

FOSC Opposes Beltway Expansion

On May 1, 2019, the board of the Friends of Sligo Creek sent a letter opposing Beltway expansion to the Maryland State Board of Public Works, a three-member body consisting of Treasurer Nancy Kopp, Comptroller Peter Franchot, and Governor Larry Hogan. The letter states as follows (and can also be read here):

Since 2001, Friends of Sligo Creek (FOSC) has worked as a volunteer conservation organization with our now almost 2000 people, and with government partners to protect, improve, and appreciate the ecological health of Sligo Creek, the park and its watershed. After careful consideration, we feel the need to state our strong opposition to the current options for expansion to Route 495, the Beltway. Three main concerns drove our decision, informed by decades of experience and a record of successful stewardship programs in the Sligo Creek watershed:

Stormwater and Air Pollution

The Beltway is already a major contributor to stormwater pollution in the region's watersheds, particularly creeks and small streams. Vastly increased pavement will inevitably strain all the existing stormwater mitigation projects and efforts downstream, likely overwhelming them as we suffer from more severe storms. As so much of this rushing stormwater now plows directly into Rock Creek, Sligo Creek, and Northwest Branch, there's no room for error. We have strongly urged that the entire Beltway get stormwater mitigation if any changes are made to it; the current scenario is much more dire. A 'double-deck' lane solution will make capturing stormwater much more difficult and expensive with difficult to estimate costs.

Loss of Public Parkland

All of us benefit from parks in Montgomery County. Under the current plan, Rock Creek and its park in particular would be impacted. Sligo Creek Park would also lose land, particularly impacting its community public golf course. Growing density in Montgomery County means it needs its parks even more today. The terrible impacts would begin with construction and then continue with a massively expanded Beltway. Purchase of new green space and planting trees at remote locations are an unacceptable solution, and are not funded in this plan.

Poor Cost-Benefit Analysis

At its heart, the Beltway expansion is only aimed at addressing the congestion problems of a very few people and would do nothing for the vast majority of travelers. The current plan decrees a wholly inadequate set of 1950s solutions to 21st century problems, at great ultimate cost to the public. This is in no way worth the damage to our environment. We believe that there is no functional,

financial, or environmental reason for this project, particularly when cheaper and more rational traffic efforts can and should be implemented.

We urge you to please oppose this project and vote against it.

Sincerely,
Board of Directors Friends of Sligo Creek

http://www.fosc.org/PDF/FOSC_BPW_Beltway_opposition_4.pdf