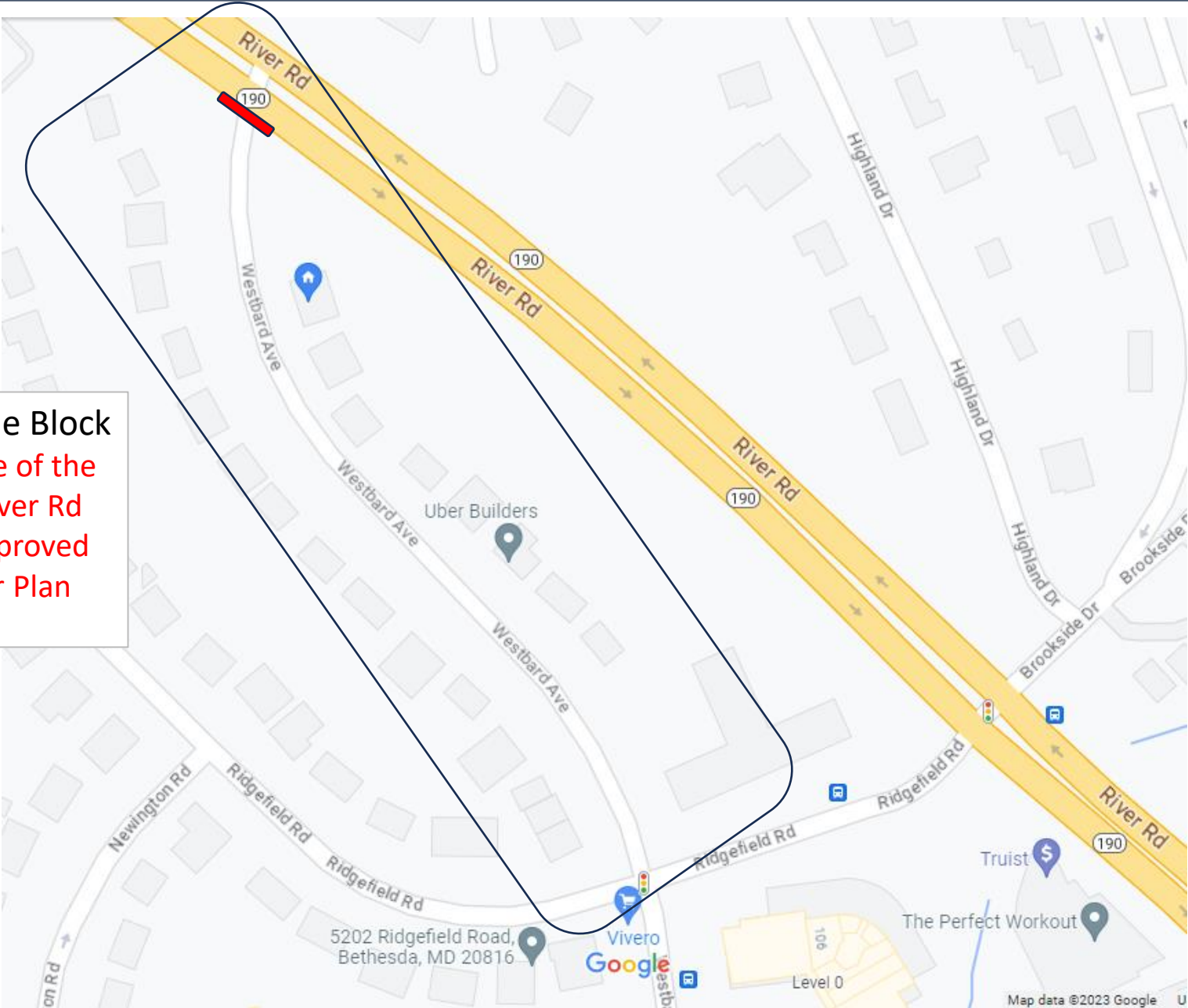
The 5500 Westbard Ave residential block will be disparately impacted if the closure doesn't occur

The dangers to the residents have been well-documented, and do not need additional studies

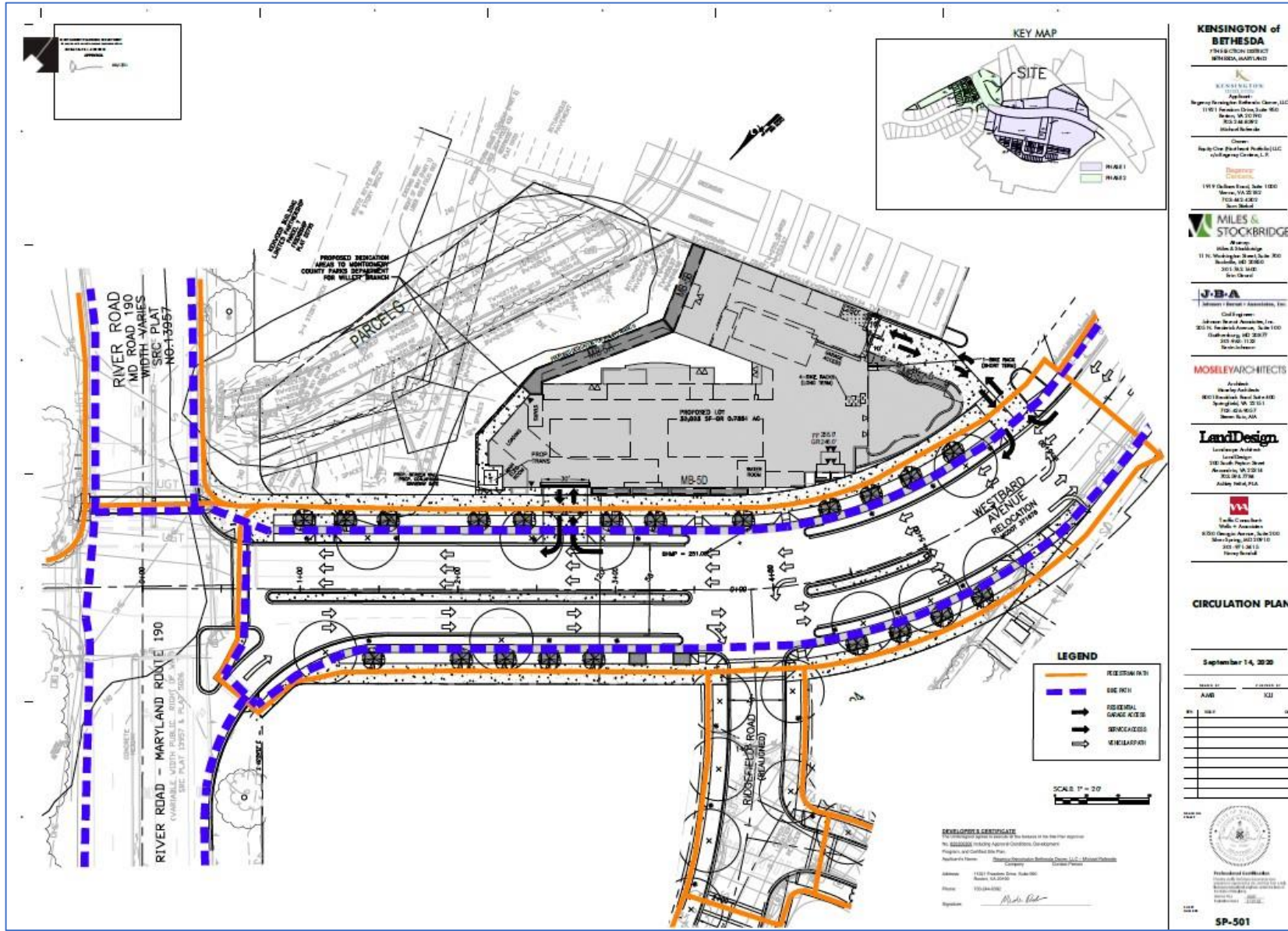


Appendix: Area Map before newly aligned Westbard Ave & River Road Intersection

5500 Westbard Avenue Block
Requested Road Closure of the
old Westbard Ave & River Rd
intersection per the approved
2016 Westbard Sector Plan



Appendix: Post-Construction Site Plan



McCray, Tiara

From: Mary Dolbashian [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 14, 2023 10:34 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Re: Registration Form

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Yes you may keep my statement. We are an Association of 174 units. It is essential to have multiple exits in and out, otherwise people will be trying to use our Circle. And if an emergency was to occur, emergency services need quick access, however that may be.

Our building is right in the middle of this and the Development is going to bring many people into the area. Closing that road is a safety issue.

Thank you, and if you have additional questions feel free to contact me.

Mary Dolbashian
Kenwood Place Condominium
Board of Directors

On Mon, Aug 14, 2023 at 6:05 PM McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov> wrote:

Good evening, Ms. Dolbashian,

Thank you for your interest in the AB 786 public hearing. The registration form to attend the hearing is linked below for your convenience:

<https://forms.office.com/g/HsuZ8YY39G>

Please be advised that registration for the hearing closes on September 15th at 5 pm. Do you intend for your written comment to be included in the record for this case?

Tiara McCray
Acting Chief, Property Acquisition

Department of Transportation

Division of Transportation Engineering

Property Acquisition Section

[100 Edison Park Drive](#), 4th Floor

Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

240-777-7257 (o)

240-720-7862 (c)



From: Mary Dolbashian [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 10:15 AM
To: McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Registration Form

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Good Morning,

Could you send me the link to register for the Sept 19 meeting?

Also, I believe it to be a very bad idea to close that road as a resident of Kenwood Place Condominium, we have been blocked in from every direction and I think that for emergency purposes and otherwise there needs to be multiple entrances as opposed to just one way in and one way out from either direction.

Thank you,

Mary Dolbashian

--

Mary Dolbashian
KPC BOD Director



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

--

Mary Dolbashian
KPC BOD Director

McCray, Tiara

From: Margaret Henoch [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 9:12 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Margaret Henoch, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and there is a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Margaret Henoch
[REDACTED]

September 15, 2023

My name is Masoud Javadi-Tabrizi and I grew up on [REDACTED] Bethesda, MD 20816 and currently live at [REDACTED] Houston, Texas 77056.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Masoud Javadi-Tabrizi, Esquire

Formerly of [REDACTED]

Currently at [REDACTED]

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Masoud Javadi-Tabrizi", written in a cursive style.

From: Mary Beth Kelly [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, August 14, 2023 3:56 PM

To: Paylor, Michael L. <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Cc: Marc Elrich <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; William Walker [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave @ River Road - Input by Ridgefield Rd Resident & SCA member

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Mr. Paylor and Mr. Conklin,

When you are reviewing the request submitted by the residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue it will be irresponsible to not take into account the views of the other nearby residents, particularly those on Ridgefield Rd, who will be severely impacted by the closure request. I'm sure that is not your intent, but from what I've heard so far the review might be going in that direction. One block does not constitute a neighborhood. I think we all have questions and concerns over the traffic in the area so the views of one block of residents should not take precedence over the rest of the neighborhood. An overall neighborhood approach should be taken for traffic management.

My husband and I fully support the issues being raised by the Springfield Citizen Association and in addition would also like to raise the following concerns.

1. It is unclear from the planning documents online how the residents of the townhomes being built on the old Manor Care site will access their homes and where they will park. Their traffic will likely have a major impact on traffic at the intersections and streets of Old Westbard and Ridgefield, particularly if Old Westbard is closed.
2. It is unclear if you are taking into account in your analysis the traffic to and from the new housing units being built to neighborhood schools such as Wood Acres Elementary School.
3. Finally, the intersection of the new Westbard and the old Westbard & Ridgefield has been built in such a way that traffic is significantly "pinched" by protruding curbs. It seems it will be very difficult to make the turn into the residential area in & out of this opening.

A graphic and a photo showing our specific area of concerns are attached.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns as well as those of the Springfield Citizen Association.

Mary Beth Kelly & William Walker

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD 20816



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Matthew Maury [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 12:42 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Westbard Ave decisions

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Matthew Maury, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood and live at [REDACTED] Bethesda MD 20816. I have lived in the community adjacent to Westbard since 1956 and watched the existing shopping center get built when I was 8 years old.

I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

It borders on insanity to spend tens of millions of dollars to create a massive new intersection about a block down the street on River Rd. and then allow incoming traffic to "cut the corner" and drive through a residential street to access the new shopping center. Why did we bother with all that infrastructure if we were going to allow hundreds and hundreds of cars to turn right a block sooner and scoot past residential housing? Come on, apply some basic logic please!

Closing off this block will NOT affect traffic through our community in anyway. Our problems with cut through traffic will be abated when the new intersection and road allow Mass Ave. traffic to get through to River Rd. as it once did by using Westbard from communities like Sumner.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and especially on Westbard Ave. and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Matthew Maury

[REDACTED]

--

Matthew Maury

[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Mozhdeh mehrabi [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 3:40 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Westbard

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

.My name is Mozhdeh Razavi, and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly closure realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the .Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route .old Westbard-River intersection

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to crucial for happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is .Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made

Please approv
e this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Mozhdeh Razavi
Sent from my iPhone

McCray, Tiara

From: Matthew Sonne [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 8:17 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Matthew Sonne, and I am a resident of the Wood Acres / Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Matthew Sonne
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 2:54 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; [REDACTED]
Subject: Westbard Avenue Closure
Attachments: NWR Lt re Westbard.docx

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Please see attached letter. I support the letter as well.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Jim Rathvon

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

September 18, 2023

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Natalie Rathvon, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Natalie Rathvon

████████████████████

McCray, Tiara

From: Nancy Finn [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 4:56 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Westbard Ave Rd Closure

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi,

My name is Nancy Finn and my parents live on Westbard Avenue. I am a former resident and currently live at [REDACTED].

I am writing in to advocate for the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue that was agreed upon in 2016 along with the road realignment plans for Ridgefield Rd, where it intersects with River Rd.

Ridgefield Rd will serve as the main commercial access point for the new development at the former Giant shipping center. The small section of Westbard Ave that connects to River is entirely a residential street and not built out to accommodate commercial traffic. Thank you for protecting the safety of local residents, as well as honoring the original closure plan and the expectations of local residents.

Thank you and all the best,
Nancy Finn

Nancy Zou Finn
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Nahid Javadi [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 20, 2023 1:48 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: 5500 Block of Westbard Ave/ River Rd Closure

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Nahid Javadi, [REDACTED]

August 19, 2023

Dear Ms. McCray

I hope this letter finds you well. My name is Nahid Javadi, and together with my husband Hassan Javadi, we have been proud residents of [REDACTED] for 32 years. As we deeply appreciate the efforts you and the Montgomery County Council have made to serve our community, I am writing to share my concerns regarding the proposed opening of WESTBARD Ave on both sides of the street.

My husband and I are senior citizens, both over 80 years old. Due to our age, we value the peace, safety, and tranquility of our neighborhood more than ever. I have a hearing impairment in one ear, and my doctor has advised against exposing my other ear to loud noises. Further, we occasionally have the responsibility of caring for our two grandchildren due to our daughter's full-time work schedule. Given these circumstances, the safety and well-being of our street's residents, particularly that of young children like our grandkids and elderly individuals like us, is our paramount concern.

Allowing WESTBARD Ave to be open on both sides, creating a direct route for cars from the new roads to reach River Rd, raises several concerns. The most pressing of these is the physical risk to young children who play on or off the currently closed street and to ourselves, should the reopening of Westbard to River Road traffic resume. We can all remember how cars used to speed along Westbard trying for easy and illegal left flow access onto River Road. It was unsafe to even cross the street no matter that there were speed bumps! To think of this being a risk again, is alarming. Moreover, the significant rise in traffic noise levels would undoubtedly impact my hearing condition and that of other residents in similar circumstances.

In my remaining years, I have a fervent desire not to burden my family or community. I firmly believe that permanently closing River Rd and WESTBARD would serve to safeguard the safety and quality of life for all the residents in our cherished neighborhood. As a law-abiding, committed, and conscientious citizen of Montgomery County, my husband and I have consistently fulfilled our duties by paying taxes and contributing positively to our community. We trust that you, as our elected representatives, share our values and will work to protect our safety and well-being.

I kindly request that you consider these concerns seriously and advocate for the best interests of our community. The decision regarding the opening of WESTBARD Ave has a direct impact on the lives of the people who call this neighborhood home. I implore you to help us preserve the peace, safety, and tranquility that we have cherished for decades.

Thank you for your time, attention, and dedication to serving our community. We eagerly await your thoughtful response and are confident that you will take our concerns to heart.

Sincerely,

Nahid Javadi

McCray, Tiara

From: Nathaniel Miller [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2023 2:29 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Opposition to Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave. @ River Rd.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hello,

I would like to register my opposition to the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road.

Due to the road closures of Westbard Ave at River Road and Ridgefield Road last year, the Springfield neighborhood - especially Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Road and Ogden Road - had been inundated with a constant stream of trucks and a large volume of commuter vehicles trying to access the open part of Westbard Avenue to either get to the Westbard Square or Massachusetts Ave. The detour plan directing commuters/trucks to use Goldsboro or Little Falls Parkway or to Massachusetts to Westbard Avenue had in effect failed to divert the traffic away from the neighborhood, and county police have confirmed their inability to enforce the detour plan. Ridgefield Road, a narrow and hilly residential street, without permit parking required to park on either side of the street, was bearing the brunt of the cut through traffic, making it difficult to leave homes and creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians and children.

On the contrary, Westbard Avenue is a flat, 45 foot wide road, with permit parking on both sides and numerous speed bumps. It has clear line demarcations separating sides of the road, and is undeniably better equipped to handle this volume of traffic without putting pedestrians, children, or vehicles in harm's way.

Westbard Ave at River Road should be permanently reopened at the very least so that Ridgefield, Springfield, Cromwell, Ogden and Westbard are equally sharing the volume of traffic during the road realignment. By requesting permanent closure of Westbard at River, Westbard residents are seeking to unfairly place all of the traffic burden on residents on and near Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive, and Ogden Road. At the very least, no decisions should be made without a further study being done of traffic patterns.

Best,
Nathaniel Miller

--

Nathaniel Miller
[REDACTED], Bethesda, MD 20816
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: NANCY WHITE [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 12:40 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: approve the permanent road closure in westbard

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Nancy White, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Nancy White
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Paul Collins/USA [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 12:55 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.go
Subject: Old Westbard Avenue road closure

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Paul Collins

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard. It will also likely increase property values on this street, thus increasing tax revenue for the County.

Paul Collins

[REDACTED]
Bethesda Md 20816

Paul J. Collins

[REDACTED]
|
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
|

|
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
|
[REDACTED]

September 5, 2023

Re: AB-786: Permanent Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road

To Tiara McCray and Montgomery County DOT:

I am writing in support of the petition by the residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue who would like to see their street closed at the intersection of River Road and Westbard Avenue. In order to prevent confusion, I will be referring to the realigned portion of Westbard Avenue as “new Westbard Avenue” and the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue as “old Westbard Avenue.”

From 2014-2017 I was president of the Springfield Civic Association. From the fall of 2014 until July 2016, the Westbard sector plan was under review by the Planning Board and the County Council, when it was finally adopted. Of particular concern to the residents of old Westbard Avenue was the traffic that would be generated by increased development along new Westbard Avenue and the impact it would have on their block. Consequently, the residents of old Westbard Avenue were heavily involved in the discussions about redevelopment. Protecting them from increased traffic was one of my major concerns as discussions over the Westbard Sector Plan ensued.

Westbard Realignment – Protecting Springfield

Early on in the discussions, Montgomery County planners recommended realignment of new Westbard Avenue so it would flow directly into River Road with an improved design at the previous intersection of River Road and Ridgefield Road. While this was suggested as a benefit to the developer, who wanted a “gateway” into the redeveloped Westwood shopping/residential area, many members of the Springfield board and community, myself included, saw this as a benefit to the overall Springfield community:

- 1) It would provide a distinct “border” between the new Westbard area and the Springfield community.**
- 2) It would eliminate the Ridgefield Road/Westbard Avenue intersection as a potential chokepoint for traffic trying to get to the new Westbard redevelopment from River Road.**
- 3) It would eliminate Ridgefield Road -- a local, Springfield community road lined with single-family home residences, which extends about a mile into the Springfield community -- from being part of the network of roads regularly used by members of the broader community.**
- 4) The intersection of new Westbard Avenue and River Road (previously River Road/Ridgefield Road) could be redesigned so tractor-trailers, trucks, school buses and other large vehicles could easily make the turn from eastbound River Road to new Westbard Ave., perhaps preventing some –but not all -- from turning onto old Westbard Avenue.**

But the realignment of new Westbard Avenue and the closure of old Westbard Avenue at River Road were not solidified until the sector plan was under final review by the Council. It had taken nearly two

years of negotiating with planners, developers, Planning Board and Council members and their staffs, before it was written into the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan.

Objections to the Closure

I know there are some residents in the Springfield community who would like to have old Westbard Avenue at River Road reopened while further study of traffic on many community roads including Springfield Drive, Ogden Road and Ridgefield Road, is done. This will only forestall the closure of old Westbard Avenue at River Road and result in more sleepless nights for the homeowners along the 5500 Westbard Avenue block.

Many of the residents supporting the re-opening of old Westbard Avenue at River Road live on streets in Springfield that were/are significantly impacted by cut-through traffic, including tractor-trailers, since the construction of the realignment of new Westbard Avenue began. For the last year and a quarter, these residents were/are suddenly experiencing the type of cut-through traffic old Westbard Avenue has been experiencing for at least a decade previously and they are unhappy about that. **They fear that if old Westbard Avenue at River Road continues to be closed, they will continue to get the cut-through traffic the Springfield community never had prior to the new Westbard realignment and redevelopment.**

However, **much of the cut-through traffic going through the Springfield community is a result of drivers not wanting to use the detour from the Westwood shopping center that has them traveling to Goldsboro Road.** Instead, many of these drivers cut through the Springfield community, turning left onto River Road at Springfield Drive or Ogden Road. I am confident that **much of this traffic will resume using new Westbard Avenue when it is opened from Massachusetts Avenue to River Road.**

Will a certain percentage of drivers continue to cut through Springfield streets? Probably. **Increased cut-through traffic may be inevitable given the increased development planned along new Westbard Avenue** – a 200-unit multi-family building; 70+ townhouses; a 115-unit senior living facility and another 30+ townhouses at the corner of Westbard Avenue and River Road with an entrance on old Westbard Avenue. This is a reality our community will have to live with as more housing comes to our area. **But if MCDOT reopens the intersection at old Westbard Avenue and River Road, the brunt of this cut-through traffic will end up on this one block, contrary to the compromises made when accepting the increased density under the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan.**

Increased Car & Truck Traffic

Residents of old Westbard Avenue will not just have to deal with an explosive increase in the number of cars that go through this block, but also in the number of trucks. **As MCDOT traffic studies have shown, from 2017 to 2020, the number of trucks that used old Westbard Avenue increased significantly.** In 2017, the total number of trucks traveling along both north and southbound old Westbard Avenue per week was 135. By 2020, this number had risen to 331 – nearly 2.5 times as many as three years prior. **This is despite signs limiting the G.V.W. of trucks, speed humps, no right turn signs during morning rush hour from eastbound River Road and a concrete island that directs (or attempts to direct) traffic to turn right only from northbound old Westbard Avenue.**

Even while new Westbard Avenue is under construction and the signs by River Road and old Westbard Avenue clearly say the street is only opened to local traffic, tractor-trailer drivers are still ignoring them and rumbling down this block only to find they can't turn around unless they damage county and private property (a practice that has been documented by residents).

If old Westbard Avenue is closed at the intersection with River Road, most of the people who will be affected by this closure will be people living outside our community who use that block as a "short-cut" from River Road to cut through to the shopping center or Massachusetts Avenue. We want these people to use the new Westbard Avenue intersection. Within our community, residents mainly use Ridgefield Road to get to Westbard Avenue and they will probably continue to use it as many of our streets actually border on or flow into this road.

As said earlier, **one of the main reasons for realigning new Westbard Avenue was to ensure that all trucks and school buses could safely negotiate the turn from eastbound River Road to new Westbard Avenue without turning into oncoming lanes of traffic.** Hopefully, the realignment has solved that problem. But the **realignment cannot 100 percent guarantee that trucks will follow that route unless old Westbard Avenue at River Road is closed.** Given the continued construction expected along new Westbard Avenue through 2026, followed by an increase in the residential and retail space available, the likelihood of construction vehicles, delivery trucks and tractor-trailers still using old Westbard Avenue, will increase exponentially. **This 5500 Westbard Avenue block is a single-family home residential street; it was never intended to be a truck bypass.**

Compliance with Vision Zero


When homes on this street were first built in the late 1950's, early 1960's, the street was closed to traffic at River Road, according to one long-time resident. When it was opened in 1962, when River Road was widened from two to four lanes from the Beltway to the D.C. border, no one anticipated GPS and other way-finding apps, nor the increased development in Westbard, Friendship Heights, downtown Bethesda and northwest D.C. and the resulting burgeoning population in Montgomery County, that has exposed this residential block to such increased traffic.

Some of the 24 families who live on old Westbard Avenue have lived there for decades. Others have moved in more recently. With nearly a dozen children living on the block, concern must be shown for their safety and their ability to safely get to school bus stops and to walk to the homes of their friends who live on their street and other streets in our community. **If MCDOT wants to ensure the county's Vision Zero policy for this block, it will only be possible if old Westbard Avenue is closed now to all but emergency vehicles at the intersection with River Road.**

Sincerely,

Phyllis R. Edelman

Phyllis R. Edelman


Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: Patricia E. Kolesar [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 3:31 PM
To: McCray, Tiara; Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher
Subject: Closure of Westbard Ave at River Road - OPPOSE

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Planning Dept:

I oppose the requested closure of Westbard Ave at River Road by a small group of residents acting on their own behalf and not at the service of the greater public who pays for the public roads.

At the very least, this is a highly premature request – especially because the Springfield neighborhood of 600+ homes (which is most directly affected by this closure request) has no idea at this time how the additional shopping center traffic will affect the general area.

Based on what I have seen of the construction of the “new Westbard Avenue/entryway to the shopping center,” the traffic lanes seem narrow, and will no doubt back-up quickly given the volume of traffic in the area. Frankly, we need MORE options for getting in and out of the neighborhood; and more options for getting to and from the shopping center – not fewer.

Further, public streets, by their very nature, are not meant to be private driveways for the exclusive service of a small cadre of residents who don’t like traffic. In any event, there are residents on that particular street who WANTED the Westbard development and who explicitly wrote letters in support of the development. They will get what they bargained for – increased traffic due to a large new development.

Please also recall that Leland Street in downtown Bethesda attempted to close their downtown Bethesda street in approximately 2017. The outcome: The residents on that street were ultimately told that “their” public street would not be closed to the public; but this decision was only reached AFTER the public uproar over the actual closure of Leland Street. In fact, after approximately two weeks, the decision to close Leland Street was reversed, and the street is currently subject to reasonable turning restrictions (based on the time of day). The Leland Street debacle should inform your decision regarding the requested Westbard Avenue closure. Therefore, rather than closing the public street, please institute reasonable turning restrictions on this public street.

Finally, you may recall that the Kenwood neighborhood (in the Westbard area) wanted to close access to its neighborhood public streets many years ago. Kenwood was also told NO, and they were given time-of-day turning restrictions from River Road into the their neighborhood as the compromise position (another precedent for your guidance).

I oppose this closure.

Patricia E. Kolesar, Westbard-area resident/Springfield neighborhood

Patricia E. Kolesar

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Peter Mitchell [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 23, 2023 1:55 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: AB 786

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray

I write in support of the permanent closure of Westbard Ave @ River Rd. Reasons:

1. MoCo has essentially promised that this would happen since 2016 and folks have relied on this promise;
2. The realignment of streets in that area will obviate the need for vehicles to use (old) Westbard;
3. Health and safety of 5500 block of Westbard residents will be negatively impacted if closure is not implemented.

Respectfully:

Peter A. Mitchell [REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Sklarew, Peter A. (TAX) [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 18, 2023 7:31 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Re: Comment Solicitation - AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave @ River Rd.)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

This communication is NOT on behalf of the Dept. of Justice and is just on behalf of myself and my spouse, Christina Sklarew. It says written comments should be submitted to you directly. Please advise if this email will qualify as a written comment or whether we must do something else.

We live at [REDACTED] and regularly shop at the Giant supermarket on Westbard which, as you know is being completely rebuilt and expanded and will be a major destination for grocery shopping from many around the same area. Closing the access to Westbard from River Road for the personal benefit of the landowner at that corner is simply insane and would reflect the County once again caving in to the interests of one to the detriment of the many.

In addition, it is positively against the environment and global warming because thousands of vehicles per day will have to travel much longer distances to reach the supermarket and adjacent shops. One alternative route will be to turn on Springfield and go the "back way" on Ridgefield and that engenders speed bumps and stop signs (burning more gasoline and using more brake pad materials). The residents on those streets deserve better treatment as well. And if you then close those streets except to local residents (which this will inevitably lead to), then folks will have to drive all the way down the hill on Little Falls and back up the hill on Westbard. Not only will that put tons more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere but also Little Falls is quite often badly backed up already there.

The fact that the County will even consider this is just outrageous.

Peter & Christina Sklarew

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20817

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From: McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 11:07 PM
To: McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] RE: Comment Solicitation - AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave @ River Rd.)

My sincere apologies, please find the below-mentioned attachments copied on this correspondence.

Thank you,

Tiara McCray
Acting Chief, Property Acquisition

Department of Transportation
Division of Transportation Engineering
Property Acquisition Section

100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878
240-777-7257 (o)
240-720-7862 (m)



Stay connected



From: McCray, Tiara
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 4:01 PM
To: McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Comment Solicitation - AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave @ River Rd.)
Importance: High

Good afternoon,

Please be advised that the Property Acquisition Section of the Montgomery County Department of Transportation (MDOT), pursuant to Section 49-62 of the Montgomery County Code (2014) as amended, the County Executive or his Designee shall conduct a virtual Public Hearing to consider an application from 5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association (the "Applicant"), for the permanent closure of a public right of way at the [northwestern terminus of Westbard Avenue at River Road](#) in the Westbard area of Bethesda.

The Applicant, through their petition, request permanent closure of the public right of way, pursuant to the [2016 Westbard Sector Plan](#), from all vehicular traffic, including emergency vehicles, at the intersection. The petition also requests that a temporary closure remain in place until a permanent closure can be installed. Attached, please find the following information concerning the application:

1. Executive Order No. 136-23
2. Abandonment Petition (*Exhibits available upon request*)

In order to protect and maintain the health of the County's citizens and workforce, the County Executive or his Designee shall conduct this Hearing via the internet-based platform Zoom™ on **Tuesday, September 19, 2023, at 2:00 PM.**



Scanning the QR Code below with your mobile device or following the [link](#), will direct you to the registration form required to participate in the Hearing.

Completing the registration form will include parties on a mailing list to receive an electronic invitation to the Hearing on the morning of the Hearing. Registration will close on **Friday, September 15, 2023, at 5:00 PM.** It is important to note that written statements carry equal weight as oral statements provided at the Hearing. All comments should be submitted to me directly so they can be added to the record and reported to the County Executive through the transmittal of the Hearing Officer's report and recommendation for final consideration.

Interpreter services will be provided upon request with five business days advance notice.

Thank you,

Tiara McCray
Acting Chief, Property Acquisition

Department of Transportation
Division of Transportation Engineering
Property Acquisition Section
100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878
240-777-7257 (o)
240-720-7862 (m)



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For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Conklin, Christopher
Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:28 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: FW: Opposition to Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road

Christopher Conklin, Director
Montgomery County Department of Transportation
240-777-7198

From: Rachel Janger [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:27 AM
To: Paylor, Michael L. <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>; Marc Elrich <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: board@springfield20816.com
Subject: Opposition to Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Mssrs. Paylor, Conklin, Friedson and Elrich,

As a resident of Ridgefield Road, I strongly object to the proposal to close Westbard Avenue at River Road. If Westbard Avenue at River Road were to remain closed once Ridgefield Road is reopened, Ridgefield Road and the adjacent cross-streets will see a significant increase in cut-through traffic, just as it did prior to the temporary closure of Ridgefield at Westbard.

The reasons Westbard residents are seeking relief from cut-through traffic are equally (if not more) applicable to residents on and near Ridgefield Road. Yet by requesting permanent closure of Westbard at River, Westbard residents are seeking to unfairly place ALL of the traffic burden on residents on and near Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive and Ogden Road, as well as Newington and Albia Roads.

Public safety considerations alone should dissuade MDOT from closing Westbard. Over 40 school aged children live along Ridgefield Road between Springfield and Westbard, and countless more walk daily to bus stops on Ridgefield Road. Ridgefield and its nearby cross-streets have three bus stops (none are on Westbard between Ridgefield and River) and closure would again place numerous school children in the middle of this unsafe traffic pattern. Elementary school children walk to Woodacres Elementary School along Ridgefield Road and its cross streets as well as along Springfield Drive and Cromwell Drive. Pedestrian and bicycle

Ridgefield Road is **not wide enough** to handle such traffic as **it is barely 27 feet wide** and contains several curves and hills – whereas Westbard is a **four-lane 45 feet wide** straight “AVENUE.” It is by far the widest street in the Springfield neighborhood. Yet the closure of Westbard at River Road will keep traffic off of this significantly safer Avenue and force traffic onto narrower winding roads where pedestrians will be at significant risk.

In addition, there are hundreds of townhomes and apartments to be built in the coming years in the Westbard construction. The residents of these homes will require street access to River Road, and, if there is traffic going into and out of the Westbard Square shopping area, they will face significant delays when trying to reach a main thoroughfare -- River Road -- if there is no access off of the existing Westbard Avenue.

In order to ensure that ALL residents of Springfield on roads that will be affected by cut-through traffic heading to and from Westbard Square are as safe as possible, I request that:

1. WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN PERMANENTLY OPEN AT RIVER ROAD, OR
2. AT A MINIMUM, WESTBARD AVENUE REMAIN OPEN AT RIVER ROAD PENDING A FULL EVALUATION OF TRAFFIC AND POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL ROAD SAFETY MEASURES, WHICH EVALUATION SHALL BE CONDUCTED NO EARLIER THAN THE COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE WESTBARD SQUARE SHOPPING CENTER AND TOWNHOMES, AND
3. IN ANY EVENT, TRAFFIC SAFETY MEASURES BE IMPLEMENTED TO SLOW AND DETER TRAFFIC IN THE SPRINGFIELD NEIGHBORHOOD

Thank You,
Rachel S. Janger

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816
[REDACTED]



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 10:33 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Closure of old Westbard Avenue-River Road Intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Ms. McCray -

My name is Ron Marshall and I live [REDACTED] in Bethesda.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Ron Marshall

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20817

McCray, Tiara

From: Ryan McMahon [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:15 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Westbard

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Ryan McMahon, and I live at [REDACTED], Bethesda MD

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Ryan McMahon
[REDACTED], Bethesda MD

McCray, Tiara

From: Ricardo Riemer [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 2:29 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Re: AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave. @ River Rd.) - Public Hearing Invitation

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Good afternoon, thank you for the link to the meeting. Unfortunately due to a recent conflict I will not be able to participate.

So as a written record, I am opposed to the closure. There is a large development coming on Westbard and reducing the optional means of ingress and egress to the area is not prudent. Perhaps after the re-development of Westbard reaches full occupancy and its impact on traffic patterns can be assessed, the issue can be re-considered.

Thank you.

Ricardo Riemer
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

On Monday, September 18, 2023 at 02:21:03 PM EDT, McCray, Tiara <tiara.mccray@montgomerycountymd.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon,

Thank you for registering to participate in the Public Hearing AB 786 (Westbaard Ave. @ River Rd.) to consider an application from 5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association (the "Applicant") for the permanent closure of a public right of way at the northwestern terminus of Westbard Avenue at River Road in the Westbard area of Bethesda.

Several ground rules should be considered before joining tomorrow's Hearing; please review the below items carefully:

- Please ensure that your phones are silenced and background noise is minimal to mitigate interruptions during the Hearing.
- Those who have identified as being interested in offering comments during the Hearing will need to limit their remarks to **1 minute**.

Please note that equal weight is given to written comments included in the Record.

McCray, Tiara

From: R. Shaibani [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 9:02 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Fwd: IN FAVOR OF permanent 5500 block of Westbard Ave closure

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

>
>
>
> Ms McCray,
>
>
> Our family of six has resided at Westbard for approximately 10 years. Over the course of those years we've had many pedestrian/vehicle close calls while simply walking down the street. This was due to the multiple speeding and careless drivers who travel on our block not to mention the numerous oversized trucks who illegally cut through our street on their way to the Giant area. It became so serious that after two traffic studies done, MC traffic officials confirmed what we experience on a daily basis which led them to make changes on our street and also voted to close it after the new intersection is complete.
>
> It's very frustrating to constantly explain our street situation over and over again especially due to the fact that our own neighborhood SCA board doesn't support keeping our small street safe! Our block of homes has been impacted directly EVERY DAY by this ongoing construction and will continue for the few years! My family and our Westbard Ave neighbors have learned to live with the constant but TEMPORARY noise/construction traffic and will remain patient and eager for its completion!
>
> The "new Westbard" road will be designed to accommodate the higher traffic volumes therefore no reason for our street to be used as cut through to the new area.
>
> We are very disappointed and quite surprised that the SCA board would oppose changes that would keep our block of residents safe! If the board continues their opposition and influences the planning board to change direction and open our street to River rd for cut through for traffic, it would be a terrible mistake and would have a negative and possibly devastating impact for the safety of the residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Ave.
>
> Raquel and Sanan Shaibani
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Raymond Tuchman [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 10:35 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Application to close 5500 Block of Westbard at River Road
Attachments: Outlook-qovrdkof; Outlook-lsgx22bo; Outlook-4lxd4kup; Outlook-4odt0n43; Outlook-0kifmngl; Outlook-pelxyzld; Outlook-ey1uwsf2; Outlook-jfdyqkff; Outlook-q5iofz0o; Outlook-bdshwsu1; Outlook-n0ghw13b; Outlook-2ln3r1y1; Outlook-fmcyt5rq; Outlook-ocetu0oq; Outlook-fwzui4ie; Outlook-zabmddjv; Outlook-fgkbl2hh; Outlook-0tp5k0hd

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I am a resident of the Springfield community and have concerns about the application by the 5500 Block of Westbard to permanently close Westbard at River Road.

As a resident on Kirkwood Drive in the community, we have had significant additional traffic with the construction and existing closing of Westbard Ave.

I am concerned that the traffic will not return to normal levels once the construction is completed and if Westbard is closed.

We all need to share in the traffic issues we have in our community equally. We all knew what traffic issues we would have when we purchased our respected homes. For a few to want to block off their street that would then increase traffic on others would not be right and considerate to the community.

My suggestion would be to keep the street open just like it is suppose to be. When the new shopping center is complete, and all the new roads are open then a study can be done.

This is my thought. Thank you for reading

Raymond Tuchman

CEO

Experis Technology Group, Inc.

[REDACTED]

www.experistg.com



McCray, Tiara

From: Sahar Javadi [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 11:40 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Petition for 5500 WESTBARD block

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Sahar Javadi and I live at [REDACTED].

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment was completed. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Sahar Javadi
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: Jan Lilja [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 1:00 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher
Subject: Document submission for Hearing Record on Westbard Closure Application (AB 786)
Attachments: SCA Letter to Planning Board 07.26.2023.pdf

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I am submitting for the Hearing record on Westbard Closure (AB 786) the letter that the Springfield Civic Association submitted to the Montgomery County Planning Board for its public hearing on this issue on July 26, 2023.

Thank you,

Jan Lilja

President, Springfield Civic Association

Via Email

July 26, 2023

Artie Harris, Chair and Members

Montgomery County Planning Board

SUBJECT: Proposed Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road by the Residents of the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue

Dear Montgomery County Planning Board and Staff,

I write in regard to the request to permanently close the existing vehicular access to and from Westbard Avenue at River Road and your plans to discuss it tomorrow, Thursday, July 27, 2023 at 10:00 AM. I write on behalf of the Springfield Civic Association (SCA). It is important to note that this block of Westbard Avenue is within the defined boundaries of the SCA and many of its residents are dues paying members of the SCA. As of today, this block of Westbard Avenue is still part of the Springfield Civic Association.

The SCA very much appreciates the perspective of residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue and respects the rights of any particular block or street to organize, but the Planning Board must be aware that no other Civic Association speaks for the Springfield neighborhood.

On the subject of closing Westbard Avenue, the Westbard Sector Plan provided that “action on this closure is predicated on the submittal of a formal neighborhood application for street closure...” To the extent that a formal application was made, it was certainly not made with the SCA’s knowledge or involvement. For context, the Springfield neighborhood contains approximately 650 households. The 5500 block of Westbard Avenue contains approximately 25.

This proposal has major implications for many other individuals besides the residents of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. Over the past year, as construction of the new road proceeded, Springfield neighborhood roads which are narrow and unsuited to handle high volumes of traffic, witnessed exponential increases in traffic volume with very serious safety consequences. A closure of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue will also affect other residents of Westbard Avenue and the Wood Acres neighborhood as well. These consequences must be studied.

We also want to note that, according to the Sector Plan, closure should not occur until the existing Westbard Road/River Road intersection is realigned. Currently, the road is not realigned. Later this fall, the realigned road will only partially reopen. The new Westbard road will still remain cut-off from the Springfield neighborhood. That connection will not be restored until early 2024 when Ridgefield Road is reopened. Any traffic studies that are conducted prior to this reopening will not capture the true implications of a permanent closure of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

We are very glad that the Planning Board will be holding a public hearing on this issue, which will allow all neighborhood residents and affected individuals to testify on this issue. However, we believe consideration of closing this road is premature and unwarranted at this time. We would encourage the Board to delay the public hearing and any studies that may need to be conducted until after the new Westbard Avenue has fully reopened so that ALL neighborhood residents, the MCDOT, the police and the Planning Board will have a better sense of how the new traffic patterns are operating and can provide more informed testimony to the Planning Board.

Respectfully,

Jan Lija

President

Springfield Civic Association

McCray, Tiara

From: SV Martin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 4:24 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: AB-786 - Petition to permanently close Westbard Ave at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray,

My family has been living in our home at [REDACTED] since 1976. In the 47 years we have seen the quality of life and the condition of the street deteriorate due to the heavy volume of traffic, primarily from illegal cut-through commuter traffic in the mornings and evenings. I remember when we first moved into our house and we could safely play in our yards, visit our neighbors and enter/exit our driveways without the risk of getting hit by a truck or car speeding down our street.

In the mornings, daily commuters come down River Rd into DC and illegally use Westbard Avenue as a cut through to Mass Ave. This flow of illegal turns occurs despite a sign on River Rd prohibiting right turns onto Westbard during the morning rush-hour. We occasionally have police at the intersection to stop cars that have made the illegal turn from River Rd. You can probably review the records on the occasions that the police are there and how many tickets they give out during the morning commute hours. We understand that having police sitting on our street daily to enforce the traffic pattern is not realistic and we would all be better served if they spent their time elsewhere. Even with the occasional police presence and the signage it has not deterred the commuters. I have seen commuters when the road was first closed off to traffic move the temporary barriers to make the turn onto Westbard or the left turn onto River Rd from Westbard.

During the evening these same commuters take a right turn onto Westbard Ave from Mass Ave and then ignore the sign at the intersection of Westbard Ave and River Rd prohibiting a very dangerous left turn onto River Rd. This poses a significant risk to the traffic in both directions on River Rd. which is why the left-hand turn from Westbard Ave to River Rd was deemed illegal. Without closing the intersection completely, we will still have commuters make the illegal turns.

Development of the Westbard shopping center is going to include construction of hundreds of new residential units with several hundred or more new residents. The final development will include apartments, townhomes, and an assisted living facility. The newly realigned Westbard was specifically designed to handle the significant increase of traffic volume heading to/from River Road that will come from the new development. There is no good reason to keep the original Westbard and River intersection open as it would not serve a purpose with the new realigned Westbard.

We fully expect that even with the realigned Westbard Ave, at the end of the construction that there will still be countless commuters who would rather use the original Westbard cut thru to avoid a traffic light on their way to Mass Ave. if it is available.

We appreciate the efforts that the community and local government have implemented in the past to address the traffic issues and the dangerous conditions, but they are not enough. We have an opportunity to better the quality of life, safety for our family and our neighbors by voting to close the original Westbard Avenue at the intersection with River Rd.

We hope the decision makers will vote yes in support of our AB-786 (Permanent Closure of the intersection of River Road and Westbard Avenue) petition, confirming that the safety of the residents of the 5500 Westbard Ave block is compelling enough to close the “old” dangerous Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection. Closing the intersection will eliminate dangerous truck and car cut-through traffic driving through our block while only adding ~20 seconds for the commuters to use the “new” and better designed Westbard Ave & River Rd intersection with stoplights and permanent turn lanes.

Sincerely,
Vicenta & Sandra Martin



McCray, Tiara

From: Shawn Wang [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 9:22 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Help to protect this neighborhood

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Shawn Wang, and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Xiang "Shawn" Wang
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Tara Marie Egan [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 8:27 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Expressing my support for the permanent closure of the Westbard Ave-River Road intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray and colleagues,

My name is Tara Egan and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Thank you for time. Sincerely,

Tara

Tara Egan
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Ted Frank [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 11:57 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Closure of Westbard At River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I do not live on Westbard but I fully support the request. There was little need for that portion of Westbard to connect to River, but with the reconfiguration of Westbard as part of the shopping center modernization, traffic coming toward the shopping center from Westbard will make the intersection of Ridgefield and Westbard more dangerous.

Theodor Frank

McCray, Tiara

From: Tara Sheehan [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:29 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: closure of the northwestern terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Tara Sheehan, and I live at [REDACTED].

I am strongly in support of the proposed permanent closure of the northwestern terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

My daughter has a very close friend who lives on that block, and we do not want to have to worry about her physical safety when she has playdates in Westbard.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this petition for permanent road closure. It's the right thing to do.

Sincerely,

Tara Sheehan
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Stout Jr, Thomas A <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, August 11, 2023 4:37 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Proposed Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

The applicants have correctly stated in their application that the Westbard Avenue intersection has for many years been an often-used thoroughfare for traffic between River Road and Massachusetts Avenue, including the Westbard Shopping Center. The so-called safety issue is pure invention. The applicants have provided no evidence of any safety issues, despite the many years this intersection has been open.

Indeed, the applicants have provided no basis for the proposed closure, other than they would prefer to eliminate traffic on the single block on which their houses are located. Were this to be considered the criteria for a road closing, there would be no open streets in the County. Not only is the application totally without merit, but it would encourage application for other disruptive road closures for purely private benefit throughout the County.

The application should be denied.

Tom
Thomas A. Stout, Jr.
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

Any advice in this communication is limited to the conclusions specifically set forth herein and is based on the completeness and accuracy of the stated facts, assumptions and/or representations included. In rendering our advice, we may consider tax authorities that are subject to change, retroactively and/or prospectively, and any such changes could affect the validity of our advice. We will not update our advice for subsequent changes or modifications to the laws and regulations, or to the judicial and administrative interpretations thereof. The advice or other information in this document was prepared for the sole benefit of KPMG's client and may not be relied upon by any other person or organization. KPMG accepts no responsibility or liability in respect of this document to any person or organization other than KPMG's client.

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McCray, Tiara

From: Vincent Fang [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 2:06 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Support for closing the old Westbard Ave to the River road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi, my name is Vincent Fang. I am living at [REDACTED], Potomac, MD 20854.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Vincent Fang
[REDACTED]
Potomac, MD 20854

McCray, Tiara

From: William Collins/USA [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 12:41 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov; Conklin, Christopher
Subject: 5500 block Westbard Ave

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is William Collins, and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

William Collins
[REDACTED]

William M. Collins
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Conklin, Christopher
Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 8:58 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Fwd: Our support for the closure of the River Road meeting the end of the Westbard avenue

Chris Conklin
MCDOT Director

Sent from a mobile device

From: susan zz [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 11:59:15 PM
To: Conklin, Christopher <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Our support for the closure of the River Road meeting the end of the Westbard avenue

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: susan zzz [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, Sep 15, 2023 at 11:58 PM
Subject: Our support for the closure of the River Road meeting the end of the Westbard avenue
To: <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>

We are homeowners and residents at [REDACTED], Bethesda, having lived here for nearly 29 years.

We are writing to express our strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection.

Our petition/support for the closure is not solely based on our self-interests, of course from an individual's point of view, everyone everywhere wants to restrict the access to their street; no denial this closure will benefit us - residents on this street. However this petition is mainly and critically based on a strived neutral stand, we look at the benefits/costs of the two options' impacts, not just on us but also on our neighboring communities, the public transportation and public safety. **Our review leads us to conclude that overall, the benefits of the closure outweighs the costs. It not only benefits us but will also be a very positive contributor to the public interest. This is based on the following essential facts and logic.**

The key fact is that there is a defined volume of traffic to reach one destination, it starts from one road, then has two options into two roads for a very short distance (those two short distances of roads have no practical values to anyone but those who live on that short street - our part of the old Westbard), then those two roads have to join again into one road to reach the only destination. Mathematically, is it more efficient to Maximize the traffic on a main artery and minimize the traffic on a secondary road (efficiency comes from the less frequent stops)? Or is it more efficient to let the

traffic equally or randomly split into two roads and then meet again to merge into one to reach the destination - then results in a lot of stops at the meeting point in this case. Anyone with common sense can figure that out - max the main artery road's traffic flow if the traffic on the secondary roads don't mind waiting longer. Our planners seem to have fully understood that applied it into their planning, it appears that is the major purpose/benefits of realigning the River to New Westbard directly and get rid of the old intersection, and minimize the cutting traffic from our street through less stops.

Here is our situation. **The new Westbard Avenue and realignment of Ridgefield is designed for the direct traffic flow from River into the new Westbard avenue into the Shopping Center, eliminating the intersection at the Ridgefield and Old Westbard.** People coming from our street end of the River, before or after the alignment, without choice, have to meet the traffic that is coming directly from the River. Because cutting through our street to reach the shopping center or from the River directly to the newly aligned Westbard have almost the same distance, there is no time wasted or inconveniences for the people who used to cut through our street to reach the shopping center. Furthermore, without the cutting traffic from our street, the traffic directly turning into the newly aligned Westbard will flow much more smoothly with less frequent stops required due to traffic from our street. **Conclusion**, positive contribution to facilitate the flow of traffic directly from the River into the realigned Westbard due to less frequent stops; no negative impact on the public transportation or inconvenience to the travelers.

Another benefit to the public is traffic safety. First of all, travelers cutting into our street from the River side is often a safety hazard to our street residents, often children - as we have witnessed so often the high speed of entering traffic from the River, despite speed bumps. More importantly, the exit traffic from our street into the River is a very very dangerous thing, accidents waiting to happen. Traffic entering our street from the Shopping center side has only one purpose and possibility - to turn left into River (it is useless to turn right into River because there is nothing between those two points of River. Those traffic always try to cut into left - a westward high speed traffic flow. It slows the traffic and also becomes a danger to themselves and others. They could more efficiently and safely go on to the River through the newly aligned Westbard, instead of cutting through our street.

Based on these facts, we can conclude that any rational person will be better off using the newly aligned Westbard and River, instead of cutting through our small segment of the old Westbard to reach the shopping center or exit to River.

There are inconveniences: the Closure will cause some inconveniences for us who live on the street or Ridgefield - we have to wait much longer than before for the traffic light to get into the newly aligned Westbard to go to the Shopping center or to River (because the green traffic light must have much longer period to the major artery of newly aligned Westbard than our secondary streets - deducted from the size of the new Westbard-River. However, that inconvenience will be more than compensated by the safety we will gain through the Closure, therefore gladly accepted.

Why people who live on Ridgefield or in Springfield will oppose the Closure is puzzling. Drivers getting on Ridgefield want to go to the Shopping Center or to the River or to Mass. This cohort of drivers won't need to come to the side of the River into our street if they make rational calculations in terms of time and convenience. Drivers used to cut our street won't go to cut through the Springfield because that is much more cumbersome than going through the newly aligned Westbard. It is difficult to imagine the basis/facts of their opposition. It might be the general presumption that one street's closure in a neighborhood is equal to the dumping of more traffic on the other streets, therefore might negatively impact them? It might be true in some cases, but not this one. One needs to look at the facts and the benefits/costs of each route's option to arrive at a conclusion.

If the Closure of our street - to River road has a positive impact on traffic flow, transportation safety, our street residents' safety and quality of life - we can clearly deduct that are the purpose and calculation from the planners' design - why can't it be done?

Therefore this petition/support for the Closure is not solely a self-interest endeavor, it is also beneficial to public safety and transportation efficiency without identified sufferers.

Please take a fact based approach to do review/analysis on the opposition/ support, approve this Closure and fulfill the promise made by the county in the Master Plan.

Thanks for your attention!

Xinsheng Zeng and Hengfu Zou
[REDACTED]



For more helpful Cybersecurity Resources, visit: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/cybersecurity>

McCray, Tiara

From: Zhongren Cao [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 12:37 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Support permanent Closure of old Westbard Ave. River Road Interaction.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Ms McCray,

My name is Zhongren Cao, and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Thank you so much for your time and attention. We are looking forward to your support!

Zhongren Cao

McCray, Tiara

From: Zach Mann [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 11:00 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Approve Permanent Closure of Westbard

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Zachary Mann, and I live at [REDACTED]

I am strongly in SUPPORT of the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at the old intersection with River Road.

My son regularly has playdates with his cousins who live on that block, and I would like the county to protect them from dangerous aggressive drivers who cut through this residential area to get to the shopping center.

Please approve this permanent closure.

Zachary Mann
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Heather Coleman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 10:26 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Heather Coleman, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Heather Coleman
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Matt DeLellis [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 9:29 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Matt DeLellis, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Matt DeLellis
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Kim Allman [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 9:22 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Paylor, Michael L.; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To thee Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Kim Allman, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Kim Allman
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

--
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: jhanzo [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 8:11 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Jeffrey Han, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Jeffrey Han
[REDACTED]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network: My name is Jeffrey Han, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood. The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection. Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic. Thank you, Jeffrey Han [REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Chad Bishop [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 1, 2023 7:53 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: River and Westbard

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray,

I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood in Bethesda, and I'm writing in support of my neighbors, on Westbard Avenue near River Road, who seek to retain the closure of the intersection at the end of their residential street.

Since southbound travelers on River Road will (very soon, I hope!) be able to turn right on Brookside Drive (one block from Westbard Avenue) into the Westbard shopping center, there is no need to have this residential block experience the increased car speed (with associated danger to pedestrians) and traffic that will come from re-opening the intersection.

Thanks very much for your attention to our neighborhood and our traffic and pedestrian safety issues.

Best,

Chad Bishop

McCray, Tiara

From: Elisabeth Doyle [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 11:50 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Elisabeth Doyle, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Elisabeth Doyle
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Donald Turnbull [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 3:46 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson, Andrew; Marc Elrich
Subject: Re: Closing of Westbard Avenue at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

We are residents of the Springfield area of Bethesda in Montgomery County and strongly object to permanently closing Westbard Avenue at River Road at this time. Given the traffic mess caused by Westbard construction and the fact that a lot more construction will follow the initial openings, it is far too soon to make a decision on a permanent road closure. There will be many more residents on Westbard once the planned town houses are built, and they should have a say in what happens with the road on which they will live.

If Westbard is closed at River Road, there will continue to be an unreasonable amount of cut through traffic, especially when the town houses and planned retirement home are built. Drivers to these will cut through the rest of the neighborhood instead of going directly one block to their destination.

All this traffic is a major safety issue in an area with many children, pets, walkers and joggers, and school bus stops. Our streets are narrow and can be steep and winding in places. We live at the corner of Ridgefield and Ogden Roads, and we often see drivers blow through the four way stop signs or block the intersection to get in line to exit from Ogden onto River Road.

Another safety issue is that emergency vehicles would have one less access route to the shopping area and the retirement home. With many more residents and stores, emergencies can be expected to happen more often.

We fervently request that any decision on closing Westbard Avenue at River Road be delayed until the planned construction is complete, people have moved into all the new housing, and the traffic impact can be studied as a whole regarding the impact on the entire neighborhood.

Barbara and Donald Turnbull, [REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Cindy Mann [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 4:31 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Intersection of Westbard Ave. and River Rd.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Good afternoon,

I live on the 5500 block of Westbard Ave, and I am the mother of three children: Kamryn, 13; Cato, 11; and Milo, 9. I'm writing to encourage you to permanently close the dangerous intersection of River Rd and Westbard Ave.

The block has been a dead end since the Westbard Detour Plan started, and it has made life so much better for our family. Because most of the houses on our side of Westbard Ave back up to a hill, the front yard is the only place for my children to play outside. They've been taking full advantage of the River Rd. intersection being closed and playing pickleball, baseball and football in front of our house, which often leads to them running into Westbard Ave. We don't have to worry about our children being hurt because the only people who drive down Westbard Ave. now are our neighbors who live there.

If our road reopens to traffic on both ends, we will see a resumption of 1,000+ cars and trucks per day zooming down our street to get to and from River Road. My children will be banned from playing outside for fear of getting hit by a car.

The intersection of River Rd. and Westbard Ave. is a dangerous one, and reopening it will negatively impact the lives of everyone in my family.

Please close this intersection permanently once the new road opens.

Thank you for your consideration,
Cindy

--

Cindy Mann
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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Please approve the closure as endorsed by the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan.

Matthew MAURY

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

[REDACTED]

Email Address

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Carolina Claver

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Name



Address



Email Address

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DENIZ SUBASI

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Robin Overby

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

Email Address

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Bryan Connor

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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ERIC W. WALTON

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

[REDACTED]

Email Address

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Reed GARDELLA

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Virginia Costello
Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Rachel Louderback
Name

[Redacted]

[Redacted]
Email Address

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Jon and Halie Heintz

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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MATT DELELLIS

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

Email Address

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Heather Coleman

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

Email Address

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James Seever

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

[REDACTED]

Email Address

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N



Address



Email Address

5

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Jeffrey Han
Name

[Redacted]
Address

[Redacted]
Email Address

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SUDEESH KRISHNAN

Name

Address

Email Address

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Jill Lindstrom

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

[Redacted Signature]

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Joyce Hartman
Name

[Redacted]
Address

[Redacted]
Email Address

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Gayle Steeby

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Email Address

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James Simon

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Mikki Blume

Name


Address


Email Address

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Cynthia Werth

Name


Address


Email Address

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Name



Address



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Jack Gilpatrick

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

Email Address

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JEFFREY HAINES
Name

[REDACTED]
Address

[REDACTED]
Email Address

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Catherine Padley

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Lois G. Hall

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

[REDACTED]

Email Address

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Dan Geldon

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Chris McGlow

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Name



Address



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AMY FORMAN

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

[REDACTED]

Email Address

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Kim Allman

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Email Address

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Margaret H. Hewich

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Jarrold Gillam

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

Email Address

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Matthew Soure

Name



Address



Email Address

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Nancy H. White
Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Matthew Skancke

Name

[Redacted]

Address

[Redacted]

Email Address

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Stacy Tucker

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

[REDACTED]

Email Address

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ANDREW BENNER

Name

[Redacted Address Line 1]

Address

[Redacted Address Line 2]

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Address

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CHAS LEE

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

[REDACTED]

Email Address

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Geo Bouma
Name

[Redacted]
Address

[Redacted]
Email Address

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Janice D'Aray

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

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Address



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JOAN MAGAGNA

Name

[REDACTED]

Address

Email Address

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Please approve the closure as endorsed by the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan.

Mary Bissell

Name

[Redacted Address]

Address

[Redacted Email Address]

Email Address

McCray, Tiara

From: Benjamin Mann [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 10:22 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: AB 786: Final documents for public record
Attachments: County Council Staff Report recommending closure of Westbard block (Relevant pages 8 and 9).pdf; 345 foot cul-de-sac.PNG; Westbard - Hammerhead Turnaround.PNG

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Tiara:

I'd like to submit a few final documents for the public record, along with these explanatory notes:

- 1) The full county council staff report which originally recommended including the compromise language in the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan, and which explained why the permanent street closure had to wait until the road realignment completion. I'd recommend tagging it to note that pages 8 and 9 are the only relevant pages, given that it's a very long document.
- 2) The attached image "345 foot cul-de-sac.PNG". A fire accessible cul-de-sac requires a 110' diameter circle within the public right of way. 90' of pavement from curb-to-curb, plus 10' along the outer perimeter. I used MAtlas to demonstrate that the existing public right of way can accommodate this. MAtlas doesn't allow for diameter displays, but it does allow circumference displays, and a circle with a diameter of 110' has a circumference of 345'.
- 3) The attached image "Westbard - Hammerhead Turnaround.PNG". A 140' x 20' hammerhead turnaround is fire accessible, per Dr Marie LaBaw. This image shows a hammerhead of those dimensions fitting in the right-of-way. MAtlas can only display the total perimeter. $140 + 140 + 20 + 20 = 320$.

I'm sure you're getting bombarded with last-minute additions to the public record, and I'm sorry to keep adding to the queue.

---Ben

Should The 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue Be Closed Immediately and Without Further Study

An objective assessment of the facts



Several claims have been made by the applicant, which are false and misleading

- Claim 1: This intersection is dangerous and must be closed
- Claim 2: Westbard Avenue Experiences extreme cut-through traffic.
- Claim 3: Closing Westbard Avenue will not harm the rest of Springfield.
- Claim 4: When the realigned road (now called Brookside Dr.) is opened, traffic will not cut through the Springfield neighborhood.
- Claim 5: There is a 5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association

Claim 1: This intersection is dangerous and must be closed

Crash data for this intersection is not noteworthy. 6 nearby intersections had 2-3 times as many accidents. Westbard Ave @ River Rd. is just an “average” intersection for this neighborhood.



Labels Reflect Number of Accidents over the last 8 years using Montgomery County Data

This intersection also did not have any severe accidents, as designated by Montgomery County, nor did it have any bicyclist or pedestrian accidents.

- Severe Crash(s)
- Fatalities
- Pedestrian/Bike incidents
- DUI (Non Local Driver)

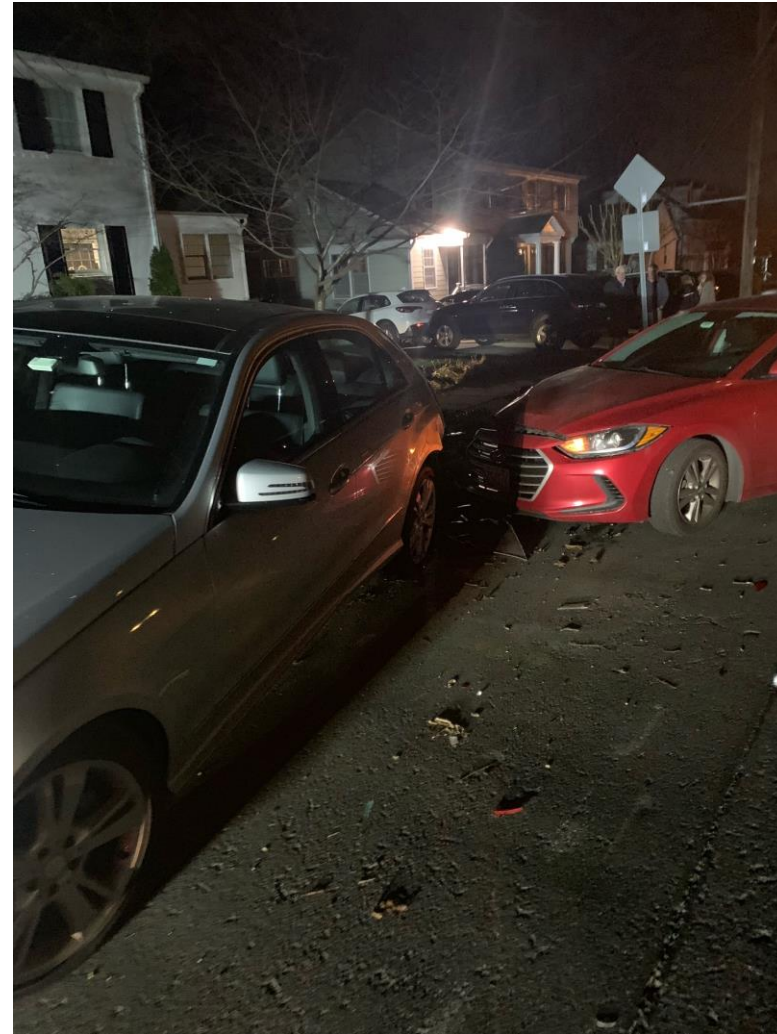
Subject intersection



Images from two of these accidents in the last 8 months



Intersection of Ogden Road and River Road, September 2023
A far more dangerous intersection



Ridgefield Road, February 2023
A “cut-through” driver totaled 2 cars on a narrow residential road. This was a DUI with a concealed weapon in the vehicle. This occurred at the same location as two MCPS bus stops.

Statements about the Westbard Avenue and River Road Intersection:

“There have been countless accidents at this intersection.”

“Dozens of collisions occurred when drivers ignored the clear signage stating that it is illegal to turn left from Westbard Ave onto River Road.”

-The residents of the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue

Reality:

There is nothing significant about the number of accidents at this intersection, nor their severity. In addition to keeping track of the number of accidents, Montgomery County keeps track of severity. While several other intersections in our community have witnessed Severe or even Fatal accidents, including River Rd. and Springfield Dr., River Rd. and Ogden Rd., and Massachusetts Ave. and Osceola Rd. None of the accidents at Westbard Avenue and River Road were considered severe.

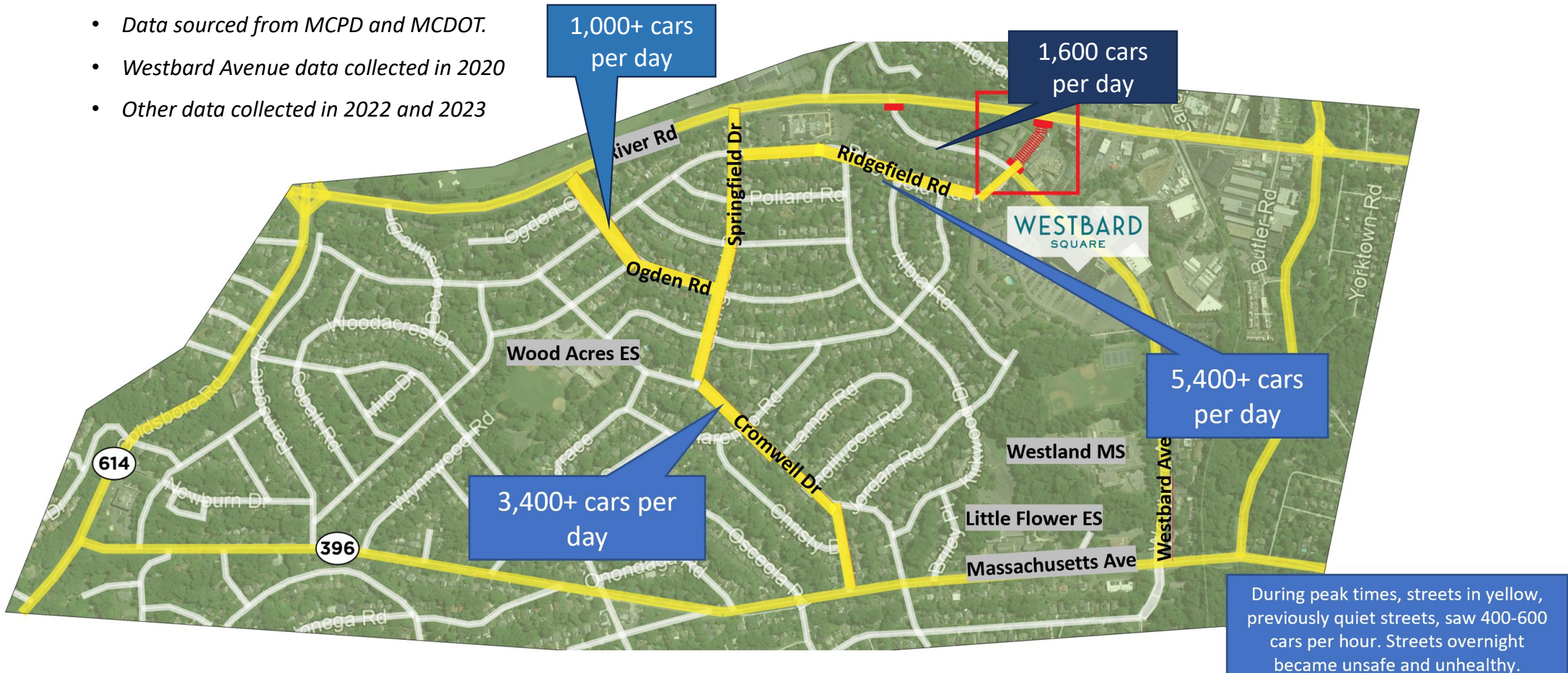
Claim 2: Westbard Avenue
Experiences extreme cut-through
traffic.

Reality: Traffic volumes on the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue are a fraction of the volumes experienced in the rest of the Springfield Neighborhood.

- In a traffic study conducted by Montgomery County DOT in 2020, traffic weekday volume on the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue averaged less than 1,600 cars per day.
- In 2022, after the road closure, traffic counts from Montgomery County Police Department revealed the following volumes:
 - Ridgefield Road: est. 4,500 cars per day
 - Cromwell Road: est. 3,400 cars per day

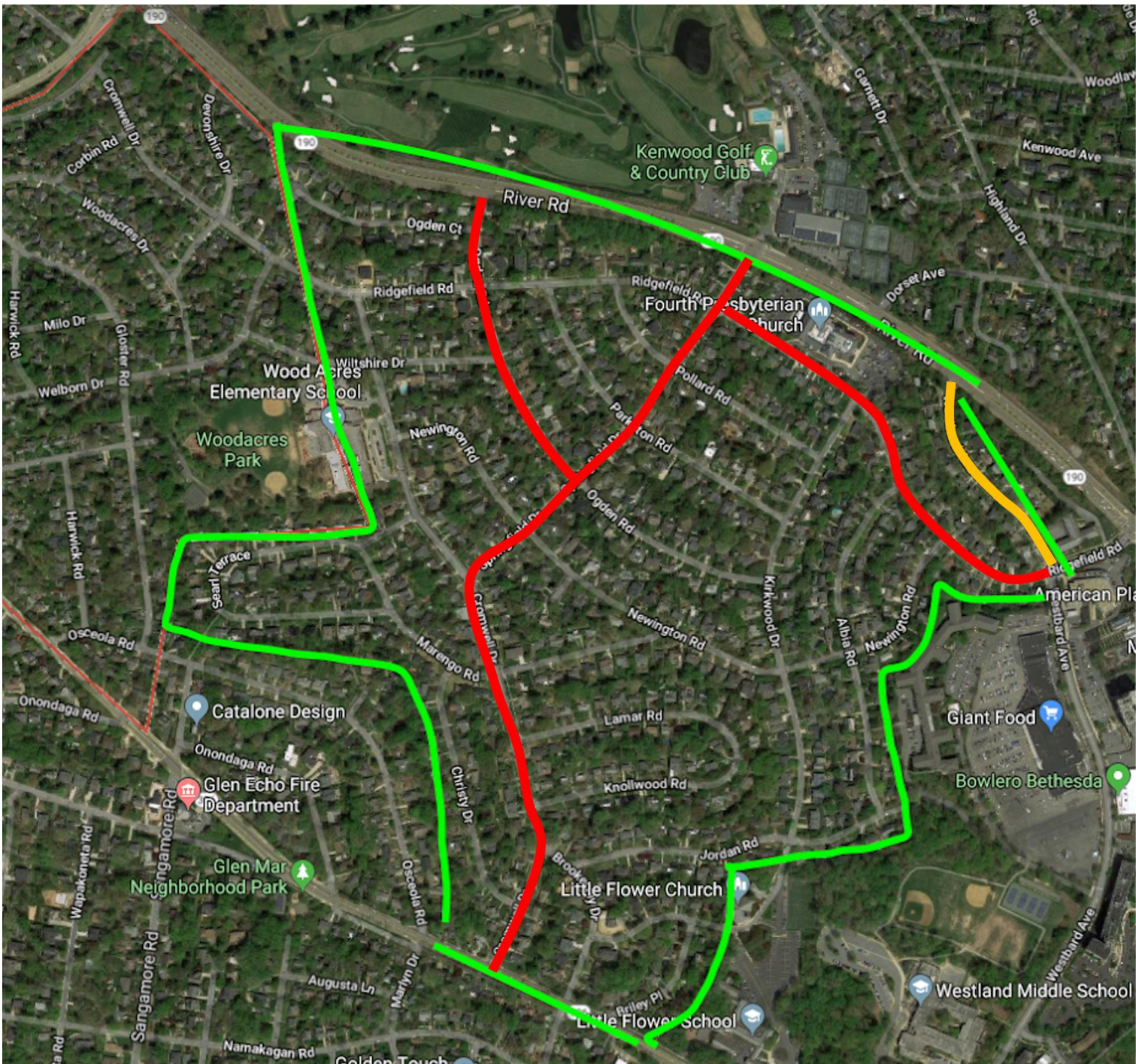
Comparative Traffic Statistics

- Data sourced from MCPD and MCDOT.
- Westbard Avenue data collected in 2020
- Other data collected in 2022 and 2023

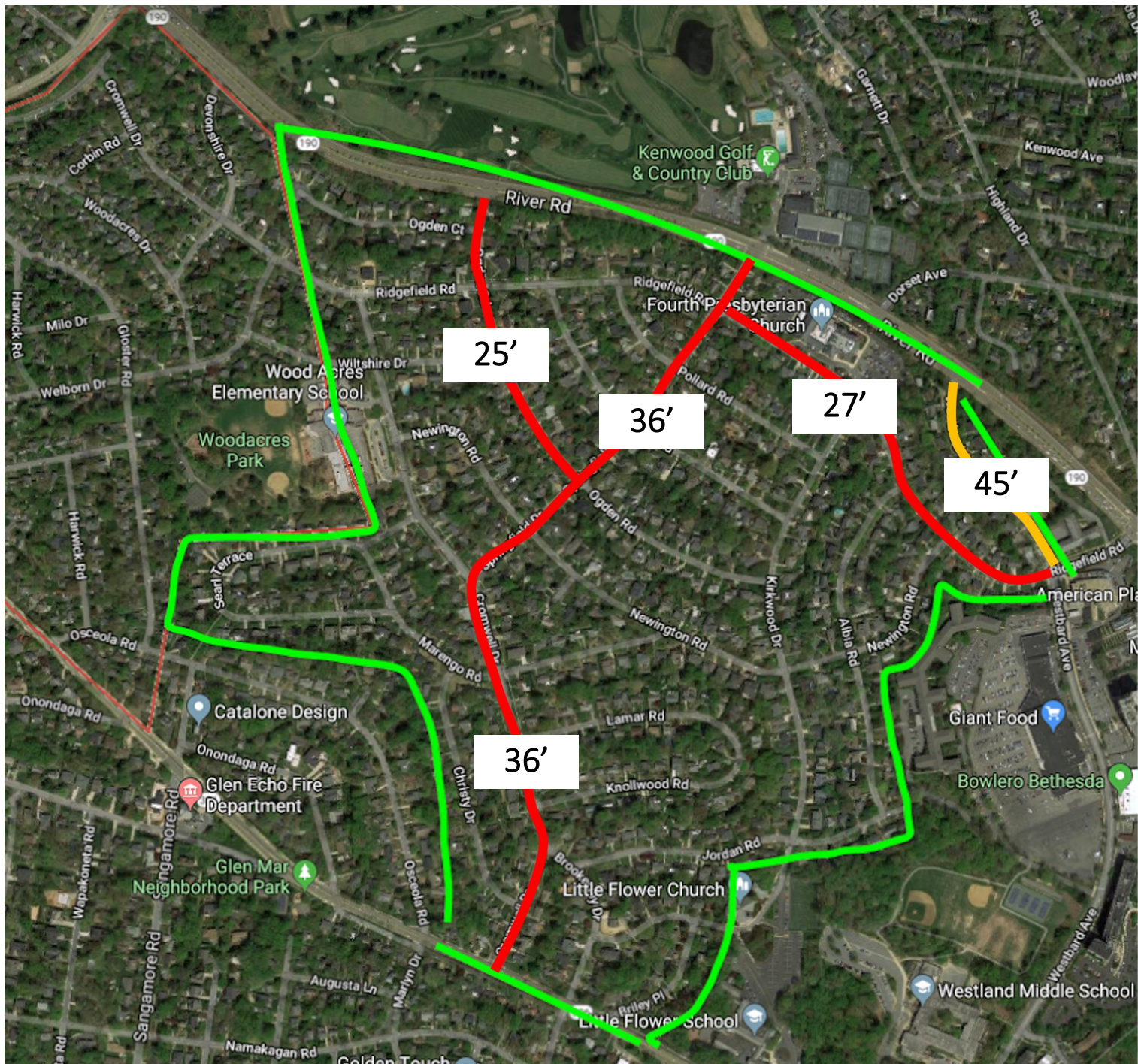


Claim 3: Closing Westbard
Avenue will not harm the rest of
Springfield.

When Westbard Avenue was closed, more than 1.5 miles of roads and 150 homes suffered. Those roads are shown in red.



-  Springfield Civic Association Boundary
-  "Old" Westbard Avenue
-  Streets with severe, negative health and safety implications following the June 2022 closure of Westbard Avenue



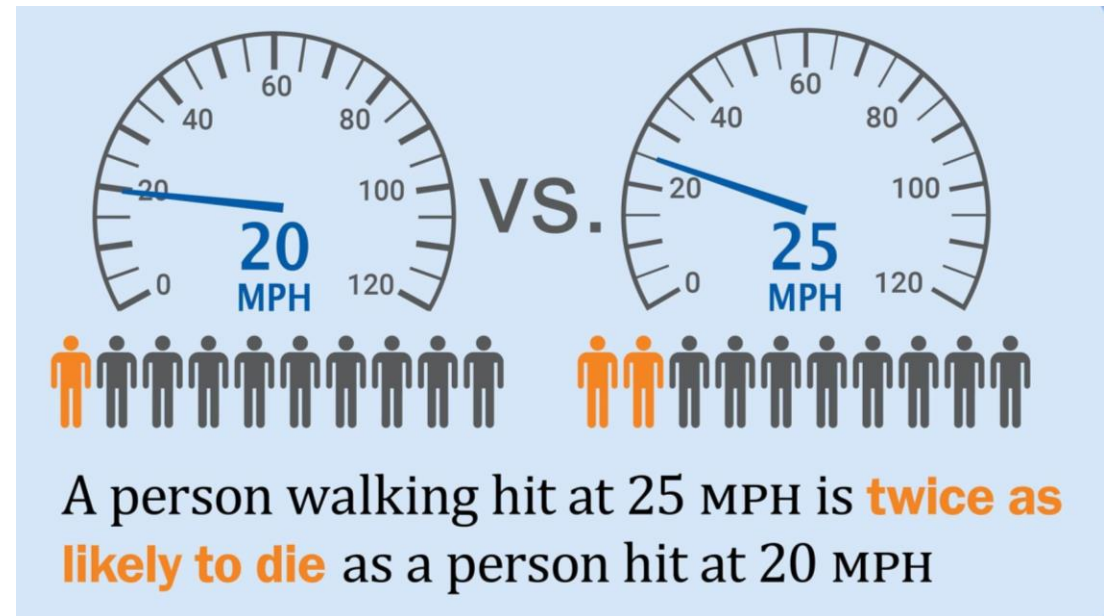
These roads are narrow roads, not designed to handle this volume.

The 5500 Block of Westbard is actually significantly wider than other roads

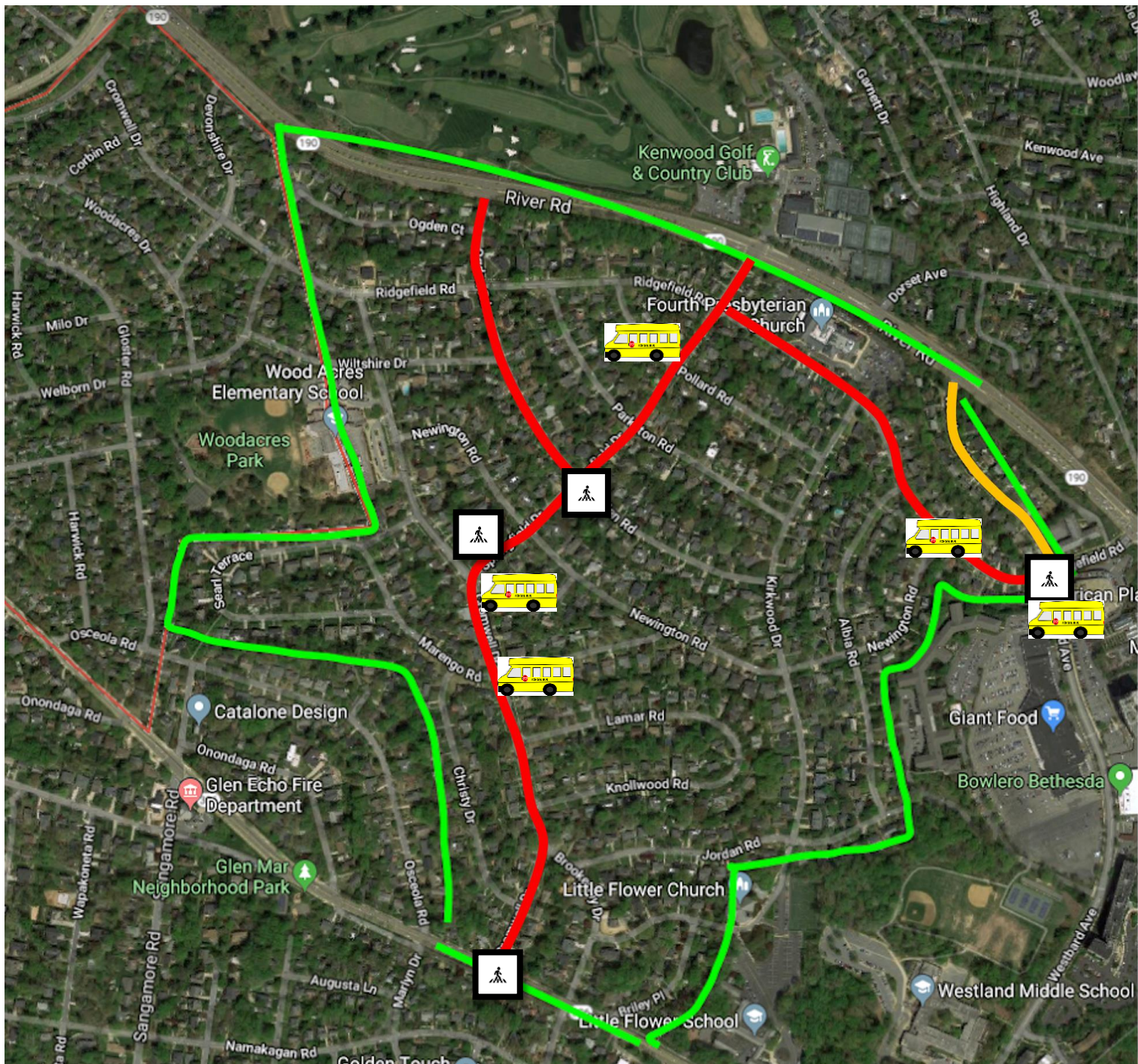
Reality: Since Westbard Avenue was closed in 2022, the Springfield neighborhood HAS been harmed.

- The only traffic mitigation enacted on these streets thus far by Montgomery County was to lower the speed limit from 25mpg to 20mph.
- Yet AFTER this change:
 - **61% of cars on Cromwell Drive drove above 20 mph.**
 - **57% of cars on Ogden Road drove above 20 mph.**

-Data from MCPS and MCPD



Statistic sourced from Vision Zero imitative

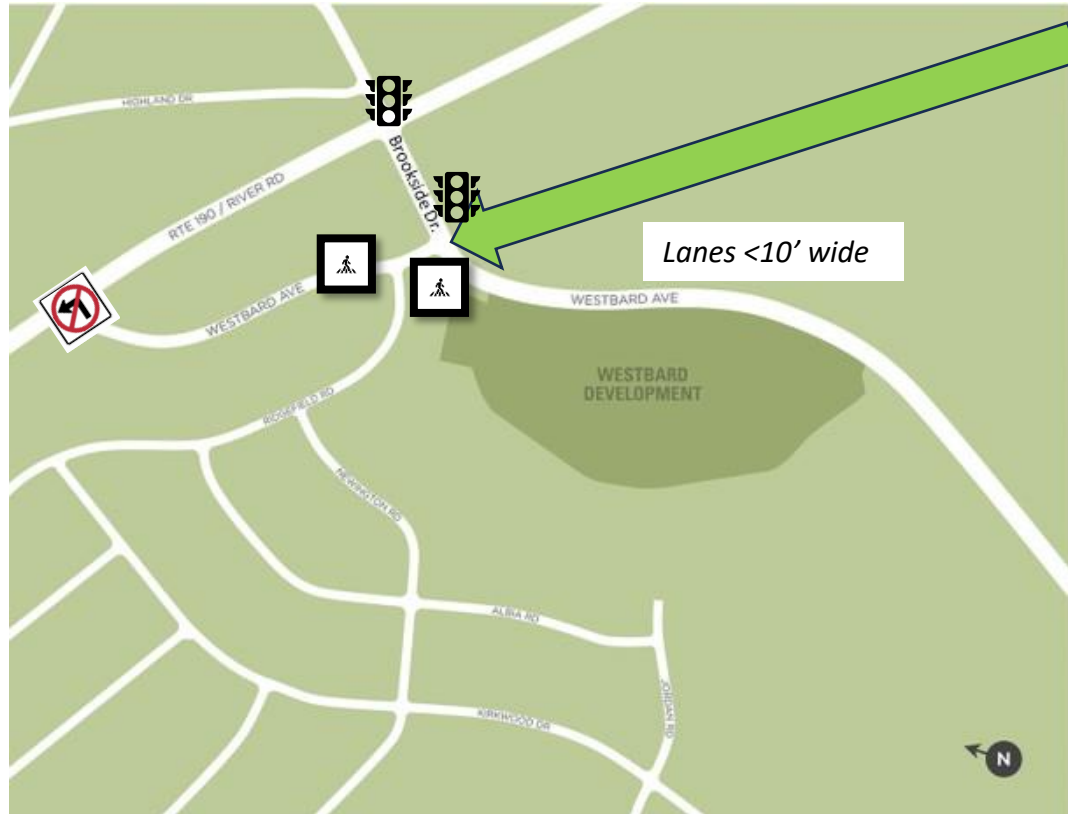


These routes have only two cross walks, none are “all way”, but many MCPS bus stops.

We are putting children in harms way.

Claim 4: When the realigned road is opened, traffic will not cut through the Springfield neighborhood.

The new intersection has been designed to limit the appeal for cut through traffic and increase pedestrian safety, and we hope it will work



*Prohibited left turn reflects existing restriction.
Other items shown as designed.*

- Mitigation Efforts
 - Signalized crosswalks
 - A narrow entrance at Brookside Drive and Westbard Avenue.
 - Existing turn restrictions at Westbard Avenue and River Road.
- These mitigation efforts benefit the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue as well as the Springfield Neighborhood.
- But Brookside Drive and Westbard Avenue also have mitigation efforts that may negatively impact the 70 homes on Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive, and Ogden Road.
 - Narrow Lanes
 - New and frequent traffic lights

Per Article 49, To be closed, a road cannot be needed for current or future access.

Beginning in 2024, partners of Regency Centers will begin building 34 new townhomes and a 155 bedroom senior living community.

These new developments may require future access and jeopardize the public safety of the Springfield Single Family Neighborhood.



A traffic study and real time evidence is needed to support this claim

- In the 2016 Sector Plan, the road was to be realigned with the purpose of Protecting Single Family Neighborhoods.
- We hope this will be the outcome, but a study needs to reveal if this is the case.
- Other tools are available, like restricted turns and closing a median are preferred.
- This was the conclusion of the Planning Department Staff's report.



Claim 5: There is a 5500
Westbard Avenue Block Civic
Association

Reality

This is not a formal civic association.

There are 24 homes on Westbard Avenue who petitioned to have their street closed permanently with no emergency vehicle access.

It is unknown why these residents called themselves a “Civic Association,” but one can presume it was to make their request sound like it was what the Springfield Neighborhood wanted.

This request does not benefit the rest of the neighborhood, but it does potentially harm it.

More than 80 residents of Springfield who are negatively impacted by the current road closures signed a petition against this permanent closure at this point in time without further study. This was not led by the Springfield Civic Association. These are not “random” residents, but homes who believe they are and will be directly impacted by the closure.

Conclusion

No number of accidents is tolerable. Every accident is horrible.

No amount of Cut Through Traffic is acceptable.

HOWEVER:

- The SCA cannot support the permanent closure of any road, when current conditions are this bad, unless it is known that it will not negatively impact the safety of other roads in our neighborhood.
- We believe prior statements have been exaggerated to support self serving interests.
- There are 650 homes in the Springfield Neighborhood. We are thinking about all of them.

McCray, Tiara

From: Benjamin Mann <benjaminmann@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 10:14 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: AB 786 (Westbard Avenue) - Public Record Submission
Attachments: SHA Heat Map of River Road Crashes.jpg

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Tiara:

Please add this communication, and the attachment, to the public record.

Last night, the Maryland State Highway Administration made a public presentation on their progress thus far in their safety study on the River Road corridor, extending from Springfield Drive to Little Falls Parkway.

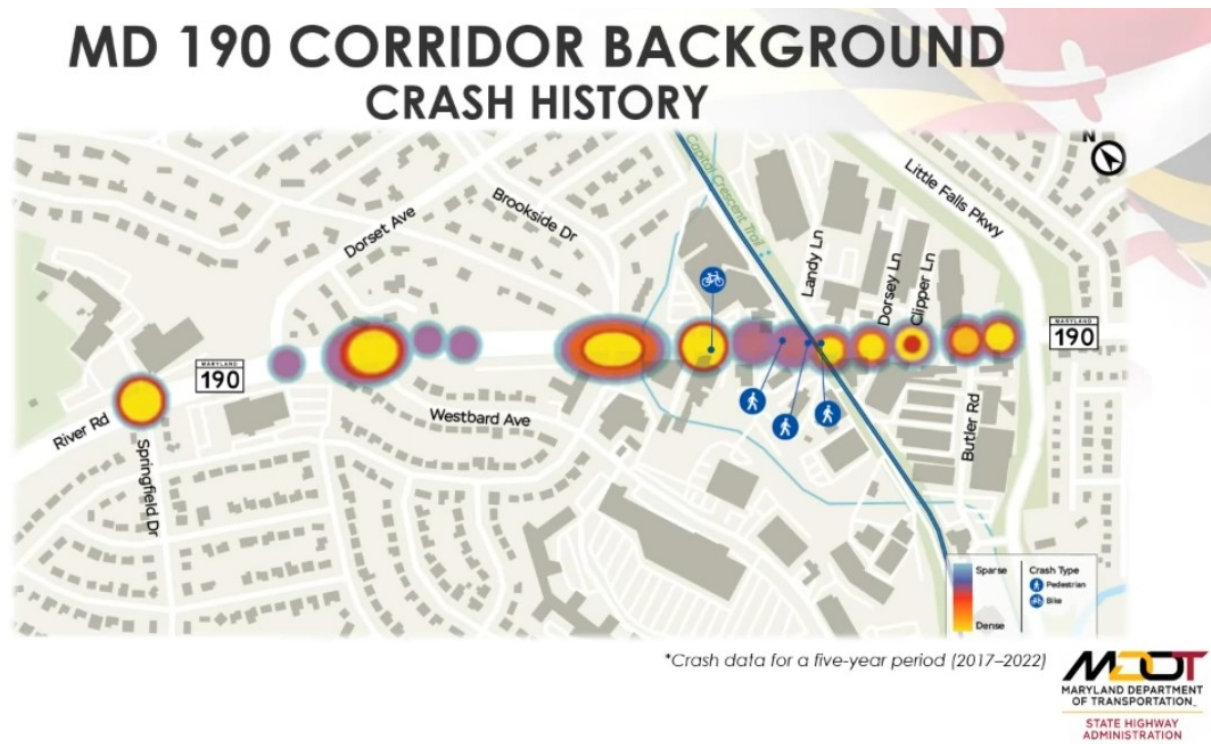
As part of their presentation, they included the attached slide. It is a visual illustration of vehicular crash density along River Road. It includes heat mapping of crashes, with the areas of densest crashes being shown in yellow.

The SHA's heat map shows that the intersection of Westbard Avenue and River Road is one of the 3 most dangerous points in the entire study area. An enormous amount of crashes happen at this intersection. This aligns with the incident numbers of car crashes which we included as "Exhibit D" to our original petition application letter.

This is an unsignalized intersection between a secondary neighborhood road and a state highway. There is absolutely no reason for these car crashes to continue happening now that a brand new signalized intersection is nearing completion. All future traffic should be channeled through the newly realigned road's signalized intersection.

Please approve the petition to close down this dangerous, unsignalized, unnecessary intersection.

---Ben Mann



should remain unchanged.) The proposed plan also calls for 10'-wide shared-use trails on each side of this segment of Westbard Avenue. Ms. Lynne Battle testified against widening the west-side sidewalk to a 10'-wide trail, decrying the encroachment on woods that abut Westland MS.

Council staff recommends no change to the existing cross-section or right-of-way on Westbard Avenue south of the intersection with the proposed B-2, except that the 5'-wide sidewalk on the east side be widened to a 10'-wide shared-use trail. Where a higher-level bikeway is warranted, road cross-sections typically either have: (1) a one-way cycle track in each direction flanked by sidewalks; (2) a two-way cycle track on one side and sidewalks on both sides; or (3) a shared-use trail on one side and a sidewalk on the other (this being the most common configuration outside commercial areas). Council staff sees no special circumstance here that warrants shared-use trails on both sides of Westbard Avenue.

For the portion of Westbard Avenue north of B-2 the Draft Plan shows two optional cross-sections. Both would feature four through lanes (with the outside lanes used for parking in the off-peak) flanked by one-way cycle tracks and sidewalks. Option B would also include a narrow median. Option A has a minimum 100' right-of-way, while Option B has a minimum 110' right-of-way. **Council staff recommends Option B, to provide more flexibility to design in all of the street elements. Furthermore, the diagram on page 30 should show each lane to be 11'-wide—10' for driving plus 1' for the gutter and shy area from the curbs—and the text on page 29 should note that there would be a median.**

Westbard Avenue realignment. Westbard Avenue is proposed to be relocated so that it ties in directly to River Road. This is desirable for at least two reasons: it would provide continuous flow between River Road and Westbard's core without having to negotiate left- or right-turns at the current intersection with Ridgefield Road; and the junction with River Road would become a proper right-angled intersection, much more able to accommodate right-turning vehicles from inbound River Road to Westbard Avenue. **Council staff recommends clarifying the text on page 29 by amending it to read:**

Westbard Avenue, a business district street, heading toward River Road, should be reconfigured to [be reconfigured to prioritize the traffic movement from Westbard Avenue to Ridgefield Road] tie directly to River Road with a right-angled intersection, instead of teeing into Ridgefield Road [to River Road].

The description of this improvement in the table of future capital improvements (Table 4.1.1 on p. 93) similarly should be amended (but with fewer words).

Westbard "Court." Drs. Cynthia Green and Xinsheng Zeng, residents of Westbard Avenue's 1000'-long block between River and Ridgefield Roads, testified about the substantial and long-standing cut-through traffic that has been occurring on their block. Unlike the rest of Westbard Avenue, this block is a Secondary Residential Street and is fronted by 21 single-family homes and three townhouses. Right-turns from inbound River Road are prohibited from 7-9 am, and heavy trucks are prohibited at all times. However, many ignore these prohibitions. It is a natural cut-through route: it is a shorter distance to the core of Westbard, and it avoids the intersection of River and Ridgefield Roads, which is signaled and requires an acute right turn that many larger vehicles cannot negotiate without encroaching on the approach lane. A primary reason for the realignment noted above is to allow this turn to occur smoothly.

The Springfield Civic Association and the residents of this block have written requesting that Westbard Avenue be permanently closed at the River Road end (©34-37). Some master plans have included recommendations for certain streets to be permanently closed, although there is a process (similar to the street abandonment process) that must be followed before a street can be legally closed. Including this as a master plan recommendation would buttress the argument once the street closure is formally requested. **Council staff recommends that the Plan call for the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at its River Road end.** If the Council agrees, the following points should either be included either in the text or the legislative history:

- *The closure should not occur until Westbard Avenue is realigned to intersect River Road with a right-angled turn.* Some vehicles need street space to access the Westbard core; until the River/Ridgefield intersection is realigned, the vehicles may still need to use the residential block of Westbard Avenue. Hopefully the realignment will occur early in the redevelopment of Westbard. At that time this residential block should be re-named to avoid confusion with realigned Westbard Avenue. “Westbard Court,” perhaps?
- *The closed end should have a mountable curb to allow emergency vehicles to access the block directly from River Road.*
- *The closed end should be reconstructed to create a turnaround.* Trash trucks, snow plows, and other large vehicles serving the homes need means to return without backing up this long block.

Kenwood. Kenwood is concerned about existing and potentially greater cut-through traffic, particularly on Dorset Avenue and Brookside Drive. At present, through traffic from Ridgefield Road (what in the future would be realigned Westbard Avenue) to Brookside Drive is prohibited during peak periods, although Kenwood residents report that some traffic still passes through in that direction then. The Kenwood Committee for Westbard/River Road has written about the land use proposed near this intersection (which will be taken up at a subsequent worksession) and has suggests more study of the intersection itself (©38-39).

One suggestion from the Kenwood Committee is to consider physically channeling the left- and right-turning lanes from the realigned Westbard Avenue onto River Road, effectively precluding the through movement to Brookside Drive at all times. Cut-through traffic also could be reduced if the reverse through movement—from Brookside Drive to realigned Westbard Avenue—were also prohibited, at least during peak hours. However, any such prohibition would also hinder Kenwood residents wishing to drive to and from the Westbard core, as well as to Westland MS and Little Falls Library. **Council staff recommends that the Plan encourages the Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration to work with Kenwood to develop a design and operations at this intersection that better protects Kenwood from cut-through traffic without restricting safe and convenient access between realigned Westbard Avenue and River Road.**

Other nearby neighborhoods. Other neighborhoods have raised concerns about existing or potential cut-through traffic, but none are as obvious as “Westbard Court” and Kenwood. The County has a cut-through traffic regulation which allows for a traffic control scheme that could restrict turns and, in the extreme, close roads if a sufficient through-traffic problem materializes and the affected neighborhoods accept it. The regulation is here:

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Traffic/Resources/Files/PDF/exreg17_94am.pdf.



190

HILLBURNE WAY

WESTBEARD AVE

RIVER RD

190

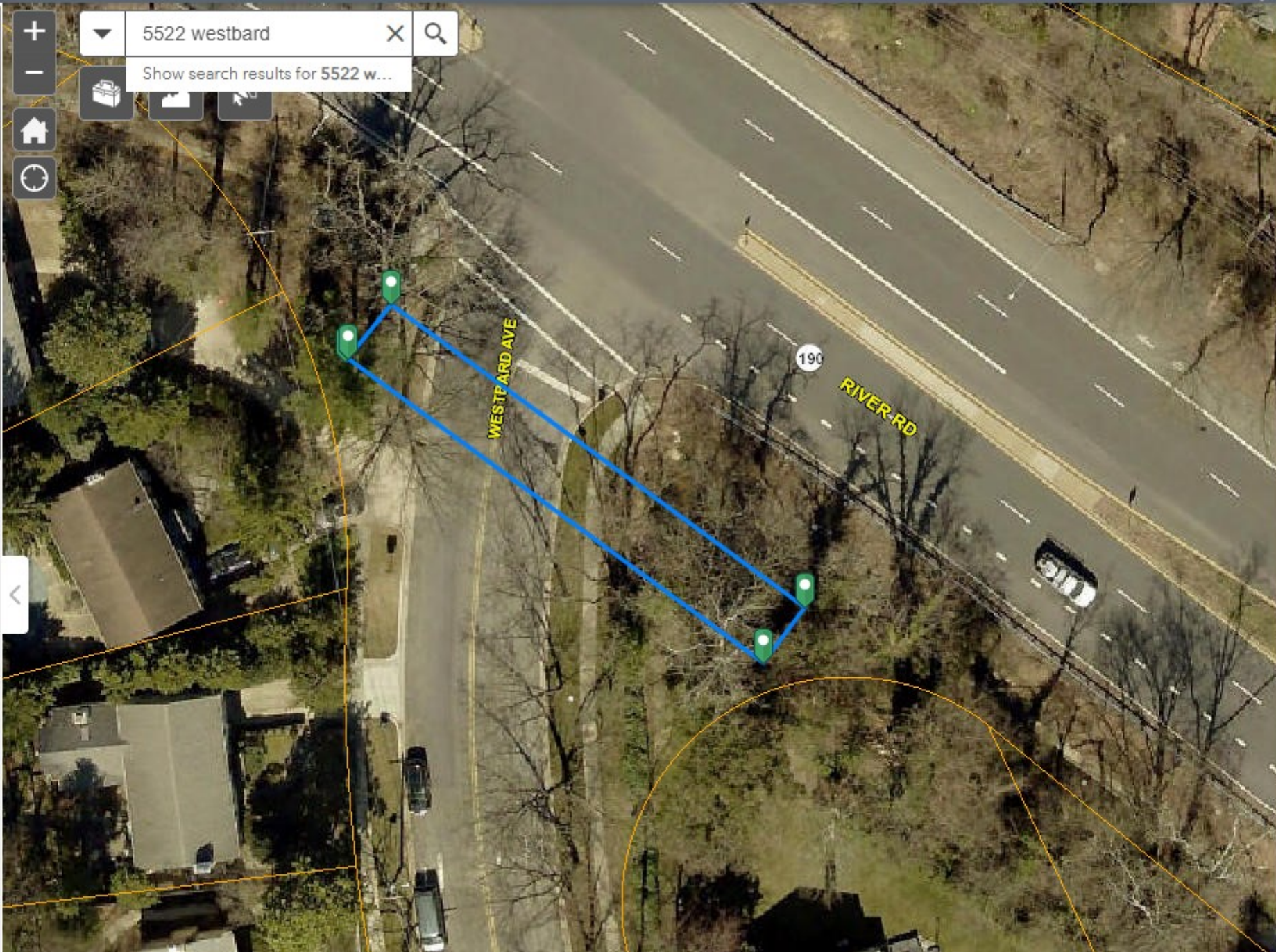
Perimeter: 345.3 Feet



5522 westbard



Show search results for 5522 w...



Meas



McCray, Tiara

From: Jeri Weaver [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 3:49 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Petition to Permanently Close Westbard Avenue AB786

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Ms. MCCray,

While the 5500 Westbard residents are well organized in their efforts to close their street, many of their neighbors are unaware of these efforts and their potential impact.

What we do know:

- A. Since construction on the Westbard Complex began, ALL neighboring streets have experienced a marked (and sometimes unexpected) increase in traffic. Ridgefield, Springfield, Ogden, Newington, and Albia, have seen the bulk of the increase. (5500 Westbard, being closed, was not impacted.)
- B. All residents of all of these streets would be happy to have less traffic on their streets.
- B. One selling point of the new entrance from River Road onto Ridgefield was that it would mitigate traffic on the 5500 block of Westbard Ave.
- C. The Westbard 5500 group submitted their petition to the county without notifying the neighborhood association, thus preempting any open discussion of the issue.
- D. Westbard Avenue is a public street. Its closure should not happen without a study of the impact of the increased density to come and its resultant traffic. .

What we don't know:

- 1. The overall traffic impact on the neighborhood that will occur after all the of the final construction (30 townhomes, an eldercare facility, and a 300 unit apartment complex) is complete.
- 2. Whether the new entrance will in fact absorb the increased traffic that will result from the significant population increase.

It is likely that, even with the construction of the new connection between River and Ridgefield Roads, traffic will be heavier on all of the neighboring streets (as mentioned above). The responsible solution to this question would be to follow the recommendations of the Springfield Civic Association and delay any street closure decisions until the Westbard construction is complete and a study can evaluate the extent of traffic impact.

Thank you for considering these thoughts.

--

Jeri Weaver
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Radhika Sinha [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 4:32 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: [REDACTED]; Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich
Subject: Oppose AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave @ River Road)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. Mccray,

As a member of the Springfield Civic Association and the erstwhile chair of its Traffic Committee, I oppose the petition to permanently close Westbard Ave @ River Rd. This is the **Only Equitable** answer to this matter since this petition is without merit and standing. The reasons are as follows:

1. The closure of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue could create spillover traffic on other neighborhood streets in the Springfield Neighborhood and that additional study — ideally following completion of Westbard Square — is the only responsible way to evaluate this possibility. The Westbard Avenue reconstruction that also closed Westbard Avenue at River Rd caused massive, unanticipated traffic effects on neighboring streets. **MCPD conducted traffic counts showed 5,400 vehicles per day diverted to Ridgefield Rd and 3500 cars/day diverted to Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive and Ogden Road.** Ridgefield Rd is the narrowest street in the neighborhood, with 3 MCPS bus stops and is the main route for pedestrians, bicyclists and children walking to Westbard Square, the Capital Crescent Trail and neighborhood schools. It is a narrow, hilly road part of it without sidewalks and winds its way through the entire neighborhood - any traffic issue on this road has a very high community impact. There have been many near misses - involving schoolchildren - and several accidents on this street in the last 18 months. Westbard Ave, on the other hand, is the widest street in the neighborhood with double yellow lines, sidewalks on both sides, and with only 20 homes has the least community impact. **Traffic counts on Westbard Avenue conducted in 2020 showed an average daily volume of 689 vehicles / day which is one-tenth of the traffic counts on other neighborhood streets. Closing Westbard Ave to the detriment of 650 homes in the Springfield neighborhood is NOT EQUITABLE.**

2. The closure petition is inconsistent with the Westbard Sector Plan.

a)The Westbard Sector Plan recommended that a closure petition be submitted by a *neighborhood civic association.* The Springfield Civic Association was neither informed or consulted before the closure petition was submitted, and had no input on its contents. The 5500 Westbard Block Association represents one block of ~20 homes, not the 650 home Springfield neighborhood. Westbard Ave residents are members of the Springfield Civic Association and last year even campaigned for positions on its board. There is NO Neighborhood Petition submitted to request for this closure.

b)The Westbard Sector Plan recommended that the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue remain accessible to emergency vehicles via a 3-inch mountable curb. The closure petition would block emergency vehicle access by erecting a substantial permanent barrier.

c) The Westbard Sector Plan stated that a formal neighborhood petition be submitted after the road construction was complete - the road construction is not complete and neither is the massive development project.

3. The applicant, Benjamin Mann of Westbard Ave, has threatened the Springfield Civic Association. The applicant purports "to have a friendly relationship with MCDOT given their commercial real estate background and is very confident that their application will be accepted because of this said relationship. They also state that if the SCA opposes their application they will be organizing opposition to traffic calming measures in the Springfield neighborhood for years to come and the removal of existing safety measures once the detour ends"

We hope the MCDOT will make this decision based on objective facts and data and will not be swayed by this rhetoric or any closeness of relationship between the applicant and MCDOT.

4. Westbard Ave residents have been going door to door in the Springfield neighborhood and misrepresenting facts to try to garner support for their application. They have made 2 assertions - 1) The closure of the 5500 block of Westbard Ave will not have any impact on the traffic situation in the rest of the neighborhood. If this were indeed the case, they would not have an issue with a traffic study to verify that fact. 2) That MCDOT will implement traffic safety measures in the rest of the neighborhood so as to mitigate any traffic impacts. Since MCDOT has been very clear that no changes will be made - this is a clear misrepresentation.

Closing this road will *also* lead to an inundation of random civic associations petitioning self-serving measures. For example, what's to stop the creation of a "Springfield Drive Civic Association" from petitioning closure of Springfield Road between Cromwell and River Roads? What's to stop "Ridgefield Road Civic Association" from unanimously petitioning for permanent closure of the Ridgefield at Westbard? When will it end?

Please block the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue & River Road intersection.

Sincerely,
Radhka Sinha
Springfield Civic Association, Member

████████████████████
████████████████████

McCray, Tiara

From: Eric Walton [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 6:35 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher
Subject: Westbard

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

My name is Eric W. Walton, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Eric W. Walton
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

McCray, Tiara

From: James Tam [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 12:29 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Support for AB 786 (Permanent Closure of Westbard Ave. @ River Rd.)

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Tiara,

My family and I reside at [REDACTED], at the very intersection that is the subject of the petitioned closure. We are among the residents that will be most directly impacted by this petitioned closure. **We support the request for closure of the Westbard/River intersection, for all the reasons already described in the record.**

Additionally, we offer the following points be taken into consideration:

- The closure of this Westbard/River intersection was one element among many others that were integrated into the larger approved 2016 Westbard Sector Plan. This Plan had already been afforded much administrative due process including opportunity for public comment, whether supporting or opposing. The submission of this petition for review was specifically described in the Plan in order to enact the closure. Accordingly, this petition should be treated as nothing more than a ministerial procedure to officially effectuate the closure, and not as an attempt to reopen the record to weigh comments in opposition to the closure.
- However, if you must give weight to the substantive comments in opposition to the closure, much of the opposition cites the inordinate increase in cut through traffic through the broad Springfield neighborhood when the Westbard realignment construction began. This increased traffic was foreseen, and is only expected to last for the duration of the street closures. Once the realigned Westbard street reopens, cut through traffic into the Springfield neighborhood streets should dissipate.
- The claim that closing the intersection of Westbard and River will cause cut through traffic to spill into the broader Springfield neighborhood is incorrect. The type of dangerous cut-through traffic that would use this Westbard/River intersection is primarily traffic intending to shortcut the travel between River Road or the remainder of Westbard Avenue, and NOT traffic that would otherwise traverse through the broader Springfield neighborhood to the north.
- Those that oppose this closure have called for additional studies to be performed. However, performing additional studies will only be a further waste of time, resources, and taxpayer dollars. Studies have already been done, ample data exists supporting closure of this Westbard/River intersection.
- Closure of the intersection of Westbard and River will enhance the safety of pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The newly realigned Westbard Avenue will have significantly widened pedestrian walkways and bike paths, distinctly separated from vehicular traffic. Closure will incentivize vehicular traffic to stay on the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, which is designed to carry significant volumes of traffic. Note the increased pedestrian and bicycle density that will result once the planned assisted living facility (i.e, elderly pedestrians), townhomes, and apartments pursuant to the Westbard Sector Plan are fully developed.
- Lastly, closure will disincentivize any pedestrian or bicycle traffic from dangerously using this Westbard/River intersection in order to cross River Road. Residing on this very intersection, I have personally witnessed numerous instances of pedestrians and bicycles (including children), using this intersection as a means to cross River Road during heavy rush hour traffic.

Thanks,

James Tam



My name is May Shen, and I live at [REDACTED] Bethesda, MD 20817.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

May Shen

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD 20817

McCray, Tiara

From: Conklin, Christopher
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 8:48 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Fwd: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

Chris Conklin
MCDOT Director

Sent from a mobile device

From: Robin Overby [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 9:41:57 PM
To: Friedson's Office, Councilmember <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Robin Overby, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Robin Overby
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Susan Wu [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 8:50 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher
Subject: Road closure

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Tiara,

My name is Susan Wu and I live at [REDACTED]

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Susan Wu
Best Regard

Sent from my iPhone

McCray, Tiara

From: Clara Zou [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 9:06 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Westbard Petition - Clara Zou

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Morning Tiara,

My name is Clara Zou, and I live at [REDACTED]. This street is a home where I learned how to bike and grew up with a dog. I treasure the community and memories made and continue making here.

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. My parents live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue and I was born and grew up there. This closure will improve traffic safety for motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians by channeling all traffic through the newly realigned Westbard Avenue. There is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue, and no traffic signal at the old Westbard-River intersection. Clearly, motorists should be channeled through the safe new route.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and this closure was to happen after the road realignment completes. In these days of declining trust in public institutions, it is crucial for Montgomery County policymakers to live up to the promises they've made.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of our friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Clara Zou
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Clara Zou
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Julie Barrie Buchanan [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 2:26 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson, Andrew; Mark.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov; [REDACTED] T. Reid Lewis
Subject: Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road in Bethesda

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray,

I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood in Bethesda, and I'm writing in support of my neighbors, on Westbard Avenue near River Road, who seek to retain the closure of the intersection at the end of their residential street.

Since southbound travelers on River Road will (very soon, I hope!) be able to turn right on Brookside Drive (one block from Westbard Avenue) into the Westbard shopping center, there is no need to have this residential block experience the increased car speed (with associated danger to pedestrians) and traffic that will come from re-opening the intersection.

While I have your attention, I'd also like to suggest making the left-hand turn from Odgen Road to River Road illegal. It's an extremely dangerous place to turn left, without a light, and causes major backups on Odgen Road. There are several streets with lights that allow cars to safely turn left onto River Road.

Thanks very much for your attention to our neighborhood and our traffic and pedestrian safety issues.

Sincerely,

Julie Buchanan
[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD

--

Julie Barrie Buchanan
Pronouns: she/her/hers
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Sue Hendrickson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 12:53 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson, Andrew;
Mark.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Petition to Close Westbard Ave.

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Ms. McCray,

I am writing in support of the petition to close the existing Westbard Avenue entrance at River Road in Bethesda after the realigned Westbard Avenue is reopened. This is a small, residential street with filled with families. This cut through will not be necessary once the newly aligned Westbard Avenue is reopened. To keep it open, I believe, will create unnecessary safety risks for pedestrians especially, having witness myself TWICE cars almost hitting kids on bikes at the exit in the past.

I do not live on Westbard but off Cromwell and I find it rich to hear my neighbors complain about this potential street closure when they have done nothing but complain about the Westbard development and how unsafe the construction has made the neighborhood due to increased traffic. I guess increased traffic is okay as long as it doesn't cut through their part of the neighborhood (and we are not talking about small stretches like Westbard but rather Springfield and Cromwell Roads).

To close Westbard at the current River Road site will not impact the neighborhood in any significant way and will definitely make it safer for those families who live on that small stretch. I am disappointed that our SCA Board took it upon themselves to oppose the petition when it has so little impact on the Springfield neighborhood.

Thanks for your consideration,

Sue Hendrickson
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: Krupa [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 10:31 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Re: Opposition to Permanent Closures of Westbard Avenue & River Road Intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Tiara,

As a follow-up to what I previously sent. Closing Westbard Ave at River Road permanently, without a traffic study, would be supporting corruption. The former president of the Springfield Civic Association used her position during the creation of the Westbard Sector Plan to negotiate this permanent closure without buy in or support from anyone else in the community, including the Springfield Civic Association Board, because she lives on the residential portion of Westbard Ave connected to River Road. Allowing this road to permanently close, without a traffic study, would be supporting her corruption.

Frankly, I'm surprised this premature and drastic decision is even being considered at this point. The sensible thing to do here would be to let all the roads reopen, let some time pass, conduct a traffic study, and then decide whether a permanent closure is warranted. **The "concerns" detailed by the 5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association are nothing more than hypothetical conjecture at this point.** That should not be sufficient to support a corrupt request to close a very wide, public road, with permit parking on both sides.

Thank you for the consideration.

Best,
Krupa

On Wed, Aug 16, 2023 at 10:54 AM McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov> wrote:

Radhika,

If they were submitted to the Director or Mr. Paylor, I have received those comments already.

I appreciate your due diligence.

Tiara McCray
Acting Chief, Property Acquisition

Department of Transportation

Division of Transportation Engineering

Property Acquisition Section

100 Edison Park Drive, 4th Floor

Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

240-777-7257 (o)

240-720-7862 (m)

Stay connected

From: Radhika Sinha [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, August 16, 2023 10:53 AM
To: McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: Krupa Parikh [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Opposition to Permanent Closures of Westbard Avenue & River Road Intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Thank you so much Ms. McCray,

I will forward you a few others that were also sent out.

On Wed, Aug 16, 2023 at 10:47 AM McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov> wrote:

Good afternoon, Radhika,

I have already received Krupa's comment and included it in the Record.

Thank you for your message.

Tiara McCray
Acting Chief, Property Acquisition

Department of Transportation

Division of Transportation Engineering

Property Acquisition Section

[100 Edison Park Drive](#), 4th Floor

Gaithersburg, Maryland 20878

240-777-7257 (o)

240-720-7862 (m)

Stay connected

From: Radhika Sinha [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, August 15, 2023 4:59 PM
To: McCray, Tiara <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>
Cc: Krupa Parikh [REDACTED]

Subject: Fwd: Opposition to Permanent Closures of Westbard Avenue & River Road Intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Ms. McCray,

Please record Krupa Parikh's written comments on the petition to permanently close Westbard Ave at River Rd.

Thank you

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Krupa [REDACTED]
Date: Mon, Aug 14, 2023 at 1:13 PM
Subject: Opposition to Permanent Closures of Westbard Avenue & River Road Intersection
To: <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>, <christopher.conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>, <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>, <Marc.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov>
CC: board@springfield20816.com <board@springfield20816.com>

Hello,

I am writing to request a denial of the [5500 Westbard Avenue](#) Block Civic Association's request to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road near the Westbard Square construction.

This biased petition by this unsanctioned "Civic Association" serves only one purpose: selfishly shield themselves from *any and all* traffic expected by the eventual opening of the new Westbard Square, by putting significantly more residents, pedestrians, and children in harms way.

We, residents of Montgomery County, rely on you to represent our needs. The Springfield Civic Association, which represents and includes the 5500 Block of the Westbard Avenue, submitted the [following letter](#) to the planning board to block this drastic and unfair measure. Furthermore, the Planning Staff's professional recommendation also suggested delaying closure until after the realignment of Westbard Avenue is completed in order to study this intersection and to respond appropriately to updated traffic patterns (see [Staff Report](#)). **Why would you entertain the "5500 Westbard Avenue Block Civic Association" over the Springfield Civic Association (which includes Westbard avenue between River and Ridgefield) and your own Planning Staff?**

Due to the road closures of Westbard Ave at River Road and River Road last year, the Springfield neighborhood - especially Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Road and Ogden Road - had been inundated with a constant stream of trucks and a large volume of commuter vehicles trying to access the open part of Westbard Avenue to either get to the Westbard Square or Massachusetts Ave. The detour plan directing commuters/trucks to use Goldsboro or Little Falls Parkway or to Massachusetts to Westbard Avenue had in effect failed to divert the traffic away from the neighborhood, and county police have confirmed their inability to enforce the detour plan. **Ridgefield Road, a narrow and hilly residential street, without permit parking required to park on either side of the street, was bearing the brunt of the cut through traffic, making it difficult to leave homes and creating unsafe conditions for pedestrians and children.**

On the contrary, Westbard Avenue is a flat, 45 feet wide road, with permit parking on both sides and numerous speed bumps. It has clear line demarcations separating sides of the road, and is undeniably better equipped to handle this volume of traffic without putting pedestrians, children, or vehicles in harms way.

Westbard Ave at River Road should be permanently reopened at the very least so that Ridgefield, Springfield, Cromwell, Ogden and Westbard are equally sharing the volume of traffic during the road realignment.

By requesting permanent closure of Westbard at River, Westbard residents are seeking to unfairly place *all* of the traffic burden on residents on and near Ridgefield Road, Springfield Drive, Cromwell Drive, and Ogden Road.

Public safety measures alone should dissuade MDOT from closing Westbard at River. Over 40 school aged children live along Ridgefield Road between Springfield and Westbard. Ridgefield and neighboring streets have three bus stops (Westbard has none) and placing numerous children in the middle of unsafe traffic patterns (evidenced last year) is unfounded. There are significantly more houses impacted on Ridgefield, Cromwell, Springfield, and Ogden than on Westbard. Not to mention, most neighborhood pedestrians utilize Ridgefield Road between Springfield and Westbard to access the Westbard Square shopping center.

Closing this road will *also* lead to an inundation of random civic associations petitioning self-serving measures. For example, what's to stop the creation of a "Springfield Drive Civic Association" from petitioning closure of Springfield Road between Cromwell and River Roads? What's to stop "Ridgefield Road Civic Association" from unanimously petitioning for permanent closure of the Ridgefield at Westbard? When will it end?

Please block the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue & River Road intersection.

Thank you,

Krupa Parikh

████████████████████

McCray, Tiara

From: Orion Hyson [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 11:38 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Support for closure of Westbard at River

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

This closure makes sense and would be good for the Springfield community.

Thanks for all you do,
Orion & David Hyson

[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

Sent from my iPhone

McCray, Tiara

From: Heidi Schadler [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 11:46 AM
To: McCray, Tiara; Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson, Andrew; Marc Elrich
Subject: UPDATED - Opposition to Proposed Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road by the Residents of the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I want to reiterate the danger that cut-through traffic has imposed in the Springfield Community due to the Westbard Redevelopment project and the potential permanent closure of Westbard Avenue. A serious accident just occurred two evenings ago at the intersection of Ogden Road and River Road between a pick-up truck and a vehicle. The driver of the vehicle broke his back in two places. Accidents at this intersection have increased with the Westbard project and I fear permanently closing Westbard Avenue will just lead to more critical, if not fatal, injuries not just between vehicles but with pedestrians and cyclists as people cut-through the neighborhood between Massachusetts and River Road. Many of our narrow streets within blocks of Wood Acres Elementary School do not have sidewalks and are not designed to hold this amount of vehicular traffic.

Please see my initial letter of opposition written just four days before this latest accident. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Heidi Schadler, [REDACTED], Bethesda, MD 20816

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Heidi Schadler [REDACTED]
Date: Fri, Sep 15, 2023 at 2:45 PM
Subject: Proposed Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road by the Residents of the 5500 Block of Westbard Avenue
To: <Tiara.McCray@montgomerycountymd.gov>, <Michael.Paylor@montgomerycountymd.gov>, <Christopher.Conklin@montgomerycountymd.gov>

I am writing in strong support of the Springfield Civic Association's letter dated July 25, 2023 addressed to Artie Harris, Chair and Members of the Montgomery County Planning Board and to submit my written testimony in opposition to the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue. I moved to Ogden Road in the Springfield neighborhood in July 2018 for the quaint community full of families, friends, and the walking proximity to Wood Acres Elementary School and Wood Acres Park.

Unfortunately, since the construction of Westbard began, Ogden Road has become one of the main throughways between Massachusetts and River Road. Despite posting multiple signs urging drivers to slow down and the prevalence of small children on a narrow street that does not have sidewalks, what once was a quiet neighborhood street has become a genuine hazard zone.

Multiple times I have had cars nearly hit me while I try exiting my driveway. Additionally, there have been instances where cars circle around me between the stop signs to move faster. I have held my breath in fear as I see my neighbors with small children or walking dogs pull them back from the street when commuters cut through the street as if they were still on a main arterial road. A permanent closure without a thorough traffic study and input by all ALL neighborhood residents, the MCDOT, the police and the Planning Board is premature since construction is not complete with the realignment and reopening of Ridgefield Road. Please consider the danger you are putting our community and residents in.

Respectfully,
Heidi Schadler



Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: CHERYL LOCKE [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 10:21 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: Opposition to the Permanent Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Good evening, Ms. McCray,

I am resident of Ogden Road in the Springfield subdivision of Montgomery County. I am opposed to the currently proposed permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road. It makes no sense to close this road until the newly realigned road (Brookside Drive) is completed, open for usage and an assessment made to determine traffic impact. My street is currently inundated with cut through traffic the likes of which Westbard Avenue has never seen. Unlike Westbard Avenue, Ogden Road does not have sidewalks, speedhumps, double yellow lines and no right turn restrictions from River Road.

My neighbors and I have been valiantly working with the Springfield Civic Association and the Kenwood Condominium Association - both of whom oppose the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road - to find any solution to the hundreds of speeding cars that cut through Ogden Road every day. Closing an access street off of River Road is just an invitation down Ogden Road, courtesy of any navigation app.

I am requesting that Westbard Avenue at River Road not be permanently closed until an additional, thorough traffic study is completed after Brookside Drive is opened.

Thank you for receiving my input.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Locke

[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Christine McHugh [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 8:28 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson, Andrew;
Mark.Elrich@montgomerycountymd.gov
Subject: Please close Westbard Ave at River Rd

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

I am a Springfield neighborhood resident and support the permanent closure of Westbard Ave at River Rd. Much planning and construction has gone into the new intersection just steps away at River Rd and Ridgefield/Brookside, and it is important for neighborhood safety that all traffic use this safe, well-designed access point to the Westbard shopping center and our Springfield neighborhood.

Without this closure, cars will inevitably cut through the 5500 block of Westbard - creating a major safety hazard for both our neighbors who live on that block, and for the drivers, who are missing the chance to use the safe, well-designed intersection just five seconds further down the road.

Please permanently close Westbard Ave at River Road.

Christine McHugh, Springfield resident
[REDACTED], Bethesda

McCray, Tiara

From: James SeEVERS [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 4:45 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Marc Elrich; Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: APPROVE THE PERMANENT ROAD CLOSURE IN WESTBARD

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is James SeEVERS, and I am a resident of the Springfield neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

James SeEVERS
[REDACTED]
Bethesda, MD 20816

McCray, Tiara

From: Caroline Schwartz/USA [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 7:50 PM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember
Subject: Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Tiara –

I am writing to express my strong support for the proposed permanent closure of the old Westbard Avenue-River Road intersection. Several people who live on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue are extremely important to me. Given that there is a traffic signal at the newly realigned Westbard Avenue and not one at the old Westbard-River intersection, it seems unnecessary and unsafe to reopen this path.

I understand that back in 2016, the county negotiated this permanent closure with the residents, and that this closure was supposed to happen after the road realignment completes. Please consider the promises made and the effect they will have on the neighborhood, especially with the additional traffic that is bound to come through with the new retail center.

Please approve this closure, and protect the health, safety, and welfare of my friends and family members who live and play in this part of Westbard.

Thank you!

Caroline

Caroline Schwartz
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

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McCray, Tiara

From: Benjamin Mann [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 10:14 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Subject: AB 786 (Westbard Avenue) - Public Record Submission
Attachments: SHA Heat Map of River Road Crashes.jpg

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Tiara:

Please add this communication, and the attachment, to the public record.

Last night, the Maryland State Highway Administration made a public presentation on their progress thus far in their safety study on the River Road corridor, extending from Springfield Drive to Little Falls Parkway.

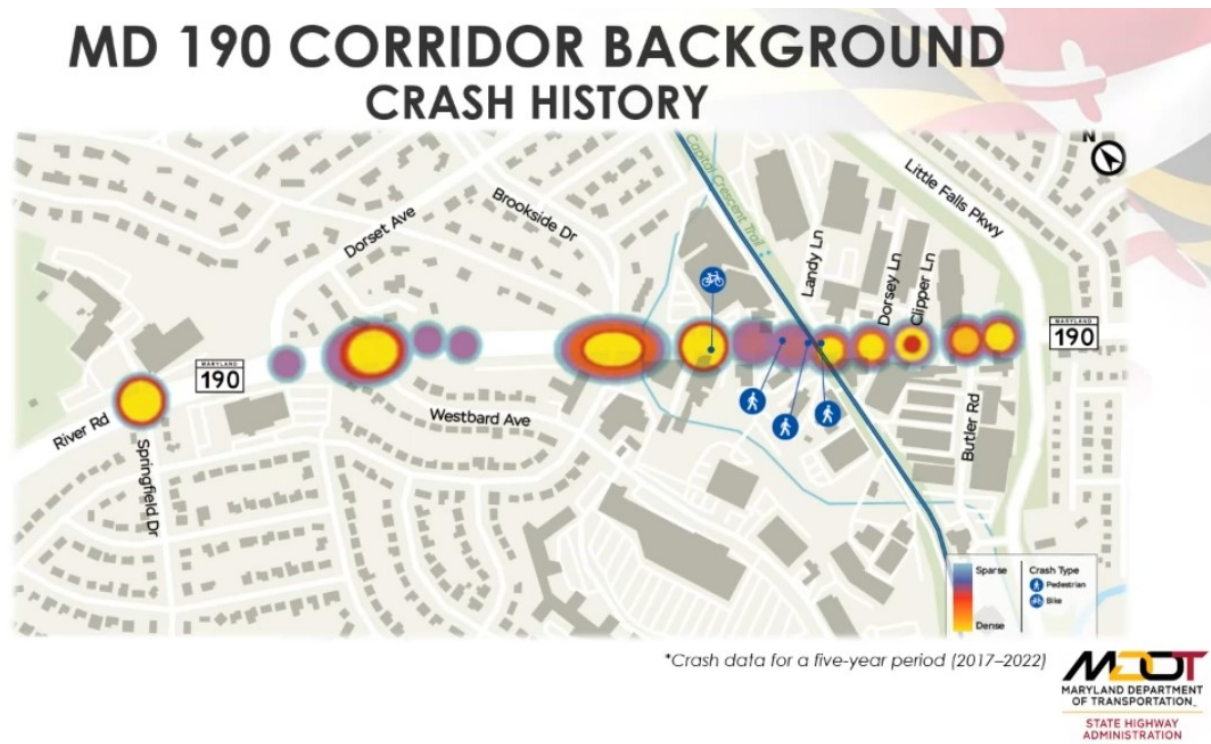
As part of their presentation, they included the attached slide. It is a visual illustration of vehicular crash density along River Road. It includes heat mapping of crashes, with the areas of densest crashes being shown in yellow.

The SHA's heat map shows that the intersection of Westbard Avenue and River Road is one of the 3 most dangerous points in the entire study area. An enormous amount of crashes happen at this intersection. This aligns with the incident numbers of car crashes which we included as "Exhibit D" to our original petition application letter.

This is an unsignalized intersection between a secondary neighborhood road and a state highway. There is absolutely no reason for these car crashes to continue happening now that a brand new signalized intersection is nearing completion. All future traffic should be channeled through the newly realigned road's signalized intersection.

Please approve the petition to close down this dangerous, unsignalized, unnecessary intersection.

---Ben Mann



McCray, Tiara

From: Leanne Tobias [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 11:23 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Paylor, Michael L.; Conklin, Christopher; Marc Elrich; Friedson, Andrew
Subject: UPDATED: Fwd: AB 786: Oppose Permanent Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road Pending Further Study

Categories: Abandonments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Dear Ms. McCray:

Below, I have updated my earlier written testimony opposing the closure of Westbard Avenue to recommend that MCDOT's impact analysis be delayed until the completion and stabilization (attainment of long-term occupancy levels) at Westbard Square, defined as *12 months* following the completion of all phases (retail, residential, assisted living) of Westbard Square.*

Delaying the impact analysis until 12 months following the completion of Westbard Square roughly conforms to the traditional real estate industry time period associated with the attainment of *stabilized project occupancy*, that is, when the project will be *operating as expected for the long term.*

While an alternative method is to estimate traffic based on *stabilized occupancy projected by a current appraisal, a real-time study is preferable in light of the uncertainty concerning the performance of the realigned roadway serving the Westbard Square project.

Assessing traffic impact at Westbard Square's *stabilized occupancy level* is important to capturing long-term effects. The full impact of traffic at Westbard Square will be affected by all phases of development, including the new Giant, additional retail/office space, an assisted living facility and substantial apartment and retail development.

Leanne Tobias
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded

DATE: September 16, 2023
Subject: UPDATED, AB 786: Oppose Permanent Closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road Pending Further Study

Dear Ms. McCray:

I write today in my personal capacity as a decades-long resident of Ridgefield Road in the Springfield neighborhood of Bethesda. Please include this letter in the AB 786 hearing record.

Closure is Premature. This letter is to oppose AB 786, the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road, as premature. A decision on AB 786 should not be made until traffic studies have:

1)Evaluated the effectiveness of the realigned Westbard Avenue in diverting traffic from the Springfield neighborhood. This evaluation should be conducted following the completion of the Westbard Avenue realignment and the completion and stabilization (attainment of long-term occupancy levels, often defined as occupancy at 12 months post-completion) of all phases of Westbard Square in order to account for the establishment of new traffic patterns.

2)Evaluated the probable impact of the permanent closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road on adjacent streets and on the Springfield neighborhood generally. Again, such studies should await the establishment of new traffic patterns following the completion of the Westbard Avenue realignment and the completion and stabilization of all phases of construction at Westbard Square, including the new Giant, additional retail/office space, the assisted living facility, apartments and townhomes.

Springfield Neighborhood Traffic Problems. A key reason to oppose the closure of Westbard Avenue at River Road at this time is the fact that recent detours have caused substantial and continuing traffic problems in the Springfield neighborhood. In light of these problems, careful study is needed before closing another through street. Recent problems include the following:

- The closing of Westbard Avenue initially diverted over 5,000 vehicles per day, including heavy trucks, to Ridgefield Road, a situation alleviated only by making Ridgefield Road temporarily one way.
- The changes in traffic patterns due to the Westbard Avenue closure have imposed an unacceptable cut-through traffic burden on Ogden Road, a small street with limited capacity. Recent review indicates that over 80% of this Ogden Road cut-through traffic has been speeding, presenting a safety hazard.
- The Westbard Avenue closure has shifted additional traffic to Cromwell Drive. This situation is potentially hazardous because Wood Acres Elementary School is located there.

Assess Impact of New Westbard Square Development. A second reason to defer a decision to permanently close the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue is the need to accurately assess the impact of added density at Westbard Square on traffic patterns. The new Westbard Square development, scheduled for completion in 2026, will include the newly expanded Giant store, additional retail/office space, an assisted living center with 90 parking spaces and, most significantly, 300+ apartments and townhomes on the Westbard Square site and on what has been lower Ridgefield Road at River Road. This new construction will significantly increase traffic volume in the area of the realigned Westbard Avenue, and could adversely affect traffic conditions on surrounding neighborhood streets.

The impact of closing Westbard Avenue at River Road should be evaluated in the context of this new residential density. A real-time post-completion evaluation is preferable to a forward-looking study because of the uncertainty surrounding the performance of the realigned Westbard Avenue in diverting traffic from the Springfield neighborhood. The study should await the attainment of stabilized occupancy levels (that is, long-term post-completion occupancy) at Westbard Square, traditionally defined in the real estate industry as 12 months following the completion of construction.

Lack of Neighborhood Representation. A final reason to defer consideration of the closure of the 5500 block of Ridgefield Road is the lack of broad neighborhood representation in drafting and submitting the current petition.

The petition to permanently close Westbard Avenue at River Road was submitted by a group representing only the 24 or so homes on the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue. The Springfield Civic Association, which represents the approximately 650 homes in the Springfield neighborhood — including the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue — was not informed of the road closure petition and was not consulted in its drafting. The Springfield Civic Association and the residents of Springfield should be given an opportunity to express their views on AB 786 before this consequential decision is made.

Thank you for your attention to this letter. Again, I oppose AB 786 as premature. Additional traffic studies should be conducted after completion and stabilization of Westbard Square to assess new traffic patterns and the adequacy of the realigned roadway in diverting traffic from the Springfield neighborhood. These studies are needed to evaluate whether AB 786 would adversely affect the Springfield neighborhood. In addition, the views of the Springfield Civic Association and the residents of the broader Springfield community should be fully considered.

Sincerely,

Leanne Tobias

[REDACTED]

Bethesda, MD 20816

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

McCray, Tiara

From: Leo Bouma [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 11:38 AM
To: McCray, Tiara
Cc: Conklin, Christopher; Friedson's Office, Councilmember; Marc Elrich; Paylor, Michael L.
Subject: Westbard Sector Plan - permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue

Categories: Abandonments

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To the Montgomery County officials responsible for designing the transportation network:

My name is Leo Bouma, and I am a resident of the Wood Acres neighborhood. I am writing to register my strong support for the permanent closure of the northwest terminus of the 5500 block of Westbard Avenue.

I understand that the 2016 Westbard Sector Plan endorsed the permanent closure of this public right of way once the newly realigned road is connected to River Road. We are nearing the completion of the road construction, and the time has come to honor the promise you made to this part of the Springfield neighborhood.

The new road is extremely wide, with 5 lanes where it intersects River Road, and it has a traffic signal there. The intersection which the petition seeks to close has no traffic signal. It is obvious that the safer route is for traffic to go through the safe, new, signalized intersection.

Please support traffic safety in Springfield, and close this dangerous intersection to vehicular traffic.

Thank you,

Leo Bouma
[REDACTED]