



Irene Lane, *Mayor*
Barney Rush, *Vice Mayor*
Rich Brancato, *Treasurer*
Stephanie Martz, *Secretary*
Joy White, *Community Liaison*

Town of Chevy Chase Testimony Capital Crescent Surface Trail Phase 2 July 16, 2024

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed Capital Crescent Surface Trail (CCST) Phase 2 project. My name is Irene Lane, and I am the Mayor of the Town of Chevy Chase, in which a portion of the proposed shared-use path will be located.

As you are aware, prior to the CCST's closure in September of 2017, the trail was one of the most heavily used in the United States, serving more than 1 million walkers, joggers, bikers, skateboarders, and rollerbladers each year. Since 2017, Bethesda has experienced rapid growth, and design plans are now well advanced for the Bethesda Market Park as well as an enlarged and much busier Farm Women's Market, which will border Willow Lane. The Town of Chevy Chase is very pleased that this project is moving forward. However, we have concerns about how pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist interactions within this tight space of one block will be minimized and managed.

As currently designed, the CCST Phase 2 project will cross multiple access points for cars and pedestrians, including children and their caretakers from the nearby daycare centers or from the future Bethesda Market Park who aim to access the Elm Street Park playground. While we agree with the initiative to promote enhanced recreational opportunities, there are critical safety considerations that need to be addressed in this current design.

To mitigate potential hazards, we propose creating an alternate pathway specifically for pedestrians going between the Bethesda Market Park and the Elm Street Park playground, allowing parents and children to avoid using the main surface trail. This pathway would ensure that young children are not exposed to the higher-speed bicycle traffic on the main trail, significantly reducing the risk of accidents.

To further enhance safety, we recommend the installation of a raised, signalized, or otherwise protected crosswalk at the points where the trail intersects with roadways, specifically the two crosswalks at Willow Lane and the crosswalk at Elm Street. These measures would slow down both vehicle and bicycle traffic at these critical junctures, providing a safer crossing for pedestrians.

By implementing these changes, we hope to create a safer, more user-friendly environment for all trail users while maintaining the intended recreational benefits of the trail. Thank you for considering these suggestions. We look forward to seeing the next iteration of design plans that incorporate these safety enhancements.