

**Robert Nelson's Testimony to the Montgomery County Council  
at the Public Hearing on the Master Plan of Highways  
and Transitways (MPOHT) - 2025 Technical Update  
July 8, 2025**

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

I moved to Montgomery County in 1982 and lived in Bethesda for nine years, Potomac for 14 years and now in Goshen for over 20 years. I always had respect for the Montgomery Planning Board down county, but in my experience living in the Upcounty, I'm utterly dismayed. There has been unbridled development without the required prerequisite of infrastructure being in place. 40,000 people now live in Clarksburg and even the nearby Montgomery Village golf course is now being turned in nearly 500 housing units.

On May 30, 2025, Governor Wes Moore said,

*"Gone are the days when we are the party  
of multi-year studies on things we already know.  
...We must be a party of action."  
---Governor Wes Moore*



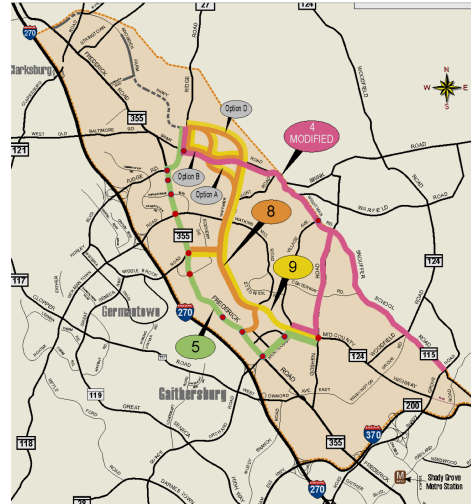
On February 13, 2025, the Montgomery Planning Board recommended another Upcounty traffic study which we don't need:

*"Conduct a comprehensive study of travel needs along the  
Clarksburg to Germantown corridor to determine  
if there is sufficient master-planned transportation capacity  
to accommodate planned development."  
---Montgomery Planning Board*

From previous studies dating back 15 years and looking at numerous alternatives, the Master Plan Route for Mid-County Highway Extended is best. We know that!

The June 2012 Midcounty Corridor Study Traffic Report stated:

- “Under Alternative 9 (Master Plan Alignment), more major intersections (i.e., intersections of primary or secondary arterial roadways) would operate below the county’s CLV congestion standard of 1,425 vehicles during more peak hours than any of the other alternatives.
- Alternative 9 would provide the fastest north-south travel route through the study area during the AM and PM peak hours, compared to the other alternatives, and would also reduce travel times along the MD 124- MD 355- MD 27 corridor more than 3 other alternatives during the AM peak hours and more than all the other alternatives during the PM peak hour.
- Alternative 9 would allow greater mobility across the study area while providing a roadway on new alignment to accommodate traffic growth without burdening existing facilities.”



*“Based on these findings, Alternative 9 (Master Plan Alignment) would provide the greatest transportation benefits, and is therefore recommended as the Preferred Alternative.”*  
*-- Mid County Corridor Study Traffic Report, June 2012*

And a bus on that route traveling at speeds up to 50 mph would take less time from Clarksburg to Shady Grove Metro than any other option that has been proposed. We know that.

The Montgomery Planning Board stated:

*“Removal of Highway M-83 would result in significant positive GHG and carbon sequestration impacts, and indeterminate negative impacts on accessibility to community and public spaces, access to transportation options, and community connectivity.” - Montgomery Planning Board, February 2025*

They don’t seem to understand the Upcounty as there are already significant negative impacts to our community with high traffic volumes overflowing onto

rural roads never designed to accommodate this amount of traffic. Montgomery County already has 5,200 miles of roadways and adding the 5.6 miles of Mid-County Highway Extended would be an increase of only 0.4%. That's an insignificant impact to the climate! We know that.

From my experience in Goshen, thirty acres of wetlands have been created only three blocks from my home at a current cost of about \$135,000 per acre. Lost wetlands can be recreated! We know that.

Recent experience in Howard County building an equivalent number of miles of roadway cost less than \$200M, not the exorbitant figures promoted by the opposition. 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 5.6 mile Mid-County Highway gap. "The Route 32 dualization project included environmental restoration efforts, such as stream relocation and stormwater management, and adhered to Maryland's Reforestation Law, which mandates tree replacement." We can do exactly the same in Montgomery County.



Similar to the Mid-County Highway Extended project, there are seven "extended" roads in Montgomery County that have been or are being planned to be extended at a combined cost of \$310M (see page 4). Why is it that Observation Drive Extended that would cut

through a dense forest and scenic stream valley is already included in the Capital Improvement Program? Is Observation Drive Extended "consistent with Thrive Montgomery 2050 and the county's Climate Action Plan?" It's inequity for Montgomery County to support seven "extended" roads and single out just one, Mid-County Highway Extended, for removal.

I urge you to keep M-83 in the Master Plan and include it in the Capital Improvement Program Budget. Upcounty desperately needs the Mid-County Highway to be connected to Snowden Farm Parkway. It's our number one transportation priority. We know that!

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These Montgomery County road projects have or are currently being funded:

Chapman Avenue Extended
Maryland/Dawson Extended
North High Street Extended
Observation Drive Extended
Platt Ridge Drive Extended
Summit Avenue Extended
Watkins Mill Road Extended

All the above road projects are forthcoming, but the Montgomery Planning Board singled out just one project to be excluded from the Master Plan:

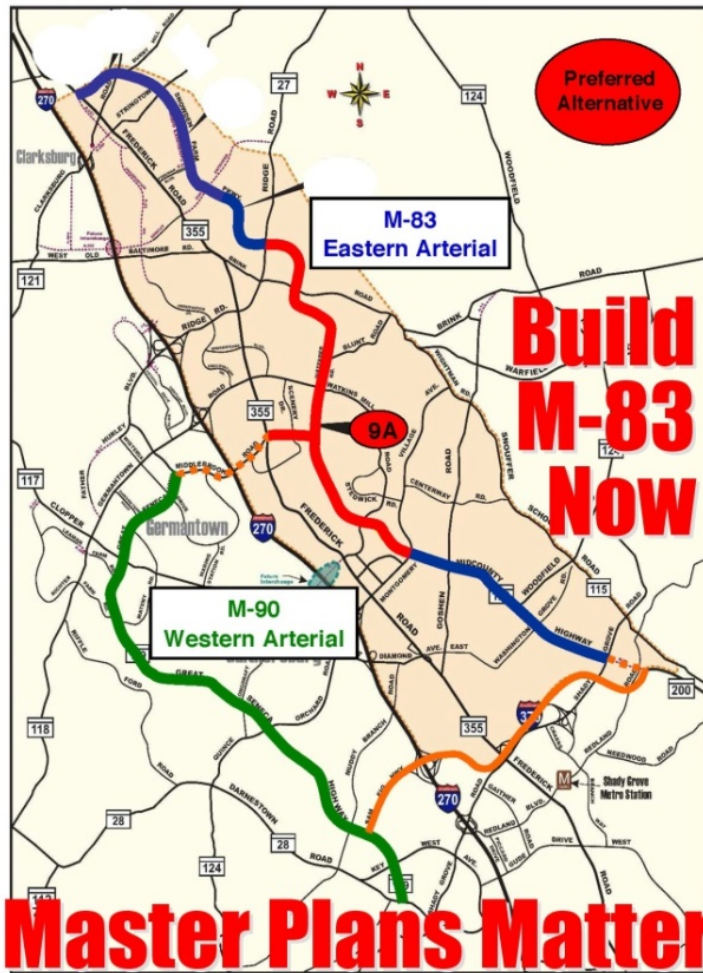
Mid-County Highway Extended
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**That's Inequity and should not be tolerated!**  
**Reach out to County Officials to demand Equity.**

Purple Line	\$10,000,000,000
Above Seven Roads "Extended"	\$ 310,000,000
Mid-County Highway Extended	\$ 0

*The Mid-County Highway Extended project is essential to the UpCounty infrastructure and it's not right to single out just one road project when so many other road extensions have or are going forward.*





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

*Recognizing that transportation is the #1 concern of Montgomery County residents, the Upcounty Citizens Advisory Board and Upcounty residents have been clamoring for the county to invest in north/south corridor transportation improvements. Four to six additional travel lanes could be made available if the Snowden Farm Parkway in Clarksburg were connected to the Mid-County Highway in Gaithersburg. A bus on the completed highway would have a travel time of less than half of the CCT.*

“M-83 has been included in Master Plans since 1960. It is essential to the development of Upcounty, including the Clarksburg and Germantown areas. M-83 provides a multi-modal, direct connection from Clarksburg to the Shady Grove Metro, meeting critical transportation needs for the region. Additionally, it supports the planned economic revitalization of areas like the former Lakeforest Mall, alongside regular transportation needs. Relying solely on MD 355 to serve Clarksburg and Upcounty traffic is not sustainable. MD 355 frequently experiences significant congestion, making it challenging for local residents to access the road from feeder streets, leading to unnecessary delays, increased air pollution, and lost time and wages for the people in the area. Clarksburg has grown from a community of 10,000 residents in 2010 to over 40,000 residents today, with more residential development underway. This rapid growth has outpaced the current transportation infrastructure, which is now critically insufficient. Removing sections of M-83 would negatively impact the quality of life for both current and future residents of Clarksburg and Upcounty.

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**Retain M-83 in the Master Plan!”**

Footnote: Capital Funds Already Expended and Currently Allocated: Chapman Avenue Extended \$21M, Maryland/Dawson Extended \$3M, North High Street Extended \$3M, Observation Drive Extended \$115M, Platt Ridge Drive Extended \$4M, Summit Avenue Extended \$32M, Watkins Mill Road Extended \$130M