

FACT SHEET FOR LITTLE FALLS PARKWAY LANE CLOSURES AND PARK PROPOSAL

What is happening on Little Falls Parkway?

- Montgomery Parks has closed 0.4 miles of the southbound half of Little Falls Parkway from Arlington Road to Dorset Avenue in order to create space for an experimental recreational area. They plan to use the 1.4 acres of closed lanes for a “linear park,” including games (cornhole toss, giant chess, ping pong, hopscotch), food trucks, porta-potties, and concerts.
- Southbound traffic has been diverted to one of the northbound lanes, meaning that opposing traffic between Dorset Avenue and Arlington Road no longer has a median.
- Combining both directions of traffic onto one side of the Parkway also means that there are no longer any road shoulders for cars to pull onto to let emergency vehicles pass.

Before commencing their park experiment, Montgomery Parks needs the Montgomery County Planning Board to approve the safety of the lane closures and modified traffic patterns. The Planning Board will discuss this at a hearing on March 30.

- *These current lane closures could become permanent, and possibly extended from Arlington Road all the way to River Road.*

Are the lane closures and modified traffic patterns safe?

- No! The lane closures increase risks of accidents and violate the County’s Vision Zero policy to eliminate serious and fatal collisions on County roads for vehicle occupants (drivers and passengers), pedestrians, and bicyclists. The lack of a median:
 - Leaves no margin for error by drivers, especially at night, increasing the risk of a head-on collision.
 - Confuses many drivers with the barriers, bollards and a chicane along the undivided roadway.
 - Means cyclists and pedestrians at the Capital Crescent Trail have to look quickly in both directions while crossing two lanes, creating a mixed-threat crossing.
 - Creates “blind spots” for cyclists and pedestrians at the Capital Crescent trail crossing when traffic is backed up from Arlington Road.
- The lane closures create backups at Arlington Road, blocking the Capital Crescent trail crossing, and significantly increasing travel times between River Road and downtown Bethesda.
- These dangers will only increase with the addition of 6,300 residential units in development between downtown Bethesda and Westbard.

Wouldn’t more park space improve the local quality of life?

- Yes, who doesn’t love park space? But this won’t be a “park” in the traditional sense. This is an experimental recreational area on a 1.4-acre patch of asphalt, next to a heavily traveled two-lane road carrying commuter, shopping, restaurant and school bus traffic.

- It is dangerous for families and children to walk and play next to these two lanes of traffic.
- The Parks Department has not responded to public queries as to how the games (cornhole, giant chess, ping-pong) will be maintained or who will manage them (putting them away at night, repairing and replacing stolen or vandalized items).
- Montgomery Parks wants to bring in food trucks and proposes having outdoor concerts on this postage-stamp size of asphalt. The Parks Department has not considered the environmental impact of these events. With them come porta-potties and trash cans.
- Noise pollution will take away from the natural tranquility we seek from the Capital Crescent Trail and park space in general.

All of these factors will detract from the natural beauty and tranquility of the Parkway and Capital Crescent Trail, which is what users value.

Who is this “linear park” intended for?

- Great question! We don’t know. Neighborhoods adjacent to the Parkway were never surveyed as to whether they wanted this linear park, and many nearby residents don’t want it.
- There are over 25 acres of parkland adjacent to this site, within walking distance of single- and multi-family homes within the area. This park is not needed.
- If people come from outer neighborhoods, they will have to walk, bike or drive to this area. There is no nearby public transit for park users and there is limited parking. The Parks department hasn’t responded to public inquiries as to where visitors will be able to park. Nearby communities are concerned that visitors will park on their narrow streets and take street parking needed by residents.

Who is paying for all of these changes?

- You are! Your taxpayer dollars are funding this project, whether you like it or not.
- This money could be spent on maintaining and improving the parks we already have, which are neglected and in need of repair.

What if I disagree with this project? What can I do to register my objection?

- **The attached petition asks the Planning Board to make the Capital Crescent Trail crossing safer, and to restore the rest of Little Falls Parkway to its original four lanes.**
- **By signing, you are exercising your taxpayer voice as to how you want your taxes spent, and not wasted. *The petition closes on March 29, for the Planning Board meeting on March 30.***