

## Amy Harvey

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**From:** Sylvia Steere <steere.sylvia@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, October 27, 2019 1:53 PM  
**To:** Town Council; All Agenda Materials; Manager  
**Subject:** Petition to Mayor and Council

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I would like to submit a petition to be added to the agenda on the November 13th City Council meeting regarding the proposed Fordham Side Path project.

As a neighborhood our concerns for safety have not been addressed, we have submitted repeated concerns and there is no evidence that town staff have taken them into consideration.

-Sylvia Steere  
414 Hickory Drive  
Chapel Hill, NC 27517

# Shared Street Solution for Bike and Walkability

The residents of the Little Ridgefield neighborhood, including those on the Fordham side of Hickory Street who are directly impacted by the proposed Fordham Sidepath project, and other residents of Chapel Hill and Little Ridgefield not directly affected but having knowledge of the specific conditions, petition the Town Council to direct Town staff to pursue what is described in the current Fordham Sidepath Project planning documents as "Option 3" or a close variation of it.

The below-signed individuals endorse and support a safe, welcoming, sustainable, cost-effective, and efficient interconnected system of bike and pedestrian facilities. Options 1 and 2 fail in important ways, while Options 3 and 4 support all of those goals:

- First, an expert in design of these facilities has illustrated that the originally-proposed path (options 1 and 2) would not be safe for bike and pedestrian traffic, and no proposals yet have solved those safety issues. In fact, proposal 2 which purports to improve safety is actually a less-safe option than option 1. With an expert on the record with these safety issues, the Town should consider the liability problem of creating a known-unsafe path rather than a demonstrably-safer shared-street in option 3 (or option 4, with the sidewalk placed in front of the curb, heretofore "4-modified")
- Second, the loss of mature tree canopy along Fordham from Estes to Elliott is unavoidable with options 1 and 2, and can be entirely avoided with option 3 (or 4). Town climate goals, (as well as simple attractiveness of the entire stretch, visible to every user of Fordham) should make this a high priority. Any reasonable option to avoid loss of mature trees should be taken. Options 3 and 4-modified require no tree removal.
- Third, the impact of losing tree buffer would be a serious harm to impacted homeowners. These impacts include elevated energy costs, direct exposure to traffic pollution, loss of privacy exacerbated by anticipated construction of multi-story buildings in University Place, and substantial loss of property value. Options 3 and 4 improve safety and convenience for Hickory residents who walk/bike, and have minimal impact on those who drive.
- Fourth, options 1 and 2 would be expensive to build and maintain. Option 3 would have minimal costs: only paint, signs, and speed tables or other traffic-calming measures. Option 4-modified would add the cost of a sidewalk on top of existing pavement. The project has inexplicably avoided even estimating those costs, though alone they should be a deciding factor. Any comparable option an order of magnitude less expensive should be taken by responsible stewards of tax funds.

- Fifth, the stormwater issues in this area, exacerbated by Blue Hill development, send water directly down the channel along Fordham into the area of Chapel Hill most prone to flooding. This is now occurring in any heavy rain. Removal of the vegetation, as well as the necessary back-filling and grading to produce a ten-foot space for a path, plus the addition of ten feet of impervious surface along that downflow, would exacerbate these stormwater issues probably extensively, endangering residents in Little Ridgefield, Camelot Village, and Estes Extension as well as commercial property at University Place. But the degree of harm has not been studied in this project. Options 3 and 4-modified would have no impact on stormwater runoff.

- Sixth, the proposed path is entirely redundant with the proposed path on the West side of Fordham. So a lower-impact approach would not affect the walk/bikeability of the area, other than for the better, by making a more inviting and safe facility on the East side of Fordham. Options 3 and 4 would also allow a more efficient and effective connection with the adjacent planned Greenway at Willow Drive, which would be closer and more useful for residents of Blue Hill and adjoining neighborhoods. Rather than being a "detour," the shared Hickory route is a more direct route to that intended Greenway connection, closer to all residents on the East side of Fordham.

- Seventh, the Little Ridgefield neighborhood is comprised of cyclists and walkers who understand and wholeheartedly support the creation of connected facilities, and who have proposed the shared-street option out of knowledge of the specific conditions of this section of Chapel Hill. A success here will provide a model for solving similar issues in other areas of Chapel Hill, as residents of cities like Portland, Boulder, and many European cities have already done.

We therefore petition the Chapel Hill Town Council to curtail additional expense from additional efforts on Options 1 and 2 of the plan, and to adopt a version of Option 3 (or a modified version of Option 4 which places a sidewalk in front of the curb) including to move forward quickly with this project, in keeping with Town goals and shared values.