



## Montgomery Planning Board Testimony - May 4, 2023 Hearing - Amherst Avenue Separated Bike Lanes

My name is Peter Gray and I am testifying on behalf of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and the 750+ WABA members who live in Montgomery County, plus the additional thousands of other County residents who have joined in actions in support of better bicycling in the region.

WABA wholeheartedly supports the construction of the Amherst Avenue Separated Bike Lanes as described in the staff report recently released to the public. As noted in that report, this Bicycle Master Plan Breezeway segment will provide safe access for bicycling along the east side of the Wheaton CBD and improve safety for all who bike and walk along Amherst Avenue for the 1.1 mile length of the lanes. WABA endorses all of the staff recommendations in Section 5 of the report, especially those that improve separation of the separated lanes from motor vehicles.

The only improvement WABA would recommend, is to find a way to widen the 8 foot bike lanes themselves. It is understandable that the right-of-way constraints on Amherst Avenue make it a difficult engineering challenge to make the separated lanes wider, but the staff report does note that the Complete Streets Design Guide developed by Planning and MCDOT has a default width for two-way bike lanes of 11 feet. Even a 9 foot wide separated lane is much better than the 8 foot wide lanes proposed here. Any means of widening the lanes beyond 8 feet is welcome and will make the lanes far safer, especially as part of a breezeway, which by definition is meant to accommodate a large number of cyclists.