



WASHINGTON AREA BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

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May 19, 2016

Montgomery County Planning Board
8787 Georgia Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Mr. Anderson:

On behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association, I would like to thank the County for its involvement with the Metropolitan Branch Trail. It has been a long time in the making and the completion of the trail will transform the lives of many Montgomery County residents.

Our position has been and continues to be that the number one priority should be to finish the trail. Our members have advocated for this trail for decades, and we are ready to see it completed.

With that being said, the above-grade crossing of Georgia Avenue is an absolute necessity from a safety perspective. Montgomery County sets the right precedent by ensuring that the bridge is a non-negotiable feature of the trail. It is a highlight of the trail's design plan, and indicates that Montgomery County is thinking in the right way about street safety, in keeping with its recent commitment to Vision Zero.

Regarding the portion of trail surrounding the B&O Train Station, a straighter line from the bridge across the property would be vastly preferable from a trail user perspective. We have safety concerns about trail users having to make sharp turns, and navigate around the parking lot. The route directly under the awning and along the railway corridor is clearly the better choice. Staying parallel to the railroad corridor is our preferred option.

The current proposed alignment represents a compromise for which the county deserves credit. It seems a manageable, if not ideal, workaround, and we recognize the County for working with MPI, and providing them multiple alignment options in an effort to move the project forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments, and your efforts to improve the County through this project.

Tamara Evans,
Advocacy Director