



Martin O'Malley, *Governor*
Anthony G. Brown, *Lt. Governor*

Beverley K. Swaim-Staley, *Secretary*
Neil J. Pedersen, *Administrator*

Maryland Department of Transportation

January 14, 2010

The Honorable Christopher B. Shank
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Delegate Shank:

Thank you for your email on behalf of your constituent, [REDACTED], regarding the Weverton Park and Ride, located off US 340 in Washington County. It is my pleasure to respond to your inquiry.

Approximately four years ago, representatives of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club asked the State Highway Administration (SHA) to consider enhancements to the Weverton lot. At that time, the proposed improvements were limited to asphalt paving and pavement markings. Lighting and landscaping have since been added, and the estimated construction cost is now \$444,000. This project is being funded wholly by SHA.

It was never our intent, or that of partnering agencies, to conceal this project from citizens or legislators. We regret that a greater effort to publicize this project was not made and we had not anticipated the level of concern that this upgrade of an existing parking area would generate. Please be assured that SHA will make a greater effort to reach out to individuals and organizations alike.

As with all ridesharing/shared-use facilities, SHA aims to promote multi-modal use by a variety of users. For example, past partnerships with counties and other agencies have provided facilities that serve commuters during the work week and recreational users on weekends. We believe these partnerships are beneficial, as they provide a common solution to different needs.

The SHA also is becoming a more active steward of the environment, on both statewide and regional levels. In addition to the environmental assessments completed for each project that SHA undertakes, use of alternative materials was investigated. The cost of landscaping was weighed against its potential benefit as a buffer or softener of the viewscape. The landscaping included in this project is in keeping with the context of the area, lighting fixtures have little "spillover" effect, and on-site stormwater management will mitigate the effects of added impervious asphalt paving. While we acknowledge that there is more to be done as we move into the future, we believe that the efforts to evaluate and lessen environmental impacts on this project were appropriate and performed in good faith.

My telephone number/toll-free number is 1.800.760.7138

Maryland Relay Service for Impaired Hearing or Speech: 1.800.735.2258 Statewide Toll Free

Street Address: 1251 Vocke Road • La Vale, Maryland 21502 • Phone: 301.729.8400 • Fax: 301.729.6968 • www.marylandroads.com

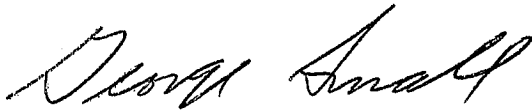


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Safety concerns were voiced by both users and non-users of the Appalachian Trail. It is difficult for law enforcement to provide coverage to this area of Washington County. However, staff members of the C&O Canal Path are closer at hand and travel the area frequently. Therefore, a mutual aid agreement, between the Maryland State Police, Washington County Sheriff's Office, and the National Park Service is being pursued. More information on this effort is available through Ranger Todd Remaley of the National Park Service, who can be reached at 304-535-6171 or at P.O. Box 50, 252 McDowell Street, Harpers Ferry, WV 25425.

Thank you again for your letter. If you have any further questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at 301-729-8485, toll-free 800-760-7138 or via email at acrawford@sha.state.md.us.

Sincerely,



Anthony F.K. Crawford, P.E.
District Engineer

cc: Mr. Neil J. Pedersen, Administrator, SHA
Ranger Todd Remaley, National Park Service
Mr. David Siuta, Constituent