THE NEIGHBORHOOD CLUB OF
BALA CYNWYD
EST. 1906
P.O. Box 717 • Bala Cynwyd, PA 19004

April 22, 2025

Hon. Mike Carroll
Secretary of Transportation
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
Keystone Building
400 North Street, Fifth Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Re: Opposition to PennDOT's plan for a "Roundabout" at the intersection of St. Asaphs Road and Belmont Avenue in the village of Bala Cynwyd, Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Dear Secretary Carroll,

The Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd ("NCBC") has been Bala Cynwyd's active civic association for more than a century and remains one of the most effective and well-respected civic associations in Lower Merion Township. With the support of Bala Cynwyd residents and local businesses, we work with elected officials and government staff to represent the interests of our community during public meetings on residential and commercial development projects. NCBC's mission is to strengthen the social, cultural, and economic fabric of our diverse community by promoting civic engagement, preserving the historic character of our residential neighborhoods, protecting our remaining open space, and enhancing the viability of our commercial corridors.

The NCBC Board of Directors writes to share with you our formal opposition to *ANY* roundabout construction at the St. Asaphs Road and Belmont Avenue intersection in our community with this letter detailing our position.

The NCBC recognizes that: (a) the St. Asaphs Road and Belmont Avenue intersection is a prominent intersection in Bala Cynwyd that will become even more important with new developments now underway or proposed for properties on three of the four corners of that intersection; and (b) modifications and improvements for the St. Asaphs Road and Belmont Avenue intersection are necessary to address ongoing vehicular and pedestrian traffic safety issues that have become of greater concern in recent years.

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The NCBC, the Township of Lower Merion, PennDOT, and many property owners in the immediate vicinity, including more than one hundred nearby condominium and other residents who are directly impacted daily by this intersection and by whatever improvements are to be proposed) have expressed and discussed their serious concerns about this intersection and the possible ways to address them.

The village of Bala Cynwyd is a primarily residentially-scaled walkable community with the advantage of nearby active and growing retail businesses, service providers, and long-standing, newly built, and still to-be-built multi-unit residential developments that enhance its diversity and vibrancy. In the face of extensive new residential expansion activity with significant density along and near the City Avenue corridor, Lower Merion Township planners have been working with developers to maintain the scale, walkability, and pedestrian accessibility of our residential community to respect and protect Bala Cynwyd's character and safety.

Since PennDOT first presented its proposed plan for a roundabout at St. Asaphs Road and Belmont Avenue intersection in 2021, in the numerous community meetings and communications to the NCBC, Bala Cynwyd residents in attendance have persistently and consistently expressed a consensus opinion that a roundabout at this intersection would be inconsistent with the character of Bala Cynwyd.

PennDOT proposed that the current four-way intersection be replaced with a "roundabout" as the way to deal with the vehicular and pedestrian traffic concerns regarding the safety of the current intersection.

The NCBC and representatives of PennDOT have had numerous meetings during which PennDOT has made presentations and answered questions about a planned roundabout. At these meetings, leadership of the NCBC as well as nearly all members of the community attending and participating in those meetings and discussions have expressed their reservations and objections to a roundabout being used as the method to modify this intersection and have requested that other intersectional improvements (such as new intersectional traffic signalization and signalized dedicated left-turn lanes) be made to address vehicular traffic and pedestrian safety problems. In particular, the community's reservations and objections about a proposed roundabout include: (i) insufficient attention to the safety of pedestrians who now or (with all of the planned development that is intended to create a more walkable mixed-use area in the City Avenue District) will in the future use that intersection; (ii) insufficient actual experience of drivers and pedestrians in navigating a roundabout (particularly for an intersection such as this one); (iii) long-term negative impacts on air quality; (iv) the replacement of attractive and well-established existing improvements that serve as a transition from commercial uses to residential

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neighborhood; (v) the loss of trees and green space; and, (vi) potential negative impacts on the quality and property values of affected residential neighborhoods.

Accordingly, at the March 2025 NCBC Board of Directors meeting, our board approved a position statement to oppose *ANY* roundabout construction at the St. Asaphs Road and Belmont Avenue intersection. In opposing a roundabout, Bala Cynwyd's civic association encourages PennDOT to design, present, and install for this intersection improvements that are more conventional ways to allow safer passage of vehicular and pedestrian traffic, appropriately scaled, and consistent with the vicinity's other busy street intersections which, while connecting residential and commercial properties, have a particularly significant impact on residential neighborhoods. The NCBC and our community stand ready to work with PennDOT and Lower Merion Township to achieve the goal of an improved and safer St. Asaphs Road and Belmont Avenue intersection — without a roundabout.

Best,

Kay Sickles
President, Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd

cc: Office of the Governor of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Department of Transportation — Region 6
US Representative Madeleine Dean
State Senator Amanda Cappelletti
State Representative Mary Jo Daley
Montgomery County Commissioners
Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners
Lower Merion Township Department of Building and Planning
NCBC Board of Directors