



MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS
THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

MCPB
Item:
Date: 03/17/16

March 10, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Michael F. Riley, Director of Parks *MR*
Mitra Pedoeem, Acting Deputy Director of Parks *mitra*
Michael Ma, Acting Chief, Park Development Division *MM*

FROM: William Payton, Park Development Division *WP*

SUBJECT: Trail Connector between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Trail near the Bethesda Pool

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: APPROVAL of the Recommended Hard Surface Trail Connector Alignment Option D between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Trail, including budgetary construction cost estimate.

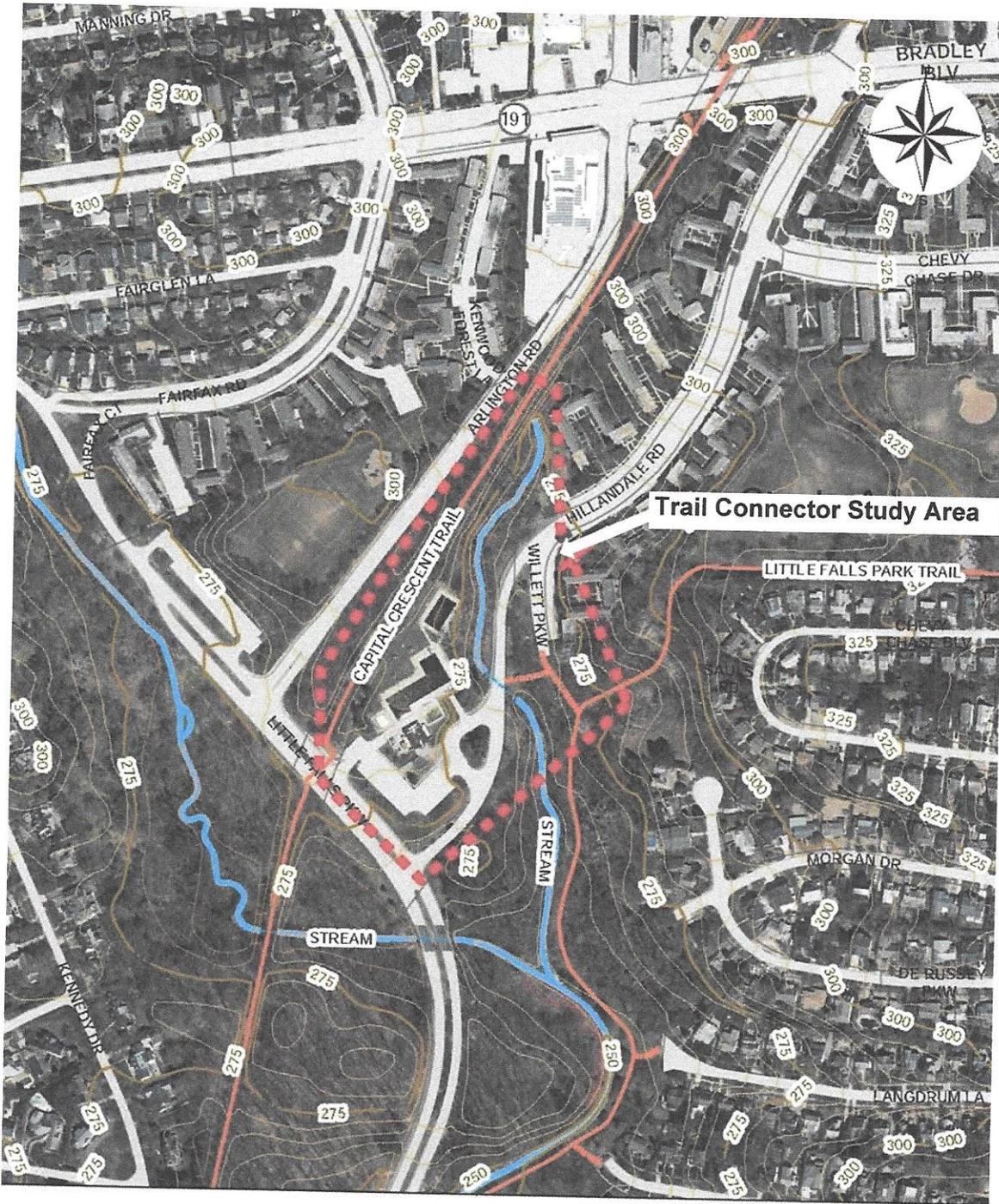
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

The purpose of this project is to provide a safe, functional and barrier-free trail connection between the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and the Little Falls Trail (LTF) within the designated study area near the Bethesda Pool, which is located at 6300 Little Falls Parkway, Bethesda. The connector trail will be in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The proposed connector between these two trail systems is on the Parks Trail Connector list based on a recommendation by the "The Capital Crescent Trail – Design and Implementation" (July 1992). Presently, the hiker/biker trail users, in this area, use the existing parking lot of the Bethesda Pool as a means of connectivity between the two trail systems. When evaluated as part of the Trail Connector analysis, this connector was rated fairly high because:

- It connects two (2) major hard surface trails;
- It provides direct links to public facilities, parks, and Metro stops within ¼ miles; and
- The surrounding areas within ½ mile include high density development.



--- Limit of Study Area

0 0.02 0.04 0.08 0.12 0.16 Miles

The Capital Crescent Trail

CCT is an 11-mile long, Class 1, shared-use trail that runs from Georgetown in Washington, D.C., to Silver Spring, Maryland. The segment between Georgetown and Bethesda is operated and maintained as a park trail, whereas the segment between Bethesda and Silver Spring is a master planned bikeway (SP-6 in the 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan). This project connects to the park trail segment.

CCT is a highly used hiker/biker trail as demonstrated by the user counts compiled by the Commission from February 15, 2015, to February 15, 2016:

- Pedestrians: 467,728
- Bicyclists: 323,271
- Total users: 791,000
- Average daily pedestrians: 1,278
- Average daily cyclists: 883

The Little Falls Trail

LFT is a 3.5-mile hiker-biker paved trail, largely shaded and offers unobstructed views of Little Falls. The trail parallels CCT starting at Mile 6 of the CCT and for about a mile shares the same right of way. Between Dorset and Massachusetts Avenues, LFT uses Little Falls Parkway to connect the upper and lower portions of the trail.

Trail Alignment Study

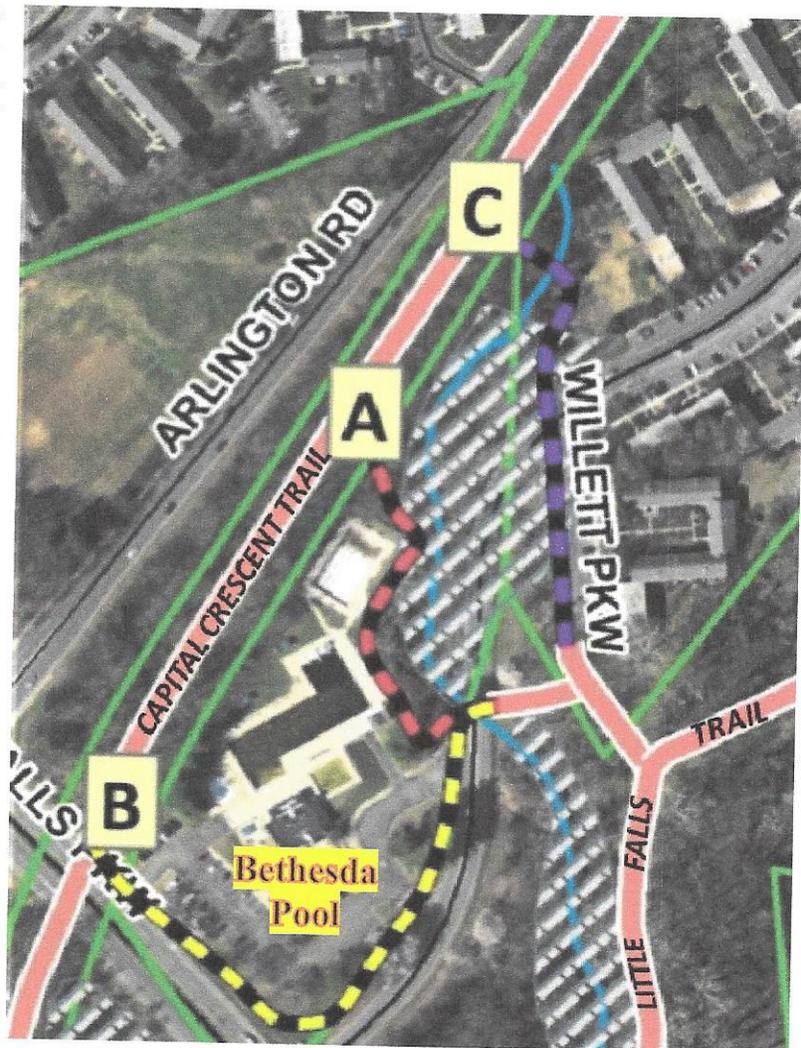
Parks hired a consulting firm, Site Resources, Inc., in May 2015 to study three options for an ADA accessible trail connector near the Bethesda pool along Hillandale Road. The consultants produced a conceptual design for each option (Options A, B and C).

All concepts were evaluated based on functionality, public safety, environmental impact, and cost. Parks subsequently held two community meetings (July 28, 2015 and September 8, 2015) to present the three trail alignment options to the public along with staff's evaluations.

Original Three Options

The initial trail connector alignment concept options presented to the public at the community meetings were:

1. **Option A:** A combination of an asphalt path and a 10-foot-wide x 400 feet long wooden boardwalk (with concrete plank decking) through the wooded area just north of the Bethesda pool. The alignment connects from the existing crosswalk at Hillandale Road. The total connector alignment travel distance is approximately 530 feet in length.



2. **Option B:** A 10-foot-wide concrete path along the Bethesda Pool parking lot frontages on Hillandale Road and Little Falls Parkway. The alignment connects from the existing crosswalk at Hillandale Road. The connector travel distance is approximately 850 feet in length.
3. **Option C:** A path that includes a 30(+/-) foot bridge-crossing at the Willet Branch with a series of wooden boardwalk switchbacks to achieve accessible grade differential. It extends a segment of the LFT along Willett Parkway. The alignment also crosses Hillandale Road at a roadway curve. The connector travel distance is approximately 680 feet in length.

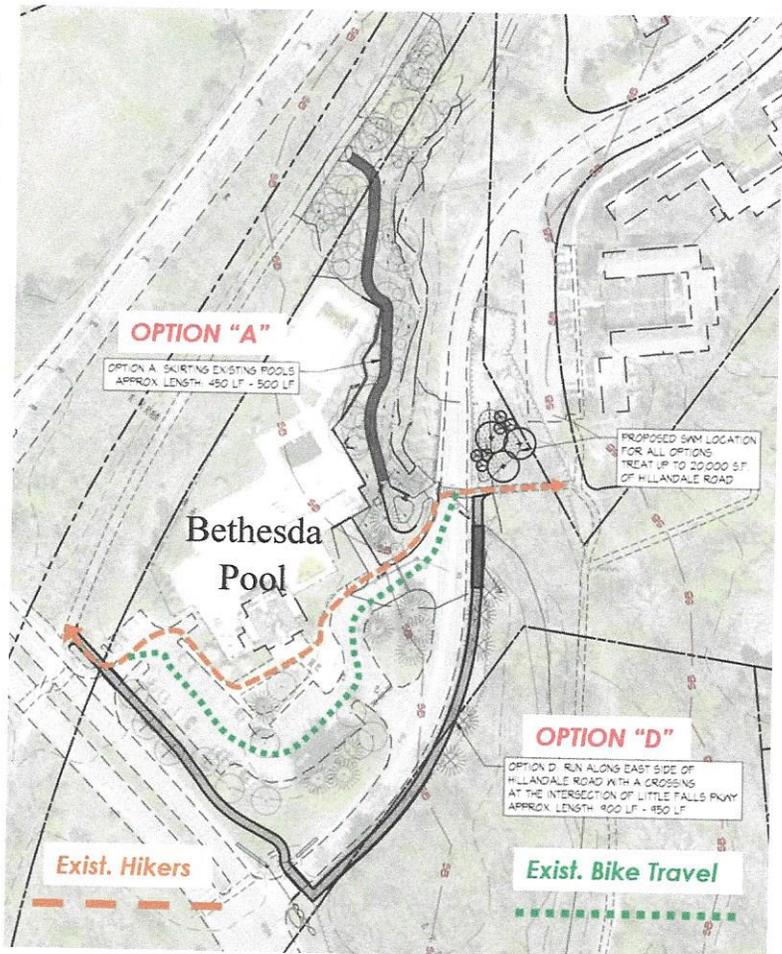
Community Input

The input received from the two community meetings ranged from those who overwhelmingly supported alignment Option A in the first meeting; to those requesting alignment Option B; to those requesting multiple connectors; to a “do not build the connector” recommendation. Later as more citizens became involved and with the participation of the Little Falls Watershed Alliance (LFWA), a new option (Option D) was recommended. A summary of some of the comments received along with petitions and emails are included in the Attachments (See Attachments A, B, and C).

Revised Trail Alignment Options

In response to the wide range of comments from the general public and civic associations, Parks directed the consultant to further study Option “A” and the new Option “D”. Based on the results of the study, Parks revised the trail alignment options as follows:

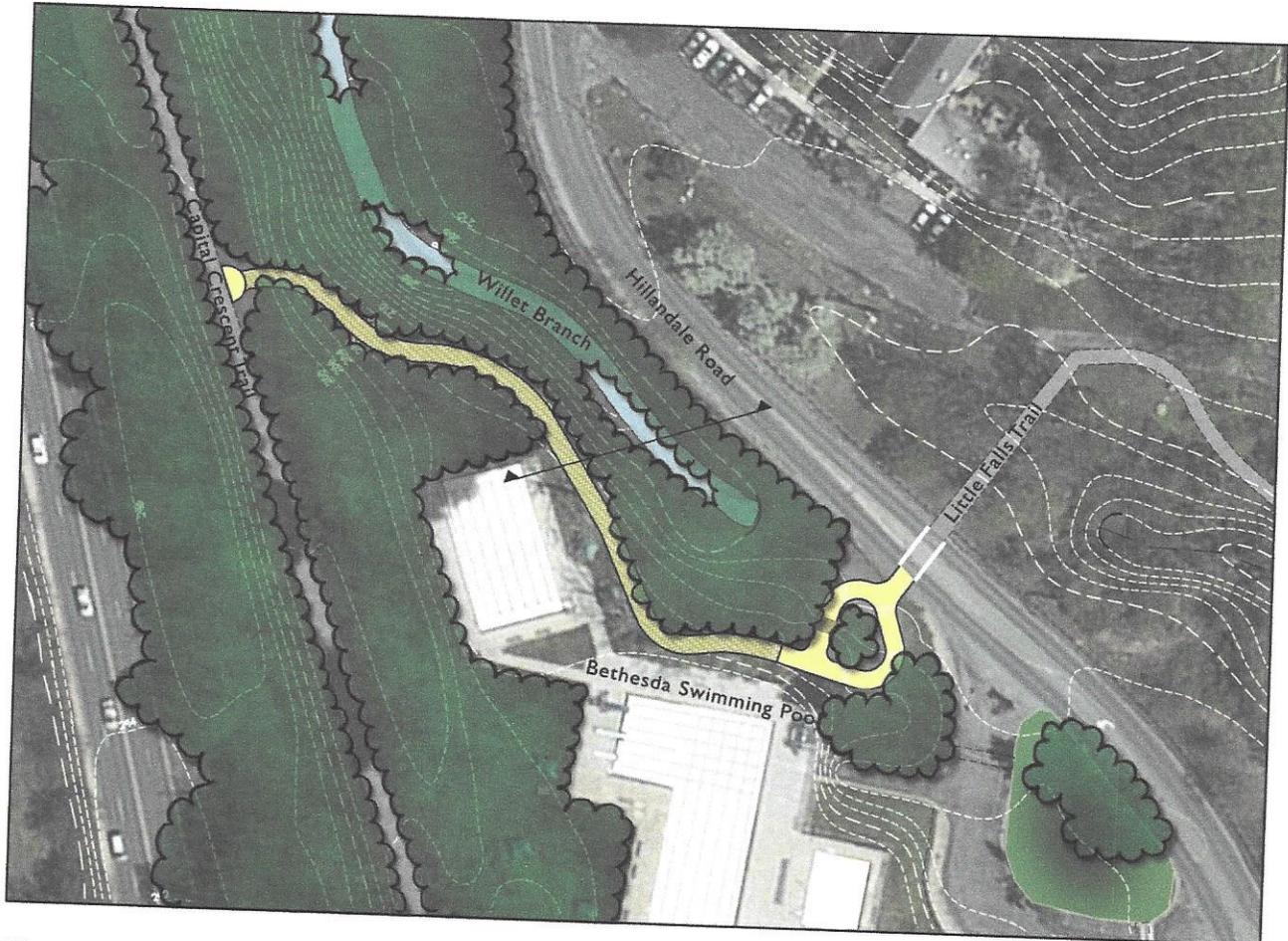
1. Trail Connector Option “A”- a 10 ft. wide boardwalk through the wooded area just north of the Bethesda Pool with the provisions for safety enhancements at the existing crosswalk crossing on Hillandale Road.
2. New alignment **Option “D”**- A 10 ft. wide hard surface connector path along the south-east side of Hillandale Road, crossing over to the pool complex frontage at the traffic light at Little Falls Parkway.
3. **“No Build”** - Provide safety enhancements at the existing crosswalk on Hillandale Road without constructing a trail connector. Other Safety enhancements will also be provided in other areas as required and necessary to promote a safe trail connection between both trails.



ANALYSIS OF ALIGNMENT OPTIONS

A brief description of each options is outlined below.

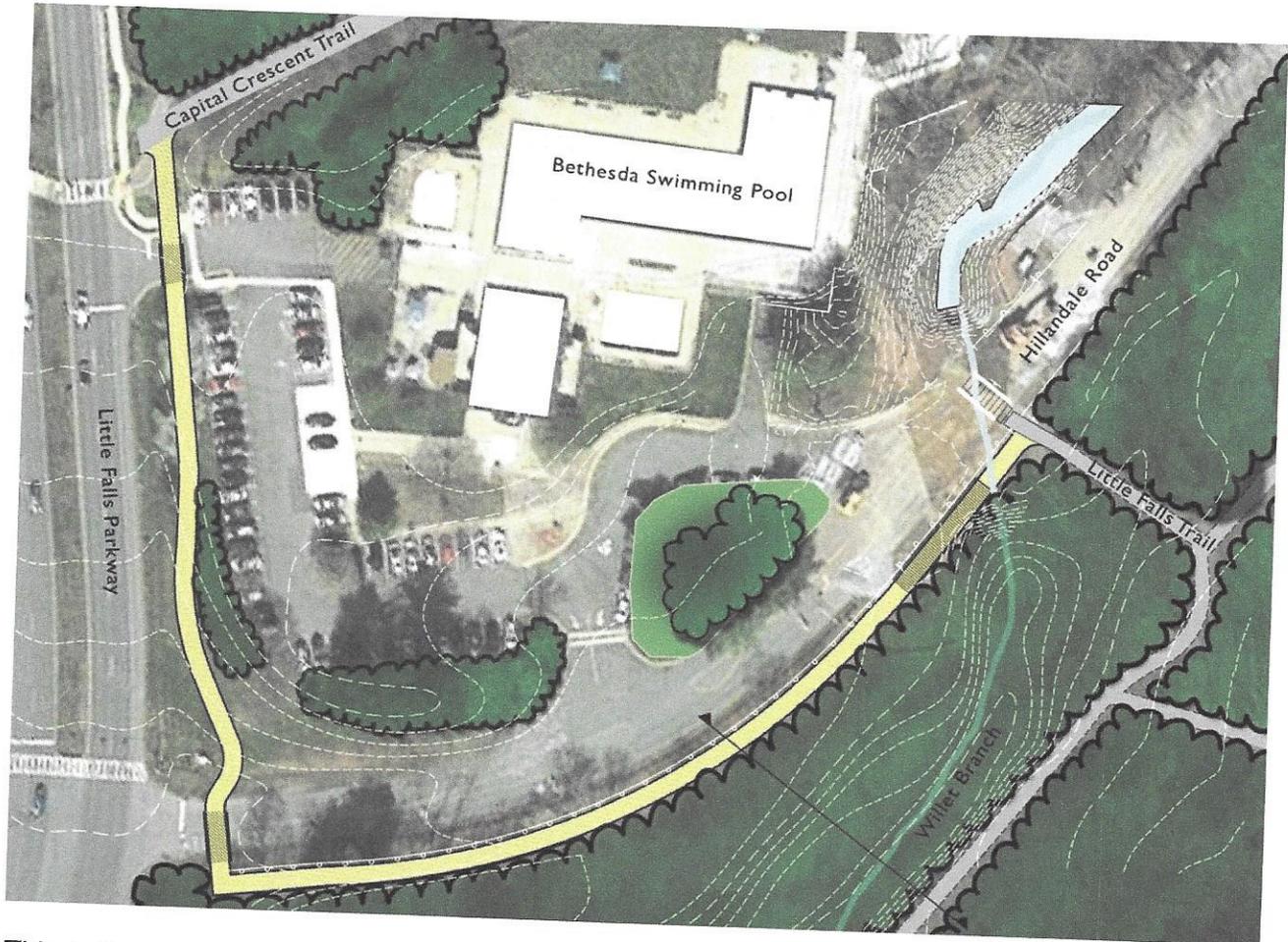
TRAIL CONNECTOR OPTION A



There are steep slopes and wooded area between the Bethesda Pool complex and the existing stream which creates a narrow space to install a hard surface trail. A wooden boardwalk on helical piers with concrete decking would be constructed through this area just north of the Pool along with a section of concrete paving and stairs. There are a lot of invasive plants just outside the boundaries of the pool (honeysuckle most noted), but there are decent sized trees along this area including white pines, sycamores, tulip trees and oaks that may be impacted. Construction access and staging are more of a challenge. This proposed alignment option will:

- Provide a scenic route and experientially pleasant trail connection between the two trail systems.
- Use the existing crossing at the cross walk at Hillandale Road.
- Avoid the three Bethesda Pool parking lot driveway entrances/exits.
- Serve hiker/biker trail users seeking to go north or south on either trail system.
- Split the difference between shortening the travel distance to go north while marginally increasing the travel distance to go south.
- Place the boardwalk construction within the Willett Branch stream buffer.
- Remove several trees, including: 1 - 22" Pine; 1 - 9" Walnut (Triple Tree); 1 - 7" Pine; 1 - 8" Sycamore; 1 - 8" Poplar; and 1 - 7" Poplar.
- Cost more than \$600,000 to construct.

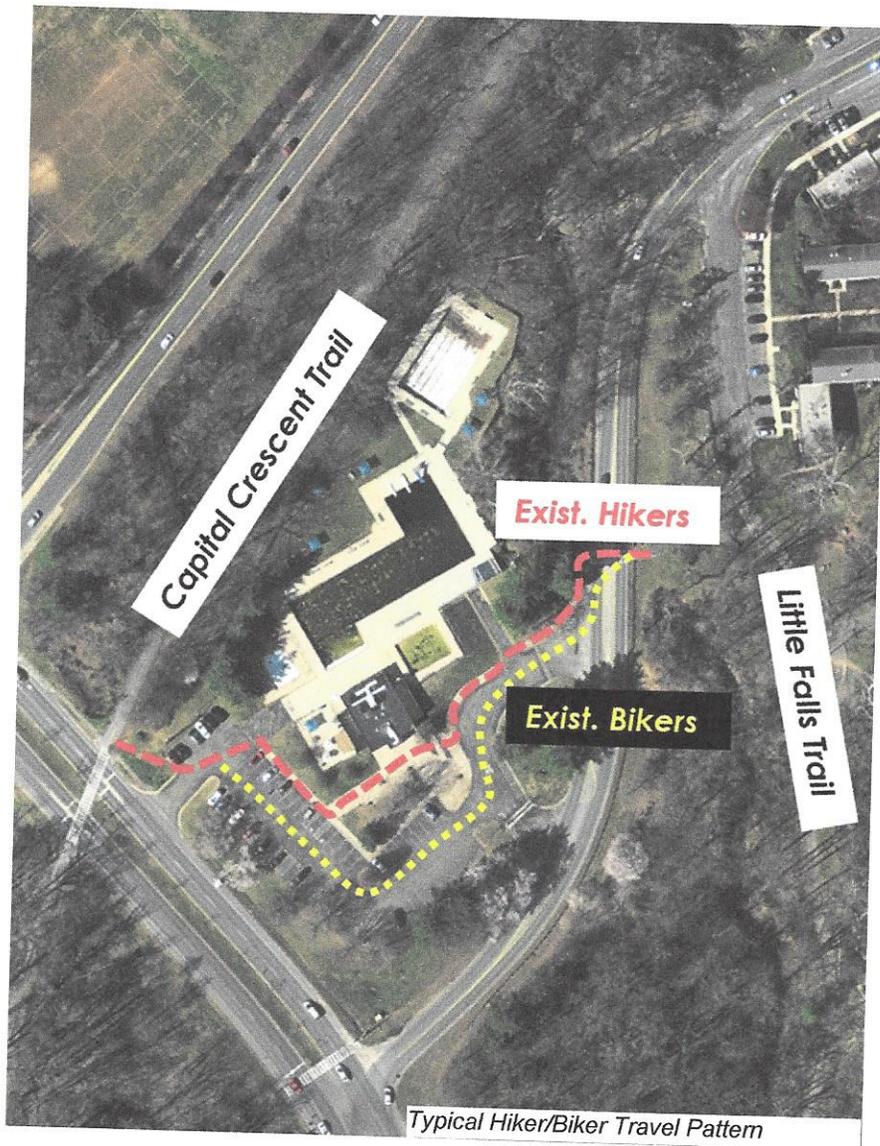
TRAIL CONNECTOR OPTION D



This option connects CCT to the LFT at a point south of Bethesda Pool complex by directing users down Hillandale Road towards Little Falls Parkway and then north on Little Falls Parkway to CCT. There is an existing swale along Little Falls Parkway and a decent slope in many areas with large trees nearest the parking lot frontage. The topography is relatively flat along the southern edge of Hillandale Road just behind the guardrail. There are no steep slopes nor major wooded areas to contend with, thereby reducing environmental impacts. However, there is a small segment of the pathway that passes through the Willett Branch stream buffer. This option allows for ease of construction access. This proposed alignment option will:

- a) Provide a paved 10-foot trail constructed on the opposite side of the Bethesda Pool along Hillandale Road.
- b) Reduce the number of driveway entrance/exist crossings along the Bethesda Pool frontages.
- c) Require minimal grading due to small difference in elevation to accommodate ADA accessibility.
- d) Allow the crossing of Hillandale Road at a controlled intersection and does not utilize the existing crossing at the cross walk across from the pool.
- e) Increase the distance to travel north while reducing the distance traveling south.
- f) Affect the existing streetscape trees along Little Falls Pkwy (three 12" trees) and several along Hillandale Road (four trees of 10" and less).
- g) Place portions of the paved trail within the Willett Branch stream buffer.
- h) Cost approximately \$400,000 to construct.

NO BUILD OPTION



With the “No Build” option, there are no environmental impacts or associated construction costs. Trail users will continue using the Bethesda Pool parking lot as the connector between the Little Falls Trail and Capital Crescent Trail in this area.

This option has:

- a) No paved construction proposed.
- b) No environmental impacts due to construction activity.
- c) Safety enhancements being provided at the existing crosswalk on Hillandale Road and other areas as required and necessary to promote a safe trail connection between both trails.

CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES

Construction Costs - A summary of the proposed budgetary construction cost estimate for each option is outlined in the table below:

Option A:

Item	Subtotal
Site Preparation & Demolition	\$22,500
Signs, Roads Markings & Traffic Control	\$ 3,200
Trail Surface	\$319,750
Landscape for SWM	\$13,000
Earthwork	\$5,625
Erosion and Sediment Control	\$9,450
Tree Preservation	\$19,500
Miscellaneous Site Features	\$7,000
Micro-Bioretenion Facility	\$75,000
Construction Subtotal	\$475,025
Construction Contingency (30% of Construction Subtotal)	\$142,508
Construction Total (Subtotal plus Contingency)	\$617,533

Option D:

Item	Subtotal
Site Preparation & Demolition	\$12,000
Signs, Roads Markings & Traffic Control	\$ 6,600
Trail Surface	\$151,000
Landscape for SWM	\$13,000
Earthwork	\$5,625
Erosion and Sediment Control	\$9,775
Tree Preservation	\$26,500
Miscellaneous Site Features	\$14,500
Micro-Bioretenion Facility	\$75,000
Construction Subtotal	\$314,000
Construction Contingency (30% of Construction Subtotal)	\$94,200
Construction Total (Subtotal plus Contingency)	\$408,200

No Connector

Item	Subtotal
Safety Enhancements	\$50,000
Construction Subtotal	\$50,000
Construction Contingency (30% of Construction Subtotal)	\$15,000
Construction Total (Subtotal plus Contingency)	\$65,000

RECOMMENDATION

Based upon the trail alignment studies and input from the general public and civic associations, staff recommends the approval of Trail Connector Option D for the following reasons:

- 1) From a user's perspective, accessing the Capital Crescent Trail or the Little Falls Trail through the Bethesda Pool parking lot is not safe nor ADA compliant. A Class 1 trail connector is needed at this location to provide a critical linkage between these two major trails which serve both transportation and recreation purposes for the surrounding communities.
- 2) Option D provides a safer, ADA accessible, hard surface, Class 1 trail connector between two major trail systems.
- 3) Option D has less environmental impacts than what would be caused by the construction of Option A through a wooded area.
- 4) Option D has the longer travel connector distance (860 feet in length) as opposed to Option A (525 feet in length) between the CCT and the LFT but the route is safer in the open and not secluded within the wooded area.
- 5) Option D cost significantly less to construct and its constructability is easier than Option A.

ATTACHMENTS

- A – Community Input Summary Sheet
- B - General Public Comments Received.
- C - Petitions Received from Lynn Balzer-Martin (12/21/2015)

ATTACHMENT - A

Proposed Connector for Capital Crescent Trail in Bethesda Community Input Summary Sheet

ITEM #	TIME	FROM WHOM	POSITION	TYPE OF CORRESPONDANCE	COMMENT
1	July 30, 2015	Henry Lebard - Resident, Chevy Chase West community	Do not see benefit of project.	Email	Requested additional information; no return follow up correspondance received.
2	July 30, 2015	Karen Green - Resident, Chevy Chase West community	Supports using Option "A" (Boardwalk).	Email	Stated - many appear to favor Option "A".
3	July 30, 2015	Bob Yetvin - Resident, Chevy Chase West community	Supports using Option "A" (Boardwalk).	Email	Stated - many appear to favor Option "A".
4	Aug. 26, 2015	Ruthann Eiser - Aide to Council Vice President Nancy Floreen	No Position taken	Email	Questioned whether project had approved CIP funding - how much and where in the CIP Budget.
5	Aug. 18, 2015	Marilyn Edwards - Resident	Do not move forward with project.	Email	States - Seems to be a waste of County money.
6	Aug. 25, 2015	Phyllis K. Lerner - Resident	Do not move forward with project.	Email	States too costly!
7	Sept. 02, 2015	Jonathan Parker - Resident	Do not move forward with project.	Email	Why is a priority for the County.
8	Sept. 4, 2015	Terri Lukas - Resident	Do not move forward with project.	Letter	States there is no objective need for a connector; local communities are not asking for a connector.
9	Sept. 9, 2015	Michael Steiner - MSKM Architect	Reconsider and reject total project.	Email	States - concept and proposed expenditures of public funds is ridiculous
10	Oct. 30, 2015	Thomas W. Hutchison, Pres. Bd of Dirs., Kenwood Forest Condo II	Most supportive of Option "B" or a modified version of Option "B".	Letter	

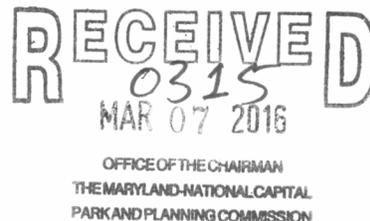
**Proposed Connector for Capital Crescent Trail in Bethesda
Community Input Summary Sheet**

ITEM #	TIME	FROM WHOM	POSITION	TYPE OF CORRESPONDANCE	COMMENT
11	Nov. 2, 2015	Sarah Morse - Exec. Dir. Little Falls Watershed Alliance	Supports using Option D (Modified Option B) - sidewalk along Hillandanle Rd on opposite side of pool.	Letter	Cites the opposition of the 3 major stakeholders: 1) the Little Falls Watershed Alliance; 2) the CCCT; and 3) the Kenwood Forest II Condo Assoc.
12	Nov. 04, 2015	Ron Tripp for the Coalition For The Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT)	Supports using Option D (Modified Option B).	Email	Sides with the Kenwood Forest II and the Little Falls Watershed Alliance
13	Nov. 15, 2015	Sarah Morse - Exec. Dir. Little Falls Watershed Alliance	Supports using Option D (Modified Option B) - sidewalk along Hillandanle Rd on opposite side of pool.	Email	Concurs with the opposition by the 3 major stakeholders: 1) the Little Falls Watershed Alliance; 2) the CCCT; and 3) the Kenwood Forest II Condo Assoc.
14	Nov. 17, 2015	Lynn A. Balzer-Martin - Resident	Supports using Option D (Modified Option B) - sidewalk along Hillandanle Rd on opposite side of pool.	Telephone	Concurs with the opposition by the 3 major stakeholders: 1) the Little Falls Watershed Alliance; 2) the CCCT; and 3) the Kenwood Forest II Condo Assoc.
15	Nov. 17, 2015	Lynn A. Balzer-Martin - Resident	Supports using Option D (Modified Option B) - sidewalk along Hillandanle Rd on opposite side of pool.	Email	Concurs with the opposition by the 3 major stakeholders: 1) the Little Falls Watershed Alliance; 2) the CCCT; and 3) the Kenwood Forest II Condo Assoc.
16	Nov. 03, 2015	Alexander Culiuc - Resident	Move forward with Option A (Boardwalk).	Email	Selects Option "A" with small modification at tie-in @ CCT. Year round user.
17	Nov. 7, 2015	Jonathan Ladd - Resident & member of the Kenwood Forest Condo II Assoc.	Strongly supports using both Option "A" (Boardwalk) and Option "C" (Bridge over Willett Branch).	Letter	States that many of the 200 unit owners support the connection Options "A" and "C".
18	Dec. 12, 2015	Lynn Balzer-Martin	Petitions regarding the proposed options for CCT/LFT Connector	Petitions	Opposes building trail connector.

ATTACHMENT - B

Garcia, Joyce

From: Payton, William
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2016 1:12 PM
To: Garcia, Joyce
Cc: Ma, Michael
Subject: FW: Capital Crescent Trail



-----Original Message-----

From: Scott [mailto:scott@spacebusiness.com]
Sent: Sunday, March 06, 2016 7:08 PM
To: Payton, William <William.Payton@montgomeryparks.org>
Subject: Capital Crescent Trail

Doesn't appear to be a comment section for you Capital Crescent Trail proposal without signing up to speak at the public forum.

Please add the following:

Glad someone included the 'leave it alone' option. As someone who lives in the neighborhood BARELY ANYONE actually travels between the two trails especially by bicycle. As someone who has done it, there is no safety issue unless you got through the parking lot at high speed, which you shouldn't do anyway.

This plan is essentially a waste of time and money. How's about spending the money on things that actually need fixing?

Scott Sacknoff
6615 Hillandale Rd

From: Dreyfuss, Norman
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2016 5:11 PM
To: MCP-Chair
Subject: FW: Capital Crescent Trail Connector – No Build Option

From: Ruthann Bates
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2016 5:10:47 PM (UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)
To: Anderson, Casey; Wells-Harley, Marye; Dreyfuss, Norman; Fani-Gonzalez, Natali; Presley, Amy
Cc: Payton, William
Subject: Capital Crescent Trail Connector – No Build Option

Dear Chair Anderson and Commissioners Wells-Harley, Dreyfuss, Presley, and Fani-Gonzalez:

I am writing on behalf of the Chevy Chase West (CCW) Neighborhood Association, which endorses the "No Build Option" for the Little Falls Trail-Capital Crescent Trails Connector. The Little Falls Trail is CCW's western border. CCW is one of the nearest residential areas to the Bethesda Pool and the proposed connector.

CCW residents enjoy their proximity to both trails and utilize them extensively, as pedestrians and/or cyclists. We are also regular pool users during the summer. CCW sees no apparent advantages to the more expensive options to connect the two trails, and believes there is a need only for some improvements in the existing connection, via the crosswalk on Hillandale, to make passage safer for cyclists, pedestrians, and those with handicaps.

The pool is open for only three months a year. For the remaining nine months potential conflict among users is moot, as the parking lot is nearly empty.

Throughout the year, it will still be easier – and more likely, given human nature - for anyone using the trails to use the unsignaled crosswalk on Hillandale rather than going the extra distance to the light at Hillandale and Arlington. Connecting the two trails under either Option A or Option D, the only ones currently under consideration by MNCPPC other than the "No Build Option," would be noticeably less convenient for everyone, including the disabled, than cutting through the pool parking lot. Installing a traffic signal at the crosswalk would be the easiest, most effective, and least costly safety measure to take.

So, benefits from options other than “no build” would be minor, if any, but the costs would be great. We do not believe any of the more expensive options represent wise use of public monies.

Thank you for consideration of our views.

Sincerely,

Ruthann Bates

Secretary

Chevy Chase West Neighborhood Association

Payton, William

From: Henry Lebard <hlebard@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 30, 2015 2:05 PM
To: Payton, William
Subject: Re: [chevy Chase West MD] Re: Capital Crescent & Little Falls Trails Connector

Hey there Butch,
Pardon in advance if this email is out of your 'jurisdiction' so to speak.

I'm a member of the Chevy Chase West community and it seems we haven't been fully informed regarding the possible plans at Hillandale by the Bethesda pool and Capital Crescent trail. Five to six years, minimum, seems like an awfully long time to undergo this hypothetical project. Additionally, we neighbors are trying to figure out what the pros and cons of it would be. Many of us don't see the benefit. That being said many of us have not seen any blueprints or proper maps illustrating what the project might look like. An illustration of sorts would be very helpful here! I understand there are A, B, C project options.

thanks for your time and all the best,

Henry Lebard

On Thu, Jul 30, 2015 at 8:54 AM, 'Bob Yetvin and Karen Green' yetvin.green@verizon.net [chevy Chase West MD] <chevy Chase West MD@yahoo.com> wrote:

Sorry for the inadvertent omission. Many appear to favor Option A.

Karen Green

Ch Ch Blvd.

Posted by: "Bob Yetvin and Karen Green" <yetvin.green@verizon.net>

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Payton, William

From: Marilyn Edwards <marilyn.m.edwards@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 18, 2015 2:34 PM
To: Payton, William
Subject: Capital Crescent - Little Falls Trail Connector

Hi.

I have been doing a lot of thinking after the meeting held in July. I must agree with the lady arguing against putting the connector in at all. It seems to me to be a waste of money. There is no need for a connector, unless it is used to cut the distance to Bethesda (plan c, I believe), and even then the whole point of the Trail is exercise and enjoyment, not how fast we can get from one end to the other.

I will not be able to make the meeting in September, but I strongly vote to use the money for something that is useful and needed, not just 'fun to have'.

Marilyn Edwards
concerned resident

Payton, William

From: Phyllis K Lerner <phyllisklerner@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 25, 2015 1:52 PM
To: Payton, William
Subject: Capital Crescent and Little Falls Trails Connector

Good afternoon,

While I do not live directly along the Capital Crescent or LF Trail connector, I am rather close, and a frequent walker/biker in the neighborhoods for both purpose and pleasure. Please log my point of view with your submissions for September 8, 2015.

My **three reasons for not moving forward with this project** are compelling.

- **The cost is primary.** We have so many other needs in the county; spending over \$300,000 for an unnecessary project is simply irresponsible.
- Resurfacing and maintenance the CCT would seem to be a far higher need.
- The dangers of walking, biking and driving around downtown Bethesda (i.e. the Barnes and Noble fountain) are now a key safety concern that seems to lack any big picture view. Signage, lights, advertising tents and crossings appear to be governed by each development site, doing what works for them. (I suspect this is not even a MCPark concern, however, for those of us who move around, we do not bike or drive "differently," as we transition across the paths and properties.)

p

--

Phyllis K. Lerner
7111 Woodmont Ave., #509
Bethesda, MD 20815
(Preferred) H/O 301.951.1112
Cell 301.580.1185

Payton, William

From: Jonathan Parker <jjaybo2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 02, 2015 10:42 PM
To: Payton, William
Cc: bjb4825@aol.com
Subject: Capital Crescent Trail Connector Project

Dear Mr. Payton,

My wife and I own the townhouse at 4843 Willett Parkway.

I have reviewed your presentation for this project and as presently explained on your web site, I am **against** this project.

My general comments are as follows: I was struck by a **lack of a convincing justification for this project**. The only one I could find was a statement that some 23 years ago the designers of the trail recommended that there be a connecting link between the Crescent and Little Falls Trails. Based on this assertion, it seems the County now wants to spend taxpayer's money to accomplish this.

Your meeting on September 8 should answer: Why is this a priority for the County's Parks Budget? For all this time bikers have made this connection thru the parking lot of the Swim Center. What are the economic benefits and costs to changing this arrangement? If you build another solution, what enforcement actions will you take to keep bikers from reverting to the old solution. If the new solution makes it harder for them to make the connection, there will be additional costs of enforcement. Are these included in your analysis? One of the options redirects biker traffic from the Swim Center through the Willett parking lot. As residents there we don't see why we should have to deal with the vaguely mentioned "safety and conflicts" instead of the County's Swim Center.

This proposal as it is presently presented, looks like a "solution looking for a problem".

Jonathan Parker

4 September, 2015

To: Montgomery County Executive and County Council members:

Mr. Isaiah Leggett, County Executive, Mr. Roger Berliner, Mr. Marc Elrich, Ms. Nancy Floreen, Mr. George Leventhal, Tom Hucker, Sidney Katz, Nancy Navarro, Craig Rice, Hans Reimer

M-NCPPC:

Patti Barney, Executive Director, Tom Riley, Director of Parks, John Nissel, Deputy Director Operations, Mitra Podoem, Deputy Director Administration, Michael Ma, Director, Parks Development Division, William Payton, Parks Development Division, Jeffrey Devlin, Southern Parks, Carl Webber, Southern Parks

From: Ms. Terri Lukas

Resident of Chevy Chase West Neighborhood
4703 Morgan Dr.
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Subject: M-NCPPC Proposed Trail Connector between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Trail: A Waste of Taxpayers' Money and an Opportunity Lost

I am writing to you to protest the building of a hard surface trail connector between the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and Little Falls Trail (LFT) by the Parks Development Division of the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC). This project is planned to be constructed in an area adjoining my neighborhood, Chevy Chase West, and others: Somerset, the Village of Drummond, and the Kenwood Forest II Apartments. Presumably, we are the "beneficiaries" of this project. The project manager for this project is William Payton. Mr. Payton and his consultant presented three options for building this trail connector on July 28, 2015 to residents of the communities near to the proposed project area. A repeat presentation of this project will be held on September 8, 2015. Construction is scheduled to begin in March, 2016. Mr. Payton and his consultant identified their preferred alternative of the three options presented – a foot bridge (option A) -- and emphasized its advantages over the other two throughout the presentation. A "no-build" alternative was not offered nor discussed, even though it was raised by members of the audience.

My reasons for protesting the building of this trail connector are listed and explained below:

- *There is no objective need for this trail connector.*
- *The local communities are not asking for a trail connector to be built; this project is an internally generated project idea of the Parks Development Division.*
- *The Parks Development Division's preferred alternative – a foot bridge -- is likely to inflict significant environmental damage locally by removing more of the already reduced number of healthy mature trees bordering the CCT and the Bethesda pool (both County park land) and by its incursion into the Willet stream buffer. The Parks Development Division has not accurately identified nor estimated the extent of environmental damage that this project will cause. Mr. Payton minimized the extent of these damages throughout the presentation.*

- *The Parks Development Division has not accurately estimated the total financial costs of the proposed foot bridge, to include capital, maintenance and replacement, costs. The project manager, Mr. William Payton, claimed that such costs will be estimated AFTER the project is approved and further design work is done.*
- *For the above reasons, I conclude that this project is both a waste of County funds and an opportunity lost to improve the quality of the LFT itself, a valued community resource. The trail connector should NOT BE BUILT.*

+++++

1. There is no objective need for a connector between the Capital Crescent and Little Falls Trails.

There are two points of access for bicyclists and pedestrians to the CCT from the LFT from the communities in question.

At the July 28th presentation, Mr. Payton asserted that “we”, the local communities, need more access to the CCT than we presently have, and in particular, more access to the CCT from the LFT. However, there is no evidence for this need because there are already two points of connection between the CCT and LFT from our neighborhoods for bicyclists.

One connecting point is at the north end of the LFT, from Norwood Park, by crossing Hillandale Rd. and the Bethesda pool parking lot. There is a continuous sidewalk across the Bethesda pool parking lot linking the Hillandale Rd. crossing to the CCT. A second connecting point between the LFT and CCT is at the south end of the LFT, by crossing Little Falls parkway at Dorset St.

Pedestrians are the predominant users of the stretch of the LFT referenced above. Pedestrian users of the LFT either consider it to be a destination itself, or use it to walk into and out of Norwood Park and their own residential streets. If pedestrians connect to the CCT from LFT, they do so either by crossing Hillandale Rd. or Little Falls Parkway and have immediate access to sidewalks.

Bicyclists use the same crossings from the LFT to the CCT as pedestrians and can use sidewalks to connect to the trails from Hillandale Rd and Dorset Ave. At the July 28th meeting, Mr. Payton acknowledged that there are these two points of access between the trails from our communities, but he focused his presentation for the new trail connector on the crossing at Hillandale Rd. only.

Contrary to assertions by MNCPPC, there is no evidence that bicyclists are at an elevated risk of coming into “conflict with vehicles” if they chose to cross the Bethesda pool parking lot to enter the CCT, rather than enter through another route.

Mr. Payton asserted that there is an unacceptably high risk of bicyclist-auto “conflict” for bicyclists who chose to cross the Bethesda pool parking lot itself – rather than use the sidewalk -- to enter the CCT, or the other access point at Dorset St. However, when asked, Mr. Payton did not produce evidence of such conflict occurring or cite statistical estimates

of risk from other sources. In fact, the Federal Highway Administration's national statistics on pedestrian and biking safety, and accidents between autos and bicycles provides no evidence that the particular configuration of the parking lot at the Bethesda pool poses any unusual risks to bikers who may choose to cross it.

http://pedbikesafe.org/BIKESAFE/guide_statistics.cfm

For bicyclists who chose not to use the sidewalk to cross the parking lot, they will incur some degree of risk coming into conflict with autos, with pedestrians or other bicyclists. But it is neither feasible nor reasonable for the County to spend taxpayers' funds to completely eliminate all risks to bicyclists, regardless of their source.

Not incidental to this issue, the Bethesda pool is only open from Memorial Day to mid-August (and only on weekends when the County's public schools are in session). The parking lot is only close to being filled on those weekends and when the weather is suitable for using the pool. It is rare that the parking lot is ever filled or congested with cars moving in and out during the weekend days.

If there are risks to bicyclists and pedestrians coming into conflict with autos when connecting between the CCT and LFT, they occur crossing Hillandale Rd. and Little Falls Parkway. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that in urban areas (BIKESAFE, *op. cit.*), most bicycle injuries (58%) occur at such intersections. Attendees at the July 28th meeting raised concerns that these road crossings could be made safer for pedestrians and bicyclists alike. However, it is not within the jurisdiction of MNCPPA to do so and Mr. Payton could say nothing about the likelihood of those safety improvements being made.

2. There is no community-wide demand for a trail connector.

When the Chevy Chase West community first heard about this project, there was surprise all around, as evidenced by the intranet chatter. I have heard similar reactions from residents of Somerset, the Village of Drummond and the Kenwood Forest II apartments. As noted, there are multiple points of access to the CCT from the LFT and our communities. This trail connector project is entirely an internally generated idea from the MNPPC and the Parks Development Division.

However, it is human nature not to turn down a "gift" worth almost \$400,000 that local government officials insist they want to give you, which is what Mr. Payton and his contractor did. And so at their July 28th, 2015 presentation, they made their best case for building their "preferred option": option A, a foot bridge connector between the CCT and LFT. After the presentation, when they asked the audience which option it preferred, it was not unexpected that most people (of approximately 40 in attendance), chose option A. It is noteworthy that the audience was not given the option of either "no connector" or use of the funds for another park related purpose that may have been more in line with felt demand.

2. The proposed foot bridge connector -- Parks Development Division's preferred alternative -- entails both significant environmental and financial costs, neither of which have been fully identified.

Option A entails removing an unknown number of the dwindling number of healthy, mature trees that are standing near the CCT and the Bethesda pool. Mr. Payton's power point presentation noted that "approximately three" would be removed, but during the question and answer period it became clear that the number was inexact, erring on the very low side.

Furthermore, the extent of incursion into the Willet stream buffer was not discussed at all. It is noteworthy that this construction is being proposed within the Little Falls watershed, the most compromised of all watersheds in the County. This being the case, it would seem that any project proposed for this area would avoid any but the most necessary "incursions" into a stream buffer. It is clear that this project does not meet any such standard: it is not a project that the local communities need.

The financial costs presented by Mr. Payton were only the estimated capital building costs. He did not present any estimates of maintenance or replacement costs. However, when asked, the consultant estimated that replacement of the foot bridge would be required in approximately 15 years. This was in contrast to another option presented, option B, a second sidewalk along a portion of the perimeter of the Bethesda pool's parking lot. This sidewalk option had lower capital costs, an estimated 30 year lifespan, and no requirement to cut down trees or make incursions into the stream buffer. While I am not advocating for option B, Mr. Payton clearly minimized its cost advantages over option A in his presentation

An example of maintenance costs that Mr. Payton ignored in his presentation is the cost of clearing snow from the foot bridge. If the foot bridge is as vital a connector between the CCT and LFT as claimed, it is reasonable to assume that it will be cleared of snow during the winter months, at the same frequency that the CCT is cleared. However, given its design, keeping the foot bridge clear of snow will require greater effort and thus cost more than clearing an equal stretch of the main CCT of snow. There are undoubtedly other maintenance costs to be included in the total costs of this project, but they were neither identified nor discussed.

3. M-NCPPC substituted its own preferences for a project in our neighborhoods rather than eliciting communities' preferences for improved parkland and trails.

As noted, there are two points of easy access between the CCT and LFT from our neighborhoods. Indeed, the CCT is not lacking in use by bicyclists or pedestrians. On the contrary, it is hard to imagine how much more use it can accommodate, especially during the commuting to work hours of the day. During these periods, neighbors are reluctant to use the CCT because of their fear of colliding with the many speeding bicyclists.

On the other hand, the LFT, the segment between Norwood Park and Dorset Avenue is a valued resource of our communities: a shaded, quiet place which people of all ages enjoy year round. Unfortunately, M-NCPPC has allowed it to seriously deteriorate over the years. The actual trail is cracked and portions of it are under water after a heavy downpour. Aging trees have been cut down and their stumps left in view. No new trees have been planted in recent memory. Invasive kudzu is visible along the entire stretch.

The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC) is planning to excavate a significant portion of this parkland this fall, 2015, to replace aging pipes. A temporary road for construction vehicles through a segment of the park will also be constructed. WSSC has

announced that it will undo the construction damage caused by its work after it is done, but that in no way means that it will address the long standing quality problems noted.

I recently raised these issues with the Park manager, Mr. Jeff Devlin. I asked him if the LFT, including the piece that connects to Massachusetts Ave. and runs southward, roughly parallel with the CCT, is scheduled to be upgraded in the future. Mr. Devlin's response was an emphatic "no". He explained that the LFT is in a long queue of trails needing upgrading but that there are many more trails in the County that are in worse shape and thus would be upgraded sooner.

4. To summarize:

M-NCPPC lacks funds to address needed upgrading of trails and parkland throughout the County, including the LFT. At the same time the M-NCPPC, through its Parks Development Division, has close to \$400,000. available to build a foot bridge connector between the LFT and CCT that is **not needed, not demanded by the community-at-large, and will incur significant but as yet un-specified environmental damage and ongoing financial costs to taxpayers.**

Clearly, this proposed connector between the CCT and LFT should be rejected outright.

The funds could be put to better use to upgrade the LFT and its surrounding parkland or other trails in the County. To address bicycle and pedestrian safety in our communities, the County and State should cooperate to improve traffic management at the intersections of the LFT and Hillendale Rd. and Dorset St. and Little Falls Parkway. In addition, MNCPPC should address improving bicyclist and pedestrian safety on the CCT itself. This is where bicyclist accidents are occurring, frequently involving pedestrians.

Payton, William

From: Michael Steiner <msteiner@mskmarchitects.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2015 10:43 AM
To: Payton, William
Subject: Capital Crescent Trail connector at Bethesda Pool

Dear Mr. Payton-

I have to say that this concept and the proposed expenditure of public funds is ridiculous from the start. The idea of creating a "safe" passage through or around the Bethesda Pool parking lot is completely overshadowed by the fact that pedestrians and bicyclists still have to cross Little Falls Parkway on the west side of the pool, and Hillandale Road on the east side, two more dangerous exposures for pedestrians and cyclists. Also, has no one mentioned that there is already a sidewalk between the pool building and the pool parking lot?

Please reconsider and reject this project.

Sincerely,

Michael Steiner, AIA

MSKM ARCHITECTS
4838 Drummond Avenue
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

Office: 202/337-4466
Facsimile: 202/338-2555
Mobile: 703/795-6717

e-mail: msteiner@mskmarchitects.com
website: www.mskmarchitects.com

KENWOOD FOREST II

6658A Hillandale Road, Chevy Chase, MD 20815 (301) 657-2683
kenwoodforest2@verizon.net

October 30, 2015

William Payton, Project Manager
Montgomery County Parks
9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Dear Mr. Payton:

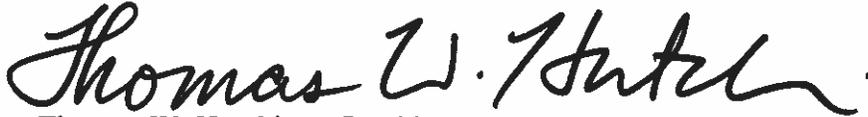
Kenwood Forest Condominium II consists of 278 residences located on some 36 acres of land adjacent to both the Capital Crescent and Little Fall Trails. What you decide to do to connect the two trails will directly affect the quality of life in our community. I write on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Condominium to express our views on the options before you.

As an initial matter, we applaud your plan to improve the parking lot at the swimming pool. Improving the parking situation there is needed from a public safety standpoint. Even if you do not decide to go forward with a connector, we believe you should go forward with improving parking at the pool. When compared to the other presented options, **our residents are most supportive of Option B, and oppose the other options**, for several reasons. Our homeowners oppose Option A because it interferes with the stream buffer and requires cutting down large native trees that benefit the environment and form a visual and sound screen between our townhomes and the Bethesda Pool. When your design team showed slides comparing the “pros” and “cons” of each plan, Option A was labeled “most harmful to the environment.” Even if the tree cutting and stream buffer problems can be minimized or eliminated, the presence of an elevated “boardwalk” in our community is not desirable in terms of appearance, congestion and noise levels. Planners may refer to the environment in abstract terms, but the impact of this potential project falls most directly and heavily on our immediate environment. Indeed, it literally is “in our front and back yards” and we want to preserve the integrity of our neighborhood to the greatest extent possible. Option C is opposed due to its high costs and impractical design. We feel that this option would fail to achieve the stated objectives of the project and serve as a poor financial decision for the County.

If it is decided that a connector is necessary, we believe that option B, or a modified option B, would best serve the need to connect the two trails and would minimize the negative impact on the environment and the integrity of our neighborhood. We like the modified option B that was discussed at the last public meeting. The modified option B would locate the Hillandale Road segment on the east side of Hillandale Road. Both option B and modified option B would have the connector join the Capital Crescent Trail at an already established entry point. Modified option B would have the additional safety features of placing the Hillandale Road crossing at the traffic signal at Little Falls and eliminating the need to cross in front of two of the entrances/exits to the pool.

If you go forward with the connector, we urge you to use modified option B or original option B.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas W. Hutchison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas W. Hutchison, President
Board of Directors, Kenwood Forest Condominium II

cc: Mike Riley, Director, Montgomery County Parks
Michael Ma, Acting Chief of Development, Montgomery County Parks
Ron Tripp, Chairman of the Board, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail



LITTLE FALLS WATERSHED ALLIANCE

EDUCATION - ACTION - STEWARDSHIP

Executive Director

Sarah Morse

November 2, 2015

Board of Directors

Daniel Dozier,
President

Mikel Moore,
Vice President

Sara Scheeberg
Robinson,
Secretary

Mauric Kathan,
Treasurer

Suzanne Richman

Jack Sobel

Board@lfw.org

Butch Payton, Project Manager
M-NCPPC Montgomery Parks
9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Dear Mr. Payton,

I am the executive director of the Little Falls Watershed Alliance, an environmental stewardship group for the Little Falls watershed. We have over 1,200 members and work closely with the Park on invasive weed removal projects, habitat restoration, clean-ups and other stewardship needs of our natural areas. Over 400 volunteers a year participate in our almost weekly events.

We have been following the plans for a connector between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Hiker/Biker trail closely as it is in our watershed and connects two of the most popular trails. One of our members attended the September meeting to express our concern about losing trees to the new trail.

In October, our board was able to do a site visit and we continue to be concerned over the loss of trees associated with the favorite option - **Option A**, the boardwalk through the woods behind the Bethesda Pool. We counted at least five mature native trees near the Bethesda Pool that would have to be cut down to allow for the connector. In addition, it appears that many smaller trees would need to be cut down where the connector would intersect with the bike path. We also worry about potential erosion of the very steep slopes caused by construction activity. The access to this area is very tight and we believe considerable damage will be done while building the boardwalk. **We oppose Option A as the environmental costs are too high.**

Option B, a sidewalk along Hillandale and Little Falls Parkway, does not require as many trees to be cut down, but has the disadvantage of crossing the parking lot entrance and exit – which has been cited as a safety concern.

With this in mind, we respectfully propose a fourth option which we call Option D. Option D is a sidewalk on Hillandale across the street from the pool—on the south-east side. Users would cross Hillandale at the light at Little Falls Parkway and the trail would continue alongside the Parkway to the Capital Crescent Trail (as it would in Option B). (See attached map.)

Option D has several important advantages:

- No mature trees would need to be removed. Our site visit revealed that there is adequate space for a sidewalk with the loss of only a few small trees.

- Safe crossing of Hillandale. Trail users would cross Hillandale safely at the traffic light at Little Falls. **This is the only option that addresses the project's oft stated objective "To provide safe crossing of Hillandale Road"**. (From the presentation, July 28, 2015 - http://www.montgomeryparks.org/pdd/cip/documents/cct_public_mtg_presentation_07-29-2015.pdf)
- Allows users to enter/exit the Capital Crescent trail at an existing intersection. We feel this is the safest place for a new trail to intersect as Capital Crescent trail users must stop at the entrance to the Bethesda Pool to cross Little Falls Parkway.

Our board members are avid bikers and several use the trail system to commute to work. We appreciate your work on this and hope we can find a solution that allows for a healthy and intact environment as well as a robust trail system. Please don't hesitate to call us if you have any questions regarding our proposal - Option D. We would love the opportunity to walk the area with the planners.

With Gratitude for Your Work in the Park,



Sarah Morse
Executive Director

Cc:
Mike Riley, Montgomery Parks
Michael Ma, Montgomery Parks
Ron Tripp, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail
Lynn Balzer-Martin, Kenwood Forest

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- To provide an ADA compliant hard surface trail connection between the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and the Little Falls Trail (LFT) near the Bethesda Pool.
- To provide safe crossing of Hillandale Road.

LFWA proposes **Option D**

This sidewalk would run along the south-east side of Hillandale, crossing to the pool at the light at Little Falls Parkway.

This is the **only option** that satisfies the project objective to provide a safe crossing of Hillandale Road.



Payton, William

From: Ron Tripp <ron.tripp@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, November 04, 2015 8:54 PM
To: Payton, William
Cc: Ma, Michael
Subject: Little Falls Trail / Capital Crescent Trail Connector

Butch Payton, M-NCPPC

Hi Butch,

The board of The Coalition For The Capital Crescent Trail (CCCT) has discussed the connector trail options, and we have been in contact with the community. Our interests are The Capital Crescent Trail (CCT), the users of the trail and our neighbors who live along the trail.

The Coalition's principle concern with new connections to the trail is safety. Clearly, the safest place for such a connection is at Little Falls Parkway, where trail traffic is already slowed and in the open, as opposed to the middle of a section of the trail that is heavily traveled and where bikes are up to cruising speed. We could only support another connection midway between the parkway and Bradley Blvd if the neighborhood was seeking it; and clearly they are not. In fact, we share the concerns that Kenwood Forest II and The Little Falls Watershed Alliance have expressed about the loss of mature trees.

Although the CCCT believes that option B (connecting at Little Falls Parkway) is the most practical of the three options proposed by M-NCPPC, being safer, more convenient, and 'greener'; the CCCT prefers what Kenwood Forest II has referred to as "modified option B", and what the Watershed Alliance calls "Option D". This suggestion makes use of the existing stoplight at Hillandale Road for a safe crossing and runs along the parkway away from the pool parking lot (a concern of people who spoke at the public meetings) and connects to the CCT at an existing intersection where traffic is slowed.

The Coalition For The Capital Crescent Trail supports a connection from The Little Falls Trail to the CCT using 'Option D / Modified Option B' as proposed by the community.

Sincerely,

Ron Tripp
Chair
The Coalition For The Capital Crescent Trail

Payton, William

From: Sarah Morse <morsekathan@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, November 15, 2015 3:29 PM
To: Payton, William; Riley, Mike; Ma, Michael
Cc: Lynn Balzer-Martin; Barbara Butera; Ron Tripp
Subject: Proposed Connector for Capital Crescent Trail in Bethesda

Hi,
I have not heard back from anyone regarding the proposed connector to the Capital Crescent trail. At this time, it looks like Parks is actively pursuing Option A, the route through the woods behind the Bethesda Pool despite the opposition of three major stakeholders - the Little Falls Watershed Alliance, The Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail and the Kenwood Forest II Condo Association.

I would like to request a meeting with the Parks we can hear where you are on the proposed trail. I am hoping that as stewards for our fragile natural environment that you are not planning on proceeding with Option A which required cutting down dozens of trees and shrubs to join the trails when the grassy right of way along Hillandale is an option.

I am available most days, so please propose some times so we can set up a meeting,

Thanks for you time on this,
Sarah

Sarah Morse
Executive Director
Little Falls Watershed Alliance
301-907-3298

On Tue, Nov 3, 2015 at 3:44 PM, Sarah Morse <morsekathan@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Mr. Payton,

I am the executive director of the Little Falls Watershed Alliance, an environmental stewardship group for the Little Falls watershed. We have over 1,200 members and work closely with the Park on invasive weed removal projects, habitat restoration, clean-ups and other stewardship needs of our natural areas. Over 400 volunteers a year participate in our almost weekly events.

We have been following the plans for a connector between the Capital Crescent Trail and the Little Falls Hiker/Biker trail closely as it is in our watershed and connects two of the most popular trails. One of our members attended the September meeting to express our concern about losing trees to the new trail.

In October, our board was able to do a site visit and we continue to be concerned over the loss of trees associated with the favorite option - Option A, the boardwalk through the woods behind the Bethesda Pool. We counted at least five mature native trees near the Bethesda Pool that would have to be cut down to allow for the connector. In addition, it appears that many smaller trees would need to be cut down where the connector would intersect with the bike path. We also worry about potential erosion of the very steep slopes caused by construction activity. The access to this area is very tight and we believe considerable damage will be done while building the boardwalk. **We oppose Option A as the environmental costs are too high.**

Option B, a sidewalk along Hillandale and Little Falls Parkway, does not require as many trees to be cut down, but has the disadvantage of crossing the parking lot entrance and exit – which has been cited as a safety concern.

With this in mind, we respectfully propose a fourth option which we call Option D. Option D is a sidewalk on Hillandale across the street from the pool—on the south-east side. Users would cross Hillandale at the light at Little Falls Parkway and the trail would continue alongside the Parkway to the Capital Crescent Trail (as it would in Option B). (See map below.)

Option D has several important advantages:

- **No mature trees would need to be removed.** Our site visit revealed that there is adequate space for a sidewalk with the loss of only a few small trees.
- **Safe crossing of Hillandale.** Trail users would cross Hillandale safely at the traffic light at Little Falls. This is the only option that addresses the project's oft stated objective "To provide safe crossing of Hillandale Road". (From the presentation, July 28, 2015 - http://www.montgomeryparks.org/pdd/cip/documents/cct_public_mtg_presentation_07-29-2015.pdf)
- **Allows users to enter/exit the Capital Crescent trail at an existing intersection.** We feel this is the safest place for a new trail to intersect as Capital Crescent trail users must stop at the entrance to the Bethesda Pool to cross Little Falls Parkway.

Our board members are avid bikers and several use the trail system to commute to work. We appreciate your work on this and hope we can find a solution that allows for a healthy and intact environment as well as a robust trail system. Please don't hesitate to call us if you have any questions regarding our support of Option D. We would love the opportunity to walk the area with the planners.

With Gratitude for Your Work in the Park,

Sarah Morse

Executive Director

Little Falls Watershed Alliance
301-907-3298

Cc:

Mike Riley, Montgomery Parks

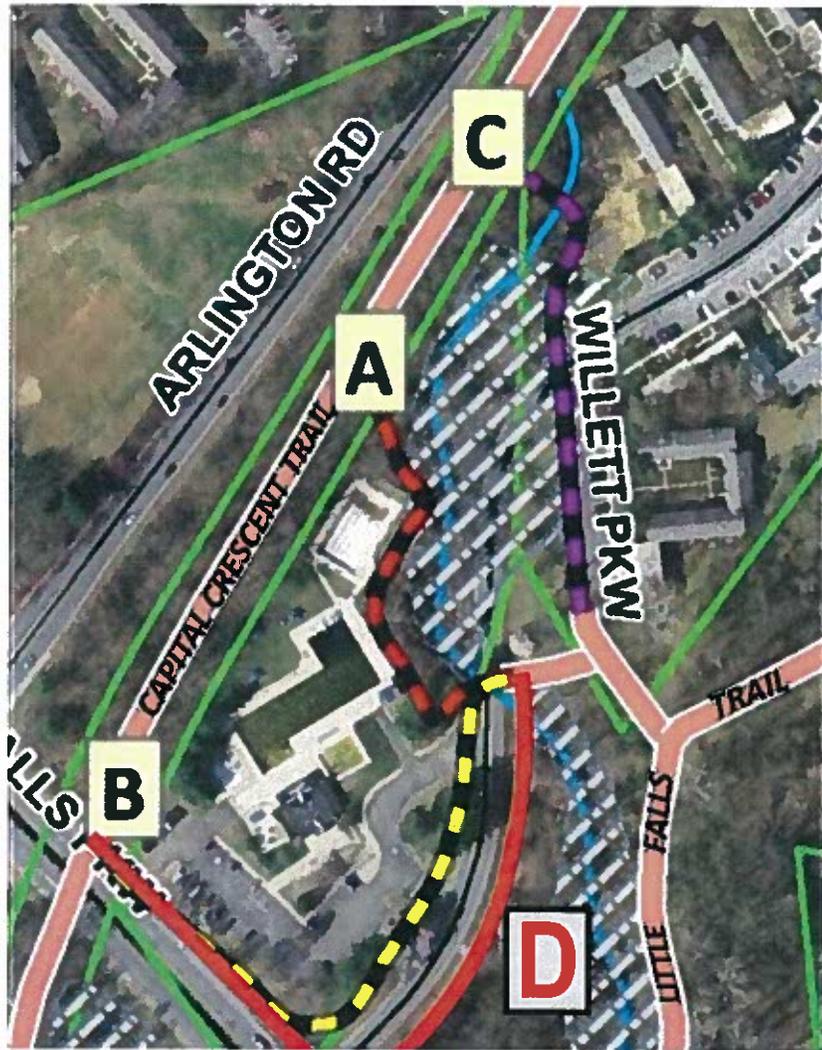
Michael Ma, Montgomery Parks

Ron Tripp, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail

Lynn Balzer-Martin, Kenwood Forest Neighbors

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

- To provide an ADA compliant hard surface trail connection between the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) and the Little Falls Trail (LFT) near the Bethesda Pool.
- To provide safe crossing of Hillandale Road.



LFWA proposes

Option D

This sidewalk would run along the south-east side of Hillandale, crossing to the pool at the light at Little Falls Parkway.

This is the **only option** that satisfies the project objective to provide a safe crossing of Hillandale Road.

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Support your local watershed group. Visit Little Falls Watershed Alliance online at www.LFWA.org
Find us on [Facebook!](#)

--
Sarah Morse

Support your local watershed group. Visit Little Falls Watershed Alliance online - www.LFWA.org
Find us on [Facebook!](#)

Payton, William

From: Lynn <lynnb2k@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 17, 2015 10:59 PM
To: Payton, William
Subject: From Lynn Balzer-Martin -- re trail connector

Mr. Payton,

Thank you again for the generous amount of time you spent talking on the phone with me today. I would be very interested in receiving feedback on the information you receive from the complete topographical survey of the site for Option A. I would also be interested personally in any updates you can provide about decisions being made as to which Option (if any) is being most seriously considered. And, as I mentioned, I am also happy to share such information with some of the other major stakeholders so that you do not have to engage in multiple communications concerning this same subject.

I am providing my contact information below.

With appreciation,
Lynn A. Balzer-Martin

LynnB2K@aol.com
(301)654-1668 at all times



William (Butch) Payton
Civil Engineer/Project Manager

Maryland - National Capital Park and Planning
Commission
Montgomery County Department of Parks
9500 Brunett Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20901,
Email: William.Payton@MontgomeryParks.Org
Tel: [301.495.3587](tel:301.495.3587) | Fax:
[301.585.1921](tel:301.585.1921) | www.montgomeryparks.org
Visit www.parkprojects.org for CIP and park development
information.



From: Eiser, Ruthann [<mailto:Ruthann.Eiser@montgomerycountymd.gov>]
Sent: Wednesday, August 26, 2015 12:55 PM
To: Payton, William
Subject: Capital Crescent Trail Connector project question

Hi Butch,

I'm following up from my earlier voice message and thought it might be easier for you to respond by e-mail. Nancy received a constituent call regarding the proposed funding and development of the Capital Crescent Trail Connector Project in Bethesda, near the Bethesda Pool. Does this project have approved CIP funding? If yes, how much and where in the CIP budget can I find the line item? Also, can you please recommend which method is best for official public comment and who should the comments be directed too? Or, is there an upcoming public hearing? Any input or information regarding this information is extremely helpful.

Thank you and I look forward to your response.

Ruthann Eiser
Aide to Council Vice President Nancy Floreen
240-777-7959

Payton, William

From: Alexander Culiuc <aculiuc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, November 03, 2015 4:18 PM
To: Payton, William
Subject: Capital Crescent Trail linkage at Bethesda Pool
Attachments: CAPITAL CRESCENT TRAIL LETTER.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Mr. Payton,

I am a resident in the Kenwood Forest II (KFII) condominium community. I just saw the letter that our KFII Board of Directors has sent you regarding the CCT linkage in which they argue for option B. I respectfully disagree with the Board's view, and present below a number of arguments in favor of option A.

I am a year-round commuter on the CCT (equally split between running and biking) and weekend user of LFT. My wife commutes by car. I also live at the very "bottom" of KFII, on Willett Pkwy, so all three options would affect directly my household, as biker, runner, car commuter and resident homeowner with windows looking directly towards proposed A and C trails. Given all this, I think I can give a fairly balanced assessment of all options discussed.

I would like to start with two observations:

1st observation. Most weekday bike traffic crossing Hilandale and continuing into CCT are commuters going to Washington downtown (there are many more bikers going southbound in the morning than northbound, and vice-versa in the evening). The current path through the parking lot is fast, direct and convenient for commuters (albeit not very safe).

2nd observation. Most weekend traffic, on the other hand, goes towards the Bethesda downtown shopping area. Currently, to go to the downtown from LFT, one has to take a detour to the south around the pool before heading north on the CCT. So the current setup is not convenient for the most usual weekend pattern.

Any change to the linkage between LFT and CCT should facilitate Bethesda-bound traffic (especially in weekend), while not compromising the convenience of the current setup for DC bike commuters (or compromising it only marginally, if safety can be considerably improved). Clearly, option A is the only one that meets this criterion, as it charts the middle path from LFT to CCT, while greatly improving safety (no more crossing of pool access roads).

Now the point-by-point analysis of the three options.

Option B is not the way to go. I second two points raised in the July 28 meeting, and highlight two more:

* It still crosses the three exits through the pool parking lot. My problem biking through the parking area are not the cars parked, but the cars entering/leaving the parking through those three access points. Especially in the summer, when the place gets very busy with pool visitors. So option B does not *in any way* address the safety concerns associated with the current setup.

* It will not see much use. In all likelihood, I will continue taking the shortcut through the parking lot, as it is much faster (with no worse safety, as trail B would not address the main safety hazard of the current setup -- previous bullet).

* In the summer, pool goers constantly park on the curbside of Hillandale, and are likely to continue doing even after a trail is installed right next to it. It means that there will be plenty of car doors opening into the trail, children running over the trail, etc. Not exactly the safest setup.

* Option C does not address my 2nd observation -- it would only lengthen the time to reach Bethesda downtown from LFT.

Option C is not the way to go. Besides problems discussed at the meeting (being expensive and damaging to the environment), there are three additional issues to take into account:

* Option C would be convenient for going to Bethesda downtown from LFT (my 2nd observation), but it would be useless for daily commuters who are much more likely to turn south when reaching CCT to go to work to downtown DC (my 1st observation). So for most traffic Option C makes an unnecessary north detour, lengthening the commute by a few hundred yards. Whoever was crossing at Hillandale, will most likely ignore the "option C trail" and continue cutting through the parking lot.

* This option would effectively change one safety issue with another. To reach the crossing over Hillandale, bikers and pedestrian would be routed through Willett Parkway, which is really just a glorified parking lot (including for our car, as it happens). So you'll be taking traffic away from the fairly spacious pool parking lot and dumping it into the much more constrained space of a residential parking lot. Even if you route the trail around Willett (e.g., make a sidewalk that goes on the West side of until reaching Hillandale), many commuters will still likely shortcut through Willett.

* This option creates a second pedestrian crossing over Hillandale road, just 100 yards north of the existing one (that connects LFT to the pool parking log). This will unnecessarily slow down traffic. Or will you close the existing one (just renovated after the road repairs)? But that would only worsen the first issue with this option -- it lengthens the way to Washington.

Option A (possibly with a small modification) is the way go:

* It reuses the existing crossing over Hillandale.

* It completely avoids the pool parking exits which, in my opinion, should be the main safety concern to be addressed by the project.

* It appears shorter than B, and comparable to the current shortcut through the parking lot.

* It splits the difference between shortening the distance to Bethesda (addressing 2nd observation), while only marginally increasing it going to Washington (1st observation), at the benefit of greatly improved safety.

* Minor modification: This trail could be even shorter if it met CCT at a 90 degree angle ([the map](#) suggests that currently it is planned to turn slightly to the north when approaching CCT, which makes little sense for commuters to DC). A straight angle at the intersection is also likely to be safer (better visibility from all angles).

Other suggestions (confirming some observations from the July 28 meeting):

* The Hillandale crossing needs to be illuminated. It is dangerous at night, and cars are usually not slowing down for bikers (unlike at the crossing where CCT crosses Little Falls Parkway, where drivers are used by now to slow down).

* An island in the middle of the Hillandale crossing would be useful (with a passthrough for bikers).

Finally, I want to touch on the concerns raised in the KFII Board letter. It appears that a small number of KFII residents whose windows face the pool (I repeat, I am actually one of them) have monopolized the position the condo association, and are ready to kill the clearly superior option A because it would imply marginally less vegetation. These concerns have merit, but they can be addressed by minimizing the number of cut trees (the July 28 meeting notes suggest that only three would be cut, which I find reasonable) and planting new ones.

Hope you will find these comment helpful.

Thank you,

Alexander Culiuc

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

From: **KF2-NoReply** <kf2.noreply@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Nov 2, 2015 at 11:16 AM

Subject: Capital Crescent Trail

To:

As you probably know, the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission is considering ways to link the Capital Crescent Trail with the Little Falls Trail. Whatever is done will have a direct impact on many of our residents. The Board of Directors has written to the parks department to express its views on the proposals under consideration. A copy of that letter is attached.

This email is intended only for residents and unit owners of Kenwood Forest Condominium II. If you are not a resident or owner, please email kenwoodforest2@verizon.net to have your email address removed.

You are receiving this email because your email address was provided to General Manager Oriel Jimenez. Your email address will remain confidential and be used only for Board-approved messages.

All requests to change, add, or remove an email address should be sent to Mr. Jimenez at kenwoodforest2@verizon.net

November 7, 2015

William Payton, Project Manager
Montgomery County Parks
9500 Brunett Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20901

Dear Mr. Payton:

I am a neighbor who owns (and lives in) a townhouse near the proposed connection between the Capital Crescent and Little Falls Trails. I live at 4849 Chevy Chase Drive, Chevy Chase, MD 20815.

I am writing to express my strong support for Options A and C. Both of these plans would be widely used by my neighbors and me. The reason I choose to live here is the closeness to the Capital Crescent Trail, which allows my children and I to bike and jog for exercise, as well as to easily go to downtown Bethesda without driving and hunting for parking. Because Options A and C make it easier to get on the Capital Crescent Trail, they make it less likely that my neighbors and I will take our cars when we go to downtown Bethesda, reducing traffic congestion and the demand for parking in Bethesda.

Options A and C both make it much easier to for my family and others in my neighborhood to get on and off the trail. We are also frequent users of Norwood Park and its playground, as well as the Little Falls Trails. Options A and C would make it much easier for us to use all these open spaces as an integrated whole. This will improve our quality of life greatly.

Option B would achieve none of these goals. The way the Option B connection is laid out, the proposed new sidewalk will actually be less convenient than simply walking or bike riding through the Bethesda pool parking lot, which is dangerous and what people do now. As a frequent walker in this area, it seems very likely that if Option B is constructed, almost no one will use the new sidewalk because walking through the pool parking lot will continue to be the more direct route. Option B will not improve the convenience or safety of traveling between the Capital Crescent and Little Fall Trails for most people.

Finally, let me note that I am a member of the Kenwood Forrest Condominium II Association. I know that the association's Board of Directors recently sent a letter to you in support of Option B. That opinion only represents the very small number of condo association members who attend the monthly meetings and vote in condo association elections. Typically only about 10 people attend the monthly association meetings out of

200 unit owners. There are many condo owners who are not aware at all of this issue, as well as many of us who support Options A and C. Please don't let the "not in my back yard" preferences of a very small number of condo owners prevent us from having a trail connector that is useful to all those who live in this area. Options A and C will clearly be much more beneficial to the quality of life of our wider community.

Sincerely,



Jonathan Ladd
4849 Chevy Chase Drive
Chevy Chase, MD 20815

cc: Mike Riley, Director, Montgomery County Parks
Michael Ma, Acting Chief of Development, Montgomery County Parks
Ron Tripp, Chairman of the Board, Coalition for the Capital Crescent Trail



ATTACHMENT - C

Director's Office Routing & Transmittal Form

2015

Log Number: **20150949**

Date Received: **12/21/2015**

From: **Lynn Balzer-Martin**

Recipient: **Riley**

Type: **Letter**

Subject: **Petitions regarding the proposed options for Capital Crescent-Little Falls Trails Connector**

Assigned to:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Action | <input type="checkbox"/> File | <input type="checkbox"/> Note and Return |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approval | <input type="checkbox"/> For Correction | <input type="checkbox"/> Per Conversation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> As Requested | <input type="checkbox"/> For Your Information | <input type="checkbox"/> Prepare Reply |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Circulate | <input type="checkbox"/> For Your Signature | <input type="checkbox"/> See Me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comment | <input type="checkbox"/> Investigate | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Justify | |

Due Date: **12/28/2015**

Remarks:

Provide copies to:

M. T. A. Z.

D. M. ... M. A.

B. ... P. ...

Logged by: **REB**

December 17, 2015

Mr. Riley,

Enclosed find the petitions I mentioned in my email to you today...

Lynn A. Balzer-Martin

Lynn A. Balzer-Martin



TO: M-NCPPC re: PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR CAPITAL CRESCENT-LITTLE FALLS TRAILS CONNECTOR (August, 2015)

We are opposed to building this connector trail for the following reasons:

- The project budget is excessive at \$300,000 to \$600,000. Surely, M-NCPPC can use these funds to improve trails in the County, including the Little Falls Trail. Many of us have been walking and biking safely through the Bethesda Pool parking lot for many years and have never seen the need for such a project.
- Option A needlessly proposes to cut down trees which benefit our environment and form a visual and sound screen from the Bethesda pool. This screen of trees benefits those who live nearby and those who walk or bike near the Little Falls Trail.
- Both Options A and C bring the Crescent Trail closer to neighboring homes in a way that negatively affects the relative quiet and safety of our neighborhoods.

If M-NCPPC insists on making amendments to the parking lot to address bicycle traffic, we could support moderate measures (akin to those in Option B) such as altering the parking lot area with speed bumps, widening the existing sidewalk or constructing a bike lane or walkway around the outer edge.

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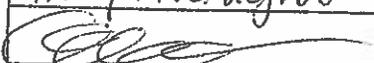
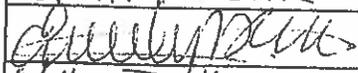
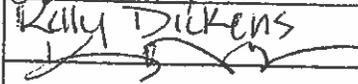
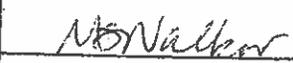
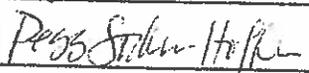
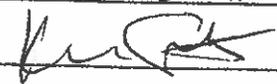
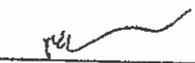
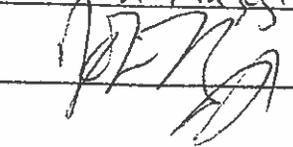
Name and Signature	Address	Email
<i>Jay C. Albright</i>	6748 Hillandale Rd. Chevy Chase, MD	
<i>Rita Albright</i>	6748 Hillandale Rd. Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
<i>Laura Spegal</i>	6672 Hillandale Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
<i>Joan Zolte</i>	4871 Chevy Chase Dr Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
<i>Erwann Markey</i>	4865 CC DR CC DR 20815	
<i>Amanda Franklin</i>	4824 Chevy Chase Dr Unit 303 Chevy Chase MD 20815	
<i>Ana Carolina Magauden</i>	4827 Chevy Chase Dr Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
<i>Michael Hoffman</i>	6746 Hillandale Rd. Chevy Chase, MD 20815	

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If M-NCPPC insists on making amendments to the parking lot to address bicycle traffic, we could support moderate measures (akin to those in Option B) such as altering the parking lot area with speed bumps, widening the existing sidewalk or constructing a bike lane or walkway around the outer edge.

Name and Signature	Address	Email
Amy Albright 	6748 Hillandale Rd Chevy Chase, MD 20815	N/A
EMILY DEAK 	6742 Hillandale Rd Chevy Chase, MD 20815	N/A
Kelly Dickens 	6736 Hillandale Rd Chevy Chase, MD	N/A
JUSAN WALKER 	6750 Hillandale Ch. Ch. MD 20815	
Peggy Sackman-Hoffman 	6746 Hillandale Rd. Chevy Chase MD 20815	N/A
Kosta Stathis 	6654 Hillandale Rd Chevy Chase MD 20815	
PE PANCOE 	4932 Bradley Blvd. Chevy Chase MD 20815	
John Maggi 	6717 Hillandale Rd Chevy Chase MD 20815	

3

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Name and Signature	Address	Email
Linda Sue Anderson <i>[Signature]</i>	4832 Langdrum Chevy Chase, Md 20815	Lsue.andersen @gmail.com
MICHAEL STEINER <i>[Signature]</i>	4838 DRUMMOND 20815 CHEVY CHASE MD	msteiner@ mkmarchitects.com
Jean Snyder <i>[Signature]</i>	4615 N. Park Dr #170F C.C., MD 20815	djgranmase@ gmail.com
Jean D Lewis <i>[Signature]</i>	4515 Willard Ave #1219 C.A. MD 20815	NOAJCHEVYCHASE @MSN.COM
PAMELA FORMAN <i>[Signature]</i>	4848 LANGDRUM CHEVY CHASE, MD 20815	forman.pamela @gmail.com
PAULO MARQUES <i>[Signature]</i>	5526 Greystone St. Chevy Chase, Md 20815	eloisam@ comcast.net
Loren Petersen <i>[Signature]</i>	6071 Hillandale Rd Chevy Chase MD 20815	Loren.Petersen@ gmail.com
LYNNA PALZER-MARTIN <i>[Signature]</i>	6648 Hillandale Ch. C. MD 20815	lynnB2keast. com

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Name and Signature	Address	Email
Toni Hartman	6634 Hillendale Rd	
Jim X. [Signature]	Cherry Chase, Md 20815	
Kathy McCarthy	4029 Langdon	
[Signature]	Cherry Chase MD 20815	
Fran Cohen	6618 Hillendale Rd	
[Signature]	Cherry Chase MD 20815	
Charlotte Bluestone	6644 Hillendale Rd.	
[Signature]	Cherry Chase, Md. 20815	
Ellen Globokor	4919 Dorset Ave	
[Signature]	Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
DINAH SMITH	4614 Norwood	
[Signature]	Ch. Chase 20815	
Sylvia Fubini	4708 Cherry	
[Signature]	Chase Blvd. CC 20815	
STEPHAN [Signature]	6618 Hillendale Rd	
[Signature]	Cherry Chase MD	

Print

Sign

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Sign

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Sign

TO: M-NCPPC re: PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR CAPITAL CRESCENT-LITTLE FALLS TRAILS CONNECTOR (August, 2015)

We are opposed to building this connector trail for the following reasons:

Print Name
Signature
Print Sign
etc.

Name and Signature	Address	Email
ALLISON MISTRETT	4877 LANGDEUM LN	allison.mistrett@gmail.com
RAGHU PENMARATHU	CHEVY CHASE MD	raghupennmarathu@yahoo.com
Carol Basha	4921 ESSEX AVE	clmstrdr@yahoo.com
	CHEVY CHASE MD	

Name and Signature	Address	Email
	4703 Morgan Dr	Kentswood@gmail.com
Kent S Wood	Chevy Chase MD 20815	
Jeanne Yu	6630 Hillandale Road	jeanniyu.md@gmail.com
	Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
Barbara Tully	5703 Warwick Place	bb_bar20815@aol.com
Bin Tully	Chevy Chase MD 20815	

Name and Signature	Address	Email
M. Bantz	4904 BRADLEY BLVD	
R. Bantz	Chevy Chase MD 20815	
Meias Panney	6646 Hillandale Rd	
Johanna	Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
Jamit P. Nakh	6726 Abbott Ln	
	Ch. Ch., MD 20815	

Name and Signature	Address	Email
	4619 Hunt Ave.	
Ruth Powers	Chevy Chase 20815	rpowers4@aol.com

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Name and Signature	Address	Email
Elizabeth Olson	4818 Cumberland	
Colman D.	Chevy Chase Md 20815	
Caroline Proyer	4910 Dorset Ave. Chevy Chase MD 20815	
Caroline Cooper	4918 Cumberland	
Ann Deary	5205 Murray Rd. Chevy Chase MD	
Ann Deary		
AMBY Association	4704 Bradley Chevy Chase, MD 20815	
Christy Bowe	4911 Hampden La. Bethesda, MD 20814	
Christy Bowe		
KATH MAGNUS	6634 H. W. A. RD. #200	
Heidi Magnus	CHEVY CHASE MD 20815	

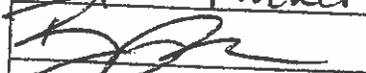
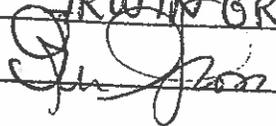
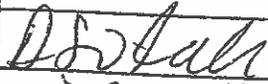
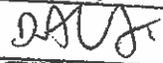
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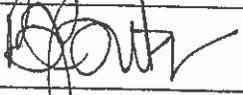
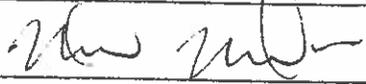
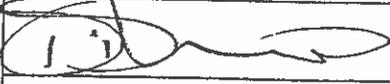
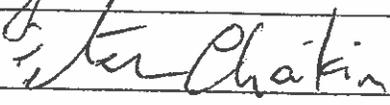
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Name and Signature	Address	Email
Bryan Plocker	6665 Hillandale Rd	bdplocker2@gmail.com
	Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Hope P McGowan	4829 Willett Pkwy	hpmcgowan@aol.com
IRWIN GROSS	Cherry Chase MD 20815	
	6602 Hillandale Road Ch Ch MD.	rosiegi@gmail.com
	6604 Hillandale Rd	
DeSiddalis		
	6604 Hillandale Rd	
A. Faraone		
DAVID WILLIAMS	6609 HILLANDALE RD	davidwilliams1978@gmail.com
	CHERRY CHASE, MD	
Margaret Perry	4831 Willett Pkwy	margaret.perry@usdoj.gov
MARGARET PERRY	Cherry Chase MD	

We are **opposed** to the current options for the Capital Crescent-Little Falls connector for the following reasons:

- The amount of money is excessive, ranging from \$300,000 to \$600,000. (Surely, M-NCPPC can use these funds for more pressing needs in other areas of the county.) Many of us have been walking and biking safely through the Bethesda Pool area for many years and do not see the need for such an expenditure.
- Option A proposes to needlessly cut down trees (which benefit our environment and which assist in forming a visual and sound screen from the Bethesda pools). This screen of trees benefits those who live nearby and those who walk or bike near the Little Falls Trail).
- Both Option A and especially Option C bring the Crescent Trail closer to neighboring homes in a way that can affect the safety and relative quiet of the neighborhood.

If some form of connector must be built, we could support more moderate measures (akin to those described in Option B) that would alter the parking lot area (perhaps with speed bumps, widening the sidewalk areas or constructing bike lanes around the outer edges).

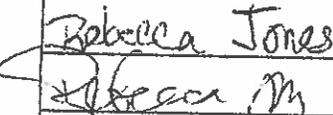
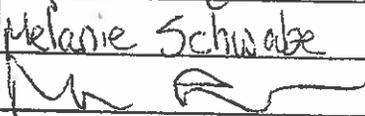
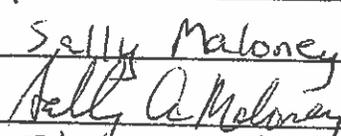
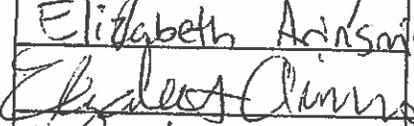
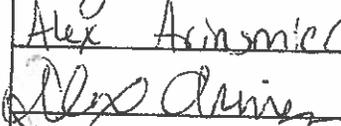
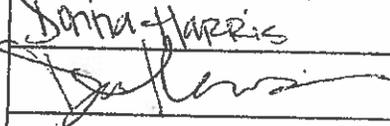
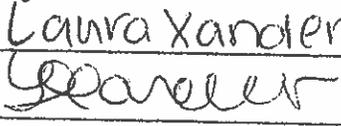
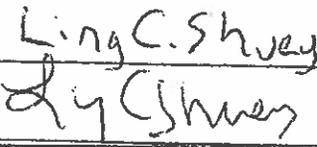
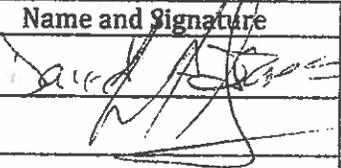
NAME and SIGNATURE	Address	Email
BARBARA BUTERA 	4825 Willett Chevy Chase 20815	bjb4825@aol.com
Rosalie Gross Rosalie Gross	6602 Hillandale Rd. Chevy Chase 20815	rosieggi@gmail.com X
Hilda Striver HILDA STRIVER	2204 Washington Ave Silver Spring MD 20910	H48284C@gmail.com
Nicole Marti 	6613 Hillandale Rd. Chevy Chase, MD 20815	nicolemarti@yahoo.com
Gonna Alessandro 	6613 Hillandale Rd Chevy Chase, MD 20815	GonnaAlessandro@hotmail.com
JOAN WEISS Joan Weiss	4845 Willett Pkwy Chevy Chase MD 20815	JWWBZARINA@ VERIZON.NET
Peter Chafin 	4845 Willett Pkwy Chevy Chase MD 20815	pacs223@gmail.com

TO: M-NCPPC re: PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR CAPITAL CRESCENT-LITTLE FALLS TRAILS CONNECTOR (August, 2015)

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Name and Signature	Address	Email
Rebecca Jones 	6657 Hillandale Rd. Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Melanie Schwabe 	4862 Cherry Chase Dr Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Sally Maloney 	4800 Cherry Chase Dr Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Elizabeth Arinsmier 	4881 Cherry Chase Dr Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Alex Arinsmier 	4881 Cherry Chase Dr Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Donna Harris 	6677 Hillandale Rd Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Laura Sanders 	6679 Hillandale Rd Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
Ling C. Shuey 	4872 Cherry Chase Dr Cherry Chase, MD 20815	
David [Signature] 	4821 Cherry Chase Dr Cherry Chase, MD 20815	

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- Option A needlessly proposes to cut down trees which benefit our environment and form a visual and sound screen from the Bethesda pool. This screen of trees benefits those who live nearby and those who walk or bike near the Little Falls Trail.
- Both Options A and C bring the Crescent Trail closer to neighboring homes in a way that negatively affects the relative quiet and safety of our neighborhoods.

If M-NCPPC insists on making amendments to the parking lot to address bicycle traffic, we could support moderate measures (akin to those in Option B) such as altering the parking lot area with speed bumps, widening the existing sidewalk or constructing a bike lane or walkway around the outer edge.

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	Pat Silbert		
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	Joan Krash		

TO: M-NCPPC re: PROPOSED OPTIONS FOR CAPITAL CRESCENT-LITTLE FALLS TRAILS CONNECTOR (August, 2015)

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