



Working to Preserve and Enhance our Urban Forest

June 24, 2023

The Honorable David Marsden
The Honorable Vivian Watts
The Honorable Jeffrey McKay
The Honorable James Walkinshaw
W. Calvin Britt, P.E., VDOT Project Manager

The Fairfax Tree Stewards urge Fairfax County and the Virginia Department of Transportation to significantly scale back the proposed shared use paths and buffer zones from the proposed Braddock Road Multimodal Project (BRMP). We are trained volunteers whose mission is to preserve, plant, and maintain trees in Fairfax County in the face of development threatening our environment.

We endorse the letter of the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia expressing concern that the environmental and financial costs of constructing the paths and buffer zone outweigh any benefits of this project. This construction would clear two corridors up to 23 feet wide for the length of the project, or about 17 acres.

The County's residents and its environment would certainly be adversely affected by the construction of the proposed paths. The loss of the benefits of these trees slated for removal would be significant. Storm runoff, erosion and flooding would increase. Each mature tree can absorb up to 150 gallons of water a day. Air and surface temperatures would increase with the loss of shade. Air pollution would increase since trees reduce particulate matter and other forms of air pollution. We would also lose this vital habitat for wildlife and pollinators.

The proposed shared use paths will not provide significant benefit to the community. They will not significantly reduce car travel since the paths do not connect to Metro or any other transportation hub, and thus will not be used by commuters. The paths also would not be attractive to recreational users, being 13 feet from busy Braddock Road. The existing paths that parallel much of Braddock Road and the side streets in the area are a far more suitable alternative for recreational users than the proposed shared use paths.

Accordingly, we request Fairfax County and the Virginia Department of Transportation to scale back the paths and buffer zones from the plans for the BRMP to benefit County residents, habitat, and the environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda J. Frank".

Brenda J. Frank
President, Fairfax Tree Stewards