



FY25 Safe Streets 4 All (SS4A) Public Meeting: Meeting Minutes

Date: 3/20/25

Meeting Subject: FY25 Safe Streets 4 All (SS4A) Public Meeting

Location: Zoom, 7-8:30 PM

Attendees:

Parks: Josh Arnett, Laura Barna, Kyle Lukacs, Andrew Tsai, Michelle Ramirez, Susan Stafford, Melissa Chotiner

Mead & Hunt (Consultant): Bryon White

STV (Consultant): Seth Young, Jermaine Gordon

Public: Approximately 40 attendees

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1. Parks explained the objective of the meeting was to present the current status of the FY25 SS4A projects, and how project objectives meshed with overall County Vision Zero goals.
 2. Parks presented the FY25 projects -

Matthew Henson Trail at MD 185 (Connecticut Ave)

Project includes removal of the “dead end” on and off ramps, wider grass buffers, re-configured sidewalks, and upgraded underpass trail lighting.

Matthew Henson Trail at MD 97 (Georgia Ave at Hewitt):

Project includes adding a new crosswalk along Ralph Road, reducing the existing marked lane widths to 11', re-constructing the curbline, and adding a grass buffer between the sidewalks and the road, revising the curb radii at Hewitt Ave, adding median refuge pads, removing extraneous pavement, and establishing enhanced connections to Matthew Henson Trail.

Arcola Avenue Traffic Calming from Nairn to Kemp Mill Road

At Arcola and Nairn Road, project includes traffic calming improvements at the intersection and a new 5' sidewalk on the west side of Nairn Road. Median refuges will be provided at the intersection. Parks indicated that a parking restriction along Nairn, on the east side, would likely be required due to narrowing the road width from 26' to 22'.

At Arcola and Orebaugh Ave, project includes traffic calming improvements at the intersection, including shifting the existing crosswalk east towards the intersection which may preclude or shorten dedicated space for left turning vehicles. A new 8' shared use path is proposed on the west side of Orebaugh Ave, connecting to a future path within WRP.

East of Orebaugh Avenue to Kemp Mill Road, a new raised crosswalk connecting the future Sligo Creek Trail connector (behind Colt Terrace) with WRP is proposed, with lane narrowing and traffic calming to Kemp Mill Road.

MD 97 (Georgia Ave) at Evans Parkway:

Project intended to connect Parks on either side of Georgia Ave and provide a protected crossing for Park users. Project includes a HAWK signal, a new crosswalk across MD 97, new crosswalks across Evans Parkway and Drive, revised curb radii for traffic calming and ADA accessible ramps. Parks is also proposing to close the existing median along MD 97.

MD 193 (University Blvd) at Sligo Creek Parkway:

Parks presented the initial design concept, which maintained the dedicated N/B right turn lane along Sligo Creek Parkway, and then presented the benefits of the current concept which removes the N/B right turn lane to MD 193 in order to fully separate the trail from traffic and add protected landing areas. Project also includes a revised connection to Sligo Creek Trail and adjacent MD 193 sidewalks, reduced curb radii for traffic calming, west leg crosswalk with pedestrian signals, pedestrian signals for Sligo Creek Parkway, Leading Pedestrian Interval timing for MD 139 and enhanced median refuges and compliant ADA ramp.

Sligo Creek Trail at Godwin Dr

Project will create a direct trail connection to the adjacent sidewalk along Tenbrook Dr along with a raised trail crossing at Sligo Creek parkway. Parks presented modifications to the existing DOT "stub road" as well.

A summary of project schedules and contact information was also provided.

3. Public Q/A

This is a summary of major themes and comments received from public testimony or Q/A chat during the public meeting. The full meeting recording is available for review on the Parks SS4A project website. Generally, residents expressed support for the overall project goals of safety and connectivity, and most concerns were related to potential vehicle traffic delays.

MHT-1 Matthew Henson Trail at MD 185 (Connecticut Ave)

No major comments received.

MHT-2 Matthew Henson Trail at MD 97 (Georgia Ave at Hewitt)

Comments were received regarding studying optimal locations of bus stops with the intersection being re-configured.

Parks Response: During detailed design, Parks will assess bus stop locations with MC DOT Ride On and WMATA Metrobus.

Arcola Avenue Traffic Calming from Nairn to Kemp Mill Road

- Some residents expressed concern with the reduced/removed informal left turn “bay” along E/B Arcola Avenue to Orebaugh Ave.

Parks Response: Parks obtained turning movement counts at Arcola and Orebaugh Avenue, including peak (rush hour) times during the typical evening commute and weekend during a major tournament at Wheaton Regional Park. The data was used to develop a “Synchro” (software) traffic model to evaluate if a formal left turn lane from Arcola to Orebaugh is warranted. The traffic model showed that even without a left turn lane, the eastbound approach remained Level of Service ‘A’ during peak conditions, with an average vehicle delay of 3 seconds and average queue length of 3 vehicles. The delays are minimal because there are still sufficient gaps in westbound Arcola traffic for vehicles to make the left turn in a timely manner. As design progresses, Parks will continue to work with MC DOT and assess the intersection design to evaluate left turn and overall safety conditions.

- Residents asked for additional information on the future Colt Terrace Sligo Creek Trail connection, and its potential impact to Parkland resources.

Parks Response: The proposed connector is slated to begin design around 2029-2030. More information will be provided at that time. The initial layout shown at the meeting was vetted with Park arborists and planning staff to ensure less impacts to natural resources.

- Residents who used scooters or bicycles in the drive lanes of Arcola expressed concern with narrowing the roadway width at the crosswalks, which may preclude them from riding on the shoulder. Users are allowed to utilize the full lane on County roads.

Parks Response: Parks will assess lane widths during detailed design, though it should be noted users may utilize the full lane on County roads and reducing lane widths is an effective way to slow vehicle speeds.

- Comment received requesting that any modifications at Kemp Mill Road not negatively impact vehicular drive times.

- No major comments were received regarding the proposed Nairn Road sidewalk and Orebaugh Avenue shared use path.

SFG-1 MD 97 (Georgia Ave) at Evans Parkway

- Residents expressed support for the HAWK signal across MD 97, especially allowing for increased safer connection to adjacent bus stops.

- No major comments received regarding the proposed closure of the MD 97 median.

SFG-4 MD 193 (University Blvd) at Sligo Creek Parkway:

- Many residents expressed concern with removing the dedicated N/B right turn lane from Sligo Creek Parkway to MD 193, citing concerns with increased traffic delays and shifting commuter schedules.
- Many residents requested additional traffic study information, including updated counts, for the proposed removal of the Sligo N/B right turn lane.
- Residents requested additional traffic counts and traffic modeling to assess vehicle delays with the proposed changes.
- Some residents indicated Sligo Creek Parkway is their preferred road to utilize instead of Georgia Ave (MD 97) and did not support any modifications which may negatively impact vehicle drive times.
- Residents expressed support for the initial concept maintaining the right turn lane.
- Some residents expressed support for traffic calming at Sligo Creek Parkway and MD 193, including removal of the N/B right turn lane.

Parks Response: The dominant theme of many of the comments for this location was a concern that removal of the N/B Sligo right turn lane would negatively impact vehicular travel times. It should be noted that M-NCPPC Park roads were built and intended to primarily provide recreational benefit and access to adjacent parkland, not to minimize vehicle commuting times. The removal of the right turn lane provides substantial safety, accessibility, and connectivity improvements for Sligo Creek Trail users (an average of over 400 user per day was measured north of this intersection during the summer of 2023). Initial traffic counts and intersection modeling indicate a potential peak hour travel time increase of 7.7 seconds in the AM and 10.4 seconds in the PM.

Parks acknowledges the concerns regarding a potential increase in vehicle travel times with the proposed intersection modifications. As detailed design progresses, we will continue to evaluate resident concerns, coordinate with MD SHA, and assess design modifications to minimize impacts to vehicle travel times while balancing vehicle and trail user safety.

- Residents expressed support for the overall project goals of safety and connectivity.
- Some residents expressed concerns with the Friday Open Parkway closure.

Parks Response: Acknowledged, however the Sligo Friday Open Parkway closure has been an extremely successful and popular program since its inception, with an average of 1,100 users per weekend.

- Some residents expressed concerns of driver confusion with the existing 5 section signal head (left turn arrow) for EB MD 193 left onto SB Sligo Creek Pkwy being active during the Open Parkway closure.

Parks Response: Parks will assess if any additional modifications to traffic signals are required during detailed design.

- A resident requested shifting the crossing across Sligo Creek Parkway and then the west side of University Boulevard, while maintaining the N/B right turn lane.

Parks Response: Parks will assess this request, however, converting a single legged crossing into a double legged crossing (crossing Sligo Creek Parkway, and then MD 193), typically decreases user safety.

Sligo Creek Trail at Godwin Dr

No major comments received.

General

- Several comments outside the scope of the SS4A projects, related to trail maintenance of connections in other County areas were received.
- Comments were received emphasizing the need to maintain traffic flow and minimize vehicle delays, in addition to comments emphasizing the need to provide safer non-vehicular modes of transportation