

6/21/2012

Arlington County Board  
2100 Clarendon Blvd. Suite 300  
Arlington, VA 22201

RE: Washington Boulevard Bicycle Trail

Members of the County Board,

The Penrose Neighborhood Association voted at our June meeting to send this letter, written by our Green Committee, to voice our opposition to the proposed bike path construction along Washington Boulevard and through Towers Park as currently designed.

A 2011 County survey showed that Penrose had 31% canopy tree coverage – the second to last in the entire County for canopy tree coverage.

We learned that the half-mile long bike trail approved by the Arlington County Board to be constructed along Washington Boulevard will result in the destruction of 175 trees.

Penrose worked with Arlingtonians for a Clean Environment to plant canopy trees on private property but the same government that encourages the planting of trees is at the same time cutting down 175 trees for a half mile of bike trail.

The trees protect the residents and the park users on the other side of this natural barrier against noise and pollution from the traffic on Washington Boulevard. Also impacted would be the wildlife that struggles to find a home in an already rapidly shrinking habitat.

The removal of 175 trees exposing the park to an open view of Washington Boulevard appears to be in direct conflict with current capital expenditures to improve and beautify the Towers Park.

The impact of losing 175 trees for a bike trail goes against the “Arlington County Master Transportation Plan Appendix C – Bikeway Design Principles” which states:

*Design of shared-use trails is to minimize disruption to historic resources, **trees**, and the natural environment. **Shared-use trail designs should undergo public review** focusing on impacts to natural, scenic and historical resources, as prescribed by public regulations including County Administrative Regulation 4.4.*

*Tree Preservation - Shared-use trails are to be designed to avoid injury to healthy mature trees and wetlands*

*Landscaping of shared-use trails is to emphasize planting locations and species whose limbs and roots will not intrude into the pathway, require frequent trimming or create concealment areas.*

*New trees and large shrubs should not be planted within 10 feet of existing trail surfaces.*

Therefore, reforestation would not be an option after the bike trail has been constructed because according to the bikeway design principles new trees cannot be planted within 10 feet of existing trails. So in effect thirty feet of trees would be cleared to accommodate a ten foot trail.

This project has been approved and has advanced without any input from the Penrose Community or without any input from the Urban Forestry Commission. This makes a mockery out of "The Arlington Way".

**For the reasons stated above Penrose opposes the bike trail in its current design.**

Moving forward on this project without substantial redesign would cause great negative environmental impact for the Penrose Neighborhood that could potentially last for generations.

Christopher Slatt  
Secretary, Penrose Neighborhood Association