

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session

Legislative Day No. 11

Resolution No. 160 -2026

Introduced by: Chairperson at the request of the County Executive

Short Title: Approving BikeHoward 2026 and indicating support for bicycle-friendly community designation.

Title: A RESOLUTION approving BikeHoward 2026, the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan Update and indicating support for the County's application to be designated a bicycle-friendly community by the League of American Bicyclists.

Introduced and read first time _____, 2026.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Read for a second time at a public hearing on _____, 2026.

By order _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Resolution was read the third time and was Adopted____, Adopted with amendments____, Failed____, Withdrawn____, by the County Council on _____, 2026.

Certified By _____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Approved by the County Executive _____, 2026

Calvin Ball, County Executive

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; Underlining indicates material added by amendment

1 **WHEREAS**, in 2016, by passage of Council Resolution No. 35-2016, the County
2 approved the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan; and
3

4 **WHEREAS**, as that plan is now 10 years old, the County has prepared BikeHoward
5 2026, Howard County Bicycle Master Plan Update, substantially in the form attached as Exhibit
6 A, to further enhance the County’s status as a bicycle friendly community by continuing the
7 County’s progress on expanding safe cycling options for every age and ability; and
8

9 **WHEREAS**, BikeHoward 2026 was developed with extensive public input in the form
10 of in-person workshops, surveys and online comment maps, all under the oversight of the Office
11 of Transportation, a multi-disciplinary Technical Advisory group, and a consultant with
12 extensive experience in drafting similar plans around the country; and
13

14 **WHEREAS**, the BikeHoward 2026 continues to provide guidance and recommendations
15 in the categories of policy updates, programs for education, encouragement, and enforcement, as
16 well as suggested infrastructure improvements to further enhance the County’s connected bike
17 network; and
18

19 **WHEREAS**, the League of American Bicyclists is a 501(c)(3) organization that works to
20 create a Bicycle Friendly America through education programs, creating better biking
21 environments, and promoting bicycling as a transportation option of choice; and
22

23 **WHEREAS**, a bicycle-friendly community designation from the League of American
24 Bicyclists is a highly coveted award that identifies the community as one that is improving
25 public health, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and improving the quality of
26 life; and
27

28 **WHEREAS**, a bicycle-friendly community designation marks the community as a
29 vibrant destination for residents and visitors, which holds positive economic benefits for the
30 entire community; and
31

1 **WHEREAS**, Columbia earned a bronze designation by the League of American
2 Bicyclists in 2016, and the County seeks to earn another designation for Howard County; and
3

4 **WHEREAS**, the approval of this Resolution will greatly aid the County in its pursuit of
5 receiving a bicycle-friendly community designation from the League of American Bicyclists.
6

7 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the County Council of Howard County,
8 Maryland, this _____ day of _____, 2026, that it hereby approves
9 BikeHoward 2026, the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan Update, substantially in the form
10 attached as Exhibit A.
11

12 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** by the County Council of Howard County,
13 Maryland, that the Council is approving BikeHoward 2026 with the understanding that specific
14 routes identified in the Plan are suggested at a planning level, and may be altered following
15 additional detailed design planning and public comment.
16

17 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Office of Transportation may correct
18 obvious errors, capitalization, spelling, grammar, headings and similar matters and may publish
19 BikeHoward 2026 by adding or amending title pages, a table of contents, photos and graphics to
20 improve readability
21

22 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the County Executive has signed this
23 Resolution, thus indicating support and approval of the County's application for a bicycle-
24 friendly community designation from the League of American Bicyclists.

BIKEHOWARD 2026

Executive Summary

The Howard County Council adopted the County's first ever bicycle master plan, *BikeHoward*, in 2016. A decade later, it is time to assess progress made toward the 2016 plan and chart a course for the years ahead.

BikeHoward 2026 was developed using a similar, context-sensitive approach to planning that considers the County's diverse settings, resources, and assets. The Plan puts forth a network that is designed for riders of all types, ages, and abilities that meets the current and future demands of Howard County residents through **Network 2.0** and the **Goals Implementation Matrix**.

To create the proposed network and matrix, *BikeHoward 2026* analyzed the current network, bicycle safety indicators, previous plans and design manuals, and public feedback.

The *BikeHoward* vision will continue to guide the evolution and growth of bicycling in Howard County for the next ten years:

VISION STATEMENT

"Howard County, Maryland seeks to be a bicycle-friendly County where residents and visitors, children and seniors, the novice and the skilled feel comfortable and safe bicycling on our roads and paths as a means of daily transportation and healthy recreation."



Existing Conditions Assessment

Howard County communities vary by population, infrastructure, and bicycling culture. For this reason, *BikeHoward 2026* analyzes existing facilities in five subareas of the County to provide a more comprehensive snapshot of bicycling infrastructure. To evaluate connectivity, this analysis looked at access to **bicycle generators**:

- Activity Centers
- Connections To Other Neighborhoods
- Schools
- Parks
- Libraries
- Employment Centers

Network Analysis & Needs Assessment

BikeHoward 2026 assesses roadway level of comfort, network barriers, bicycle-related crash characteristics, and County topographic features to identify high-priority roadway segments which would most benefit from facility improvements.

Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress

Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) provides a baseline estimate of how comfortable and safe a roadway is to use for a bicyclist and the types of bicyclists likely to use that facility.

ALL SKILL LEVELS	INTERESTED BUT CONCERNED	ENTHUSED AND CONFIDENT	STRONG AND FEARLESS	NO BIKING PERMITTED
LTS 1	LTS 2	LTS 3	LTS 4	LTS 5
				



LTS Islands

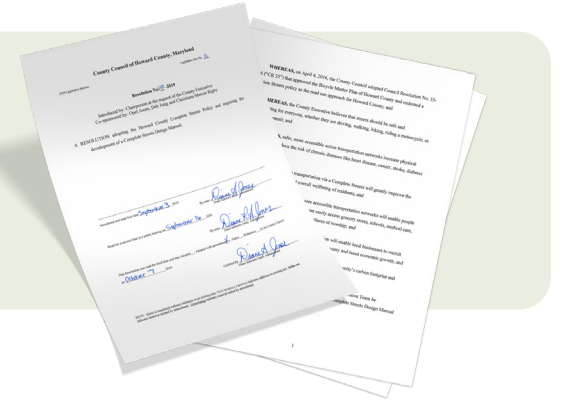
Clusters of low stress roadways, divided by high stress arterials, exist throughout Howard County. Connecting LTS islands provides safer options to current bicyclists and makes biking a more feasible option for transportation for everyone.

Plan & Policy Review

BikeHoward 2026 reviews local, regional, and state plans and policies to align recommendations with existing efforts and standards.

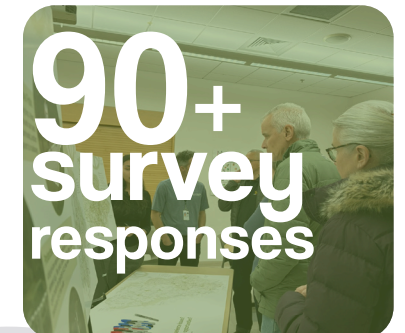
Plans and policies reviewed by level:

- 13 County
- 4 Regional
- 7 State



Public Engagement

Howard County residents provided valuable feedback over the course of three in-person workshops, a survey, and an online comment map. Public comments created a strong, community-driven foundation for recommendations.



Recommendations

BikeHoward 2026 takes a multi-pronged approach to the enhancement and expansion of Howard County's bicycle network.

1. Bicycle Network 2.0

Howard County's prioritized bicycle network is based on prior planned facilities, technical analysis, and stakeholder input. Network segments were developed using the following criteria:



Inclusion in
a Prior Plan

LTS Barrier
Breaker

Existing
Wayfinding Route
Eligible for Upgrade

Public Comment
Density

Implementation

Proposed bicycle facilities will primarily be built through **subdivision and land development**, **roadway resurfacing**, and **capital projects**.

2. Goals Matrix

Sixty action items will support the development of Howard County's bicycle network over the next ten years. Action items are divided into **six strategies**:

8 

Data Collection
& Management

Internal
Processes

12 

9 

Programs

Policies & Design
Standards

11 

11 

Network
Development

Outreach &
Education

9 

Rural Recreational Routes:

BikeHoward 2026 also identifies long-distance, leisurely routes for possible signage investments, rather than for dedicated facilities.

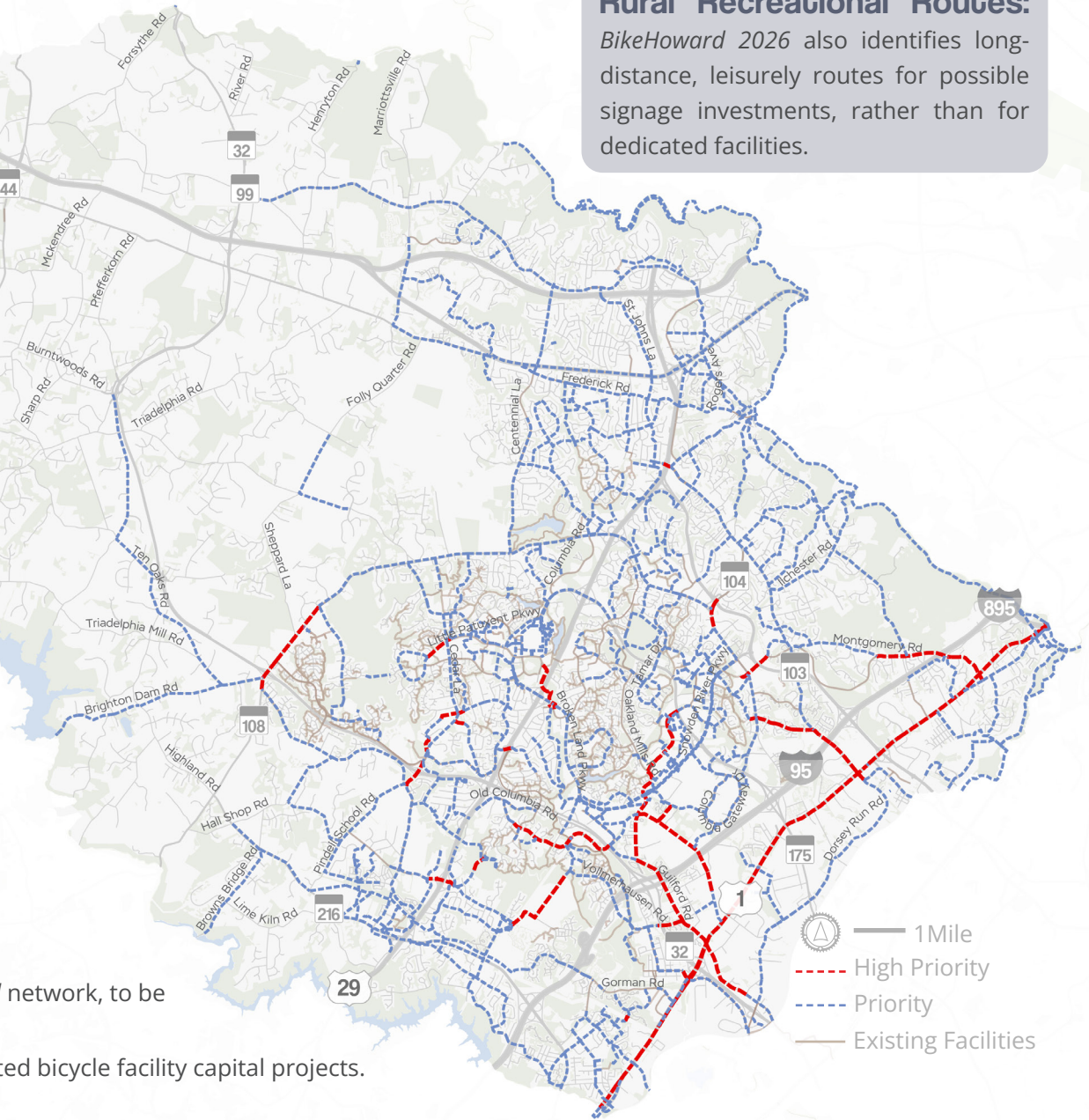
Network 2.0

BikeHoward 2026 identifies

333+ miles

of planned priority and high-priority facilities.

TYPE Priority: Future segments of the *BikeHoward* network, to be implemented as opportunities arise.
High-Priority: Likely candidates for dedicated bicycle facility capital projects.





BIKEHOWARD

Howard County Bicycle Master Plan Update

COUNTY COUNCIL SUBMISSION VERSION, SUMMER 2026

Acknowledgments

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Calvin Ball

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Statement from the County Executive



August 25, 2026

From the Office of County Executive Calvin Ball

Dear Residents and Visitors of Howard County:

I am thrilled to present *BikeHoward 2026*, an update to Howard County's Bicycle Master Plan. Building upon our Complete Streets Policy adopted in 2019, *BikeHoward 2026* provides the framework to take biking to the next level in Howard County. This plan outlines a network of safe biking routes and recommends programs and policies that will support safer streets for all.

Biking aligns with Howard County's vision of a healthy, sustainable, and prosperous community, while also creating safe and convenient options for both transportation and recreation. Since taking office at your Howard County Executive in December 2018, we have worked collaboratively to expand multimodal infrastructure throughout the County. This has included the creation of more than 40 miles of new bike infrastructure throughout our community.

In 2023, Howard County was nationally recognized by Smart Growth America for our Complete Streets Policy, which earned a perfect 100 out of 100 score and made Howard County the first community in the nation to receive this honor. The Howard County Complete Streets Policy ensures that all modes of travel are considered in the planning, design, maintenance, and operations of our streets. *BikeHoward 2026* builds upon these successful efforts by developing an actionable plan to build the biking infrastructure our community needs.

BikeHoward 2026 was developed through a combination of technical expertise and community outreach. County staff worked with expert consultants using state-of-the-art analysis to develop recommendations that were fine-tuned through extensive community input. The result is a plan that takes what was working best from *BikeHoward 2016* and "cranks up the cadence" to provide the guidance needed to make Howard County one of the most bicycle-friendly communities in the region.

I would like to thank the Howard County Office of Transportation and every community member that contributed input and analysis during the development of this plan. Through *BikeHoward 2026*, we will continue to invest in bicycle safety, access, mobility, and connections for families across Howard County.

Sincerely,

Calvin Ball
County Executive

CENTENNIAL PARK
SOUTH AREA

HOWARD COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION & PARKS

ASSISTED BY PROGRAM: LEE WACE
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES





1 Introduction

BIKEHOWARD





Why Update *BikeHoward*?

Maintaining Momentum

The Howard County Council adopted the County's first ever bicycle master plan, *BikeHoward*, in 2016. The plan recorded a snapshot of bicycling conditions in the County at the time and plotted a course for future bicycle infrastructure, policy, and program development. A decade later, it is time to assess progress made toward the 2016 plan and chart a course for the years ahead.

Vision

BikeHoward's vision for bicycling in Howard County remains steadfast.



“Howard County, Maryland seeks to be a bicycle-friendly County where residents and visitors, children and seniors, the novice and the skilled feel comfortable and safe bicycling on our roads and paths as a means of daily transportation and healthy recreation.”



How the Plan Will Be Used

***BikeHoward 2026* will guide the development of Howard County's bicycle network over the next ten years.**

BikeHoward 2026 is the successor to BikeHoward 2016.

Like *BikeHoward 2016*, *BikeHoward 2026* takes a context-sensitive approach to planning that considers the County's diverse settings, resources, and assets. The Plan proposes a more connected and comprehensive bicycle network (**Bicycle Network 2.0**) that is designed for riders of all types, ages, and abilities and identifies concrete action items (**Goals Implementation Matrix**) to meet the current and future demands of Howard County residents.

Bicycle Network 2.0 presents the County's vision for a more connected and comprehensive bicycle network. Proposed bicycle facilities will be integrated into relevant public and private plans, and implemented through a combination of subdivision and land development, roadway resurfacing, and capital projects.

The Goals Implementation Matrix outlines policy and programmatic action items to support the improvement and expansion of the County's bicycle network. Action items are divided into six overarching strategies and assigned to stakeholders that will be involved in their implementation.

Sources of Inputs

BikeHoward 2026's implementation plan — including Bicycle Network 2.0 and the Goals Implementation Matrix — is rooted in:

- Extensive analysis of bicycling conditions in Howard County, including existing facilities, trip generators, crash data, and Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (SHA) Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) designations.
- Coordination with County departments, partner agencies, and organizations such as the Howard County Bicycle Advisory Group, SHA, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, and the Columbia Association.
- Public feedback gathered during open house events and through online platforms, where participants shared their experiences, priorities, and perspectives on issues and opportunities.
- A thorough review of the 2016 plan, as well as relevant county, regional, state, and federal bicycling plans and policies.



Summary of the Planning Process

The process to update *BikeHoward* consisted of two phases: 1) assessing existing bicycle conditions and 2) developing recommendations to improve those conditions in the future.

Phase I: Existing Conditions



1. Data Collection & Analysis

All available and relevant data was collated and analyzed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of bicycling conditions in Howard County in 2026.



2. Plan & Policy Review

Previous and concurrent transportation plans published by regional agencies, jurisdictions, and organizations were reviewed to align planned regional and state-level bicycle facilities with update recommendations.



3. Public Engagement

Howard County residents and bicyclists provided hundreds of overarching and site-specific comments online and over the course of three open house events regarding their experience bicycling in the County.

Phase II: Recommendation Development



4. Network & Process Recommendations

Prioritized network segments, spot safety improvements, wayfinding updates, potential policy changes, and programmatic guidance were developed based on findings and feedback collected during Phase I.



5. Public Review & Comment Period

The draft plan and its recommendations were presented to the Howard County Council, followed by a one-month public comment period. Feedback was used to refine the final plan.



6. Howard County Council Adoption

The draft plan was submitted for consideration for adoption by the Howard County Council in August 2026.

How This Plan Is Organized

CHAPTER 2

The Existing Conditions Assessment of *BikeHoward 2026* is an overview of Howard County today: the people, the places, and the bicycle network. The chapter includes a quick overview of the types of bicycle facilities in Howard County, followed by an assessment of existing bicycle facilities at the County and subarea level.

CHAPTER 3

The Network Analysis and Needs Assessment analyzes bicycling conditions along Howard County's existing bicycle facilities using data from the County, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, and the State of Maryland. The chapter examines safety and comfort indicators such as Level of Traffic Stress (LTS), a measurement of the suitability of different environments and facilities for different types of bicyclists, as well as crash history, slope, and elevation.

CHAPTER 4

The Policy and Plan Review summarizes bicycle-related plans, policies, and design guidance put forth by regional agencies, jurisdictions, and organizations. The summaries highlight prior, ongoing, and proposed projects and programs that influence bicycling in Howard County and Central Maryland for incorporation in this plan.

CHAPTER 5

The Public Engagement section steps through the plan's public engagement process, which included in-person pop-up events and online outreach. Participants were asked where they typically travel within the County, what their experiences bicycling have been, and what they would like the future of bicycling in Howard County to look like. The chapter highlights key takeaways from community feedback that directly informed the plan's recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

***BikeHoward* — The Next Ten Years** presents *BikeHoward 2026*'s recommendation framework. The framework was developed using insights from the public comment period, analysis of existing conditions, best practices from previous plans, and applicable County policies. The framework consists of the County's proposed enhanced network — Bicycle Network 2.0 — and the Goals Implementation Matrix that will be used to build the expanded network. The chapter outlines the construction mechanisms through which the expanded network will be built and identifies potential funding sources that could support network implementation.

Steering the Update: Bicycle Advisory Group

As a recommendation of *BikeHoward 2016*, a Bicycle Advisory Group (BAG) was formed to monitor the progress of the plan's policy, programmatic, and infrastructure actions across the County. The BAG is composed of representatives from stakeholder organizations and bicycle advocates. The BAG provided their collective experience and knowledge during the *BikeHoward* update process, as described in Chapter 4.





2 Existing Conditions Assessment

BIKEHOWARD





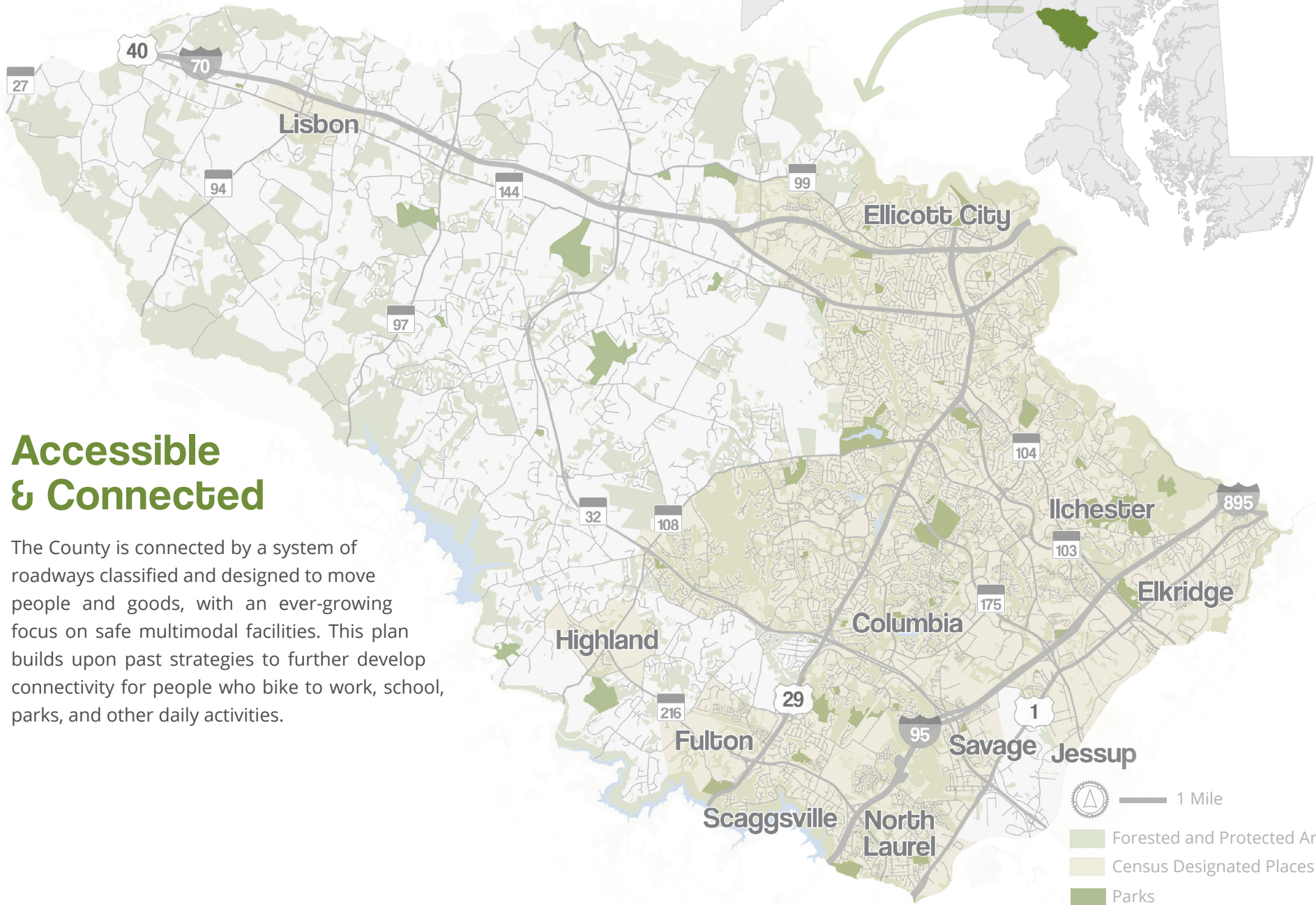
Multifaceted & Dynamic

Howard County in 2026

Nestled in Maryland's Piedmont region, Howard County is known for its rolling hills, beautiful lakes and rivers, pristine forests, historic towns, strong education system, and vibrant culture.

As the only county in the State of Maryland with no incorporated cities, Howard County plays a significant role in providing services throughout its 250 square miles, including for residents who choose to bicycle. Population centers and urbanized areas such as Elkridge, Ellicott City, North Laurel, and Columbia feature a diverse mix of housing typologies, commercial districts, and parks. Many of these communities are located in the central and eastern portions of the County, offering convenient commuting options to nearby Baltimore and Washington DC.

Howard County In Context



Accessible & Connected

The County is connected by a system of roadways classified and designed to move people and goods, with an ever-growing focus on safe multimodal facilities. This plan builds upon past strategies to further develop connectivity for people who bike to work, school, parks, and other daily activities.

Today's Network

Howard County has over 175 miles of dedicated and shared-use bicycle facilities.

Types of Facilities

Facility Type	Miles
Shared-Use Path	117.94
Conventional Bike Lane	34.54
Bike Route	17.09
Sharrows	3.35
Cycletrack/Protected Bike Lane	2.97
Buffered Bike Lane	1.51

Most shared-use paths in Columbia are owned and maintained by the Columbia Association. Bicycles are permitted to operate on most non-interstate roadways in the County.

End of Trip Facilities

Howard County launched a Bicycle Parking Retrofit Program as part of the implementation of *BikeHoward 2016*. Through this program, the County has installed ~60 bike racks at 30 locations to date, including at multiple County facilities.

The County's approach to prioritizing the development of end-of-trip facilities also includes working with regional transit partners to install bicycle parking at transit stations and hubs, and encouraging developers to include end-of-trip facilities in their projects. As of October 2025, Howard County Park and Ride facilities have capacity for 510 bikes.

***BikeHoward 2026* strengthens the County's commitment to the provision of end-of-trip facilities that continues to prioritize the installation of bicycle parking and storage options.**



Common Facility Types



Shared-Use Paths

Shared-use paths or pathways are paved, off-road facilities designed for pedestrian and bicycle use. Natural surface trails - permeable paths primarily for pedestrian use - are differentiated from shared-use paths in this Plan.

Cycletracks/Protected Bike Lanes

Cycletracks or protected bike lanes are dedicated bike lanes separated from general purpose travel lanes by a physical barrier.



Buffered Bike Lanes

Buffered bike lanes provide physical separation between bicyclists and vehicular traffic via a striped buffer of at least two feet.

Conventional Bike Lanes

Conventional bike lanes are on-road travel lanes dedicated for bicycle use. Bike lane placement and direction of travel can vary by context.



Bike Routes or Sharrows

Bike routes or sharrows are general purpose travel lanes designed for bicycle and vehicular use. Bike routes are denoted by street signage and pavement markings, and may be appropriate on low-speed, low-volume roadways.



Wide Shoulders

Although they are not a dedicated facility, shoulders on roadways are often used by bicyclists.



HoCo At A Glance

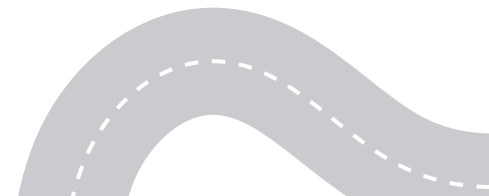
Ten Years of Building Network & Community

Howard County has fostered a culture of cycling over the past ten years. This cultural shift, along with significant increases in bicycling infrastructure, is the product of the consistent implementation of *BikeHoward 2016* action items. These infrastructure, policy, and programmatic changes make it easier for residents to get to their destination, cross major barriers, and lead active lifestyles.

Eastern Howard County has an extensive network of shared-use paths, on-road bicycle facilities, and trails that connect its many communities and provide easy access to safe recreation opportunities. This network is the result of continuous, decades-long development and has grown tremendously since the first publication of *BikeHoward* in 2016. People who regularly take transportation bicycle trips are more likely to live in this part of the County.

The western half of Howard County — largely delineated by the planned sewer service line bisecting the County — is more rural in character. There are many low-volume, picturesque routes attractive to road cyclists for mile-building and recreation. *BikeHoward* takes a context-sensitive approach to planning the County's future network, taking into consideration the County's diverse settings and designing for riders of all types, ages, and abilities.

Whether riders use biking to commute, recreate, connect with community, or meet their daily needs, *BikeHoward* works to continue to create safe, reliable infrastructure for every rider.



HoCo's Bicyclists

All types of riders rely on Howard County bicycle facilities to reach their destination. From competitive mountain bikers, to seniors running errands, to kids on their way to school, Howard County strives to accommodate all users.

Transportation

In the past ten years, biking has evolved rapidly and these changes are reflected on the streets and trails of Howard County. Specifically, the introduction of electric bikes (e-bikes) and cargo bikes, which reduce physical strain and increase a bicyclist's range, have expanded travel possibilities for many bicyclists. With the rise in popularity of these bikes, County facilities need to evolve to accommodate these new bicycles.



Exercise

Riding a bike is an excellent form of exercise, and improved facilities increase opportunities for residents to live active, healthy lives.



Socializing with Others

Group riding is common in Howard County. Elementary school students participate in "bike trains" where they ride to school in a group, often led by a chaperone. Older adults have recreational biking groups such as the HoCo Cyclists group, the Cycle2Health group, and the "Glenelg Gang."



Key Destinations & Generators

Getting Around HoCo

Knowing where residents want and need to go is critical to identifying gaps in the County's existing bicycle network. Key destinations are located throughout Howard County, particularly in the eastern, more urban half. Common trip generators and destinations include:

- Employment Centers
- Commercial Areas
- Transit Hubs
- Historic Sites
- Civic Institutions
- Dense Multi-family Housing
- Schools
- Libraries
- Parks
- Recreation Centers

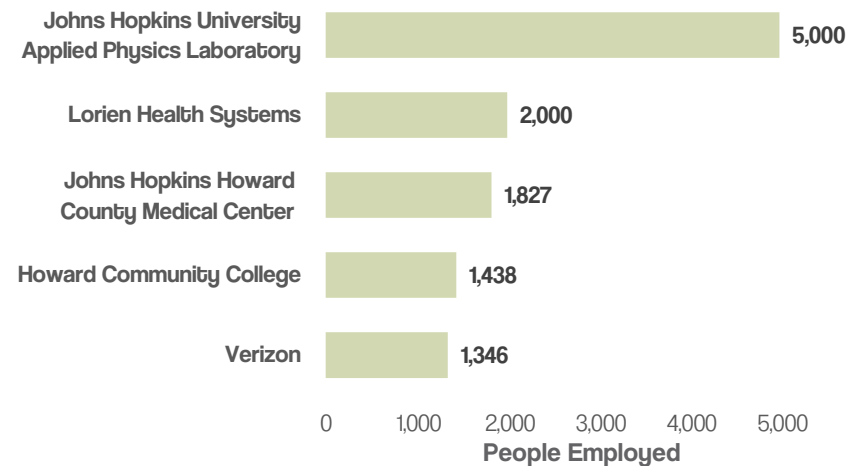
Providing residents with safe and accessible routes to these destinations is central to making Howard County more bikeable.

Downtowns and Historic Sites

Urban hubs like Maple Lawn Shopping Center and Downtown Columbia are regional draws for economic, commercial, and recreational activity. Historic districts like those in Ellicott City and Lawyers Hill provide visitors with experiential and educational opportunities, while retail centers like the Mall in Columbia and Columbia Crossing offer dining, shopping, and recreational activities.

Employment Centers

Major employers in Howard County include:¹



First and Last Mile Bicycle Trips

Most local and regional transit services are designed to accommodate bicyclists. Maryland Area Rail Commuter (MARC) passengers can secure full-sized bicycles, e-bikes, and scooters on bike racks in designated rail cars and at select stations. Regional Transportation Agency (RTA) bus riders can secure their bike to the rack above the front bumper of the bus.

Howard County is implementing Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in 2026 through an extension of the US-29 Flash BRT Service in Montgomery County.² Flash BRT will improve connectivity between both counties, Washington, DC, and Baltimore City, while also allowing riders to bring bicycles on board.

¹ Maryland Department of Commerce | Major Employers in Howard County, <https://commerce.maryland.gov/Documents/ResearchDocument/MajorEmployersInHowardCounty.pdf>

² Flash BRT, Howard County, MD Transportation | <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/transportation/flash-bus-rapid-transit-frequently-asked-questions>

Biking Generators & Destinations

Activity Nodes in HoCo

Historic Areas

- 1 Historic Lawyers Hill
- 2 Historic Ellicott City

Employment Centers

- 3 JHU Medical Center
- 4 JHU Applied Physics Laboratory
- 5 Columbia Gateway

Commercial Areas

- 16 Gateway Overlook
- 17 Snowden Square Shopping Center
- 18 Columbia Crossing
- 19 Long Gate Shopping Center
- 20 Chatham Station Shopping Center
- 21 Maple Lawn Retail District

Columbia Village Centers

- 6 Dorsey's Search
- 7 Harper's Choice
- 8 Wilde Lake
- 9 Town Center
- 10 Kings Contrivance
- 11 Hickory Ridge
- 12 Oakland Mills
- 13 Long Reach
- 14 River Hill
- 15 Owen Brown

Historic Places

The architecture, cafes, restaurants, and boutiques of Historic Ellicott City attract visitors from across the region.

The City's hilly topography provides bicyclists with a challenging ride while neighboring facilities like the Trolley Line #9 Trail allow for a flatter, more leisurely experience.



Medical Facilities

Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center services over 100,000 people per year and is staffed by ~1,800 employees.³



Howard County Public Schools

Over 57,000 students attend Howard County Public Schools.⁴ Many schools across Howard County are accessible by bike, providing a safe, healthy, and social way for students to get to school.



Atholton High School



³ Johns Hopkins Howard County Medical Center | About, <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/johns-hopkins-howard-county/about>

⁴ Howard County Public School System | HCPSS - By The Numbers, <https://www.hcpss.org/about-us/facts/>

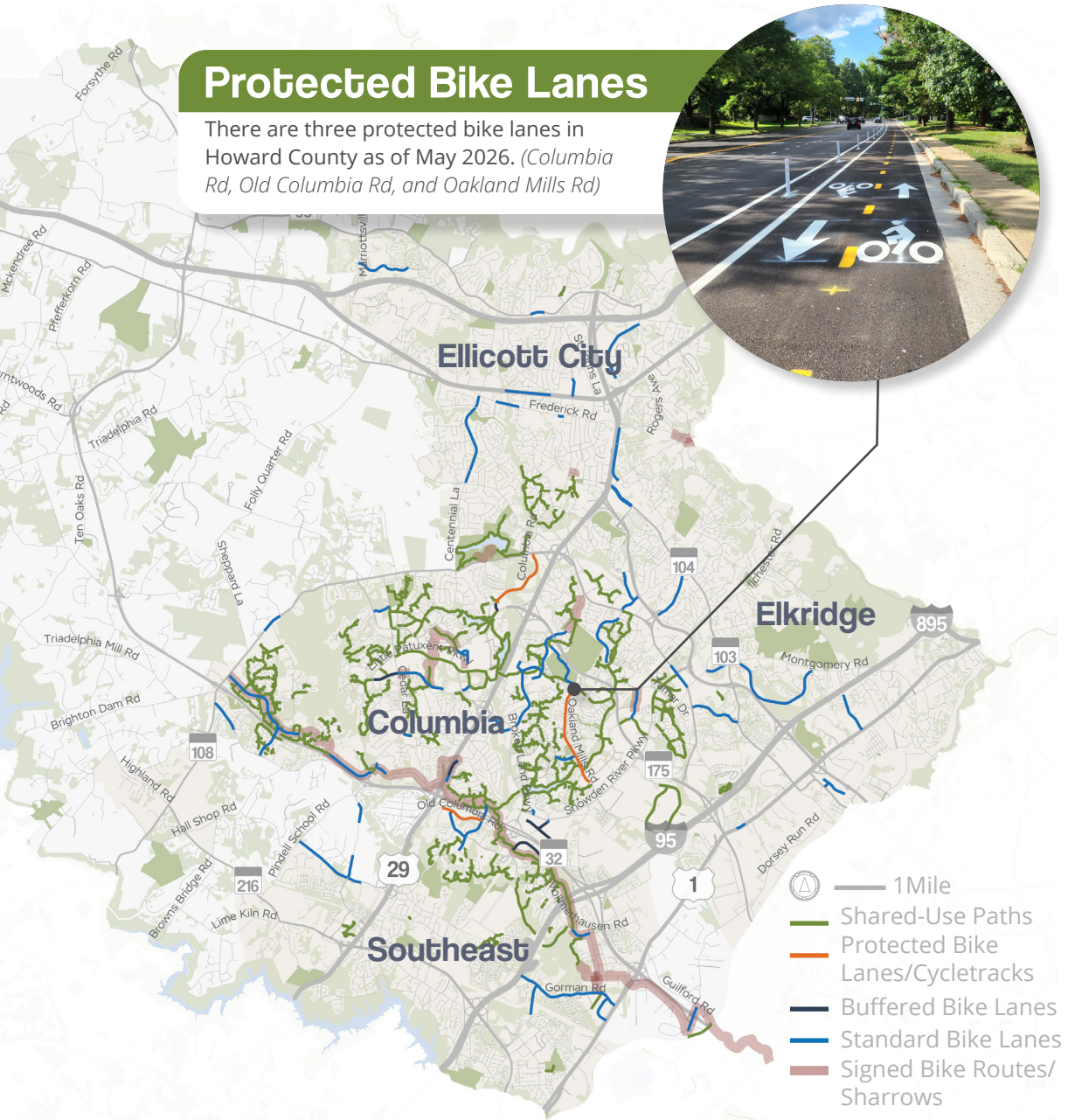
Existing Facilities

175+ miles
of bicycle facilities

Howard County communities vary by population, infrastructure, and bicycling culture. *BikeHoward 2026* considers existing facilities in **five subareas** of the County, mirroring the geographic separations used in *BikeHoward 2016*, to provide a more comprehensive snapshot of bicycling infrastructure today and set the stage for a more connected tomorrow.

Protected Bike Lanes

There are three protected bike lanes in Howard County as of May 2026. (*Columbia Rd, Old Columbia Rd, and Oakland Mills Rd*)



Elkridge

Elkridge is located at the eastern edge of Howard County and contains Historic Lawyers Hill, a popular area known for its architecture and natural landscape. It is bounded by MD 108, MD 175, and MD 104.

People and Parks



While Rockburn Branch Park is accessible to residents through many local roads, accessing Troy Park and Waterloo Park requires many residents to cross high volume interstates and arterials (e.g. US-1, I-95). The absence of dedicated facilities on these roads can hinder park access for residents without a vehicle.

Connecting to Education

There are 16 schools in Elkridge; two are adjacent to standard bike lanes and two connect to shared-use paths. These facilities do not connect to a larger network. There are no facilities serving the single library in the subarea. Most residents must cross high speed and high volume roads, such as MD 100, US-1, and I-95 to reach schools and libraries.

Traveling to the Train

Reaching the MARC station requires most residents to cross I-95, US-1, MD 175, MD 100 or MD 103. These roads are dangerous for bicyclists to cross or travel on and make the MARC station inaccessible on bike.



Columbia

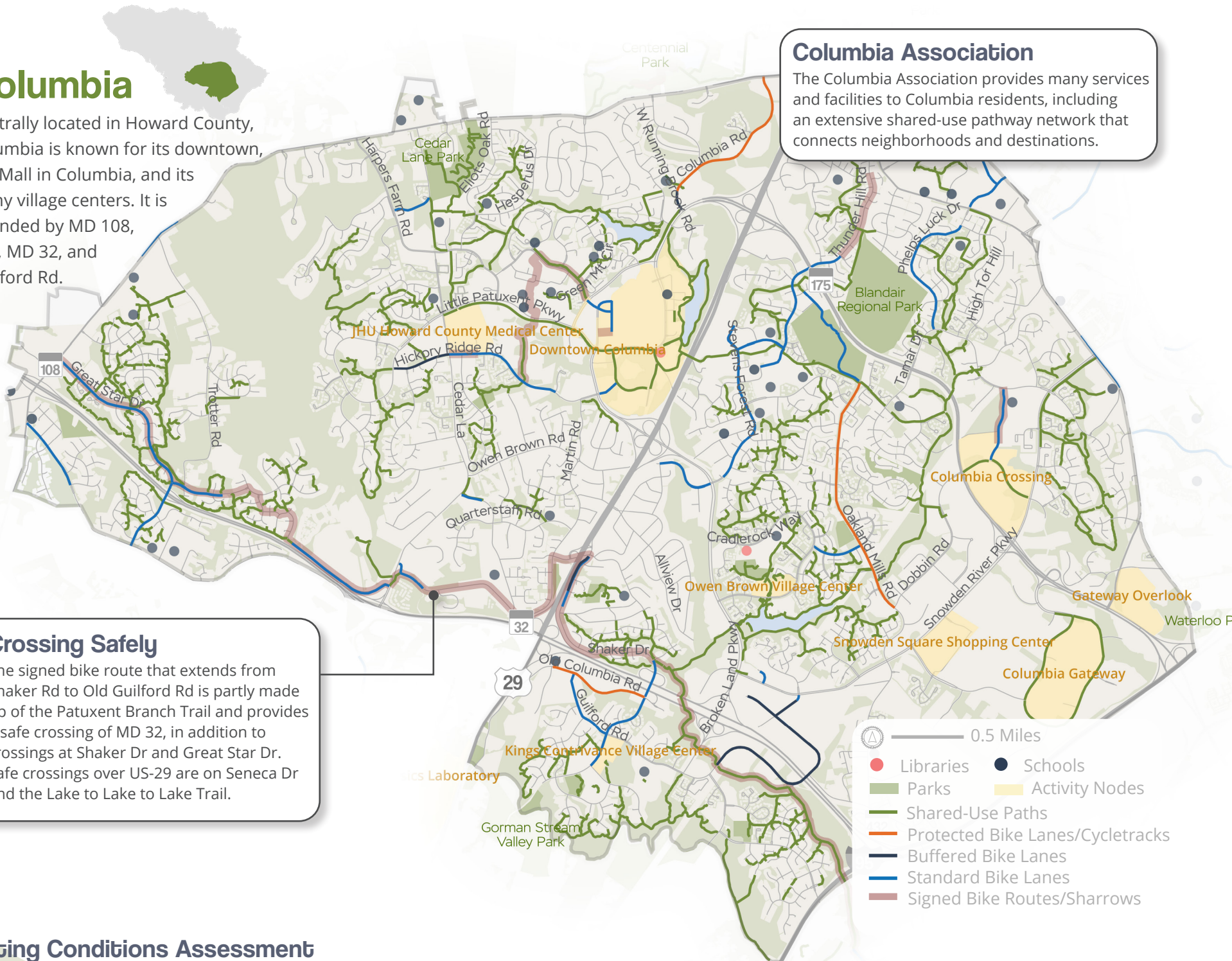
Centrally located in Howard County, Columbia is known for its downtown, the Mall in Columbia, and its many village centers. It is bounded by MD 108, I-95, MD 32, and Guilford Rd.

Columbia Association

The Columbia Association provides many services and facilities to Columbia residents, including an extensive shared-use pathway network that connects neighborhoods and destinations.

Crossing Safely

The signed bike route that extends from Shaker Rd to Old Guilford Rd is partly made up of the Patuxent Branch Trail and provides a safe crossing of MD 32, in addition to crossings at Shaker Dr and Great Star Dr. Safe crossings over US-29 are on Seneca Dr and the Lake to Lake to Lake Trail.

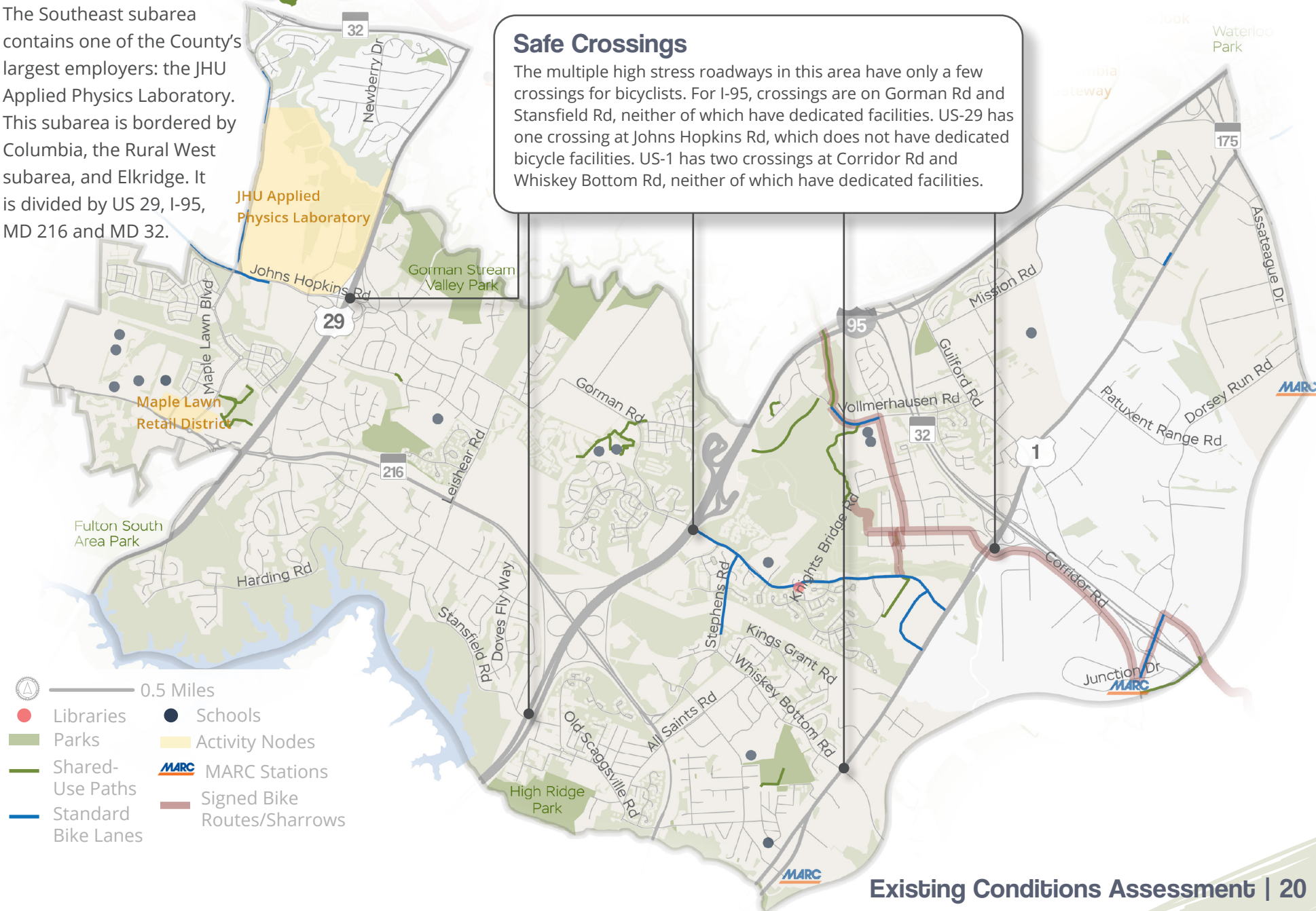


Southeast

The Southeast subarea contains one of the County's largest employers: the JHU Applied Physics Laboratory. This subarea is bordered by Columbia, the Rural West subarea, and Elkridge. It is divided by US 29, I-95, MD 216 and MD 32.

Safe Crossings

The multiple high stress roadways in this area have only a few crossings for bicyclists. For I-95, crossings are on Gorman Rd and Stansfield Rd, neither of which have dedicated facilities. US-29 has one crossing at Johns Hopkins Rd, which does not have dedicated bicycle facilities. US-1 has two crossings at Corridor Rd and Whiskey Bottom Rd, neither of which have dedicated facilities.



Ellicott City

The cultural and commercial center of this area is Historic Ellicott City, a popular area known for its well preserved historic charm and festivals. Major arterial and interstate barriers in the area are US-29, US-40, I-70, MD 99 and MD 103.

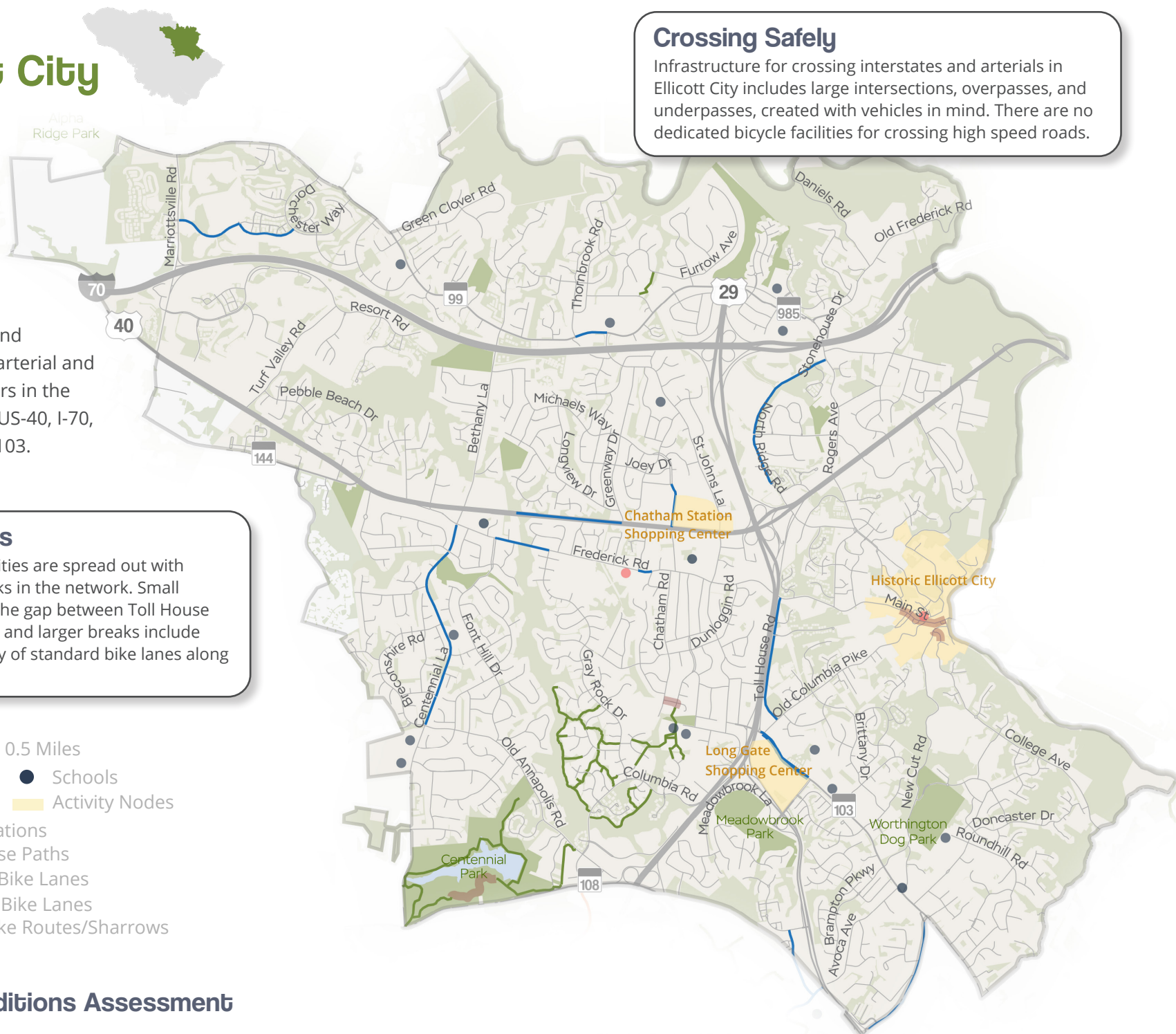
Crossing Safely

Infrastructure for crossing interstates and arterials in Ellicott City includes large intersections, overpasses, and underpasses, created with vehicles in mind. There are no dedicated bicycle facilities for crossing high speed roads.

Filling Gaps

Ellicott City facilities are spread out with significant breaks in the network. Small breaks include the gap between Toll House Rd and MD 103, and larger breaks include the discontinuity of standard bike lanes along Frederick Rd.

-  0.5 Miles
-  Libraries
-  Schools
-  Parks
-  Activity Nodes
-  MARC Stations
-  Shared-Use Paths
-  Buffered Bike Lanes
-  Standard Bike Lanes
-  Signed Bike Routes/Sharrows



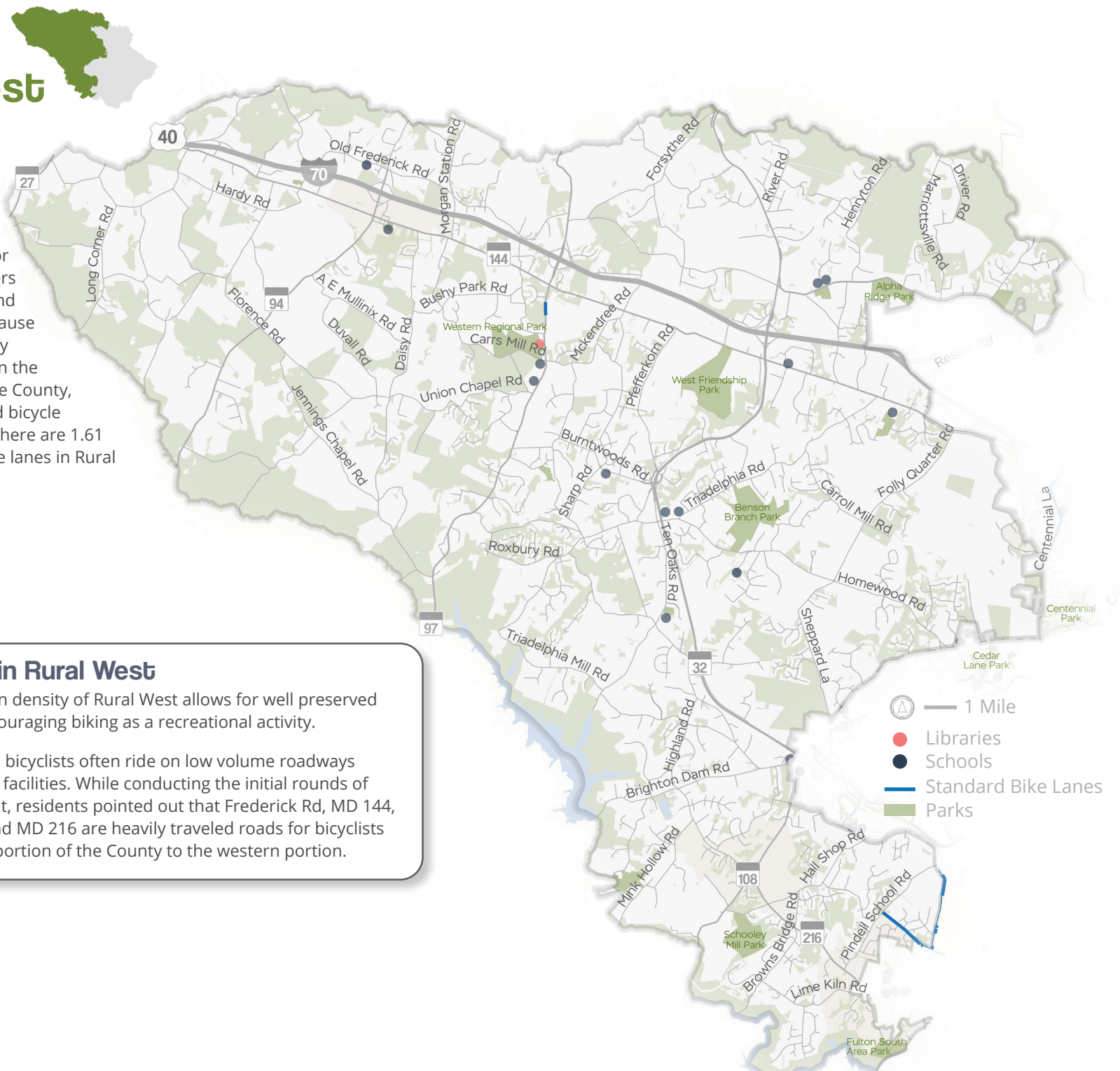
Rural West

Bordering Columbia, Ellicott City, and the Southeast area, Rural West is the largest subarea in Howard County. Major interstates and barriers include US-40, I-70, and MD 32. However, because the population density is significantly lower in the western portion of the County, the existing dedicated bicycle facilities are sparse. There are 1.61 miles of standard bike lanes in Rural West.

Recreation in Rural West

The low population density of Rural West allows for well preserved natural areas, encouraging biking as a recreational activity.

Within Rural West, bicyclists often ride on low volume roadways without dedicated facilities. While conducting the initial rounds of public engagement, residents pointed out that Frederick Rd, MD 144, Homewood Rd, and MD 216 are heavily traveled roads for bicyclists from the eastern portion of the County to the western portion.



Wayfinding

Howard County is in the process of implementing the Howard County Bicycle Wayfinding System.

The Bicycle Wayfinding System is intended to provide a safe, reliable, and easily comprehensible set of identified routes for all types of bicyclists, differentiated by color. With the addition of the wayfinding system, bicyclists of all skill levels will be able to more easily utilize and enjoy Howard County's bicycle network, access important destinations, and use biking as an everyday transportation method.

In 2019, a planning study was conducted to identify main biking corridors and destinations. Using qualitative input along with an exercise to identify bike route termini, the County developed 11 proposed wayfinding routes.

Updating the Infrastructure

The proposed wayfinding routes will have enhanced signage to improve accessibility for bicyclists and increase motor vehicle drivers' awareness of bicyclists. While the majority of these routes have not yet been signed, phase one of signage implementation along the Indigo Route is complete. Other routes will need further improvements before signage can be installed.

Enhancement of bicycle facilities on the existing roads used by the wayfinding system is a crucial consideration for the recommendations in *BikeHoward 2026* and drives the prioritization of Bicycle Network 2.0.

Gorman Rd, located in Savage, is part of the planned Fuchsia Wayfinding Route. This section of Gorman Rd is the only segment of the Fuchsia route south of MD 32 that requires infrastructure improvements before it will be ready to be signed.



Wayfinding Routes

Milestones in Wayfinding

Howard County completed the first phase of installation of the Indigo Bike Wayfinding Route - the first Howard County Bicycle Wayfinding System route - in May 2025. The Indigo Route runs from Twin Rivers Rd and Governor Warfield Pkwy to Hickory Ridge Rd and Athletics Field Drive, and serves community centers and schools along its path.



 1 Mile

 Aqua	 Indigo
 Black	 Maroon
 Connector	 Olive
 Coral	 Silver
 Fuchsia	 Violet
 Gold	

Signing Status

 Ready for Signing
 Future Routes







3 Network Analysis & Needs Assessment

BIKEHOWARD





Analysis

Digging Into the Data

A key part of improving and expanding Howard County's bicycle network is understanding where improvements and new facilities will have the greatest impact. *BikeHoward 2026* assesses roadway level of comfort, network barriers, bicycle-related crash characteristics, and County topographic features to identify high-priority roadway segments which would most benefit from facility improvements.



Bicycle Level Of Traffic Stress

Who Rides Where?

Not all bicyclists are comfortable riding on all facilities and roadways. Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress (LTS) is an indicator of how comfortable and safe a roadway is to use for a bicyclist, and the types of bicyclists likely to use that facility. LTS scores range from one (low stress on-road facilities) to five (facilities where bicycles are not permitted).

A low LTS score indicates that most bicyclists will feel comfortable and safe using a facility. Side paths and protected bicycle lanes usually provide enough of a buffer to receive an LTS score of 1 or 2.

A high LTS score indicates that most bicyclists would not feel comfortable or safe using a facility. Sharrows, signed bike routes, or shoulders along high-volume roadways are likely to receive a higher LTS score of 3 or 4. LTS is calculated to provide a general idea of what kinds of people would use the facility.

Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) LTS is only calculated for roadways where bicycles and vehicles are both present. Although off-road facilities do not receive an LTS score, they always provide a safe passage for bicyclists.

Types of Bicyclists & Their LTS

ALL SKILL LEVELS	INTERESTED BUT CONCERNED	ENTHUSED AND CONFIDENT	STRONG AND FEARLESS	NO BIKING PERMITTED
Everyone can ride on these facilities. 	People could include older adults and parents with children. 	People could include commuters and able-bodied adults. 	People with years of experience riding on-road facilities. 	Biking is not permitted on LTS 5 roadways. These roads are intended to be crossed rather than biked on. 
LTS 1	LTS 2	LTS 3	LTS 4	LTS 5

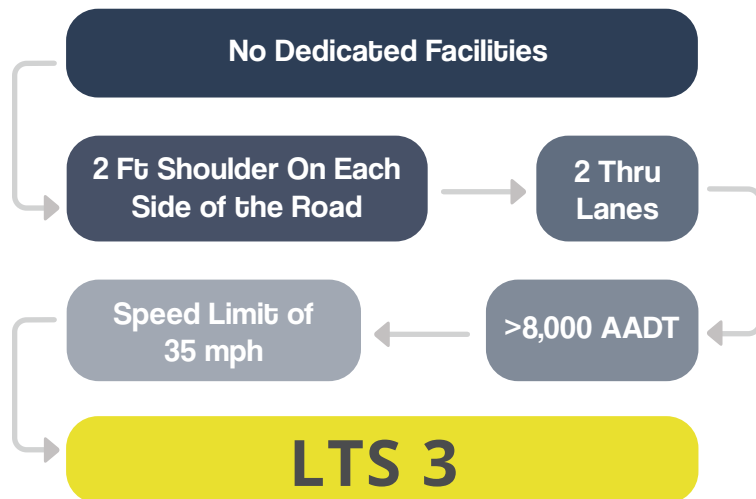
Source: MDOT SHA

LTS Methodology

BikeHoward 2026 uses LTS data analyzed and created by the MDOT SHA. LTS measurements are calculated by analyzing:

- Traffic volume using the Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT)
- The number of lanes on a roadway
- The presence and type of bicycle facility
- The presence and width of a shoulder
- The speed limit

LTS is a preliminary scoring method and the “true” score must be informed by qualitative assessments and experiences. Depending on the combination of the above factors, the road is given an LTS designation of 1 to 4. For example, Montgomery Rd from Rockburn Dr to Monterey Rd has an LTS score of 3 due to this combination of elements:



How Do High Stress Roads Impact Connectivity?

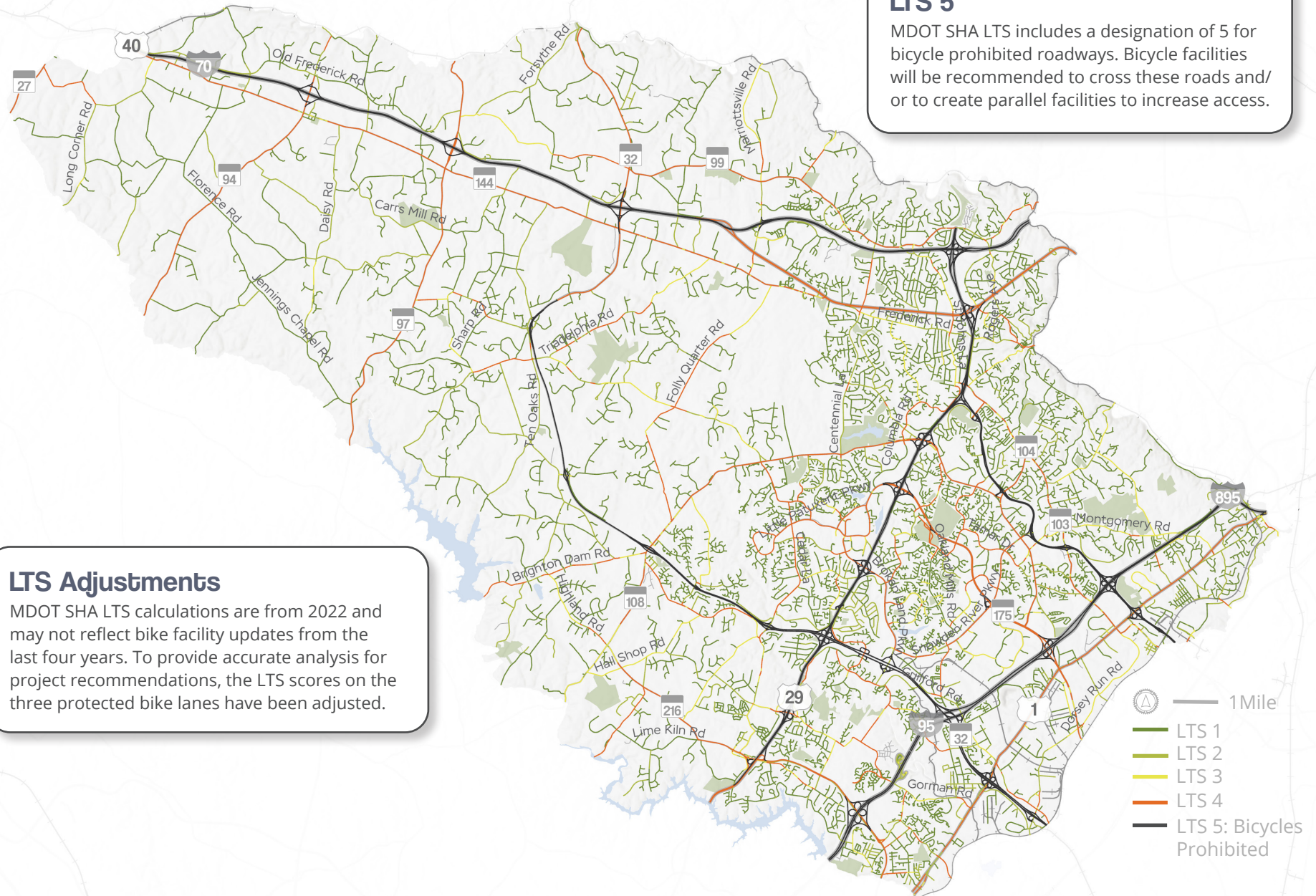
Most bicyclists find high stress roads to be unsafe and uncomfortable. Neighborhood roads, often narrow two-way roads with parking on both sides, can be more comfortable to ride on because of lower posted speed limits, smaller road widths, and fewer vehicles (LTS 1 or 2). Trips to many popular destinations and generators require riding along higher stress arterials and roadways. These roads are often the only connections between neighborhoods (LTS 3 or 4). Creating facilities on arterials creates connectivity between neighborhoods.



LTS Measurements

LTS 5

MDOT SHA LTS includes a designation of 5 for bicycle prohibited roadways. Bicycle facilities will be recommended to cross these roads and/or to create parallel facilities to increase access.



LTS Adjustments

MDOT SHA LTS calculations are from 2022 and may not reflect bike facility updates from the last four years. To provide accurate analysis for project recommendations, the LTS scores on the three protected bike lanes have been adjusted.



LTS Islands

Barriers and Obstacles

In Howard County, around 67% of the roadway network has LTS levels of 1 or 2, which are considered comfortable for most people to bike on. However, the clusters of comfortable roadways are separated from each other, reducing connectivity throughout the County. Connecting LTS islands, or creating connections between areas with multiple low stress roadways and pathways, provides safer options to current bicyclists and makes biking a more feasible option for everyone.

The LTS islands in Howard County are primarily created by interstates, state routes, and US routes. Along these high stress, high speed, and high traffic volume roadways, bicyclists do not have dedicated space to operate or cross, making bicycle trips for most riders circuitous or impossible. Connecting LTS islands is a major consideration in the *BikeHoward 2026* recommendations.

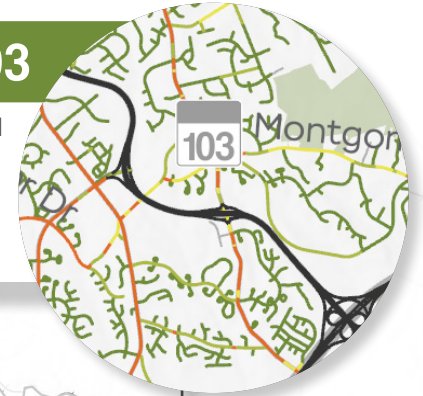
The Highest Stress in Howard

I-70, MD 100, and I-95 are bicycle prohibited roadways and the largest barriers in Howard County. Bicycles are also prohibited on MD 32 from the eastern border to Burntwoods Road and on US-29 from Old Frederick Road to MD 108 North. These roads, along with other state routes, US routes, waterways, and rail lines, fragment Howard County bicycle facilities. The most appropriate roadways to connect are those that exist within LTS Islands because they would connect small neighborhoods and communities.

LTS Islands

MD 103

The intersection of Meadowridge Rd (MD 103) and MD 100 and surrounding road segments are all higher stress. The roundabouts at this intersection connect to MD 100 using highway ramps.



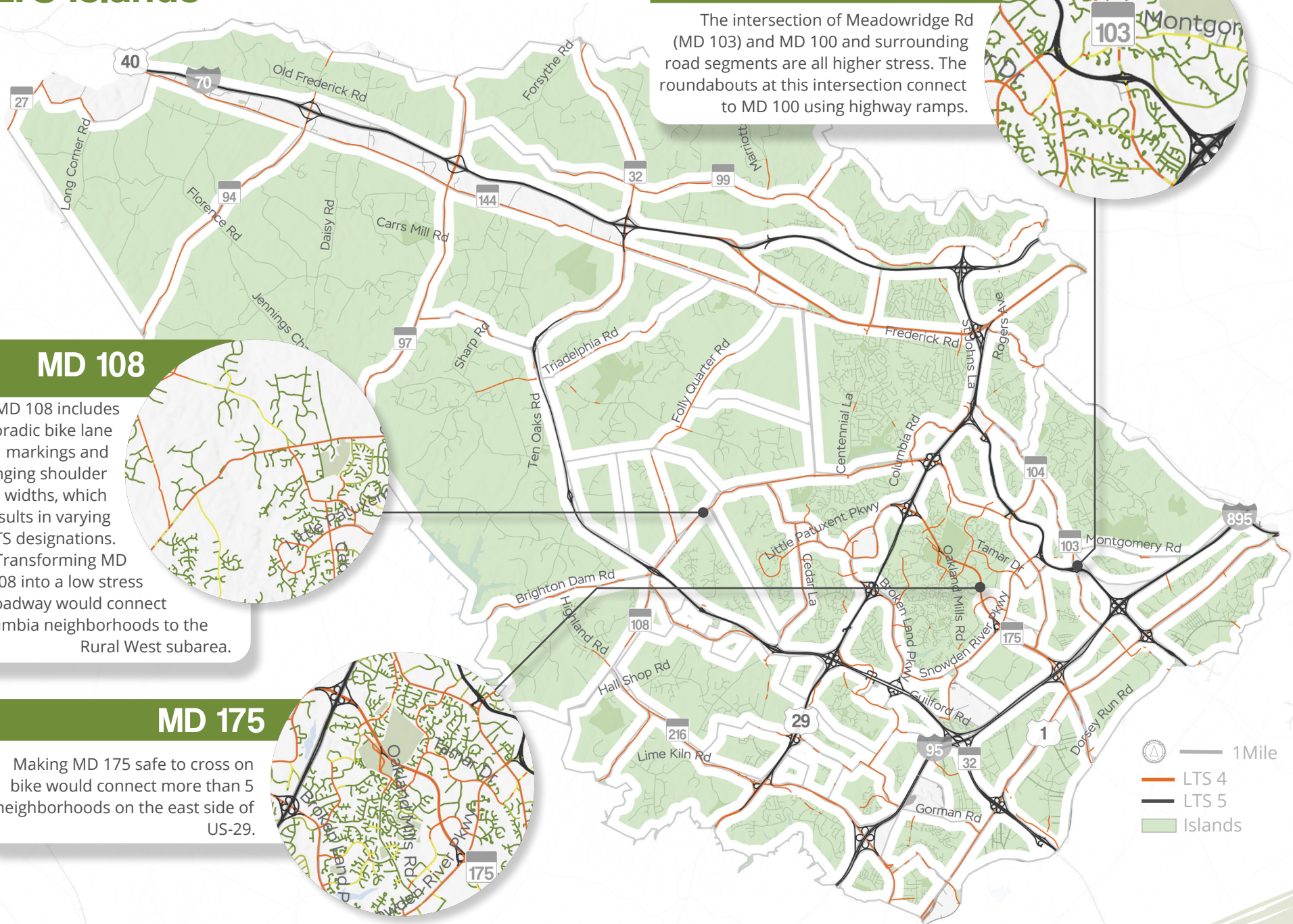
MD 108

MD 108 includes sporadic bike lane markings and changing shoulder widths, which results in varying LTS designations. Transforming MD 108 into a low stress roadway would connect Columbia neighborhoods to the Rural West subarea.



MD 175

Making MD 175 safe to cross on bike would connect more than 5 neighborhoods on the east side of US-29.

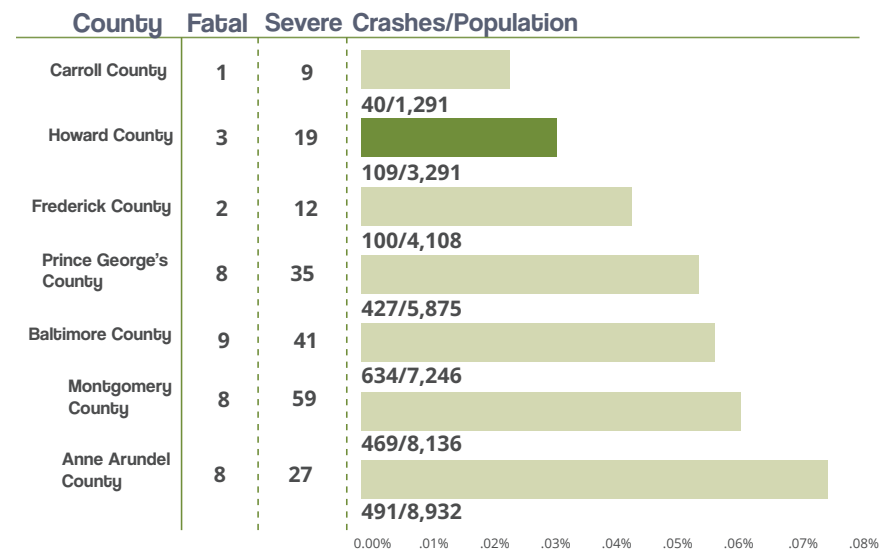


Crash Analysis

Bicycle-Involved Crashes

There were 100 reported bicycle-involved crashes between 2019 and 2023 in Howard County. Three of these crashes were fatal. Approximately one in five bicyclists involved in reported crashes sustained severe injuries. Howard County has the second lowest bicycle crash count when looking at surrounding counties and when normalizing by population.⁴

Bicycle-Involved Crashes from 2019-2023 in Howard County and Surrounding Counties



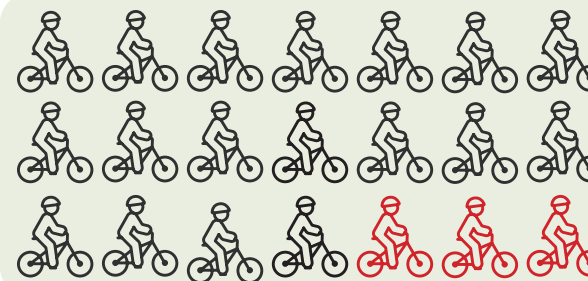
Bicyclists are considered vulnerable road users and are eight times more likely to be injured than vehicle occupants in a crash.⁵ Bicyclists generally travel at much slower speeds than vehicles and are smaller overall, reducing their visibility to drivers.

The expansion of dedicated infrastructure for bicyclists attracts more riders.⁶ More riders in an area will inevitably result in an increase in crashes, due to the sheer increase in the number of people, but crash rates in this area will decrease.

Scenario A: Total Crashes: 2 | Crash Rate: 33%



Scenario B: Total Crashes: 3 | Crash Rate: 14%

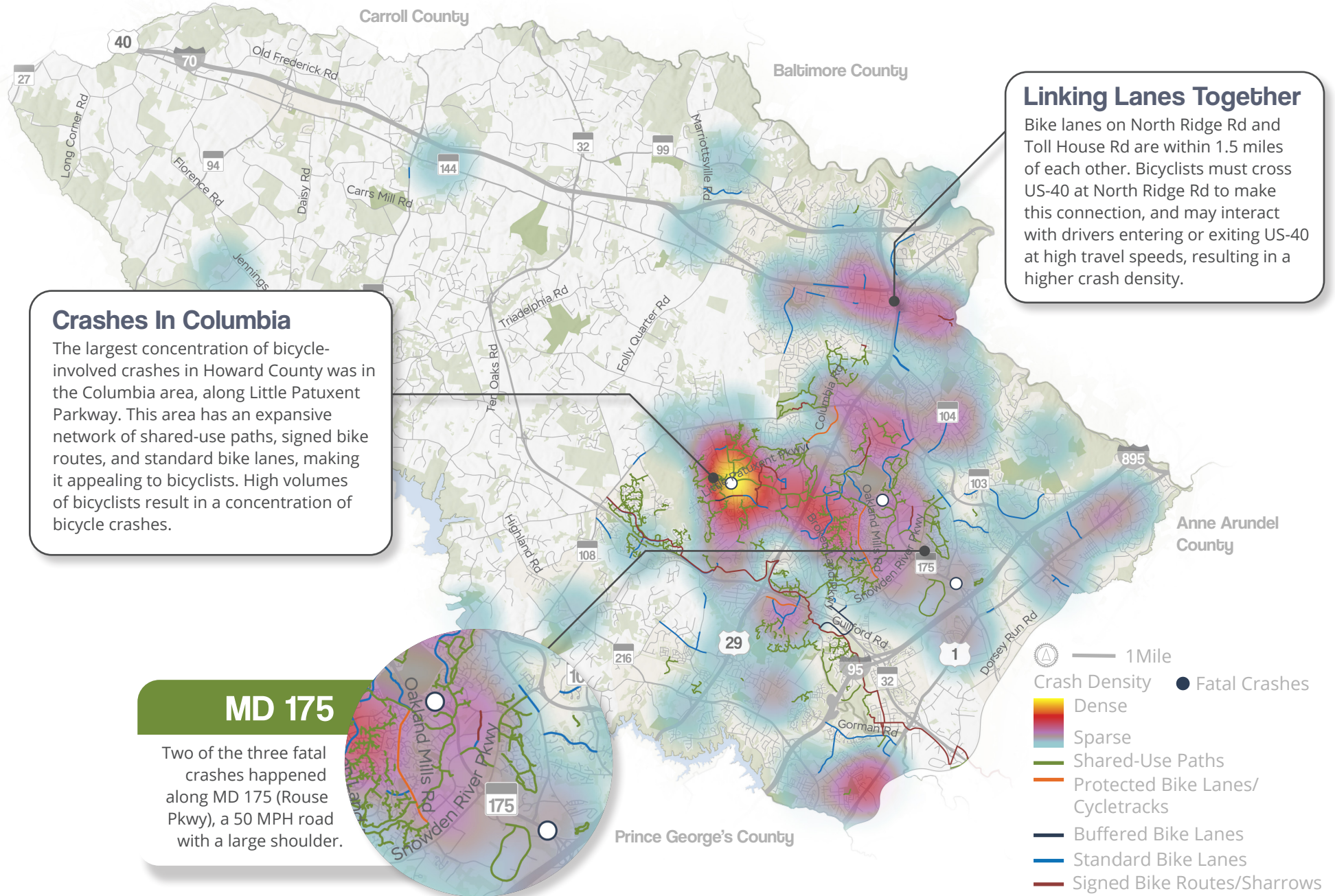


More bicycle crashes in a given area does not necessarily mean that area is inherently less safe.

Bicycle crashes often happen where facilities end abruptly along a road or where there is no designated space for a bicyclist to go after the end of a facility. It is likely that the given area is in high demand for riders, but does not have the network to support it.

Crashes are concentrated in the eastern half of the County, such as along US-1 between the two MARC stations at the edge of the County. The crash concentration correlates with where the standard bike lanes end, indicating an interest in biking without the supporting facilities.

Bicycle-Involved Crashes In Howard County, 2019-2023





Topography & Terrain

How High Can You Bike?

The river valleys and piedmont hills in Howard County add challenges to the County's landscape. For some bicyclists, these hills are welcome — a fun challenge to climb and a way to pick up speed on the way down. For others, the added difficulty of riding on these hills are the barrier that prevents them from getting on a bike. Most of the higher elevation and steep slopes exist around Ellicott City and in the northwestern portion of the County, towards the foot of the Appalachian Mountains to the west. Other notable peaks include Chestnut Hill (554 ft), Annapolis Rock (600 ft), and Lawyers Hill (266 ft).

Climbing Lanes

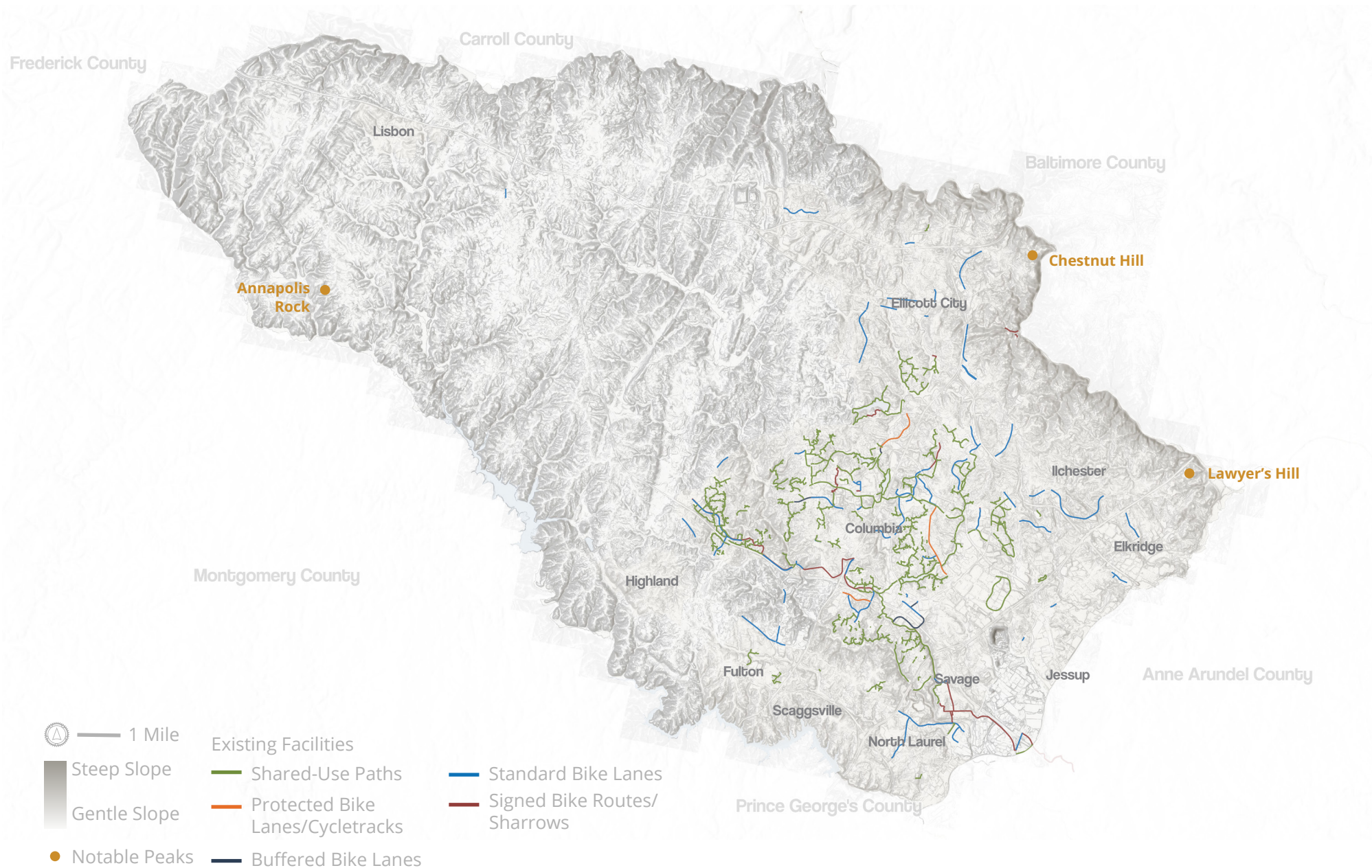
Climbing lanes are a type of bike lane used on steep hills with limited available right-of-way. Climbing lanes are used when there's only enough space for a bike lane on one side of the road. The uphill side of the road is selected to allow for dedicated space for cyclists to make a slow ascent, with the reasoning that a downhill cyclist will be better able to keep pace with vehicle traffic.



E-Bikes

E-bikes are bicycles with an electric motor that can provide assistance to riders in the form of speed and pedaling. These enhancements allow bicyclists to bike farther distances, easily tackle steep uphill climbs, and arrive more quickly to their destinations. As such, e-bikes can be used as mobility aids for older adults and people with disabilities, reinforcing their autonomy through transportation, recreation, and social activities.

Slope







4 Plan & Policy Review

BIKEHOWARD





Plans & Policies

The Building Blocks of Change

Decades of local, regional, and state plans and policies have helped shape the trails and facilities that Howard County residents and visitors ride today. Since the adoption of *BikeHoward* in 2016, Howard County and the State of Maryland have each passed Complete Streets policies that systemically prioritize multimodal facilities in transportation plans and projects. *BikeHoward 2026* aligns with and builds upon these efforts.

County

County Plans & General Plan

- BikeHoward 2016*
- HoCo By Design (2023)

County Policies & Strategic Plans

- Strategic Road Safety Plan (2020)
- Transportation Demand Management Plan (2025)
- Complete Streets Resolution (2019)

County Functional Plans

- WalkHoward: Moving Forward (2020)

County Community & Corridor Plans

- Elkridge Bicycle & Pedestrian Priority Area Plan (2026)
- Gateway Master Plan (2025)
- Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan (2020)
- Downtown Columbia Plans (2016-2023)
- Route 1 Corridor: A Plan for Washington Boulevard (2019)
- Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan (2016)
- US Route 40 Streetscape Master Plan (2010)

Regional

Plans

- Bikeable Baltimore Region (2025)
- Resilience 2050 (2023)
- Short-Range Transportation Improvement Program (2026-2029)
- Patapsco Regional Greenway Plan (2017)

State

Plans

- Strategic Highway Safety Plan (2026-2030)
- Connecting Our Future (2025 Update)
- The Playbook (2024)
- 2050 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2024)
- Context Driven (Ongoing)

Policies

- Complete Streets (2024)
- SHA Bicycle Policy & Design Guidelines (2026)

County Plans

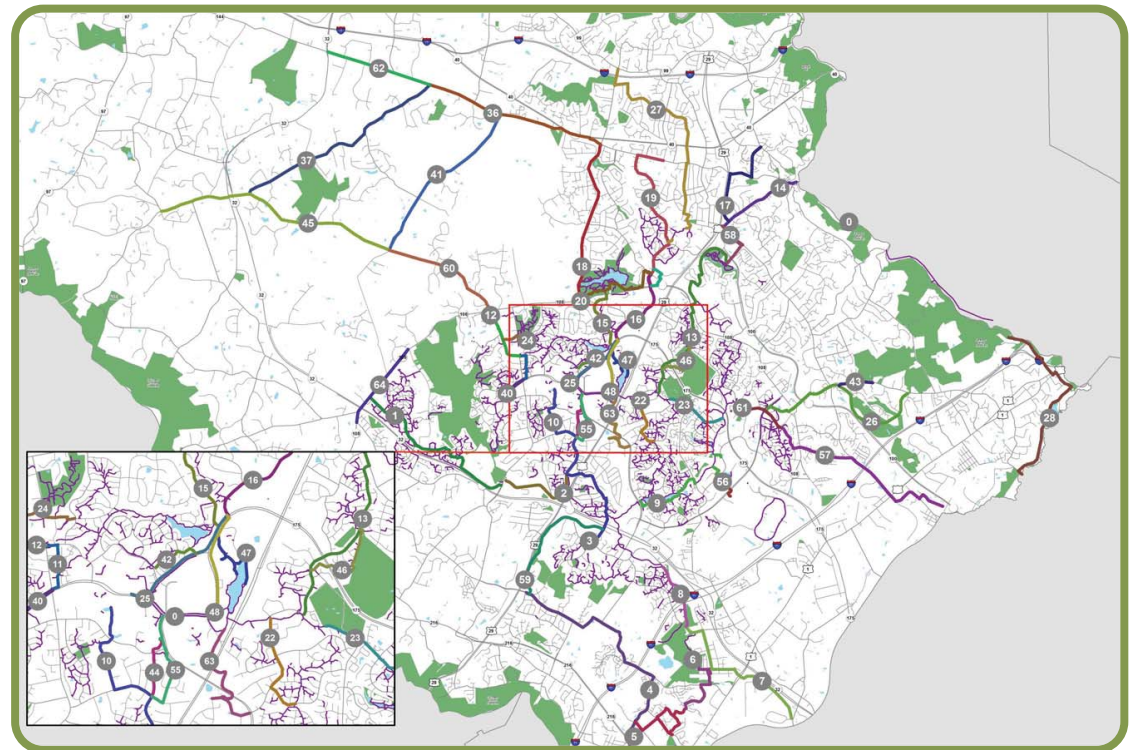
BikeHoward 2016

BikeHoward 2016 served as Howard County's Bicycle Master Plan from 2016 to 2026. *BikeHoward 2016* provided a framework for policy, programmatic, and infrastructure decisions to “promote bicycling as a safe and convenient travel option” for people of all ages and abilities in Howard County. *BikeHoward 2026* builds on ten years of success launched by *BikeHoward 2016* and sets a path for the continued improvement and expansion of bicycle facilities in the County over the next decade.

BikeHoward 2016 examined existing on- and off-road bicycle facilities, policies and practices, and design guidelines to identify gaps and recommend policy actions to improve bicycling conditions. Through extensive data analysis, policy review, and community engagement, *BikeHoward 2016* developed bikeway recommendations impacting over 550 miles of roadway. These recommendations were prioritized using overarching, geographic, and feasibility-based criteria to produce Short-Term, Mid-Term, and Long-Term Networks. Forty-nine structured projects were identified along the Short-Term Network.

BikeHoward 2016 Vision

“Howard County, Maryland seeks to be a bicycle-friendly County where residents and visitors, schoolchildren and seniors, men and women feel comfortable and safe bicycling on our roads and paths as a means of daily transportation and healthy recreation.”



BikeHoward 2016 map of Short-Term Network structured projects.

A Look Back At *BikeHoward* 2016

BikeHoward 2016 took a structured, capital improvement-driven approach to developing the County's bicycle network. The plan identified a Short-Term Network, comprising 49 structured projects to be completed over a 10-year period. The development of *BikeHoward* 2026 provides an opportunity to assess progress toward the Short-Term Network, identify challenges, and refine the County's approach to expanding and enhancing the existing bicycle network.

A Shift In Approach

Howard County has strengthened its commitment to Complete Streets roadway design since 2016 with the adoption of the County's Complete Streets policy (2019) and design manual (2022). Revisiting progress made towards the 2016 Short-Term Network provides the opportunity to refine the County's approach to bicycle facility development over the coming decade in a way that reflects the County's Complete Streets approach.

While many proposed segments of the 2016 Short-Term Network were constructed as structured capital projects, most constructed segments were completed as part of development projects and regular roadway resurfacing. The lessons learned about how portions of the network are implemented have informed the framing of *BikeHoward* 2026 network recommendations.

Much of the yet-to-be-realized portions of the planned network from the 2016 plan are carried forward in the *BikeHoward* 2026 recommendations. Many of the segments omitted from the planned network in the 2026 update consist of long stretches of shared roadways.

Progress to Date

Significant progress has been made on the majority of structured projects identified in *BikeHoward* 2016. Many of these projects and/or portions of their recommended facilities have been constructed. A number of projects are programmed for construction in the coming years, and several others are in various stages of design.

The map to the right highlights two structured projects — one constructed, one programmed — within the County's bicycle network.



Progress to Date

Lake Kittamaqundi & Vantage Point Road 100% Complete

The Columbia Association constructed a shared-use path around Lake Kittamaqundi. Shared-use path upgrades include pathway widening and intersection enhancements.

Patuxent Branch Trail Construction Start: 2026

This project features a paved shared-use path and trailhead improvements. Design is complete and funding has been acquired. Construction is scheduled to begin at the end of 2026.



- 1 Mile
- Shared-Use Paths
- Protected Bike Lanes/ Cycletracks
- Buffered Bike Lanes
- Standard Bike Lanes
- Signed Bike Routes & Sharrows



County General Plan

HoCo By Design (2023)

HoCo By Design, Howard County's General Plan, is guiding the growth, development, and land use policies in the County over the next 20 years. This long-range, visionary document takes a character-driven approach to growth and development that is rooted in equity, predictability, sustainability, and achievability. HoCo By Design aims to address housing demand, support economic opportunity, and conserve the County's natural resources through proposed policies, initiatives, and actions. The Plan organizes the County's future land use into four high-level categories: areas to preserve, areas to strengthen, areas to enhance, and areas to transform.

A key element of the Plan is the areas to transform, identified as "activity centers." HoCo By Design establishes the activity centers as an important component of the County's future land use patterns and specifically recognizes that these areas will need to plan for high-quality transportation facilities to and within these centers.

County in Motion

HoCo By Design's "County in Motion" chapter presents eleven policy statements to inform government actions that can help "manage and provide a safe, equitable, and fiscally sustainable transportation system for all users." Each policy statement has accompanying implementing actions assigned to responsible agencies. *BikeHoward 2026* carries these policy statements and their implementing actions forward by integrating relevant items into its implementation framework.

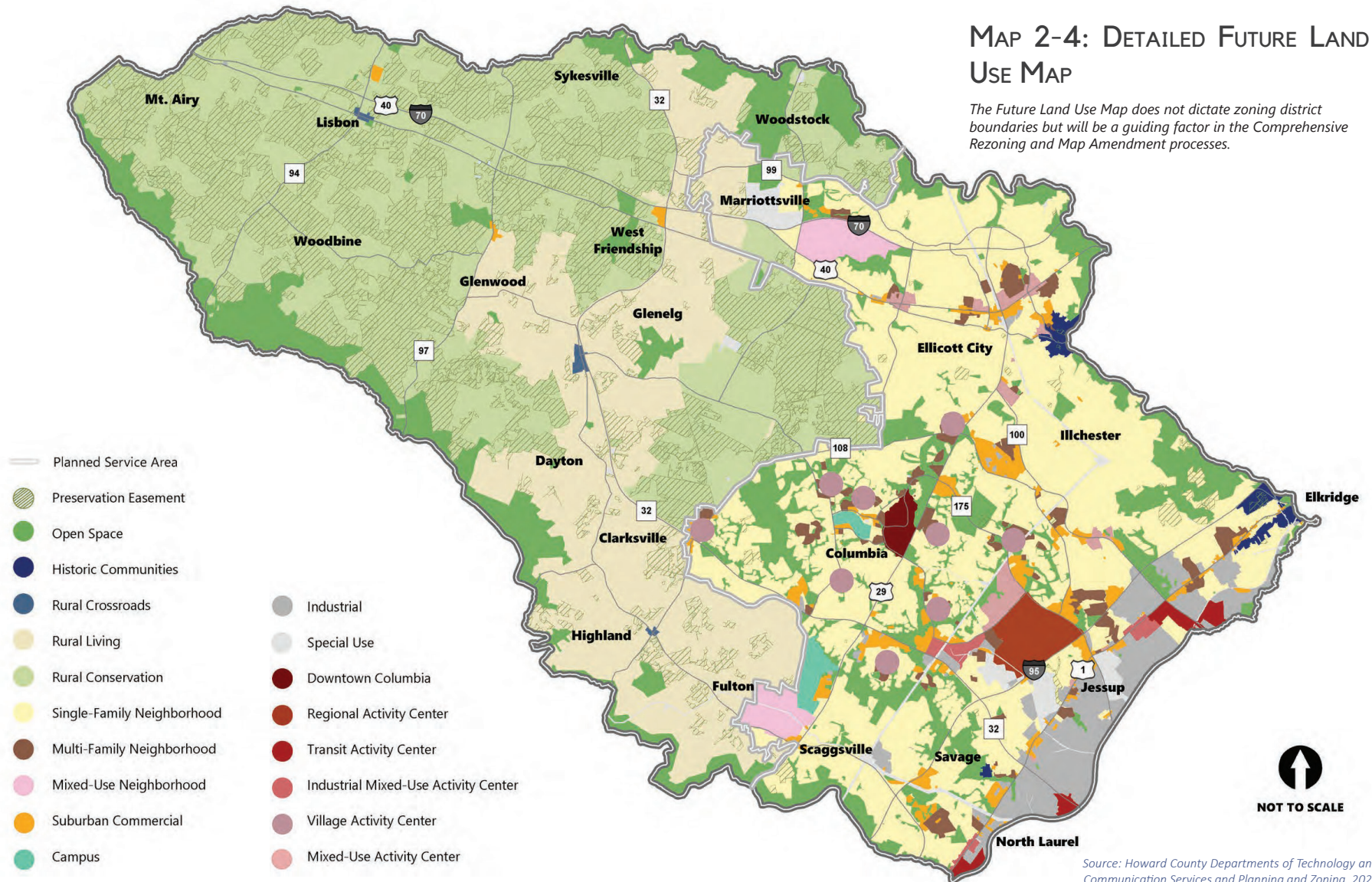
HoCo By Design highlights 39 transportation investment projects and introduces design guidelines by roadway functional classification from the Howard County Design Manual. *BikeHoward 2026* assesses the status of these investment projects and adheres to Design Manual guidelines in its recommendations.

HoCo By Design calls for safe, non-automobile connections within activity centers that allow people to move between destinations without needing to make multiple vehicle trips. *BikeHoward 2026* recognizes that many of the County's activity centers will transform in the future, therefore, for some locations, the land use, street network, and development pattern envisioned by HoCo By Design may not yet exist. As activity centers are rezoned, redeveloped, or revisited for more detailed land use planning, Howard County staff will use these opportunities to refine the bicycle network to respond to these changes per the recommendations in *BikeHoward 2026*. Stronger connections both to and within these centers can be accomplished by:

- **Identifying bicycle connections between activity centers and surrounding neighborhoods, employment areas, and transit services;**
- **Developing safe and comfortable bicycle routes within activity centers that connect individual buildings and destinations and support the General Plan's "park once" concept;**
- **Coordinating bicycle facilities with new streets, street extensions, sidewalks, transit facilities, and other infrastructure constructed as part of redevelopment; and**
- **Reassessing facility type, alignment, and implementation priorities as more detailed information becomes available.**

MAP 2-4: DETAILED FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The Future Land Use Map does not dictate zoning district boundaries but will be a guiding factor in the Comprehensive Rezoning and Map Amendment processes.



Source: Howard County Departments of Technology and Communication Services and Planning and Zoning, 2023

Activity centers and the future land use in Howard County, as defined by the County's General Plan.

County Policies & Strategic Plans

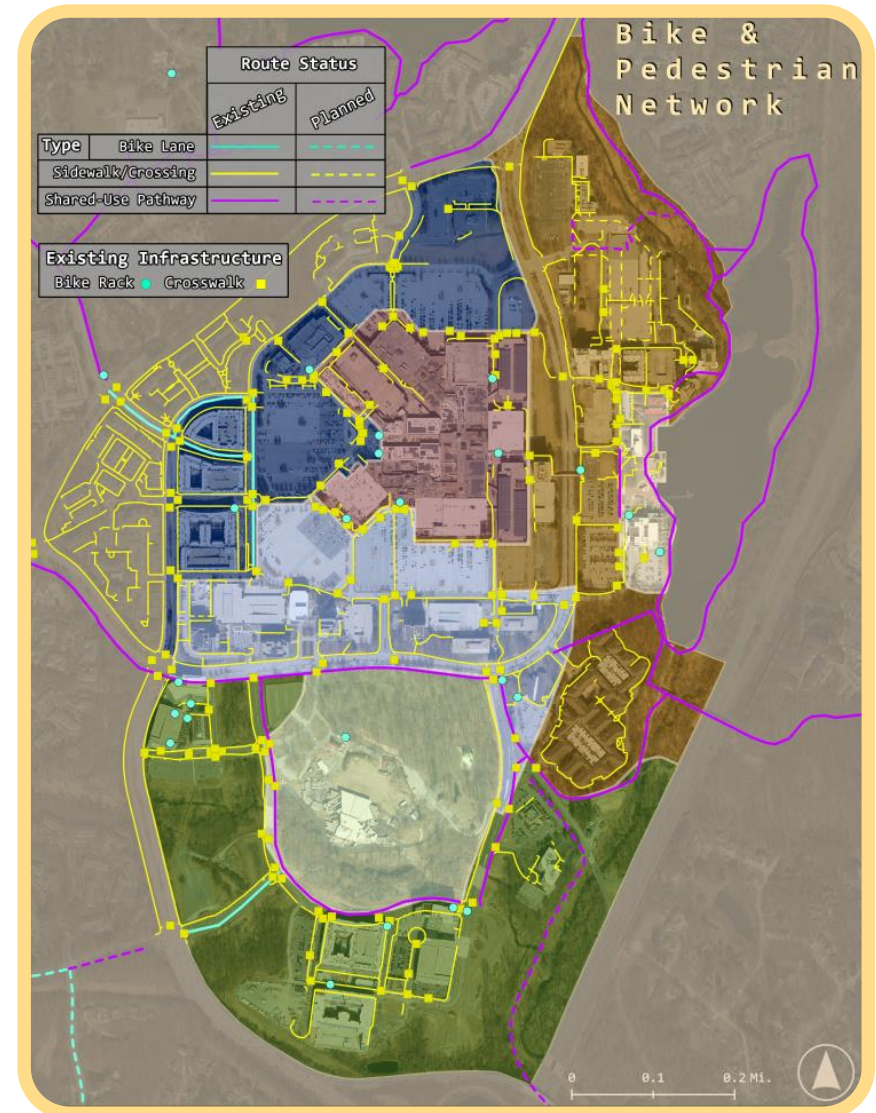
Strategic Road Safety Plan (2020)

The Howard County Strategic Road Safety Plan (SRSP) takes a comprehensive approach to the prevention of fatal and serious injury crashes in Howard County. The SRSP sets realistic, data-driven safety goals, assesses crash trends, and identifies deployable strategies and actions to improve roadway safety in Howard County.

The SRSP's analysis of pedestrian and bicycle crash trends provides useful context to this plan's crash analysis, and its Pedestrian/Bicycle Strategies and Action Items serve as guidance for *BikeHoward 2026's* recommendations.

Transportation Demand Management Plan (2024)

Howard County's Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program Go Howard encourages residents to use transportation alternatives to single-occupant vehicles to manage travel demands as the County continues to grow. TDM takes a holistic approach to demand management, leveraging strategies from rideshare to telework. One of these strategies is making it easier to bike around the County, which is also a goal of *BikeHoward 2026's* Bicycle Network 2.0. TDM is required in Downtown Columbia and Maple Lawn.



The TDM Plan for Downtown Columbia considers the planned and existing bicycle facilities in the area.

Complete Streets Policy

The Howard County Complete Streets Policy establishes that “public and private roadways in Howard County shall be safe and convenient for residents of all ages and abilities who travel by foot, bicycle, public transportation or automobile.”

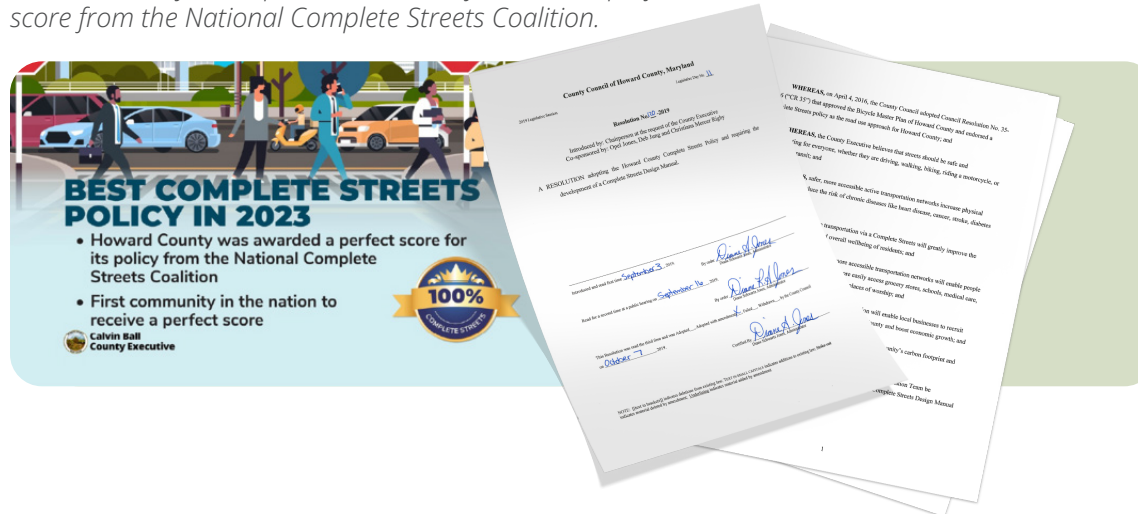
The policy covers all phases of all transportation projects and requires developers to implement Complete Streets. The policy establishes design guidelines, performance measures, a data-driven project prioritization process, and maintenance procedures.

Complete Streets Resolution CR 120-2019

Complete Streets Resolution CR 120-2019 was unanimously adopted by the Howard County Council in 2019. The resolution adopted the Howard County Complete Streets Policy and required the development of a Complete Streets Design Manual.

Project and policy recommendations in *BikeHoward 2026* adhere to the County's Complete Streets Policy and incorporate guidelines from the Complete Streets Design Manual.

Howard County's Complete Streets Policy received a perfect score from the National Complete Streets Coalition.



County Functional Plans

WalkHoward: Moving Forward (2020)

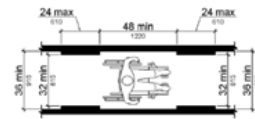
WalkHoward: Moving Forward (2020) is the latest update to the County's 2007 Pedestrian Master Plan, which aims to improve network safety, connectivity, and accessibility. Products of the 2000 General Plan, WalkHoward and *BikeHoward 2016* were created to fulfill the General Plan's overarching goals. WalkHoward renews the County's efforts to make Howard County more walkable by providing facility, program, and policy recommendations based on field assessments of 343 miles of sidewalk and 915 intersections. WalkHoward recommendations support multimodal transportation across Howard County and provide opportunities for bicycle facility tie-ins with pedestrian infrastructure.

Recommended Program Descriptions

Develop a "Beyond the Minimum" program for ADA accommodation

This type of program designed for the pedestrian network is based on a similar program in the health care facility industry.⁴⁸ The program would guide Howard County government, its school system, local businesses, restaurants, etc., in exceeding minimum standards for ADA-accessible public spaces.

Lead Agency: Department of Community Resources and Services (DCRS) Office of ADA Coordination.



Educating policy makers, staff, and contractors on the purpose of ADA standards.

Using the set of principles known as "universal design" to accommodate as many pedestrians as possible, regardless of disability.

Using ADA guidance and standards for all project phases: design, construction, and maintenance.

Designing for actual use, not just minimum compliance. For example, sidewalks and intersections adjacent to healthcare facilities or housing for seniors may need more accessibility.

Creating, in coordination with the County's existing Commission on Disability Issues and Access Committee, an advisory board composed of staff and community members with disabilities to provide ongoing review and suggestions for the pedestrian network.



Developing a set of low cost retrofits to address highly problematic situations that are very costly to make compliant, such as portable landscaping to partition sidewalk cafes.

Safeguarding the "ADA Path of Travel" by removing barriers to bus stops and other pedestrian destinations within the pedestrian network to maintain the minimum ADA-accessible pathway.

Spelling out compliance requirements for contractors to keep common construction practices from resulting in inaccessibility issues, such as non-compliant sidewalk closure and detour signs.

Incorporating accessibility review early in the design review process for transportation and development projects, so accommodations can be made without negatively impacting other needs.

Establish a short accessible design check list to help avoid mistakes from Preliminary and Final design of projects.

⁴⁸ <http://www.healthcarefacilitytoday.com/posts/ten-steps-for-designing-beyond-minimum-ada-compliance-standards-in-hospitals-565>

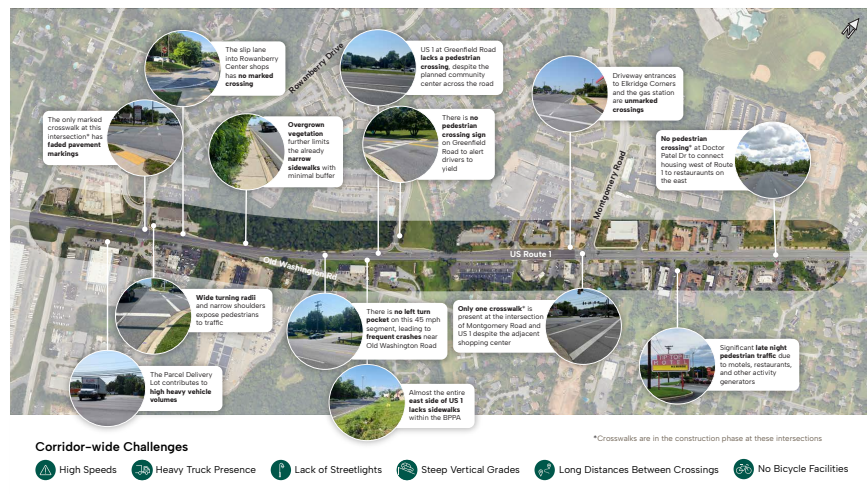
Programmatic recommendations within WalkHoward emphasize ADA compliance, design practices, and education.

County Community & Corridor Plans

Master plans guide planning in Howard County at the subarea level. Bicycle recommendations in these plans contribute to the development of the County's overall network.

Elkridge Bicycle & Pedestrian Priority Area Plan (2026)

Howard County Office of Transportation developed a Bicycle and Pedestrian Priority Area Plan (BPPAP) for the Elkridge community in partnership with MDOT SHA to improve multimodal safety, comfort, and connectivity in the area. The BPPAP's analysis of crashes, sidewalk gaps, land use, and anticipated population growth informed the development of capital program, maintenance, and operations recommendations. *BikeHoward 2026* incorporates these facility and network priorities in its capital and policy recommendations.



Elkridge BPPAP (2026) network recommendations.

Gateway Master Plan (2025)

The Gateway Master Plan (2025) provides a comprehensive guide for the long-term transformation of a 1,100-acre suburban business park near I-95 into a mixed use innovation district. The plan outlines a phased redevelopment strategy informed by market analysis, existing conditions, and stakeholder engagement.

One of the Master Plan's foundational principles is to develop "a multimodal transportation network that welcomes people traveling via all modes." It identifies transportation infrastructure goals for each Gateway subarea, including a new shared-use path along Robert Fulton Drive, connections to existing Columbia Association and regional active transportation networks, multimodal access at MD 108 and MD 175, and enhanced external connections to and from the Gateway area. The plan also identifies opportunities for a multimodal corridor utilizing the CSX right-of-way to improve connectivity within Gateway and to surrounding destinations.

BikeHoward 2026 incorporates the shared-use paths, bicycle facilities, and multimodal connections proposed in the Gateway Master Plan into its planned facilities assessment and network recommendations.

Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan (2020)

The Ellicott City Watershed Master Plan (2020) provides a comprehensive, community-driven vision for rebuilding a stronger more resilient community after historic flooding in 2016 and 2018. The Master Plan provides a roadmap to rebuilding, composed of policies and implementing actions, which address key topics and geographic areas over the next 20 years.

Downtown Columbia

Downtown Columbia Plan (2016)

The Downtown Columbia Plan (as amended in 2016) is “a 30-year master plan for the revitalization and redevelopment of Downtown Columbia” into a mixed-use urban center. The Plan recommends specific transportation policies that will “enhance multi-modal connectivity through a variety of safe, convenient and innovative transportation alternatives” including on-street and off-street bicycle facilities. The Plan includes Downtown-wide design guidelines and a Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation Plan.

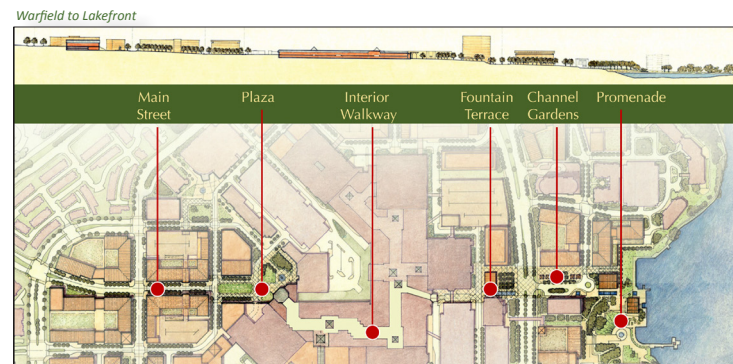
The Downtown Columbia Plan establishes a phased approach to implementing transportation improvements. These improvements are expected to be advanced through a combination of private development and County-led projects. The Plan’s implementation framework identifies a network of pedestrian and bicycle connections to be constructed as individual properties are redeveloped and as the County advances transportation improvements within Downtown Columbia. *BikeHoward 2026* reviews the status of these planned facilities and incorporates relevant recommendations.

Redevelopment Monitoring Report (2023)

The Downtown Columbia Redevelopment Monitoring Report updates community members on progress made in revitalizing Downtown Columbia. The Report documents new developments in transportation and transit, including walking and bicycling conditions. Infrastructure updates including the installation of bike counters, high-visibility crosswalks, and bike parking, as well as descriptions of bicycle education and engagement activities informed *BikeHoward 2026*’s assessment of existing bicycling conditions in the County.

Pedestrian Improvement Action Plan (2023)

Downtown Columbia’s Pedestrian Improvement Action Plan (2023) provides design recommendations and action items to improve walkability in Downtown Columbia based on site visit and desktop analysis of existing pedestrian facilities, as well as stakeholder and community feedback. The plan’s general and location-specific facility recommendations were considered and incorporated into *BikeHoward 2026*’s proposed Bicycle Network 2.0 where appropriate.



The Downtown districts have specific design guidelines and consider bicycle access, parking, and connections within the guidelines.

County Corridor Plans

Corridor plans inform development along Howard County's transportation corridors. These plans include general and location-specific design recommendations that contribute to the expansion and densification of the County's bicycle network.

A Route 1 Corridor Plan for Washington Boulevard (2023)

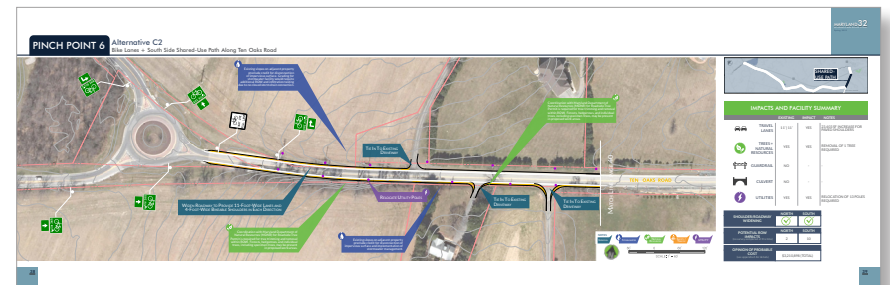
A Route 1 Corridor Plan for Washington Boulevard offers guidance for the revitalization and redevelopment of Route 1 through placemaking, reinvestment, high-quality design and multimodal transportation connections. The Route 1 Corridor Plan specifies its commitment to making Washington Boulevard and the area surrounding it more bikeable, looking to BikeHoward for specific infrastructure improvements. The Plan for Washington Boulevard states that the first priority should be closing existing gaps in the bicycle network.

US Route 40 Streetscape Master Plan (2010)

The US Route 40 Streetscape Master Plan is a planning and design effort to provide beautification and planting recommendations for the Route 40 corridor. The Plan included existing conditions analysis and provided landscape recommendations for physical improvements. This Plan states that improvements to the streetscape will encourage and improve walking and biking along the corridor, but does not provide specific design recommendations for bicycle facilities.

Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines (2016)

The Clarksville Pike Streetscape Plan and Design Guidelines provide streetscape and architectural design guidance to improve the look, feel, and experience of Clarksville Pike. This document has materialized into the Clarksville-River Hill Streetscape Improvements, which, using the MD 32 Alternate Bike Route Study (2019), has recommended and is designing shared-use paths along the north and south sides of Ten Oaks Rd, from Burntwoods Rd to Clarksville Pike.



Recommendation layout from MD 32 Alternative Bike Route Study (2019).

Regional Plans

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Baltimore region, which is composed of eight counties and cities including Howard County. BMC staffs the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB), which manages planning and investment of surface transportation assets in the region, including bicycle facilities. Regional plans and activities that inform *BikeHoward 2026* include Bikeable Baltimore Region, Resilience2050, and the Short-Range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2026-2029.

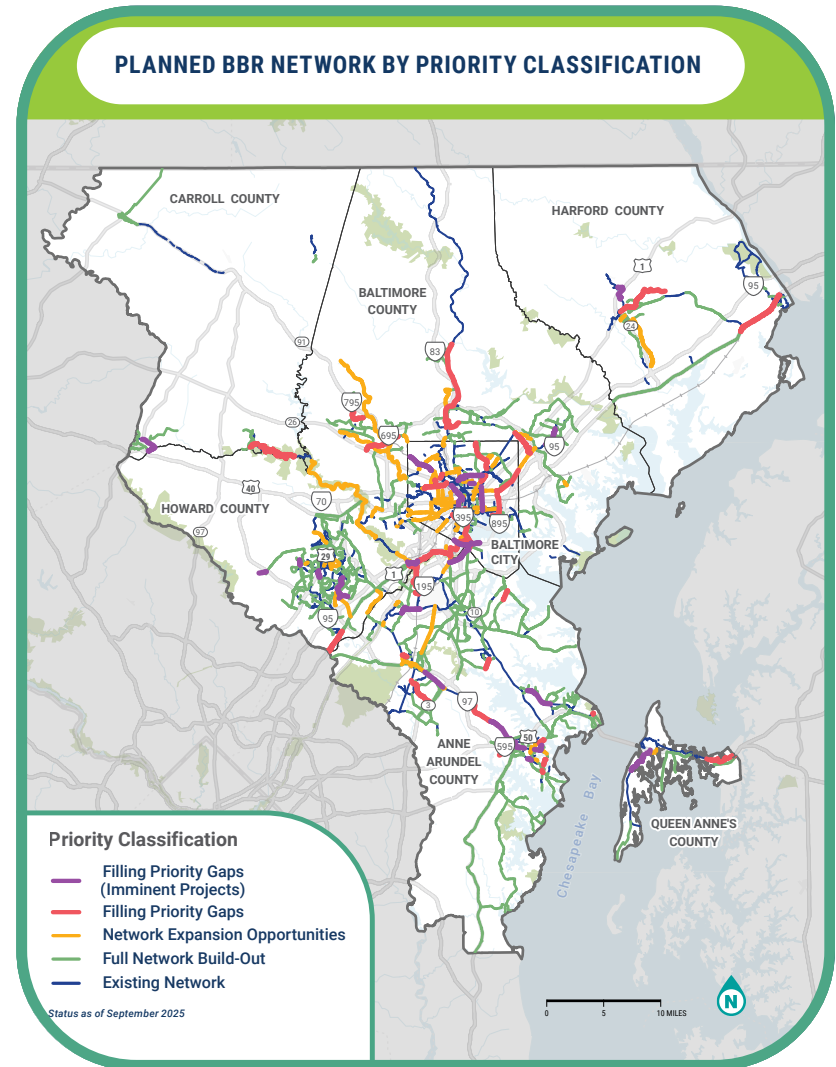
Bikeable Baltimore Region (2025)

Bikeable Baltimore Region (2025) identifies a comprehensive regional bike network for people of all ages and abilities. Bikeable Baltimore Region (BBR) evaluates existing facilities through connectivity, safety, and short-trip demand analysis to identify network gaps. This analysis combined with community input informs the BBR Network, which includes 330 miles of existing and 782 miles of planned bikeways. BBR prioritizes projects for implementation and provides recommendations for network partners in service of creating a comprehensive bicycle network.

BikeHoward 2026 assesses high-stress bikeways and network gaps identified in the BBR, and aligns with BBR policy and project recommendations.

BBR Vision

“The Baltimore region will work together to create a bicycle network that expands opportunities for users of all ages and abilities.”



Bikeable Baltimore Region planned network segments by priority.

Resilience 2050 (2023)

Resilience 2050: Adapting to the Challenges of Tomorrow (2023) is BRTB's latest Long-Range Transportation Plan. Resilience 2050 presents regional goals and implementation strategies to guide transportation investments in the region between 2028-2050 to enhance the safety, efficiency, and capacity of the region's transportation system.

Resilience 2050 identifies transportation projects that may receive federal funding, including major capital projects with bicycle improvements in Howard County. *BikeHoward 2026* considers these projects and their performance targets in its analysis, recommendations, and evaluation methodology.

Short-Range Transportation Improvement Program 2026-2029

The BRTB Region Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) details federally funded transportation projects identified in Resilience 2050. The TIP reviews the status of 2025-2028 TIP projects and documents justifications, timelines, and expected costs for 2026-2029 TIP projects.

Over \$25 million in funding will go to projects in Howard County. Two of these projects include multimodal facilities. *BikeHoward 2026* includes these planned facilities in its assessment of the County's bicycle network and in the identification of future network connections.

Major Projects

Capital projects in Resilience 2050 and the 2026-2029 TIP that feature multimodal facilities include:

1. Snowden River Parkway

Funding: \$3.26 Million

Year of Operation: 2030

Design and implementation of multi-modal improvements from Broken Land Parkway to Oakland Mills Road including protected bicycle facilities.

2. PRG: Elkridge to Guinness Open Gate

Funding: \$625,000

Year of Operation: 2030

Construction of 1.5 miles of shared-use path including on-street facilities, hard surface trails, bridges, and boardwalks.

Roadway widening projects featuring bicycle improvements and/or shared-use path construction include MD 108 (ID: 73), MD 175 (ID: 75), and US 1 Revitalization Breakout Projects (ID: 79).

Patapsco Regional Greenway Plan (2017)

The Patapsco Regional Greenway (PRG) Plan proposes a 40-mile, shared-use trail through the Patapsco Valley from Baltimore to Sykesville. Over 12 miles of the PRG are operational and multiple segments are undergoing design, including a segment in Elkridge. Significant portions of the PRG will be located along the northeastern border of Howard County. *BikeHoward 2026* considers connections to these planned facilities in its recommendations.



State Plans

Strategic Highway Safety Plan (2026-2030)

The 2026-2030 Maryland Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) reaffirms the State's commitment to Vision Zero and leverages intergovernmental partnerships to improve safety outcomes. The SHSP analyzes crash trends by emphasis area, including pedestrian and bicycle crashes. Crash characteristics associated with bicycle crashes at the state level were considered in BikeHoward's crash analysis. BikeHoward's implementation plan leverages components of the SHSP's strategic pillars to reduce fatal and serious injury vulnerable road user crashes.

Connecting Our Future (2025 Update)

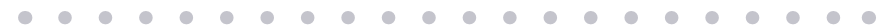
The Central Maryland Regional Transit Plan Update is a public transportation improvement plan focused on Central Maryland for the next 25 years. The 2025 Update to this Plan features progress updates, demand evaluations, improved strategies, and a five year implementation plan. While the plan largely focuses on transit improvements, it does highlight the importance of improving bicycle access to stations and commercial areas in order to satisfy the goal of increasing access to jobs and opportunities. The Update also mentions progress in the realm of Complete Streets and any large capital projects that involve bicycle facility improvements.

The Playbook (2024)

MDOT's 2050 Maryland Transportation Plan or "The Playbook" provides a long-term vision for the future of Maryland's transportation system and will inform project prioritization over the next 20 years. The Playbook assesses the State's current transportation system, including 1,148 miles of separated active transportation routes. This analysis, along with public feedback, informs the Playbook's implementation approach and evaluation methods. *BikeHoward* 2026 draws from the Playbook's vision, guiding principles, transportation goals, and objectives to improve transportation outcomes in the County.

2050 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2024)

The Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) establishes goals, priorities, and performance measures to improve active transportation safety and access statewide through future planning and investment along state and local roadways. *BikeHoward* 2026 integrates the BPMP's policy, program, and facility recommendations into its implementation framework.



MDOT Vision

"To provide safe and convenient active transportation that supports equitable access for all."

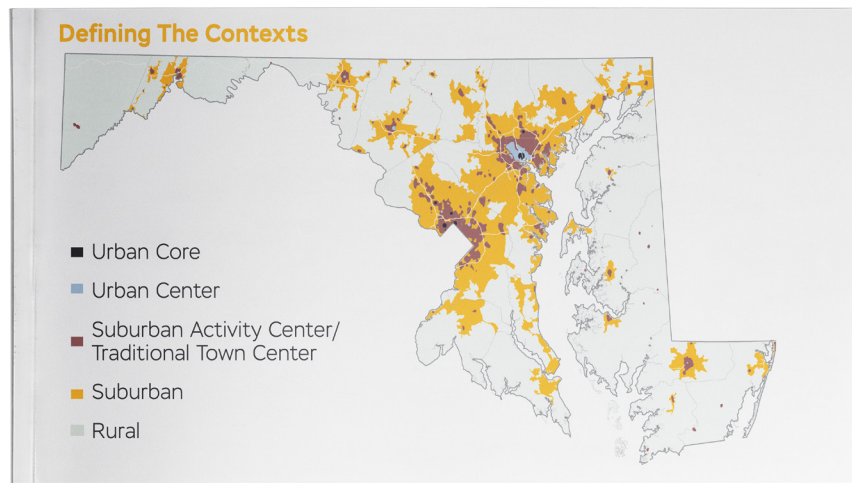


Context Driven Initiative

Context Driven is a Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration (MDOT SHA) initiative that considers the impact of land use on the State's transportation system. The initiative includes the Context Driven Guide detailing each land use context, the Pedestrian Safety Action Plan providing context-driven pedestrian safety strategies, and the Context Driven Toolkit featuring safety-enhancing design treatments. *BikeHoward 2026* considers land use contexts when developing network and design recommendations.

Context Driven Guide (2020)

MDOT SHA's Context Driven guide provides planning and design guidelines for multi-modal transportation systems tailored to the State's different land use contexts. Much of Howard County is classified as Suburban and Rural, with select Suburban Activity/Traditional Town Centers in Columbia. *BikeHoward 2026* considers the corresponding design treatments identified in the Context Driven Toolkit for these land use contexts when coordinating with SHA on state roadway projects with a bicycle element in Howard County.



Map of contexts statewide.

Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (2023)

The Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (PSAP) identifies areas of need and priority corridors for pedestrian and bicycle improvement using a data-driven approach informed by existing conditions analysis, land use context, and public feedback. The PSAP informs physical improvements made by SHA — including safety countermeasures from the Context Driven Toolkit — and SHA pedestrian and bicycle policies and strategies. *BikeHoward 2026* considers priority corridors identified by the PSAP in Howard County in its approach and recommendations.

PSAP Purpose

“To make our streets safer for everyone by making them safer for pedestrians and bicyclists.”

Context Driven Toolkit (2020)

MDOT SHA's Context Driven Toolkit provides context-appropriate safety countermeasures that support surrounding land uses. Recommended design elements adhere to national standards. *BikeHoward 2026* references the Context Driven Toolkit when collaborating with SHA on applicable roadway projects.

An aerial photograph showing a residential neighborhood with several apartment buildings, parking lots, and green spaces. A road, Montgomery Road, runs horizontally across the top of the image. To the right, it intersects with Timberlee Road, which curves upwards. The area is densely wooded with many trees. The text 'Montgomery Road' is overlaid on the road in the top left, and 'Timberlee Road' is overlaid on the road in the top right.

Montgomery Road

Timberlee Road

Project Highlight

Montgomery Road

Steepridge Drive to Lawyers Hill Court

A new bike lane, sidewalk, and crosswalk with pedestrian refuge island were added in September 2024.



State Policies

Complete Streets (2024)

MDOT 750 Complete Streets Policy was adopted June 1, 2024. The Policy applies to all capital improvement projects within MDOT right-of-way where specific users are not prohibited.

Howard County adheres to MDOT policies, including Complete Streets, when working with SHA on projects within SHA's right-of-way. *BikeHoward* 2026 builds upon the best practices outlined in MDOT's Complete Streets Policy.

Complete Streets Policy Statement

“The MDOT shall aim to create a safe, comprehensive, integrated, and connected network to accommodate all users in a manner that is suitable to the existing and planned land use context as defined by the Context Guide.”



COMPLETE STREETS



safety for all users



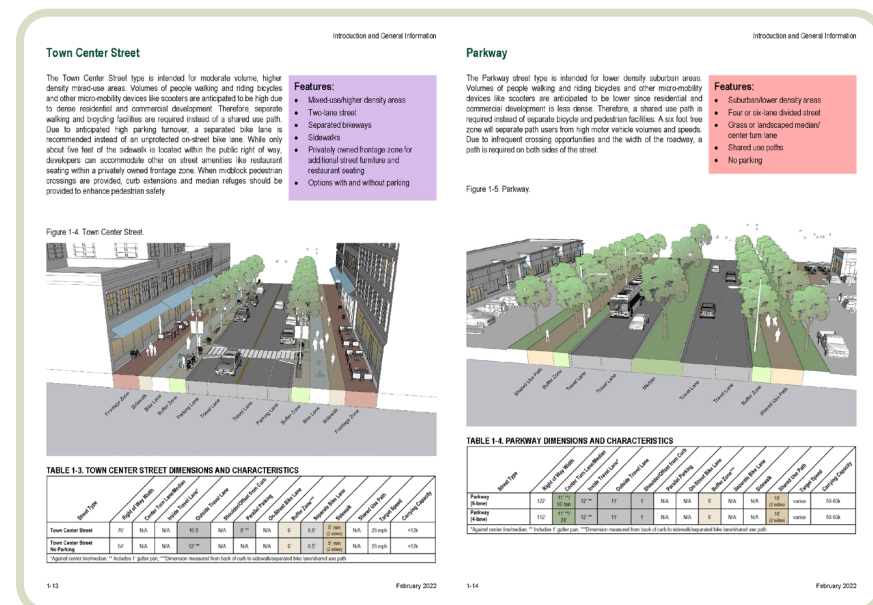
Design Guidance

Standards & Best Practices

The implementation of Complete Streets policies passed at the County and State level includes the development of roadway design manuals. These manuals adhere to national standards set by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Maryland Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MdMUTCD), and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and incorporate cutting-edge, best practices. Network suggestions and recommendations included in *BikeHoward 2026* utilize these best practices.

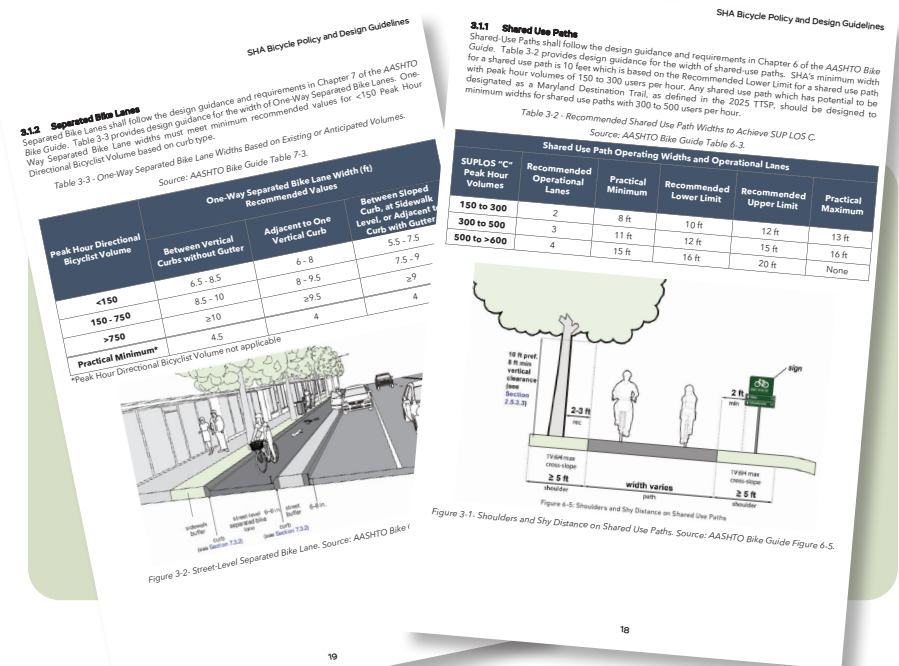
Complete Streets Design Manual

The Howard County Design Manual Volume III—Complete Streets and Bridges provides flexible and responsive design guidelines based on national best practices (e.g., FHWA, AASHTO, NACTO). The Manual was developed as part of Complete Streets Resolution 120 - 2019 (2019).



Design guidance by street type.

State Guidelines



State design guidelines.

SHA Bicycle Policy & Design Guidelines (2026)

The 2026 SHA Bicycle Policy & Design Guidelines provide bicycle facility selection and design standards. The document emphasizes the need for bicycle facilities to accommodate users of all ages and abilities. This document is crucial during the planning and design process to create a safe and reliable bicycle network. Howard County follows SHA guidelines when developing bicycle facilities in coordination with SHA along state roadways. *BikeHoward 2026* adheres to these guidelines.



Planned Facilities From Prior Plans

The bicycle and shared-use facilities proposed by the plans in this review form the backbone of *BikeHoward 2026*'s recommendations. The map differentiates programmed facilities (with dedicated funding) and planned facilities (awaiting dedicated funding).

Planned facilities are depicted as solid lines to more clearly show select short segments.

Project Highlight South Entrance Trail

As of Summer 2026, Howard County is designing the South Entrance Trail, a paved shared-use path that will connect South Entrance Road to Stevens Forest Road. The trail will provide a valuable multimodal connection across US-29 and Broken Land Parkway.





Anne Arundel County

Prince George's County

- Sharrows
- Protected Bike Lanes
- Standard Bike Lanes
- Signed Sharrows
- Roadways



5 Public Engagement

BIKEHOWARD





Perspectives & Feedback

Engaging with the Community

Connecting with the riders who use the network of trails, lanes, and pathways every day reveals the challenges and opportunities related to biking in Howard County.

Public comments, concerns, and ideas are the foundation of *BikeHoward 2026*. With observations and input from everyday riders, recommendations have been tailored to provide reliable, safe, and accessible infrastructure for Howard County residents. Feedback was collected both in-person and online, providing community members who were unable to attend in-person forums the opportunity to provide feedback.

Through this combination of tools, the Office of Transportation collected **361** site-specific comments and **92** surveys. The comments and survey results informed the recommended network, the prioritization methodology, and the implementation matrix for the next ten years.

Engagement Process

Several Streams of Feedback

Public feedback was collected throughout March 2026 with a focus on thematic feedback via a survey and site-specific feedback via a mapping activity.

Public Feedback



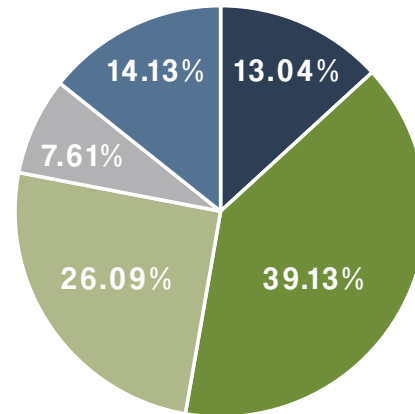
Survey Results

What We Heard

Participants filled out a five question survey that featured a mix of multiple choice and ranking questions to identify planning priorities for the *BikeHoward 2026* Bicycle Network 2.0. Participants were asked to identify themselves as types of cyclists, rank their improvement type preferences, and prioritize what kinds of bicycle improvements they would like to see in the next ten years.

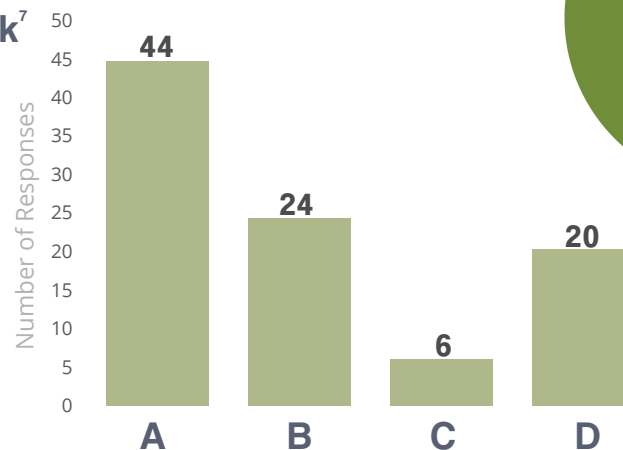
Type of Cyclist

- A strong and fearless cyclist
- An enthused and confident cyclist
- An interested but concerned cyclist
- Not a cyclist
- Opted out



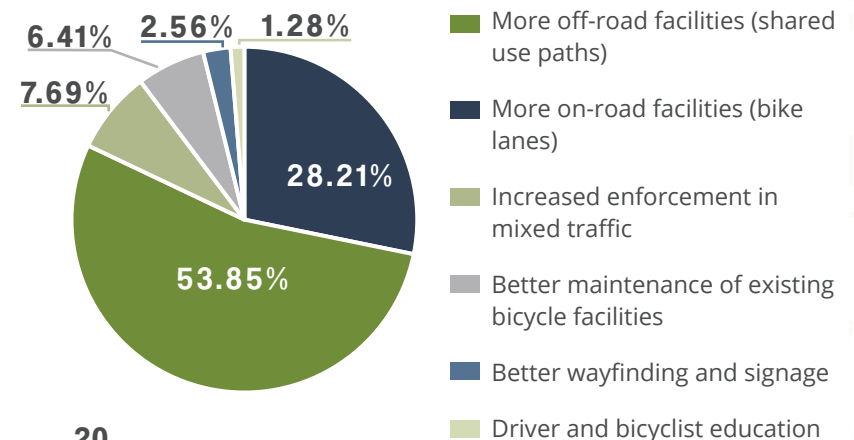
Prioritization of The Network⁷

- A:** Building longer segments that link population centers in and around the County
- B:** Building smaller segments that fill gaps in the network
- C:** Upgrading our existing facilities with spot-safety improvements and wayfinding
- D:** No response



Ranking Overall Improvements⁸

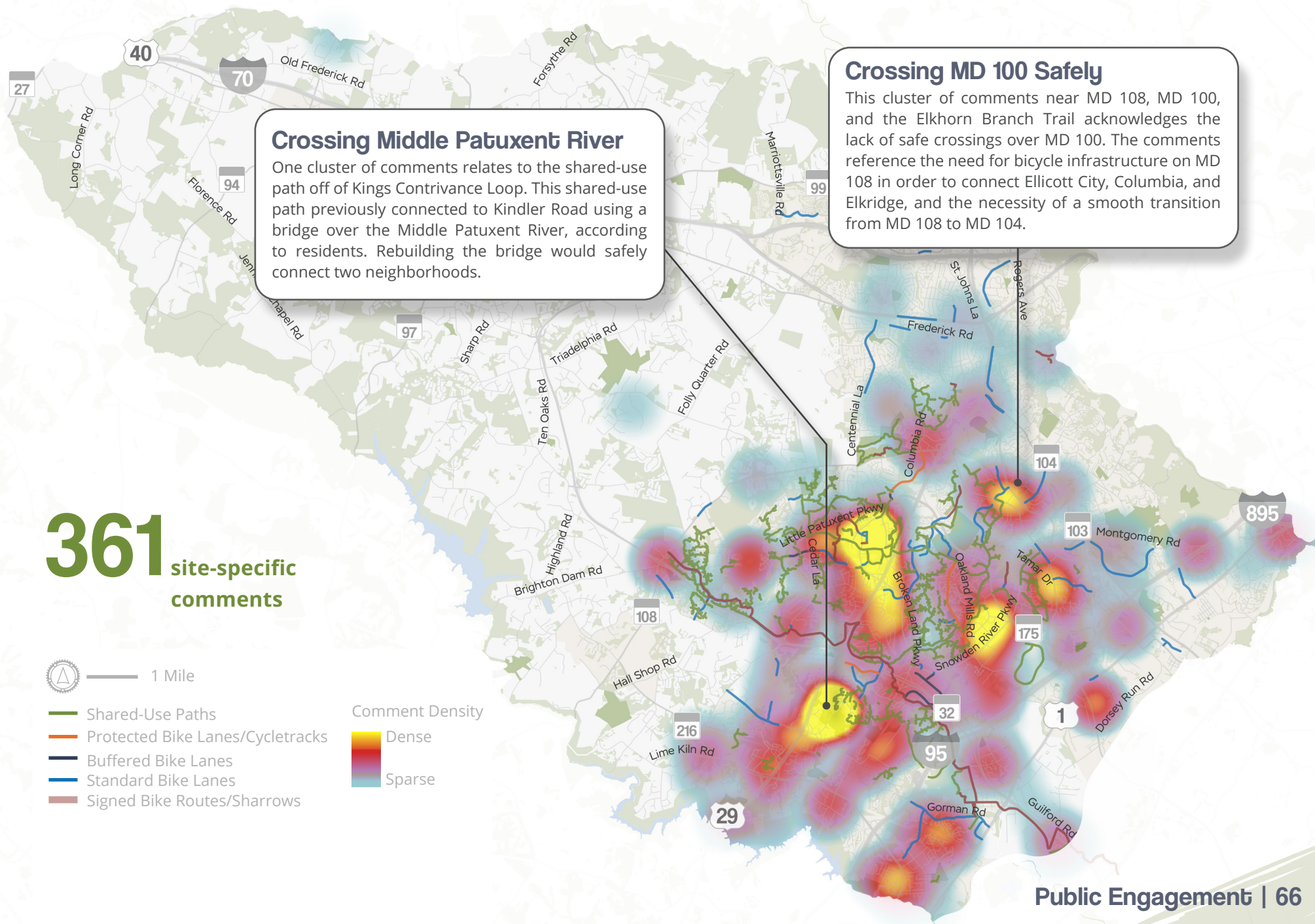
When asked to rank which types of improvements Howard County residents would like to see, all of the options were ranked first by at least one participant. The majority of participants prioritized building facilities over all other improvements.



⁷ The number of total survey responses for this question is 94 responses due to some participants selecting two options.

⁸ Seventy-eight participants answered the question above, out of the 92 total survey responses. As such, the percentages above have been calculated from a total of 78 responses.

Who We Heard From





Key Themes From Public Engagement

HoCo wants to see:

1. **Safe connections across major barriers such as rivers, interstates, and arterials.**

Examples include but are not limited to I-95, US-1, US-40, MD 175, MD 100, and MD 32.

2. **An expanded network of pathways between residential neighborhoods and popular destinations.**

This includes continuing to grow the Columbia Association pathway network and extending shared use paths beyond the Columbia area. It also includes building trails and paths between cul-de-sacs, schools, and parks to create opportunities for safe local trips.

3. **Easy to navigate intersections and roundabouts.**

Retrofit existing intersections and build new intersections with bicyclists in mind (e.g. the Johns Hopkins Road roundabout).

4. **More mileage of protected bike lanes.**

Many riders prefer protected bike lanes and mentioned safety as their top consideration when choosing whether to bike over other modes of transportation.

5. **Connections where gaps exist in the bike and sidewalk networks.**

Creating a complete network that provides seamless connectivity to parks, shopping centers, schools, and recreational facilities makes biking a viable transportation option in Howard County.



6. Routine debris removal from bike facilities, especially protected bike lanes.

Debris often gets caught between the flexible delineators and curbs of the protected bike lanes, making it challenging to navigate safely.

7. Maintenance of traffic plans to prioritize operable bike facilities during construction.

Bicycle facilities are at times blocked off and/or used as staging areas during construction projects, with no clear detour for bicyclists.

8. Scheduled updates to recommended bike routes on public navigation platforms (like Google Maps or Apple Maps).

Navigation platforms develop recommended bike routes from a variety of sources, one of which is data provided by Howard County.

9. Bike racks, bike storage, and e-bike charging stations at key nodes in the County.

Key locations identified include public facilities, business parks, and shopping centers (e.g. Mall in Columbia, Snowden Square Shopping Center, Dobbin Center, Columbia Gateway, Columbia Crossing).





6 ***BikeHoward –*** **The Next Ten Years**

BIKEHOWARD





Developing Network 2.0

A Comprehensive Approach

BikeHoward 2026 builds on Howard County's existing bicycle network to envision a more connected, safe, and functional system ready to meet the transportation, recreation, and access needs of residents and visitors in the coming decade. In ten years, Howard County will have an expanded network of dedicated facilities, upgraded bikeways, and improved connections.

This chapter outlines the County's multi-pronged approach to network expansion and enhancement. The **Bicycle Network 2.0** map presents the County's anticipated biking network in 2036. The **Goals Implementation Matrix** lists specific infrastructure, policy, and programmatic action items led by specific stakeholders. The action items from the Implementation Matrix will help shape how the future network looks and operates.

Recommendation Framework

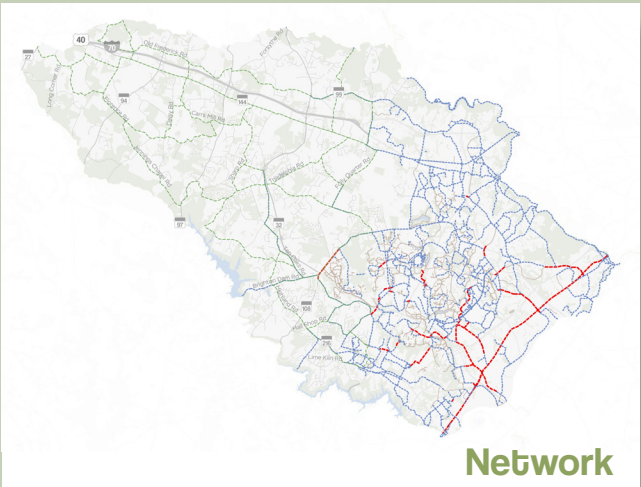
Recommendation Tools

The *BikeHoward 2026* recommendations are organized using two complementary apparatuses: the Bicycle Network 2.0 map and the Goals Implementation Matrix. These tools are designed to work concurrently in creating the bicycle network of tomorrow, and are the product of existing conditions analysis, prior planning recommendations, and stakeholder and public input.

Guidance for *BikeHoward 2026*

Bicycle Network 2.0

- 1. Base Layer: Proposed Facilities from Prior Plans + 2026 Recommendations
- 2. Prioritization: LTS Islands, Wayfinding Routes, and Public Input
- 3. Technical Review



Goals Implementation Matrix

- 1. *BikeHoward* 2016 Matrix Assessment
- 2. 2026 Recommendations
- 3. Technical Review

Item	Lead Agencies
On Howard County Public School grounds, replace existing substandard bicycle parking equipment with racks that meet standards described in this plan and begin a process of providing covered bicycle parking where bicycle access is highest.	HCPS
Manage bicycle parking supply in response to use and need to ensure that all schools have sufficient supply to meet the needs of students, teachers, staff, visitors and school and non-school events that use school facilities.	HCPS
Prioritize <i>BikeHoward</i> network recommendations that provide connectivity to HCPS facilities, especially middle and high schools.	HCPS & HCPSS
Prioritize <i>BikeHoward</i> network recommendations that provide connectivity to County Parks. Work with DRP to provide safe and connected facilities on park lands.	COT & DRP
Thoroughly train existing traffic engineering and design staff (as well as consulting engineers) using existing curriculum related to the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, other national and state engineering guidance documents, and the County's Complete Streets Design Manual. Conduct training courses as needed.	DPZ
Ensure that the County is a regular applicant for key Maryland Bikes Program, CMAQ, and Recreation	COT & DPZ
Identify dedicated funding for ongoing maintenance pathways.	DRP & Advocates
Improve wayfinding signage along identified bike routes and connection corridors.	COT & DPW

Matrices



Bicycle Network 2.0

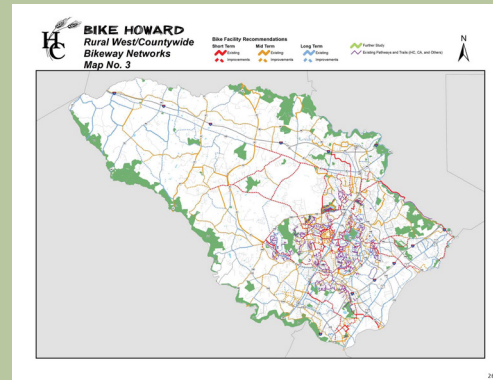
Bicycle Network 2.0 represents Howard County's vision for the next version of the County's bicycle network. The network features 333.17 new miles of bikeway facilities and connections to future development and regional active transportation networks. These planned facilities and connections will make it easier and safer for residents and visitors to reach their destinations.

This network is the culmination of data analysis, stakeholder and public input, and opportunities assessment. Network segments are symbolized by priority to help inform the selection of projects and allocation of resources over the coming decade. Construction of proposed segments will be achieved through a combination of capital, roadway resurfacing, and development projects, reinforced by the execution of the Goals Implementation Matrix.



Network Development

Bicycle Network 2.0 stems from the planned facilities proposed in prior plans – *BikeHoward 2016* and *Bikeable Baltimore Region (2024)* - technical analysis, and input from the BAG.



+

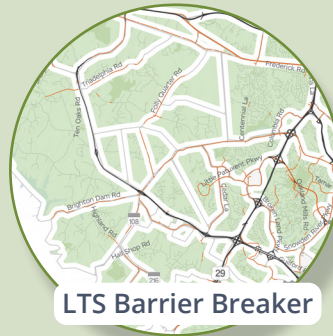


Prioritization Methodology

High priority segments were created considering the following criteria:



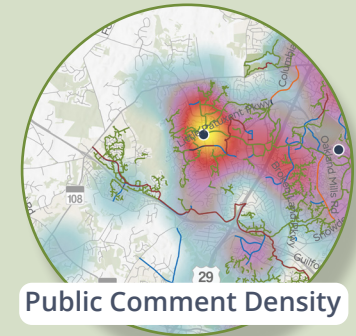
Inclusion in a Prior Plan



LTS Barrier Breaker



Existing Marked Wayfinding Route Eligible for a Facility Upgrade

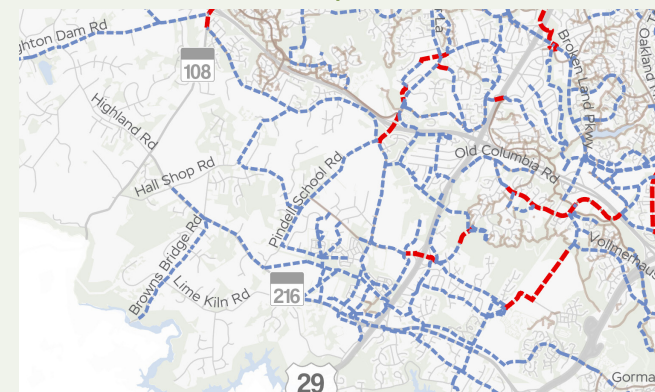


Public Comment Density

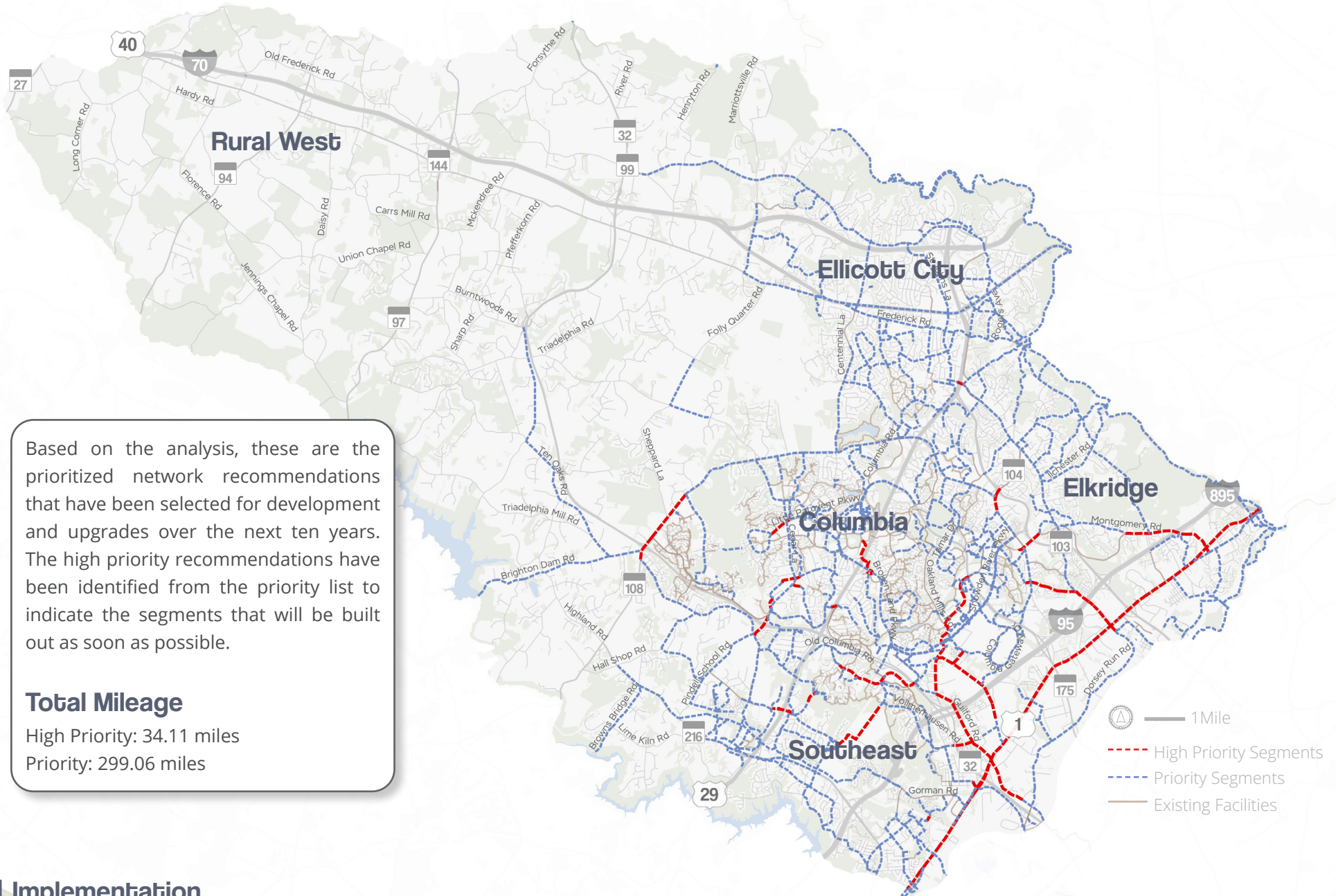
Priority Categories

The two subnetworks that comprise Bicycle Network 2.0 are the **Prioritized Network** and the **Recreational Routes**. Some segments of the proposed network are classified as a “high priority.”

- **Prioritized Network:** intended to be useful for riders of all ages and abilities. Likely to be implemented through routine maintenance and as opportunities arise.
- **Recreational Routes:** intended to be useful for riders to identify long distance, leisurely routes.
- **High priority segments:** more likely to be selected for capital projects due to a greater need from riders and for prompt construction.



Prioritized Network



Recreational Routes



Elkridge

High Priorities

High priority segments in Elkridge are intended to connect existing facilities, create crossings over major barriers, and improve connectivity into other parts of Howard County.

MD 100 Crossings

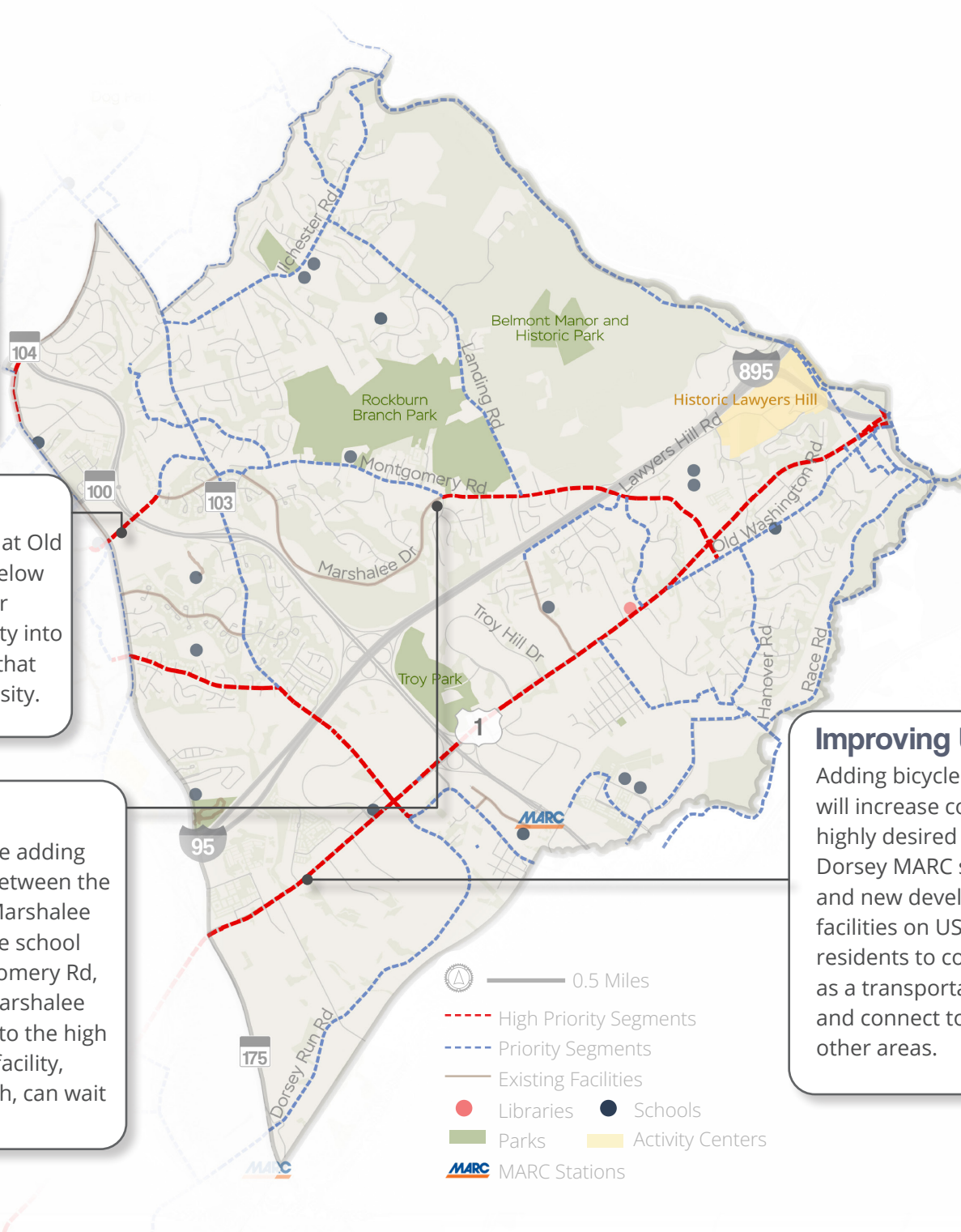
The addition of a crossing facility at Old Montgomery Rd, an underpass below MD 100, would break a barrier for bicyclists and enhance connectivity into Columbia. Riders have indicated that crossing MD 100 safely is a necessity.

Proposed Network

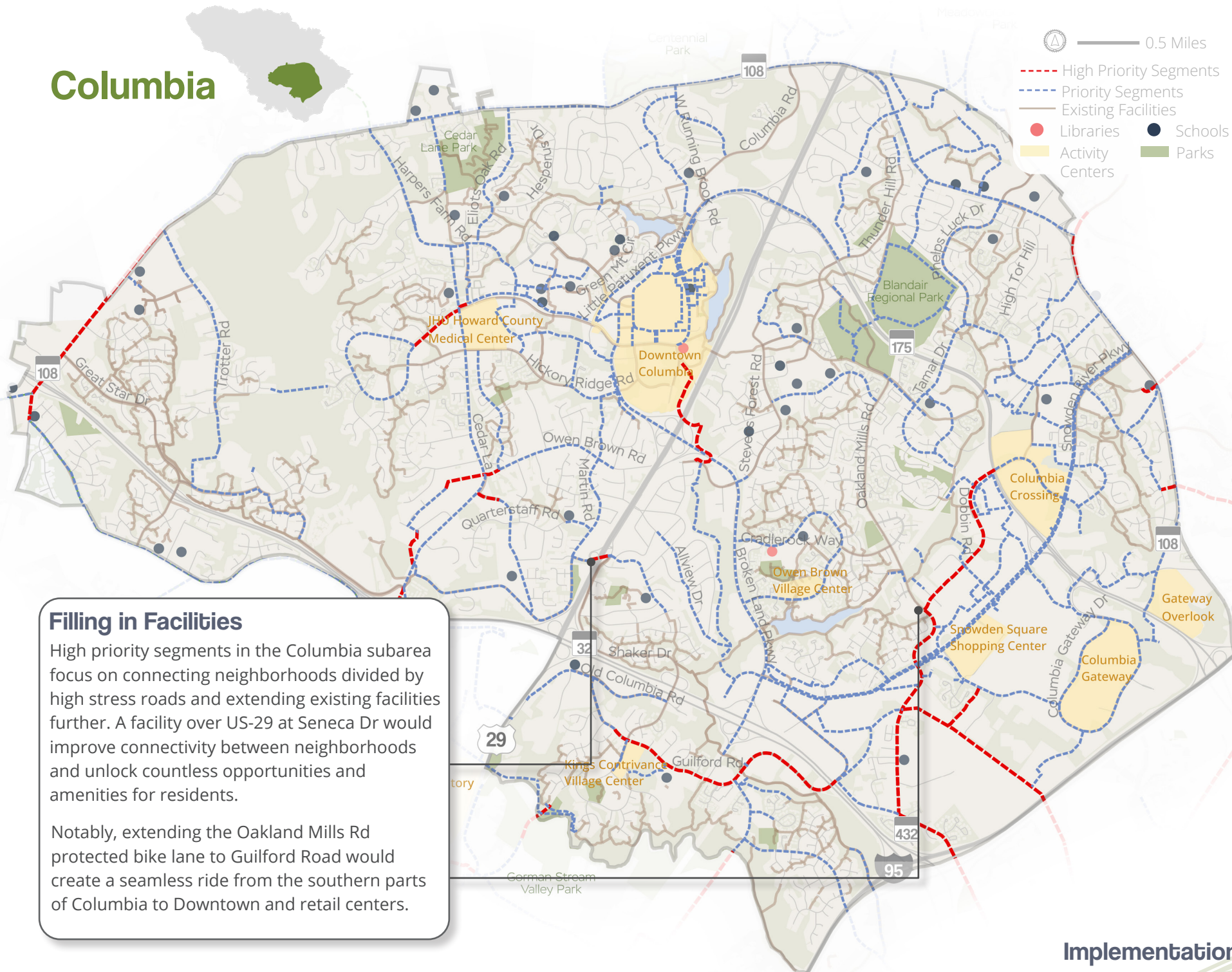
Other priorities in Elkridge include adding facilities on Montgomery Road, between the termini where it intersects with Marshalee Dr. This is to provide access to the school and neighborhoods off of Montgomery Rd, but because of the facilities on Marshalee Dr, there is already a connection to the high priority segment. This proposed facility, while still important to accomplish, can wait longer than other segments.

Improving US-1

Adding bicycle facilities to US-1 will increase connectivity in a highly desired area, with the Dorsey MARC station, schools, and new developments. Bicycle facilities on US-1 will allow residents to consider bicycling as a transportation method and connect to amenities in other areas.



Columbia



Filling in Facilities

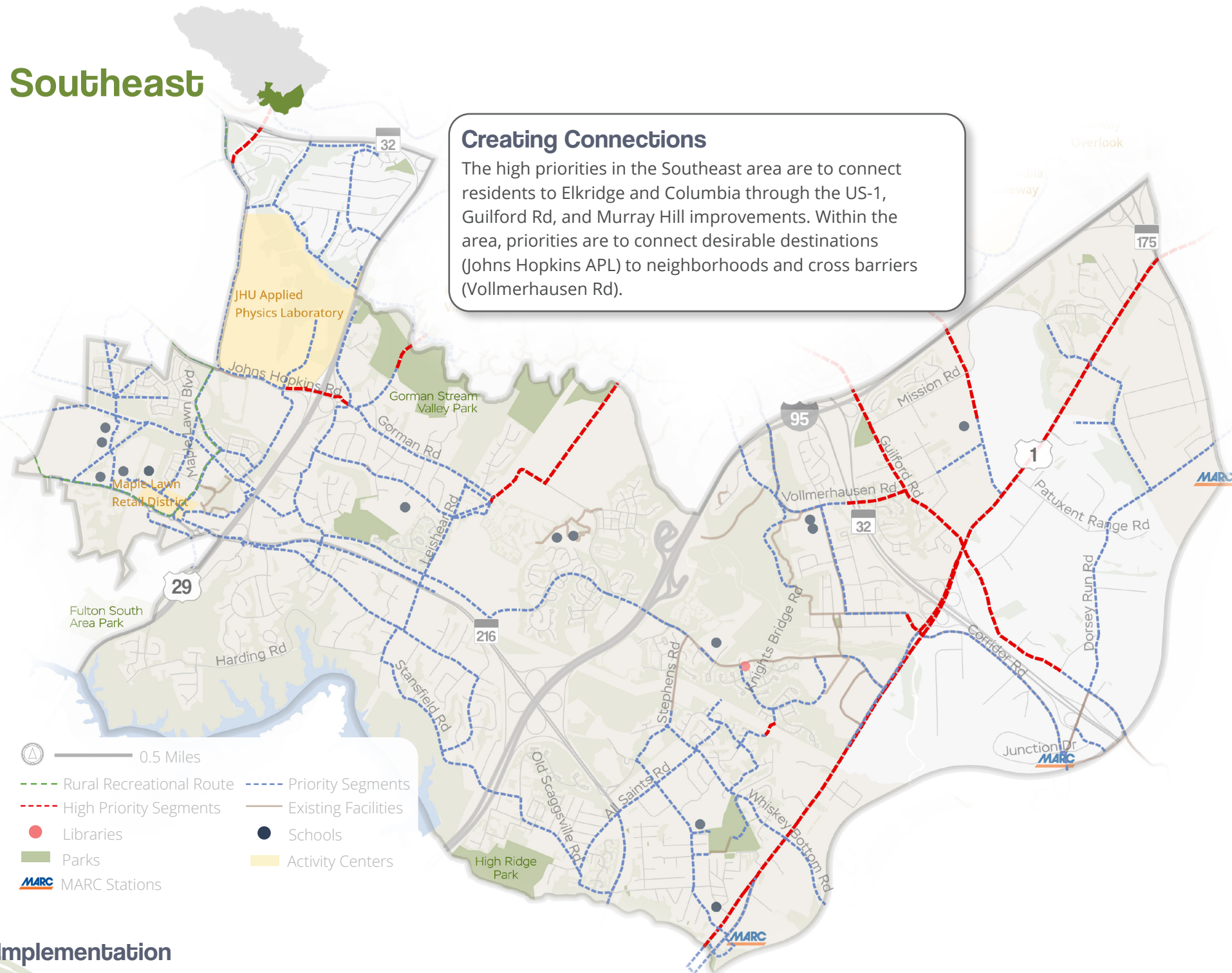
High priority segments in the Columbia subarea focus on connecting neighborhoods divided by high stress roads and extending existing facilities further. A facility over US-29 at Seneca Dr would improve connectivity between neighborhoods and unlock countless opportunities and amenities for residents.

Notably, extending the Oakland Mills Rd protected bike lane to Guilford Road would create a seamless ride from the southern parts of Columbia to Downtown and retail centers.

Southeast

Creating Connections

The high priorities in the Southeast area are to connect residents to Elkridge and Columbia through the US-1, Guilford Rd, and Murray Hill improvements. Within the area, priorities are to connect desirable destinations (Johns Hopkins APL) to neighborhoods and cross barriers (Vollmerhausen Rd).

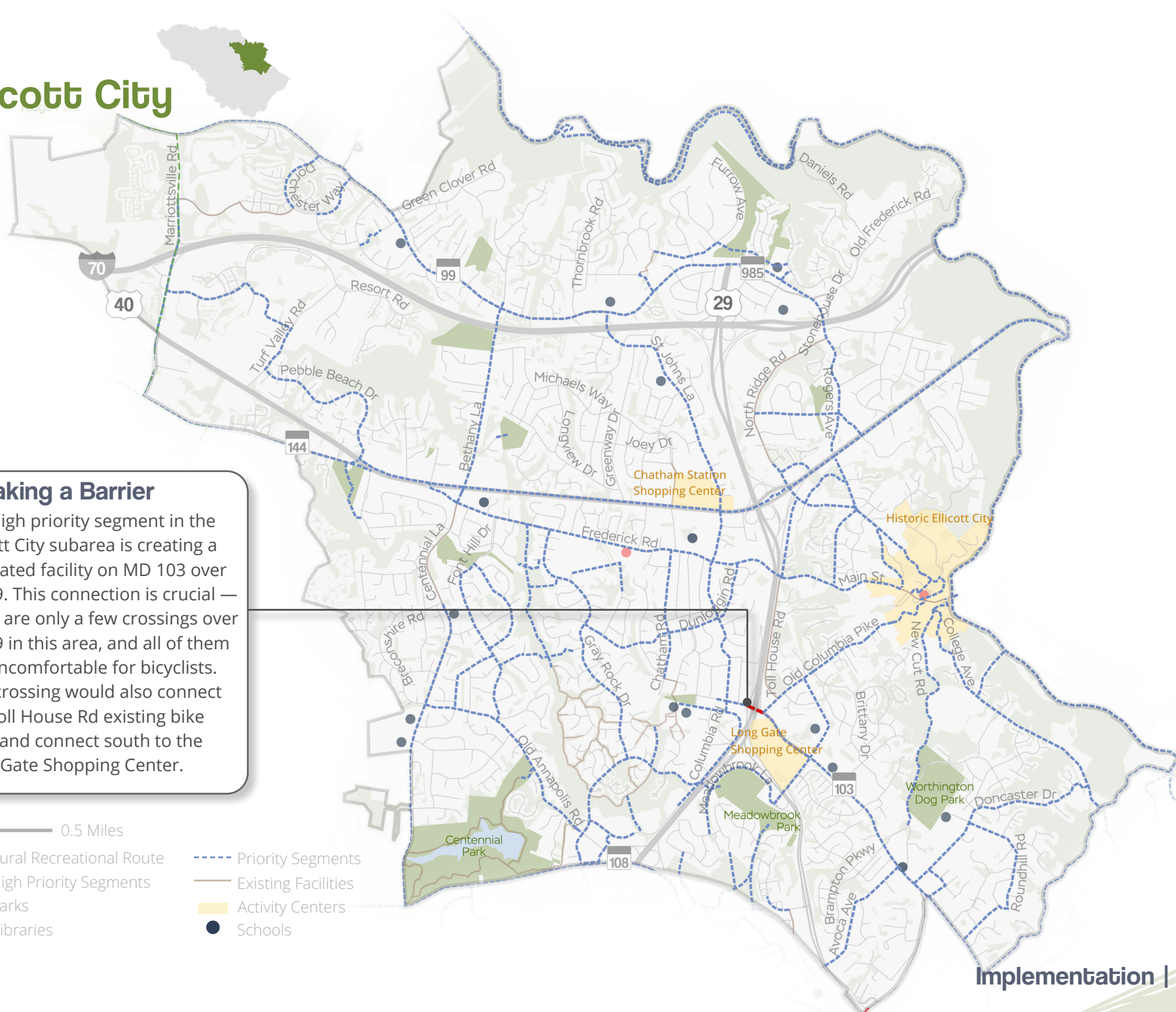


Ellicott City

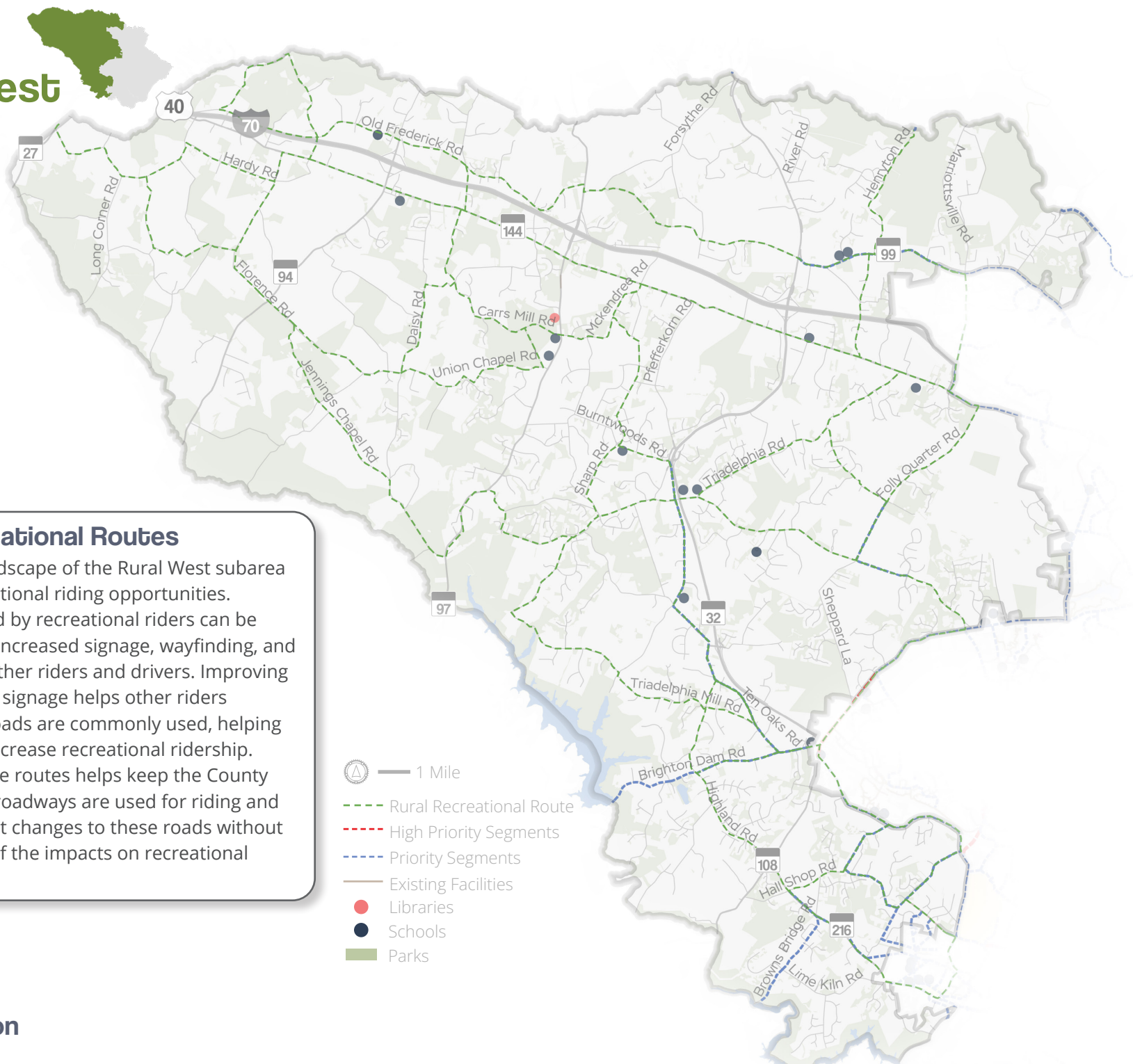
Breaking a Barrier

The high priority segment in the Ellicott City subarea is creating a dedicated facility on MD 103 over US-29. This connection is crucial — there are only a few crossings over US-29 in this area, and all of them are uncomfortable for bicyclists. This crossing would also connect the Toll House Rd existing bike lane, and connect south to the Long Gate Shopping Center.

-  0.5 Miles
-  Rural Recreational Route
-  High Priority Segments
-  Parks
-  Libraries
-  Priority Segments
-  Existing Facilities
-  Activity Centers
-  Schools



Rural West



Rural Recreational Routes

The natural landscape of the Rural West subarea provides recreational riding opportunities. The routes used by recreational riders can be improved with increased signage, wayfinding, and awareness to other riders and drivers. Improving wayfinding and signage helps other riders identify what roads are commonly used, helping to potentially increase recreational ridership. Identifying these routes helps keep the County aware of what roadways are used for riding and helps to prevent changes to these roads without consideration of the impacts on recreational biking.

- 1 Mile
- Rural Recreational Route
- High Priority Segments
- Priority Segments
- Existing Facilities
- Libraries
- Schools
- Parks



Project Highlight

Johns Hopkins Road

Sanner Road to Pindell School Road

Bike lanes were added in both directions of travel during roadway resurfacing in November 2024.

Goals Implementation Matrix

Continuing to improve and expand Howard County's bicycle network over the next decade will require consistent infrastructure improvements, sustained programming, and thoughtful coordination across departments, governments, and initiatives. *BikeHoward 2026* has identified **61** action items to help implement these overarching strategies. These items include policy, programmatic, and operational recommendations that will further embed bicycle network improvements in routine County activities.

Goal Development

Progress made towards the 85+ action items identified in *BikeHoward 2016* over the past 10 years was assessed and action items were categorized as upcoming, ongoing, and complete. All completed action items were removed from the matrix, and upcoming and ongoing action items were filtered by relevance and efficacy, based on lessons learned in local bicycle network development over the past ten years. Remaining action items were carried over to the 2026 matrix.

The project team added several new action items to the 2026 framework which reflect updates in bikeway design practices, infrastructure development mechanisms, and County partnerships.

Matrix Categories

The combined action items in the 2026 matrix are classified into six categories:

A. Data Collection & Management

B. Internal Processes

C. Programs

D. Policies & Design Standards

E. Network Development

F. Outreach & Education

Implementers

The following groups and organizations will be involved in the process of implementing the combined action items.

Howard County Government

DCRS: Department of Community Resources & Services

DGS: Department of General Services

DPW: Department of Public Works

DPZ: Department of Planning & Zoning

DRP: Department of Recreation & Parks

HCPD: Howard County Police Department

HCLS: Howard County Library System

HCPSS: Howard County Public School System

OOT: Office of Transportation

MDOT

MTA: Maryland Transit Administration

SHA: State Highway Administration

Non-Governmental Organizations

Advocates: Local Bicycle Advocacy Organizations

CA: Columbia Association

Data Collection & Management

Good projects start with good data – improving how Howard County gathers and handles data will help the network grow efficiently and safely.

Item	Description	Implementers
DCM.1	Establish a bicycle counting program or gain access to large, anonymized transportation datasets (like Streetlight and Replica) that would allow the County to measure annual changes in bicycle ridership and traffic counts to better understand the impacts of enhanced bicycle facilities on ridership.	OOT
DCM.2	In coordination with the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, develop long-range transportation forecasting methods and models for bicycle and pedestrian trips.	OOT
DCM.3	Use the County's mobile app (Tell HoCo) and/or online reporting systems system to identify road hazards that pose a safety risk for cyclists.	OOT
DCM.4	Develop an asset management database for maintenance of wayfinding and other signs used in the bikeway system.	OOT & DPW
DCM.5	Expand the geo-coded emergency response location system to include County facilities and assets (tunnels, bridges, key intersections) and other regularly spaced markers to ensure that the trail and pathway systems are fully covered.	OOT, DRP, HCPD, & CA
DCM.6	Track and analyze bicycle crashes within the County. Explore opportunities to identify and track near-miss locations.	OOT & HCPD
DCM.7	Develop an online map/data base for the location of all end of trip facilities in the County (e.g., bike racks and storage).	OOT
DCM.8	Request bicycle facilities proposed in <i>BikeHoward</i> be included in the BRTB long range transportation plan and TIP, including as part of bridge resurfacing projects.	OOT & DPZ



Internal Processes

As the County develops, internal stakeholders need to advocate for bicyclists and bicycle infrastructure.

Item	Description	Implementers
IP.1	The County's Traffic Engineering Division should evaluate initiating a review of all traffic signals in the County to ensure that bicycles will be detected on the minor road approaches which may be given green cycle only when cross traffic is present. Various treatments are available to remedy any location where bicycles are not currently detected.	OOT & DPW
IP.2	Evaluate bike parking at all County-owned public facilities and add or replace bike parking as needed.	OOT & DPW
IP.3	On Howard County Public School grounds, replace existing substandard bicycle parking equipment with racks that meet standards described in this plan and begin a process of providing covered bicycle parking where bicycle access is highest.	HCPSS
IP.4	Manage bicycle parking supply in response to use and need, to ensure that all schools have sufficient supply to meet the needs of students, teachers, staff, visitors and school and non-school events that use school facilities.	HCPSS
IP.5	Identify dedicated funding for ongoing maintenance of pavement markings and signage, bike parking facilities and County pathways.	OOT
IP.6	Improve wayfinding signage along identified bike routes and connection corridors.	OOT & DPW
IP.7	Restripe bicycle lanes and reapply shared lane and bicycle lane markings as needed.	OOT & DPW
IP.8	Ensure the County has adequate engineering and design capacity.	OOT & DPW
IP.9	Identify training opportunities for planning and engineering personnel to become familiar with national best practices and guidance.	OOT & DPW
IP.10	Ensure that the County regularly pursues key funding programs including but not limited to Transportation Alternatives, Safe Routes to School, Maryland Bikeways Program, CMAQ, and Recreational Trails and has dedicated matching funds, if need be.	OOT & DPW
IP.11	Continue to encourage coordination between County roadway maintenance officials and State Highway Administration roadway maintenance offices.	DPW & SHA
IP.12	Continue coordination with SHA District 7 agencies to build and improve facilities on SHA roadways.	OOT, DPW, & SHA



Programs

Not every improvement is plastic or concrete – good programming leads to a better biking experience.

Item	Description	Implementers
P.1	Develop a program that involves adult and youth volunteers in trail maintenance on County paths, trails, and protected bike lanes. Consider developing an "adopt a bike lane" program to have local bicycle stakeholders conduct regular clean up events.	DPW, DRP, HCPSS, & Advocates
P.2	Develop a bike lane and shoulder sweeping and snow clearing program that focuses on the roads with the worst debris build up and those with the highest user levels.	DPW
P.3	Expand the bicycling-related elements of the County's existing Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program.	OOT
P.4	Evaluate feasibility to expand the Bicycle-Mounted Police Program.	HCPD
P.5	Expand on existing biking maintenance and training programs for both youth and adults.	DRP & Advocates
P.6	Establish a Share-the-Path and Road Safety and Respect program.	OOT & HCPD
P.7	Establish a Youth and Advocate Ambassadors Program, similar to efforts in other communities, that trains adult and teen advocates to be ambassadors of bicycling at public events, educators about bike safety, and promoters of bicycling.	OOT, HCPSS, HCPL, & Advocates
P.8	Continue to support the Cycle2Health program. Plan routes and conduct rides in such a way that participants can be educated about bicycling improvements proposed in the <i>BikeHoward</i> plan.	OOT & DCRS
P.9	Support HCPSS programming, including varsity and club teams in the Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League (MICL).	OOT, DRP, & HCPSS

Policies & Design Standards

The County needs to be at the forefront of designs and best practices, and adapt for the bicyclists of tomorrow.

Item	Description	Implementers
PDS.1	Continue to monitor DPW and SHA roadway resurfacing and design projects. In rural areas, where by-pass lanes are provided on two lane roads, if the roadway section approaching the by-pass lane has a shoulder it is essential that the shoulders are continued through the widened roadway section.	OOT, DPW, & SHA
PDS.2	Evaluate traffic volume warrants thresholds and design guidance for slip lanes, including the review of design standards, to ensure safety for cyclists and pedestrians.	OOT, DPW, & SHA
PDS.3	Advocate for and work with state officials to use bike-friendly stormwater grates on SHA facilities.	OOT, DPW, & SHA
PDS.4	Trail projects should utilize Low Impact Development (LID) and other design treatments as a part of trail and path projects to ensure that trail designs do not promote erosion and appropriately direct runoff to pervious areas that can filter and absorb water.	OOT & DRP
PDS.5	Encourage pavement reduction strategies on roadway improvement projects, which involves reallocating excess pavement width to bicycle infrastructure.	OOT & DPW
PDS.6	Evaluate and amend the subdivision regulations and policies to align with the goals and priorities of Bike Howard and the Complete Streets Policy, including along scenic roads.	DPZ & OOT
PDS.7	Amend County facility development policy to include a provision for the inclusion of bicycle parking at new County facilities.	OOT & DGS
PDS.8	Evaluate and amend zoning and subdivision codes to require new commercial and residential development to provide appropriate types, quantities, and locations of bicycle parking as a part of development approval.	DPZ
PDS.9	When siting new schools, consider bicycle connectivity as a contributing factor in decision making.	OOT & HCPSS
PDS.10	Ensure that the practice of scoping transportation studies always includes elements related to bicycling and references the Howard County Complete Streets policy and design guidelines.	OOT, DPW, & DPZ
PDS.11	Consider e-bikes and cargo bikes in facility development (e.g., larger turning radii).	OOT & DPW (Design Manual Update)

Network Development

The bicycle network needs to continue to expand and improve as Howard County looks towards the next ten years.

Item	Description	Implementers
ND.1	Retrofit existing roundabouts and traffic circles with appropriate signs and striping to provide bicycle accommodations and appropriate directives and warnings for bicyclists and motorists. When possible, construct bike ramps, which allow bicyclists to bypass traffic circles and roundabouts.	OOT & DPW
ND.2	Explore opportunities to connect both planned and implemented regional bicycling and shared-use networks, such as the Patapsco Regional Greenway. Where applicable, provide support for implementation of planned segments.	OOT & DRP
ND.3	Determine and develop projects for inclusion in the County's capital budget. Continue to ensure that the capital budget line item for <i>BikeHoward</i> projects includes at least \$1,000,000 of new county funding per year and look for opportunities in DPR's annual budget to dedicate towards bicycle infrastructure and programming.	OOT & DPW
ND.4	Identify easements between neighborhoods, housing developments, and other areas that have not been executed, and explore feasibility to provide multimodal connectors.	DPW
ND.5	Identify additional or new connections/routes and obtain right-of-way.	DPZ & DPW
ND.6	Work with the MTA and SHA to provide adequate bicycle parking and connectivity at MARC stations and Park & Ride (P&R) lots, including access improvements to the following transit hubs: Broken Land East and West, Long Gate, Oakland Ridge, Snowden River Parkway, Dorsey MARC and Savage MARC access. Improvements at Broken Land Parkway East and West should be completed before bike parking at these locations is upgraded.	OOT & MTA
ND.7	Explore candidate locations for spot safety improvements (e.g., HAWK signal installation).	OOT & DPW
ND.8	Implement the <i>BikeHoward</i> network recommendations. Implementation will likely occur via private development, regular resurfacing activities, or via a capital project. OOT will use the land development process, maintenance schedules, and capital plans to strategize how the network will be built.	OOT, DPW, & DPZ
ND.9	Continue to collaborate with landowners and utility companies to search for connection opportunities on and across utility corridors. Consider modal filters including physical barriers and signage when appropriate (e.g., One Way Except Bikes).	OOT, DPW, & DPZ
ND.10	Ensure HoCo By Design's activity centers incorporate high-quality bicycle facilities as individual activity centers are rezoned, redeveloped, or undergo more detailed land use planning.	DPZ & OOT
ND.11	Examine <i>BikeHoward</i> network recommendations that provide connectivity to County Parks. Work with DRP to provide safe and connected facilities on park lands.	OOT, DPW, & DRP

Outreach & Education

Let's make sure everyone knows the rules of the road — whether they're driving or riding a bike - so everyone can get home safely.

Item	Description	Implementers
OE.1	Continue to implement the public participation process established for transportation projects.	OOT, DPW, & DRP
OE.2	Fund and hire a Safe Routes to School Coordinator position to develop programming, activities, and outreach materials for HCPSS students, parents, and staff.	OOT & HCPSS
OE.3	Provide <i>BikeHoward</i> materials at Howard County Public Libraries.	OOT & HCPL
OE.4	Promote awareness of bicycle-related traffic laws, including the 3 foot passing law.	HCPD
OE.5	Participate in study tours, charrettes, and/or workshops to visit officials of other jurisdictions exchange expertise about bicycling facility design and implementation best practices.	OOT & DPW
OE.6	Continue to provide regular updates to the Bicycle Advisory Group.	OOT
OE.7	Provide road and mountain bicycle safety/skills training courses for children and adults.	HCPSS & DRP
OE.8	Continue to support the training and education of law enforcement with regards to bicycle safety and standards.	OOT & HCPD
OE.9	Develop roadway safety education campaign targeting drivers (e.g., unmarked crosswalks).	OOT

Network Implementation

How the Bike Network is Realized

Bicycle facilities outlined and recommended in *BikeHoward 2026* will be implemented through a variety of methods. While the majority of high priority segments of the recommended network will be built through traditional capital projects, regularly scheduled roadway resurfacing, and the land development process provide opportunities to build or upgrade all facilities on the planned network. As of 2026, these are the three main ways facilities have been built since 2016:

Capital Projects

The County develops capital projects for the highest-priority segments and locations on the bicycle network. The annual budget, which is typically between \$750,000 and \$1,000,000, covers the cost of engineering, design, and construction of on- and off-road facilities.

Roadway Resurfacing

Roadway resurfacing on County roadways is performed by the Department of Public Works on a regular basis - a single roadway is resurfaced at least once a decade. If the roadway is on the bicycle master plan, OOT and DPW will review for potential implementation of bicycle facilities through resurfacing.



Subdivision & Land Development

Howard County's planned bicycle network is implemented through the subdivision and land development review process in accordance with the Subdivision and Land Development Regulations and the Howard County Design Manual. During site plan and subdivision review, the Howard County Department of Planning and Zoning, Office of Transportation, and the Howard County Department of Public Works work with developers to ensure appropriate frontage improvements, as outlined in the Howard County Design Manual, are constructed to support the County's planned bicycle network.

Future Methods of Growth

Howard County will continue to coordinate all three of these processes in tandem to build out the maximum amount of the planned bicycle network. The County recognizes that network development processes may evolve over the coming decade and the Office of Transportation, organizational partners, and key stakeholders will remain flexible in their approach to building out the Bicycle Network 2.0.

What Kind of Facility Will Be Built?

Deciding What Goes Where

When a segment of the proposed bicycle network is selected for implementation, the next step is understanding which facility will be designed and implemented. There are several factors that go into the decision calculus, including:



Constructibility Considerations

Evaluating facility constructibility is the first step for all three implementation methods. Construction considerations, including the presence of trees, utilities, poles, and stormwater infrastructure, determine what the most appropriate route, facility type, and design strategy is needed for building a facility.

Available Right-of-Way

Many projects are restricted by the available existing right-of-way. Adjusting the existing curb and gutter configuration is costly and cumbersome and will not be part of the scope of facilities added via roadway resurfacing.



Operations & Maintenance Considerations

For every new facility that is added to the bike network, Howard County needs to plan for its continued operational and maintenance upkeep. For facilities such as protected bike lanes and shared-use pathways, this often means acquiring specialized equipment for clearing leaves, snow, and debris.

Vehicle & Bicycle Volumes

The existing vehicle volumes and the anticipated bicycle trips generated by a new facility are a consideration when choosing the appropriate treatment - the higher volume of either mode increases the need for more physical separation.



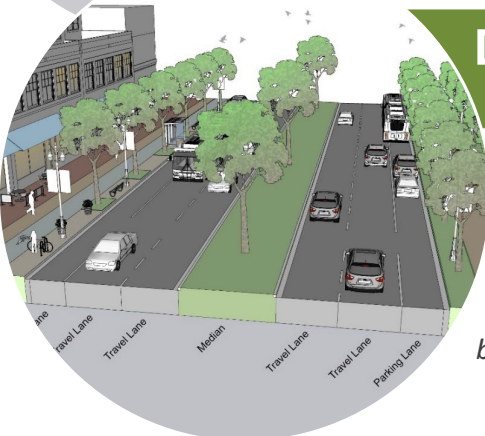
Community Comments

Public outreach is performed during all capital projects and input gathered about public priorities, concerns, and preferences are incorporated into new facility decisions and designs.



Design Standards - Howard County Volume III Design Manual

Facility design is guided by the Howard County Volume III Design Manual. Volume III provides typical street types, common facility types and their design requirements, and specifications for intersections and transition areas. Volume III provides facility selection guidance based on contextual differences (rural versus urban/suburban). Volume III also denotes that "County streets are to be designed to meet LTS 2 or better whenever practical."



Howard County aims to continually build the safest and most connected bicycle network for riders. As each project along the bicycle network is developed, all of the above factors are considered to build physically separated segments of the network where it is most warranted and feasible.

Additional Funding Sources

Leveraging the Capital Budget

As capital projects continue to advance through programming and implementation, Howard County will look for opportunities to leverage capital funding as matching funds for competitive or discretionary grant opportunities to maximize the amount of network is built over the next ten years. Below is a snapshot of available opportunities as of 2026 at the state and federal levels. The County will continue to explore these and other opportunities for engineering and construction funding over the life of this plan.

Grantor	Program Name	Application Typically Due	Program Description
MDOT SHA	Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program	April-May	The Kim Lamphier Bikeways Network Program provides grant support for a wide range of bicycle transportation development activities. The Program supports the planning, design and construction of projects that maximize bicycle access and mobility by creating low-traffic-stress facilities to encourage mode shift. The Bikeways Program seeks to leverage past investments in bicycle facilities, complement existing local, state, and federal programs.
MDOT SHA	Recreational Trails Program	April	The Recreational Trails Program provides Federal funds to States to develop and maintain land and water-based recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. Administered by the MDOT SHA, this program is a reimbursable grant program that matches federal funds with local funds or in-kind contributions to implement these trail projects. Projects can be sponsored by a county, a municipal government, or a non-profit agency.
MDOT SHA/ NCTRB	Transportation Alternatives Program	Spring	Maryland's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) awards grant funding to projects that enhance mobility and accessibility, as well as the cultural, aesthetic, historic, and environmental aspects of Maryland's transportation network. TAP funds projects create bicycle and pedestrian facilities, restore historic transportation buildings, convert abandoned railway corridors to trails and mitigate highway runoff.
Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)	Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)	July	As part of the program, FHWA will award competitive grants to help communities plan, design, and construct safe and connected active transportation networks such as sidewalks, bikeways, and trails that connect destinations such as schools, workplaces, residences, businesses, recreation areas, and medical facilities within a community or metropolitan region. Grants will also be provided for projects used for trails, pedestrian facilities, bikeways, and other routes that serve as backbones to connect two or more communities, metropolitan regions, or states. ATIIP also provides an opportunity for eligible organizations to enhance their overall transportation network by integrating active transportation facilities with transit services, where available, to improve access to public transportation.

Service & Community

Be a Part of Better Bicycling in Howard County

The growth of bicycling culture in Howard County over the last ten years has enhanced the experience for cyclists. The culture grows through the overall growth of the bicycling community, but also through the activity of dedicated leaders, volunteers, and advocates. For people interested in becoming more involved in bicycling in Howard County, the following opportunities are available:



The Bicycle Advisory Group

The Bicycle Advisory Group (BAG) was established by Howard County Code Section 6.408 to “advise the County Executive and County Administration” on matters of bicycle transportation, particularly the implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan. Members include representatives from state agencies, Howard County departments, non-profits, and local advocates. The BAG meets virtually every other month to guide implementation efforts.

Educational Programs & Volunteer Opportunities

Per the Implementation Matrix, Howard County currently programs and plans to develop several opportunities for volunteers from the community to participate in activities that benefit the environment and culture of bicycling in Howard County. Please contact the Howard County Library System to learn about educational opportunities, the Office of Transportation for volunteer maintenance opportunities, and the Howard County Public School System for youth bicycle programming.



Local Advocates & Riding Groups

At the time of this plan’s adoption, there are several riding groups organized through community action in Howard County. If you are looking for advice on where to ride, a group to ride with, or an advocacy organization, start a conversation at one of the local shops or contact Bike HoCo, HoCo Cyclists, Baltimore Bicycling Club, Cycle2Health, the Columbia Association, or any of the other civic groups that advance the cause and experience of biking in Howard County.

For further information on how to get involved in the future of bicycling in Howard County, please contact the Office of Transportation:
transportation@howardcountymd.gov | 410.313.4312



A Better Biking Environment

Getting There, One Bike Ride at a Time

BikeHoward's legacy of fostering a safe, reliable, and accessible bicycle network in Howard County is reinforced through the goals set forth within this plan. The future network, proposed policy actions, and planned programmatic improvements will continue to create and enhance multimodal transportation and recreation options for Howard County's residents and visitors. The combination of the beautiful landscapes, engaged citizens, and peaceful communities makes bicycling in the County possible and *BikeHoward 2026* an achievable mission.

The creation of this plan is rooted in *BikeHoward's* vision for bicycling in HoCo:

Vision

“Howard County, Maryland seeks to be a bicycle-friendly County where residents and visitors, children and seniors, the novice and the skilled feel comfortable and safe bicycling on our roads and paths as a means of daily transportation and healthy recreation.”