



FREDERICK COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
November 8, 2017

TITLE: **Public Hearing on the Draft 2017
Bikeways and Trails Plan**

REQUEST: Public hearing to take comments on the Draft Plan. The Commission will consider making a recommendation to the County Council.

DOCUMENT: <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/4297/Bicycle-and-Pedestrian-Plan-Update>

STAFF: Ronald T. Burns, P.E.

ATTACHMENTS: Exhibit 1- Compilation of Comments on the Draft Plan

Division of Planning & Permitting STAFF REPORT

ISSUE

Staff is requesting a review the Draft Plan to make revisions and forward a Recommended Plan to the County Council.

The purpose of this Bikeways and Trails Plan update strives to achieve the following:

- Incorporate related goals, policies, and action items from the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan.
- Assess the off-street trail corridors identified in the 1999 Plan to refine their scope and to either add new corridors or remove corridors from the Plan.
- Assess the on-street bicycle facilities in the 1999 Plan for revisions, additions, or deletions.
- Expand the Plan to include a pedestrian component and how the planning and design for both pedestrian and bicycle/trail facilities need to be considered in a comprehensive approach.
- Include the consideration of a Complete Streets policy that could be adopted.
- Address the coordination of planned county path and bicycle facilities with both regional and municipal facilities that either exist or are planned.
- Identify implementation and funding opportunities.

BACKGROUND

The Frederick County Bikeways & Trails Plan was first prepared and adopted in 1999. The 1999 Plan proposed over 174 miles of combined natural surface and multiple-use trails along with 334 miles of On-street bikeways. The Plan also developed design standards for both off-street trails and on-street bikeways. Since 1999 the City of Frederick has adopted its own Shared Use Path Plan (2002) and has been very active in developing off-street paths and on-street bicycle facilities within the City. Also of note since 1999 there has been a significant increase in the advocacy by citizen organizations to construct bicycle facilities in the City and County. The adoption of the 2010 Frederick County Comprehensive Plan includes an action item which specifically calls for an update to the 1999 Plan.

ANALYSIS

With a countywide focus this Plan is meant to provide a conceptual framework for multi-use trails and bicycle facilities and will not provide and detailed design or engineering for a particular facility. The Plan recognizes that there will need to be follow-up studies conducted to address overall feasibility, design, and operational issues. Identification of a trail corridor in this Plan does not guarantee that it will be developed if further studies find either engineering feasibility or operational issues that may result in a particular corridor being dropped from consideration.

An effort has been made to be consistent with like plans from the State, local municipalities/city of Frederick, neighboring counties, and Livable Frederick. This would help maintain continuity of facilities at political borders and accommodate longer term travel.

Unlike the 1999 plan, this plan addresses pedestrian infrastructure needs and issues such as sidewalk networks, crossing improvements and safe (walking and biking) routes to school.

This Plan will implement the emphasis on a multi-modal transportation framework established in the 2010 County Comprehensive Plan under the *Providing Transportation Choices* chapter. The focus of a balanced, multi-modal transportation system provides mobility for the general population with automobiles but also for people who may not be automobile dependents. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are but one component of a multi-modal transportation network necessary to address existing and future mobility needs in the county.

The Comprehensive Plan has adopted the following goals and policies to guide the implementation of a multi-modal system and specifically support the pedestrian and bicycle components.

Goals

- TR-G-01 Plan a safe, coordinated and multi-modal transportation system on the basis of existing & future development needs, land uses and travel patterns.*
- TR-G-02 Integrate transit, pedestrian, bicycling and ADA accessible facilities into the County's existing roadways and communities and the design of new roadways and communities.*
- TR-G-03 Maintain and enhance the quality of the transportation system to assure an acceptable level of service, safety and travel conditions for all roadway users.*
- TR-G-04 Reduce the need for single occupancy auto use through travel demand management and increasing the share of trips handled by bus; rail; ride-sharing; bicycling and walking.*

Policies

- TR-P-15 Accommodate safe use and access in the design and maintenance of all developer or County funded road projects by public transportation, cyclists, pedestrians and users with disabilities.*
- TR-P-06 Support the implementation of the Countywide Bikeways and Trails plan including identifying needed sidewalk, shared-use path, on-street bikeway improvements; maintenance; education and enforcement.*
- TR-P-07 Ensure commercial and residential development constructs shared use paths and on-street bikeways designated in the County Bikeways & Trails Plan that pass through or immediately adjacent to their proposed development site. Easements in lieu of constructed improvements may be provided in the case of shared use paths.*
- TR-P-08 Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian network implementation based on providing safe and functional transportation connections between residential, employment, recreational, shopping, schools and transit centers.*
- TR-P-09 Pursue the shared use of existing and proposed publicly and privately owned utility right-of-ways for the purposes of establishing shared use path facilities.*
- TR-P-25 Employ Transportation Demand Management (TDM) options such as ridesharing, transit provisions and incentives, commuter outreach programs, non-motorized and ride-sharing transportation facility provision, community outreach, tele-work and parking demand management as an integral part of county, developer, and state roadway projects in Frederick County.*
- TR-P-16 Foster close coordination between Frederick County and the Maryland Department of Transportation; the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments; and adjoining jurisdictions on matters related to funding; management of existing transportation networks; planning and programmed improvements; data collection and modeling; emergency through routes; land use plans and coordinated legislative actions.*

- TR-P-20 Identify and improve the location and alignment of new roads, bicycle/pedestrian connections and transit links in advance of future need to coordinate establishment of right of way requirements and access control.*
- TR-P-03 Maximize transportation network connectivity by providing an interconnected street and transportation network within and between new and existing development.*
- TR-P-10 Encourage higher density and mixed use residential and employment centered transit oriented development in growth areas that are served by or could be served by rail service, local and regional bus transfer points, shared-use paths and ride-sharing facilities.*

In this 2017 Draft Plan, the goals have been organized under broad goal statements that provide structure for the organization of the draft Plan.

Vision Statement

Frederick County will be a community where bicycling and walking are viable modes of travel for recreation and transportation purposes. A network of bikeways and multi-use trails will provide safe and convenient connections between municipalities through improved access to recreational, historical/cultural, commercial, and employment areas.

Goals

1. Safety/Encouragement

To reduce the number of cyclist and pedestrian crashes in Frederick County

- Provide bicycle facilities that offer safe riding for basic cyclists.
- Develop local law enforcement programs and educational efforts to promote safe and courteous bicycle use on trails and roadways.
- Encourage public/private partnerships and volunteerism for trail construction, maintenance and safety patrols.

2. Connectivity

To provide safe options for non-motorized transportation and recreational trips for residents and visitors, accommodating all ages and abilities

- Provide recreational bikeway access or trail connections to all ages and abilities of users, to existing and planned park and recreation facilities, schools, and cultural/historic sites.
- Develop bikeway and trail corridors that connect with existing and planned regional facilities beyond Frederick County.

3. Opportunity

Increase the proportion of work and transportation trips by walking and bicycling

- Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections and access between residential, commercial, employment, and educational institutions to accommodate all ages and abilities of users.
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian access along with bicycle parking to MARC stations, local TRANSIT bus stops, commuter bus stops, and park and ride lots.

4. *Planning/Design/Implementation*

Accommodate pedestrian and bicycling designs up front in the planning and design of our roadways and communities

- Support a Complete Streets policy for new road construction and for improvement projects on existing roads.
- Develop corridors/facilities that meet the shared needs of cyclists, walkers/hikers, equestrians, and other leisure users.
- Accommodate bicycle and pedestrian access into the design of new development and existing communities impacted by development.
- Evaluate the opportunity for bikeways and trails in existing and proposed utility lines, existing and abandoned railroad lines, and along waterways.
- Seek funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Exhibit # 1 has been developed to identify all comments received to date, at and since the October 11 Planning Commission meeting. Staff is in agreement with the vast majority of the comments as they will add to the accuracy and effectiveness of the plan, as well as its ultimate implementation.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff is recommending that the Planning Commission consider the public and agency comments and provide any revisions/recommendations to the Draft Plan and forward a recommended plan to the County Council. The recommendation should also reference a finding of consistency with the County Comprehensive Plan.

Based upon the comments made at the Commission's October 11, 2017 meeting and those received since then, staff recommends that the Draft Plan be amended to incorporate comments received for as part of a recommended plan.

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL

I move that the Planning Commission find the Draft Bikeways and Trails Plan to be consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan and to forward the Recommended Bikeways and Trails Plan for approval by the County Council.

Exhibit #1 - Compilation of Comments on the Draft Plan

Page/Chapter Figure	Comment	Response
4	Acknowledge Holly Nelson and David Olney	Concur
6	Assure consistency with Livable Frederick	Confirmed – note in 4 th paragraph
Ch. 2	Add discussion on safety action plan	Concur: Resource: USDOT 8/17 publication
25	Reference MDOT Design Guidelines	Concur
26	ID jurisdictions with complete street policy	Concur
26	Delay signal phase - bike/peds to advance	Concur
27	Colored bike lane - not conforming with MUTCD	Keep, but reference non-conformance
31	Improve/move hard to read graphic to appendix	Concur
Fig 3.2	Better label roads	Concur
36	Add to Rails to Trails discussion	Concur
36	Add support to Agritourism as key aspect	Concur
Ch. 4	Discuss developer role in off-road trails	Concur
42-43 Fig 4.1	Remove all private trails	Concur
43	List all Trail Projects to compliment map	Concur
43	Add Frederick to C&O sidepath to priority list	Concur
Fig 4.1	Add Middletown trails near Remsburg Park	Concur
Fig 4.1	Better Label roads	Concur
46	Add citizen involvement in trail planning	Concur
47	R/W requirement table is confusing	Remove the row regarding bikeways
50	Quantify Maintenance Costs (per year/mile?)	Will investigate
50-53	Consider State Housing & Community Development block grants as a funding source	Will investigate
54	Form County sanctioned bike/ped committee	Concur but as subcommittee to TSAC
54	Add access to TRANSIT stops as criterion for priority determination	Concur
Profile	Modify limits of Ballenger Creek Trail	Delete in BC Park & extend to MD 85