

SUMMARY OF PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY
PUBLIC HEARING DRAFT RACHEL CARSON GREENWAY TRAIL CORRIDOR PLAN
 May 19, 2005

TOPIC	TESTIMONY	STAFF COMMENTS
<p>A. RACHEL CARSON GREENWAY CONCEPT</p>	<p>Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation supports the Rachel Carson Greenway Trail Corridor Plan and the inclusion of an existing segment in Prince George's County near Adephi Mill. This is a wonderful opportunity for our citizens in both counties to access facilities located along the greenway corridor. We are especially please with the opportunity to create stronger connections between our Counties through the park system (Maye Wells-Harley, Director)</p> <p>Plan implements two key elements of the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan: protection of greenway connections and the protection of heritage resources. Board should keep in mind importance of providing a true greenway of woods, streams and fields that serves as wildlife corridor. Fully multi-purpose greenway corridor will meet goals of Legacy Open Space program by preserving, linking best natural and historic resources throughout County. (Legacy Open Space Advisory Group)</p> <p>Historic Preservation Commission supports and applauds the broad concept of the trail. Commemorating the work of Rachel Carson by interpreting and celebrating our county's natural and cultural resources an excellent idea. Board should carefully consider agricultural and historic preservation issues and community concerns. Have trail acknowledge historic areas along and near the trail route; signage critical. (Historic Preservation Commission)</p> <p>Wholeheartedly endorse completion of the Rachel Carson Greenway Corridor because of important recreation opportunities and emphasis on key historic and cultural events from our past. (Mid-County Recreation Advisory Board)</p> <p>Northwood-Four Corners supports extension of the trail to the Patuxent River State Park and its further connection of Seneca Greenway Trail; use should be limited to pedestrian and equestrians (Pritchard)</p> <p>Many outstanding issues that need to be addressed. Plan does not offer any detailed information concerning potential environmental constraints within the corridor. Concerned about potential impacts to wetlands, rare and uncommon plant species, steep slopes, stream crossings, and additional fragmentation of forest interior habitat. Recommend manual, not chemical, eradication of noxious plants. (Maryland Native Plant Society, Sierra Club)</p>	<p>These concerns will be addressed as each segment of the Trail goes through further staff analysis prior to deciding a final alignment. Staff has walked the entire greenway and the trail alignments showing in the plan reflect an approximate trail location based on environmental inventory data and field analysis. The final alignment will be determined with involvement of park managers, park naturalists, park ecologists and park maintenance staff.</p>

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	<p>Support greenway concept from an educational point of view the themes developed for different sections of the trail fit in nicely with the established curriculum of Montgomery County Public Schools. The Interpretive Program ("Opportunities") would only enhance the educational value of the trail and definitely should be included. Involving MCPX personnel in developing interpretive materials should be considered as this could make them even more useful to school groups utilizing sections of the trail. (Montgomery County Outdoor Education Assoc.)</p> <p>The Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board advocates re-evaluating any proposed alignment, which traverses through active agricultural operations and more importantly properties which are protected by agricultural easements.</p> <p>In general, Farm Bureau supports the idea of a continuous 25-mile corridor trail. One of the goals of the Rachel Carson Plan should be to have minimal impact on agricultural businesses along the trail alignments.</p> <p>Been enjoying Northwest Branch trail south of Rte 29 for many years only recently discovered the trail north of Rte 29 and has become favorite. This entire trail system is an excellent natural resource that should be supported and maintained for future generations (McDonnell)</p> <p>Congratulate staff and Board for recognition of desirability and necessity of the varied interpretive possibilities, which the corridor can offer to children and all citizens. (McCandless)</p> <p>Plan does not address issue of pest management in general, whether chemical pesticides would be used adjacent to trail or how unwanted organisms including weeds would be controlled near greenway. Urge development of alternative, organic pest control plan (Rachel Carson Council, Inc.)</p>	<p>When proposed trail alignments traverse agricultural land there is no intent to interfere with existing farming or interfere with the continued use of a property for agriculture. Park trails or public use trail easements are implemented at time of subdivision and even in the Agriculture Reserve, subdivision activity still occurs. Trails can also support the growing horse industry in Montgomery County. A 1999 survey conducted by the Soil Conservation District Montgomery concluded that trail riding was the most popular equestrian activity.</p> <p>The management of parkland is a countywide natural resource issue that has to be addressed outside of this particular Master Plan.</p> <p>In general, the MNCPPC Natural Resources Management Staff prefers mechanical rather than chemical removal of invasive species of any type (hence the emphasis on the Weed Warrior Program and use of bush hogs, mowers, gas-powered hedge trimmers, weed wackers, etc).</p> <p>We always try to schedule our work so that we can do the optimal amount of damage to the invasive plant population using mechanical means. This means planning staff work days so that the plants are mowed just before they flower vs after they have produced fruit, etc. We have recently initiated an innovative pilot program using goats in urban non-native invasive control.</p>

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	<p>Make sure trails are open to horses wherever trail can be made sustainable (Loczi)</p>	<p>However, there are situations in which chemicals must be used due to the biological nature of the particular plant species. The huge majority of the worst invaders are perennial plants. Cutting these off at ground level may "set them back", but certainly doesn't kill them. Some of these will regenerate with only a few roots left in the ground; one or two plants regenerate with even just pieces of the plant left (one reason they are so rampant). We have neither the staff nor the money to hire contractors to keep hacking away at perennial vines for years.</p> <p>Staff is sympathetic to the sentiment and we should make every effort to minimize chemical use and use the most benign chemicals we can but a total ban won't work. Rachel Carson supported the preservation of biodiversity. Today we use pesticides judiciously to maintain that diversity.</p>
B. PERMITTED TRAIL USES		
	<p>Disappointed that cyclists have been left out. Trail should be open to cyclists not included in notes from early community meetings. Rachel Carson Greenway would provide safe place to ride bicycles away from traffic. County needs to stop ignoring cyclists and to share public land with citizens who ride bicycles. (Fritsch) Map submitted with proposed trails for cyclists.</p> <p>Proposed Rachel Carson Trail should be open to hikers, bikers, and horses because everyone needs and deserves a safe place for recreation. Bike trails along roads are not safe. (Hampp, Hall).</p>	<p>The Park and Planning Department is committed to providing more natural surface trails that are open to cyclists. The Seneca Creek Greenway is open to all uses: hiking, horseback riding and cycling. Park trail staff have worked with MORE to open shared use trails in Fairland Recreational Park. One of the planning issues in the upcoming trail corridor plan for Rock Creek will be where cyclists can be accommodated</p> <p>The Rachel Carson Greenway has always been designated an interpretive corridor. Hikers and walkers will be encouraged to stop and study their surroundings, to follow maps identifying key historic and cultural features and to encourage groups of school children to visit. Because of the emphasis on interpretation, cycling will not be permitted unless it will not interfere with the interpretative activities.</p>

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C. CLOSING THE GAP IN SANDY SPRING: SEGMENT 5		
C1. <i>Plan Process</i>	<p>I feel proud to have been born in Sandy Spring 80 years ago and to have worked with community members especially with the Quaker community to improve our community. I urge you to listen to the community and its wishes and concerns (Snowden)</p> <p>Listen to local community and approve a trail option through Sandy Spring that reflects local participation and acceptance. Concern about intrusion of visitors to trail and museum to residents on Bentley Road. (Montgomery Preservation, Inc.)</p> <p>The Sandy Spring and Bentley Road Civic Assn and Greater Sandy Spring Green Space have proposed a plan for the Rachel Carson Greenway. Urge adoption of Plan A for the trail (Delegates, 24th Legislative District)</p> <p>Persuasion and appeal of pride of ownership is how the public has traditionally gained access to privately owned historic properties. "House and Garden" tours should not be discarded in favor of a 24/7 trail. (Sandy Spring Trails Committee)</p> <p>Listen to those living in the community. Very intrigued by Greater Sandy Spring Greenspace option. Consider options C and A. (Schauffer)</p> <p>Be sensitive to people and relationships. Find Option C very provocative. (L. Wright)</p> <p>Did not receive 30 days notice. Proposals have constantly changed and appear to have been tailored to win support from whatever audience staff is presenting to. Have not defined what kind of easements would be required of private property owners. (Sandy Spring Trails Committee)</p> <p>Staff has shown different versions of trail proposals at every presentation and in staff Draft. Confusing. (Ziek)</p>	<p>The trail options shown in the Staff Draft Plan, published in March 2005 have remained unchanged and are the same as appear in the Public Hearing Draft Plan. At earlier meetings with the community, prior to publication of the Staff Draft Plan, different options were shown and then revised based on public input. For example, at one time, a trail option that followed sidewalks proposed in the Sandy Spring/Ashton Plan was proposed at a Sandy Spring Civic Association meeting. Those attending opposed this option in the area of Brooke Road/Chandlee Mill because of the impact on existing lots. This option was then dropped. At the same time, the recommendation of the Sandy Spring Trails Committee (Option A) was added.</p>

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<p align="center">C. 2. Testimony From Owners of Property Proposed To Be Traversed by Greenway</p>		
<p>Brooke Grove Foundation, Inc.</p>	<p>It appears that Option A would have a greater adverse impact because it would traverse a more significant portion of the campus and would make it difficult, if not impossible, to provide the necessary security for Brooke Grove's residents. Therefore, while we do not support either trail alignment insofar as both impact the campus, we believe that Option B is a better alternative than Option A. (Brooke Grove Foundation, Inc.)</p>	<p>In terms of private property owners, all corridor options require a trail easement across a portion of Brooke Grove Foundation. The specific elements of the easement would be subject to negotiation with the Foundation</p>
<p>Brooke Run Tree Farm, Inc.</p>	<p>Oppose Option B because it is our intent to continue [the working nursery] and we believe the proposed staff preferred alignment, which crosses our property, is both unrealistic and undesirable to us.</p>	<p>The willingness of Brooke Grove Foundation to at least consider a trail easement is appreciated.</p>
<p>Joe Danshes</p>	<p>My family is not opposed to Option B traversing our property and would work with the county in an acquisition or possible easement to facilitate a public walkway through our property</p>	<p>Continuation of the nursery and the open space it provides is a benefit to the community and the county. The Greenway alignment shown in Option B does traverse the nursery but implementation as stated in the Plan would only occur if and when the property developed as another use (the property is zoned Rural Cluster). The Plan includes an interim trail alignment that avoids nursery operations.</p>
<p align="center">C.3 Testimony Of Property Owners That Would Be Provided Access By Trail Options</p>		
<p>Sandy Spring Meeting</p>	<p>Will not give easement for trail on private road in front of Meeting House because of concerns of conflicts with Meeting House Programs and worship services. Support Plan recommendation that trail goes east of Meeting House Road. Support Option C from Greater Sandy Spring Green Space. (Fullerton on behalf of the Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting Trustees)</p>	
<p>Housing Opportunities Commission</p>	<p>Support greenway location that would allow families at Sandy Spring Meadows safe access to Ross Boddy Recreation Center (Housing Opportunities Commission)</p>	<p>Agree</p>
<p>Mid-County Recreation Advisory Board (Ross Boddy Recreation Center)</p>	<p>Endorse greenway options that provide safe connections between Ross Boddy Center and Sandy Spring.</p>	<p>Agree</p>

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<p>Owners of bakery at corner of MD108 and Meeting House Road</p>	<p>Prefer Option A; as an alternative would be happy to see Option C which would have trail go past our bakery and possibly become a "watering hole" for those taking trail. Find little benefit to Option B.</p>	<p>A key advantage of Options B and C over Option A is what trail users would be directed through the village center.</p>
<p><i>C. 4 Testimony Of Civic Groups, Governmental Boards And Agencies</i></p>		
<p>Greater Sandy Spring Green Space, Inc.</p> <p>Sandy Spring Civic Association</p>	<p>Option C developed by Greater Sandy Spring Green Space at meeting on April 26. Meets county objectives in many positive ways and also meets the needs of local residents. (Chirtea for Greater Sandy Spring Green Space Inc.)</p> <p>We support A, will enjoy the benefits of economic development offered through Greater Sandy Spring Green Space's Option C and we oppose Option B. Approve Option A for the Rachel Carson Greenway with a Sandy Spring Heritage spur along Option C.</p> <p>Planning board should approve a trail between the HOC development at The Meadows and the RNC Danshes property along Brooke Road through the current subdivision process regardless of the greenway alignment.</p> <p>Support countywide policies: fiscal constraint, protect environmentally sensitive forests and wetlands by avoiding duplicate trails and support farmers in areas zoned for agriculture.</p>	<p>See packet for discussion of Sandy Spring Heritage trail concept.</p> <p>The issue is whether this connection should be park trail of a public use easement.</p>

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	<p>Option B not in Sandy Spring Master Plan. Option B has similar problems to Option A: public uses, easements, bottleneck at Brooke Grove, following public roads. Bypasses the village center. Affects agricultural properties and small farms along Bentley Road. Involves 2, maybe 3 stream crossings. Misses the Sandy Spring historic district. Misses interpretive opportunities. Forces private historic property into a public program. Tries to do too much: uncomfortable with park being open at night to interpret "Night Sky".</p>	<p>The Sandy Spring/Ashton Master Plan recommends that the Northwest Branch Trail, since renamed the Rachel Carson Greenway, extend from MD 108 to the Hawlings River. The Plan states: "The design and exact width and location of the trails should be determined by the Parks Department... The trails should be unpaved and designed in keeping with the historic and rural setting of the area. Resolve outstanding trail issues by conducting a more detailed analysis of the entire tire Northwest Branch Corridor."</p> <p>The "Night Sky" theme would be interpreted by park naturalists at park sponsored events. The trail would not be open at night.</p> <p>No private property owners are being forced into public programs. Only Brooke Grove Foundation is affected by trail options that would require permission to cross their property. All three trail options assume implementation at time of development of parcels affected by trail proposals.</p> <p>In Option B, the existing neighborhoods closest to proposed greenway alignment are Sandy Spring Meadows and Bentley Road homes.</p>
Sandy Spring Trails Committee	<p>Most of Option A already exists. People bought in new subdivisions knowing easement there; they did not have to buy the house. Unfair to put trail near existing homes. Option A treads lightly on the environment and is less expensive for taxpayers; highlights historical resources the community deems important.</p> <p>Option B conflicts with purpose of RNC zone; focuses on privately owned, historically designated farm houses that have no relationship to Rachel Carson; ignores MALPF easement on Stephens Farm; farming and recreation are not compatible.</p>	
Friends of Oakley Cabin & Underground Railroad	<p>Support continuing trail through not around the Village of Sandy Spring. Interpretation of Underground Railroad experience needs Village of Sandy Spring and interpretation of role of Quakers and Free Blacks of Sandy Spring. This experience consistent with National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.</p>	

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Bentley Road Civic Association	<p>Preference for Option A as least invasive to the environment even as it passes nearly though not close enough to infringe upon important historical resources.</p> <p>Option A is a beautiful path. Meets all the greenway criteria of staff. Has superior historical resources: the Sharp Street Methodist Church and the Odd Fellows Lodge. Less costly than Option B and ready to roll.</p> <p>Option B is bad for agriculture. It would convert open space on Dansches to Parkland. Bad for the environment. Bad for the budget as it would require acquisition of six-acre lot on Bentley Road.</p>	<p>See Packet for discussion of options.</p> <p>See Packet.</p>
Trail Riders of Today (TROT)	<p>Support B; better crossing of MD 108, adjacent to green space and historic sites; not dependent on homeowner's association for trail's continued use.</p> <p>Option A: area very wet; no good place to cross MD 108</p>	
Heritage Tourism Alliance of Montgomery County	<p>Support Option C. Heritage Tourism program dedicated to bringing history of county alive and a trail like Rachel Carson helps that goal. Trail would be part of the Target Investment Zone for Heritage Tourism and as such qualified for additional funding.</p>	<p>Agree that the Rachel Carson Greenway Trail Corridor should support Heritage Tourism.</p>
Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association	<p>Option A in Rachel Carson tradition; Option B is part of County history. We need both. If this approach approved, Option A segment should stay under Commission control to assure maintenance, trash collection, environmental protection and park police support. (Fritchard for Northwood-Four Corners Civic Association)</p>	
Maryland Native Plant Society, Sierra Club	<p>Support Option A because dedicated parkland and public use easements already available and a trail will be placed here regardless. Prefer to have only one trail thru Sandy Spring. Not insensitive to the privacy of those in the community owning historic properties. (Md. Native Plant Society, Sierra Club)</p>	
Legacy Open Space Advisory Group	<p>The Advisory Group concludes that either Public Hearing Draft Option B or the Sandy Spring Greenspace option would achieve the LOS Functional Master Plan's intent that historic and cultural resources in this area be linked. The Advisory Group also recommends that Option A, which goes west of Sandy Spring be included as part of the Greenway Corridor concept because it would help provide a "loop" trail in and around Sandy Spring. We understand most of this alignment consists of public use easements and could be implemented without parkland acquisition. The loop trail concept will enhance both natural and historic interpretive opportunities.</p>	<p>See packet for discussion of loop trail option.</p>

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<p>C. 5 Other Testimony</p>	<p>Option A</p> <p>I am a member of local horse community; request adoption of Option A (Pariso)</p> <p>Support Option A and more bicycle connections through Sandy Spring (Winkler)</p> <p>Crossing Route 108 in vicinity of Sherwood Elementary school extremely hazardous; trail in this area very wet all year; parking at Sharp Street would inconvenience services and parking lot very small; no guarantee homeowners associations will keep trails maintained and open. (Boyd)</p> <p>Area very wet; no good place to cross Md 108 (Jossi)</p> <p>No assurance trails will stay open and maintained; no good parking lot (Solner/Grey)</p> <p>Option A preserves agriculture and the equestrian tradition and the sporting life in and around Sandy Spring. We do not need public trails in environmentally fragile stream valleys, trails that pass too close to farming operations and invite trespass onto private property (G. Hayward)</p> <p>Option A, presently being developed, can perfectly reasonably be designated the Rachel Carson Greenway without additional outlay or additional disruption (Ennis, Bhatia, Hutchinson)</p> <p>Option A is a more pleasant hike being further away from homes, businesses and road traffic (Caldow)</p> <p>Support Option A as would best satisfy the needs of the Sandy Spring community (Wolcott)</p> <p>Option A trails already there. Less money to be spent. Best to use as little of tax money as possible on project. Light and crosswalk needed at crossing of MD 108 at Sherwood Elementary. Trail will benefit Sherwood Elem and Sherwood HS (C. Berglund)</p> <p>Strongly oppose Option A. Own two properties on Marden Lane, now allow equestrians to use but will withdraw my permission for rides because Option A will dramatically increase volume of traffic. Surprised some rider/proponents of Option A live along Option B, which would allow trail to be closer to them. (Hines)</p>	<p>Publicly owned and maintained trails help lower incidents of trespass.</p> <p>See packet for discussion.</p> <p>Option A goes by homes and involves a crossing of MD 108. The fact it avoids the business area of Sandy Spring is a disadvantage.</p>

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	<p>Option A is going to be built. We are not inventing anything new. Residents knew public trail was going to be built. (Ziek)</p> <p>Option A is superior route (Hayward, Reid)</p> <p>Best from an economical standpoint; no land will have to be purchased. Sidewalks needed and safe crossing of 108 at Sherwood Elem. Sidewalks can provide connection to Sandy Spring. Beautiful trail exists in Option A. Should reroute the trail near MD 108 where it goes through an existing new home development. Trail soggy west of Norwood Road. Risked lives crossing MD 108 Need pathway to downtown. Does not go thru farmland. (Berglunds)</p>	<p>See discussion in packet.</p> <p>The trail in Option C cannot be rerouted because the trail is designated on a record plat that is not easily changed and is the responsibility of the homeowners association, not the park department.</p>
<p>Option B</p>	<p>Oppose option B: Route 108 crossing very dangerous at Bentley Rd. Trail invites more intrusions from HOC residents; are you willing to protect privacy by erecting a fence on north side of our property? (Brown, Kernan)</p> <p>I am member of local horse community; request adoption of Option A (Pariso)</p> <p>Support either Option B or Option C. Pleased that the Plan addresses Meeting concerns about not having official trail go in front of Friends Meeting House. (McCandless)</p> <p>History associated with property behind museum not only from underground railroad but also from life of native Indians. Trail and entrance does not interfere with houses on Bentley road. Parking is available at Sherwood High School.(Boyd)</p> <p>Support B: better crossing of MD 108 and cannot see any homes (Oliva)</p> <p>Appreciate equestrian trails in Montgomery County; very strongly in favor of Option B: best crossing of MD 108 and avoids riding along road of Option C and the mud of Option A (Joss)</p> <p>Support B: high school provides parking, safe crossing of MD 108 and believe trail north of MD 108 will not affect privacy of property owners (Richards)</p> <p>Trail should go through best part of county; seeing large residences and breathing car exhaust not part of Rachel Carson's legacy; B gives rural feel. To avoid nursery, go west before reaching the property. (Soliner-Webb)</p> <p>Oppose use of Bentley Road, a paved but narrow country road. Crossing Bentley Road will cause a safety hazard for hikers and residents (Caldow)</p>	

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<p>Option C</p>	<p>Most cultural resources in Option B privately owned. (Hayward)</p> <p>Taking a trail thru land that is very fragile is not being a keeper of the land. Wetlands are a precious part of our environment. Horses and hikers will result in erosion and destruction of fragile life. Taking a trail up to a farmer's land will result in people going thru the farmer's land. (C. Berglund)</p> <p>Support Option C and the routing of the greenway east of Meeting House Road. Sherwood High School parking lot seems like good place to direct people to park on weekends (Wright)</p>	
D. OTHER SEGMENTS		
<p>Segment 1</p>	<p>Advocating for trail south of Route 29, a local gem that just needs a little polishing. Many interpretive opportunities, including beltway. Paved portion very good for cyclists and access is okay but steep. Need signs. (Finnegan)</p>	<p>The one-mile, hard surface hiker-biker trail portion of the Rachel Carson Greenway at the southern terminus of the Northwest Branch Stream Valley, originates in Prince Georges County at the Adelphi Mill and extends north into Montgomery County to the point where the maintenance access road from Oakview Avenue meets the trail. This trail provides an important connection for Montgomery County residents to access the greater Anacostia Trail System of hiker-biker trails. The hard surface trail terminates and continues as a natural surface trail for the length of the Greenway. The hard surface portion of the trail is recommended for renovation through the capital program. This will include a comprehensive study of improvements to the trail to address the need to make a portion of the trail accessible, as well as signage, resurfacing sections, drainage, and in particular, possible provision of a bridge where the trail passes through a stream tributary. In addition, providing better connections from the neighborhoods should be evaluated as part of the analysis including natural surface connections from Brookview and Broad Acres Local parks.</p>
<p>Segment 3,4</p>	<p>Concern due to presence of rare plant species and numerous wetlands, high quality riparian habitats and large areas of contiguous forest that deserve the utmost protection (Md Native Plant Society, Sierra Club)</p>	<p>Agree. As more fieldwork is done in these segments prior to trail completion, staff will identify areas that may need bridges or boardwalk if the trail cannot avoid sensitive environmental features completely. Permitted trail uses may be limited to hikers only in areas that are particularly sensitive.</p>

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Segment 8	<p>Include access at Cubstone Way and Balboa Drive while these is an easement/access retained for entry into the greenway (Bolesta)</p> <p>Option A - Major environmental constraints associated with wetlands so allowing equestrians not good idea. Support Option B shorter, more direct and lessens impacts to wetlands and forest habitats. (Md Native Plant Society, Sierra Club)</p> <p>The opportunity to link this segment to the Rock Creek Trail Corridor further implements the Legacy Open Space Function Plan's objective to create a "coherent, interrelated, countywide network of green." We would urge that both options shown in the Rachel Carson Greenway Trail Corridor Plan be pursued, once again to create a trail loop linking the Rachel Carson Conservation Park, the Patuxent River State Park, and the Rock Creek trail network. (Legacy Open Space Advisory Group)</p>	<p>This issue will be addressed when staff looks at Segments 3 and 4 in more detail.</p> <p>See packet for discussion.</p>

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