

It should be noted that this route allows for an Amity Drive connection to the bike path through Picea Court and does so without the problematic crossing of the second (eastern) wetlands and streambed adjacent to Amity Dr. that is part of the Lower Field/Piedmont Crossing Local Park. Although outside the WG Bike Path Task Force's plan of study, the Amity Drive Connector has been part of the overall Washington Grove Connector – Crabbs Branch Way Extension Facility Planning Study. Park and Planning recommended deferment of the Amity Drive Connector for now, nevertheless route 2b speaks directly to the comments noted in the 4/29 briefing. "A natural surface trail connection from the end of Amity Drive to the existing Natural Surface Trail loop in the park should be a consideration as part of the overall trail plan where an unsigned people's choice trail exists now." Doing double duty as both an Amity Connector and Washington Grove Connector, Route 2b eliminates the need of a second wetlands crossing, balancing the cost and environmental impacts involved in crossing the wetlands by Crabbs Branch Way, making it attractive for reconsideration as part of the overall plan as noted above.

**Name:** Letter from the Washington Grove Historic Preservation Committee

**Date:** August 27, 2021

**Inquiry type:** Letter

**Email:**

**Category:** EC2, EC3, EC5, EC6, EC8, EC11

**Comments:**

Gary and Eva:

The HPC noted in its March resolution that the route designated Alternative 2 by MCDOT was not a serious, good faith option. In fact, this judgement was confirmed when Alternative 2 was rejected by the planners at Park and Planning a month later in the report dated 4/29: Washington Grove Connector – Crabbs Branch Way Extension Facility Planning Study Briefing report.

Compared to Alternative 1 (Salt Barn) and Alternative (Brown St), Alternative 2 will do the most environmental damage to the historically significant forested buffer that runs between the Conservation Meadow and the Lower Field/Piedmont Crossing Local Park. Besides removing the greatest number of mature trees, it passes over an environmentally sensitive headwater of Mill Creek that is part of a complex of possible archeological sites contained within the forested buffer that forms the southeastern border of the Conservation Meadow.

Therefore, the HPC recommended that an alternative route through the Conservation Meadow be presented to the Town as was intended when the Town advised MCDOT to consider 3 alternatives at the February 2020 meeting.

This route avoids the Brown Street area entirely and follows one of the existing natural surface paths located on the upper Conservation Meadow and the lower Piedmont Crossing Local Park. Though it isn't critical which path it follows thru the Meadow, it seems best to start at Ridge Road somewhere between Oak Street and Center Street at the NE end of the Meadow. It would follow the existing path SE adjacent to the houses on Picea Court and turn with the path SW along the forested buffer that forms the southeastern border of the Conservation Meadow, then to the existing farmer's road thru the gap in the buffer. It then follows the farmer's track south across Piedmont Crossing Local Park down the hill to the south corner, where an

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informal path enters the forested area near the wetland, crosses over the stream and continues to the lawn area immediately adjacent to the Men's Shelter. It would then intersect Crabbs Branch south of the wetland that the other Alternates have to cross.

Though it looks pristine, the wetland in the forested area has been altered several times, first for the installation of the sewer main, next for the ICC and then for the interchange. The area adjacent to the Men's Shelter has been altered for the construction of Crabbs Branch, the Salt Barn complex and the Shelter. The path thru the forest would not need significant earthwork and could be threaded thru the trees with minimal tree removal.

Paving the field with an asphalt path 10' across and with 2 foot shoulders, could change the character of the Conservation Meadow, a contributing resource to the Washington Grove Historic District, so alternative permeable surfaces should be considered as presented by MCDOT at their informational meeting in Feb 2020 and preferred by the informal "voting" by Town residents. In discussions with MCDOT and Park and Planning, standard widths and shoulders should also be reconsidered.

This path provides a recreational value as well as a commuter connection to the Metro.