Public Meeting on the Draft 2017 Bikeways and Trails Plan

The Commission will consider making a recommendation to the County Council: 1) finding conformance with the comprehensive Plan and 2) identifying changes to the plan document.

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

Ronald T. Burns, Transportation Engineer

Exhibit #1- Compilation of Comments on the Draft Plan
Exhibit #2 – Written comments since the November 8 Hearing
ISSUE

Staff is requesting a review the Draft Plan to find conformance with the Comprehensive plan and forward a Recommended Plan to the County Council with proposed revisions.

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 and proposes 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 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.

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 suggested changes to the draft plan received to date. 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 November 8, 2017 hearing and those received before and since then, staff recommends that the Draft Plan be amended to incorporate comments received for as part of a recommended plan as noted in Exhibit #1.
PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION

MOTION(S) TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL

I move that the Planning Commission forward the Draft Bikeways and Trails Plan to the County Council with the changes approved by staff in Exhibit #1, and as modified as follows:

I move that the Planning Commission find the Draft Bikeways and Trails Plan as amended by this Commission 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item #</th>
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<th>Response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Account for improvements since 1999: trails, funding, bike compatible shoulders, signing, marking</td>
<td>William Smith&lt;br&gt;Alyssa Boxhill&lt;br&gt;Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;Kim Lamphier</td>
<td>Disagree – it has been established that we have less than desirable performance, this exercise would add to time and costs to finalize plan. Instead highlight past performance qualitatively in text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bicycle Safety: Add Action Plan concept to text and as implementation action item. Address additional safety issues in the text relating to: user etiquette, R/W, benefit of commuter &amp; recreational safety, funding, standards, education, enforcement, etc.</td>
<td>Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;FCPC Member&lt;br&gt;John Turner&lt;br&gt;Matt Suibert&lt;br&gt;Kevin Sellner&lt;br&gt;Carole Heine&lt;br&gt;Stan Mordenski&lt;br&gt;Sara Robbins</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Budgeted annual CIP line item for projects are to be mandated</td>
<td>William Smith&lt;br&gt;Alyssa Boxhill&lt;br&gt;Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;Kim Lamphier</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>City of Frederick: Assure consistency with City trail system (as well as all municipalities)</td>
<td>Tim Davis&lt;br&gt;John Fieseler&lt;br&gt;City of Frederick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Agree – will confirm and correct any inconsistencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Complete Street Policy: plan should require</td>
<td>William Smith&lt;br&gt;Alyssa Boxhill&lt;br&gt;Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;Kim Lamphier</td>
<td>Disagree – a functional master plan should never require a policy that has ramifications for other disciplines. The text not only highly recommends the adoption of the policy, but also provides a template to do so in the appendix.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cost or right of way information for projects is missing and should be calculated</td>
<td>Bruce Holstein&lt;br&gt;Rhonda Bean&lt;br&gt;Catherine Adelaide</td>
<td>Disagree – This would be done as a post plan project prioritization or project development design, if ever built</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CSX (Bush Creek) Trail Connection: Retain with new connection to Mount Airy and do not delete</td>
<td>Town of Mount Airy&lt;br&gt;Carroll County&lt;br&gt;Jon Arnold&lt;br&gt;Larry Heshner</td>
<td>Consider - Staff recommends deleting the Bush Creek (CSX) Trail, east of MD 75, as its constructability is questionable; bike lanes on Old National Pike the alternative; but Mount Airy is looking to implement the trail there. Propose to meet with town to collaborate and replace in plan if justified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Detailed studies need to be completed and incorporated in the plan that includes costs, benefits (such as attractiveness between employment and residential areas), impacts, etc. so that a priority list may be accomplished identifying the low hanging fruit along with a commitment to implement within a prescribed timeframe, such as 15 years</td>
<td>William Smith&lt;br&gt;Alyssa Boxhill&lt;br&gt;Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;Kim Lamphier&lt;br&gt;Jaime McKay</td>
<td>Disagree – This level of study is recommended as a post plan activity. Based on current staffing, if this is required now it could delay the submission of the plan to the CC by a year +/-</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Developer coordination: emphasis is needed to assure maximum construction opportunity of trails and bikeways/shoulders</td>
<td>FCPC Members&lt;br&gt;Ann Abeles</td>
<td>Agree – emphasis to be added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Economic Development benefit of trails and bike ped routes with for both commuters and recreation need to be better emphasized</td>
<td>Bill Turner&lt;br&gt;Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;Bryant Despeaux&lt;br&gt;Vicki Grinder, Town of Thurmont&lt;br&gt;William Smith&lt;br&gt;John Fieseler&lt;br&gt;Richard Griffin&lt;br&gt;Clyde Hicks</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Emmitsburg connections to C&amp;O Towpath and Mount St. Mary’s University</td>
<td>Town of Emmitsburg</td>
<td>Agree – while this objective is satisfied in the text by various facilities, the town to towpath route would be identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>FCPS curriculum: Add safety and education to PE</td>
<td>Town of Emmitsburg</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Fitness benefit: add emphasis</td>
<td>Lou King, FSRC&lt;br&gt;Clyde Hicks&lt;br&gt;Matt Suibert</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Funding, capital and maintenance must be better addressed</td>
<td>FCPC Member</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Form a County sanctioned Bike/Ped committee</td>
<td>William Smith&lt;br&gt;Alyssa Boxhill&lt;br&gt;Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;Kim Lamphier</td>
<td>Agree, but as a subcommittee to TSAC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>High speed road impacts on bike use need discussion</td>
<td>MDOT SHA&lt;br&gt;FCPC Member</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Hire full time Ped/bike coordinator</td>
<td>Frederick Bicycle Coalition&lt;br&gt;Ann Abeles&lt;br&gt;William Smith&lt;br&gt;Alyssa Boxhill&lt;br&gt;Shayne Boucher&lt;br&gt;Kim Lamphier&lt;br&gt;Clyde Hicks&lt;br&gt;Ann Abeles&lt;br&gt;Clyde Hicks</td>
<td>Partially agree, but as a FTE position, that could be split between: Planning, Parks and DPW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Hiring full time Ped/Bike coordinator is too prescriptive, should be reworded</td>
<td>FCPC Member</td>
<td>Agree – see above. The job junction needs to be covered but not necessarily a defined person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>H &amp; F Trial Priority: sub-segment from Thurmont to Catoctin Furnace, looping back to Thurmont via State and National Parks</td>
<td>John Kinnard, Mayor&lt;br&gt;Vicki Grinder, Town of Thurmont</td>
<td>Agree to investigate and report if viable</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>I-270 Trail location needs to be flexible to take advantage of I-270 expansion</td>
<td>Lib Root</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Implementation of projects need acceleration and prioritization ranking</td>
<td>FCPC Members, Shayne Boucher, Ann Abeles</td>
<td>Agree – emphasis to be added</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>List all trails and bikeways to compliment maps</td>
<td>Lib Root, Clyde Hicks</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Livable Frederick: Assure consistency</td>
<td>FCPC Member</td>
<td>Agree – done and will add to text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Main Street Connectors between Frederick, Thurmont, Brunswick and Middletown: Prioritize; seed money now available for preliminary engineering</td>
<td>Downtown Frederick Partnership, Tourism Council of Frederick County</td>
<td>Agree — would add to the Chapter 4 priority listing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Maintenance costs chart: quantify time frame – per year per mile?</td>
<td>FCPC Member</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Middletown Trail system: Incorporate into County plan</td>
<td>Town of Middletown</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Monocacy River Trail: Remove all references</td>
<td>Bruce Holstein, Lisa Bell, Earl Bell, Margaret Elgin, Jim Bittner, Rhonda Bean</td>
<td>Disagree – the majority of the trail has already been removed (from the north end of the Monocacy Battlefield to MD 28). The section from Pinecliff Park to the Battlefield would remain subject to no objection from the NPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Mount Airy Trail System: Incorporate into County Plan</td>
<td>Town of Mount Airy</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>MWCOG Coordination should be done</td>
<td>City of Frederick</td>
<td>Agree – would amend plan to be consistent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>New Design Rd Sidepath: Prioritize</td>
<td>Shayne Boucher, City of Frederick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Clyde Hicks, Richard Griffin</td>
<td>Agree - would add to the Chapter 4 priority listing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Park Mills Road Bikeway: why was it removed</td>
<td>FCP member</td>
<td>Agree – as Urbana expands, user potential would increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Performance Measurement needs to be proposed in plan to chart progress, esp. miles added, safety improvements, user numbers and timeframes</td>
<td>William Smith, Clyde Hicks, Ann Abeles, Bryant Despeaux, City of Frederick Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Private Property owners rights not to sell is paramount; concerns with language on p. 37</td>
<td>Bruce Holstein, Lisa Bell, Leslie McMullen, Richard Rothschild</td>
<td>Agree – will emphasize in text that the policy to only acquire property by settlement and not condemnation should be retained and that a project may only move forward if all private property owners</td>
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<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Public-Private Partnerships: Investigate as a funding mechanism</td>
<td>Lou King, FSRC</td>
<td>Agree to examine and report in text if viable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Private Trails should be removed</td>
<td>FCPC</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Sidewalk/Crosswalks at TransIT stops should be prioritized</td>
<td>TSAC</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>State Spine Bike Network (draft): Strive for consistency if possible</td>
<td>MDOT SHA</td>
<td>Agree – would incorporate latest MDOT draft prior to submittal to CC, since it has been vetted by County and City of Frederick staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Tourism/Agritourism benefits need to be highlighted/better emphasized</td>
<td>Tourism Council of Frederick County, Frederick Bicycle Coalition, Lib Root, John Thomas, William Smith, Alyssa Boxhill, Shayne Boucher, Kim Lamphier, Tom Moore, Kevin Sellner, Richard Griffin</td>
<td>Agree – will better elaborate in text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>US 15 Crossings north of Monocacy Blvd.: address unsafe crossings</td>
<td>Ann Abeles, Carole Heine</td>
<td>Agree – deserves mention to work with MDOT SHA on this challenging movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear County Executive and Planning Board,

This letter is to add our endorsement to the new proposed Frederick County Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan.

The Frederick Bicycle Coalition, a 501(c)3, supports the vision of establishing this comprehensive system. We believe its adoption will have an overwhelmingly positive effect on our community by providing a transportation mode that promotes positive, healthy, and active outdoor lifestyles for our local youth, parents and families.

Additionally, a strong path infrastructure will provide a significant economic impact in both the state and the region. We also see this master plan as a key component to reducing cycling injuries and fatalities across Frederick County.

We would gladly welcome the opportunity to partner with the county to assist in the adoption of this forward-thinking transportation, recreation, and lifestyle plan.

Sincerely,

Roger Rinker
Founding Chair, Frederick Bicycle Coalition
For the post 11/8 file

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Stubbs, Chris" <chris_stubbs@nps.gov>
Date: November 30, 2017 at 12:25:58 PM PST
To: <rburns@frederickcounty.gov>
Cc: Tammy Stidham <tammy_stidham@nps.gov>, Andrew Banasik <Andrew_Banasik@nps.gov>

Subject: NPS Comments on Frederick County Bikeways and Trails Plan

Dear Ron,

Thanks for taking time to talk with me the other day about the Frederick County Bikeways and Trails Plan. As I mentioned, we only became aware of this plan a couple of days ago, and we were unaware of the Planning Commission meeting on November 8. Please find, below, some general comments that we would like to submit.

I'd like to assure you that multi-modal transportation, and appropriate trail connections between Frederick County and the Monocacy National Battlefield are a high priority for the National Park Service. In 2017 we completed our Public Access Plan (https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?parkID=192&projectID=60366&documentID=77260) which aligns in many ways with your Bikeways and Trails Plan, yet we find no reference to it. Specifically, we find the following goals in your plan that align with our Access Plan:

- Page 6: "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"
- Page 6: "A network of bikeways and multi-use trails will provide safe and convenient connections between municipalities through improved access to recreational, historic/cultural, commercial, and employment areas"
- Page 7: "Integrate transit, pedestrian, bicycling and ADA accessible facilities into the County's existing roadways and communities..."
- Page 9: "GOAL: Connectivity. 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"

All these point to easy alignment with goals and action items in the Selected Alternative in the Access Plan and recurring themes in the County’s plan include "connectivity", "regional connections", "shared/multi-use trails", "recreation", "improved access", and "comprehensive planning."

Your plan states on page 42 that, "The National Park Service finds a trail traversing its Monocacy Battlefield as undesirable," yet the park currently has approximately 7.5 miles of trails, with a proposed 8 more miles in the Access Plan. Additionally, your maps show several natural surface or multi-use trails dead ending at the park, but we are unaware of efforts to discuss or plan for appropriate connections.
Given this, we request a meeting with the County to align our various planning efforts and discuss trail connections. It is in the interest of the citizens of Frederick County and visitors to the park that we collaborate on this effort, and as such, I ask that you not finalize your plan until we do so.

Please feel free to call me at any time. I look forward to working with your office on the County Bikeways and Trails Plan.

Kind regards,

Chris Stubbs

Christopher J. Stubbs
Superintendent
Monocacy National Battlefield
Cell: (301) 302-6239
Dear County Executive and Planning Board,

This letter is to add our endorsement to the new proposed Frederick County Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan.

The Frederick Bicycle Coalition, a 501(c)3, supports the vision of establishing this comprehensive system. We believe its adoption will have an overwhelmingly positive effect on our community by providing a transportation mode that promotes positive, healthy, and active outdoor lifestyles for our local youth, parents and families.

Additionally, a strong path infrastructure will provide a significant economic impact in both the state and the region. We also see this master plan as a key component to reducing cycling injuries and fatalities across Frederick County.

We would gladly welcome the opportunity to partner with the county to assist in the adoption of this forward-thinking transportation, recreation, and lifestyle plan.

Sincerely,

Tom Rinker
Owner, The Bicycle Escape
Dear Frederick County Planning Commission Chairman Anthony Bruscia and Commission Members,

I am writing you in strong support of adoption and implementation of the 2017 Frederick County Bikeways and Trail Plan Update which you are considering at this time. Bikeways and Trails are strong quality of life and economic development drivers which serve as strong community differentiators and critical infrastructure to attract and retain the talented workforce of the future and provide meaningful transportation and recreation options. It has become more and more frequent that as my staff and I visit businesses, there are employees who walk or bike to work and/or who use the trail system at lunch for walking/running.

One can see the strong correlation between public investment in trail systems and the strong usage of the City’s Shared Use Path connecting east and west Frederick through Downtown Frederick and the adjacent private investment in businesses, homes, and tourism related activities. Nearly 1.7 million visitors (from more than 50 miles away) come to Frederick each year now and spend in excess of $1 million per day on food, lodging, and retail.

The City Bike and Pedestrian Committee continues to advance strategies for safer shared roadways and connected neighborhoods throughout the City. For example, the City through its Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) has worked hard over the past several years to connect Rock Creek Park under US15, through Baker Park and Downtown Frederick via Carroll Creek Park, and soon Renaissance Park (Matan – Renn Farm Development). This connection allows movement between retail and neighborhood centers for work and pleasure.

It is critical that the new city trail on the east side of Frederick when built in the coming months, be connected in a timely manner to the County system heading north and south along the Monocacy River. A future connection of Downtown Frederick to the C&O Canal via the Monocacy River Greenway Trail is highest priority. A connection to the south to the C&O Canal gives provides a unique opportunity for Fredericktonians to tap into a world class resource as well as attract some of the millions of people who use the C&O Canal each year. Access to the north is also critical to provide residents and businesses access to Downtown Frederick.

Adopting the county plan is the first step. Designing, financing, and implementing the plan is the equally vital.

Richard G. Griffin, AICP, CEcD
Director of Economic Development
The City of Frederick, Maryland USA
rgriffin@cityoffrederick.com
301-600-6361 (office)
301-401-8844 (mobile)
Greetings Frederick County Planning Commission,

Earlier this year, the Governors Highway Safety Association distributed a report “A Right to the Road: Understanding & Addressing Bicyclist Safety”. It contains a number of significant insights on how and why bike crashes happen and makes important recommendations to protect cyclists from injuries and deaths (for reference, see link: http://www.ghsa.org/sites/default/files/2017-09/2017BicyclistSafetyReport-FINAL.pdf).

As vulnerable road users, it is vital for Frederick County to build trails, bikeways and roadways that enable cyclists to ride safely on county roads. By designing, planning and implementing safe bicycle facilities, it will make riders feel safer on the roadways and promote cycling within the community. Furthermore, it will extend the impact that local bike educators like myself can have in promoting cycling as a practical, economical, sustainable, healthy, enjoyable and safe form of transportation, especially as we strive to realize our shared community vision of a Livable Frederick County.

Below are some recommendations applicable to Frederick County. These recommendations should be considered for inclusion in the Frederick County Bikeways & Trail Plan:

- Establish a dedicated local funding source for bicyclist safety initiatives. (page 32)
- Follow design standards that offer a model for designing safe, attractive and sustainable streets that accommodate and encourage bicycling. (page 41)
- Couple new or improved infrastructure with educational and enforcement strategies that convey why and how the roadway improvement works. (page 48)
- Adopt Complete Streets policies. (page 50)

Regards,

Shayne Boucher
Bicycle Educator
Certified League Cycling Instructor
November 21, 2017

The Honorable Jan Gardner

County Executive Frederick County, Maryland
12 East Church Street
Frederick, MD 21701

Dear Madam County Executive:

The draft 2017 Frederick County Bikeways and Trail Plan does not lay out a strong vision or implementation plan to create a established in the 1999 plan that provided a strong bicycling network to encourage and support both basic transportation and recreation. We know that these facilities are a key component in attracting new businesses and new residents to our community.

We request that key features be included in the draft Bicycle Plan to ensure that both Frederick County residents and visitors have access to cycling facilities that are based on best practices and promote commuter transportation, short trip errands, healthy exercise, and recreation.

In analyzing Frederick County’s plan, this team has looked to both Howard County -- and Washington County bikeway plans that follow best practices.

The 1999 Frederick County Bicycle Plan proposed 334 miles of on-road bicycle facilities. Generally these are facilitated by using either the road shoulder (as seen on New Design Road north of Elmer Derr Road), by striping designated bicycle lanes in the roadway, or by painting shared lane markings known as “Sharrows” in the roadway to indicate to motorists the presence of a designated bicycle route. They require paint and signage. As of November 2017, we find very little evidence that any of these 334 miles have been completed during the past 18 years.

The 1999 Plan also proposed 174 miles of off-road facilities such as paths and trails. These require a greater investment in planning, design, engineering, and construction and therefore take longer to implement. However, even with available funding from State and Federal sources, we can only find 2.5 miles of the Ballenger Creek Trail completed since the passage of the 1999 plan—and that was accomplished largely by private developers. (http://www.recreater.com/191/Ballenger-Creek-Linear-Trail).

We believe that the following suggestions are key to the success of this plan and will help to align Frederick County with best practices followed in neighboring counties.
The 2017 Bikeways and Trail Plan must include an accounting of what has been accomplished since 1999, including number of miles of on-road facilities and trails. It should also include an overview of funding (county, state and/or federal sources) used to accomplish these on-road trails such as a road-widening, painted bike lanes, and “Share The Road” signs.

With Counties and Municipalities of our size, almost all successful bicycle programs have a Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator who works with internal stakeholders, inter-agency heads, and community leaders to ensure that bikeways and trail plan implementation is reviewed and prioritized, adheres to planned timelines, and maintains transparency in its progress to the public.

The Frederick County Bikeways and Trail Plan must include a commitment and funding for a full-time Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator. This position should have significant authority to establish and implement priorities according to established timelines. We highly recommend that this position be located either in the County Executive’s Office or in the Department of Transit to support multi-modal planning, handle the inter-agency coordination required to implement the bikeways and trail plans, and identify and obtain external funding through grants, governmental programs and foundations/non-profit organizations.

We recommend the creation of a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to advise the Executive and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, and other stakeholders. This Committee would 1) review and prioritize plan components, 2) ensure goals and timelines are adhered to, and 3) issue an annual progress report.

A Complete Streets Plan states, in statute, that streets and roads are for everyone -- cyclists, pedestrians, transit riders, and motorists and that a road must include facilities for each of these users.

We strongly recommend adoption by Frederick County of a Complete Streets Policy in statute by Frederick County. The draft 2017 Bikeways and Trail Plan does an outstanding job of describing what Complete Streets look like and a variety of formats that fit within Complete Streets guidelines. What is lacking is a requirement to adopt Complete Streets guidelines as policy in Frederick County and applying those guidelines to new roads being built or existing roads being improved.
A strong plan to improve bikeways identifies projects by priority, using a stated set of criteria, and includes a timeline for completing these projects.

The Frederick County Bikeways and Trails plan must identify priority projects with timelines, costs and potential funding from county, state and/or federal sources.

The Bikeways and Trail plan must identify, prioritize and plan short trip connections that safely link bicyclists to businesses, retail offices, government agencies, schools and transit centers.

The Bikeways and Trail Plan must include a description of the criteria used to establish the priorities.

The Plan must establish metrics for measuring number of miles of on-road and trail facilities completed, cyclist counts on both road and trail facilities, effectiveness of safety and awareness campaigns, and other metrics deemed as needed and appropriate.

The Bikeways and Trail Plan must include a reasonable time-window to complete meet these goals. We suggest 15 years.

An effective bikeways plan will have a plan to fund the needed improvements

The County Executive must establish of a budget line-item to target budgetary dollars for projects prioritized and selected by the County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee in consultation with county executive and Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator. For the first year, we recommend a line-item of $750,000 to cover the upfront costs of engineering studies and design and accelerate planning and implementation of prioritized projects, especially those with low funding requirements.

There are both federal and state programs that provide significant funding for bikeways. Frederick County must maximize the use of these funding streams for successful implementation of this plan.

Communities where residents drive fewer miles are in high demand especially by corporations seeking to relocate or expand. Marriott recently announced a move to Bethesda where employees can easily take transit, bike, or walk to work. Amazon included easy access to bicycling in their request for communities to host their East Coast headquarters. Locally, Bill Turner of Thermo Fisher Scientific stressed the importance of bicycling when recruiting and retaining employees during his testimony before the Planning Commission.
Frederick County has a demonstrated ability to develop and implement outstanding facility plans. In particular Chapter 5 of the Educational Facility Master Plan, is an excellent model for any type of facility planning. It clearly states both a vision and has all of the components of a quality implementation plan. It is available at https://campussuite-storage.s3.amazonaws.com/prod/33903/86de7fb0-3a18-11e6-b537-22000bd8490f/1645437/705f42d8-b508-11e7-aa50-128336db5c14/file/EFMP2017FINALWEB-CH5.pdf

We believe that cyclists of all ages and abilities deserve a well-thought out Bikeways and Trail Plan that incorporates best practices, articulates a clear vision, and lays out the steps and timetable for achieving that vision. We ask that the plan be updated to include the listed recommendations, which will significantly improve the document into a plan that the County and its citizens can be proud of.

Sincerely,

William Smith, Frederick Pedalers Bicycle Club

Alyssa Boxhill, Frederick County Commuter of the Year 2015, League of American Bicyclists Certified Instructor

Shayne Boucher, Bike Educator and Certified League Cycling Instructor

Kim Lamphier, Bike Maryland
Burns, Ronald

From: Jon Arnold <jonbarnold@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, November 17, 2017 10:09 AM
To: Burns, Ronald
Subject: Bikeways and Trails Plan Update- keep eastern Bush Creek Trail

Hello Mr. Burns,

I am writing to express my support for keeping the eastern portion of the Bush Creek Trail in the Frederick County Bikeways and Trails Plan between Rt 75 and the eastern edge of the county. I live in Mount Airy and this trail would be a great way to connect the town to the other rapidly growing communities in the southern part of Frederick county and eventually on to the Monocacy river. There are not many natural surface trails within a short distance of Mount Airy and this would be a great addition. Please leave the eastern portion of the trail intact in the plan.

Thank you for your time,

Jon Arnold
To Members of the Planning Commission,

To start, let me just say that we are blessed in Frederick County to have so many beautiful local, state & federal public parks - all of which have various recreational trails for public enjoyment. A key person involved with the 2017 Bike Plan told me that Frederick County has more National Park facilities than any other county in the U.S.

Some of the ample parks in the County include:

- Cunningham Falls State Park; Gambrill State Park; Gathland State Park; The Monocacy River natural Resources Management Area; The Monocacy Battlefield Park; C&O National Park; Catoctin National Park; Greenbriar State Park; Kempton Park; Loys Station Covered Bridge Park; Washington Monument State Park. Plus various local city & town parks. Additionally, the Scenic Monocacy River stretches 58 miles through Frederick County with 10 established access points for public recreational use.

Needless to say, much government-owned land exists in the county for recreational opportunities which could include more public trails if desired.

We are all for more bike paths and trails in the county except for a couple of very important things:

I. MANY NEW TRAILS PROPOCSED BY THE COUNTY... ARE ON PRIVATE PROPERTY.

**It is plain wrong for Frederick County to propose public trails on land they do not own!**

Worse still, Frederick County did not reasonably notify the property owners (whose private land is targeted and specified on public maps for the county's proposed bike paths & trails) to inform them of the 2017 Bike Plan. And yet, the Planning Commission has been asked to hear public comments and decide whether to recommend the Bike Plan to the County Council, who in turn, will decide whether to adopt the plan.

All this without the landowners most impacted by the proposed trails even knowing about it!

The public comments and ideas from these landowners are vital as they are the ones whose land will be used. Their input should have been solicited from the start. And yet, incredibly, Frederick County left them out of the process.

The lack of transparency is astounding.

II. Secondly, proposing any bike paths or trails along The Monocacy River is the epitome of hypocrisy.

Why? Because for nearly a year since the updated Monocacy River Plan was released for public review, the County’s representative on the River Board (and even the County Executive) have specifically said repeatedly, that there was no intention to build bike paths & trails on private land along The Monocacy - when it turns out the newly released Frederick County Bike & Trails Plan proposes to build bike paths along the river on private land!

Frederick County says one thing and then does another.

What this really shows, is that Frederick County does not really care as they claim to, about protecting the river. Because if they cared, they wouldn't be pushing new bike paths & more public access to the banks of the river - which only serve to create more environmental stress to the river area, adversely affecting The Monocacy.

*The hypocrisy of it all is lost on no one. It’s “do as I say...and not as I do.”*
On the one hand, the River Bcard & Frederick County (through their Board Liaison) used the River Plan to push for the "taking" of private property along the river to be under gov't control by proposing expanding the river buffers. They said this was necessary to "protect the river and for clean water" without any evidence of need - and regardless of undue harm caused to Monocacy landowners. While on the other hand, it turns out that Frederick County was aiming to build bike paths and create more public access along the banks of the river as shown in the newly updated County Bike Plan.

What happened to protecting the river? What about the claims there was no intent to create bike paths on private property along The Monocacy?

All "Monocacy Greenway" trails proposed along the river should be removed altogether. There is no need and it doesn't make sense as it is counter to protecting the river.

Moreover, the bike paths can infringe on private property rights if any of the private land obtained is through involuntary easements. Take a look at page 37 of the Bike Plan where it notes various ways to obtain land for the bike path including voluntary easements or the gov't buying the land etc. However, the 4th way noted to obtain land is a newly inserted option (which was not in the previous 1999 Bike plan that was newly updated). The 2017 updated Bike & Trails Plan says this:

"Another option is for the County to just secure a right of entry easement, which grants public access on the trail and access by the County for maintenance."

This sounds like it could be a an involuntary easement to private property...it doesn't matter whether it's residential, commercial, or industrial private land because it remains an infringement on private property regardless of who owns the land.

Mr. Jim Gugel said in a recent email responding to questions on the Bike Plan and in a conversation -that the County never takes land by involuntary easements, nor does the county use eminent domain for such things as a bike path & trails. If this is the case, the language in the 2017 Bike Plan needs to be clarified & tightened up to state that no private property will be taken eminent domain, involuntary easements; or regulatory action for bike paths and trails.

The plan also discusses the prospect of creating bike paths on private land that is in AG preservation or has an FRO easement. I asked if this could occur against the wishes of the landowner (?) See page 37 of the Bike Plan for this provision. Conceivably it could, according to Mr. Gugel but the process would be difficult.

Again, language in this paragraph should include protective property rights language stating no private land in AG preservation or FRO programs should be used for bike paths & trails without consent of the property owner.

Respectfully,

Lisa & Earl Bell
Frederick County Planning Board,

As a Monocacy River landowner, I have attended meetings for one year on how the County needs an 8,000 acre easement along the Monocacy River to protect the river and to have clean water for the citizens in Frederick City. We were assured no trails or bikeways were to be established in the future. This information was incorrect as shown by the proposed Bikeways & Trails Plan.

I highly recommend you oppose the establishment of trails or bikeways along the precious Monocacy River. It is a beautiful river as seen from a canoe, but individuals ride their four-wheelers in the water when the water is low. I am seventy-five and have spent a lifetime picking up tires, refrigerators, batteries, trash of all kinds, and remains of animal carcasses. Actually inviting people to go along the river is unthinkable. When I watch Outdoor Maryland on PBS, I see bike riders riding trails of compacted soil and bare roots. Any rain causes soils to move; sediment goes into the river and the tree dies. With more human activity along the river, the habitat for the animals is lost.

The money required to plan and establish these bike trails is sizeable and unknown and will serve a relatively small percentage of people living in Frederick County. There are so many other programs which need funding in the county such education, health, and the truly needy.

Hiking and Biking is usually done by those who have time and money for recreational activities. I have worked decades on the farm without recreation and vacations. I have a heavy heart when I think of Frederick County government taking easements of hard earned land along the Monocacy River for the enjoyment of others who have contributed nothing.

I have tried my best to be an excellent steward of the land. Help to protect the Monocacy River by opposing trails and bikeways along its banks.

Margaret D. Elgin
301-271-2627
To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express strong disagreement with Frederick County proposal for taking away private land for public recreational activities, such as bike trails or other uses, especially along the Monocacy River area. I am even more upset that this proposal could be implemented, via eminent domain or other means, against the wishes of individual property owners.

Shame on you, Frederick County Council members and County Executive, for disregarding individual property rights!

How would you feel if government entities took away your land at their discretion against your will? I hardly think you would like the idea. And if you do, there's nothing stopping you from donating your property for public use, or selling your private property and voluntarily paying higher taxes to various government entities. Somehow, I don't suspect that will be the case.

I urge you to please put aside your misguided political ideology, career ambitions, or whatever it is that motivates you to even propose this bad idea of a land grab, and consider how you would if your private property was taken away from you, particularly against your wishes?

Just say NO to any effort to take away private property along the Monocacy River.

Sincerely,

Leslie McMullen
Greetings, Planning Commission folks.

I may be unable to attend this Wednesday's meeting, so I would like to put my comments on the record beforehand.

I have read through the documents that Mr. Burns has produced. On the whole, I feel that they are in good order and mostly thorough.

Please keep in mind of the advantages that good bicycling infrastructure will bring to Frederick county (currently, there is little-to-none - almost all of what is in place was performed by SHA). Many others will likely express these better than I, but these come to mind: 1) increased tourism, including restaurants and hotels; 2) a friendlier transportation system for all (bicycles are not going away); 3) safer streets ("Complete Streets"); 4) healthier people; 5) employers are increasingly looking for places that offer alternative transportation modes than the automobile).

I would suggest the following be strongly considered in order to increase chances of a successful implementation.

1) A list of "low-hanging fruit" projects that could be done quickly to get some infrastructure built
2) Some specific goals, such as "miles of new bike lanes per year", or "miles of new trails" in a time period.
3) A timetable and a way to measure progress. Otherwise, nothing will be done.

It would also be critical for success of the plan for the county to fund and hire a full-time bicycle-pedestrian coordinator to assist in the implementation of the plan.

Thank you,
William H Smith
794 Cromwell Ct
Frederick MD 21701