

Greater Colesville Citizens Association

PO Box 4087
Colesville, MD 20914
March 26, 2024

Montgomery County Department of Transportation
Attn: Khursheed Bilgrami
Rockville, MD

Re: Bikeway on Cherry Hill Road Study

Dear Mr. Bilgrami:

This memo is from the Greater Colesville Citizens Association, which is centered at the intersection of Randolph Rd and New Hampshire Ave, but extends up to two miles in each direction. GCCA represents 3500 single family households plus four senior housing buildings of over 100 units each. Many GCCA residents frequently use Cherry Hill Road and the bridge to access US29.

I recently moved to Riderwood Village, on Gracefield Road, which has over 3000 residents and employs some 1400 staff. Cherry Hill Road is the primary road for accessing Riderwood. Residents also make frequent trips to Orchard Shopping Center and the White Oak Medical Center/doctor's offices, which requires crossing Cherry Hill Road at Plum Orchard Drive or Calverton Blvd/Broadbirch Drive. Cherry Hill Road is used to access Riderwood by many of the staff.

Comments on Presentation.

The location of the existing conditions on pages 8-10 is not stated. We assume that page 8 is at the intersection of E. Randolph Rd and Old Columbia Pike. That diagram fails to illustrate the existing right-turn lane in the westbound direction. We assume page 9 is at the intersection with Ofallon St. Lastly, we assume page 10 is at FDA Blvd but fails to show the dedicated left-turn lane westbound.

Comments of the three Alternatives

Alternative 1. This concept provides a bikeway on the south side of Cherry Hill Rd by eliminating one of the two existing thru-lanes. GCCA **strongly opposes Alternative 1.** Cherry Hill Rd is already congested in both the AM and PM during peak periods. The traffic demand will only increase as Viva White Oak starts to be built and Montgomery College opens its education center in April 2024 and starts to build its east county campus. (The college is presently in the site selection process, but likely locations will be accessed from Cherry Hill Rd).

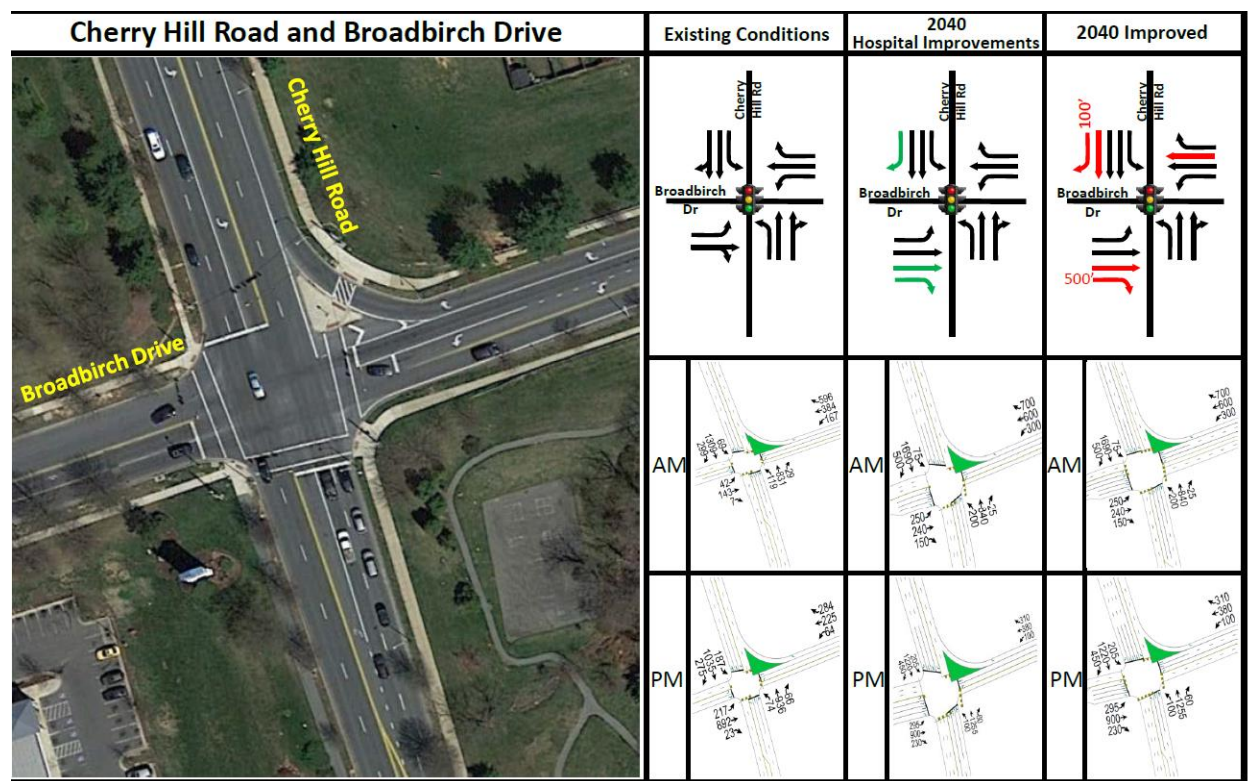
Alternatives 2 and 3. Both alternatives maintain existing thru-lanes. Alternative 2 provides a bikeway on the south side, while Alternative 3 provides a bikeway on both sides of Cherry Hill Road. Both Alternatives adds a buffer between the existing bike lanes and vehicle lanes. We oppose both alternatives. Of the two, Alternative 2 is best. A 4-5 foot bikeway already exists on both sides of the road adjacent to the curb. In addition, an eight-foot side path (walkers and bikers) already exists on the north side (see page 2 in the DOT presentation). There is no need for additional bikeway facilities on this road. Rather than use the existing facilities, we expect nearly all bikers will use bike paths that either exist or are planned for Calverton Blvd, FDA Blvd, Healing Way, Plum Orchard Dr, and Broadbirch Dr. The county needs to provide those facilities where they do not already exist, especially on Broadbirch Dr.

We agree with closing the three existing curb cuts on Cherry Hill Rd since that area will be integrated into Viva White Oak: Timberline Road, the closed package store at 11790 and the residence at 11800.

US29 Comments. The intersection of E Randolph/Cherry Hill Rd at the on/off ramps with US29 has been an area with many accidents and near misses since the interchange was built. As such, existing lane widths should not be reduced. (We question whether the width identified in the presentation is accurate.)

The pavement markings should be corrected for both the on and off ramps to US29 north. From E. Randolph eastbound, the left lane of two is directing vehicles into the bridge structure. From southbound US29, the markings run the two left-turn lanes together before reaching East Randolph Rd. Also, drivers often want to switch from the right-lane to the left-lane before the thru-lanes are reached – thus interfering with another vehicle already in that lane.

Intersection Comments. The presentation does not account for the planned improvements at the intersection with Calverton Blvd/Broadbrich Dr. This intersection is the primary source of congestion on both Cherry Hill and Broadbrich Dr. DOT developed a design for this intersection under the Local Area Transportation Improvement Program (LATIP) in 2017. The design from pages 575 of the appendix is provided below. Any improvements related to Bikeways need to account for this design.



Using the 2040 Improved diagram, a dedicated right-turn lane and another thru-lane from Broadbrich needs to be added, a right-turn lane from eastbound Cherry Hill needed to be added and a second thru-lane from Calverton Blvd needs to be added. This configuration would require either adding a lane or eliminating the parking on the east side of the Calverton Blvd between Cherry Hill Rd and Gracefield Rd.

The issue at Plum Orchard is that the eastbound left-turn lane from Cherry Hill is too narrow which discourages its use in favor of Calverton Blvd/Gracefield Rd. That movement causes more congestion at the Calverton/Broadbrich Dr. intersection.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Daniel L. Wilhelm, GCCA President