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Transcript of Public Hearing

Date: March 11, 2025

Case: North High Street Extended Project, In Re:

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WORLDWIDE COURT REPORTING & LITIGATION TECHNOLOGY

1 MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

2 DIVISION OF TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING

3 100 EDISON PARK DRIVE

4 GAITHERSBURG, MARYLAND 20878

5 -----
6 VIRTUAL PUBLIC HEARING

7 NORTH HIGH STREET EXTENDED

8 MARCH 11, 2025

9 6:30 P.M. TO 8:00 P.M.
10 -----

11 PROJECT BACKGROUND: Montgomery County Department of
12 Transportation is holding a virtual public hearing for
13 the North High Street Extended Project. The limit of
14 this project is from Morningwood Drive to Georgia
15 Avenue on North High Street. This project aims to
16 improve safety and connectivity within the Olney Town
17 Center vicinity by providing vehicular, pedestrian,
18 and bicycle access to North High Street from
19 Morningwood Drive, instead of Georgia Avenue.
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21 Job Number 573206

22 Pages 1 - 46

23 Transcribed by Sandra Ann Masterpole
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Virtual Hearing held remotely.

Pursuant to agreement, before Mylene Santiano,
Court Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of
Nevada.

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A P P E A R A N C E S

NORTH HIGH STREET EXTENDED PROJECT

MARCH 11, 2025, PUBLIC HEARING

Hearing Officer Richard Dorsey

MCDOT Chairperson Dan Sheridan

MCDOT Host Lori Main

MCDOT Joseph Moges

MCDOT Hoang Nguyen

MCDOT Rebecca Park

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS:

Michele Howard	Cicero Salles
Danna Jennings	Judy Hruz
Kay Zeiter	Eileen Simpson
Bradley Child	Carlos Munoz Brenes
Allen McFarland	Emerson Diaz
Ted Chanin	Howard Forman
Paul Geller	Delinda Becker
Jim Smith	Brenda Bishop
Curtis Chappell	Mary Jo O'Brien
Max Etin	David Sostman
Kathleen Dawson	Spencer Long
Mindy Badin	Louis Masciocchi
Carolyn Knight	Lauren Smith
Neil Patel	Pam Destino
Lisa Edwards	Ngi Rifkin

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E X H I B I T S

NUMBER	MARKED
1 - Office of Management and Budget	5
2 - 70 Percent Design Plans	5
3 - Written Testimony Provided Prior and After	5
4 - Washington Times Newspaper	5
5 - List of Attendees	5
6 - Hearing Transcript	5

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Hearing began at 6:47 p.m. All parties appeared in person.)

(Public Hearing Exhibit Numbers 1 through 6 were marked for identification.)

HEARING OFFICER DORSEY: Good evening. It is Tuesday, March 11, 2025, and the time is approximately 6:30 p.m. My name is Richard Dorsey. I am the Hearing Officer designee at this hearing for the Montgomery County Department of Transportation for the North High Street Extended project in Olney, Maryland.

Here with me this evening to conduct this public hearing are Mr. Joseph Moges, chief of MCDOT's Division of Transportation Engineering; Ms. Rebecca Park, transportation engineering unit manager of DTE; and Mr. Hoang Nguyen, project manager for North High Street Extended. Mr. Moges will be providing the information and details regarding the proposed project.

Thank you for joining us on this virtual platform. Tonight's hearing is broadcasted via Zoom, and it is being recorded. A link to the recording will be posted within 24 hours after tonight's hearing on the project web page of North High Street Extended. The link to the project web page is provided by scanning the QR code at the top of the chat.

1 Please note, your video camera is turned off
2 by default this evening. This is to reduce the bandwidth
3 of the meeting and maximize technical efficiency. We
4 request that you please do not turn your camera on during
5 the hearing. Likewise, your microphones have been muted.
6 Once the testimony portion of this hearing begins, those
7 who wish to testify can raise their hand, and you will be
8 called on and unmuted when it's your turn to speak. If you
9 are joining us via telephone only, you may raise your hand
10 by pressing star-nine on your telephone keypad.

11 Please wait until the testimony portion of
12 this hearing to raise your hand. You may raise your hand
13 at any time during the testimony portion of the hearing.
14 We will call on you to provide your oral testimony when it
15 is your turn to speak. Written testimony and comments may
16 be submitted as well and will be considered with the same
17 weight as oral testimony.

18 Following the testimony portion of this
19 hearing, we will hold a question-and-answer session if time
20 allows. During that time, you may raise your hand to ask a
21 question, or you are welcome to type your question in the
22 chat box by clicking on the "chat" icon at the bottom of
23 your screen.

24 Tonight's hearing is being held pursuant to
25 Section 49-53 of the Montgomery County Code. The purpose

Transcript of Public Hearing
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1 of a public hearing is to obtain resident testimony
2 regarding the potential project to assist in determining if
3 the project is in the best interest of the public, and
4 whether it should be authorized for construction in its
5 entirety, or any portion thereof. This forum allows you to
6 provide testimony about the project, which may influence
7 the final design. Your testimony should be focused
8 entirely on the project which is the topic of discussion.
9 All interested persons are entitled to be heard at this
10 hearing. However, the testimony portion of this hearing is
11 not a forum for dialogue, questions and answers, or cross-
12 examination.

13 Please direct your remarks to the specific
14 project that is the subject of this hearing. If comments
15 stray into areas not related to the project, I will ask
16 that you refocus your comments to the subject project.

17 Following the conclusion of this public
18 hearing, the record will remain open for one month to allow
19 any person who was unable to attend this hearing an
20 opportunity to have their testimony included in the public
21 record and be fully considered. The official closing date,
22 by which all written testimony must be received, is Friday,
23 April 11, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. Submissions should be
24 provided by the online comment form on the project website,
25 the link to which is shown on your screen, or by e-mail to

1 Hoang Nguyen at Hoang.Nguyen@montgomerycountymd.gov, by the
2 close of the hearing record. Please be sure to provide
3 your name and property address on your submission. Written
4 submissions will be considered with the same weight as oral
5 testimony.

6 After the hearing is concluded and the
7 record is officially closed, I, as hearing officer, will
8 review and weigh all the information submitted into the
9 public record and make a recommendation to the Director of
10 the Montgomery County Department of Transportation,
11 Christopher Conklin, for his decision regarding the final
12 detailed design of the project.

13 And now, to discuss the North High Street
14 Extended project, I give you Mr. Joseph Moges.

15 MR. MOGES: Good evening, ladies and
16 gentlemen. I am Joseph Moges with Montgomery County
17 Department of Transportation, Division of Transportation
18 Engineering. The subject of this evening s public hearing
19 is to consider a proposal to construct an extension of
20 North High Street and other associated work on Morningwood
21 Drive. For your convenience, we have posted a few displays
22 that aid in the visual description of this project and can
23 be downloaded from the project web page. We will review
24 them as I describe the project.
25 Display A is a project vicinity map showing

1 North High Street in Olney. The red line represents the
2 project limits of North High Street from its intersection
3 with Morningwood Drive to Georgia Avenue or Maryland 97.
4 The total length of the proposed project will be
5 approximately 1,000 feet long.

6 Display B -- next slide, please -- Display B
7 shows the improvements in more detail. The large plan,
8 shown on the screen, can be downloaded for review from the
9 project website. For tonight's presentation, we will use
10 zoomed-in images of the plan as I highlight several of the
11 key features.

12 The next three slides will show the North
13 High Street Extension in more detail. At the bottom of the
14 slide is the legend highlighting what the various colors
15 and line styles are showing.

16 Presently, North High Street terminates
17 about 50 feet east of Morningwood Drive. In addition,
18 pedestrians are currently limited to concrete stairs that
19 are not ADA compliant.

20 The project provides vehicular access and
21 ADA-compliant access to pedestrians and cyclists from North
22 High Street to Morningwood Drive. This intersection will
23 be all-way stop controlled with crosswalks on all legs and
24 ADA-compliant ramps at all corners. Furthermore, traffic
25 calming curb bump-outs will be implemented on the south leg

1 of the intersection to assist vehicles in navigating the
2 curve on Morningwood Drive as it approaches this
3 intersection. In addition, a pedestrian refuge island is
4 being added at the existing midblock crossing on
5 Morningwood Drive approximately 300 feet from its
6 intersection with Georgia Avenue.

7 Next slide, please. Display C1 depicts the
8 existing condition of North High Street with approximately
9 8-foot-wide travel lanes in both directions, 8-foot-wide
10 on-street parking, a continuous buffered sidewalk on the
11 north side for half the length of the road, and segmented
12 sidewalks along the entire south side of the road.
13 Currently, Morningwood Drive has approximately 11-foot-wide
14 travel lanes with shoulders in both directions, and 5-foot-
15 wide buffered sidewalks along both sides of the road.

16 Display C2 shows the proposed improvements
17 to North High Street. Beginning at the intersection with
18 Georgia Avenue -- or Maryland 97 -- heading westbound for
19 about 400 feet, where Graeves Auto is currently located,
20 the roadway will have 11-foot-wide travel lanes in both
21 directions. The existing sidewalk on the north side will
22 remain. Crosswalk ramps will be updated to be ADA
23 compliant, and the south side will have 6-foot-wide
24 continuous sidewalks. From Graeves Auto heading further
25 west, the roadway will maintain the 11-foot-wide travel

1 lanes and 5-foot-wide sidewalks on the south side, and
2 parking bays will be provided for on-street parking.

3 The project also provides segmented
4 retaining walls at the back of the south side sidewalks,
5 beginning from approximately 50 feet east to the
6 intersection of Morningwood Drive, to approximately 100
7 hundred feet eastward. Morningwood Drive will remain as is
8 with 11-foot-wide travel lanes and 5-foot-wide buffered
9 sidewalks on both sides of the road. However, the existing
10 shoulder on both sides of Morningwood Drive will be
11 removed.

12 Next slide. The extension of North High
13 Street to Morningwood Drive was requested by the Olney
14 Community during the development of the Olney Master Plan
15 in 2005. The planning study for North High Street Extended
16 was completed in 2020. The project was funded for final
17 design and construction starting July 2022.

18 The North High Street Extended project will
19 complete the street grid and provide reduced distances for
20 motorists looking to get to Morningwood Drive from Georgia
21 Avenue or Maryland 97. It will also improve on several
22 safety needs, such as continuous sidewalks along the south
23 side of North High Street, dedicated on-street parking
24 bays, and curb bump-outs on Morningwood Drive to calm
25 traffic.

1 Next slide, please. The total cost of this
2 project is currently estimated at \$2,419,000, including
3 design, land acquisition, site improvement, utilities, and
4 construction. There are no properties which are considered
5 to be specially benefited by the proposed improvement.
6 Therefore, no properties are expected to be assessed.

7 Next slide, please. Several exhibits are
8 incorporated into the public record binder for your
9 information and consideration.

10 The exhibits include:

11 1) Office of Management & Budget; North High Street
12 Extended P502310;

13 2) Design plans at the level of 70 percent completion
14 with the latest revisions;

15 3) Written testimony provided prior to and after this
16 public hearing, to be added following this hearing;

17 4) Washington Times newspaper ad on February 25th and
18 on March 4th, 2025, online advertisement proof, and
19 Montgomery County governmental press release circulated
20 February 20th and March 7th and posted to various social
21 media sites;

22 5) List of attendees, to be added following this
23 hearing; and

24 6) Hearing transcript, also to be added following the
25 hearing.

1 Project related data and files can be
2 downloaded from the project web page as shown on your
3 screen. The files will continue to be available to the
4 public until the record for this public hearing is
5 officially closed.

6 As previously stated, here with us this
7 evening are Ms. Rebecca Park and Mr. Hoang Nguyen of MCDOT.
8 In addition, we have Ms. Pam Destino and Mr. Neil Patel
9 from the engineering consulting firm WRA, present at this
10 hearing. We will be available after the hearing to answer
11 any questions regarding the construction aspects of this
12 project. And now I will turn things back to either Dan or
13 Mr. Dorsey.

14 Richard, are you there?

15 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: I think he's still
16 having technical difficulty.

17 MR. MOGES: Okay. He is present, but we'll
18 let Dan take over while he has his technical difficulties.
19 So go ahead, Dan.

20 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: Lori, can you -- just
21 before I go farther, can you see if Richard has the North
22 High Street invitation.

23 MS. MAIN: If he has the North High Street
24 what?

25 MR. MOGES: He's here. He's just having

1 technical difficulties.

2 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: He sent me a message
3 saying it was telling him that the meeting wasn't started.

4 MS. MAIN: Well, he is in here. I just made
5 him a cohost. Richard, see if your camera or mic will work
6 now.

7 (Pause.)

8 MS. MAIN: It doesn't appear that he's able.

9 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: So I will continue in
10 his place.

11 Thank you, Mr. Moges. We will now hear
12 testimony from those in attendance who wish to testify.
13 Please reserve all questions for the Q and A session after
14 the testimony portion of this hearing. We will begin with
15 those who have preregistered to testify. If you did not
16 register to testify, but changed your mind at any time
17 during this hearing, please raise your hand. Attendees
18 will be invited to speak in the order in which hands were
19 raised. If you joined tonight's hearing by phone, you may
20 dial star nine from your telephone keypad to raise your
21 hand, and star six to unmute yourself once invited to
22 speak. Please clearly provide your name and address for
23 the record prior to beginning your testimony.

24 Lori Main, our host this evening, will
25 announce the speakers.

1 MS. MAIN: Okay. We do have some people
2 signed up to testify first. So let's hear from Eileen
3 Simpson.

4 MS. SIMPSON: Hi. My name is Eileen
5 Simpson. I'm a board member for the Homeland Village
6 Community Association. Also, I'm retired from Montgomery
7 County Public Schools Department of Transportation. And
8 one of my duties, along with many others, was I was the
9 lead accident investigator for Montgomery County. I have
10 investigated hundreds of collisions. I also worked for
11 collision analysis and reconstruction part time and
12 investigated, and been a part of investigations of several
13 fatal collisions. So I have some experience in limited
14 sight distance.

15 And what I wanted to talk about, in
16 particular, was the design challenges right on Page 18,
17 where it says, "Morningwood Drive has relatively sharp
18 horizontal curves north and south of proposed North High
19 Street, which can cause a sight distance concern." The
20 distance issue should be reviewed in design, and it talks
21 about the AASHTO sight distance being 331 feet for left
22 turn from North High Street, and 291 -- or 290 feet to make
23 a right turn.

24 What I don't see is -- since there are stop
25 signs there, is the sight distance for a vehicle traveling.

1 I think now we've placed the speed limit at 25 miles an
2 hour possibly. But I don't see a distance for a person to
3 drive, react, and actually have braking time to come to a
4 stop. And I'm seriously worried about the sight distance
5 for that area.

6 Anyway, and I think that Gannett Fleming,
7 the study that they gave, really talked about the sight
8 distance there.

9 Additionally, if you look at one of the
10 forms -- and I think it's Page 19 possibly -- it lists all
11 the collisions on 97 and 108, and they're all at
12 intersections -- or a biggest portion of them is at an
13 intersection. I don't believe that completing High Street
14 will make it any safer for 97. In fact, I think you'll
15 start to see collisions down at the stop signs at North
16 High and Morningwood. And having students cross to and
17 from Olney Elementary from our neighborhood, I just don't
18 find that to be very safe.

19 I would propose and love to see ADA
20 accommodations, because this is a very walking community
21 and a cycling community, to improve that that way, but not
22 invest the amount of money that it's going to cost to put
23 that intersection in. And I just -- I feel like it just
24 would add just more traffic cutting through trying to get
25 to our neighborhood.

1 And in the very first part of the report, it
2 talks about safe access to Route 108 and to 97. If I were
3 leaving my neighborhood and made a left onto North High
4 Street to go towards Route 97, I would not try to make a
5 left-hand turn onto 97 North. The only way I would be
6 going would be to 97 South. And there was a mention of
7 traffic coming on 97 North to make a left onto North High
8 Street. And I'm not sure I would understand why anyone
9 would do that if there's a left turn lane going to
10 Morningwood Drive before you even get to North High Street.
11 Why wouldn't you go that way to access the neighborhood?

12 So, again, I'm very much in favor of ADA
13 accommodating access to North High Street. The stairs are
14 kind of ugly. And this is a walking neighborhood, and
15 mostly there are some folks that would agree with it, but I
16 think -- would agree with the street coming through. But I
17 think most of the neighborhood does not want it. And it's
18 a small neighborhood with Homeland Village Community
19 Association. The other neighborhoods, Olney Oaks, have
20 Headwaters Drive, and we also have Homeland Drive to access
21 Route 108 and Morningwood to access 97.

22 So that's my testimony so far, and I'll have
23 questions later.

24 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Eileen.

25 Okay. Next we'll hear from Ted Chanin.

1 Ted?

2 MR. CHANIN: Thank you. I am going to be
3 very brief. Frankly, the extent of my use of that road is
4 pretty much that I'm a creature of habit and every day at
5 approximately 10:30 to 11:00 a.m. I go to McDonald's and
6 grab a cup of coffee. I live in Norbeck Grove, which, in
7 essence, is at the intersection of Cashell and Bowie Mill.
8 And so the advantage of that project would be simply making
9 a left turn -- I'm sorry -- a right turn out of McDonald's
10 into Morningwood.

11 But the last person giving testimony is
12 right. I can see it being problematic and potentially
13 dangerous at times. When I drive, it's not necessarily
14 during the height of either rush hour, so I don't get to
15 see all the congestion. And I can certainly vouch for the
16 fact that the times that I want to make a left turn and go
17 shopping in town going northbound on 97 can be very
18 dangerous.

19 So that's really it. I'm going to be brief.
20 I'm happy to be here. Thank you for this forum. And if I
21 have any questions, I will save them for later. Thank you.

22 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Ted.

23 Let's see. Next we will hear from Paul
24 Geller. Paul, can you unmute yourself, please?

25 MR. GELLER: Yes. Thank you very much for

1 this opportunity to address the members of the division of
2 transportation and engineering and everyone else.

3 I'd like to associate myself with the
4 comments made by Board Member Simpson and also Mr. Chanin.
5 I am a resident of Olney Oaks, and I'm also the past
6 president of the Montgomery County Council of PTAs. And I
7 feel very strongly that this project is not in the best
8 interest of the public.

9 As a resident of this affected area, I find
10 it disappointing we're still discussing the \$2.4 million
11 North High Street Extended Project, which aside from being
12 a waste of resources, violates the basic tenets of Vision
13 Zero by introducing a high-flow business area into a sleepy
14 bedroom community located near a preschool, Olney
15 Elementary School, and a blind curve that was already
16 dangerous enough for walkers and bikers like myself to
17 navigate.

18 Realizing Vision Zero is the goal for the
19 county, here are two facts reported in the North High
20 Street Extension Facility Planning Study, a virtual public
21 meeting on September 30, 2020, that should be noted. There
22 were 28 reported crashes in five years on Georgia Avenue
23 within the project limits, and 25 percent of the crashes
24 were located at the intersection with North High Street and
25 Buehler Road.

1 The purpose of this project is truly to
2 allow a few folks to access a handful of businesses one
3 minute faster, at the cost of destroying a 60-foot cut-
4 through, purposely and thoughtfully maintained for decades
5 to keep residents safe from the high-traffic area and
6 parking nightmare that is North High Street, a place I
7 frequent. This is not a good idea.

8 My son and I went out two years ago to
9 survey this project in detail. And according to our
10 measurements, it was two inches shy of 60 feet. At the
11 time, that equaled a whopping \$36,150 per foot to build a
12 road so a handful of people can access doughnuts, Big Macs,
13 the orthodontist, and the mechanic a minute faster. This
14 is ludicrous and a complete waste of the \$2.05 per person
15 it would be costing every resident of Montgomery County.

16 However, as a long-time advocate for kids, I
17 have to, you know, just underline the fact -- and as
18 someone who walks that area frequently, a lot of kids walk
19 across the street. Eventually, if we build this cut-
20 through, someone is going to get hurt or killed in a
21 traffic accident in this particular location, specifically
22 that blind spot that you heard about earlier. The chronic
23 car crashes on Georgia Avenue already attest to this quite
24 well.

25 Thank you very much for this opportunity to

1 testify to you tonight.

2 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: Lori, do we have
3 another speaker?

4 MS. MAIN: I apologize, I was on mute. Yes,
5 we do. Let's hear from Max Etin.

6 MR. ETIN: Hi. My name is Max Etin. I live
7 on Sunset Lake Court in the Homeland Village neighborhood,
8 right next to this project.

9 I am actually in favor of this project for a
10 few reasons. One, I think this area of Morningwood Drive
11 is already dangerous for pedestrians. It's already highly
12 used. Lots of people cross right there already, coming
13 from trying to access the businesses on North High Street.
14 So, for me, I see this as a net improvement in pedestrian
15 safety, because now you're going to have stop signs there;
16 you're going to have crosswalks there.

17 There is a high school bus stop right next
18 to where this intersection would be at Battery Lane. Right
19 now, a lot of kids crossing there, especially early in the
20 morning, especially during winter when it's dark, or maybe
21 slippery roads or whatever, have nowhere safe to cross
22 Morningwood Road to get to their bus stop. And I see them
23 crossing, and I see several close calls for the high school
24 kids. There's a middle school bus stop right there.
25 Obviously, Olney Elementary is right there. The closest

1 place to safely -- luckily, I am happy they built a
2 crosswalk finally at Homeland and Morningwood, because
3 before that there was no safe place for kids to cross.
4 It's all the way from Headwater to the crosswalk by
5 Goddard. But I think a lot of kids do cross more closer to
6 the school, and this provides an always stop.

7 Now I see that this project has changed, and
8 I want to thank them for the changes, because I think it
9 comes in response to, at least something I've mentioned in
10 past meetings, where I wanted to see two crosswalks there,
11 to be realistic about how people really cross. And you can
12 see from the last picture that that's been taken into
13 account. I don't know if it's possible to make the speed
14 bumps that exist any higher leading up to this
15 intersection.

16 I do understand the concerns about the
17 potential because of the blind turns or the danger that
18 still would exist, but I think this section of the road is
19 already dangerous. And I see many close calls with people
20 driving there already. So I do think more people will
21 hopefully -- I mean, we live in the real world. I
22 understand everyone doesn't stop at stop signs, but I would
23 say, even when people don't stop at stop signs, at least
24 maybe a majority of people, at least a lot of people slow
25 down at stop signs. And so at the very least, I'm hoping

1 that cars on Morningwood will drive slower because of this
2 new project. I don't see how this will really increase
3 traffic on Morningwood, because as I've scratched my head,
4 I can't think of what this is really a cut-through for. It
5 does make some things more convenient, so instead of for me
6 having to drive -- taking Homeland to 108 to 97 to get --
7 to access those stores, now I can just take Morningwood and
8 turn left onto North High Street and not have to go that
9 full circle around. But I'm still traveling these roads.
10 I still live here. I don't know who doesn't live here,
11 this really makes a cut-through for -- so I don't foresee
12 extra traffic.

13 So I recognize that this isn't a perfect
14 plan and there's still some risk for safety, but I see this
15 as a net positive, in terms of the pedestrians that are
16 already crossing that section of road to at least get those
17 stop signs, to at least get crosswalks there, in addition
18 to the ADA compliance, or to people who are disabled to be
19 better able to access the businesses that are nearby us.

20 So with that, I am in favor of this project.
21 I like some of the changes I've seen. If there are still
22 safety concerns, maybe more can be done. But I do see
23 changes from the original plan that have made this project
24 more safe. So, thank you.

25 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Max.

1 Okay. Next we'll hear from Susan Long.

2 MR. LONG: Susan Long -- this is actually
3 Spencer Long. I am Susan's wife. We're on the same
4 account right now -- I'm Susan's husband, sorry. Anyway, I
5 grew up in Olney Oaks. I moved into one of the houses in
6 Olney Oaks when it was first built, and now I live at 3419
7 North High Street. Overall, the initial reaction I have is
8 that it just doesn't make sense to do a complete automobile
9 cut-through. What Ms. Simpson and Mr. Geller brought up
10 about safety is very, very important, especially with cars
11 coming on either side, either direction. I am -- but I do
12 want to actually second Eileen Simpson's aim to clean up
13 the street and make it ADA compliant on the ramp.

14 In addition, the elevation to where 3419 and
15 34 and the neighbor's house is compared to where to get
16 down to Morningwood, yeah, it just seems to be an
17 excavation nightmare. And the retaining wall might even be
18 higher than you might think. I'm not too sure. I'm not an
19 engineer. I'm sure you have that more in your mindset.

20 But talking to other people on this street
21 who live here, cleaning up, making it ADA compliant seems
22 to be the best way to go. With a response to Max Etin's
23 concern, if the stop signs can be made at both of the
24 crosswalks that are planned to be right across from Town
25 Center Place, and the stop signs can be placed in there,

1 also with extra speed bumps as well on the turn. And that
2 is all I'd like to add into this at this moment.

3 MS. MAIN: Okay. Thank you, Spencer.

4 Would anyone else like to give testimony?
5 You can click the react icon, which also looks like a
6 heart, and then click -- oh, we do. All right. We'll hear
7 from Jim Smith.

8 MR. SMITH: Hello. Thank you very much for
9 the opportunity to testify. I'm Jim Smith, and I'm
10 currently the acting chair of the Olney Town Center
11 Advisory Committee. We were formed in 2006 to create an
12 illustrative concept plan for the Town Center and Olney,
13 and Civic Center Town Commons plan, and provide inputs on
14 redevelopments in the Town Center, such as this.

15 We initiated the request for this project
16 several years ago and advocated for it to be included in
17 the capital improvement program. We're delighted to see it
18 get to this point. We're in favor of it. We applaud the
19 safety upgrades on Morningwood Drive. This is something we
20 really support to address the current safety issues that
21 we've heard about from residents. This would be big safety
22 improvement. It will create traffic calming and create new
23 safe crosswalks, and it will reduce the distance for some
24 trips.

25 Wedo not believe it's going to bring new

1 traffic substantially to the area. People can already go
2 down Morningwood Drive if they want to go that direction.
3 And so, you know, going down North High Street to get to
4 Morningwood Drive isn't appreciably -- it's not like a
5 connection that creates a new way to get somewhere in a
6 large sense. It does make it more efficient for people
7 that are intending to go from in that direction. And I
8 think it overall will reduce traffic distance for some
9 trips and overall improve safety, take a lot of pressure
10 off of that intersection, considered a high-priority
11 pedestrian intersection in the Town Center at Morningwood
12 and 97.

13 There are many trips that won't have to
14 involve that intersection anymore. Like we heard earlier
15 about like a customer from McDonald's going back to
16 Homeland Village -- with this connection, will no longer
17 need to go through that back onto Georgia Avenue to get to
18 Morningwood Road.

19 So it's these small local trips like that
20 that I think will keep traffic off of Georgia Avenue and
21 help improve things in the Town Center. And I do have a
22 couple questions for later on. Thank you very much.

23 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Jim.

24 Okay. Does anybody else? Okay. Yes.

25 Let's hear from Mindy Badin.

1 MS. BADIN: Hi. My name is Mindy Badin. I
2 am on the transportation committee of the Greater Olney
3 Civic Association, and we support this project. And I
4 would agree with everything that Jim Smith just said is
5 about the safety concerns on Morningwood Drive.

6 I believe that this project is going to
7 enhance traffic safety and flow in our area. It's just
8 going to improve connectivity in the whole area, and it'll
9 support some of our businesses by giving people easier
10 access to those businesses.

11 There's also been a population increase in
12 Olney over the past several years and there are more
13 pedestrians and bicyclists. And this extension is going to
14 provide improved access for those people, plus for people
15 who have mobility issues.

16 We had one of our resident traffic experts
17 look at the plans. We're glad to see that there's going to
18 be three-way stop signs and crosswalks at Morningwood Drive
19 and High Street. And I have a question also. It looks
20 like there's no crosswalk at the eastern end where North
21 High Street meets Georgia Avenue, and we were wondering
22 about that, but I'll ask that as a question later.

23 Also, there's a six-foot sidewalk on the
24 south side. We think that should be a little wider to
25 accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists.

1 And one other thing, I don't know if this is
2 the right place to mention this, but a lot of pedestrians
3 walk across Georgia Avenue mid-block between Morningwood
4 Drive and 108. I would love -- and I know this would be in
5 the purview of the State Highway Department, but I would
6 love to see a crosswalk across 97 where this High Street
7 is. I think it would promote safety for those people who
8 are crossing mid-block. And I thank you for your time.

9 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Mindy.

10 Would anyone else like to testify? Okay.
11 David Sostman?

12 MR. SOSTMAN: This is David Sostman. I live
13 at 18011 Rocky Ridge Lane in Olney, which is a cul-de-sac
14 that connects into Morningwood. I am also a board member
15 of the Homeland Village Association, which represents 370
16 homeowners in the neighborhood directly surrounding North
17 High Street. And rather than repeat the safety concerns
18 expressed by Eileen and others, which have been, I think,
19 well justified, I'd like to suggest something a little bit
20 about the history of this effort that began with the master
21 plan back in 2005 that I think Jim Smith and others would
22 recognize that they were looking for a site to put an Olney
23 Town Center. And since then, we've had a lot of
24 development in Olney that I think negates that desire.
25 But, in addition, I'd like to propose a

1 suggestion on a new Olney Town Center. And this deviates
2 from all the other conversations. We have a building at
3 the intersection of Spartan and George Avenue -- an old
4 bank building that's been vacant for the last few years.
5 That if we took the money that is being discussed on
6 changing the landscape of North High Street and perhaps
7 apply it to buying this building, the old bank building on
8 Spartan and George Avenue, we have an ideal Town Center.
9 And I'd like to put that forward and have other people
10 comment on that concept. That's really it. Thank you.

11 MS. MAIN: Thank you, David.

12 Would anyone else like to testify?

13 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: Okay. Last chance
14 for anybody to do oral testimony.

15 With that, that concludes the speakers who
16 have expressed an interest in speaking tonight. If there's
17 anyone else who did not sign up to testify, who now wishes
18 to speak, please raise your hand or dial star nine on your
19 telephone keypad if you wish to speak. As a reminder,
20 written testimony may be submitted as well, and will be
21 considered with the same weight as oral testimony. We
22 appreciate your testimony.

23 Seeing that everyone who wishes to speak has
24 had an opportunity to do so, this concludes the oral
25 testimony portion of this public hearing.

1 Now we will move into the question-and-
2 answer session. Again, please raise your hand or press
3 star nine on your telephone keypad if you wish to ask a
4 question. Once invited to speak, please unmute yourself by
5 clicking on the microphone icon at the bottom of your
6 screen, or by pressing star six on your telephone keypad.
7 You are also welcome to type your questions into the chat
8 box.

9 If we run out of time before answering all
10 questions, your questions will be answered via e-mail in the
11 days to come.

12 MS. MAIN: Okay. We have a question from
13 Mindy Badin.

14 MS. BADIN: Hi. So when Mr. Moges was
15 talking about the plan, he said that there was an -- you
16 know, I thought I heard that a shoulder -- the shoulders on
17 Morningwood Drive are going to be removed in a certain
18 section. Will there be some sort of alternate path there
19 for bicyclists?

20 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: At this point, the
21 project team will answer the question.

22 MS. PARK: This is Rebecca Park. Currently,
23 there's no plan to put the Sherry's (phonetic) Path along
24 Morningwood Drive -- Morningwood Road.

25 MS. BADIN: Okay. So does that make sense

1 if there's bike riders going down Morningwood Drive, they
2 won't have a path to go down a long distance -- down the
3 distance all the way to Georgia Avenue. I don't think that
4 changes should be made at the expense of, of bike riders.

5 MS. PARK: Actually, bicyclists can ride on
6 the sidewalk.

7 MS. BADIN: I'm not a bike rider. But I
8 think that's not -- generally, they prefer not to ride on
9 the sidewalk. I bring this up because this became an issue
10 when there were bump-outs put on Old Baltimore Road.
11 Suddenly, there were bump-outs, and the bicycle -- a lot of
12 bicyclists suddenly -- it was much more dangerous for them
13 to ride on Old Baltimore Road once the bump-outs were put
14 there. So, you know, I just think that's something to
15 consider having a safe path for bicyclists and not causing
16 them to go on the sidewalk.

17 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Mindy. I can
18 certainly send you our bikeways request form.

19 MS. BADIN: Okay.

20 MS. MAIN: If you would like to submit a
21 request.

22 MS. BADIN: Okay. That would be great.
23 And I do have another question, if that's okay? I kind of
24 mentioned it in my testimony.
25 So is it possible to work with the state

1 highway administration -- is it possible to look at the
2 possibility of getting a mid-block crosswalk on 97? I know
3 the state probably would fight this, but I think a lot of
4 us who live in Olney see it constantly, people running
5 across Georgia Avenue mid-block between Route 108 and
6 Morningwood Drive. And back in October, a pedestrian was
7 struck there. I just think a mid-block crosswalk there
8 would improve safety for a lot of people in Olney.

9 MS. PARK: This is Rebecca Park again. Yes,
10 we are coordinating with SHA, and we'll certainly bring
11 this up to their attention.

12 MS. BADIN: Okay. Thank you very much. I
13 appreciate that.

14 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Mindy.

15 MS. BADIN: Okay.

16 MS. MAIN: Okay. Next we have a question
17 from Jim Smith.

18 MR. SMITH: Thank you. Yeah, I'd like to
19 get back to Mindy's question about the crosswalk at the
20 eastern end at Georgia Avenue, why we're not seeing that in
21 the project plan.

22 MR. NGUYEN: Hi. My name is Hoang. I'm the
23 project manager for this project. So the project itself is
24 for the extension of North High Street. Again, any
25 addition or features that are going to be added on a state

1 road would need to be coordinated with the state. And we
2 are doing that right now. We're working with the state to
3 find any mitigation or safety features that we can add to
4 the project. Ideally -- I mean, speaking from a traffic
5 perspective, a crosswalk across 97 at this location may not
6 be ideal -- that's from my traffic experience. But we will
7 coordinate with the state and we'll work closely with them
8 to see, you know, if this is something they will entertain,
9 and if there any design that we can try to incorporate.

10 MR. SMITH: I'm sorry, I think I wasn't
11 clear on my questions. I was talking about crossing North
12 High Street at that intersection. There's currently a
13 crosswalk there. Can I assume that that crosswalk will not
14 go away with this project?

15 MR. NGUYEN: At which location are you
16 talking about? Are you talking about right in front of
17 Graeves Auto, sir?

18 MR. SMITH: No. It's in front of the
19 McDonald's -- like the McDonald's and the gas station.

20 MR. NGUYEN: I gotcha. Okay. I gotcha.
21 Okay. So if there are existing crosswalk right now, we're
22 going to go back to our design and look at it again. And
23 we'll make sure, if it's an existing crosswalk, we're going
24 to try to put it back. But my apologies, I didn't
25 understand your question before. But, yes, I mean, if it's

1 something existing, we're going to try our best to
2 accommodate.

3 MR. SMITH: Well, yeah, there has to be a
4 crosswalk there. It's like a 12-foot sidewalk going along
5 Georgia Avenue. So I don't think there's an option for it
6 to go away.

7 MR. NGUYEN: Understood.

8 MR. SMITH: Thank you.

9 MS. PARK: Lori, this is Rebecca. Can you
10 switch the slide to the plan view, Display B, please see if
11 we have a crosswalk shown there. Display B. It's not
12 shown, but I mean, we do have -- we do show that in our 70
13 percent design plans, I believe. Yeah, right there. I
14 believe so. Okay.

15 MS. MAIN: Okay. Great. Next we have a
16 question from Carolyn Knight.

17 MS. KNIGHT: Just a minute. Thank you. I
18 came in late, and so I didn't see these earlier drawings.
19 My question was about crosswalks on Morningwood Drive at
20 the junction of High Street. There was a time in the past
21 that we were seeking crosswalks there. A lot of people
22 from the HOC housing development there do cross, and a
23 traffic study said that it was because it was on a curve or
24 at the end of a blind -- sort of blind curve that a
25 crosswalk wasn't appropriate, and some traffic calming

1 features were put in along the curve. But I'm glad to see
2 that there will be the crosswalks. It wouldn't make sense
3 to have stop signs and a juncture there that doesn't have
4 them. So, thank you very much.

5 MS. MAIN: Thank you.

6 Does anybody else have any questions?
7 Actually, we do have one in the chat. Eileen Simpson asks:
8 "Has the sight distance been examined for the ability to
9 stop in time for the stop signs at North High Street and
10 Morningwood? It has been addressed for vehicles turning on
11 Morningwood, but there's been no mention for the vehicles
12 on Morningwood approaching North High Street."

13 MR. MOGES: Hi, I'm sorry. So I believe
14 the question is in relation to stopping sight distance to
15 the proposed always stop condition at Morningwood Road and
16 North High Street. And my response to that would
17 essentially be, the fact that it's an always stop control
18 improves safety at the intersection and improves safety for
19 the pedestrians crossing.

20 In addition, the lane narrowing or the bump-
21 outs along Morningwood Road would also further support that
22 traffic calming improvement. And lastly, I'd say, if there
23 is a stopping sight distance deficiency, that would justify
24 some advanced warning for motorists approaching the curve
25 towards the intersection. So we're happy to take a look at

1 that to make sure that the design -- the final design is
2 optimal with respect to safety and mobility. I hope that
3 answers your question.

4 MS. MAIN: Okay. Great. Next, we'll hear
5 from Rita Grotsky.

6 MS. GROTSKY: Can you hear me?

7 MS. MAIN: Yes, we can.

8 MS. GROTSKY: Oh, great. Okay. I don't
9 know why I couldn't figure this out. But anyway, I live on
10 Headwaters Drive, and I'm concerned because people coming
11 off of Morningwood from High Street will turn right onto
12 Morningwood, and then they'll turn right on to Headwaters.
13 My neighborhood faces the gas pipelines. And as you're
14 probably well aware, on the gas pipelines, they have a
15 large number of teams, both adults and young children,
16 playing various sports there and people park on both sides
17 of the street, which is fine. But people don't always
18 really look when they're crossing the street. And it's
19 going to be -- I'm concerned that there's going to be a lot
20 more traffic coming down that street as a result of this.

21 And I'm also concerned that -- I really
22 don't understand the tremendous advantage of spending over
23 a million dollars to make this extension available to just
24 the few people who are inconvenienced, which includes me,
25 because, occasionally, I do go to McDonald's and those

1 other businesses.

2 Also, I think having more traffic on that
3 street, if the concern is for pedestrians and bikers, --
4 and I am a pedestrian because I walk a lot, I think having
5 traffic down that street is more dangerous for pedestrians,
6 even if you put in sidewalks. And bikers and pedestrians
7 on sidewalks don't mix very well. So I would like to go on
8 record as being definitely opposed to this extension.
9 Thank you.

10 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Rita.

11 MR. NGUYEN: So, Miss Rita, your statement
12 was a little bit long. I didn't clearly get your question.
13 What exactly is your concern, ma'am?

14 MS. GROTSKY: I'm sorry, I can hardly hear
15 you.

16 MR. NGUYEN: Sorry. Did you have a specific
17 question that you wanted answered?

18 MS. GROTSKY: Well, actually, if it was a
19 question, I would like to know who's proposing this. Who's
20 behind this?

21 MR. NGUYEN: So during the project
22 justification portion of the hearing, it was mentioned that
23 this was actually a request by the Olney community when the
24 2005 master plan was being developed. So a study was
25 conducted, and it showed that this is a feasible project,

1 and it was funded for construction -- for design and
2 construction.

3 MS. GROTSKY: Was it proposed by the
4 businesses that were concerned because they wanted more
5 business, or was it proposed by the residents? I'm sure
6 the people that live on that street don't want it. The
7 people on my street, Headwaters, I'm sure don't want it
8 because I talked to a bunch of them.

9 MR. NGUYEN: Well, I mean, I was not around
10 when the proposal was made, so I don't know specifically if
11 it was by the businesses or whoever. The information I do
12 have says that it was requested by the community, and it
13 was implemented into the master plan.

14 MS. GROTSKY: And the people from -- that
15 represent GOCA, what's their position on this -- Greater
16 Olney Civic Association.

17 MS. PARK: Ma'am, this is Rebecca Park,
18 transportation engineering unit manager. I think you
19 joined in later, but this was already stated that GOCA's
20 position is that they're in favor of this project. And it
21 was Olney Town Center Advisory Committee that initiated
22 this request of the connection.

23 (Cross-talk.)

24 MS. GROTSKY: And my other question is --

25 MS. PARK: It's also the Olney master plan

1 that is dated 2005.

2 MS. GROTSKY: And are they planning to put
3 more commercial operations, large or small, on that street?

4 MS. PARK: Not that I know of. I don't
5 think so. I have no knowledge of that.

6 MS. GROTSKY: Okay. Thank you.

7 MS. PARK: Sure.

8 MS. MAIN: Thanks, Rita.

9 Okay. Would anyone else like to ask a
10 question? You can also type your questions in the chat.
11 Okay. Kay Z. You're unmuted, Kay. Do you want to type
12 your --

13 MS. ZEITER: Can you hear me?

14 MS. MAIN: Oh, yes, I can. Great.

15 MS. ZEITER: Okay. Great. Sorry about
16 that. So my name is Kay Zeiter. I'm a resident of
17 Homeland Village, and I've recently learned of this street
18 extending project. I'm not very familiar with the report,
19 but I just wanted to see what the proposed speed limit
20 would be for the North High Street and if, like, additional
21 speed bumps have been assessed.

22 And overall, I am in favor of expanding that
23 area into -- if anything is done with that area, into like
24 a more accessible pedestrian and biker-friendly area
25 instead. But, yeah, those are the two questions I had, the

1 speed limit and speed bumps.

2 MR. NGUYEN: Okay. So I can answer this
3 question for you. The speed limit is going to be 25 miles
4 per hour for North High Street. As far as speed bumps go,
5 for North High Street, this is going to be a business-
6 oriented road, so we're not considering speed bumps as of
7 right now.

8 As for Morningwood Drive, there is existing
9 speed bumps on Morningwood Drive, and I will work closely
10 with our traffic division to see if there are any locations
11 where more speed bumps could be potentially considered to
12 make Morningwood Drive even safer. I hope that answers
13 your question.

14 MS. ZEITER: Okay. So I think 25 miles an
15 hour is very high. I was honestly thinking five miles an
16 hour for that area. So that is a little bit concerning.
17 And I do see people on Morningwood Drive. They do, you
18 know, kind of speed around that corner, so I would even
19 suggest maybe lowering the speed limit for that area, too,
20 if we go ahead with this.

21 MR. NGUYEN: Okay. So five miles an hour is
22 not a realistic speed limit for the roadway. And for
23 Morningwood Drive, we are implementing, you know, traffic-
24 calming features such as the curb bump-out. And like I
25 just said, I'm going to work closely with our traffic

1 division to see if we can consider traffic humps or speed
2 humps to further calm the motorists along Morningwood
3 Drive.

4 But just as a side note is that the speed
5 limit is not the final determinant factor on how fast
6 vehicles travel. Generally, vehicles are going to travel
7 at the speed in which they're comfortable. So just by
8 lowering the speed limit does not necessarily mean that
9 you're going to get lower vehicle speed. I hope I answered
10 your question, ma'am.

11 MR. MOGES: Can we -- I'm sorry. Lori, can
12 you unmute Kay one more time. She keeps getting muted.
13 Just make sure that --

14 MS. ZEITER: Hi. Thank you for that. Yeah,
15 I just -- I mean, five miles an hour is what I currently
16 drive. You know I go to Graeves Autos. So when I am on
17 this street, I generally drive very, very slow. Yeah, and
18 I think definitely the speed bumps would help people really
19 slow down in that area.

20 MR. NGUYEN: Understood, and we will take
21 your concern into consideration. Thank you.

22 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Kay.

23 Does anybody else have any questions?

24 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: There are no more
25 questions. Seeing that all questions have been answered.

1 We will now conclude this hearing. I just want to ask if,
2 Richard, if you can just -- I think Richard Dorsey is on
3 the phone. I just want would like him to introduce himself
4 as the public hearing officer, if he's still here.

5 MR. MOGES: Real quick, I think we got a new
6 question. Eileen Simpson raise her hand.

7 MS. MAIN: Yes. Eileen?

8 MS. SIMPSON: Hi. Thank you very much.
9 There was a question by Mr. Geller that I don't think was
10 answered. If --

11 MR. MOGES: What was the question that was
12 not answered?

13 MS. SIMPSON: It says: "As a follow up with
14 Mr. Smith and Ms. Badin, share if they live in or near the
15 affected area, like Homeland Village or Olney Oaks areas."

16 MS. MAIN: This is not a forum for
17 conversation between residents. so I told Paul that I will
18 be sending his contact information to them, and then they
19 can converse amongst themselves outside of the hearing
20 forum.

21 MS. SIMPSON: I appreciate that. And just
22 for some history, when this first came up, it was -- it
23 went to the county council and it was denied some years
24 ago. So -- and I have to tell you that the residents,
25 after being here over 30 years, most of the residents were

1 not aware of it -- you know, through maybe our fault. I
2 don't know. But anyway, that's just a little piece to add.
3 Thank you all very much, too, for having this hearing. I
4 really appreciate it.

5 MS. MAIN: Thank you, Eileen.

6 MR. MOGES: Richard, if you're there?

7 HEARING OFFICER DORSEY: Yes. Good evening.
8 First of all, I'd like to thank Mr. Moges and Mr. Sheridan
9 for covering for me. I had some major technical
10 difficulties. But I will be reviewing -- I have heard the
11 testimonies and the comment. I will be reviewing
12 everything.

13 So now that all questions have been
14 answered, as a reminder, additional written testimony may
15 be submitted via e-mail or online written testimony forms
16 on the project link -- a link in which is shown on your
17 screen -- must be received by the close of the hearing
18 record one month from today, April 11, 2025, by 6:30 p.m.
19 Submissions via e-mail should be sent to Mr. Hoang Nguyen,
20 and his e-mail address is attached.

21 Thank you again for joining us this evening
22 we appreciate your participation. And thank you for your
23 testimonies and questions.

24 The public hearing is now concluded. Have a
25 great evening.

1 CHAIRPERSON SHERIDAN: Thank you, everyone.
2 Sorry for the technical difficulties.

3 (Proceedings concluded at 7:46 p.m.)

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I, Mylene Santiano, the officer before whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that any witness in the foregoing proceedings was fully sworn; that the proceedings were recorded by me and thereafter reduced to typewriting by a qualified transcriptionist; that said digital audio recording of said proceedings are a true and accurate record, to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to this case, and have no interest, financial or otherwise, in its outcome.



MYLENE SANTIANO

DATE

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I, Sandra Ann Masterpole, do hereby certify that this transcript was prepared from the digital audio recording of the foregoing proceeding; that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings to the best of my knowledge, skills, and ability; and that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the case and have no interest, financial or otherwise, in its outcome.

Sandra Ann Masterpole

SANDRA ANN MASTERPOLE

MARCH 17, 2025

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