



TOWN OF NORTH EAST

May 13th, 2025

Dear Wallace Montgomery Team,

Thank you for hosting the recent public workshop on the MD-272 Corridor Study in North East. It was a productive event that clearly reflected a thoughtful and data-driven approach to one of the most critical transportation issues facing our community. I appreciate the effort your team has invested so far, as well as the opportunity for public engagement.

That said, I want to express a few concerns and suggestions that I believe are important to incorporate as the project advances—particularly regarding the segment of MD-272 that runs through our town center.

The current scope of the study appears to be primarily focused on the efficient, safe movement of vehicles and the infrastructure needed to support that function. While this car-centric approach is appropriate in the areas north and south of town—where MD-272 serves as a true travel corridor—it is less effective in the heart of North East, where the dynamic is significantly more complex.

In-town traffic congestion stems a combination of vehicle volume and an interaction of factors such as:

- On-street (parallel) parking
- Frequent pedestrian crossings
- Commercial loading and unloading
- Curbside pick-ups and drop-offs at local businesses
- Seasonal tourism peaks
- Limited turning capacity at key intersections

The two proposals presented were foundationally: A) maintaining the current one-way pair or, B) converting Maudlin Avenue to two-way. These do not, on their own, adequately give a full menu of alternatives for solutions to in-town congestion. Without considering curb activity, pedestrian demand, and business interface, these proposals feel incomplete.

To develop a truly comprehensive and context-sensitive plan for downtown North East, I encourage the study to evaluate a wider range of strategies beyond the proposed two-way conversion of Maudlin Avenue. These should include:

- Curb management strategies to address the impact of on-street parking, short-term loading zones, and pick-up/drop-off activity at local businesses—particularly along Main Street and other high-activity zones.
- Expanded off-street parking opportunities or reorientation of existing parking layouts to reduce pressure on Main Street and encourage circulation away from core congestion points.



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- Pedestrian infrastructure enhancements, including upgraded crossings, traffic calming, and sidewalk extensions, which would improve safety while reducing vehicular conflicts.
- Reconfigured intersection geometry or signal timing at key nodes, such as Cecil Avenue and Main Street, to optimize flow without compromising walkability or business access. This would include improved access to MD-7 by modifying the traffic signal layout at MD-272/Cecil Avenue.
- Seasonal or time-based solutions, such as dynamic signage or adaptive signal control, that could respond to fluctuations in traffic due to tourism, events, or school schedules.
- Reimagining the use of Maudlin Avenue, which, as a wide two-lane road, presents an opportunity to better serve multimodal needs. Rather than converting it to two-way vehicle traffic, consideration should be given to alternative uses such as expanded pedestrian or dedicated shared use infrastructure, and additional parking. These improvements would support walkability, ease congestion on Main Street, and enhance the overall downtown experience.
- Encouraging alternate circulation routes by improving wayfinding and traffic conditions on streets such as Mechanics Valley Road, Cemetery Road, and Race Street to draw through traffic away from the Main Street corridor and reduce strain on the central downtown network.

If such a level of analysis is beyond the scope of the current RFP, I would like to formally express interest in identifying how it can be incorporated now—before design decisions solidify. The time to address these elements is during the corridor planning phase, not later when opportunities are more limited and costly.

These types of adjustments could significantly enhance traffic circulation and safety while maintaining the walkable, business-friendly character of downtown North East.

I hope this feedback is helpful, and I remain available to discuss these items further as the project progresses. Again, thank you for your work and for the thoughtful engagement of our community in this planning process.

Sincerely,

Mayor Kelly Benson