

Dear Rockville Residents,

On February 17, 2022, the City of Rockville received a letter from the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) concerning a request for de minimis concurrence of 2.1 acres of Rockville parkland, from three City parks, for the Managed Lanes Study (MLS) project land needs along I-270. The letter proposed that replacement parkland elsewhere in the City would be provided to the City for parkland. The need for the City land and the replacement parkland would depend upon whether the MLS I-270 project is ultimately approved.

On March 21, 2022, the City of Rockville responded in a letter outlining its concerns and objections to the de minimis designations.

In consultation with its legal team and City Staff, Mayor and Council learned that, on this very specific provision of federal law (Section 4(f) (23 CFR 774.17), the U.S. Government and the State of Maryland could impose only fair market value compensation were Rockville not to concur with the de minimis findings. In other words, the Federal and State Government hold all the power on this matter. Further, a Rockville non-concurrence would not have delayed or impeded the project in any way. Therefore, on April 25, 2022, the Mayor and Council of Rockville reluctantly directed the City Manager to concur with the de minimis request.

The three City Parks impacted by the de minimis concurrence are Rockmead Park, Woottons Mill Park, and the Rockville Senior Center and Park. A fourth property, Bullards Park and Rose Hill Stream Valley Park, would also be impacted but is not of de minimis nature and will be handled differently. In total, 5.4 acres of the City's parkland over the four properties would be impacted, including 5.2 acres of permanent impact and 0.2 acres of temporary impact.

The Mayor and Council's concurrence included agreement on the replacement parkland to be provided to the City as mitigation for the 5.4 acres. Had the Mayor and Council not concurred with the 4(f) de minimis finding, the City would not have been able to have input into mitigation for the affected parkland. The Mayor and Council determined that it was in the best interest of the City to concur with the de minimis finding in order to receive more favorable replacement parkland in mitigation.

Rockville's Mayor and Council remain strongly opposed to the proposed expansion of I-270 and are pursuing plausible avenues to stop this project. Further information on Rockville Mayor and Council's communications pertaining to this project can be found at <https://www.rockvillemd.gov/2371/I-495-and-I-270-Managed-Lanes-Project>.

Mayor and Council