

Response to RASEC's shared use path recommendation

Please see that the message below is sent to the mayor and council members.
Thanks much,
Jay Everhart

One of RASEC's recommendations is to "Collaborate with Neighboring Communities Regarding the Shared Use Path."

In the Mayor's letter of 1/08/24 to Department of Transportation (DOT), one of the arguments in favor of building the path related to engagement with neighboring communities:

"Gaithersburg and Rockville are two of the most ethnically diverse cities in the en re country, and each has significant pockets of poverty. Although the cities are nearly contiguous, travel between them is difficult except by motor vehicle, and nearly impossible east of I-270. Many residents, especially those who are non-white, do not have private automobiles and do not find that buses meet their needs. A disproportionate benefit for such persons would be the safe, efficient, and inexpensive bicycle option provided by the Connector."

After years of discussion and some false starts, the route of the Connector was agreed upon by DOT and WG in 12/23, and it is preliminarily included among the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for FY 2025. Despite these achievements, the project may languish unless DOT prioritizes and funds it.

In consideration of social equity and opportunity, I would support engagement with Rockville, Gaithersburg, and any other interested community in pressing DOT to fund and complete the WG Connector. Although the Connector has finally been included in the CIP after years of effort by a few town residents, there is no guarantee of funding, as it is competing for funds with other "bikeways" projects in the six-year Bikeways Program Minor Projects plan. Thus, in the current plan, it is possible that by the beginning of the next decade the Connector will remain uncompleted. The more that parties press the County and DOT, the faster the Connector will be built.

Jay Everhart
118 Grove Avenue

