



June 1, 2021

Montgomery County Planning Board
2425 Reddie Drive, 14th Floor
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

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RE: Miles-Coppola Pre-Preliminary Plan #720210010

From: The Friends of Ten Mile Creek and Little Seneca Reservoir

Dear Commissioners,

At this early stage in the development review process, we have concerns regarding any potential alignment for the Clarksburg/MD355 bypass that is contrary to the recommendations and intent of the Ten Mile Creek Limited Master Plan Amendment (Master Plan) and that would degrade the high quality of Ten Mile Creek, the cleanest tributary flowing into Little Seneca Lake Reservoir.

We concur with the Master Plan in its call for adjusting the alignment of the bypass to avoid and minimize forest, stream and wetland impacts. The Master Plan on page 19 states: “Minimize disturbance of natural resources throughout the Ten Mile Creek Watershed, especially forests in the headwater areas,” and we note that the Miles Coppola site is located in the headwaters of Ten Mile Creek.

Specifically, **we support the Master Plan recommendation for the bypass alignment to connect to MD 355 next to the new fire station** (MP, p.26) – Option 1 in the Miles-Coppola Pre-Preliminary Plan. This alignment will avoid a stream crossing, preserve a wetland and minimize loss of forest cover. And in so doing, it will also support the Master Plan’s core objective of “preserving natural resources critical to the County’s well-being” (MP, p.5).

We also concur with the Master Plan recommendations (MP, pp. 26, 39) to **conduct a facility plan for the bypass in conjunction with the development plan for the Miles-Coppola property**. A comprehensive study by M-NCPPC planners, the Montgomery County Department of Transportation, and Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection can determine how bypass alignments affect surrounding properties upon which the alignment must traverse. A facility plan will take into account broader community, environmental and transportation impacts both east and west of Clarksburg Road (MD 121). In contrast, the Pre-Preliminary Plan limits the area of focus for the bypass to the Miles-Coppola property. *Such a narrow focus improperly predetermines an alignment for the bypass without considering broader impacts.*

The Master Plan recognizes that additional development in Ten Mile Creek will adversely affect stream biology. At the same time, the Master Plan recognizes that a higher level of protection than that already provided under SPA regulations is required in order to meet the goal of retaining as much stream biodiversity and overall health as possible (MP, p.21).

We urge you to abide by the vision, recommendations, and intent of the Master Plan to preserve natural resources critical to the County’s well-being and to avoid and minimize damages to natural resources in the Ten Mile Creek watershed

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,
Anne James, President on behalf of Friends of Ten Mile Creek

CC: Marc Elrich, County Executive