

Comment by Friends of Sligo Creek  
To the Maryland Transit Administration

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Advocacy Director

Friends of Sligo Creek supports the use of mass transit to minimize environmental impacts in general, and in specific in the Sligo Creek watershed. Expansion of lanes of traffic on 495 would do the precise opposite. And even worse, using express lanes that charge more for their use crushes any opportunity to facilitate mass transit on the beltway, multiple person vehicle use or any other mode of minimizing per person vehicle use. We find this a massively wrongheaded plan. We completely oppose it as currently envisioned. Funds that would be spent on this could much more efficiently and effectively be spent in other environmentally and climate-friendly ways to facilitate transportation and other community needs.

In particular, the specific effects on Sligo watershed will be quite serious – the Beltway crosses our watershed at one of its wider spots, with the golf course, vernal pools, considerable forest and meadow in shouting distance of the Beltway. There's no way lane expansion could be done without a significant amount of destruction of these areas.

That pales in comparison with the impact on our sister, Rock Creek and its watershed. The impact there would almost certainly be massive as the creek itself meanders a stone's throw from 495 at present. It's already a terrible place to put a multi-lane road. Any expansion would functionally destroy that watershed over a wide swath.

Friends of Sligo Creek is a nonprofit environmental group dedicated to protecting, improving and appreciating Sligo Creek and its surrounding watershed. We represent more than a thousand people connected to the organization, and many thousands more in our watershed.