

STATEMENT OF
James D. Schaub, PhD
Before the Howard County Council
Legislative Public Meeting
22 September 2026
In the matter of CR160-2026

I am pleased to address the County Council. I am James D. Schaub of Howard County. I have lived on Kindler Road for 40 years. I am a professional economist and statistician. I oppose approval of BikeHoward 2026.

The Spring outreach effort failed to reach many residents who are potentially impacted by the priorities in the 2026 draft plan. Feedback using surveys lacks statistical robustness and shows sampling bias. The RESOLUTION approving BikeHoward 2026 Bicycle Master Plan is pending and should remain so.

I focus my remarks on the project to install a bridge over the Middle Patuxent River for pedestrian and bicycle/ebike use. This project is coded as High Priority in the draft plan. Reasons to lower the priority or eliminate this project are 1) alternatives that achieve the same movement goals and 2) safety.

The 2016 plan shows Old Columbia Road as an option for bike travel that would likely be less costly and add to safety. The existing high-risk one-lane bridge over the Middle Patuxent could be replaced with a two-lane bridge and a dedicated bike lane. I remind you that in February '24 a school bus carrying 19 students overturned just north of the bridge.

Safety concerns with the Kindler-Eden Brook proposal are that motorcycles and dirt bikes will be attracted. They move much faster and endanger pedestrians and oncoming bikers. Combustion engines add to noise pollution.

Park Rules allow use between sunrise and sunset. Winter days have sunsets before 5:00 PM. Legal usage of the proposed Kindler-Eden Brook connection is limited. The Old Columbia Road route is available 24 hours a day. The Kindler-Eden Brook project would have only 12 hours available on average during the year. Darkness can increase accidents and invite crime.

The concept bridges describe 10-foot-wide bridges. While I am not an engineer, that width seems excessive. Pedestrians and bikers don't need to have that much width. U.S.-market automobiles are typically 6 feet wide. Does BikeHoward 2026 have a long-term plan to accommodate automobile traffic?

I have not mentioned the wetlands in the project site that are an environmental asset, valley slopes have vegetation cover that reduce runoff, endangered species may be present. Preliminary budgets and funding plans for the project are needed.

In my 40 years on Kindler Road, I have enjoyed Gorman Park without a desire to connect across the river.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these views.