



Potomac ALMANAC

Bikes in Big Demand at Big Wheel

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Will Quinn does a gear adjustment at Big Wheel Bikes in Potomac Village.

MCPS Schools Start Virtually

SCHOOLS, PAGE 3

Testimony Opposed to Toll Lanes

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PHOTO BY PEGGY MCEWAN

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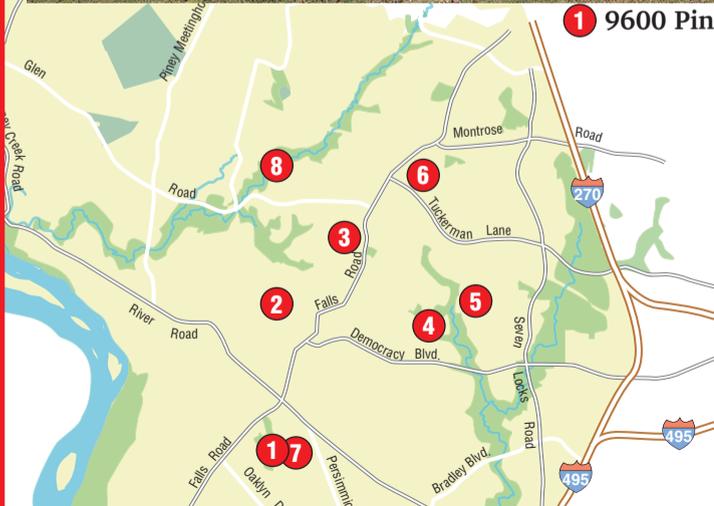
5 8508 Hunter Creek Trail — \$983,750



1 9600 Pinkney Court — \$1,110,000



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1 9600 PINKNEY CT	6...	3.....		POTOMAC..	\$1,100,000Detached...	0.65 20854.....	CONCORD	06/30/20
2 10712 LOCKLAND RD	5...	5.....		POTOMAC..	\$1,040,000Detached...	1.67 20854....	POTOMAC VILLAGE	06/29/20
3 9446 SUNNYFIELD CT.....	5...	4... 1..		POTOMAC..	\$1,000,000	.....Detached...	0.23	..... 20854.....	BEDFORDSHIRE....	06/20/20
4 10602 VANTAGE CT.....	5...	3... 1..		POTOMAC.....	\$990,000	.....Detached...	0.23	..... 20854..	EAST GATE OF POTOMAC	06/30/20
5 8508 HUNTER CREEK TRL	5...	3... 1..		POTOMAC.....	\$983,750	.....Detached...	0.25	..... 20854.....	FOX HILLS	06/23/20
6 8906 LIBERTY LN.....	5...	3... 1..		POTOMAC.....	\$975,000	.....Detached...	0.48	..... 20854.....	BEVERLY FARMS ...	06/26/20
7 9604 ACCORD	4...	3... 1..		POTOMAC.....	\$970,000	.....Detached...	0.51	..... 20854.....	CONCORD	06/12/20
8 11808 BEEKMAN PL.....	4...	2... 1..		POTOMAC.....	\$941,000Detached...	0.97 20854....	GLEN MILL VILLAGE	06/25/20

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MCPS Virtual Now, In Person Soon?

BY PEGGY MCEWAN
POTOMAC ALMANAC

Despite the controversy about opening schools to in-person learning created by Maryland Governor Larry Hogan (R), Montgomery County Public Schools students started a new school year virtually on Monday.

On Aug. 27, just four days before MCPS students were scheduled to begin the school year, Hogan announced, "As a result of our improved health metrics, every single county school system in the State of Maryland is now fully authorized to begin safely reopening."

"Nearly everyone agrees that there is no substitute for in-person instruction. It is essential that we all work together on flexible hybrid plans to safely get some of our kids back into classrooms and into healthy and supportive learning environments," Hogan said.

He did however note that the final decision on safe openings continues to rest with county boards of education, adding that decisions should be made based on a set of statewide metrics, guidelines, and benchmarks issued by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) in collaboration with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

Currently, 16 of the state's local school systems (there are 24) have developed plans for returning children to schools for some form of in-person instruction this calendar year, including students with special needs.

MSDE State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Karen Salmon said that based on the state's improving health metrics, she is urging local school systems to reevaluate their modes of instruction at the end of the first quarter. The state is making \$10 million in grant funding available to help systems that move toward in-person instruction.

The Health Metrics released the same day are:

The statewide positivity rate is now 3.3%, a decline of more than 87% since it peaked on April 17 at 26.91%.

Maryland's positivity rate has now been under 5%, the benchmark recommended by the World Health Organization and the CDC, since June 25, and has been under 4% since Aug. 8.

Last week, for the first time, the COVID-19 positivity rate for all 24 jurisdictions in Maryland fell below the 5% milestone. Currently, 17 of the state's jurisdictions have positivity rates below 3.5%.

The positivity rate among Marylanders under the age of 35 has declined by 44% since July 23, and has now fallen below 4%, to 3.79%. The positivity rate among Marylanders 35 and older has dropped below 3% and is now 2.97%.

Montgomery County's positivity rate was 2.4% on Monday and had been declining for 12 days.

Montgomery County Executive Marc Elrich and County Council reacted together



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Imagine having a brand new school and not being able to use it. That's the story for Potomac Elementary School. Potomac Elementary School PTA President Susana Zhuo created a virtual sign on the grass in front of the new school welcoming students to the new school year which, for students will be virtual.



PHOTO COURTESY MARYLAND GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

State Superintendent of Schools Karen Salmon speaks at a press conference with Maryland Governor Larry Hogan Aug. 26. Salmon suggested schools evaluate their plans after the first quarter.

on Saturday.

"Montgomery County, like other school districts in the State, spent months planning for opening the school year virtually. It did consider a hybrid in-person and virtual learning approach, but after reviewing the situation and consulting with public health experts and others, decided to teach virtually. We support Montgomery County Public Schools' (MCPS) decision, which was based on data and science and was made to keep our children, teachers and education professionals safe.

"We are dismayed and perplexed that Governor Hogan made this announcement just days before students return to school. MCPS has been proactive and deliberate in its approach in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy environment in our schools. We understand the importance of getting our kids back in the classroom, but how we do that has far reaching implications for the entire community.

"Switching plans for a school system with 165,000 students and 24,000 staff cannot happen overnight. MCPS has outlined a

blended virtual learning model that, when the time is right, will be implemented. Until that time, we request that the Governor support our local school system and its deliberative approach to educating children in the face of this pandemic."

Montgomery County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Jack R. Smith responded Friday.

"We thank Governor Larry Hogan and State Superintendent Karen Salmon for their guidance on the return to in-person instruction for local school districts.

"However, we are deeply disappointed by the last-minute announcement of this critical information for school systems. MCPS will begin the school year in a virtual-only instructional model on Aug. 31, as scheduled. We know many in our community will have questions about what this new guidance means for our students. Please allow us time to thoughtfully assess these important developments and continue to prepare for a successful start to the school year.

"As we shared earlier this month, we are working with county health officials on a process that will allow us to bring in small groups of students, such as students in specific special education programs.

"Our focus remains on the academic needs and the health and safety of our students and staff."

In an Aug. 25 letter, Dr. Travis Gayles said "based upon the current state of surveillance and epidemiological data, I would not recommend in-person instruction for students inside school buildings at this time. I recommend investing in a virtual instruction model until, at earliest, the completion of the first quarter in November, with consideration for virtual instruction through the first semester."

Be Smart: Press Pause

Informal tally: 54 comments oppose 495/270 expansion and toll lanes; nine support.
Final day of public hearings scheduled for Sept. 10.

BY KEN MOORE
THE ALMANAC

Seth Glinski works in construction and development. An uncertain future because of the 2020 pandemic, he said, is actually cause for “feeling lucky” when it comes to the possible widening of the Capital Beltway and I-270 and the American Legion Bridge.

“I see a lot of hesitation from people moving forward with a lot of different types of construction projects these days because we’re not sure what the world is going to look like six months or a year from now,” said Glinski, of Bethesda. “Every smart private developer that I work with is putting projects on hold that may or may not be impacted by the future of how people work and live.”

Think if construction of privatized toll lanes had already begun, he said. Would we be able to put a stop to construction one year in, he asked, if it was determined widening lanes is no longer the way to go?

“We are very very lucky and would be very smart to delay this decision for at least another year,” said Glinski.

The COVID-19 pandemic is “a game changer,” said Rockville’s Elliott Levine.

“There’s no certainty office life and associated traffic will ever return,” Levine said. “If it is correct that a reduction of 12 percent of traffic results in acceptable congestion, there would be no need for this highway.”

“Therefore, don’t build,” said Levine.

The Maryland Department of Transportation and the State Highway Administration MDOT and SHA will hold six public hearings. This article focuses on the first two days of hearings, Aug. 18 and Aug. 20, done virtually, because of the pandemic.

“Most importantly,” said Ole Varmer, of Silver Spring, “The Draft Environmental Impact Statement that was compiled is before the pandemic, so it can’t discuss the increase in telework, the reduction in traffic, or other strategies and alternatives that should be considered before exacerbating the harm already done.”

“Please press pause and take a hard look,” said Varmer, before closing with precise wording. “I oppose this project and support the no build option.”

PEOPLE GIVING FEEDBACK were especially careful with the wording of their bottom-line conclusions.

Janet Gallant, the first speaker, gave her reason for cynicism that dissenting voices won’t be heard.

“We reviewed DEIS source documents to see how MDOT handled the comments, and it’s troubling. MDOT undercounted the public comments opposing the P3 project,” she said.

“This matters, agencies can’t make informed decisions without accurate data,” said Gallant.



PHOTO BY KEN MOORE/THE ALMANAC

Hundreds turned out for a meeting in December (pre-pandemic) in opposition to widening 495 and 270 with four toll lanes for more than 50 miles.

She gave an example of the Sierra Club, which attached a petition with 627 signatures, that was only counted as one person in opposition to the project.

She also said MDOT gave labels to every public comment, such as supporting the project, opposing the project, or something neutral ... but MDOT labeled a “comment as opposing the project only if the submitter had used exactly the right words.”

“To see how this played out, listen to three excerpts from public comments in MDOT’s files,” said Gallant, “One, ‘Our opposition will never cease to proposals that benefit only the privileged.’ Two, ‘We should not be spending resources and time on 20th century solutions proven to increase car trips.’ Three, ‘When is a large road too big, when local citizens who would be affected by the road are up in arms against its expansion.’”

“Not one of these comments was counted as opposing the project,” said Gallant.

Barbara Coufal, of Bethesda, followed.

“I oppose the project to add private toll lanes to I-495 and I-270. I support a no build option,” said Coufal.

Coufal said disturbances due to construction of the added toll lanes will be more than the draft environmental impact statement suggests.

“I agree with the Maryland National Park and Planning Commission that the limits of disturbance in the draft environmental statement do not adequately address the likely impacts of the project,” she said. “Because the final design and engineering won’t be prepared until a later stage by the private contractor, it appears that the limit of disturbances in the draft statement are optimistic.”

THE NEXT public hearing is scheduled for Sept. 3 and an in person hearing is scheduled at the Montgomery County Hilton Executive Center on Sept. 10.

Officials from Citizens Against Beltway Expansion said 54 speakers spoke in opposition to the project while nine spoke in favor during the first three hearings. On the first day, only a man calling in from Atlanta, Ga., unidentified by name, spoke in support.

Jerry Garson, of Potomac, and Jennifer Russel, of Rockville, spoke in support at the second hearing on Aug. 20.

“Although the draft environmental impact statement is an overwhelming document, the bottom line remains the same. We will still be stangulating in traffic,” said Russel, who suggested that traffic speeds are going to be 15 miles per hour or less by 2040 as population increases in the area.

“More delay must not be the answer for something that has been studied for 30 years,” she said. “The project is a no-brainer that we must embrace.”

Garson, speaking on behalf of the Seven Locks Citizens Association, said he has been analyzing daily traffic counts for the last 20 years.

He said that traffic patterns are returning to pre-covid numbers, and because more people are going to be hesitant to travel in subway cars or busses, even more people are going to use cars.

“We need much more road capacity,” said Garson.

THE BIG SHOCKER came immediately on day one when Casey Anderson, chair of the Maryland Park and Planning Commission, said he learned from press and advocacy

groups that more than 1,600 pages have been added to the DEIS document from that original July 10 website posting of the draft environmental impact statement.

“The addition of new material without notice to anyone raises serious doubt about whether the comment period must be extended in order to comply with NEPA, and just as importantly about why MDOT failed to disclose the modifications to the DEIS materials,” said Anderson.

“MDOT SHA must extend the deadline for public comment, and the 90-day review clock should start no earlier than today, but only with MDOT SHA’s assurance that no additional changes will be made to the DEIS,” he said.

Last week, the public comment period for the 18,000 page Draft Environmental Impact Statement was extended until Nov. 9, 2020.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS were raised by a majority of speakers.

Rory Davis, of Rockville, was the youngest speaker to testify. A former student at Julius West Middle School last year, Davis recommended air quality tests inside and outside, especially for schools and residents in close proximity to I-270, I-495, and other highways. Julius West’s building is already 253 meters from the I-270 and its track is 35 meters from the highway, he said.

“That is already too close,” said Davis.

“Increasing cars on the highway can only make air quality worse,” he said, citing asthma, lung problems, and other cardiovascular problems children might acquire simply because of where they live and go to school. “Don’t ruin the lives of children for the sake of profit,” especially for an Australian company that stands to benefit from this project, he said.

Jim Foster, president of the Anacostia Watershed Society Foster said the watershed society has worked for 30 years to restore the health of the Anacostia River.

“We are very very very interested in preventing water pollution, not having to clean it up,” Foster said.

“We expect you to meet a high standard for environmental and community protection,” said Foster. “Water pollution issues in the Anacostia River are directly attributed to designing our communities around automobiles rather than people. This process is used to justify simply the need to do more and the very downward spiral of unsustainable practices.”

Gail Landy, of Gaithersburg, said “only one of the reasons” she opposes the project is the impact on local, state and national parks. “Widening the Capital Beltway and I-270 with four toll lanes will impede on 237 parks, 18 community recreation centers and four community pools...The loss of and infringement on parks is unacceptable to me.”

SEE PUBLIC HEARINGS, PAGE 5
WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

Public Hearings

FROM PAGE 4

Alice Schindler, of Silver Spring: “The draft EIS on the 495/270 plan fails to study the full range of impact the highway plan could have on environment, health and communities. I do not support the project and support the no build option.”

Anderson spoke for the Park and Planning Commission: “The DEIS provides an inaccurate and incomplete picture of the impact of the project on parkland and private property because it does not account for significant changes to the limits of disturbance likely to be required for construction of the managed lanes and therefore cannot be a legally adequate basis for evaluating the environmental impact of the project.”

He said Park and Planning will provide more thorough responses in writing by the deadline to give feedback, now Nov. 9, 2020.

MANY BROUGHT UP the need for additional alternatives for study.

“In a progressive state such as Maryland, we should not be solely reliant on road expansion and increasing our dependence on cars and travel. MDOT/SHA should be an innovator and bring light rail to Maryland,” said Schindler.

“The impact statement fails to analyze transportation alternatives, such as transportation demand measures, forthcoming

technologies, synchronized automobiles and monorail concepts that are far less impactful,” said Levine.

“The overall strategy lacks creativity and vision and is fiscally irresponsible,” said Richard Stolz, of Rockville. The current project is “a disservice to ourselves and future generations. A lot more thought has to go into how we transport people,” he said.

Traffic can be annoying, but not as much as exacerbating climate change, said Daniel Ring, of Rockville.

SUPPORTERS WILL REMIND everyone that traffic congestion affects many lives around the Beltway. More than 235,000 vehicles crossed the American Legion Bridge daily, at least until the beginning of the pandemic.

Gov. Larry Hogan made the claim: “The project is expected to cut commuting time in half for many travelers, reduce congestion in the regular lanes by 25 percent, provide 40 percent more lane capacity over the old bridge, and include bicycle and pedestrian paths across the Potomac River.”

Virginia officials have pointed to Maryland as the problem before the pandemic, where Virginia’s toll lanes end and merge before the American Legion Bridge.

“Our teams have identified a way to fix one fo the worst traffic hot spots in the

SEE PUBLIC HEARINGS, PAGE 7

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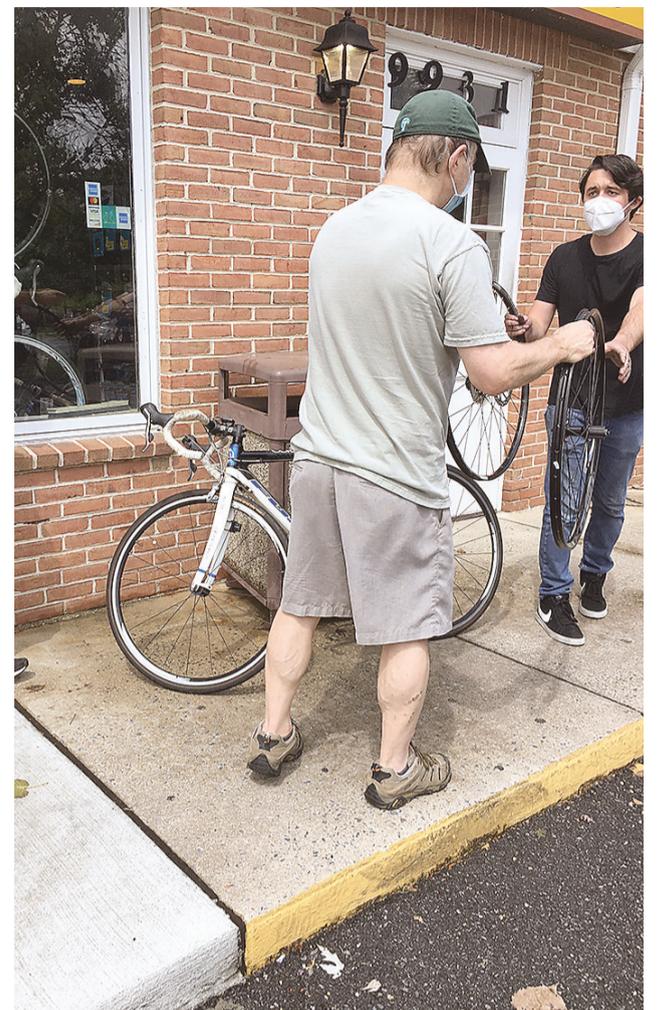
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Affordable bikes are hard to find during this time of coronavirus. Though Bike Wheel Bikes in Potomac looks full, most of the bikes pictured are waiting for repair.



Daniel Heimlich and his son Josh wait outside Big Wheel Bikes as one of their bikes is serviced. Employee Walker Butterfield takes two rims for repair.



Big Wheel Bikes manager David Zovko delivers a bike to a customer in the parking lot behind the store.

PHOTOS BY PEGGY McEWAN

Bikes Hot Items During Time of COVID-19

BY PEGGY McEWAN
THE ALMANAC

The rumor is true, it's hard to find a good new bike – at a reasonable price.

“Bikes and puppies,” said Daniel Heimlich, a customer standing outside Big Wheel Bikes in Potomac Saturday.

Heimlich and his son Josh, 15, were waiting to pick up one of their bikes that was being repaired.

Actually, everyone arriving at the store had to wait outside for service.

The store is small and manager David Zovko said serving customers outside was

“the easiest way for me to make sure I was protected and the customers too.”

Saturday was a busy day with customers picking up bikes that were repaired and dropping off others. Some quick adjustments were serviced while customers waited.

A look inside revealed a double layer of bikes on racks on both sides of a center aisle. No bikes available?

“Most are customer’s,” Zovko said. “Here for repair.”

He also said some were second hand bikes for sale and a few were new, also for sale.

“We have high-end road bikes, high-end mountain bikes, and used bikes,” Zovko said.

For high-end, think thousands of dollars.

The run on bikes began in earnest in March, said Mike Sendar, owner of Big Wheel Bikes, a chain of five local bike stores. “We had all we wanted through May but in the beginning of summer the supply dried up.”

The shortage, he said, was mainly lower priced bikes and kids’ bikes.

Big Wheel Bikes has been in business 50 years and this is an unusual situation, he said.

The Potomac store, which opened in 2009, did not close during the quarantine, Zovko said, because they were considered essential under the blanket of transportation.

“People did not want to use public trans-

portation,” he said. “With gyms closed, they were denied exercise opportunities and cycling was an option.”

Zovko is hopeful the situation will ease up soon.

“Everything’s set to drop right now,” he said. “Manufacturers introduce new stock at the end of August.”

Meanwhile, he said, they are just rolling with the punches.

“This year [we’ve] had busy days just about every day,” he said. “This year has been one of the craziest in 20 years.”

Big Wheel Bikes is located at 9931 Falls Road. Call 301-299-1660 or visit <http://www.bigwheelbikes.com>

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Public Hearings

FROM PAGE 5

country,” Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam has said. “This demonstrates what can get done when leaders come together to find shared solutions to tough regional problems. This is about helping people see their families more, grow their business, and further unlock the region’s vast economic potential.”

And Gov. Hogan pitches the project as being paid for by a private company, not the tax-payers.

But according to public testimony, most were not convinced.

“Since the start, Gov. Hogan and MDOT have stated there would be no cost. Then we learned that it will cost WSSC customers \$2 billion to move water and sewer lines,” said Coufal, of Bethesda.

Arthur Katz, of Rockville, called a private company coming to the rescue to cover the cost a fantasy. “The highway expansion is based on a politically driven false fantasy embodied in, ‘I built this and you didn’t have to pay for it,’” he said.

“Even more bizarre is the idea that it’s okay to make \$10-billion, 50-year commitments to highway building without understanding telework and other covid effects and other transportation options will permanently upend traffic patterns and flatten peak hour commutes,” he said.

Susan Grodsky, of Rockville, said she was reminded of something her father told her when she was 10 years old. “If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is,” she said.

A few speakers brought up fiscal problems with private-public partnerships with construction of the Purple Line. And a couple also brought up that taxpayers will be faced with the burden when WSSC has to charge for moving water and sewer lines to make way for this massive construction project.

“It’s wishful and naive to think there will be no cost to taxpayers,” said Joseph Espito, of Carderock Springs. “The Purple Line is exhibit A that in public private partnerships, taxpayers end up footing the bill.”

TOLL LANES are going to help 10 percent of drivers in the toll lanes while 90 percent of drivers are stuck in the “free” lanes, said Katz.

Hence the moniker, Lexus Lanes, said Elliott Levine, of Rockville. “The speed gains in the toll lanes are compensated by slower drive times in the free lanes, hence the moniker, Lexus Lanes on this project.”

Peter Tantisunthorn, of Silver Spring, doesn’t oppose mitigating traffic, he just thinks more multi-modal transportation should have been considered.

“When we are looking at an environmental impact study, it’s kind of funny that’s the only consideration when we’re building a project that is going to make a larger environmental impact on this region. We are doing a disservice to ourselves and future generations because of this plan. A lot more thought has to go into how we transport people about the 270 corridor and 495 in modes outside from cars.”

“This whole thing sounds foolish and must be abandoned at once,” said Frank Pierce.



ALMANAC FILE PHOTO

During the pandemic, traffic all but disappeared on the Beltway and other roads as workers shifted to working from home.

Brian Ditzler, of the Sierra Club, called it a “financial and environmental disaster.”

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE was not followed, said Coufal and Eyal Li, of Takoma Park.

“Appendix P shows that MDOT did not successfully engage environmental justice populations in Prince George’s County at any stage of the process,” said Coufal. Communities of color and poor people are often more negatively affected by environmental impacts of such projects.

Prince George’s County submitted less than one-fifth of the testimony of Montgomery County so far.

Eyal Li, of Takoma Park, is an environmental engineer and an advocate for clean transportation policy with the Union of Concerned Scientists. “On behalf of our 24,000 supporters in Maryland, and our network of more than 26,000 scientists, engineers and public health professionals nationwide, [Union of Concerned Scientists] strongly opposes the proposed addition of lanes to I-495 and I-270 and supports a no-build option,” said Li. “As detailed in the DEIS, the proposed added lanes would increase vehicle miles travelled, leading to higher global warming emissions and traffic related air pollution.”

UCS is “particularly concerned” about the project’s disproportionate health impacts on marginalized communities near the highways, he said. The race and ethnicity characteristics of the analysis area reveal that Latino, Asian-American and African Americans are overrepresented by 50 percent, 49 percent and 9 percent, respectively, while white residents are underrepresented by 37 percent compared to their population statewide. In 2019, the Union of Concerned Scientists released a study showing African American and Latino Marylanders are exposed to levels of traffic related air pollution that are 12 and 11 percent higher than the average while white Marylanders breathe air that is 8 percent cleaner than the average Maryland resident.

“Chronic exposure to particulate matter pollution from vehicles causes increased death rates attributed to cardiovascular disease and respiratory ailments including COVID-19, among other conditions. Given the systematic oppression of marginalized groups throughout history, we call on the MDOT to shoulder a greater burden of proof that its actions are not harmful to the health and wellbeing of minority populations, low-income populations, and/or indigenous peoples,” said Li.

Sue Nerlinger said: “Toll lanes are not an equitable solution to the congestion problem.”

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Not Exactly the “Canswer” I Was Hoping For

By KENNETH B. LOURIE



If this past week’s test results (EKG, blood pressure and lab work) pass muster, then I will join the ranks, full time, of the thyroid cancer community. At present, the medical plan is to pivot, completely, from any lung cancer treatment - which for the past 18 months has been immunotherapy bi-weekly, and focus instead, exclusively, on my stage IV, papillary thyroid cancer. If I can go forward, I’ll be taking three pills a day, at home. No more visits to the Infusion Center and of course, no more infusions. And not that I’m paranoid about getting exposed to the coronavirus, but less exposure to whatever can be transmitted by droplets, door knobs, elevator buttons, etc., can’t be a bad thing. The question remains however: Is the medication I’ll be receiving likely to have a positive effect? As in, will it cure my thyroid cancer?

What little I already know is that the type of papillary thyroid cancer that I’ve been diagnosed with recently - after three biopsies, is unfortunately not curable. It is treatable though, just as my previous lung cancer diagnosis was described. I like curable much better. But, treatable I’ll have to live with, hopefully for a long time, as I have for 11 and 1/2 years with the originally diagnosed stage IV non small cell lung cancer. My attitude then, as it will be now, is to try and stay alive until the next new drug comes along which might actually cure my thyroid cancer. The interim goal, different from the ultimate goal is stability; turning the incurable disease into a chronic disease, like diabetes, for example. And though curable is the preferred outcome, for those of us with our rear ends in those barcaloungers, stable is perfectly acceptable. In fact, for the many years I was treated for lung cancer, ‘stable’ became my new favorite word. Shrinkage, cure, remission and N.E.D. (no evidence of disease) was certainly the ideal. But for those of us in the trenches, our reality is often very different.

Living, even in those trenches, is the best reward, and as cancer patients, you learn that any guarantees, presumptions or even entitlements are best left outside the examining room’s door. Because once inside, reality takes over (as it likewise does late at night, as you’re lying in bed contemplating your predicament, when it tends to get late, early, if you know what I mean?). My friend Sean often jokes by asking me if I’m still on the clock (meaning am I still terminal-ish). I’m on the clock, alright, as I have been since February 27, 2009 when my oncologist first told Team Lourie of my “terminal” diagnosis. Cancer then, as now, is the dreaded disease. Eventually though, the conversation ends and a treatment plan is initiated.

Treatment is often predicated on a series of definite maybes/“we’ll see’s”. Success is measured one lab result, one appointment, one scan and one surgery at a time. No promises are offered and rarely are other patient histories relevant to one’s own circumstances. Patients have unique characteristics and it’s never quite right to draw parallels. Being a cancer patient is the opposite of being on a “Merry Go ‘Round.” It’s a “Not Very Merry Doesn’t Go ‘Round” - without the music. Moreover, there’s never a brass ring to grab, only an intangible thing called hope.

However, hope is a wonderful thing. Though it doesn’t necessarily get you across the finish line, it does enable you to endure the journey. You’re where you are and where you’re going to be so any kind of assistance - mentally or otherwise, is greatly appreciated. In my mind, the only pathway is forward. And though the challenges seem endless, a proper positive attitude that leaves open the possibilities of living life with cancer rather than succumbing to it creates a kind of karma that reflects off of others and is reabsorbed back into you. It’s this positivity loop which makes the unbearable a bit more bearable. At least it does for me.

My father used to say: “Every knock is a boost.” Imagine what every boost would mean to a cancer patient? It’s almost like medicine, but without the negative side effects. And who doesn’t need that? Those of us diagnosed with two types of cancer, that’s who! Don’t knock it if you haven’t tried it.

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