

J PUBLIC MEETING TRANSCRIPTS

The following is a record of the oral comments received during the two public information meetings.

Two individuals provided testimony at the July 13, 2011 scoping meeting and six individuals provided testimony at the November 8, 2012 alternatives meeting. Their statements are presented in this appendix.

1

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
BROAD BRANCH ROAD, N.W.

CHEVY CHASE COMMUNITY CENTER
5601 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20015

6:30 p.m. through 8:30 p.m.
July 13, 2011

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. WHITLE: And what do you want with
3 that?

4 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 1: If it was a bike
5 path --

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Um, I guess
7 your, uh, address --

8 MR. WHITLE: So I'll give you my e-mail.
9 How's that?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER 2: Whatever you --

11 MR. WHITLE: Tom9754@verizon.net. And an
12 ANC commissioner 3-F.

13 I have been a resident of this area for
14 about 20 years, ridden this area of Broad Branch
15 Road often during that period, am very pleased
16 with the initiative to make the corrections
17 necessary to, um, make the road truly useable and
18 safe.

19 And I would particularly be concerned
20 that there be enough space in the roadway and
21 cart way to include a bicycle lane so that there
22 may be a movement of people by that means as well

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1 as walkers, who at this time have no room on the
2 road.

3 Um, I think that an accelerated effort
4 like this is very commendable, but I would be
5 concerned about people who don't want any change,
6 number one. And, number two, who are only
7 focusing on the speed of traffic. And the fact
8 is that the speed of traffic must be corrected
9 and reduced. Too many people driving on that
10 road as if we were part of the Swiss Alps. So I
11 feel that this is a great initiative, but we
12 better not just succumb to the don't do it NIMBY
13 people and have a very dangerous situation
14 continue. It's dangerous now. It must be
15 corrected.

16 And I think that's about -- that'll do
17 it. Okay?

18 MR. ROSENBERG: What would you like me --
19 okay. Sure.

20 Okay. My name is Eric Rosenberg, E-R-I-
21 C, R-O-S-E-N-B-E-R-G. And I live at 3511
22 Patterson Street, N.W. in D.C. I'm speaking as a

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1 private citizen but also I'm a member of the D.C.
2 Bicycle Advisory Council, uh, representing
3 Michael Brown who is the at large City Council
4 Member, but living in the neighborhood, I'm
5 obviously concerned on the personal level.

6 My issue with this, um, specific project
7 is, uh -- my concerns, rather, are, uh, with
8 regards to the safety of, uh, bicyclists and
9 others who use the road. The road is in bad
10 shape and is in consistently bad shape. Uh,
11 there are drainage issues, erosion issues, um,
12 that make the road unsafe, uh, for both drivers
13 and for others, uh, specifically bicyclists.

14 Um, there are a lot of -- the roads, uh -
15 - the nature of the road in terms of its -- um,
16 its route has a lot of blind spots so that when
17 you're traveling, you don't necessarily see
18 traffic coming towards you until the last moment.
19 And that's unsafe for everyone.

20 Speed is an issue. When the road was
21 repaid approximately two years ago, um, the speed
22 -- the average speed appeared to go up for

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1 drivers. Um, and as a result, again, safety is
2 the number one issue for my concern. Um, there's
3 no bailout area because the road is so narrow,
4 certainly for, uh -- for bicyclists or
5 pedestrians.

6 I do not believe that it is worth the
7 effort of DDOT to, um, accommodate pedestrians
8 other than making the entrances and exits to the
9 park on the various bridges, um, marked clearly
10 for pedestrians and have some sort of speed
11 control of some nature, a traffic calming, at
12 those areas, um, so that drivers will know that
13 there are -- there's a potential of pedestrians
14 crossing, um, Beach Road -- uh, Beach Drive at --
15 at those spots.

16 But I don't believe that sidewalks are
17 necessary or of any particular value or use. Um,
18 hikers and, um -- uh, runners, um, I would
19 presume -- or it's my understanding and my
20 observation that they are more interested in
21 getting into the park, um, and running in the
22 park and using the park as opposed to bicyclists.

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1 Um, the trails that are on the inside of
2 the park, um, are -- because they're somewhat
3 hidden, they are not well maintained. Certainly,
4 um, there's a lot of debris. Um, they're not --
5 and when it gets wet, it gets very dangerous with
6 leaves and all of that.

7 So, uh, my, uh, hope is that the
8 bicyclists will be addressed, um, in the
9 redevelopment of this road. I would -- I would
10 hope that a bike lane would be installed, um, on
11 the west side of the park. Maybe you could -- on
12 the west side of the road, rather.

13 Maybe you could flatten out some of the
14 curves. That would be great. Another suggestion
15 would be to put flex posts, which, uh, are
16 similar to the ones that are on Pennsylvania
17 Avenue, as a demarcation between the traffic --
18 the automobile traffic and the bicycle traffic.
19 It doesn't have to be everywhere, but certainly
20 with the corners and the intersection, uh, or the
21 curves that are significant that they would be
22 there so that the -- that the cars who tend to

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1 drift in these narrow roads over the center
2 median -- not that they would go all the way on
3 the other side, but it would give some sense of
4 protection to a bicyclist who will not otherwise
5 ride on that, um -- in that area if there's no
6 sense of -- a feeling of safety there.

7 Um, again, speed is -- is -- is an issue,
8 and there should be some way to do some traffic
9 calming, be it straightening out the road, which
10 I don't believe is practical, or speed humps or
11 bumps, or something, uh, to slow down the
12 traffic.

13 Um, the intersections tend to be, uh,
14 pretty precarious -- a lot of accidents appear to
15 happen on the 27th Street intersection because
16 there are so few of them. And, again, there are
17 a lot of blind spots there. Um, and it's
18 relatively dark, uh, most of the time. It's not
19 brightly lit. And I don't believe it should be
20 brightly lit, um, but again, to use what
21 resources are available and the space that's
22 available would make sense.

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1 Again, the idea of a bike -- a bike lane
2 with flex posts in either the entire area or in
3 an appropriate area I think would work quite
4 well. Um, on the straighter parts maybe not
5 because that's where it's -- since the bike lane
6 would -- I do not believe is big enough to
7 accommodate, uh, bicycle traffic in both
8 directions simultaneously -- someone would have
9 to, you know, give way to the other -- give the
10 right-of-way to the other bicyclists, uh, in the
11 other direction. And if you have flex posts all
12 the way around, um, if they're too close
13 together, there's no place for the -- for one of
14 them -- you know, one to go and the other to
15 pass.

16 So, those are my comments. Thank you
17 very much.

18 (Conclusion of public comments.)

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
BROAD BRANCH ROAD, N.W.

METHODIST HOME OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
4901 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008

6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
Thursday, November 8, 2012

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ALSO PRESENT

Paul Hoffman - Parsons Corporation

Stephen Walter - Parsons Corporation

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. MCGRATH: Dorn McGrath, 2710
3 Brandywine, Northwest, Washington, D.C.

4 THE REPORTER: Feel free to proceed.

5 MR. MCGRATH: Okay. I will proceed to
6 declare the engineers supervising this project
7 are very helpful. They are not the same ones
8 that represent Anacostia and I have yet to be
9 informed about any hearing in Anacostia
10 concerning the Historic Preservation Act, section
11 106. And I am the former chairman of the
12 Committee of 100 and also the designated person
13 to receive such information from the DDOT with
14 respect to section 106.

15 And I have received nothing. I have had
16 nothing for a year from the MDOZP (ph) concerning
17 this project, their project in Anacostia, street
18 car project. Not a road widening like this is.

19 And this is another group of engineers
20 much more suitable to the task they have.

21 [WHEREUPON, THE STATEMENT OF DORN MCGRATH WAS
22 CONCLUDED]

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1 MS. RAY: Mary Beth Ray. 4526 29th
2 Street, Northwest, Washington, D.C. 20008.

3 THE REPORTER: Please proceed.

4 MS. RAY: Oh, okay. So I'll be brief.
5 One of the reasons that I and my family chose to
6 live in Forest Hills is because of the proximity
7 to Rock Creek Park. And it's extremely
8 frustrating because there's no save access for
9 pedestrians or cyclists to be able to get from
10 our house into the park.

11 So, I was really excited to see
12 alternatives three and four, in particular
13 because it would provide safe access into the
14 park.

15 And so, we would just really encourage
16 the Park Service and DDOT to do whatever it takes
17 to construct both a sidewalk and a bicycle lane,
18 if possible and if not both a cycling lane and a
19 sidewalk then at the very least, a wide sidewalk
20 that could be used for either cycling or
21 pedestrians so that people across the area can
22 enjoy one of the most beautiful parks in the

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1 country.

2 [WHEREUPON, THE STATEMENT OF MARY BETH RAY WAS
3 CONCLUDED]

4 MR. THOMAS: Samuel Thomas. 4600
5 Connecticut, apartment number 512,

6 THE REPORTER: The zip code?

7 MR. THOMAS: It's 20008. I'm on? Okay.
8 I just wanted to start out by saying I've been
9 planning to come to this meeting since I heard
10 about it and coincidentally a friend of mine from
11 college, Gelseigh Karl-Cannon was killed, struck
12 by a motorist riding her bicycle yesterday in
13 Denver, Colorado. That further energized me to
14 come out here and emphasize how critically
15 important bicycle and pedestrian safety in our
16 neighborhoods is.

17 Broad Branch Road, in particular, I'm
18 quite familiar with. I do not own a car. My
19 transportation is all by foot and by bicycle.
20 It's a very narrow and windy road. Of course I
21 would like to see bicycle lanes, or at least
22 sharrows markings put on the road.

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1 Even more important than bicycle safety
2 on Broad Branch, I believe, is pedestrian safety.
3 It's located in a residential neighborhood and
4 next to a national park that gets frequent use by
5 urban citizens in Washington, D.C. And in
6 particular, the Soapstone Valley hiking trail
7 which is supposed to connect to the Rock Creek
8 hiking trail system, dumps pedestrians,
9 currently, right onto Broad Branch Road in a very
10 narrow and windy spot where they have to walk
11 along the roadway with no shoulder to connect to
12 the other trails.

13 I think it's really critical that DDOT
14 and the city take responsibility and make this a
15 safe place for pedestrians so they feel
16 encouraged to use the facilities.

17 So, please consider the options three and
18 four that include sidewalks along the length of
19 Broad Branch Road. They're very important and
20 bicycle lanes would be an improvement as well.

21 Thank you.

22 [WHEREUPON, THE STATEMENT OF SAMUEL THOMAS WAS

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1 CONCLUDED]

2 MR. KLOSSNER: You ready? My name is
3 Christian Klossner. I live at 4501 Connecticut
4 Avenue, Washington, D.C., 2008.

5 My primary concern is a safe connection
6 from the base of Soapstone Valley to beach drive.
7 I live at the head of Soapstone Valley. I enjoy
8 hiking there with my six year old son.

9 The connection to the Pierce Mill area
10 and the parking lot or other trails is incredibly
11 unsafe and to be quite frank, my wife limits my
12 going there with my son.

13 My secondary concern is the usability
14 between Brandywine and Beach Drive for bicycles.
15 It is the easiest way into the park from my
16 neighborhood for a bicycle yet that stretch of
17 road is incredibly unsafe. There is a curve that
18 people come around very quickly and you are
19 exposed to traffic coming up behind you before
20 you can connect to Beach Drive which is heavily
21 used by bicyclists, especially on weekends.

22 I also use Broad Branch for driving.

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1 Most frequently from Beach Drive to Brandywine
2 but also, sometimes, to Davenport as an access to
3 the nature center. As a driver, I would be happy
4 to accept a number of restrictions on my ability
5 to travel.

6 I should say, viewing the four options,
7 my preference is option four but as all three
8 have, at least, a sidewalk from Soapstone Valley
9 to beach drive, I find them all an improvement
10 over the current system. And the first option,
11 no build, is completely unacceptable.

12 In addition to the actual building
13 structures which I understand would possibly
14 involve purchasing rights of way from private
15 property, I think there are other structures that
16 can be put in place to slow down traffic on the
17 road to make it safer for pedestrian and
18 bicyclist.

19 I would be in favor, even as a driver, be
20 in favor of speed bumps, appropriately designed
21 to allow for the passage of bicyclists without
22 going over a bump. I would be in favor of a

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1 heavily reduced speed limit, as low as 15 miles
2 per hour. And I would encourage the city to put
3 speed cameras on the road to enforce it.

4 The major conflict I see between
5 bicyclists and drivers is drivers becoming
6 impatient when bicyclists are heading northbound
7 at a slow rate of speed. I think that if there
8 was an enforced speed limit, that was
9 approximating what a bicyclist would do that that
10 would reduce tensions and make for a happier and
11 safer ride for all. Especially considering that
12 the largest danger is that the bicyclists would
13 cause motorist to pass into oncoming traffic.

14 So again, as both a pedestrian user, as a
15 bicycle user and as a driver I am strongly in
16 favor of safer access from Brandywine to Beach
17 Drive and would accept restrictions on my
18 motorist use.

19 Thank you.

20 [WHEREUPON, THE STATEMENT OF CHRISTIAN KLOSSNER
21 WAS CONCLUDED]

22 MR. KATZ: My name is Kenneth Katz

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1 and the address is 3411 Fessenden Street,
2 Northwest, 20008. It's actually right behind us,
3 Fessenden Street.

4 THE REPORTER: Please proceed.

5 MR. KATZ: Well I would just like to say,
6 certainly from my point of being a pedestrian, a
7 driver, cyclist and a neighbor I am vastly in
8 favor of alternative four or the idea of
9 alternative four, which does indeed create a safe
10 facility for all travel modes as best as
11 possible.

12 I do think one small addition would be,
13 it's a little odd that there is a one-way bicycle
14 lane proposed which does make sense in terms of
15 geography because that bike lane is for the
16 uphill lane and the direction in which there is
17 no bike lane is for the downhill lane where you
18 would, even on a bike, be going pretty close to
19 the speed limit.

20 However, it just strikes me that perhaps
21 a better idea would be not to have the bike lane
22 at all and to instead have what is a sidewalk

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1 extended in width by a couple feet and turn that
2 into a multi-use trail.

3 But in any case, my belief is that
4 alternative four will definitely increase use of
5 neighbors. Just having a safe place to walk and
6 ride along in Broad Branch will probably bring
7 many, many people into the park who live
8 Northwest of where Broad Branch hits Beach Drive
9 because right now there is no way to get into the
10 park, except by driving. At least no safe way.
11 So I think this would be wonderful.

12 Thank you so much.

13 [WHEREUPON, THE STATEMENT OF KENNETH KATZ WAS
14 CONCLUDED]

15 MR. CALDWELL: My name is William
16 Caldwell. My address is 4660 Broad Branch Road,
17 Northwest.

18 THE REPORTER: 20008?

19 MR. CALDWELL: Yes.

20 THE REPORTER: Please proceed.

21 MR. CALDWELL: My comment is that I
22 prefer option one. One of the reasons for that

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1 is that it preserves the character of Broad
2 Branch road as having, sort of a rural feel to
3 it, country road. It's an historic road and it's
4 the edge of the national park. It's really
5 beautiful. I think it should stay that way.

6 It's a nice idea to have sidewalks and
7 bike trails and swales and all that and I don't
8 have any objection to those things except that,
9 in order to do it, it's going to require
10 excavation on the west side. It's going to
11 require cutting down hundreds of trees and
12 building retaining walls, relatively high
13 retaining walls in order to widen the right-of-
14 way. And I really don't think that's a good
15 idea. It's going to pretty much destroy the
16 character of the road. And it's certainly an
17 expensive solution so I'm opposed to that.

18 And, I also think that the notion that
19 it's necessary for safety to put up the various
20 retaining walls between the road and the creek is
21 kind of excessive. I don't think that's -- I
22 don't think there really have been many instances

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1 that, where there have been problems because of
2 that.

3 But anyway, I wanted to comment, which is
4 that, one of the reasons that the road is damaged
5 by water is -- the primary reason, and I've seen
6 this for twenty years. It's not because of the
7 water coming down from the hillside on the west
8 side onto the road and undercutting the road.
9 It's the, in a heavy rain the water fills Broad
10 Branch and it overflows its banks in some places
11 and it just turns it into a tributary. It just
12 rolls down Broad Branch and that's a very violent
13 flow and that's what damages the road surface.

14 So, your engineering should address how
15 to keep Broad Branch within its banks, at least
16 in the crucial places where there are little
17 bottlenecks where -- gravity -- it has no place
18 to go and it has to flow up onto Broad Branch
19 Road.

20 So that would be my suggestion and I
21 think that's all I have to say.

22 Thank you very much.

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1 [WHEREUPON, WILLIAM CALDWELL RETURNS FOR FURTHER
2 COMMENT]

3 MR. CALDWELL: I'd like to amend my
4 remarks just a tad.

5 I do have one further comment and that is
6 that I think the -- there has not been sufficient
7 public notice about this project. Even tonight I
8 kind of expected that there would be a
9 representative from the Department of
10 Transportation that would make a presentation
11 about what the various options are. And I found
12 it quite difficult to get information about each
13 of them, not that the people who are here aren't
14 accessible, they are. But it's a one-on-one
15 situation and it's not an opportunity for the
16 group to hear what's going on, to hear answers.
17 And so, there's very little information that's
18 actually getting out.

19 So I think that does a disservice. I
20 think there should be another meeting. A public
21 meeting where, you know, there are many, many
22 people who are interested in this. They should

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1 have the opportunity to hear a coherent
2 presentation of what the three basic options are
3 and to be able to ask questions that everybody
4 can hear so that they -- people don't all think
5 of the same question at the same time.

6 So, that would be really useful and would
7 make it possible for people to actually
8 understand what's going on, what the issues are
9 in this project. You know, the last time the
10 Department of Transportation tried to do this,
11 which was 10 or 12 years ago, there was a huge
12 amount of public interest in it. There were
13 hundreds of people going to ANC meetings about it
14 and you shouldn't be surprised if there's a lot
15 of interest in it this time.

16 And I know we're only into the process,
17 it's not over yet. You haven't made your
18 decisions but, people need to know what's going
19 on before you make your decisions so they can
20 have some opportunity to tell you what they think
21 about it and to involve their representatives.

22 Thank you.

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1 [WHEREUPON, THE STATEMENT OF WILLIAM CALSWELL WAS
2 CONCLUDED]

3 MR. HOFFMAN: The time is now 8:31 and
4 we're done.

5
6 [WHEREUPON, AT 8:31 p.m., THE PUBLIC MEETING WAS
7 CONCLUDED.]

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