

Dear Council President Stewart and County Councilmembers:

The Parks Department Director is complaining about its "slashed" budget and has made an hysterical plea for funding. Ms. Figueredo claims that "this budget underfunds employee compensation and fails to fund increases necessary to cover maintenance for new parks, debt service and inflationary increases."

The Parks Department's proposed budget is \$150.1 Million which includes a \$10.2 M increase or 7.2%. The County Exec has proposed a budget that allots a 3.1% increase to the existing \$140 million, which Figueredo claims will be \$1 million short of covering staff compensation, and \$3.1 million below what is necessary to maintain existing level of services. We taxpaying citizens are concerned that this request for additional funding is not verified or warranted. If there is \$1 Million dollar short fall for covering staff compensation, the Parks Department should take a hard look at where the waste is in their operation. We citizens of the surrounding neighborhoods of Little Falls Parkway believe that the ongoing expense for this 4/10 of a mile (2112 feet) of Parkway be eliminated.

Parks has been wasting time and manpower on this tiny stretch of road. They have changed it so many times that we have lost count. They have succeeded in making it ugly, traffic clogged and unsafe over a five year period. They have not listened to the taxpayers/voters who have not wanted nor needed the changes. The parkway is less safe now then it was in 2017. The plans for its future, which will cost upwards of \$650,000, have yet to be implemented. The taxpayers have never seen a formal budget for this project. If there is such a dire shortfall of funds, the most cost effective solution would be to return the Parkway to 4 lanes. Let the citizens use the parkway fully. Do not tear up any asphalt, do not change the topography yet again. Remove the jersey walls and bollards and return the parkway to its useful and attractive state.

Right now it is an eyesore, full of makeshift equipment and sits with empty lanes, not used by bikers or walkers, right next to a trail that needs repair and carries thousands of bikers/walkers everyday. This Parkway has been tortured, closed and opened, gates made and now unused, traffic signaling changed, lanes narrowed without signage. The Capital Crescent Trail Crossing is now more dangerous with no refuge for walkers or bikers. There are no fire lanes for Montgomery Fire and Rescue. In fact there was a serious accident in September 4, 2024 when an impatient young driver ran the light around backed-up traffic; was concussed and taken to a hospital. That accident was dismissed as "nothing serious" by a Parks' employee at an NCPC hearing. The accident happened because of the poor lane configuration instituted by Parks.

Ms. Figueredo states that Parks will "do everything we can to find savings and help close the gap". We, the taxpaying/voting public, suggest that Parks begin with a cost effective solution: open up Little Falls Parkway to its previous, safe, four lanes. Eliminate its present unsafe configuration and increase its needed carrying capacity (with 300+ units under construction at Westbard and RR named a Growth Corridor). Do not spend \$650,000 more for changes not wanted or needed, on top of the thousands of dollars you have already spent on this folly. Get rid of the bollards and jersey walls. Look at the petition signed by 5645 persons and open the Parkway. Don't spend this money for changes that have never been wanted, asked for or needed. Save the money for necessary projects in this time of fiscal stress in the County and State.

Sincerely,  
Patricia Depuy Johnson  
Dr. David C. Johnson  
5301 Oakland Road  
Chevy Chase, Maryland 20815