

The People's Safe Bridge Coalition

The Mission:

Imagine enjoying a walk or a bicycle ride along the Capital Crescent Trail unimpeded by cars as you cross from one side of the trail to the other over Little Falls Parkway. Imagine driving down Little Falls Parkway without worrying that a bicyclist or pedestrian will dart from the trail just after you've fully stopped and started moving again. We, The People's Safe Bridge Coalition have imagined that. **The People's Safe Bridge Coalition is a citizens' organization working to advocate for and build a recreational bridge for walkers, joggers, and bikers that will carry the Capital Crescent Trail over the four-lane divided Little Falls Parkway, enhancing the safety of all citizens.**

The primary concerns of the People's Safe Bridge Coalition are:

- **Safety.**
 - A crossing bridge will ensure compliance with the Montgomery County Vision Zero initiative, providing safe passage for pedestrians, joggers and bikers while vehicles are on the Parkway below.
 - A re-opened four lane Parkway will ensure that emergency services – police, fire and ambulance – will have easy access between the densely settled areas of downtown Bethesda and the new multifamily residences in Westbard as well as to other communities south of Massachusetts Avenue.
 - Four-lane travel by motorists on Little Falls Parkway will limit cut-through traffic in nearby neighborhoods without sidewalks, making it safer for residents to walk on their community streets.
 - Students walking or biking from area schools will be able to safely negotiate the trail to make their way home, and school buses will not have to seek alternate routes so that their young passengers can get home on time.
- **Protecting the Environment.**
 - The People's Safe Bridge Coalition will develop an environmental committee that will consider how best to:
 - suggest the naturalization of the Little Falls Stream to improve its ecology including identifying invasive species and protecting and enhancing the tree canopy along the bridge approaches to the CCT, keeping the trail an inviting and shaded pathway.
 - protect the sensitive nature of the flood plain environment and the surrounding stream valley.
- **Looking Toward the Future.**
 - With more than 6 million square feet still available for development in Bethesda before the cap of 32.4 million square feet of residential and commercial space is reached, downtown Bethesda greatly needs pocket parks and other green and recreational space to enhance the daily quality of life for

the thousands of people who will be moving into and working in the area. A bridge over the CCT – a longer walk for many in the area -- would provide a safer venue for exercise, leisure, and social connection.

- An additional 600,000 square feet is being developed in Westbard, which will include multi-family residential, an assisted living facility, restaurants, and retail, adding hundreds of people to this area daily. Development of the Willett Branch Park was planned to connect to the CCT and to give the Westbard area communities southwest of Westbard Avenue access to a natural resource to enhance their daily lives.
- A four-lane, median-divided Little Falls Parkway will provide the most direct and efficient route for area residents to move between downtown Bethesda and Westbard to get to jobs, shopping, schools, dining and entertainment.
- A pedestrian/bicycle crossing bridge over Little Falls Parkway will provide an alternate safe route for people to engage in activities between downtown Bethesda and Westbard.

The People's Safe Bridge Coalition will work with community members representing local civic organizations, environmental and business groups, and government agencies to reach its goal: to fulfill a request made nearly five years ago [see timeline attached.] to the M-NCPPC by community groups to build a pedestrian/bicyclist bridge over Little Falls Parkway. The bridge, similar to the one over River Road will return Little Falls Parkway to be the sylvan and safe connection between downtown Bethesda and the southwestern Bethesda communities while ensuring safe passage for people whether they walk, jog, bike or drive.

Join us, as a member of The People's Safe Bridge Coalition, as we work together for a safe trip for all!

Jeffrey Slavin, Mayor
Town of Somerset

Jenny Sue Dunner
Kenwood