



# Muddy Branch Alliance

ACTING TOGETHER LOCALLY

*The Muddy Branch Alliance's vision is for the surrounding streams, lakes, forests and parks to be teeming with life, safe for families, pets and wildlife to enjoy and to have a community connected to preserving the area's intrinsic beauty.*

July 1, 2024

The Honorable Andrew Friedson, President  
Montgomery County Council  
100 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, MD 20815

Dear Council President Friedson and Councilmembers:

On behalf of the 1100 members of the Muddy Branch Alliance, I urge you to remove Mid-County Highway Extended (M83) from the Master Plan of Highways and Transitways, and from all other master plans governing our county.

The Muddy Branch Alliance is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization founded in 2011 as an all-volunteer group of clean water advocates who work to protect a tributary stream of the Potomac River. The Muddy Branch stream enters the Potomac just upriver of the WSSC water intake. Our members, who live in Gaithersburg and the surrounding communities, drink the water provided by WSSC. In other words, we are drinking our stream.

The M83 highway alignment is in our neighboring watershed of Seneca Creek. The Seneca Creek also joins the Potomac upriver of the water intake; it impacts local drinking water quality in the same way that the Muddy Branch does. Thus, the members of the Muddy Branch Alliance also have an interest in development proposals in the Seneca Creek watershed.

The proposed M83 extension would create more impervious surface in our community. Water would run rapidly off the roadway, picking up contaminants along the way and lowering the overall quality of our source water. Worse yet, construction of M83 would destroy existing forests and wetlands, which serve to improve the health of our water sources. The purity of water in our local streams bears a direct relation to the safety of our drinking water, as treatment facilities like WSSC do not filter out dangerous pollutants – including salt, nitrate, PFAS, and microplastic – that are common in our region. Functioning natural ecosystems stop these pollutants from reaching our waterways. Impervious surfaces hasten their transport.

The M83 extension was written into our master plans more than 60 years ago. Much has changed over the past 60 years: new threats to water quality have emerged, the climate crisis has accelerated, and the rise of remote work has shifted travel patterns. Ongoing development in our county has enabled us to welcome new neighbors to our diverse and vibrant community; it has also inflicted “death by a thousand cuts” on our natural resources. The construction of M83 would destroy a remarkably pristine greenway, disrupt thriving neighborhoods, and reinforce dependency on single-occupancy vehicles at the expense of other modes of transit. This plan – which dates from the era when only government researchers had access to the internet, when humans had not yet set foot on the moon, and when basic civil rights for people of color were still up for debate – is no longer the right choice for our communities.



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The Council has already acknowledged this by adopting Resolution 18-957 (Transportation Solutions for Northwest Montgomery County), which began the process of removing M83 from the County's master plans. We urge you to now finish the job by fully removing M83 from all master plans.

Montgomery County is proud to preserve its history, including remnants of its agricultural past, sites related to the Civil War, and the fascinating scientific significance of the Latitude Observatory. The remaining traces of M83 in the master plans are not a relic we want to keep. Let's look to the future together and update our master plans with ideas that help us move forward.

Thank you for taking this important action so that our communities can thrive for the next 60 years and beyond.

Sincerely,

Janette Rosenbaum  
President  
Muddy Branch Alliance