

**March 2, 2023**

### **P567102 Millersville Park- Traffic Study Comments**

The following is in response to the comments received during the comment period for the Traffic study that was posted online.

1. Specific concerns with the study –The study area is too small
  - The study should also have assessed traffic impacts on MD 175, its intersections (Gambrills, Burns Crossing, Dairy Farm, and Sappington Station Rds), and existing features like Arundel High School and the Dairy Farm. DRP proposed the soccer complex to meet needs in the west county, and the traffic study assumes 85% of the trips to the park will come from the west (page 37), many along MD 175.
  - It should have considered impacts at the intersection of Generals Highway with Sunrise Beach Rd, the primary access to the Arden community and the site of the new County fire station and meeting room.
  - It should have considered the impacts of Millersville Park traffic on the entire MD 3 corridor, because delays at Millersville Rd will propagate through the entire corridor.
  - It did not consider how park traffic would interact with events when highway traffic spills onto local roads (Cecil Ave, Millersville Rd, Generals Hwy, Severn Chapel Rd, and Waterbury Rd) because of backups on MD 3 or I97. It also does not address the increasing problem of highway users routinely “cutting through” the area to simply avoid MD 3.

**Response:** The Traffic impact Analysis (TIA) examined the entire length of Millersville Road from MD 178 (Generals Highway) to MD 3 (Crain Highway) including the study of intersections MD 178/Indian Landing Road, Waterbury Road, Cecil Avenue, and MD 3/MD 175 (Annapolis Road), as well as the planned park entrance road. This study was done based on acceptable standards. While not required the County has submitted the Traffic study to SHA for cursory review as it relates to signal timing and safety in the area. The County and State have several projects that are underway to address traffic concerns in this area of the County.

2. The safety analysis is incomplete -The study devotes less than a page to the issue of safety. Past vehicular accidents are tabulated, but pedestrian and bicycle safety are not addressed at all.
  - The study should have considered the impacts of added park traffic on vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian safety on the roads, at the intersections of the South Shore trail, Bacon Ridge Trailhead, and especially at the new entrance/exit for the park. Millersville Rd, Cecil Ave, Waterbury Rd, St. Stephen Church Rd, and Severn Chapel Rd are all used by runners, bikers, and walkers throughout the year.

**Response:** Traffic impact studies examine primarily vehicular traffic generation and impact. The study reviewed MDOT/SHA data on crashes involving cars on Millersville Road. There were no reported auto v. pedestrian or auto v. bicycle crashes noted.

3. School impacts are not considered

- The study doesn't quantify or address the level of school traffic or the impact of park trips (especially in the afternoon and evening) on delays or safety issues for school traffic.
- The study does not discuss existing backups of parent cars at school drop-off/pickup, which often extend for dozens of cars or more and can generate long delays for parents and children.
- The study does not account for special events at Millersville Elementary School such as PTA or back-to-school night, which often lead to heavy traffic and overflow parking along streets.

**Response:** The study evaluated all sections of Millersville Road and measured traffic contributed by all properties, including Millersville Elementary School. There were no reported auto v. pedestrian or auto v. bicycle crashes noted.

4. Tournament events were not considered at all

The study did not even mention the traffic impacts of soccer or lacrosse tournaments. Social media postings on sites like Nextdoor.com show that tournaments at other DRP fields have caused traffic congestion, travel delays, and even property damage from cars parking on lawns.

**Response:** The TIA examined actual and forecasted traffic generation and flow using accepted engineering practices. While a tournament is an isolated occurrence that may increase the traffic at an infrequent time. The traffic can be managed with traffic control officers, the park's capacity being limited to the number of parking spaces and scheduling. The TIA that was done assumed full parking and full scheduling, which includes tournament conditions. The model was based on discussions with the County regarding the maximum projected field usage (data provided in Appendix J of the TIA). It was determined that fall sports (football) would generate the most traffic during the peak hours; therefore, the PM, Saturday and Sunday peak hour trips were based on the projected fall sports schedule. AM peak hour volumes were developed from ITE TripGen and were less than 5 trips.

5. Church traffic is underestimated

- The study clearly underestimates traffic from the Jehovah's Witness (JW) Assembly Hall. Study data were collected when they were meeting virtually, so JW traffic was estimated by interviewing JW staff. The study's failure to accurately capture JW traffic is revealed by the A grade assigned to the Cecil Ave intersection on Saturdays when the intersection has historically failed. Pre-pandemic traffic on Saturday afternoons often backed up on Millersville Rd past Cecil Rd, sometimes up to a mile east of MD 3. Saturday afternoons would be peak times for a soccer complex, so it is especially important to understand conflicting traffic sources then. An effort to solicit information from residents or JW attendees about these delays could have avoided this major deficiency in the study.

- The study notes that there are 6 other churches near the park but did not report on their traffic. At a minimum, we should know if these churches were experiencing COVID-reduced attendance during the data gathering period.

**Response:** The traffic impacts of seven (7) churches in and proximal to the study area were evaluated, in addition to special consideration of the impacts of traffic associated with Assembly Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses. A detailed analysis of this traffic is included in the study as Table 3.

6. Other local concerns are omitted

- It does not consider how increased traffic will degrade the rural character of Millersville Rd, a county road with many historic buildings at the heart of a network connecting four officially designated Scenic and Historic Roads (St. Stephens Church, Severn Chapel, Waterbury, and Indian Landing Rds.). Preserving rural character in this area is a specific recommendation in Plan 2040 and previous small area plans.
- It should have quantified the very large and direct impacts on adjacent residents. With peaks of 200+ trips per hour, it may be very difficult for them exit their homes and turn onto Millersville Rd.
- It should have sought information from residents, who have years of traffic observations that would fill gaps in the brief, COVID-impacted traffic counts. Failure to seek such information from residents limits the accuracy of the study and its ability to assess quality the overall impact of traffic on flow and quality of life (see Jehovah’s Witness comment above).

**Response:** Refer to Number 1. The Millersville Road/Waterbury Road rating was reduced due to the site development, requiring mitigation to improve the road rating to at least No Build conditions. The parameter which reduced the rating the most is the restricted sight distance at the Waterbury Road intersection. Tree and shrub pruning along the north side of the Millersville Road/Waterbury Road intersection was recommended to increase the sight distance along the horizontal curve. The trees and some shrubs could remain if they do not restrict the sight distance to act as a traffic calming measure along Millersville Road. The mitigation measures are discussed further in the October 10th, 2022 Millersville Park Traffic Impact Analysis – Executive Summary.

7. The mitigations are being applied to the wrong goal

- The proposed mitigations at the Millersville Rd-MD 3 junction might improve flow at those intersections. However, given that levels of service there are already unacceptable and getting worse, those modifications should be implemented to achieve real service improvements rather than to put a positive spin on a new development that will add even more traffic.
- The tree trimming mitigation at the Waterbury Rd curve may improve sight distance, but it will also change the character of the road corridor and will likely increase the potential for speeding at the curve, which is already a site of frequent accidents.

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remain if they do not restrict the sight distance to act as a traffic calming measure along Millersville Road. The mitigation measures are discussed further in the October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 Millersville Park Traffic Impact Analysis – Executive Summary.

8. The list of expected development projects omits several properties along Route 3 for which the designated future land use was intensified to mixed land use in the Council Approved version of Plan 2040. Expected traffic from those baked-in developments should also be accounted for in estimating future traffic.

**Response:** This is outside of study limits. Refer to Response 1

9. In calculating the expected trips from the athletic fields, the peak incoming trips is 150 and the outgoing is 50. How can these two numbers be so unbalanced? Shouldn't incoming and outgoing trips be roughly equal? Also, how can the peak number of trips (200) be so much lower than the total number of parking places (371, page 3)? Are trips underestimated or is the parking lot too big?

**Response :** The peak measurement comes from initial arriving traffic for the first scheduled games/uses while outgoing traffic flows are staggered based on schedule. The peak number refers to arrivals within a limited time. The available parking may be filled by other non-peak arrivals.

10. Renaissance Festival traffic may also be underestimated. Were Renaissance Festival organizers asked how attendance at the Renaissance Festival during the 2021 traffic study period compared with pre-pandemic levels of Renaissance Festival attendance?

**Response:** Renaissance Festival traffic was measured and its influence discussed in Section III B of the study.

11. The study should provide information on the impacts of fewer fields as well as the impacts of mixing in other amenities, such as pickleball, tennis, basketball, exercise and nature trail, picnic area, native gardens, and natural buffers.

**Response:** Because the roads function at a low level of service and any development would require some road mitigation at this area. The idea of changing the park to something that the current roads could handle would result in no development at this location, which is not practical. Fewer activities in the park or park activities with fewer participants would lessen the resulting traffic impacts.