

## Howard County Office of Transportation

### Dobbin Road Pathway Public Meeting – October 28, 2021

#### Questions and Answers

14 members of the public attended

1. *Why did we come up with the schedule we came up with and why are the segments being done in the order presented?*
  - Segment III is easier to do for less cost. We had funding in the capital budget already and it provides useful connection between shopping centers. Good utility for a good price tag and a good way to get the project started.
  - Segment II and I are very important – more involved, more expensive so it takes longer to design and acquire funding.
2. *How did we decide to put pathway on east side of road?*
  - Preliminary study found it was easier to go on the east side. East side also gives access to Wegmans, shopping centers, and County administration building. We provide connections via crosswalks to the other side of the road to access destinations there as well. Segment II provides two crossings. The most southern one accesses Ross and the trail system to the west of Dobbin Road which can be used to access the pathway to Lake Elkhorn.
3. *Is there planting proposed for Segment II?*
  - We will do planting plans as part of the final design process. There will be challenges with utilities. Effort will be made to mitigate tree impact along that corridor.
4. *Who will be responsible for clearing snow off of the pathway?*
  - Clearing sidewalks are the responsibility of the adjacent property owner. Shared use pathways are different (wider, signage, markings) and therefore the County will be responsible.
5. *Explain more about Segment I and the connection to Wegmans on McGaw Road?*
  - The shared use pathway is proposed on the east side of Dobbin Road with a new signalized crossing of McGaw Road and a new sidewalk will be added along the north side of McGaw Road from Dobbin Road to the existing sidewalk and signalized crossing at Stanford Boulevard to complete the connection to Wegmans.
6. *This is wonderful.*
7. *Will the retaining walls be made out of timber to reduce severity of impact of crashes into them (by bicyclists)?*
  - These walls are considered low landscape walls (below 4-5 feet) so they can be a smaller structure wall. During the final design we will decide on exact materials. We are providing a wider trail segment with an additional 2 feet of pavement adjacent to the wall to allow for extra clearance. The walls are currently showed as concrete for the purposes of the cost estimate.
8. *Is there a timeline for improvements by SHA at intersection of Dobbin and MD 175.*
  - No, we do not have a definitive timeline. We have just started conversations with SHA on that. Currently, the crossing at MD 175 is decent; it is sidewalk not pathway. There is a valid crossing there now and hoping the SHA will bring it up to the same standard as other crossings.
9. *Comments regarding excitement over the projects.*
10. *Adjacent segments from Old Dobbin Road to McGaw Road on Snowden River. Would be nice to have better upkeep of the current sidewalk.*
  - This is a different project than the current one. We will make a note of this as this is a County Road.
  - Maintenance responsibility for sidewalks is on the adjacent property owners and we can look at who that might be. Sometimes that sidewalk can get overgrown with weeds, etc. and that maybe what this question is referring to.

11. *What's the likelihood that the speed limit on this stretch of road will be reduced given the increase in pedestrian and bike traffic?*
- We will be keeping bicycle and pedestrian traffic off of the road with this project onto pathway, but they still need to cross the streets. Lower speeds are usually safer for everybody. Not part of this project, but we can bring this suggestion to the Department of Public Works, and they have a process to study to see if any changes in speed limit are feasible and appropriate.
12. *There is a trail from the Elkhorn Branch trail to the west side of Dobbin Road. Please consider a connection across Dobbin Road to the new pathway.*
- Perhaps the comment is to do it in a more direct fashion. Currently a connection is planned at the southern Dobbin Center intersection because there is an existing signal there. Can be difficult to put one in elsewhere because of sightlines issues or the need for a new signal. We determined a signalized crossing was needed at that location.
13. *Concerning the schedule. Would like to see Segment I and II installed first. It seems that Segment III will only be useful once Segment II is installed. It seems that Segment III will only be useful once Segment II is installed.*
- Agreed, but the Segments I and II have fairly high costs and are not currently funded for construction. We will keep working on locating funding for those segments. If we are able to secure funding that would help accelerate the schedule.
14. *I believe there is a path already around the pond near the Loyola building. Is there a plan to tie Segment I into that path?*
- There is a pathway at least for a portion of the pond that connects from some businesses to retail center. Pathway connection to Stanford Blvd might be a possibility. We did look at this early on in the project and the issue is that any impacts to the slope may be considered pond embankment impacts, and there is a cut-off wall built into that slope. In order to meet ADA requirements we would need a pretty significant structure to meet the trail on the top of that embankment. It is a challenging site to build on to.
15. *What is a bicycle facility?*
- Term for improvements or accommodations for people on bicycles, including on-street bike lanes, or a shared-use pathway (for pedestrians and bicyclists), or protected bike lanes that are on-street with buffering or vertical elements providing separation from vehicular traffic.
16. *Are there stairs near Pub Dog down toward Dobbin Road? Is there a plan to tie Segment I into those?*
- Located at North side of pond, and no, there are not stairs at that location leading to Dobbin Road. The connection at that location is via Stanford Blvd.
17. *Request for more crosswalk locations 1. Snowden from McGaw accessing BJs and other stores. 2. Dobbin or Old Dobbin where Target is on one side and REI on the other.*
- The would not be part of this current project but could be considered for a future projects. We will add it to our log.
  - Second suggestions might be part of Segment IV near REI and will look at crossing opportunities at that time.
18. *Is there any coordination with the businesses (especially Wegmans) to help tie their facilities into the new path?*
- We have one connection to Wegmans in the plan. Property owners could consider connections from their property to the pathway. However, the County is not aware of any being pursued at this time.
19. *Has the County ever considered making connections to Elkhorn Branch Trail from nearby (in addition to the one that is already there)?*
- We are not aware of any connections to the trail by other properties at this time. There is quite a slope there so it would be difficult to make connections there.

20. *Another question about the crossing of the same trail from Dobbin Center Way.*
- The stream itself is in between the pathway and that segment of road. It would require another bridge crossing and is not being considered at this time.
21. *What is the connection from the Lake Elkhorn Pathway to Oakland Mills Road?*
- There will be crossing improvements at Oakland Mills Road and Dobbin Road intersection – some coming from this project and some from the Oakland Mills Road project. It will make crossing this intersection to access the Elkhorn pathway much easier.
22. *Clarification on Snowden River Parkway sidewalk. Weeds are overgrown.*
- The sidewalk is directly adjacent to the roadway, so we understand the request to add some buffering between the sidewalk and the roadway to make it more comfortable.
23. *Will the location of the pathway inhibit access to the shopping center where Ale House is located?*
- There is a crosswalk proposed at Dobbin Center Way intersection. It will connect to one of the commercial parking lots and the back area of the Ale House – which then connects to sidewalk network at Ale House.
24. *Question concerning project location*
- Pathway would provide connection from Old Dobbin Road at Columbia Crossing along Dobbin Road to McGaw Road and to Oakland Mills Road.
25. *Clarification concerning access PF Changs (Pei Wei) which is also in the Ale House parking area.*
- Yes, the pathway would provide access to Pei Wei. Please see previous response concerning Ale House.
26. *Clarify crossing from Elkhorn Branch Trail spur to Stanford Blvd.*
- Pedestrian crossing at the signal is being added at southern Dobbin Center entrance (access to MVA). That connects to Elkhorn Branch Trail spur. There will be a pedestrian crossing with push button activated pedestrian crossing to pathway then to Stanford or wherever you might be going.
27. *Question re: location of Ross and thrift stores.*
- They are located in the shopping center across Dobbin Road from the MVA and north of Stanford Blvd.
28. *Do you have funding to add bike racks to commercial properties?*
- We do not, and typically we do not add bike racks to commercial properties. We did at one time have a grant funded program to add bike racks at different locations in the County. That grant period is now over. We can suggest to the private property owners to add them themselves. If it is a public facility, then yes, we would pursue providing a bike rack.
29. *Will there be integration with bus routes?*
- There is a bus stop along with Dobbin Center for the RTA. Also commuter buses pick up along Dobbin Road as well, but there are no pedestrian facilities at those locations. We will look closer at the intersection at Dobbin Center Way/Dobbin Road in the next stage of design for pedestrian facilities to connect to bus transit.
30. *In Segment II, as part of the private driveway reconstruction, and Stanford Blvd re-grading, was a raised crosswalk considered?*
- We actually ended up with somewhat of a raised crosswalk. We needed to narrow the roadway to create enough room for the pathway. A 10-foot wide crosswalk was required at that location and the reconstruction of the curb resulted in a shallow reveal. So we almost have a raised crosswalk intersection.
  - The other issue is drainage coming from Stanford Blvd. Crossing Stanford Blvd could cause some drainage issues. This solution addresses it.

## Public Comments from Chat Log - October 28, 2021

Minor edits made for grammar and clarity.

1. Do any of these cover a path from Columbia Crossing to McGaw Rd.?
2. Does the County have adequate right-of-way now to execute the project as designed?
3. I can't remember exactly where the intersection of Col Crossing is. What's the nearest store? or restaurant?
4. Why was Segment III chosen to be constructed first?
5. Once we cross 175, any easier access to anything such as Walmart or PF Chang's?
6. Is one of the lights at Segment II, the one that leads to the back of Ross or more to the front of Ross & the Thrift store?
7. Why was Segment II sited on the east side of Dobbin Road vs the west side?
8. Who will be responsible for clearing snow on the shared use paths?
9. Is there planting proposed in the buffer zone for Segment II?
10. Will there be a crosswalk to cross Oakland Mills Road to access the Elkhorn Branch Trail to the west?
11. Is Segment I planned along McGaw Road to connect to Wegmans? Or is it just for the portion of Dobbin between McGaw and Oakland Mills?
12. This is wonderful, and I can't wait to use the new facilities. Will the retaining walls that are beside the path be constructed of timber to reduce the severity of any crashes into them?
13. Is there an expected design/construction timeline from SHA for the reconstruction of the MD175 intersection?
14. When are the upgrades to the MD 175/Dobbin Rd intersection anticipated?
15. Thank you for an informative presentation
16. All sections look fantastic. Will be an amazing addition to walkway/biking. How would we get consideration for an improvement to the sidewalk from Old Dobbin to McGaw on Snowden River Pkwy? Would be nice to have a buffer from the road, and if nothing else, better upkeep of the sidewalk.
17. What's the likelihood that the speed limit on this stretch of road will be reduced given the increase in pedestrian and bike traffic?
18. There is a trail from the Elkhorn Branch trail to the west side of Dobbin Road behind Walmart. Please consider a connection across Dobbin Road to the new pathway. Going to the nearest intersection would be quite a detour for pedestrians headed to the Health Department
19. Comment: I like the design, but I am concerned the schedule for the construction is not optimal. It seems that Segment III will only be useful once Segment II is installed; while Segments I and II seem to be useful sections independent of whether any of the other sections are constructed.
20. I believe there is a path already around the pond near the Loyola building. Is there a plan to tie Segment I into that path?
21. How about two crosswalks. 1) on Snowden from McGaw to cross Snowden (& access to BJ's plus) 2) on Old Dobbin or Dobbin, between the two Columbia Crossings - Target on one side, REI on the other
22. Also, I may be remembering incorrectly but are there stairs near pub dog down toward Dobbin? Is there a plan to tie Segment I into those?
23. What is a bicycle facility?
24. Is there any coordination with the businesses (especially Wegmans) to help tie their facilities into the new path?
25. Has the county ever considered making connections to Elkhorn Branch Trail?
26. Sorry if we missed it, but what is the timeline for continuing up Dobbin to connect to the pathway on the west behind the buildings (that goes under Oakland Mills on the south)?
27. Yes, weeds overgrown on Snowden sidewalk, but also, it hugs the road, so scary walking or biking on it
28. I'm excited about the proposed pathways. I often drop vehicles for service in the area and rather than sit in the waiting room, I walk in the area. The pathway will make things much safer to get from location to location in the area.

29. What is the recommended method to go from Lake Elkhorn to this bike lane? Will the OM / Dobbin intersection have an easy crossing?
30. Thank you! Very excited about this project
31. I see a lot of value in just Segment III.
32. Was a more direct connection to the elkhorn branch trail to Dobbin Center Way through the BGE right of way considered?
33. Crosswalks?
34. Thanks so much for these. It is so exciting to see this all coming together. We really appreciate your continued commitment.
35. Actually the Elkhorn Branch connects further north, above the green II, above the MVA
36. Can you clarify again, how you'd safely cross Dobbin from Elkhorn Branch to get to Stanford?
37. Do you have any additional funding to add bike racks on some of the adjacent commercial properties from the office park that Elkhorn leads to
38. If I understand correctly, the Segments will all be along the east side. Will that inhibit path access to the shopping center that Ale House is located in?
39. Possible recommendation: It seems like the Elkhorn branch trail could be extended under the powerlines near Alehouse to the back of those parking lots.
40. I see the connection to Ale House now. Thank you.
41. In Segment II, as part of the private driveway reconstruction, and Stanford Blvd re-grading, was a raised crosswalk considered?
42. Small suggestion for next presentation. Would be nice if you could label some of the stores.
43. Great!
44. Thanks on elkhorn/ dobbin crossing at Stanford
45. How will this integrate with bus routes and bus stops?
46. Great work everyone!!
47. Great presentation. Thank you! Look forward to Segment 1 being complete.
48. When do we hear again?