



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

December 6, 2017

Isiah Leggett  
County Executive  
Montgomery County, Maryland  
101 Monroe Street, 2nd Floor  
Rockville, MD 20850

Dear County Executive Leggett:

In recent years the Council has worked with your administration successfully to make County roads safer for bicyclists of all ages and skill levels. Progressive infrastructure improvements, including protected bicycle lanes in White Flint and Silver Spring have improved the bikeability of these rising urban centers. This letter requests your support for a similar effort be undertaken in and around downtown Bethesda. Specifically, we request that your FY2019-2024 Recommended CIP include funding beginning in 2019 for design and construction of protected bicycle lanes that could be known as the "Bethesda Circle." We similarly request that your administration consider designing and constructing a "protected intersection" at Bethesda Ave and Woodmont Ave to increase safety for bicyclists crossing from the Capital Crescent Trail (CCT) to the future tunnel.

The County Council recently adopted a bold new vision for Downtown Bethesda that includes recommendations for many transformational changes to the area's bicycle infrastructure. The plan supports the development of "low-stress bike networks" that are safer for bicyclists of all ages and skill levels as well as a new development mitigation policy that requires developer payments for all modes of transportation, including biking. In addition, the nearly complete Bicycle Master Plan will be making recommendations on bicycle infrastructure, routes, and parking in Bethesda. The County also is working closely with stakeholders to identify alternate bicycle connections between Silver Spring and Bethesda in the wake of the closure of the Georgetown Branch Trail for the construction of the Purple Line.

These events led to a community meeting that we organized on November 1 to discuss bicycling in and around Bethesda. With over 100 community members in attendance, MCDOT, MNCPPC, and WABA gave presentations and led a discussion on how to improve bicycling in Bethesda. MCDOT presented a concept for a Bethesda loop built upon the master plan recommendations and their work on the interim route for the Georgetown Branch Trail. The concept, which we called the Bethesda Circle based on advocates in Silver Spring using that term for the protected bike lane loop there, was well-received by the community and bicycle advocate groups.

The Bethesda Circle would be comprised of protected bicycle lanes to the west on Woodmont Ave, to the south on Montgomery Lane/Montgomery Avenue, to the east on Pearl St./Maryland Ave, and to the north on Cheltenham Dr. It would help provide safe connections to Metro, Capital Bikeshare, the interim Georgetown Branch Trail and future Capital Crescent Trail, the Bethesda Trolley Trail, nearby neighborhoods, local businesses, and many activity centers in Bethesda. Our understanding is that MCDOT is developing more detailed cost estimates.

The closing of the Georgetown Branch Trail brings great urgency to building safe bicycle connectivity in and around Bethesda, but the above improvements will continue to provide significant benefit to the community long after the Capital Crescent Trail is opened.

Residents of Bethesda are eager to see tangible benefits from the Master Plan process. A protected bike lane network in the downtown would be well received.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hans Riemer', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Hans Riemer  
Council President

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Roger Berliner', with a stylized, cursive script.

Roger Berliner  
Councilmember, District 1