

CITY OF BALTIMORE

STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE, Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

WILLIAM JOHNSON, Director  
417 E. Fayette Street, 5th floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

June 17, 2015

John E. Kyle  
President  
Mt. Royal Improvement Association (MRIA)  
P.O. Box 19958  
Baltimore, Maryland 21211

Dear Mr. Kyle:

The Department of Transportation has reviewed the comments supplied by MRIA concerning the Midtown Streetscape Project. Please accept our apology for not providing a response in a more timely manner. A summary of the comments and the Department of Transportation's response are contained in the attached document.

Please note that the requested improvements to the footways on the West side of Mt. Royal Avenue cannot be incorporated into the project, a proposal to address them in a separate project will be forwarded to you under separate cover.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 410 396-6802.

Sincerely,

  
Frank J. Murphy  
Senior Advisor

Attachment

cc: William M. Johnson  
Veronica McBeth  
Bimal Devkota  
Satinder Kang  
Michael Camper  
Lok Shrestha

**Midtown Streetscape/Traffic Improvements**  
**CONTRACT NO. TR11306**

The following is a point-by-point response to Mt Royal Improvements Association Major and Minor concerns

Page	Comment	Response
	<b>MAJOR CONCERNS:</b>	
1	The two-way cycletrack needs to connect with the existing cycletrack on Guilford Avenue. This would make for safe bicycle travel all the way from Bolton Hill to Downtown. The 2 1/2 block gap in the protected path between Charles and Guilford across the heavily used exit of 1-83 creates a major safety hazard and a significant weakness in the plan. If the connection is not feasible, then we recommend that the two-way cycletrack be eliminated entirely and replaced with painted bicycle lanes.	The cycletrack transitions to a 10' wide shared-use path and connects to the Jones Falls Trail. Note that currently the Jones Falls Trail is a 10' wide shared-use path from St. Paul to Guilford. In addition, there will be a cycle track installed along Maryland Avenue/Cathedral Street which the Mt. Royal cycle track will connect with. This will provide Bolton Hill residents an alternate route to downtown.
2	Safety measures for both bicyclists and pedestrians need to be enhanced where cars exit the Jones Falls Expressway onto St. Paul St. and Mt Royal Avenue. Cars coming off an interstate have a tendency to speed and ignore pedestrians, posing a major hazard .	Safety enhancements at the JFX off ramps include new warning signs, ADA pedestrian ramps, and shorter crosswalk distances which will be at the narrowest points for pedestrian safety. In addition, we will be adding flashing beacons at the Mt. Royal exit. The flexible posts will be eliminated at the Saint Paul exit and we are adding a concrete channelization island.
3	The proposed plan comes to an abrupt and awkward end northbound at Lafayette Ave. There are several options, and we would like to work with the City to alleviate this situation.	Sharrow markings will be provided from Lafayette to the end of the project at McMechen.
4	Although the proposed sidewalks along the west side of 1400 and 1500 Mt Royal Avenue are most welcome, the bulk of the pedestrian traffic is carried by the damaged sidewalks along Mt Royal Terrace in the same blocks . Fixing these sidewalks should be included in the project. Our neighborhood association and individual neighbors have been advocating for the replacement of these sidewalks for years. It seems logical to include the replacement in this project, rather than only addressing sidewalks on the other side of the street and allowing these to continue to languish and to be a constant danger to pedestrians.	This project is a federally funded project. Mt. Royal Terrace is not a federal route. Therefore, the walkway improvements on Mt. Royal Terrace cannot be incorporated into this project because they are not federal-aid eligible. The DOT Alleys and Footways Section has agreed to replace the sidewalk with exposed aggregate concrete in a separate project in the next fiscal year. A letter will be sent to MRIA under separate cover outlining the proposal.
5	We are concerned about the proposal to remove the nine trees in front of the Lyric. Increasing the tree canopy in Baltimore has been a major City initiative and one that our neighborhood heartily endorses. It seems that removing these trees is incompatible with the City plan. We suggest the proposal be modified to re-locate those trees as close as possible to the existing trees. potentially on the Lyric property.	The trees have been removed to accommodate the cycletrack . There is limited space in front of the Lyric for crowds prior to events. Trees will be replanted in accordance with current City policy for tree replacement within the project and at other locations in the City. There will be no net loss of trees.
	<b>Minor suggestions:</b>	
1	Because this proposal eliminates some parking along Mt. Royal Avenue. we suggest that parking along the East side of Mt. Royal Avenue from Lafayette to McMechen become pay-to- park. This would increase parking turnover.	The Parking Authority recommends installing metered parking on both sides of Mt. Royal Avenue between Lanvale and McMechen Streets.
2	There is a significant jaywalking problem with University of Baltimore students crossing Mt. Royal Avenue midblock between Maryland Avenue and Charles St. Although we are generally opposed to fences, we suggest the City consider a physical barrier on that block, to force pedestrians to cross at the lights.	There is existing median and landscaping to discourage mid-block crossing. A fence is not part of this project but the Department of Transportation would be happy to meet with MRIA to discuss issues and options.

**Midtown Streetscape/Traffic Improvements**  
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3	We suggest that the crossing signals have a leading pedestrian interval at as many intersections as possible, especially at Maryland Ave, Charles St, and St. Paul St.	Signal timing changes will be adjusted during the construction of the project. There is currently a leading pedestrian interval (LPI) at Charles Street that will remain. The Traffic Division does not anticipate adding an LPI at Maryland Avenue or St Paul St because LPI's are generally used at locations with high turning vehicle volumes.
4	Since the City is proposing to add new conduit, we suggest the City consider adding fiber optic concurrently with the new conduit installation.	The conduit installed under this project is for use during Artscape. There is an existing conduit system in Mt. Royal Avenue, which may be utilized for fiber optic.
5	We suggest reflective paint or other visibility enhancements at all "bump-outs".	DOT-Traffic does not recommend such treatment on the proposed bump-outs and it is not typical practice for bump out construction. Such treatment is typically reserved for cases where visibility of an object is an issue.
6	We suggest that the City improve the timing of two closely spaced signals at Cathedral St. & the Station Building Drive and Cathedral St & Mt Royal Ave.	Signal timing changes will be adjusted during the construction of the project. The Traffic Division can look into improving the timing at these signals as part of that effort.
7	We suggest that the City make this plan congruent with the separately proposed cycle track improvements along Maryland Avenue.	The City's plans for both of these projects will be coordinated.
8	The proposed plan calls for the removal of two Zipcar spaces at the Mt Royal light rail stop. We urge the replacement of these Zipcar spaces as close as possible to the removed ones.	DOT will coordinate with Zipcar for replacement of the removed spaces.



MOUNT ROYAL  
IMPROVEMENT  
ASSOCIATION

May 6, 2014

William M. Johnson ([WilliamM.Johnson@baltimorecity.gov](mailto:WilliamM.Johnson@baltimorecity.gov))  
Director, Baltimore City Department of Transportation  
417 E. Fayette Street, 5th Floor (fax: 410-547-1036)  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Dear Mr. Johnson:

We thank you for your Department's hosting a public information meeting on 2/20/14 regarding the Midtown Streetscape. The Mount Royal Improvement Association (MRIA) – representing the Bolton Hill neighborhood – welcomes streetscape improvements and desires our neighborhood and our City to be as pedestrian and bicycle friendly as possible.

Nevertheless we have five major concerns about this project, as well as eight minor suggestions. This letter was approved by the MRIA Board of Directors at its April Board meeting which was open to the public.

MAJOR CONCERNS:

1. The two-way cycletrack needs to connect with the existing cycletrack on Guilford Avenue. This would make for safe bicycle travel all the way from Bolton Hill to Downtown. The 2 1/2 block gap in the protected path between Charles and Guilford across the heavily used exit of I-83 creates a major safety hazard and a significant weakness in the plan. If the connection is not feasible, then we recommend that the two-way cycletrack be eliminated entirely and replaced with painted bicycle lanes.
2. Safety measures for both bicyclists and pedestrians need to be enhanced where cars exit the Jones Falls Expressway onto St. Paul St. and Mt Royal Avenue. Cars coming off an interstate have a tendency to speed and ignore pedestrians, posing a major hazard.
3. The proposed plan comes to an abrupt and awkward end northbound at Lafayette Ave. There are several options, and we would like to work with the City to alleviate this situation.
4. Although the proposed sidewalks along the west side of 1400 and 1500 Mt Royal Avenue are most welcome, the bulk of the pedestrian traffic is carried by the damaged sidewalks along Mt Royal Terrace in the same blocks. Fixing these sidewalks should be included in the project. Our neighborhood association and individual neighbors have been advocating for the replacement of these sidewalks for years. It seems logical to include the replacement in this project, rather than only addressing sidewalks on the other side of the street and allowing these to continue to languish and to be a constant danger to pedestrians.

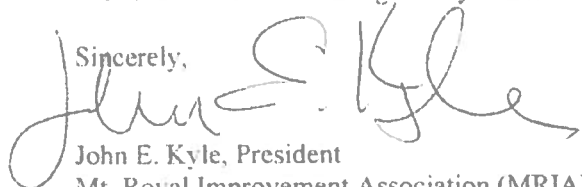
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Minor suggestions:

1. Because this proposal eliminates some parking along Mt. Royal Avenue, we suggest that parking along the East side of Mt. Royal Avenue from Lafayette to McMechen become pay-to-park. This would increase parking turnover.
2. There is a significant jaywalking problem with University of Baltimore students crossing Mt. Royal Avenue midblock between Maryland Avenue and Charles St. Although we are generally opposed to fences, we suggest the City consider a physical barrier on that block, to force pedestrians to cross at the lights.
3. We suggest that the crossing signals have a leading pedestrian interval at as many intersections as possible, especially at Maryland Ave, Charles St, and St. Paul St.
4. Since the City is proposing to add new conduit, we suggest the City consider adding fiber optic concurrently with the new conduit installation.
5. We suggest reflective paint or other visibility enhancements at all "bump-outs".
6. We suggest that the City improve the timing of two closely spaced signals at Cathedral St. & the Station Building Drive and Cathedral St & Mt Royal Ave.
7. We suggest that the City make this plan congruent with the separately proposed cycle track improvements along Maryland Avenue.
8. The proposed plan calls for the removal of two Zipcar spaces at the Mt Royal light rail stop. We urge the replacement of these Zipcar spaces as close as possible to the removed ones.

We look forward to hearing from you about these matters.

Sincerely,



John E. Kyle, President  
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