

From the planning documents, it appears that the County hopes to widen Knowles Avenue on the south, eastbound side and add a dedicated bicycle lane. That construction would be a folly under present circumstances.

Our community certainly needs better access for bicycles traveling up that hill from the Rock Creek trail area, but this change will cause more problems than it will solve. First, the homes along Knowles and Warner have back yards plagued by excessive run-off water . Adding asphalt without improving the storm drainage will make this worse. Our neighborhood already suffers regularly from a large accumulation after heavy rain. Second, where will the bikes go, once they reach Summit? There is no sound and safe place for them to travel in any direction at that intersection and the auto traffic on Knowles from Summit to Connecticut Avenue or downtown Kensington is tremendous. It can take ten minutes to move those two blocks. Downtown Kensington is well-equipped to handle bike traffic, but the transition along Knowles has to be changed before more bikes are put on that road.

Finally, if the County believes that the improvements should start by making more room for bikes now on the hill to Summit, I have heard three better solutions:

First, and least expensive, Warner could be closed to thru traffic other than bikes, and signage added to direct east-bound cyclists from Rock Creek to Warner. Travel difficulties at Summit would remain, but dedicating the existing road would accomplish the same goal as widening Knowles.

Second there is an existing trail along the northern edge of the rail right of way between Rock Creek Trail and Plyers' Mill. That trail could be re-graded to provide a less challenging uphill slope and widened slightly to accommodate east-bound cycles, bringing them to Summit with more safe and quick options to continue on to downtown Kensington, especially to the MARC station, via Plyers and Metropolitan.

Third, it would be better to widen Knowles on the north side than on the south. The buildings on the north side are on larger lots, set back further from the road, and cyclists would have direct access to the public library and commercial development on that side of the street upon reaching Summit.

Note that as of one month ago, a developer presented a preliminary plan to add another large apartment building at the Summit and Knowles intersection. Before that project goes forward, the Knowles traffic pattern should be reconsidered with great care.