

August 12, 2014

Mr. Brian W. Young
District Engineer, District 3
Maryland State Highway Administration
9300 Kenilworth Avenue
Greenbelt, MD 20770-1403

District Engineer for District 3:

We are writing about the planned road improvements that will directly impact the Berwyn District of College Park. Specifically, we are writing about the road changes that are being done to improve the pedestrian and bicyclist safety at the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and MD 430 (Greenbelt Road) and along other sections of MD 430. While we appreciate the research conducted by your staff and the improvements SHA has proposed, we are concerned that the changes may not fully satisfy the concerns of Berwyn residents.

We certainly share the same goal of improving the Greenbelt road traffic area to make it more biker and pedestrian friendly. However, we are concerned that going to one lane will probably make crossing at Greenbelt road and Rhode Island Avenue worse for both pedestrians and cars. With no turn lanes, cars will probably back up and during rush hour there will be a lot less breaks in the stream of cars to have an opportunity to cross. Quite possibly there may need to be a stop light at the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and Greenbelt Road. Currently the only light into the Berwyn neighborhood is at the intersection of Route 1 and Berwyn Road. Unfortunately the stop light on Route 1 and Greenbelt road is a little awkward to cross and for many walkers it would be a bit out of their way to walk all the way down there to cross at the intersection of Greenbelt road and Rhode Island Avenue.

The Trolley Trail is used by many people in Berwyn and North College Park as a commuter route to the College Park Metro, the University of Maryland, and elsewhere in downtown College Park. In your letter to Mayor Fellows, dated April 25, 2014, you stated that there were “low pedestrian and bicycle volumes” at the intersection of Rhode Island Avenue and MD 430. While we respectfully disagree with this observation (particularly if this was observed during non-peak hours,

as your speed studies were), if one of the objectives of this project is to create bike lanes, thereby encouraging bike travel and creating more pedestrian-friendly streets, why wouldn't efforts be undertaken at this time to truly make this area pedestrian-friendly and safe by adding a flashing beacon at this intersection?

Anyway, as we understand it, the process for making improvements to the stretch of Greenbelt that borders our neighborhood has already begun. However, we do assume that there will be some future follow-up evaluations with possible modification to the long term plans. So, please let us know what we can do to help work with SHA to improve the safety for cars, pedestrians, and cyclists along the State roads (Greenbelt Road and Route 1) that run along the border of our community.

Sincerely

Kevin Young
President of the Berwyn District Civic Association