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Inquiry type: Email to Eva Patrone

Email:

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Comments:

Task Force Question: How will a path that connects Washington Grove to surrounding communities be part of the Washington Grove RASEC's goals "build relationships and make amends with neighboring communities?" (from RASEC letter to Mayor and Town Council April 12, 2021)

- The Shared Use Path will provide an opportunity to reduce the functional distance between Washington Grove residents and members of surrounding communities and improve attitudes across these largely racially-divided lines. When there are opportunities for natural, incidental interactions via shared paths and facilities, psychologists refer to this as low "functional distance." This means opportunities for non-competitive cross-group contact, which especially under the right circumstances (e.g., people being treated with equal status), is one of the VERY FEW reliable means to reduce prejudice (Allport, 1954; Brown & Hewstone, 2005; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). Moreover, the functional distance between people is one of the most important factors in friendship formation (e.g., Athanasiou & Yoshioka, 1973; Case, 1981; Sacerdote & Marmaros, 2006), which is one of the best interventions to improve intergroup attitudes (e.g., Davies et al., 2011).
- The Shared Use Path will provide an opportunity to communicate to neighboring communities that they are welcome to pass through Washington Grove. Conversely, if we do not allow an easy, direct Path through Washington Grove we will be carrying on the exclusionary tradition created from real or imagined fears like the Camp fence which forced Emory Grove residents to walk around the Town (Edwards, 1988). This is an opportunity to show our desire to be part of the larger community.
- A Shared Use Path through Town demonstrates Washington Grove's effort to provide continuous access for workers of Washington Grove and connecting communities to get to the Metro and the shopping areas to meet basic needs.
- Communities outside of Washington Grove often depend on public access to grocery stores and the natural environment. The Shared Use Path provides access to both for Washington Grove residents and our neighbors with higher minority populations.

