

**Robert Nelson's Testimony to the Montgomery County Council
at the Public Hearing on the County Executive's recommended amendments transmitted to
the Council on April 14, 2025 and other potential amendments to the FY25-30 Capital
Improvements Program (CIP)
May 13, 2025**

I'm Robert Nelson, homeowner in Goshen and past chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board.

A big announcement on May 8, 2025, was that Flash BRT is being extended to Columbia in Howard County. That's great for the Route 29 corridor, but for the Upcounty we are still awaiting transportation solutions. There are 350,000 residents in the Upcounty. "Four major infrastructure projects serving the Upcounty are envisioned in county master plans, including expanded capacity on I-270, the Corridor Cities Transitway, Bus Rapid Transit on or near MD 355, and the extension of Midcounty Highway (M-83) north of Montgomery Village Avenue." Only one of these four is currently proposed for funding: MD 355 BRT and it only extends north to Germantown.

On May 8, 2025, I saw a presentation on the Germantown Sector Plan Amendment showing that economic development has not proceeded as envisioned and there are actually less jobs now in Germantown than there were 15 years ago.

On February 13, 2025, the Montgomery Planning Board voted that "a comprehensive study of travel needs along the Clarksburg to Germantown corridor be conducted to determine if there is sufficient master-planned transportation capacity to accommodate planned development." On May 5, 2025, there was a presentation to the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board on the "central" section of MD 355 BRT. A number of the Board members expressed reservations as to the effectiveness of BRT in the Upcounty. Instead of pursuing a piecemeal Upcounty transportation approach as currently proposed in the County Executive's CIP, let's perform the comprehensive study of travel needs instead of funding just a small portion of MD 355 BRT.

Regarding existing infrastructure, on February 6, 2025, I testified in-person at the County Council meeting advocating for a replacement of the Brink Road Bridge over the Great Seneca Creek. When I testified it was scheduled for FY26 but now it's FY28 or FY29. In the meantime, the County Executive singled out the Brink Road Bridge project as the only one to be deferred in the entire county. Yet the deteriorating Brink Road Bridge carries nearly as much traffic per lane as the Key Bridge in Baltimore. I again request that this project be accelerated with a plan for no closure of the road during construction. (February 6, 2025, testimony attached).

In the Upcounty we utilize existing public transportation and I am fortunate to have a bus stop at the end of my street. Unlike the Purple Line and Flash BRT stations, the bus stop at the end of my street is just a concrete slab, has no shelter and not even a bench to sit on. Congratulations on the 50th Anniversary of The Ride On bus transit system!

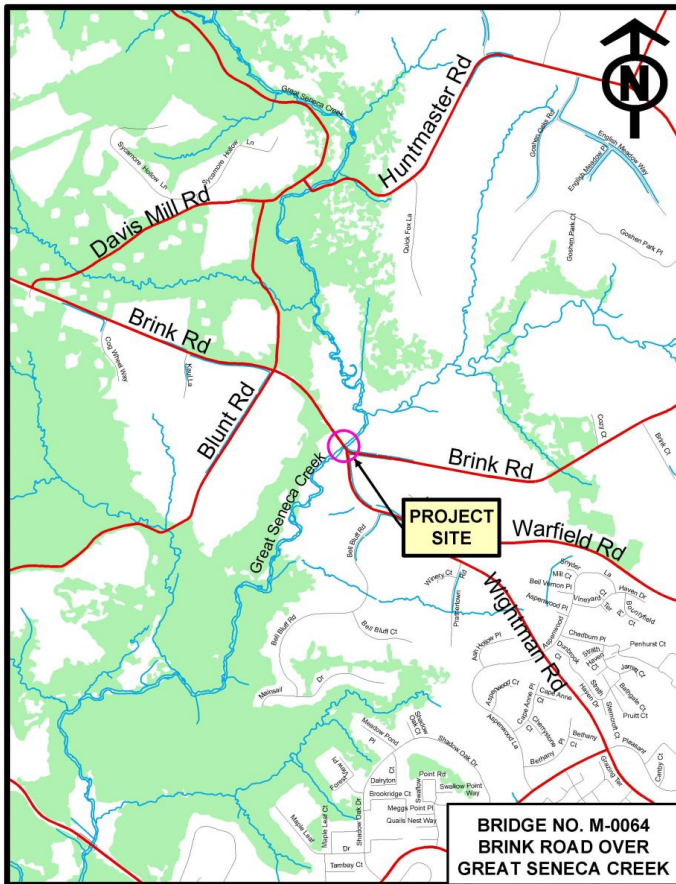


**Robert Nelson's Testimony to the Montgomery County Council
at the Public Hearing on the FY25 Capital Budget
and FY25-30 Capital Improvements Program (CIP)
February 6, 2025**

I'm Robert Nelson, homeowner in Goshen and past chair of the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board.

Transportation is the top concern of Upcounty residents and I'm here today to advocate for critical infrastructure projects.

Replacing Brink Road Bridge over Great Seneca Creek

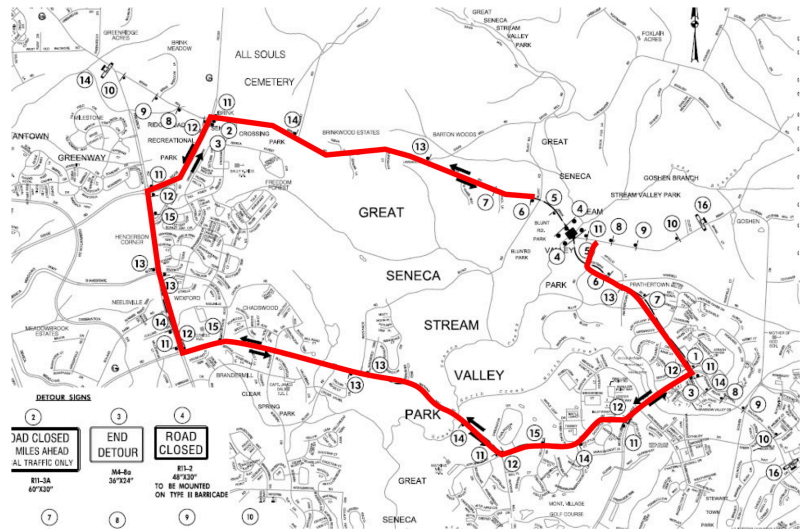


"The Montgomery County 2023 Bridge Inspection Report found that the bridge steel beams and bearings are in poor condition and warrant a high priority for bridge superstructure replacement. In addition, other design issues, such as outdated bridge railings for vehicle crash safety need corrected." "The 2022 bridge inspection report for Bridge No. M-0064 indicates that the bridge steel beams are in poor condition with areas of 100 percent section loss. "The existing bridge, built in 1972, is a one (1) span 58'-3" steel beam with an asphalt filled corrugated metal deck structure carrying a 23'-6" clear roadway with W-beam guardrail on each side." The proposed replacement bridge has a 34'-0" clear roadway width. "The bridge is functionally obsolete with a clear roadway width of 24' and carries approximately 12,000 vehicles per day." The costs of bridge construction ... for this project are eligible for up to 80 percent

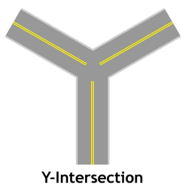
Federal Aid," yet the Brink Road Bridge Replacement keeps being deferred (P502104).

The Brink Road bridge currently carries 12,000 vehicles per day. Previous capital projects in our area have maintained traffic flow including the Brink Road Bridge over Goshen Branch (P500503) and the Davis Mill Road Emergency Stabilization (P502006), but current MCDOT plans propose a three-month road closure of Brink Road. The MCDOT proposed detour is 7.7 miles in length and few people are likely to choose to take this very long detour. We will probably see large volumes of traffic unsafely diverting onto narrow, winding, rural roads that were never designed to handle this traffic. An alternative four-mile diversion route is over Davis Mill Road (a rustic road) to a very narrow Huntmaster Road where there is a one-lane bridge with a sharp turn.

(Graphic: MCDOT Proposed Detour Route During Brink Road Bridge Construction)



Closing Brink Road for three months is unacceptable and MCDOT must maintain traffic flow on Brink Road during the construction of a new bridge.



Y-Intersection

The current intersection of Brink and Wightman Roads is configured as a “Y” which is not acceptable for current road safety

standards. “Y-intersections can be unsafe because of the angle of entry, the potential for head-on collisions, and the possibility of drivers misjudging their right-of-way.” (Source: *Roadway Intersection Type - Mass Crash Report Manual*). Fortunately the area next to the current Brink Road Bridge is public



land and a reconfiguration to a standard “T” intersection is a very feasible option. Moving the Brink Road Bridge slightly north would easily incorporate a “T” intersection and also allow construction to proceed without the closure of the current bridge. Another option is to create a “roundabout.”

◆ AI Overview

Y-intersections can be unsafe **because of the angle of entry, the potential for head-on collisions, and the possibility of drivers misjudging their right-of-way.**



Y-Intersection

Why Y-intersections can be unsafe

Angle of entry

Drivers entering a Y-intersection from one leg may think they have the right-of-way because of the angle.

Head-on collisions

Although the angle of impact may be less severe than a right angle, there's still a risk of head-on collisions at high speeds.

Misjudged right-of-way

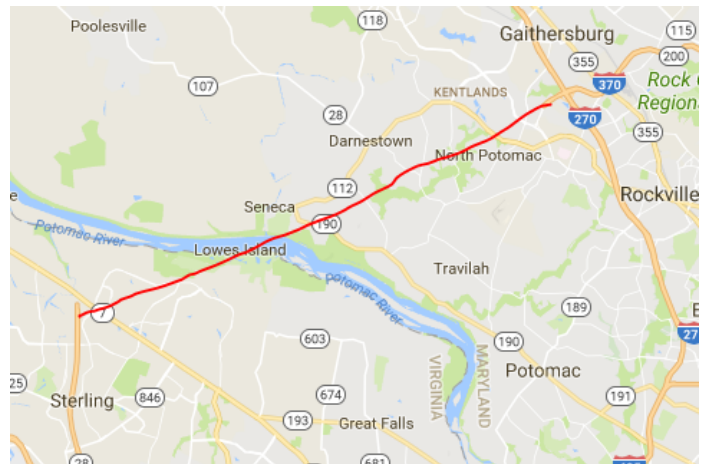
Drivers may misjudge their right-of-way, especially older drivers or drivers of articulated vehicles.

How to make Y-intersections safer

- Close the intersection and convert it into a roundabout
- Square up the intersection to form a T-intersection

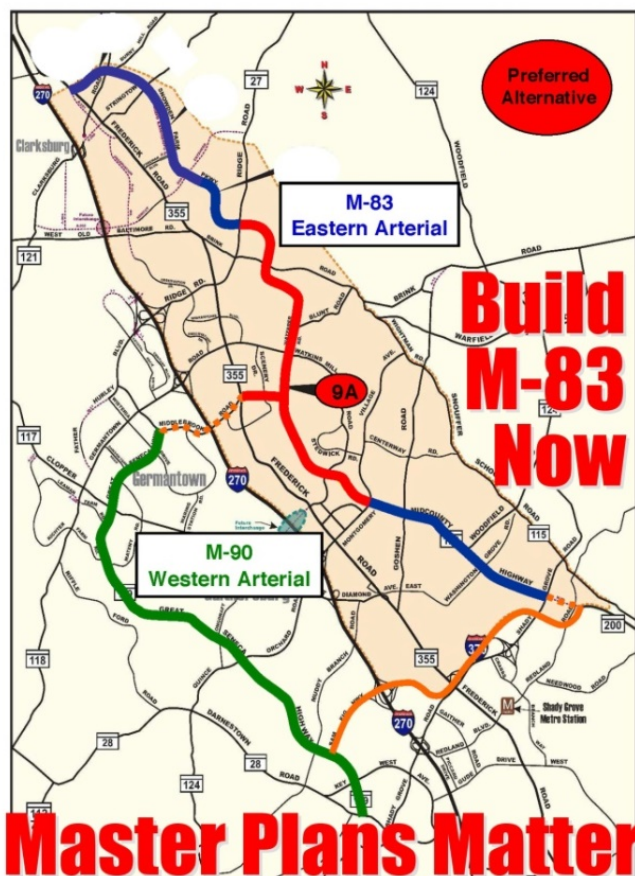
New Potomac River Crossing

I know from personal experience having had an office in Reston for six years, that the commute over the American Legion Bridge is horrendous. “The Northern Virginia Transportation Alliance recommends constructing a new Potomac River bridge in the 35-mile gap between the American Legion Bridge and the U.S. 15/Point of Rocks Bridge, resolving the region’s single greatest regional transportation deficiency.” The bridge at Point of Rocks is only one lane each way and the ferry at Poolesville has been out of service for over four years. Isn’t it equity for Montgomery County residents to have access to the great jobs offered in Virginia?



Completing the Mid-County Highway

Lieutenant Governor Aruna Miller knows well the need for the Mid-County Highway as she worked on this project at MCDOT. It’s not equity if Upcounty residents can’t get to Downcounty jobs because of traffic congestion. Snowden Farm Parkway is completed in Clarksburg and only 5.6 miles are left to complete the long-awaited Eastern Arterial. Now is the time to enlist the support of the State of Maryland along with county resources to fully fund this project. For example, Howard County contributed \$17M and the state paid \$151M for the recently completed Route 32 dualization that has a similar-sized project scope as the 9 kilometer Mid-County Highway gap.



Completed Sections of Eastern Arterial – Snowden Farm Parkway and Midcounty Highway
Preferred Alternative to complete Eastern Arterial – Alternative 9A, Master Plan Route
Western Arterial – Great Seneca Highway
Connections; East to West, and both highways to the ICC. Solid-completed, Dashed-planned

**Build M-83 now on the
Master Plan Route!**
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