



David Forman <davidforman01@gmail.com>

Re: Do Not Fund the Little Falls Parkway Lane Closures and Linear Park

Friedson's Office, Councilmember

<Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Mon, May 8, 2023 at 2:48

PM

To: "Friedson's Office, Councilmember" <Councilmember.Friedson@montgomerycountymd.gov>

Good Afternoon,

This morning, the Council reviewed the Montgomery Parks capital budget during our review of the Maryland-National Capital Parking and Planning Commission budget. I am writing to inform you of my proposal and the Council's decision with respect to Little Falls Parkway.

Following the Planning Board's April 27 decision approving the road realignment of Little Falls Parkway between Arlington Road and Dorset Avenue and the further study of a linear park in the unused lanes, the Parks Department indicated plans to move ahead with the road realignment using level-of-effort funding from existing capital funding sources such as its Planned Lifecycle Asset Replacement (PLAR) and Vision Zero programs. However, there has been overwhelming opposition from the community to the use of limited funds to realign the parkway and create a linear park. A petition garnered over 4,000 signatures in firm opposition to these plans and the Council received over 1,000 emails against approving funding over this past weekend alone. There are also outstanding questions about the cost of the realignment of the parkway and the potential linear park and whether the use of limited funding on these projects is consistent with our master-planned priorities. As such, I proposed the following language to be added to the PLAR, Vision Zero, and Urban Parks Elements CIP project descriptions:

“Any realignment of the remaining two lanes between Dorset and Arlington on Little Falls Parkway must be reviewed by the Council before funds may be utilized for this purpose. No funds may be utilized for the implementation of a linear park in this section of Little Falls Parkway.”

After robust discussion, the Council voted 10-1 to approve my proposed language. This means that the Parks Department must come before the Council to receive approval for plans to permanently realign the parkway before any funds are spent and funds may not be used to implement a linear park.

I want to clearly reiterate my longstanding support for the road diet at the Capital Crescent Trail crossing. The road diet was a swift, cost-effective response to the tragic loss of life of recumbent bicyclist Ned Gaylin in October 2016. The data supports the conclusion that the road diet has improved safety at the crossing by slowing traffic, eliminating the multiple lane threat, and maintaining a pedestrian refuge – all while maintaining adequate throughput of traffic. At the time, reducing the parkway from four lanes to two lanes was about safety and required limited costs to accomplish.

Despite certain statements to the contrary, the realignment of Little Falls Parkway to one side of the median was not proposed as an additional safety measure, but rather, to create additional space for a new linear park. Despite overwhelming support for many parks in the area and countywide and limited resources to fund them, this project has not been requested by residents or proposed in master plans. In a budget full of difficult choices, I just don't know why we would insist on dedicating significant scarcely available resources for such a divisive and unpopular linear park project.

You can view my remarks and the Council's discussion [here](#).

Sincerely,



Andrew Friedson

Councilmember, District 1



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