

MINUTES

Howard County Bicycle Advisory Group (BAG) Quarterly Meeting, 10/31/17

Ilchester Room, George Howard Building, 3pm to 5pm.

In Attendance

BAG Members

Sean Harbaugh as proxy for Jane Dembner (Columbia Association)
Kevin Dolan (Howard County bicycle retailers)
Jack Guarnieri (Bicycling Advocates of Howard County)
David Zinner as proxy for Larry Schoen (Multimodal Transportation Board)
Jen Terrasa (County Council)
Chris Tsien (Environmental Sustainability Board)
Paul Walsky (Dept. of Recreation and Parks)

Non-Members

Phil Nichols
Kevin McAliley
Katie DiSalvo-Thronson

Office of Transportation Staff

Chris Eatough Eatough
Albert Guiney Engel
David Cookson

The meeting was called to order by Chris Eatough at 3:00 pm.

1. FY2019 Bicycle Master Plan Project Priorities

Jack Guarnieri opened the meeting by asking the Office of Transportation staff to explain the selection rationale for the proposed projects.

David Zinner added a request that proposed bike lane and pathway projects include wayfinding to guide users to destinations of interest.

Mr. Guarnieri then emphasized an interest in learning how the Office of Transportation developed the project list, and Jen Terrasa noted that many of the projects did not seem to be related to *BikeHoward* structured projects, and asked how these proposals were related to the structured projects. Albert Guiney Engel explained that two of the proposals were complete structured projects, several others were partial structured projects, and other proposals were either continuing design of projects that predated *BikeHoward* or were initial concepts of projects that had not been conceived at the time *BikeHoward* was developed.

Mr. Eatough then proceeded to give an overview of each of the proposed projects:

He described the **North Laurel Connections** project as a pathway connection between the Bowling Brook and Kings Grant neighborhoods. There was discussion about whether the northern end of the proposed pathway was actually within Bowling Brook Farms HOA territory, and Phil Nichols pointed out that the proposed alignment of the pathway did not lie on Bowling Brook Farms HOA land, but that the closest homes to the pathway were members of the Bowling Brook Farms HOA. Ms. Terrasa emphasized that for this project, working with the community would be extremely important, and stated

that she liked the concept of the project but was not sure that the community supported it. Mr. Nichols related that he and Mr. Eatough had knocked on doors along Ridings Way to talk about the project, and that they had heard support, to which Ms. Terrasa responded that she was happy to hear this.

Mr. Eatough then described the **Blandair to Elkhorn Connection** project as filling an important gap between the Downtown Columbia Trail and the Columbia Association pathway system to Long Reach and Owen Brown. David Zinner asked why this project was important, given that one could make a left from the pathway system onto an extremely low-traffic segment of Old Montgomery Road that was already very bike-friendly. Mr. Eatough responded that because one of the goals of the pathway system is to provide for all ages and abilities, and because many children use the pathway system, it is important to provide a pathway-only connection from Long Reach to Oakland Mills and Downtown Columbia. Discussion continued about the merits of upgrading the pathway between Tamar Drive and Oakland Mills Road, and multiple attendees reported that the current surface of the pathway was in extremely poor condition. Sean Harbaugh added that he considered this to be an important project.

Katie DiSalvo-Thronson began the discussion about the **Columbia Road** bike lane proposal by asking whether this was proposed as a separated facility. Mr. Eatough responded that *BikeHoward* called for buffered bike lanes along this segment, and that this would be accomplished by converting existing shoulders to bike lanes. Mr. Guarnieri added that it would be important to include a connection to the pathway that connects Old Annapolis Road to Centennial Park in the project. Mr. Eatough pointed out that there would be a loss of parking with this project, and that the primary parking use of the shoulders of Columbia Road was Dorsey Hall Pool patrons. Ms. Terrasa commented that it would be important to interface with the community on this issue. Ms. DiSalvo-Thronson shared that before the Horizon Foundation's recent Open Streets event along this same segment of Columbia Road, she had been worried that residents of townhouse communities along the east side of Columbia Road would be opposed to the project for this reason. However, she stated that the opposite was true—residents were opposed to the provision of parking on Columbia Road because the parked vehicles, especially at Rams Horn Row, obscured the sight distance of vehicles exiting the courts. She added that in fact, there were existing no-parking signs along some of that segment. Mr. Zinner remarked that the intersection of Columbia Road and Gray Rock Drive would be an important place for wayfinding signs.

Mr. Eatough introduced the **Dobbin & McGaw** pathway project by describing it as a new shared-use pathway along Dobbin Road between Oakland Mills Road and McGaw Road, and along McGaw Road between Dobbin Road and Wegmans. He added that the project included a new crossing of Oakland Mills Road at Dobbin Road, as well as sidewalks along the other side of Dobbin Road. Mr. Zinner asked if the project could be extended along McGaw to provide better bicycle access into the industrial park on the other side of Snowden River Parkway—where he reported that people like to bicycle—and Ms. Terrasa asked if the project could be extended to include sidewalk to Oak Hall Lane to provide access to the post office—which she reported had been requested by constituents. After discussion of both of these proposals, Mr. Engel stated that although both of these were worthy of further investigation, the present 30% design was just for Dobbin and McGaw, and that adding a sidewalk along Oakland Mills Road could be considered in the future to be possibly completed at the same time as the pathway project.

Mr. Eatough described the **Edgar Road and Meadowbrook Lane** bike lane project as a relatively simple effort to add bike lane stencils to existing shoulders. He explained that Edgar Road had wide shoulders on both sides, to which bike lane stencils could be added without adjusting the existing lines, while Meadowbrook Lane had one wide shoulder and one narrow shoulder, so more work might be needed along that segment. He added—responding to Mr. Zinner’s earlier point about wayfinding—that the route between these two segments would require wayfinding. David Cookson commented that this would be good messaging in advance of the courthouse project to emphasize that Edgar Road is a bicycling route and to help require that bicycle accommodations be maintained in the design of the courthouse.

Mr. Eatough explained that the **Harriet Tubman Lane and Martin Road** bike lane project was an important bicycle route that connected to existing bike lanes along Grace Drive while avoiding Cedar Lane, and others added that this route also provided access to APL. Mr. Eatough added that a pathway connection had been added from Harriet Tubman Lane to the intersection of Cedar Lane and Simpson Mill Road. Mr. Zinner responded that this was a narrow, windy pathway, and that this connection had a narrow gate through which it was difficult to fit a bike, and asked if this project would improve that connection. Mr. Eatough responded that there was nothing that could be done about the speed of the pathway, but that he had previously reached out about the gate and would do so again.

This project connected at its northern end with the **Martin Road and Owen Brown Road** bike lane project, which Mr. Eatough described as a similar effort to add bike lanes to the existing roadways. Mr. Zinner commented that there was an upcoming development at the intersection of Seneca Drive and Martin Road, and asked if the Seneca Drive bridge over US 29 could be improved as part of the project, commenting that it was narrow and had poor surface conditions. Attendees used Google StreetView to look at the bridge, and Ms. Terrasa asked if there was a way to improve pedestrian accommodations as well.

Mr. Eatough introduced the **Oakland Mills Road Road Diet Feasibility Study** and the **Tamar Drive Road Diet Feasibility Study** by explaining that these were two four-lane roads, and the study would examine the feasibility of converting these into roadways with one lane in each direction and a center turn lane, which would create space for high-quality bicycle infrastructure. Ms. Terrasa stated that she expected the proposal for Oakland Mills Road to have a positive response from the community.

Mr. Eatough then explained that the **River Road, Levering Avenue, and Furnace Avenue** shared-roadway project would improve a connection presently popular with bicyclists between Main Street in Elkridge and Patapsco State Park, and added that Anne Arundel County was seeking to add an adjacent connection from Race Road to the BWI Trail. Mr. Zinner asked whether repaving of River Road—which is maintained by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources—would be included in this project, and several other attendees agreed that such repaving would be helpful. Mr. Eatough added that this was already part of a signed bike route from the BWI Trail to Patapsco State Park.

Finally, Mr. Eatough described the **Robert Fulton Drive** shared-use-path project as an expansion of existing sidewalk into a shared-use path on the south side of Robert Fulton Drive, along with the addition of wayfinding in the Solar Walk and Gentle Shade neighborhoods. He added that this project came about because of a developer’s desire to make a fee-in-lieu payment instead of building sidewalks on the north side of Robert

Fulton Drive. Ms. Terrasa asked whether the project would include a crossing of Robert Fulton Drive at Solar Walk to provide access to the Snowden Square shopping center. Mr. Engel responded that there was currently no receiving sidewalk on the opposite site, but that the initial design would be able to answer that question more fully. Mr. Zinner asked if the project could include access between the ramp from Snowden River Parkway to Robert Fulton Drive and Oak Hall Lane via an existing commercial parking lot. There was then a discussion about the legality and safety of that connection.

Mr. Nichols then asked meeting attendees to attempt to prioritize the projects that had been discussed. First, Chris Tsien suggested, and Mr. Guarnieri concurred, that North Laurel Connections should be the highest priority due to its high level of design and the importance of the connection it would make. Mr. Zinner then suggested, and Mr. Guarnieri, Mr. Tsien, and Mr. Harbaugh concurred, that the Levering Avenue project should be a high priority. Mr. Eatough then suggested using high/medium/low priority categories to organize the exercise, and Mr. Engel asked the attendees which projects belonged in the high-priority group. The group mentioned North Laurel Connections, Levering Avenue, Harriet Tubman/Martin Road, and Columbia Road. Mr. Engel then asked attendees if there were any projects that belonged in the low-priority group, and the group did not have any recommendations. Mr. Zinner then suggested that the Office of Transportation staff should identify the priority projects, and the attendees all concurred with that suggestion. Mr. Guarnieri added that he felt the Office of Transportation should add additional design projects to increase the amount of the budget ask. The meeting thus concluded with the consensus that the Office of Transportation's proposed projects were all high-priority projects, and the Office of Transportation should use staff expertise to decide what dollar amount to request for the FY2019 capital budget for K5066.

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Eatough at 5:00 pm