

HPC Resolution on the Bike Path adopted March 16, 2021

The HPC requests the Town Council to table and reconsider the recent Resolution on the preferred bike path. This resolution reflected a rush to judgement without proper deliberation to assess the wider implications and impacts to the Town of becoming a through connection, when access to Metro becomes a reality.

- 1) The procedure was irregular. The agenda item: “Bikeway Connection-Discussion on how to proceed” offered no notification to residents that a final decision was imminent, to be voted on that evening by Town Council members.
- 2) It was passed without a clear expression of the reasons why the chosen route was preferred. No criteria for selection were included and specific relevant information was omitted. The discussion provided no systematic analysis of the benefits or disadvantages of the chosen route versus other options.
- 3) There was no exploration of routes other than those focused around Brown St. The route behind the backyards of the homes on Brown St. provided by Dept of Transportation was not a serious, good faith alternative. At least one viable option other than Brown St should be explored, and compared together with the other routes before a final decision is made.

The HPC recommends further study of the options using the following criteria for comparing different routes:

- 1) Assessment of compatibility and impacts to neighborhoods
- 2) Environmental impacts
- 3) Access to Metro and adjacent communities
- 4) Recreational value of the multi-use path
- 5) Social equity implications

Reservations were expressed that a working group formed to study and report its conclusions to the Town would either take too long or would prove too divisive to function well. An alternative proposed by the HPC, is to ask the relevant permanent committees and commissions of the Town to address the criteria above from their point of view and report back to a Town Forum. Building on this idea, a task force could be formed with one representative from each commission and committee, whose task would be to produce a consensus report, reflecting the views expressed by the reporting committees.