



A Call to Action

**The Foundation, Rationale, and Mandate
for Removing Proposed Midcounty Highway
Extended (M83) from all Master Plans in
Montgomery County, Maryland**

TAME



Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended





Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended

TO: Honorable Members of the Montgomery County Council:

Andrew Friedson, President	Marilyn Balcombe	Sidney Katz
Kate Stewart, Vice-President	Natali Fani-Gonzalez	Dawn Luedtke
Gabe Albornoz	Evan Glass	Kristin Mink
	Will Jawando	Laurie-Anne Sayles

CC: The Honorable Marc Elrich, Montgomery County Executive, Montgomery County Planning Board Chair Artie Harris, Vice-Chair Mitra Pedoeem and Planning Board members Shawn Bartley, James Hedrick, and Josh Linden

FROM: The Coalition for Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended (TAME Coalition), Diane Cameron, Tim Goodfellow, Deborah Sarabia, Margaret Schoap

DATE: February 12, 2024

The TAME Coalition urges you to take specific action to permanently remove the proposed Midcounty Highway Extended (M83) (or any other name this project may be given) from all aspects of current and future Montgomery County plans, programs, and project development.

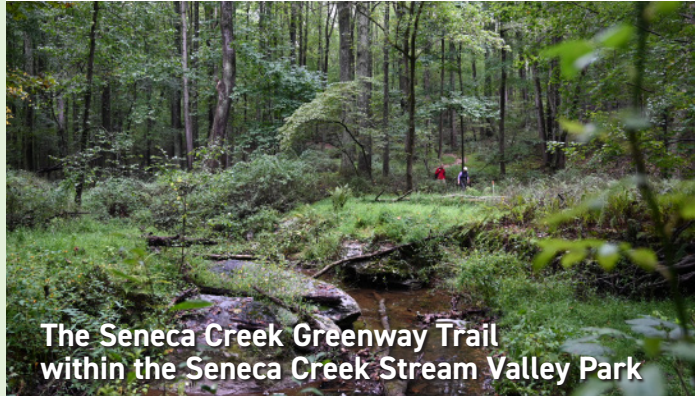
The attached document, ***“A Call to Action: The Foundation, Rationale, and Mandate for Removing Proposed Midcounty Highway Extended (M83) from all Master Plans in Montgomery County, Maryland,”*** summarizes the analyses, investigations, and governmental findings that establish the framework and provide clear justification to cancel M83 highway and remove it from all County land use and transportation plans.

Some councilmembers have publicly stated that since M83 is dormant, there's no need for the council to act to remove it from the master plans. Yet, experience has taught us that as long as a proposed highway remains in master plans, it can be built at any time. Therefore, we call upon the Council to act now to permanently remove this threat that will harm neighborhoods, degrade public parkland, imperil the county's response to climate change, and weaken its commitment to Racial Equity and Social Justice.

Adherence to retrograde transportation policies embodied by M83 highway is not in the public interest. We ask you to take this action now to completely remove proposed M83 highway from all master plans.

A Call to Action

The Foundation, Rationale, and Mandate for Removing Proposed Midcounty Highway Extended (M83) from all Master Plans in Montgomery County, Maryland



Below is a listing and summary of the myriad publications, analyses, investigations, community and governmental findings that provide clear and compelling justification to permanently remove M83 highway from all plans in Montgomery County, Maryland.

The following compendium is grouped into seven headings:

- 1) Recent Government Actions to Cancel Proposed M83 Highway and Remove it from Master Plans**
- 2) Definitive Findings in Support of Cancelling Proposed M83 Highway and Removing it from Master Plans**
- 3) Avoid Community Harm and Promote Social Justice**
- 4) Protect and Maintain Parkland, Forests, Biodiversity, and the Agricultural Reserve**
- 5) Adopt Transportation Alternatives and Smart Growth Solutions**
- 6) Choose Climate Sanity**
- 7) Final Actions Required to Remove M83 Highway from all Master Plans**

1) Recent Government Actions to Cancel Proposed M83 Highway and Remove it from Master Plans

Montgomery County Council Resolution 18-957, Transportation Solutions for Northwest Montgomery County, adopted October 31, 2017

This 2017 Resolution prohibits use of the proposed M83 highway in land use plans, land development projects, and for addressing future roadway capacity needs and regional traffic movement.

<https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/ResolutionDetailsPage?RecordId=8710&fullTextSearch=18-957>

Montgomery County Department of Transportation's *Midcounty Corridor Study, Supplemental Report*, February 10, 2017

The output of Scenario 1 (Bus Rapid Transit on MD 355 + MD 355 widening + intersection improvements) in this study showed superior improvements in transportation performance metrics (listed below), compared to Scenario 3, building the M83 Master Plan alignment.

Transportation system performance metrics: Lowest Vehicle Miles Traveled; Highest % of people in transit; Shortest travel AM/PM peak time on MD 355; Fewest # of intersection delays in AM/PM peak hours

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/corridor/PublicOutreach.html#Update>

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, Transportation Planning Board's June 2022 approval of: *Visualize 2045: A Long Range Transportation Plan for the National Capital Region*, including the FY2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan and its Air Quality Conformity Analysis

M83 highway was removed from the regional transportation plan due to excessive pollution and air quality violations that would result if proposed M83 was constructed, and reflects official regional policy priorities.

<https://visualize2045.org/plan-update/approved-2022-plan/>

2) Definitive Findings in Support of Cancelling Proposed M83 Highway and Removing it from Master Plans

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) (11/19/2013) letter to Montgomery County Department of Transportation requesting additional information on the County's application for a Section 404 Clean Water Act permit for impacts to wetlands and waters of the U.S., which also includes USACOE comments on the Draft Environmental Effects Report (May 2013) from the 2007 Midcounty Corridor Study

The USACOE cites deficiencies in County analyses and methodologies, substantial resource impacts, and lack of county identification of the Least Damaging Practical Alternative (LEDPA) as required by the Clean Water Act.

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/corridor/Resources/Files/USACE_11-19-13_Info_Request_Letter.pdf

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency comments (8/20/2013) to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on the County's Draft Environmental Effects Report (May 2013) from the 2007 Midcounty Corridor Study

The U.S. EPA identified the following areas of concern in their detailed review: Alternative Analyses, Avoidance & Minimization of Impacts, Compensatory Mitigation, Environmental Justice, Secondary & Cumulative Impacts.

http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/corridor/Resources/Files/pdf/EPAs_comment_20130820.pdf

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/corridor/PublicOutreach.html#USACE>

Montgomery County Parks Department's 2013 memo details the damage to North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park, Great Seneca Stream Valley Park, and Seneca Creek Greenway Trail that proposed M83 highway would cause.

The memo documents in detail the destruction the proposed M83 highway would wreak on our public parks' forests, streams, habitats, wildlife, and to one of the few remaining high biodiversity areas in Montgomery County within the North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park and Great Seneca Stream Valley Park.

<http://tamecoalition.org/videos-studies/>

Georgetown University Law School, Institute for Public Representation (now the Environmental Law and Justice Clinic) (8/24/2015) letter to the U.S. EPA, U.S. ACOE, and the Maryland Department of the Environment on Montgomery County's Preferred Alternative and the Draft Environmental Effects Report (May 2013)

Georgetown attorneys and law students cite:

- Outdated and inadequate traffic modeling with flawed assumptions on growth projections and traffic patterns;
- Failure to sufficiently assess indirect and cumulative environmental impacts from M83;
- Lack of analysis on the extensive use of bridging as an attempted mitigation measure on the underlying forested wetlands within the County's Preferred Alternative of the M83 alignment.

The Georgetown University Law School's Institute for Public Representation (now Environmental Law and Justice Clinic) concludes with the following two statements:

- 1) "MCDOT's Stated Purpose for the Midcounty Corridor imprudently and impermissibly ignores a Material Change in Circumstances"
- 2) "The Preferred Alternative Violates Federal Law because MCDOT has not fully explored Project Impacts"

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YPYiPZ8tVGQIHFr9OrRAnuUSfTtep7fu/view>

U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) Education Fund, Frontier Group, Highway Boondoggle 7 – Wasting Infrastructure Funding on Damaging and Unnecessary Road Projects, Summer 2022

This comprehensive report details the proposed M83 highway's reality: a wasteful public expenditure that is grossly ineffective in addressing capacity, mobility, and traffic needs, and would destroy significant natural resources.

<https://pirg.org/edfund/resources/highway-boondoggles/>

3) Avoid Community Harm and Promote Social Justice

Avoid Community Harm

Montgomery Village Foundation Board of Directors' resolution in opposition to building M83 highway dated January 26, 2023, reaffirming their prior opposition to M83 on January 23, 2014 and stated in their 2017 Transportation Priorities list

The Montgomery Village Foundation Board represents the 35,000 County residents who call Montgomery Village home. Proposed M83 highway would slice through multiple Montgomery Village community open space parcels, harm hundreds of residents who live adjacent to the proposed alignment, and negatively impact children at the Watkins Mill Elementary School and Montgomery Village Athletic field, as both abut the proposed M83 alignment.

<https://www.montgomeryvillage.com/press-room/village-news/mvf-board-reaffirms-opposition-to-m-83-highway-with-resolution>

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https://www.montgomeryvillage.com/component/edocman/746-m-83-resolution-1-26-23/fdocument?Itemid=9999>

<https://docs.google.com/viewer?url=https://www.montgomeryvillage.com/component/edocman/146-2017-transportation-priorities/fdocument?Itemid=9999>

Montgomery Village Committee on the Environment opposition to M83 highway

A citizen-based advisory group to the Montgomery Village Foundation Board, formally declared its opposition to M83 highway on January 11, 2023.

<https://www.montgomeryvillage.com/mvf/committees>

This 500-acre climate-resilience forest must be protected: Dayspring Silent Retreat Center and North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park

The 200-acre Dayspring Silent Retreat Center is located adjacent to the North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park. Together, these two lands constitute a 500-acre, climate-resilience forest complex in Germantown, Maryland. Construction of the proposed M83 highway would cause grave, disruptive, and irreparable harm to this entire forest ecosystem.

Dayspring Silent Retreat Center, established in 1953, has hosted tens of thousands of people from all walks of life and all faiths, who come to Dayspring for retreat in nature. Dayspring's commitment to preserving its forests and fields is a model of responsible private land stewardship.

North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park was created by Montgomery Parks in order to protect and preserve high-quality, sensitive Dayspring Creek, and the rich biodiversity of its forested watershed. The health and stability of North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park and its neighbor, Dayspring Silent Retreat Center, are closely connected.

Germantown is a highly diverse suburban area with currently 100,000 residents. Being able to breathe clean air, drink clean water, and to visit protected natural places, will only become more crucial in the future. Present and future generations of Germantown and Upcounty residents depend upon this entire 500-acre, climate-resilience forest, consisting of these two lands being preserved in perpetuity.

<https://dayspringretreat.org/>

<https://montgomeryparks.org/parks-and-trails/north-germantown-greenway-stream-valley-park/>

Neighborhoods and community members harmed by proposed M83 highway

Thousands of Montgomery County residents in Montgomery Village, Gaithersburg, and Germantown, who live in the following subdivisions abutting or adjacent to proposed M83 alignment, will experience lost quietude, property value declines, and quality of life reduction if M83 is ever constructed.

Breckenridge; Christopher Court; Woodland Hills; Normandie; Walkers Choice; Windbrooke; Montgomery Meadows; Lakeforest Glen; Stedwick; Watkins Meadow; Middlebrook Manor South; Quail Ridge; Seneca Overlook; Middlebrook Manor; Cedar Valley.

Promote Social Justice

Equity focus areas, social justice, and racial equity issues

Proposed M83 highway would go through three Equity Focus Areas in Germantown, Gaithersburg and Montgomery Village: 700834, 700833, 700721 (Census Tracts). These are lower-income communities, including communities of color and immigrants, and they are most vulnerable to the disruptions caused by highways including: more pedestrian dangers, heat pollution, air pollution, flooding, higher costs of living due to increased automobile travel, and loss of green space.

In the previously-referenced US EPA letter dated August 20, 2013, the issue of Environmental Justice (EJ) related to M83's impacts gave the federal agency pause when reviewing the M83 highway proposal: "...EPA is concerned that environmental justice issues may not have been adequately addressed, that populations may not have been properly characterized, additional documentation of impacts on populations of EJ may be needed, and that there may be impacts to populations of concern." (pg. 5)

<https://mcplanning.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=05d437361e7a4e19a2ba3bbced117d10>
http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/corridor/Resources/Files/pdf/EPAs_comment_20130820.pdf

Montgomery County's Racial Equity and Social Justice Act (Bill 27-19)

Passed in 2020, this law requires County decisions and proposed actions to be subjected to a thorough racial equity and social justice review, as well as to a robust community engagement process.

The proposed M83 highway alignment bisects 3 Equity Focus Areas in Montgomery Village, Gaithersburg, and Germantown, whose populations are racially and ethnically-diverse, lower-income, with high transit usage.

These population groups and geographic communities directly adjacent to the path of M83 highway would disproportionately suffer and endure adverse health impacts by construction of M83 (air pollution, noise pollution), and through loss of significant forest cover and green space that provide clean air and outdoor recreation. Construction of M83 highway would harm these communities, widen social, environmental, and economic disparities, and exacerbate racial and ethnic inequities in the County.

Cancelling proposed M83 highway also enables re-purposing of County resources in order to provide improved transit, protect public parks and forests, enhance use of existing roadways, and provide affordable housing in transit-served, walkable communities.

The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice must critically evaluate and scrutinize all M83 highway-affiliated plans, projects, budget requests, policy decision-making, or other proposed legislation by the County to ensure that racial equity and social justice is promoted, advanced, and protected.

<https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/BillDetailsPage?RecordId=2623&fullTextSearch=Racial%20AND%20Equity%20AND%20Social%20AND%20Justice%20AND%2027-19>

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/exec/Resources/Files/15-21\(1\).pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/exec/Resources/Files/15-21(1).pdf)

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2020%20Reports/RESJLegislativeTool.pdf>

Affordable housing at a scale to meet the need in transit-served walkable areas

Driving Down Emissions is a 2020 report by Transportation for America and Smart Growth America, showing that continuing to build and expand the highway and road system destroys our ability to meet our climate and social justice goals. Instead, we need to invest in affordable housing in transit-served walkable neighborhoods.

Quotes from *Driving Down Emissions*:

"Considering that just 1 to 6 percent of all urban land in large metropolitan areas on average is truly walkable, we've created a scenario where those who would most stand to benefit from lower transportation costs—lower-income Americans, people in communities of color—are shut out because the scarcity [of walkable neighborhoods] makes many of them affordable only to people with far greater means."

"Lower-income Americans will bear the brunt of the effects of climate change.... If they can't afford a car then they have no choice but to limit the possibilities for their lives to what can be reached on dangerous streets by foot or bike, or via infrequent buses or trains on underfunded transit systems that fail to connect them to opportunity, even if the emissions are low."

"Finding ways to put more housing in places where people can drive less—and make those homes attainable and affordable for everyone—will be a key aspect of transitioning to a low-carbon economy in a way that doesn't just place a new burden on lower-income Americans. We need more options beyond 'purchase an expensive brand new electric vehicle' to truly solve our climate crisis in an equitable way."

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/driving-down-emissions/>

4) Protect and Maintain Parkland, Forests, Biodiversity, and the Agricultural Reserve

Permanent ecological degradation & size reduction, forest loss & fragmentation, user experiences diminished in the following public parklands from proposed M83 highway

- Great Seneca Stream Valley Park
- North Germantown Greenway Stream Valley Park
- Wildcat Branch Stream Valley Park
- Seneca Crossing Local Park
- Seneca Creek Greenway Trail
- Montgomery Village Community Open Space (South Valley Park, 32 ac.; Stedwick/Capehart Drive parcel, 1.4 ac.; Seneca Spring Way wetlands, 7 ac.)
- Blohm Park (City of Gaithersburg)

Permanent alteration to the Montgomery County Agricultural Reserve

The M83 alignment bisects the Agricultural Reserve north of Brink Road, where the M83 highway would diminish the size and degrade the integrity and function of Montgomery County's award-winning Agricultural Reserve.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/upcounty/agricultural-rural-open-space/>

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Ag-Reserve-Land-Use-300dpi.pdf>

Downgrade of a Montgomery County rustic road

Proposed M83 alignment runs on Wildcat Road for approximately 0.32 miles from Brink Road to the Wildcat Branch Stream Valley Park. Wildcat Road was designated an 'Exceptional Rustic Road' in the *Rustic Roads Functional Master Plan*, December 1996, and reaffirmed on July 25, 2023. M83 highway would severely alter and degrade the 0.32 miles of Wildcat Road if constructed; its status as an Exceptional Rustic Road would decline.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/highway-planning/rustic-roads/rustic-roads-master-plans/>

5) Adopt Transportation Alternatives and Smart Growth Solutions

Viable, functional, and climate-aligned alternatives to the proposed M83 highway do exist and must be championed, supported, and implemented by Montgomery County leaders.

Transit Alternatives

Strengthen community commitments to provide high-quality transit for residents to access employment, services, education, and opportunities.

Maintain full funding of the County's own **Ride-On bus** transportation system, with no level of service reduction in light of possible reduced transit subsidies from the state of Maryland.

Implement recommendations from the **Ride-On Reimagined** study to improve and expand services for bus riders, with focus on 3 areas identified in Montgomery County's Transportation Vision, *Moving Forward Together*: Environment and Climate Resiliency, Safety & Vision Zero, and Economic Development & Equitable Access.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/DOT-Transit/reimagined/>

Fortify County funding, and continue to seek state resources for the completion of planning, design, and construction of a fast and dependable **Bus Rapid Transit** system on MD 355 that serves population and employment centers with no inefficient, substitute diversions off MD 355 in the north.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/dot-dte/projects/MD355BRT/>

Endorse and explore resource commitments for the expansion of the Maryland Area Regional Commuter Train Service (**MARC**) **Brunswick Line** as an all-day, two-way transit system.

<https://www.mta.maryland.gov/marc-brunswick-study>

Continue engagement in long-range transit planning for extension of Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority's (**WMATA**) **Red Line Metrorail** to Germantown.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/transit-planning/corridor-forward-the-i-270-transit-plan/>

Transit Support and Funding

Support new local revenue structures that would create dedicated, stable sources of funding for transit projects and improvements to transit systems in Montgomery County, including WMATA, as discussed by the Montgomery County State House Delegation meeting on January 12, 2024 and January 19, 2024.

<http://montgomerycountydelegation.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQCBsgOAaGY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1CXnfmI_bYM

Evaluate the recommendations from the Maryland Commission on Transportation Revenue and Infrastructure Needs (TRAIN Commission) and examine and support their ability to generate more funding for transit projects and transit system improvements in Montgomery County.

<https://www.mdot.maryland.gov/tso/pages/Index.aspx?PageId=205>

Implement the action recommendations of Montgomery County's *Vision Zero Program* in order to protect the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/visionzero/background.html>

Improve Existing Roadway Capacity

Utilize and enhance existing transportation infrastructure and systems in the Midcounty—a sound and necessary transportation planning approach for the 21st century.

<https://smartgrowthamerica.org/resources/driving-down-emissions/>

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0681?ys=2024RS>

<http://tinyurl.com/mssm784a>

Following is a partial listing of existing roadway segment improvements — as alternatives to the proposed M83 highway — that will enhance traffic flow, increase capacity, accommodate higher regional traffic volumes, and provide additional pedestrian and bicycle options in the Midcounty Corridor.

Detailed descriptions of these segment enhancements are included in a letter dated September 30, 2023 from the TAME Coalition to County planners, the County Council, the County Executive, and the Planning Board, sent via electronic mail on October 1, 2023 related to the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* scope of work.

- Frederick Road (MD 355) [Expand travel lanes]
- Snouffer School Road (MD 115) [Upgrade Northern Section]
- Woodfield Road (MD 124) [Widen through lanes]
- Goshen Road [Accelerate CIP funding]
- Brink Road/Wightman Road Corridor [Turning lanes]
- Brink Road/Wightman Road intersection [Enhancement]

6) Choose Climate Sanity

Montgomery County Council Resolution 18-974, Emergency Climate Mobilization, adopted December 5, 2017

Supports engagement of available powers and resources to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 80 percent by 2027 and 100 percent by 2035.

Transportation generates more GHG emissions than any other sector.

In order to meet Montgomery's GHG reduction targets and related climate commitments, we must cease planning and building automobile-centric transportation infrastructure and, instead, focus on a people-centric transportation system.

Immediate County Government actions to protect our existing forestlands - our carbon sinks - and fully canceling proposed M83 through removing it from master plans - are fundamental to Montgomery County's climate emergency response.

https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/res/2017/20171205_18-974.pdf

Montgomery County's Climate Workgroup recommended a moratorium on car-centric transportation investments. January, 2020.

In response to the County's Emergency Climate Mobilization Resolution, the County Executive convened six technical workgroups, including one on transportation, in order to: 1) Identify solutions and specific methods that could advance the County's progress towards its GHG reduction goals; 2) Inventory existing efforts and measures to reduce GHG emissions across the County Government and Agencies.

Strategy 3.2 from the Transportation Workgroup: *Adopt Policies to Reduce Road Construction.*

Action 3.2.1 from the Transportation Workgroup: *Impose immediate moratorium on County transportation investments that are oriented to motor vehicles. Develop criteria for future investment decisions that incorporate a monetary value for the societal cost of carbon.*

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/climate/cap.html#Workgroups>

Montgomery County's Climate Action Plan, Transportation Action Section, June 2021

Montgomery County in June 2021 released its *Climate Action Plan*, which included a Transportation Action section.

Climate Action Plan, Transportation Action Section: Actions: T-1, *Expand Public Transit*; T-4, *Constrain Cars in Urban Areas and Limit Major New Road Construction*; S-1, *Retain and Increase Forests*; S-3 *Retain and Increase Tree Canopy*.

Each of these Actions fully align with eliminating proposed M83 highway and implementing sensible alternatives to M83. Permanent removal of M83 highway also addresses the 'Primary Benefits and Cobenefits' of the 2021 *Climate Action Plan*: Greenhouse Gas Reduction, Climate Risk Reduction, Racial Equity and Social Justice, Public Health, and Environmental Stewardship.

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/climate/plans-reports.html>

Urban Heat Island and Urban Heat Corridors in the Upcounty would be worsened by proposed M83 highway.

Community heat mapping reveals highways are heat corridors.

Highways and roadways are among the hottest places in the urban — and suburban — landscape.

The intensity and frequency of extreme heat waves are increasing due to climate change.

Montgomery County's *Climate Action Plan* calls for reducing the risks and impacts of climate change on our communities, including heat emergencies.

Summer heat emergencies in Montgomery County, Maryland (*issued every year since 2019 and at least 3 alerts issued in 2023 alone*) would impact more communities, last longer and hit higher temperatures in the Upcounty due to M83 highway construction destroying greenspace and adding more pavement.

All communities along the proposed M83 alignment, including those in Equity Focus Areas in Montgomery Village, are vulnerable to further intensification of the Urban Heat Island effect, if their backyard forests — that now provide cool and clean air — are destroyed and replaced with pavement.

By choosing to protect existing forests and stream valleys, through canceling proposed new highways including M83, we avoid intensifying heat emergencies and we help to protect the most-vulnerable residents from further harm due to heat and pollution worsened by climate change.

Montgomery County's June 2021 *Climate Action Plan* shows heat as the top climate hazard, which most endangers vulnerable communities located close to highway corridors (pp. 47-51).

<https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/climate/Resources/Files/climate/climate-action-plan.pdf>

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/389babe7ce654fdd87701488ae72e8b6>

Maryland's 2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan and Maryland's 2022 Climate Solutions Now Act commit the State of Maryland to greenhouse gas emission reductions, including from the transportation sector.

The *2022 Climate Solutions Now Act* revises the *2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan* with a 60% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2031.

Implementation of Maryland's *2030 Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act Plan* in the Transportation sector is via the Maryland Department of Transportation (DOT) *Climate Pollution Reduction Plan*.

Reducing Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMTs) is a core strategy in the Maryland DOT *Climate Pollution Reduction Plan*.

Cancelling proposed M83 highway and removing it from all programs and from master plans and funding plans in which it appears is a core action required in order to reduce VMTs as part of meeting Maryland's *Climate Solutions Now Act* greenhouse gas reductions.

[https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/Pages/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions-Reduction-Act-\(GGRA\)-Plan.aspx](https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Air/ClimateChange/Pages/Greenhouse-Gas-Emissions-Reduction-Act-(GGRA)-Plan.aspx)

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/air/ClimateChange/Pages/index.aspx>

7) Final Actions Required to Remove M83 Highway from all Master Plans

CALL TO ACTION: Remove Midcounty Highway Extended (M83) Highway from the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* during the 2024 Technical Update of the Plan.

In addition to revising the road classification system in the County, the 2024 Technical Update of the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* (MPOHT) includes the reevaluation of master-planned transit locations, including the addition and removal of several transit station sites, as well as the consideration of adding new roads to the MPOHT.

The County's stated intention to add and remove transportation elements from the MPOHT during this functional master plan update provides the opportune moment to implement a climate-aligned, community-supported transportation policy and remove the Midcounty Highway Extended (M83) from the MPOHT in 2024. The local factors and justification for this action are evident in the TAME Coalition's report.

We call upon the County Council to exercise its full authority to amend or revise any component of the MPOHT, once the Planning Board's Draft of the MPOHT is forwarded to the Council. <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/highway-planning/master-plan-of-highways-and-transitways/2024-technical-update/>

The removal of M83 highway from the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* during the 2024 Technical Update shall constitute a comprehensive amendment to the following master plans (including appendices) that removes all references to the Midcounty Highway Extended (M83) including, but not limited to, descriptive narratives, text, graphics and maps, policy goals, comprehensive guidelines or recommendations regarding Midcounty Highway Extended (M83).

- 2018 *Bicycle Master Plan*
- 1994 *Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area*
- 1989 *Germantown Master Plan*
- 2016 *Montgomery Village Master Plan*
- 2006 *Shady Grove Sector Plan*
- 2021 *Shady Grove Sector Plan, Minor Master Plan Amendment*
- 2022 *Thrive Montgomery 2050, A General Plan for Montgomery County*
- 2004 *Upper Rock Creek Area Master Plan*

CALL TO ACTION: Remove the portion of the M83 highway from MD 27 through Wildcat Road (an exceptional rustic road) to Brink Road, as shown on the *1994 Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area's* planning area boundary, as part of the Council's approval of the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan*.

The 2023 Planning Board-approved scope of work for this land use plan indicates that adjustments to other policies and recommendations in prior plans, and the revisiting of recommendations in the *Master Plan of Highways and Transitways* and the *1994 Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area*, will be made in the *Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan* (CGSP).

Pointedly, the County states on Page 4 in the Scope of Work document that the CGSP will reconsider any master-planned but unbuilt highway interchanges and roadway extensions recommended in previous master plans or county transportation plans within and around the Plan area.

The proposed M83 highway is one such unbuilt roadway extension that is still present in various master plans but remains, for valid and justifiable reasons, unbuilt. This TAME Coalition report illuminates the rational grounds and motives for reconsidering — and removing — the M83 highway from the *1994 Clarksburg Master Plan and Hyattstown Special Study Area* (and all master plans) as part of the CGSP approval process.

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/communities/upcounty/clarksburg/clarksburg-gateway-sector-plan/>

CALL TO ACTION: Support the County Executive's 2023 list of transportation projects that excludes M83 highway from *Visualize 2050*, its accompanying Air Quality Conformity Analysis and Transportation Improvement Program.

The Transportation Planning Board of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC-TPB) is underway with an update of *Visualize 2045*, the long-range transportation plan for the National Capital Region. The removal of the proposed M83 highway from *Visualize 2045* reflects official regional policy priorities and acknowledges the excessive pollution and ensuing air quality violations that M83 would cause. There is no sound reason to reinstate M83 highway as a project input to *Visualize 2050, the National Capital Region Transportation Plan*.

<https://visualize2045.org/plan-update/visualize-2050/>

CALL TO ACTION: Enlist and engage all other related governmental entities, agencies, and decision-makers — Montgomery County Executive, Montgomery County Planning Board, Montgomery County Department of Transportation, Montgomery County Planning Department, City of Gaithersburg, Montgomery County Delegation to the General Assembly, the Administration of Governor Moore and Lieutenant Governor Miller — to cooperate, assist, and support the Montgomery County Council in its work to remove M83 highway from all master plans in Montgomery County, Maryland.

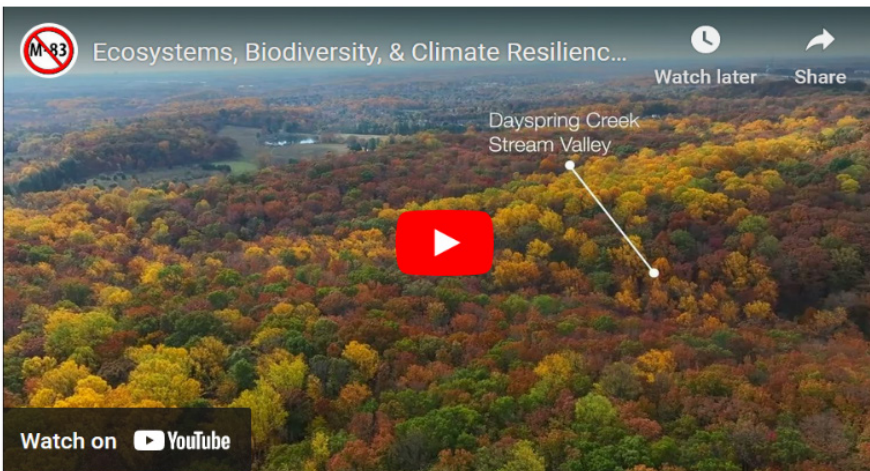
Film productions from the TAME Coalition:

The Proposed M83 Highway's Path of Destruction in Germantown, Maryland



2:14 video

Ecosystems, Biodiversity & Climate Resilience at Risk from the Proposed M83 Highway in Montgomery County, Maryland



2:47 video

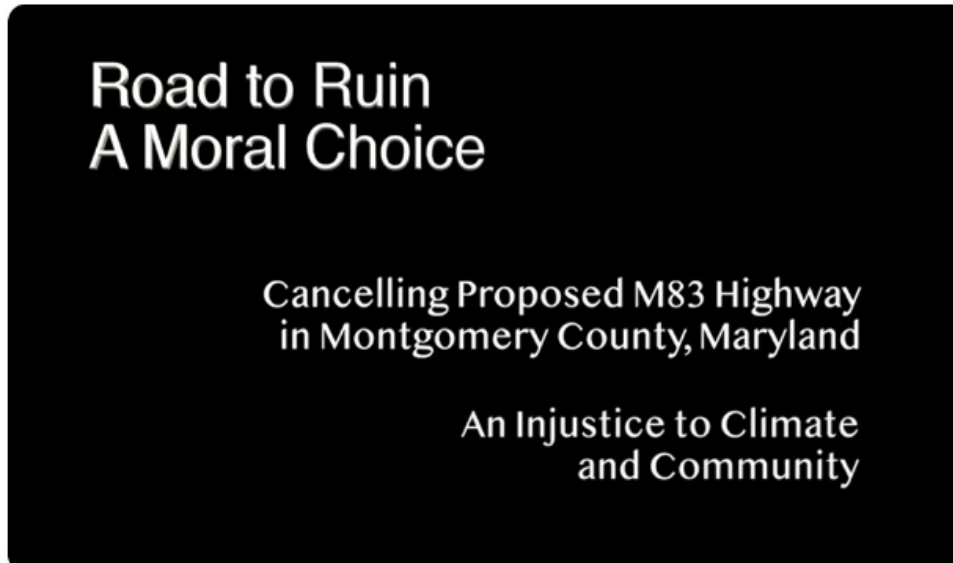
The Proposed M83 Highway will Degrade Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve



2:04 video

Film productions from the TAME Coalition:

Road to Ruin. A Moral Choice. Cancelling Proposed M83 Highway in Montgomery County, Maryland. An Injustice to Climate and Community.



37-minute video

Following are 7 short clips from the main film, *Road to Ruin*:

\$1.3 Billion Proposed M83 Highway—the Worst Example of Outmoded Transportation Planning



3:43 video

Film productions from the TAME Coalition:

Montgomery Village and Gaithersburg—Neighborhoods Threatened by Proposed M83 Highway



4:04 video

Montgomery County is Trustee & Steward of its Streams and Forests



5:04 video

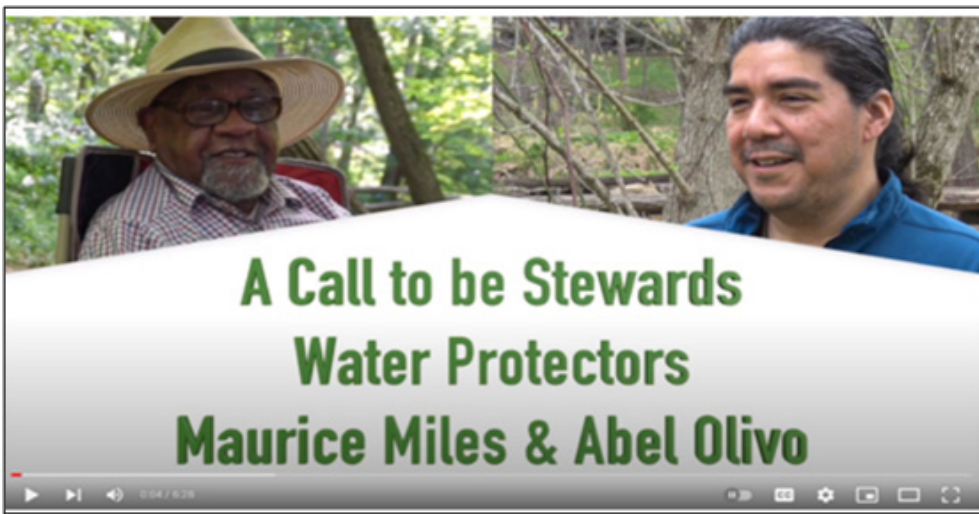
Film productions from the TAME Coalition:

Game Preserve Road & Jericho Drive, Gaithersburg. Remove Earth-Crushing Proposed M83 Highway



4:38 video

A Call to be Stewards & Water Protectors. Cancel Proposed Midcounty Highway Extended, M83



6:28 video

Film productions from the TAME Coalition:

Save our Seneca Creek, our Forests, our Parkland



4:29 video

Dayspring Silent Retreat Center. Proposed M83 Highway would Destroy Mature Ecosystems



6:18 video



TAME



Transit Alternatives to Mid-County Highway Extended

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