
Testimony in support of CR160-2026 adopting BikeHoward 2026

From Ted Cochran <tedcochran55409@gmail.com>

Date Mon 9/14/2026 12:09 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (2 MB)

Bike Howard 2026 testimony.pdf;

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Greetings,

Please see my testimony attached on this topic, which is near and dear to my heart.

Thank you,

--tc

Ted Cochran

5178 Downwest Ride

Columbia, MD 21044

5178 Downwest Ride
Columbia, MD 21044

September 14, 2026

Dear Howard County Council Members:

I am writing to support the passage of Council Resolution **CR160-2026**, to approve BikeHoward 2026, the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan Update. I participated in the development of BikeHoward 2026 both by providing extensive feedback during the development process and as Vice President of the Bicycle Advisory Group. The plan describes the development of a network of safe biking routes and reinforces the need to continue existing programs and policies that will make traveling on county roads safer for bicycle riders.

I grew up in Howard County, and as an elementary school student in the early 1960s my friends and I rode bicycles for miles on country roads like Pindell School Road, Sanner Road, and Cedar Lane. Route 29 could be crossed at traffic lights. There were only about 35,000 residents in the county--Traffic was light to non-existent, and drivers expected to see, and showed patience towards, kids riding bicycles on county roads. Kids who lived close to their school walked or rode there.

I then spent a 32-year career in Minneapolis. Minneapolis is rightly considered a bicycling paradise, with a network of well-maintained dedicated paths and protected bicycle lanes crisscrossing the city. That network enabled me to commute 10 miles each way to work, year around, regardless of the weather, on my bicycle.

I moved back to Howard County as I neared retirement nine years ago and saw that the county's population growth had led to roads that were much less safe to ride on.

The population is now ten times larger, but aside from Columbia and new subdivisions, there aren't that many more streets, albeit many have been widened. There is much more traffic on the roads, leading to more interactions between cyclists and drivers and more opportunities for miscalculations that result in accidents. And, of course, distracted driving has skyrocketed due to cell phones.

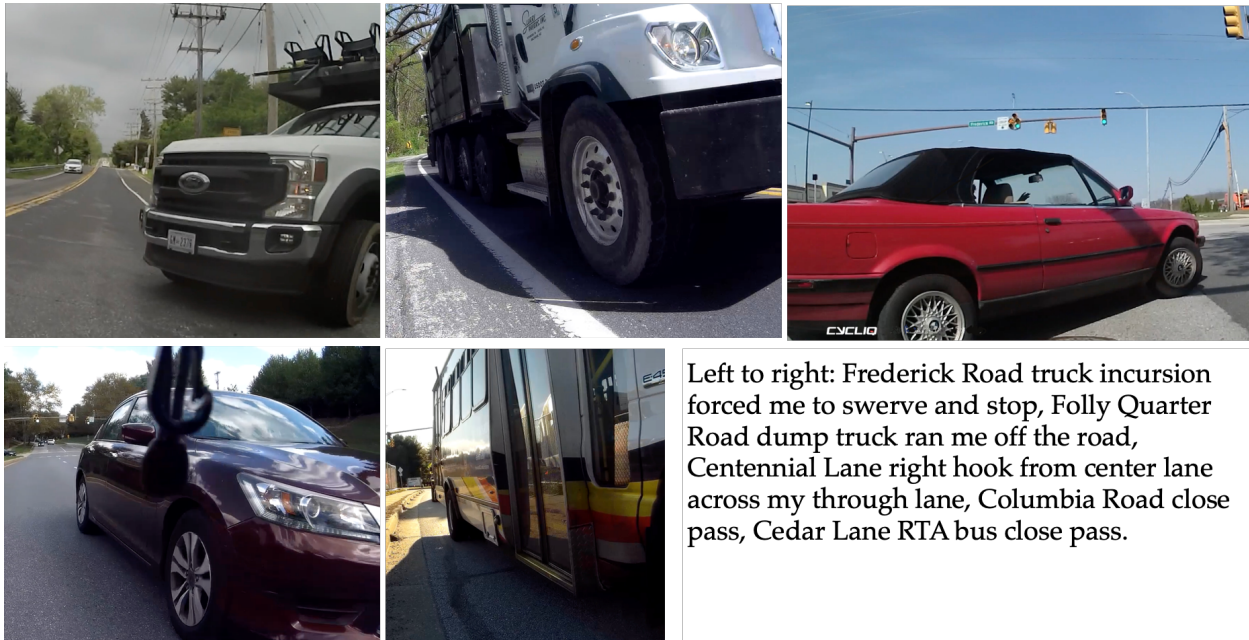
Even if 95% of the ~250,00 Howard County drivers are scrupulously courteous (and from personal experience I'd say that's generous), there are over twelve thousand drivers that are not, and that means that we cyclists have dangerous, sometimes life-threatening, encounters pretty much every ride.

In fact, despite having commuted for over 20,000 miles in Minneapolis, when I first moved here there was no route for me to get to my office in Gateway from Running Brook that I, a “Strong and Fearless” rider, was comfortable riding! Fortunately, that situation has improved considerably since the completion of the Oakland Mills Road cycleway, and will improve even more as Gateway is developed, if the current plans are implemented.

But there is much more that needs to be done to make it safe for everyone to get to where they need to go.

Since retiring, I have personally cycled over 98% of the 1580 miles of bicycle-legal roads and paved paths in Howard County (there is an app that can track all that!), and for the last four years I have used bike cameras fore and aft to document the challenges we cyclists frequently face when riding here.

Unfortunately, there has been no shortage of examples of such challenges, as shown below in frames captured from even scarier videos:



These kinds of life-endangering driving behaviors are a fact of life for cyclists who venture outside their neighborhoods. There is a legal requirement to give cyclists three feet of room, and even legal permission to cross a double yellow line when it is safe to do so to enable the required safe passing, but many drivers seem unaware. Bicyclists are treated by some drivers as, at best, an obstacle to their convenience.

Encounters such as those illustrated above are one reason cyclists resort to using cameras, rearview mirrors, daytime flashing lights, and even radars to warn them of approaching cars. Some give up cycling altogether. No wonder parents drive their children to schools even though their kids are within easy cycling distance.

This is why systematic planning and infrastructure improvements are required to better provide for cyclists' safety.

Fortunately, Howard County Government (and, more recently, State Government) has begun to take steps to implement such plans. The original BikeHoward document, approved in 2016, represented a significant step in acknowledging the need for improvements in cycling infrastructure and policies.

The 2019 adoption of the Complete Streets Policy, the best policy document in the nation according to Smart Growth America, recognized that the need for streets to be safe for all users is more important than prioritizing driver convenience. The completion of several Minneapolis-quality projects to improve safety for cyclists (e.g., Oakland Mills Road, Columbia Road, Twin Rivers Road) are solid steps in the right direction.

But much work remains to be done. If we are to better support cycling for transportation and utilitarian purposes, we need to start connecting the existing networks of safe streets and paths. If we are to make it easier to get from point A to point B without needing a car, we have to start providing for more ways to cross the major barriers that exist across the county, including I-70, I-95, Routes 29, 32, 40, and 100, and the Patapsco and Little and Middle Patuxent Rivers. We need to connect adjacent subdivisions. We need to build infrastructure that allows cyclists to safely get to where they need to go.

It won't just be cyclists who benefit. More cyclists means fewer cars on the road. Cycling infrastructure means adjacent drivers are less inconvenienced by cyclists. Road diets, narrower lanes, and other facets of Complete Streets reduce unsafe speeds in neighborhoods.

BikeHoward 2026 is an excellent vision for what Howard County could do to improve safety for all road users, and I urge you to support it. More importantly, I'll be urging members of the next Council to ensure the initiatives in BikeHoward 2026 are funded and implemented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Cochran". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Ted" and "Cochran" being capitalized and prominent.

Ted Cochran

Bike HoCo Testimony for 9/22/26 Public Hearing on BikeHoward Update CR160-2026

From Jack Guarneri <jackguarneri@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/16/2026 12:31 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (385 KB)

Bike HoCo Testimony Council Hearing BikeHoward Hearing September 22 2026.pdf;

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Councilmembers,

Attached is Bike HoCo's, Bicycling Advocates for Howard County, testimony in support of CR160-2026 adoption of the *BikeHoward* Master Plan Update.

Respectfully,

Jack Guarneri
President Bike HoCo a 501(c)3



Bike HoCo - Bicycling Advocates of Howard County

Testimony to County Council Public Hearing *BikeHoward Update* CR160-2022

September 22, 2026

Bottom Line:

Bike HoCo strongly supports adoption of the *BikeHoward Update* by Council Resolution.

Bike HoCo (founded in 2008 as Bicycling Advocates of Howard County) is a 501(c)3 non-profit representing over 1000 cyclists and cycling clubs/groups. There are two major Bike HoCo objectives that have remained consistent: to increase cycling safety through infrastructure improvements and greater awareness and to be proponents that bicycling should be a part of an energy efficient, environmentally sustainable transportation system for Howard County and the region. Bike HoCo has functioned as a subject matter expert and provided advise to the County Government and the County Executive on bicycling issues in Howard County. We have been consistent, persistent, and patient in achieving our goal of building a forward-looking bicycle infrastructure system that meets the needs and desires of all between the ages of 8 to 80+ for safer alternative transportation options. Bike HoCo is uniquely positioned to help advise on the impact of the *BikeHoward* Master Plan having been involved in its development, funding, and execution to date as well as many other bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects.

Background on *BikeHoward*:

In 2011 Howard County applied for and received an MDOT Bikeways Grant to develop a bicycle master plan for the County. A contract was given to Toole Design to support the project and work commence in 2012. Data was collected and public meetings were held over the next 2 years. The draft was reviewed by the new County Executive and internally by the Departments of Planning and Zoning and Public Works. A new Bicycle Pedestrian Coordinator was hired in late 2014. *BikeHoward* was presented to Council along with a Complete Streets Resolution in April 2016 and approved by CR35-2016.

What has changed Since The Original Master Plan Adoption:

- Growth from 2014 -2026: Approximately 34,000 additional residents and 12,000 additional units of housing have created changing patterns in traffic and needs for additional alternative transportation connections.
- Since the original 2016 *BikeHoward* Master Plan, and especially post-COVID, a significant increase in community interest and support for bicycling for transportation to work, school and errands as well as recreation.
- *BikeHoward Express*, initiated in FY17, funded near-term and 'low hanging fruit' bicycle infrastructure improvements. This resulted in approximately 40 miles of

bicycle infrastructure with \$10.1 million of county funds appropriated from FY17 to FY27.

- Howard County *Complete Streets Policy* adopted in October 2019 requires all County Departments to consider alternative transportation in decisions on new development approval and design of roads.
- Howard County *Complete Streets Design Manual* adopted in February 2022 provides engineering level guidance to the Department of Public Works as well as developers on implementing complete streets in new roads and development.
- Changes to *Land Use Regulation* are guided by Design Manual changes and were reviewed by an inter-departmental working group in 2024. Additional changes to APFO are currently under consideration.
- *HoCo By Design*, the update to the County General Plan, was adopted in October 2023 and has been considered in the *BikeHoward Update*. This includes the implementation of pedestrian and bicycle connectivity in and to Activity Centers.

What Bike HoCo recommends:

The County needs to continue to build on the progress made in bicycle infrastructure in as timely a manner as physically and fiscally possible.

The *BikeHoward Update* provides priorities based on growth, changes in traffic patterns, and more positive community support for alternative transportation (bicycling and walking), which have occurred in the past 10 years. There is a ‘missing middle’ of connections to existing and projected bicycle infrastructure that is needed to develop a true network of bicycling infrastructure.

Bike HoCo fully supports adoption of the *BikeHoward Update*. It builds on the previous plan, by specifically using Level of Traffic Stress (LOTS) analysis and focusing on addressing linear barriers to bicycling such as highway crossings, river crossings, etc. and by identifying and building complete bicycle networks connecting key locations in the County.

Testimony provided by: Jack Guarneri,
President Bike HoCo a 501(c)3 Non-Profit
10224 Little Brick House Ct.
Ellicott City, MD 21042
president@bikehoco.org
(301)844-8930

Stop the bike path!!!!

From Jessica (Brunn) Hummel <brunnjl@gmail.com>

Date Mon 9/21/2026 8:47 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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I am strongly against the bike path through my neighborhood!!! We bought in this neighborhood (Kindler road laurel Md) because there was no path!! If we wanted to have bike traffic in our neighborhood we would have bought in a different area. I am disappointed in the lack of the office of transportation listening and understanding the concerns of the residents of Kindler road laurel md. The feasibility study was a horse and pony show and survey just asked us which bridge we wanted and not if we wanted one! Gorman road/kindler road intersection also can not handle the bike traffic as the turn onto Gorma is sharp and somewhat blind and there's already enough of a backup on Gorman road/29. Please do a real feasibility study.

Sincerely,

Jessica Hummel

Sent from my iPhone

Concern on BikeHoward proposal

From Jennifer <jensuppa@gmail.com>

Date Tue 9/22/2026 4:57 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

Cc Ernie Lemmert (Husband) <elemmert@gmail.com>

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Good evening,

I just was made aware that the BikeHoward proposal which includes the Kindler Pedestrian / Bike Bridge, is up for vote tonight.

This is very discouraging, considering I asked at the feasibility study walk-through what the timeline was to be able to speak our concerns about this proposal and I was told, "this is early in the process. We're a long way from there". A week and a half doesn't seem to be a long time.

Here are my concerns -

1. I have seen nothing on what the cost would be to make the necessary modifications to the single lane bridge over old Columbia Pike to make it safer for not just bicyclist and pedestrians, but also cars. Just this morning I almost had somebody hit me head on. That seems like a much more useful and impactful use of government funds, improving what we have as opposed to building something new.
2. I would like to understand what the county's proposal is in ensuring the safety of cars, pedestrians and bicyclist on Kindler Road, but that does not impact the current residence on Kindler and the adjoining neighborhoods.
3. I would like to understand what the county is going to do to ensure the crime rate does not go up on Kindler Road. The crime statistics on the other side of the proposed bridge are much higher than the neighborhood of Kindler. Building a bridge would just make it an easy walk to extend with those crime rates over on our side.
4. I would like the county to state that by building this pedestrian bridge, it will not impact our neighborhood's zoning as bus riders to Atholton high school. Building the bridge could potentially put us into a position where not only we are rezoned to go to Hammond high school, but we will no longer have bus service and would have to be walkers.
5. Reviewing the bike Howard 2026 plan, it does not appear that community engagement was a blanket engagement across the neighborhoods impacted. I for one, and many of my neighbors, do not recall the county reaching out to us directly asking for our opinions on the proposal. I would like to see the statistics for how many houses in the Kindler and adjoining neighborhoods were both contacted as well as responded to the community engagement product.

Thanks,
Jennifer

Sent from my iPhone

HOCO Bike Plan

From Susan Harnstrom <susan.harnstrom@gmail.com>

Date Tue 9/22/2026 1:29 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

Cc Jennifer Suppa <jensuppa@gmail.com>; Ernie Lemmert <elemmert@gmail.com>

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Dear Howard County Council,

My husband and I are unclear how this evening's Bike Plan meeting addresses the feasibility study of the bike path bridge connecting Kindler Road in Laurel to Eden Brook Drive in Columbia. Is this bike path bridge a "done deal"?

We are firmly opposed to a bike path bridge connecting Kindler and Eden Brook. We live on a quiet dead end street at the end of Kindler. Our property borders the Gorman Valley Stream Park and we already have enough people wandering through our property thinking they are on County parkland. We developed this property specifically to be a refuge from through traffic. There is no discernible benefit for a connection to a community in Columbia, yet such a connection would provide ample opportunity for mischief from increased traffic on Kindler.

If this meeting tonight assumes the construction of a bike path bridge outlined above, when was that decision made and why were we not given an opportunity to voice our STRONG dissent?

Respectfully,

Susan Harnstrom

Phone: (410) 707-0584

Sent from my iPhone

CR160-2026 Written Testimony for Legislative Public Hearing, Wednesday, September 23, 2026

From Martha McNeil <martha_mcneil@yahoo.com>
Date Wed 9/23/2026 10:44 PM
To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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County Council Members,

Please accept the attached written testimony for tonight's Legislative Public Hearing, Wednesday, September 23, 2026, regarding CR160-2026, adoption of Bike Howard 2026. Please enter my testimony into the record. An email acknowledgment of receipt would be greatly appreciated.

I am a resident of District 3. My husband and I own 7680 Kindler Road, where we have lived for 40 years. Our home is near a proposed Middle Patuxent River crossing that the Bike Howard 2026 network map designates as high-priority. My testimony concerns that designation and its relationship to the prioritization of other projects originally planned for my community that were previously high-priority in Bike Howard 2016, have not been completed, and have been lowered by Bike Howard 2026.

I do not ask the Council to reject Bike Howard 2026. Rather, I ask that the Council pause their approval temporarily so that Bike Howard 2026 priorities relative to my community can be amended to be more equitable, fiscally responsible, and environmentally conscious. My testimony proposes an alternate priority for your consideration.

Thank you. Sincerely,

Martha W. McNeil
7680 Kindler Road, 20723
martha_mcneil@yahoo.com

Attached: Written Testimony, 6 pages plus list of references

Submitted by Martha McNeil, 7680 Kindler Road, 20723

Position: Request for amendment before approval. I oppose the designation of a bridge at Kindler Road as a high-priority and the lowering of priorities of other projects in that area by Bike Howard 2026.

My husband and I live on Kindler Road in the Twin Oaks community in a home we have owned for 40 years. My neighborhood is south of the Middle Patuxent River adjacent to the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area (aka "Gorman Park"). I have reviewed the Bike Howard 2026 projects and associated priorities with respect to my community and would like to offer some thoughts about the priorities in that local area. Thank you for the opportunity to be heard.

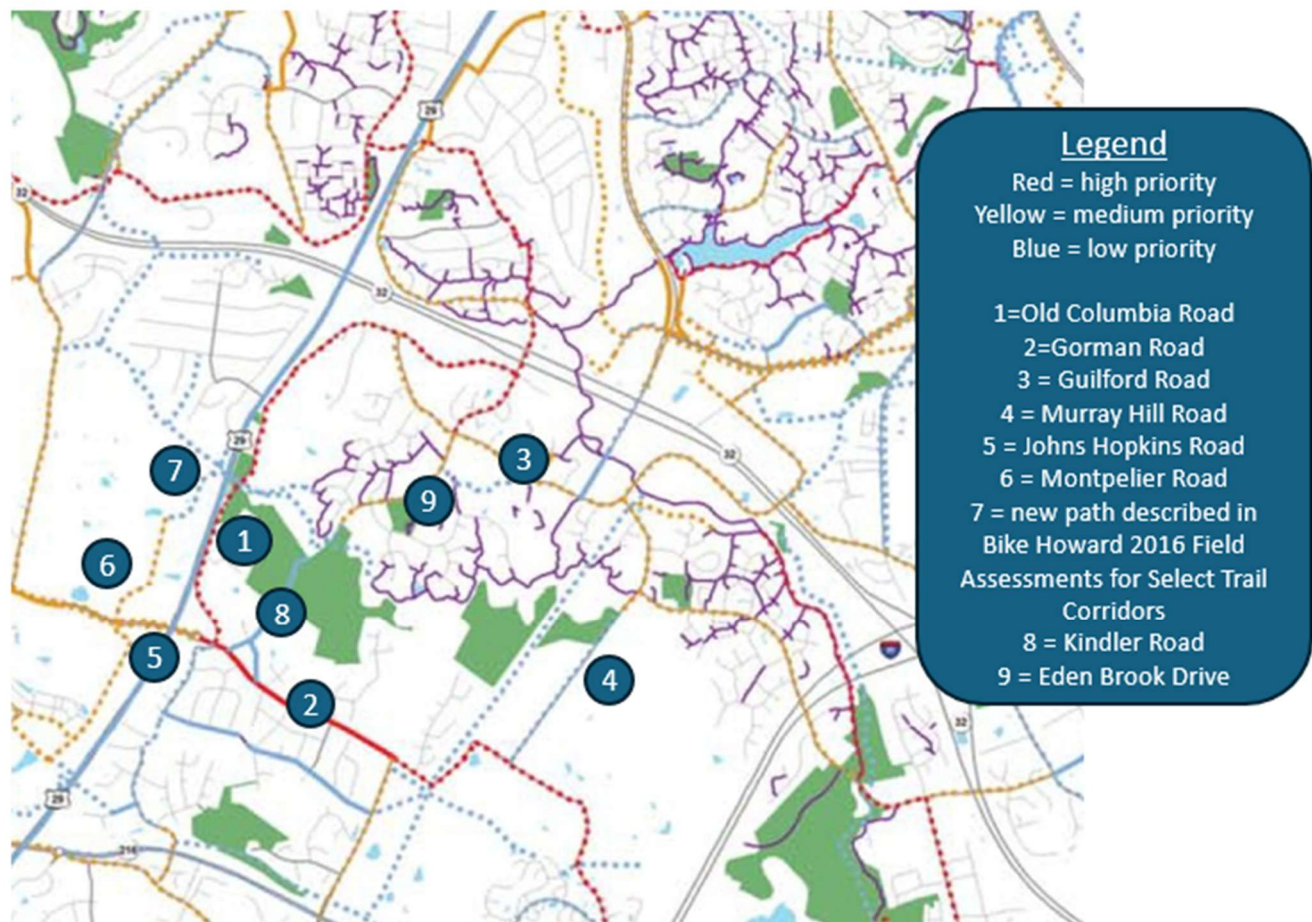


Figure 1. Bike Howard 2016 Southeast Bikeway Network (zoomed) [3]

First, by way of definition, the area I will speak about is loosely bounded by Old Columbia Road, Gorman/Johns Hopkins Roads, Guilford Road, and Murray Hill Road, as labeled on the map in Figure 1. For the rest of this testimony, when I say "the area of interest" that is the area I mean. When I say "my neighborhood," I mean Twin Oaks and Kindler Estates, sister communities centered on Kindler Road within the area of interest. When I say "the parkland" or "the park," I mean the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area. When I say "the river," I mean Middle Patuxent River in the area of interest. The maps in Figures 1 through 3 above and below are taken directly from the Bike Howard 2016 [1] and Bike

Howard 2026 [2] reports. Figure 4 is from the Howard County Interactive Map [18]. On all the maps, I have zoomed in on the area of interest and added legends and some annotations which I reference in my remarks.

I compared Bike Howard 2026 for the area of interest versus the original Bike Howard 2016 project recommendations and prioritizations. When compared with the priorities set for this area in Bike Howard 2016, but mainly not yet achieved (see Figure 2 below), I believe the Bike Howard 2026 recommendations for this area are seriously flawed, inequitable, and not fiscally responsible. And, again, I am speaking just about Bike Howard 2026 as it relates to the area where I live. There's a lot of good work there, but I feel it falls short in my community.

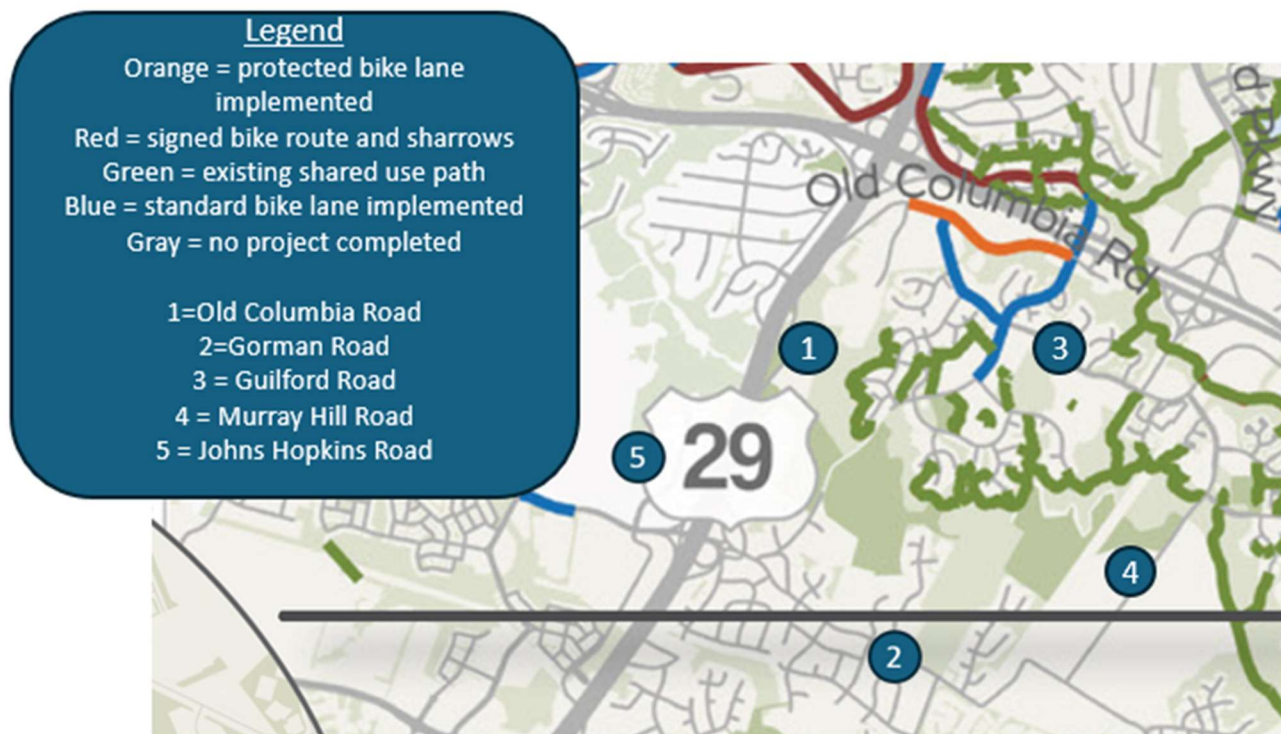


Figure 2. Bike Howard 2026 Progress to Date (zoomed) [4]

First, as shown in Figure 1 above, Bike Howard 2016 proposed high-priority projects around the perimeter of the area of interest improving parts of Old Columbia ① and Gorman Roads ②. Adding in the medium-priority projects along Murray Hill ④ and Guilford Roads ③, together they would have made a complete circle serving at least 6 communities, including Kings Contrivance to the north and Twin Oaks, Kindler Estates, Hammond Village, Hammond Hills, and Hunters Creek to the south. Add Johns Hopkins Road ⑤ (medium) and the route to Montpelier Center and the APL campus would also have been complete. Notwithstanding the completion delays, the 2016 plan was elegant in that it was equitable and inclusive by serving many communities, fiscally responsible by using existing infrastructure, and environmentally responsible by not encroaching on the river and parkland. It saddens me to see that the elegant circle of inclusion drawn by Bike Howard 2016, which would have served at least 6 communities, now largely leaves the 5 communities south of the river on hold [7].

Bike Howard 2026 has flipped the original Bike Howard 2016 prioritization upside down in the area of interest. The high-priority bike paths from Bike Howard 2016, including large parts of Old Columbia ① and Gorman Roads ②, would have served a broad swath of constituents. However, as shown in Figure 3 below, those projects have had their priorities lowered in Bike Howard 2026, in favor of placing a high-priority designation on a new bridge between Kindler Road ⑧ and Eden Brook Drive ⑨, improvements at Murray Hill Road ④ where there is an existing bridge, and addressing a highly-contested traffic interchange where Johns Hopkins Road ⑤ crosses over Route 29. I do realize, of course, that the lower-priority projects are technically still in the plan; but I have to ask, if they did not get done over the last decade when they were high-priority, realistically what is the likelihood that they will get done in the next decade as lower-priority?

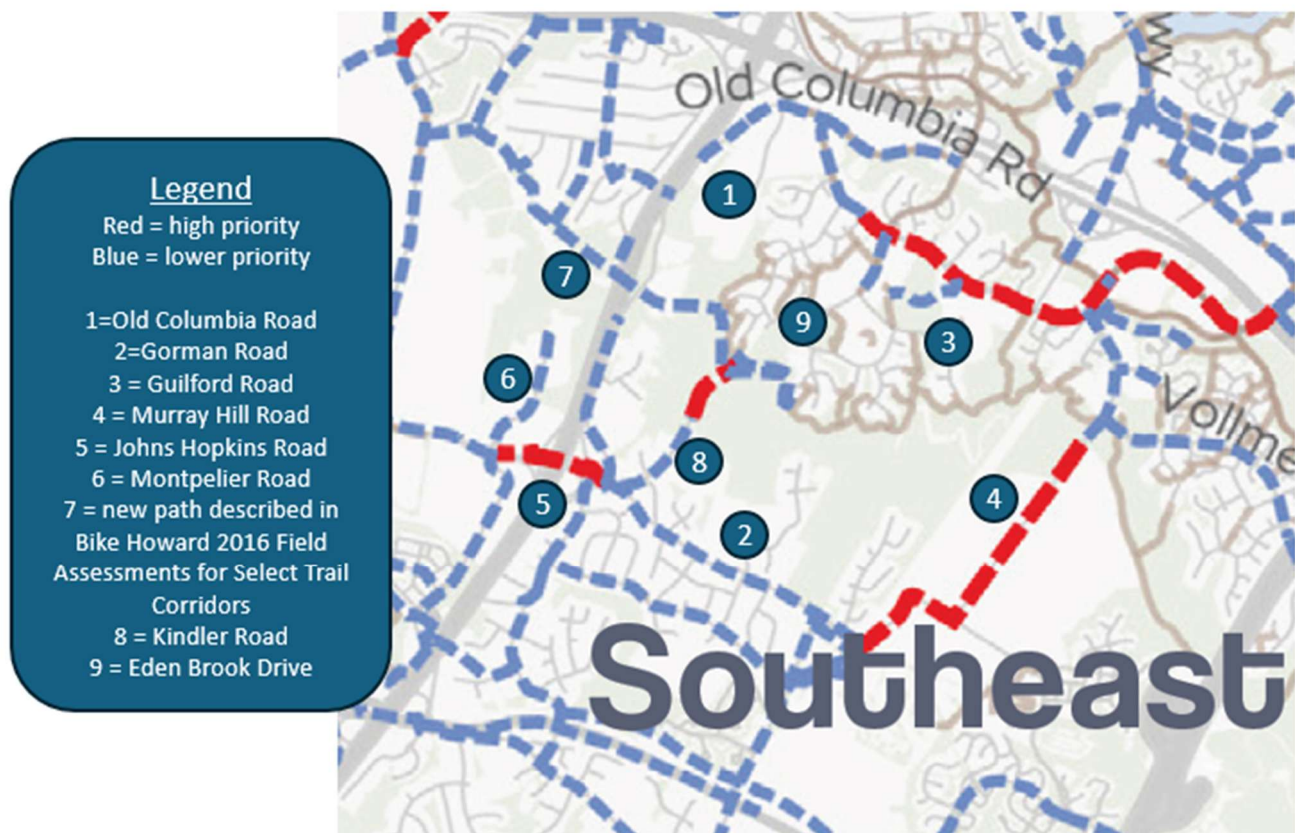


Figure 3. Bike Howard 2026 Prioritized Network (zoomed) [5]

I agree that the interchange at Johns Hopkins Road ⑤ and cycling improvements on Murray Hill Road ④ should be high priorities. Not that Bike Howard 2016 got that wrong. I have done my own field survey and even with my untrained eye I can see that ④ and ⑤ will be challenging and expensive projects. Thus, I respect that Bike Howard 2016 originally made the trade-off to set those priorities lower in favor of projects that used limited taxpayer funding to serve many.

I strongly disagree that we need a third bridge across the Middle Patuxent River at Kindler Road ⑧ in a two-square-mile area where two such crossings already exist. One bridge is 0.4 miles west of Kindler

Road on Old Columbia Road and one is 1.3 miles east on Murray Hill Road. A new bridge on Kindler Road will deposit travelers onto Johns Hopkins Road a mere 200 feet away from [6] where those using the existing Old Columbia Road crossing will reach Johns Hopkins Road. Both sets of travelers will have to transit the interchange at Johns Hopkins Road ⑤. A complete estimate has not been shared by Howard County to date; however, at a recent feasibility study open house, \$644K-\$869K was quoted for the bridge alone [12, 13]; hence, the bridge is likely to cost one to two million dollars to build when all costs are accounted for, not including annual operating costs which have not yet been quoted. A third bridge would simply be a luxury provided to communities that already have enough bridges. It is neither fiscally responsible nor equitable.

Bike Howard 2026 provides thin justification for reprioritizing the projects in the area of interest. One key driver appears to be “creating connections” [7]. However, if you look at Figure 3 above, you will see that the highest-priority projects do not make connections in my community at all. Instead, they bisect my neighborhood and turn it into a commute path from the north to commerce in the south, deprioritizing more localized connections that would benefit us directly. Bike Howard 2026 seems to give outsized weight to “361 site-specific comments” [8, 10, 11] as the reason to highly prioritize a new bridge at Kindler Road without stating how many of the 361 votes are attributed to Kindler Road versus one of the other 22 clusters shown on the map [10]. I have asked Howard County for the actual number of comments for the cluster labeled “Crossing Middle Patuxent River”. I look forward to receiving a reply to my inquiry. Meanwhile, as someone trained to deal with data, I roughly estimate based on the graphic that the “Crossing Middle Patuxent River” cluster represents less than 100 respondents. If my estimate is correct, this is less than .03% (three one-hundredths of one percent) of all Howard County residents and less than 0.6% (six tenths of one percent) of the residents in the area of interest [16, 17]. This does not constitute a groundswell to build a bridge. The data is also biased due to how it was collected. The “add dots to a map” approach [8, 9], while very effective for cyclists expressing location-specific wants, excludes those stakeholders, like me, whose feedback on the desired locations does not fit in a dot.

One final observation. If Howard County is determined to build another bridge in this area, please consider the location identified in Bike Howard 2016 Field Assessments for Select Trail Corridors [14] marked as ⑦ in Figure 1 above. This location would provide a connection from Old Columbia Road, under Route 29 along the north river bank, crossing the river to join Montpelier Road west of Route 29. It would require a new bridge and, thus, has many yet-to-be-answered financial and environmental concerns. An apparent small easement through the protected parkland west of Route 29, similar to the easement in Gorman Park, suggest a bridge here is at least as feasible as a bridge through Gorman Park. See Figure 4 below. The following are ways a bridge at Montpelier is superior to the Kindler Road location:

- (a) It is a more equitable and fiscally responsible use of taxpayer funds. Instead of a third bridge serving the same communities east of Route 29 already served by two bridges, this location would connect an additional community, the one west of Route 29 whose only entrance is

directly on Route 29 at Rivers Edge Road. I cannot speak to whether that community would want such a connection; that remains for them to say. But it is fair to observe that being bounded on two sides by highways and on two sides by the river, they are pretty hemmed in and forced to exit only by highway in motor vehicles. Someone should ask them.

- (b) It provides a connection between two commerce centers on opposite sides of the highway.
- (c) It bypasses the highly contested traffic circle at Johns Hopkin Road and Route 29 **5**. This interchange is frightening in a car. I drive it every day. Although improving this interchange is now high-priority in Bike Howard 2026, it is not clear what can be done to make it better, short of tearing it out and starting over with a new design, which is not realistic. Many lesser things have already been tried. Subtracting traffic from the circle would be beneficial to everyone - walkers, motorists, and cyclists.
- (d) The Middle Patuxent River is narrower and less complex at Montpelier Road than it is at Kindler Road. The river forks and joins [13] near the proposed Kindler crossing forming an island. A smaller, less expensive span may be possible at Montpelier.
- (e) A viable walking and biking path along a scenic river may also be of interest for recreation rather than just commuting, expanding the user base. A bridge at Kindler Road is not that interesting and will probably not draw any users from the wider Howard County.

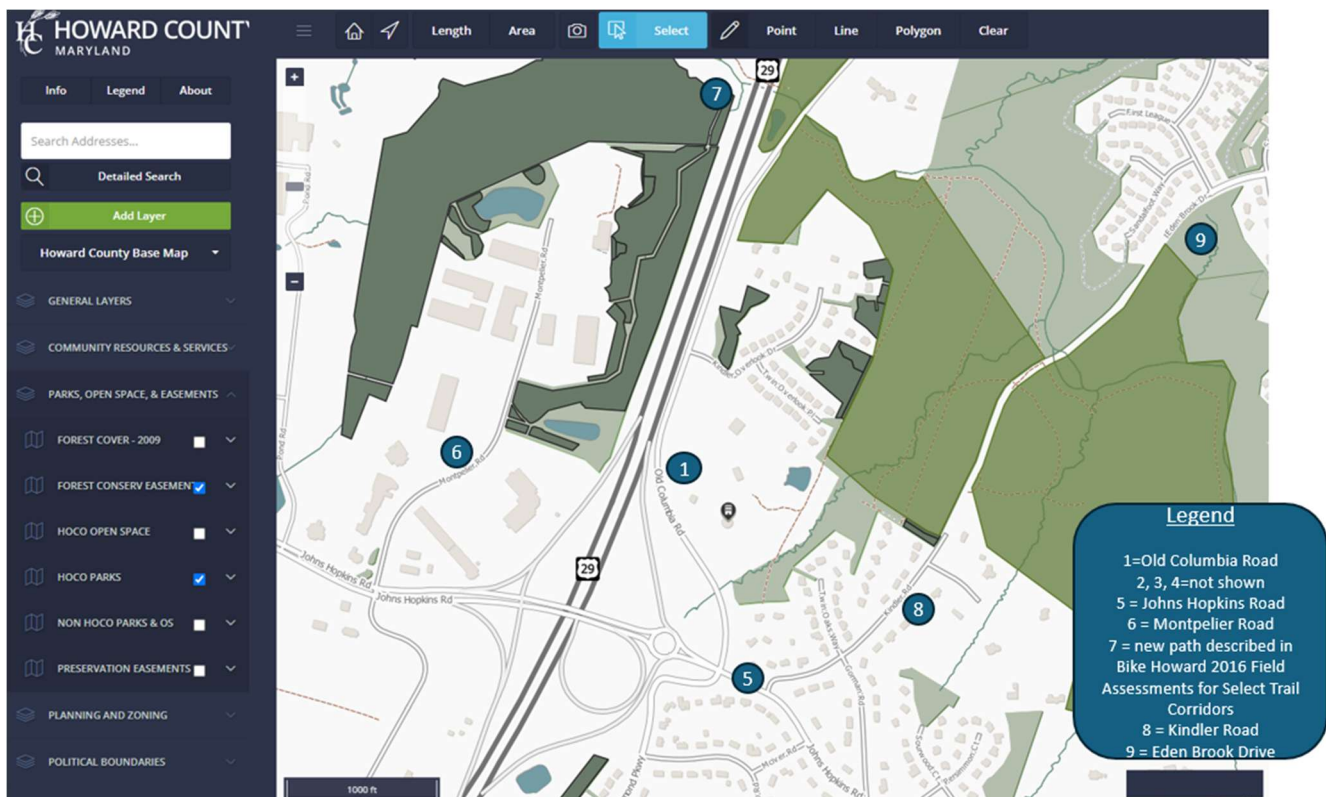


Figure 4. Howard County Interactive Map (zoomed) [18]

In conclusion, I would like to say that, although I am not a cyclist myself, I am not opposed to making a safer journey for those who are. But I'm not just passing through the area of interest; I live here every

day. As we strive to make Howard County “one of the most bicycle-friendly communities in the region” [15], we must also remember that this is only one of many County goals competing for our limited resources. Other goals we hold in high regard are fiscal responsibility, equity and inclusion, and environmental stewardship. Those goals have not been met by the Bike Howard 2026 project prioritization in my community. Therefore, I respectfully request that the County Council pause Bike Howard 2026 and send it back for amendment to rework the priorities in the area of interest, especially to more highly prioritize the connections within my community and reduce the high priority given to building a redundant bridge through it.

My ideal prioritization for the area of interest is as follows (from high to low): Old Columbia Road ①, Gorman Road ②, Johns Hopkins Road and Route 29 interchange ⑤, Murray Hill Road ④, Guilford Road ③, and Eden Brook ⑨ to build out the connectivity for the 6 local communities. Then Montpelier Road ⑥ and ⑦ to build connectivity between commerce centers east and west of Route 29 in those 6 communities plus connect one more community. Drop the bridge at Kindler Road ⑧; it is redundant.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these thoughts. Please reach out to me if I can clarify any part of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Martha W. McNeil
Ronald W. McNeil
7680 Kindler Road, 20723
martha_mcneil@yahoo.com

References

- [1] Bike Howard 2016 Howard County Bicycle Master Plan. Retrieved 9/20/2026, <https://bikehoward.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/bike-howard-final1.pdf>
- [2] Bike Howard 2026. Howard County Bicycle Master Plan Update, County Council Submission Version, Summer 2026. Retrieved 9/20/2026, https://www.howardcountymd.gov/sites/default/files/2026-08/BikeHoward_2026_0825.pdf
- [3] Bike Howard 2016, page 30, “Southeast Bikeway Networks Map No. 7”. Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [1].
- [4] Bike Howard 2026, page 42, “Progress to Date”. Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].
- [5] Bike Howard 2026, page 75, “Prioritized Network”. Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].
- [6] Google Maps Measuring Tool. Retrieved 9/20/2026.
- [7] Bike Howard 2026, page 79, “Southeast”. Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].

[8] Bike Howard 2026, page 63, "Engaging with the Community," Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].

[9] Bike Howard 2026, page 64, "Engagement Process," Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].

[10] Bike Howard 2026, page 66, "Who We Heard From," Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].

[11] Bike Howard 2026, page 74, "Prioritization Methodology," Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].

[12] Kindler Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study, 2026,
<https://www.howardcountymd.gov/transportation/kindler-bridge-study>. Retrieved 9/20/2026.

[13] Kindler Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study, 2026, "Bridge Concept Options,"
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[14] Field Assessments for Select Trail Corridors, Bike Howard 2016 Appendices, pages 12-13, Item X, "Eden Brook Drive to APL," <https://bikehoward.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/bike-howard-appendices-draft.pdf> . Retrieved 9/20/2026.

[15] Bike Howard 2026, page iii, "Statement from the County Executive," Retrieved 9/20/2026 from [2].

[16] United States Census, Howard County Quick Facts, "Population Estimate July 2025,"
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/howardcountymaryland/PST045225>, Retrieved 9/20/2026.

[17] Kings Contrivance Community Association, "About Us," <https://villageofkc.org/living-in-kc/about/> . Retrieved 9/20/2026.

[18] Howard County Interactive Map; Base Map, Forest Conservation Easement, and HoCo Parks layers shown; centered on (-76.885124, 39.160863),
<https://data.howardcountymd.gov/InteractiveMap.html>. Retrieved 9/23/2026.

Supplemental Written Testimony, CR160-2026 (BikeHoward 2026), Hearing of September 23, 2026

From Susan Arday <ardaysusan@gmail.com>

Date Wed 9/23/2026 4:27 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

Cc Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov>; Goldscher, Paige <pgoldscher@howardcountymd.gov>; Susan Arday <ardaysusan@gmail.com>; David At Lockheed-Martin <davidarday@aol.com>

 1 attachment (2 MB)

CR160-2026-supplemental-testimony-4.pdf;

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Chair Jones, Vice Chair Rigby, and members of the Council:

Attached is my supplemental written testimony on CR160-2026, Approving BikeHoward 2026, for tonight's continued public hearing. It supplements the written testimony I submitted on September 22, 2026, at 6:09 PM.

The statement adds three points:

1. The Department of Recreation and Parks gives our neighborhood personal notice of its managed deer hunts every year. The Office of Transportation gave no comparable notice of the Kindler feasibility study or of the High Priority designation now before the Council.
2. The designated route crosses parkland with five weekday firearms hunts scheduled this season, each closing the park until noon.
3. No crossing has existed at this location for 54 years, since Hurricane Agnes destroyed the bridge in June 1972. The reasons should be identified in the feasibility study before an adopted plan designates the crossing High Priority.

The attachment includes the Recreation and Parks hunt letter our household received on September 21, 2026.

I renew the request in my original testimony: please remove the Kindler Road crossing segment from the recommended network pending completion of the feasibility study, or amend CR160-2026 to state that adoption does not prejudice the outcome of that study.

Please confirm receipt and that this statement will be entered into the record for CR160-2026.

Respectfully,

Susan Lewis Arday
7640 Woodstream Way
Laurel, MD 20723
410-215-2906
ardaysusan@gmail.com

Attachment: CR160-2026-supplemental-testimony.pdf (4 pages)

SUPPLEMENTAL WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Howard County Council Legislative Public Hearing, Wednesday, September 23, 2026 (rescheduled from September 22)

RE: CR160-2026, Approving BikeHoward 2026 and indicating support for bicycle-friendly community designation

Position: Request for amendment. I oppose the proposed Kindler Road crossing of the Middle Patuxent River.

Submitted by: Susan Lewis Arday, 7640 Woodstream Way, Laurel, MD 20723 | ardaysusan@gmail.com | 410-215-2906

Chair Jones, Vice Chair Rigby, and members of the Council:

This statement supplements my written testimony on CR160-2026 submitted September 22, 2026. It adds three points. The first two draw on a County letter our household received on Monday, September 21, 2026: the Department of Recreation and Parks' notice of its 2026-2027 managed deer hunts.

1. The County knows how to reach us. Each year the Department of Recreation and Parks sends every household in our neighborhood a personal notice of its managed deer hunts on the adjoining parkland. This year's letter states that the Department advertises through its website and signage, "however, as a neighbor, we would like to use this letter to personally inform you." One County department has judged that signs and a website are not enough notice for the households next to this land. Our household received no comparable notice from the Office of Transportation about the feasibility study or about the High Priority designation now before the Council. This is the second time this year that County work at the Kindler Road terminus has proceeded without direct notice to adjoining residents. Capital Project D-1184 began converting the dead end to a trail in spring 2026 without advance notice and was abandoned April 22, 2026.

2. The designated route runs through a managed firearms hunt area. The High Priority route crosses the river and continues through parkland where the Department of Recreation and Parks conducts managed firearms deer hunts. This is not a one-time event. The Department states that it has conducted its Managed Deer Hunt Program since 1998, and it notifies our neighborhood of hunts on this parkland every year. County announcements place managed hunts in the Gorman area, along the Middle Patuxent River, as early as the 2016-2017 season. The 2026-2027 schedule lists five hunts at Gorman Stream Valley, all on weekdays: October 19, November 6, and December 9, 2026, and January 7 and January 27, 2027. On those dates the park is closed to other users until noon, and firearms hunts begin a half hour before legal sunrise. A commuter route through this land would be closed for the morning commute on each hunt day, every season, a condition the feasibility study has not yet addressed. Nor can the conflict be resolved simply by ending the hunts. The Department's letter states that the program exists because overabundant deer can pose a serious threat to the forest, damage landscaping and crops, increase deer-auto collisions, and spread the potential for exposure to Lyme disease.

3. Fifty-four years without a crossing. The roadway bridge that carried Kindler Road over the Middle Patuxent River was destroyed by Hurricane Agnes in June 1972. For the 54 years since, this segment has been closed to vehicular traffic and no bridge has stood here; no level of government has rebuilt it. A proposal to restore a crossing around 2000 did not proceed after residents objected, and BikeHoward 2016 placed a bridge here only in its Long Term tier, 20 to 30 years out. Our house at the terminus was built in 1978, after the closure, and the homes on nearby Twin Oaks Way were built later still. There must be reasons a crossing has gone unbuilt for more than half a century. The County has not identified them. They should be identified and weighed in the feasibility study before an adopted plan places this crossing in the tier to be built as soon as possible.

Request. All three points confirm that questions central to this crossing remain unresolved. I renew the requests in my September 22 testimony: remove the Kindler Road crossing segment from the recommended network pending completion of the feasibility study, or amend CR160-2026 to state expressly that adoption does not constitute a finding that any crossing of the Middle Patuxent River is feasible, safe, or advisable, and does not prejudice the outcome of that study.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Lewis Arday

Sources: Department of Recreation and Parks managed deer hunt letter, 2026-2027 season (attached); Howard County Department of Recreation and Parks announcement of the 2016-2017 Deer Management Program, as posted by the Village of River Hill, <https://www.villageofriverhill.org/managed-deer-hunts/>; Howard County, "Department of Recreation & Parks announces Deer Management Program for 2019-2020," <https://www.howardcountymd.gov/recreation-parks/departments-recreation-parks-announces-deer-management-program-2019-2020>; viewed September 22, 2026.

Attachment: Department of Recreation and Parks managed deer hunt letter, 2026-2027 season (3 pages).



Howard County Recreation & Parks

7120 Oakland Mills Road, Columbia, Maryland 21046

Bryan Moody
Bureau Chief of Parks
bmoody@howardcountymd.gov

Phone: 410-313-4640
www.howardcountymd.gov/rap

Fax: 410-313-4646
Voice/Relay: 410-313-7275

Dear Resident,

As you are probably aware, Howard County is experiencing an overabundance of white-tailed deer. As a steward of the County's natural resources, the Department of Recreation and Parks has been conducting a Managed Deer Hunt Program to reduce the deer population in some parks when the herds have become so overstocked that they can pose a serious threat to the forest community in which they dwell. Overabundant deer populations can negatively impact the community by damaging landscaping, crops, increasing the number of deer-auto collisions and spreading the potential for exposure to Lyme disease.

The Department advertises our activities through our website and signage; however, as a neighbor, we would like to use this letter to personally inform you that the Managed Deer Hunt Program will be occurring on the parkland near your home.

Please be aware that the Department has been conducting this program successfully and safely since 1998. Carefully screened, qualified, experienced, and safety-conscious hunters will be entering the sites on the dates listed below, in a program that has received special approval from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. The hunting will take place only on days listed in this letter. All hunters are in elevated positions, so all shots are directed towards the ground. In addition, the Department will be posting "Notice of Deer Management - Hunting" signs in your neighborhood at strategic locations two weeks prior to the hunt date to remind residents of our presence. Signs will be removed after the conclusion of the hunts at that park. Parks not listed as "permitted" will be closed to the public from 05:00AM to 12:00PM on the dates listed below.

The dates approved for the hunts include:

MANAGED FIREARMS HUNT SCHEDULE:

Dates of Managed Firearms Hunts – 2026, 2027 Season		
Park	Dates	Number of Hunts
Alpha Ridge Park	10/5/26, 10/21/26, 11/13/26, 12/7/26, 1/14/27	5
Gorman Stream Valley	10/19/26, 11/6/26, 12/9/26, 1/7/27, 1/27/27	5
MPEA	10/13/26, 11/2/26, 11/18/26, 12/16/26, 1/12/27	5

West Friendship Park	10/5/26, 10/21/26, 11/13/26, 12/7/26, 1/14/27	5
High Ridge Park	10/9/26, 10/23/26, 11/20/26, 12/18/26, 1/25/27	5
Schooley Mill Park	10/19/26, 11/6/26, 12/9/26, 1/7/27, 1/27/27	5

	Total	30
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All managed firearms hunts begin one half hour before legal sunrise and continue until 11:00 am. The parks will be closed to other users until 12:00 noon.

MANAGED ARCHERY HUNT SCHEDULE:

Proposed dates for Managed Archery Hunts – 2026, 2027 Season		
Park	Dates	Number of Hunts
Blandair Park (North)	10/7/26, 10/27/26, 11/16/26, 12/11/26, 1/29/27	5
David Force Park	10/15/26, 11/4/26, 12/4/26, 12/21/26 1/21/27	5
Wincopin Trails Open Space	10/7/26, 10/27/26, 11/16/26, 12/11/26, 1/29/27	5
Dorsey Hall Open Space	10/1/26, 10/29/26, 11/9/26, 11/24/26, 12/14/26, 1/5/27	6
Gray Rock Open Space	10/1/26, 10/29/26, 11/9/26, 11/24/26, 12/14/26, 1/5/27	6
Autumn View Open Space	10/15/26, 11/4/26, 12/4/26, 12/21/26 1/21/27	5
Benson Branch Park	Permitted: October 1 st – January 31 st Monday - Saturday	As permitted

Haviland Mill Park	Permitted: October 1 st – January 31 st Monday - Saturday	As permitted
Fulton Park	Permitted: October 1 st – January 31 st Monday - Saturday	As permitted
North Farm Park	Permitted: October 1 st – January 31 st Monday – Saturday	As permitted

If you have any questions about the Department's Deer Management Program, please call at (410) 313-1675.

Council Resolution 160-2026

From Andrew Heiser <amheis@gmail.com>

Date Thu 9/24/2026 12:39 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Hello,

I would like to express my support for Landing Road's inclusion in the Bike Howard plan under consideration by the council. Landing Road's proximity to Patapsco State Park, Rockburn Branch Park/Elementary and several large housing communities makes it an ideal candidate for improved walking/biking. The road is currently unsafe for hikers/bikers with no shoulders and cars generally traveling 35-45 mph (just my guess) with many blind curves. As a driver on this road, the posted speed limit of 30 mph feels too slow, causing most drivers to exceed the limit, in turn making conditions unsafe for hikers/bikers. Dedicated pathways or improved shouldering would be welcome. As an example, when my kids became teenagers we let them ride their bikes from our Grovemont Overlook neighborhood to our pool, Watermont. For the majority of this ride they cut through Rockburn Park and were clear of traffic. To get there, however, they had to navigate a short, shoulderless section of Landing Road (from Forest Kelly to the Rockburn driveway). A connector here and to the other neighborhoods would eliminate the potential for catastrophic accidents. The trail access to the Avalon area also attracts many hikers and bikers who are frequently in unsafe conditions for parking, traveling to the trails or crossing the road.

Andy Heiser
5441 Forest Kelly Court Elkridge

CR160 Testimony (Was Presented Virtually, Sending Text)

From Antoine RJ Wright <contact@antoinerjwright.com>

Date Thu 9/24/2026 2:12 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear members of the Howard County County Council,
Thank you for the opportunity to (virtually) testify towards CR160 (the resolution to accept the new Bike Howard Master Plan) last night during the continued legislation session. As others have, I wanted to send my testimony directly so that it would be accurately recorded in the record. If there are comments/questions from the Council, I am happy to answer what I can. My testimony is in the block quote below:

Good evening, Chair and members of the Council. My name is Antoine RJ Wright, and I come to you wearing three hats: I chair Howard County's Multimodal Transportation Board, I serve on the board of Bike Maryland, and I chair the Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. I speak in strong support of CR160-2026.

Let me start with the question this plan really answers: what does Howard County want to be? HoCo By Design — our general plan — describes a county that grows in a connected, sustainable, and equitable way. BikeHoward 2026 is how we deliver that vision on the ground. A general plan sets the destination; a bicycle master plan builds the route to get there.

At its heart, this is a safety plan. It measures every corridor by how stressful it is to ride — asking not whether a confident cyclist can manage, but whether a twelve-year-old or a grandparent would feel safe. Today we have strong, low-stress neighborhoods cut off from one another by high-stress arterials. BikeHoward 2026 maps the connections that close those gaps, for people of every age and ability.

Through my work on the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance review and in helping to draft the Gateway Master Plan, I've learned the same lesson each time: the infrastructure we don't plan for is the infrastructure we don't get. Safe bikeways are public facilities. They belong in how we phase growth, review development, and shape places like Gateway — part of the foundation, not an afterthought.

Approving this resolution, and pursuing the League of American Bicyclists (and the aforementioned People for Bikes) designation, says clearly who we intend to be. I respectfully urge your approval of

CR160-2026. Thank you.

Thank you once again for the allowance to testify. I look forward to seeing Howard County put much of what has been put forth within the 2026 draft Bike Master Plan into action in the coming years.

Antoine RJ Wright

Chair, Multimodal Transportation Board (HoCo MTB)

Board, Bike Maryland

Chair, Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocacy Committee (MBPAC)

Support for Council Resolution 160-2026 (Bicycle Master Plan Update) – Landing Road Infrastructure

From Christian Sachek <csachek@yahoo.com>

Date Thu 9/24/2026 1:41 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear Howard County Council,

I am writing as a resident living at 5420 Wecker Way to express my strong support for **Council Resolution 160-2026**, updating BikeHoward, the County's Bicycle Master Plan.

Specifically, I urge the Council to support the inclusion of Landing Road as a priority corridor for further evaluation of bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements.

Landing Road is a critical missing connection in our local infrastructure. Safer bicycle and pedestrian facilities along Landing Road would:

- Connect our residential neighborhoods and Rockburn Branch Park directly with Ilchester Road and the Patapsco Valley area.
- Complement planned multi-modal improvements along Montgomery Road, creating a cohesive, safe, and functional network for both active recreation and everyday transportation.
- Address current safety concerns, making the corridor comfortable and accessible rather than a hazardous route for walking and cycling.

Where feasible, I would strongly encourage evaluating options for a separated bicycle/pedestrian facility, such as a shared-use path, to ensure maximum safety for all users.

Thank you for your consideration and for working to make Howard County safer and more connected for all residents.

Sincerely,

Christian Sachek

5420 Wecker Way

Comments on Council Resolution No. CR 160-2026

From Robert Dover <bobatwaterbury@aol.com>

Date Thu 10/1/2026 3:49 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (311 KB)

Dover Comments on CR160-2026_Bike Howard Plan.pdf;

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Howard County Council members:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my comments and observations on Council Resolution No. 160-2026.

As you will see in my comments, I strongly favor almost all proposals and recommendations made in the BikeHoward 2026 Bicycle Master Plan Update, except for the inclusion of the proposed Kindler Road bridge and bike trail within the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area. Because the proposal did not receive wide notification in the adjacent neighborhoods or throughout Columbia and Laurel, many interested residents, including myself, did not learn about it until very recently. I, and a few other residents, have made inquiries and filed Public Information Act (PIA) requests to learn more about the proposal, and its expected benefits and impacts. Because it will take several weeks for us to receive and process those responses, I request that the Council postpone consideration of approval of the Plan for a period of a few months. There is nothing time-critical about this approval and, because of the impacts that the proposal will have within a County-designated Natural Resource Area and adjacent residential area, the most prudent thing to do would be to postpone approval until residents have had an opportunity to provide meaningful review and comment on the proposal.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Bob Dover
6354 Tamar Drive
bobatwaterbury@aol.com

Comments on Proposed Howard County Bicycle Master Plan Update

CR 160-2026

Bob Dover

6354 Tamar Drive, Columbia, MD

October 1, 2026

Dear Howard County Council Members:

I am providing these written comments to ask that the County Council postpone any further consideration and approval of the BikeHoward 2026 Bicycle Master Plan Update under Resolution No. 160-2026.

While I am in favor of almost all of the recommendations and proposals in the Plan, the Council should postpone their approval because the inclusion of the proposed Kindler Road Bridge as a High Priority element of this plan has been rushed without providing a meaningful opportunity for residents, biking groups, environmental groups, and other stakeholders to become aware, understand the benefits and impacts, engage with their neighbors and County officials, and develop and deliver their arguments either in favor of or in opposition to the proposed bridge and trail.

As evidence of the rush, please understand that:

- The County Transportation Department has already engaged a contractor and developed conceptual designs for two bridge options even before the bridge has been designated by the Council as a High Priority element of the plan.
- Both the Transportation Department, and one of the Councilpersons, have cited the “high level of support from the community” as rationale to proceed, even though there has been no direct attempt to notify residents, especially those whose neighborhoods would be directly affected.
- The “Feasibility Study” and associated survey do not:
 - define the objective to be accomplished - I still don’t know what it is;
 - consider whether that objective, in itself, is a high priority for the transportation network;
 - consider whether that objective could be accomplished in a less costly and destructive way at another location - it can, by making modifications or constructing a new bridge at Old Columbia Road.

The publication, today, of an article by The Merriweather Post capably analyzed the potential users of the bridge and trail, and rightly concluded that it would not substantially support commuting to APL, the village center, or schools. Instead, the article argued that the bridge would entirely be used by recreational cyclists. There is not even a trail system south of the river to connect to – only a quiet neighborhood with narrow residential streets, so it is not clear why these recreational cyclists would even want to visit the area south of the bridge. The numbers of these users would be very low.

- The inclusion of the bridge is almost hidden in the BikeHoward plan. There is very little substantial discussion of this element itself – it is just shown as a very short red, dashed line on their map. This is an unacceptably subtle way to present what is going to be a massive financial cost to taxpayers, environmental impact in the Middle Patuxent River and adjacent Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area, and conversion of a narrow, quiet, residential street into a bike trail that will have no restrictions on the types of vehicles or speeds they travel.

- I, and other residents, have reacted to this proposal by attempting to access relevant data and reports from the County, but we are required to do that under Public Information Act (PIA) requests. Responses to those request will take time.

I understand that residents who have made inquiries about this rush have been told, by the Transportation Department, that no decisions have actually been made, and there will be ample time for public engagement in later stages. These assurances are not credible. If this was the case, a proper, professional feasibility study and survey would have presented the objective, included an option for “no bridge or trail,” and an option for a crossing at a substantially different location, if that could be accomplished through improvement of an existing crossing with no environmental impact or nuisance to existing residents. If no decision had yet been made, the Transportation Department would not be presenting conceptual designs at an Open House weeks before the Council vote. Instead, there appears to be a rush with the intention to gain approvals and begin construction before opponents can be organized.

Below, I attach a copy of the comments that I submitted to both the County Transportation Department and the Columbia Association regarding this proposal.

As you can see, I am an avid recreational cyclist who rides local and regional trails almost every day. I am not only strongly in favor of bike trails, but I have also written and published three books that address the practice of converting former railroad beds and bridges into connections between bike trail systems. I have also recently supported, through written and verbal testimony and participation in surveys, the inclusion of bike-accessible sidewalks on the new Patuxent River bridge south of Odenton, across the Anacostia at the Arboretum, and the proposed replacement of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Overall, I support thoughtful expansion of bike trails, but only if it:

- Is done with a fully transparent public engagement process;
- Will benefit a large enough number of users to justify the taxpayer costs;
- Has the full support of the neighborhood residents who would have their residential street converted to a multi-use cycle trail; and
- Has few or no environmental impacts in an area designated for the protection of natural resources.

None of these apply to the proposed bridge and trail at Kindler Road, and this appears to be why the cycling community is so committed to ramming this approval through the County Council as quickly as possible.

Personally, my major concern regards the conversion of a County-designated Natural Resource Area into a more heavily-used park. There is a substantial difference between a Park, managed primarily for recreation for users of all types and abilities, as opposed to a Natural Resource Area, which is managed primarily for protection and enjoyment of the natural resources therein. Based on my reviews and site visits, there appears to be some confusion about the official designation, and therefore the management priorities and objectives, of the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area (NRA) that would be transected by the new bridge and trail. The Howard County interactive map and the Rec & Parks printable park map show the name as “Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA.” However, the area is not listed among the list of Regional Parks, Neighborhood Parks, or Natural Resource Management Areas on the Rec & Parks website – in fact, the Rec & Parks website provides almost no information about the area, in strong contrast to the descriptions provided for other parks. Also, Pages 19 and 20 of the Bike Howard Plan that you are considering shows the area as “Gorman Stream Valley Park,” with no mention of it as a Natural Resource Area. Outside websites, such as those of Howard Birds and various websites providing trail information, use the name “Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area (NRA).” A visit

to the area shows that, except for the relict of the original road, there is no parking access or park-like amenities. Instead, there are signs indicating that the stream is stocked for fishing, and that managed deer hunts are allowed, but those users would have to park on narrow residential streets such as Kindler Road. It is clear that this is not a park – it has been managed as an NRA and, based on the bald eagle that I watched fly over the river last Tuesday (9/29), that management has been reasonably successful. It is almost as if the Rec & Parks website has been purged of any reference to the designation of this area as being for management and protection of natural resources, or any information about the resources present, and Bike Howard is instead trying to pretend that the proposed trail would just be another trail in a heavily used park, and would not inflict any new impacts on the environment or existing residents.

This lack of background information about the NRA and its resources makes it impossible for concerned residents to make their own investigation regarding the potential impacts of a new bridge and trail. I have requested, through the PIA, a copy of the relevant Resource Management Plan and any associated resource surveys or studies, but I expect that it will be weeks before I receive a response. I have also requested a meeting with one of the managers of Rec & Parks but, again, I expect that it will take substantial time for that to be arranged. I understand that other residents have also filed PIA requests for information on other relevant topics such as safety and maintenance and, like mine, it will take weeks to receive and then digest that information. This is the primary reason that I request a delay of at least several months, to allow residents to study the actual benefits and impacts of this proposal.

I also have some comments about the wording in the Plan – wording that appears to pre-suppose approval and subtly present the idea that the project is nothing more than a minor repair of an existing bridge that has been damaged a little. Examples include:

- As mentioned above, citing the area as a “Park” instead of a Natural Resource Area on Pages 19 and 20 appears to be a subtle way of avoiding opposition by leaving readers with the idea that the area is already a heavily used recreation area. This is absolutely not the case, and it is unacceptable for County staff to mislead residents and Council members this way.
- On Page 66, the text states that “Crossing Middle Patuxent River One cluster of comments relates to the shared-use path off of Kings Contrivance Loop. This shared-use path previously connected to Kindler Road using a bridge over the Middle Patuxent River, according to residents. Rebuilding the bridge would safely connect two neighborhoods.”

The statement that it would “safely connect two neighborhoods” is both irrelevant and debatable. Maybe it would be safe, but it is also extremely steep, and it can be argued that it would not be. Also, this disregards the obvious question of whether any reasonable value is to be gained by “connecting neighborhoods,” or whether the cost of that connection, in terms of financial cost, environmental impact, and nuisance to existing residents is worth the value that would be gained. Also, the statement that this path “previously connected to Kindler Road” is extremely misleading. It implies that this was a recent situation, and the proposal is only a minor re-connection to restore a recent connection between two neighborhoods. This could not be further from the truth. Yes, there was a road here – more than 50 years ago. At that time, there was no neighborhood to the north of the river, where Kings Contrivance is now situated. The development did not occur until the early 1980s, so the road never “connected neighborhoods,” and the statement about restoring a previous connection is disingenuous. In fact, the tree canopy has largely healed itself over the past 50 years.

- On Pages 67 and 68 – Key Themes from public engagement. This is nothing but a general list of all the positive features of any bike trail network. I agree with all of them. But they are presented under the heading “HoCo wants to see,” as if the respondents favored these features against potential competing uses, such as continuing management of an area solely for the protection and management of natural resources. This list assumes that all trails are good. However, if presented with a full range of options, residents would certainly agree that they want any planned connections or trails to only be developed if it would benefit a reasonably large number of users (enough to justify the cost), would not create a nuisance in a neighborhood that does not want to be connected, and would not inflict substantial environmental damage to implement and maintain. If this choice were to be presented to the respondents to your survey, they surely would agree that these issues must be considered – but this Plan makes no mention of such considerations.

Thank you for considering these comments in your consideration of CR 160-2026. There is no emergency or time-sensitive reason that this Plan must be approved immediately. On the contrary, approval of the Plan will just make this project even more inevitable than it already is. Please allow time for residents to receive responses to our PIA requests, and develop a better understanding of how this proposal will affect the environment, and our residential communities.

Bob Dover

6354 Tamar Drive

bobatwaterbury@aol.com

Letter Provided to County Transportation Department and Columbia Association

September 24, 2026

Chris Eatough

Planning Supervisor

Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator

Email: ceatough@howardcountymd.gov

Jason Heath

Manager of Capital Improvements

Email: jason.heath@columbiaassociation.org

Mr. Eatough and Mr. Heath:

I am writing to provide my observations and concerns regarding the proposed pedestrian and bike bridge connecting Kindler Road and Eden Brook Road in Howard County. I am writing as:

- A 30+ year resident of Columbia
- A surface water hydrologist and environmental planner with more than 35 years of experience evaluating the environmental impacts of proposed infrastructure and transportation projects. This has included
 - a substantial focus on the hydrologic and environmental impacts of tree and vegetation removal, and
 - management of a multi-year project analyzing the recreational benefits versus the environmental and residential impacts of thousands of miles of off-road trails in southern California
- An avid cyclist for more than 40 years, still averaging (at my advanced age) more than 3,000 miles per year on bike trail systems in Columbia and adjacent counties
- The author of three books (Bridgespotting, Bridgespotting Part 2, and Bridges of Washington, DC) which address the use of obsolete bridges and their legacy bridge structures for conversion into multi-use trail systems.

With this extensive background as a user of bike trails, and having authored books extolling the benefits of using obsolete bridges to support development of new bike trails, you might guess that I would be strongly in favor of any project similar to the proposed Kindler Road Bridge project. And I generally am. I think these projects are a massive benefit to our communities, when they can meet four conditions:

- Benefit the environment by displacing a significant amount of carbon emissions from motor vehicles;
- Benefit a substantial number of recreational trail users (enough to justify the cost to the taxpayers);
- Be implemented with little or no increase in nuisance noise, dust, or visual intrusion to an existing community; and

- Be implemented with little or no adverse environmental impact to ecology, habitat, or water quality.

The proposal to construct a new bridge connecting Eden Brook Road to Kindler Road fails miserably on all four of these items, and should absolutely not be moved forward.

Displacement of Carbon Emissions

I have been unable to find written documentation regarding the actual purpose and intention of this bridge and trail project. I attended the Open House, and found most of the cyclists attempting to justify it as a means to reduce carbon emissions by facilitating commuting between Columbia and APL. I also found some individuals who thought that this would somehow increase business at Kings Contrivance Village Center by allowing Kindler-side residents to ride bikes there.

Since the Open House, I have ridden and driven these areas, and have reviewed trail and road maps, and I find these claims to be largely false. There already exists bike access to APL from most of Columbia through bike lanes on Sanner Road and Old Columbia Road. Can these be widened, improved, and made safer? Sure. But the routes exist, and can be made even more suitable with limited cost or environmental impact. Also, APL already operates a system of shuttle buses. Overall, the new bridge and trail will only provide a short-cut for a very small number of additional commuters, and that benefit would only apply for only a few months per year. Also, it is hard to believe that Kindler-side residents would choose biking to the village center in numbers high enough to justify this enormous expense and the associated environmental damage. The sustainability argument, especially when completely ignoring the other adverse environmental effects, appears to be a red herring to convince residents that they are being good environmentalists by supporting this project.

In my career, I have found this “displacement of vehicle miles” argument to be a common claim among cyclists. They frequently exaggerate the number of vehicle miles that would be displaced by their proposals, because they have found that taxpayers are not anxious to spend tax dollars to support what is, for most cyclists, just a recreational hobby that benefits only a small proportion of the population. By exaggerating the displacement of vehicle miles, the cyclists can use their faux- environmentalism to shame taxpayers into funding almost anything. I have seen it work in other jurisdictions, and this project is exactly what it looks like.

Has Bike Howard, the County, CA, or APL done an actual quantitative analysis of the number of vehicle miles that would be avoided by the new trail and bridge? Have they converted this into a quantity of carbon emissions avoided, and then compared this to the amount of carbon sequestration that would be lost by the need to cut down trees? Have they compared this to the carbon emissions that would be caused by heavy equipment during construction? I have not done these calculations for this particular project. However, I know they can (and should) be done, because I have done them myself for numerous other projects over the years. And what is almost always found is that the assumptions regarding displacement of vehicle miles are exaggerated to ridiculous proportions. When more reasonable estimates are used, the combination of construction vehicle emissions and the loss of sequestration by removal of trees almost always negates the vehicle emissions that are avoided. Until the proponents of this project present an actual quantitative assessment, any claims that this project would cause any substantial reduction in carbon emissions should be viewed with skepticism.

Benefits to Substantial Number of Recreational Trail Users

As mentioned above, I have written about the use of historic bridges to connect multi-use trail systems in three books since 2022. I have even advocated, in written and verbal comments, in favor of the incorporation of bike trails into new bridges. However, when I have praised or advocated in favor of the use of bridges to connect trail systems, they have always had two things in common:

- The bridge would have minimal environmental impacts because it would use an existing, previously-disturbed right-of-way; and
- The bridge would benefit a large number of users by providing a connection between extensive, heavily-used trail systems that already exist on both ends of the bridge.

Again, neither of these applies to the proposed Kindler Road Bridge. I will address whether it would be using an existing, previously-disturbed right-of-way in the discussion of environmental impacts below. However, for the second bullet point, the obvious observation is that there is currently no substantial trail system south of the river. When I advocated in favor of bike trails on the new Chesapeake Bay Bridge, I did so because it will someday connect the extensive BWI and B&A Trail systems, through the Broadneck Peninsula Trail, to the network of trails on Kent Island. The benefit to the regional system by adding this small segment, with little additional cost or environmental impact, was enormous. The same is the case with the new Patuxent bridge on the WBA Trail south of Odenton, connecting the Baltimore systems to the Washington systems, and helping to enhance the East Coast Greenway.

At Kindler Road, there are some rustic hiking trails south of the Middle Patuxent River that may, or may not, be rideable on a mountain bike. However, there is no extensive network of bike trails that would serve a large number of riders. In fact, the area south of the river is designated as the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area (NRA), and is also identified by state DNR documents as a 900-acre Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) habitat area. A review of maps shows that it is one of the largest, relatively-undisturbed areas of mature forest, and one of the longest reaches of relatively-undisturbed stream, in the Columbia area. And the proposed bridge and new trail cut right through the middle of it.

Given that there is clearly no substantial displacement of vehicle emissions, and no existing recreational trail system to connect to, one is left with only one conclusion – while there is not currently a recreational trail system in this area, the cyclists intend to develop one. In my attempt to understand the impetus behind this proposal, I conducted a comprehensive review of the maps, the Gorman Stream Valley NRA websites, and the Bike Howard documents. These show that the most probable intention is to convert the Gorman Stream Valley NRA into a new dirt-biking recreational playground, situated a short ride across the bridge from Columbia. Even if this is not the intention, providing access into this area from Columbia will, as discussed below, encourage irresponsible dirt-bikers to open up their own trails, for their own amusement. This conversion to a system of dirt-bike trails is not compatible with the designation of the NRA for natural resource protection, or its status as Forest Interior Dwelling Species (FIDS) habitat.

Nuisance to Existing Community

In my work on the off-road trail systems in southern California, one of our greatest challenges was the difficulty in limiting route or trail access to a specific subset of users. The process involved evaluating the natural resources and users along each existing and proposed route, and trying to determine which uses were appropriate. The goal was to avoid adverse impacts to natural resources, but also to consider nuisance impacts to residents, and even to address conflicts among different classes of users. For instance, the hiking groups wanted quiet hiking trails on which motorized vehicles were not permitted, and the users of different types of bikes and motorized vehicles often had disagreements among themselves.

What was obvious, and that which created the challenge, was that, once you create access for one class of users, you have AUTOMATICALLY created access for ALL classes of users. It is unavoidable. Often, these unauthorized users fail to follow simple rules of safety, noise limitations, and environmental protection. They often fail to stay on the established trails, not because they are being careless, but because, to them, going off-trail is part of the fun. They cause substantial environmental degradation, soil erosion, fragmentation of habitat, nuisance to local residents, and, in a few cases, even deaths have occurred due to irresponsible users. The Federal agencies I worked for (Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and USDA Forest Service) attempt to manage this by providing rangers for law enforcement and education but, even then, it is largely impossible to regulate.

I know that Bike Howard and other pro-cycling and environmental groups are firmly convinced that their own members are responsible cyclists and dedicated environmentalists who would never cause these damages, and conflicts would not occur if a bridge created trail access in the Gorman Stream Valley NRA. And maybe their members, themselves, are responsible and dedicated. But this area would not be restricted to use by responsible Bike Howard members – it would be open to everyone. Before long, even the Bike Howard members would be complaining that the irresponsible motorized cycle users are spoiling their own enjoyment of the area.

I know this because I am lucky enough to have found a house bounded by a CA trail on one side, and a County trail on another. When I bought the house eight years ago, I considered only the benefit of living with direct access to the trail system – and I still use the trails almost every day. It has also been pleasant to sit out on my deck, only forty feet from these trails, in the evenings.

However, I also immediately realized there were drawbacks. The most obvious, and disturbing, was that a very large number of people, including cyclists, somehow thought that it was okay to cut through my backyard to create a shortcut from one trail to another. This happened literally every day. My car was broken into by someone using this shortcut. I caught kids cutting through my backyard with flashlights in the middle of the night. I asked the County to install a fence, and they did. Now, the cutting through my yard has stopped, but those same people simply created another unofficial foot-trail to bypass the fence by going through the tall grass and woods.

Also, in that eight years, a new problem has arisen. Although use of those trails eight years ago was only regular bikes, hikers, and joggers, the use of prohibited Class II and Class III e-bikes, scooters, and other fully motorized cycles up to and including gas-powered cycles, has exploded. These users travel at high speeds, and even at night, which is a full violation of County Code and CA regulations. I don't see these uses now and then – I see them EVERY DAY. I also see this on the B&A and NCR trails, which I use five or six days a week during the summer. In the past three or four years, both have become invaded by Class II and III e-bikes, motorized scooters, throttled cycles, and even gas-powered cycles. The presence of other vehicles, on its own, is not a major problem. However, these vehicles are capable of traveling at speeds up to 50 mph, and they are commonly used by young people who fail to follow rules and regulations, or even follow simple etiquette rules for other riders. These are not people reducing carbon emissions by cycling to work. They are joy riders – and the faster they can go, the more fun it is, regardless of the safety of other riders, nuisance to residents, or impact to natural resources. The problem is especially severe on B&A, an affluent suburb similar to Columbia, where parents buy motorized bikes for their teens. I have spoken to the local rangers and police on these trails, and they admit that there is nothing they can do about it. As I see every day from my office window and evening from my deck, it is clear that neither CA nor the County have any intention of doing anything about it.

Once you open up the Gorman Stream Valley NRA and Kindler Estates neighborhood to direct access from Columbia, how are you going to stop these irresponsible users from creating nuisance and environmental destruction in that area? Have you notified the Kindler-side residents that this is what is

going to happen, or have you told them that it will be just a few responsible, environmentally-friendly cyclists riding to work at APL? You can plan and hope that the new bridge and trail will be used only by responsible cyclists – but what are you going to do when the motorized dirt bike riders move in – which will happen literally the first day? When that happens, you have no mechanism to stop them, and they will destroy many of the resources and features (tree canopy, water quality, soils, birds, fishing, lower temperatures, and low noise levels) that make the NRA a special place.

While this project would certainly be an enhancement of the recreational biking system, and would probably attract many users from Columbia on the northern end of the bridge, it would also subject residents on the southern end of the bridge to increased noise, dust, and other nuisance from these e-bikes and other motorized users. In addition, once the availability of this new dirt-bike playground becomes known, the use will not be limited to individuals riding their bikes in from the Columbia Association trail system. Instead of riding on CA trails to the new dirt-bike playground, many users will drive their bikes to the area, and park on the road on either end of the bridge. This will cause increased car traffic, and use of limited parking space for residents. This would be a minor nuisance on the Kings Contrivance end of the bridge, where there is space for parking along Eden Brook Road. However, Kindler Road is not wide enough to allow for parking – but this will not stop dirt-bikers from trying. Also, this destroys the argument that development of the bridge and NRA would reduce vehicle miles traveled – if it is a very prominent attraction, it will actually increase vehicle miles travelled. Has the County made a reasonable attempt to solicit the opinions of the residents in Kindler Estates and other neighborhoods surrounding the Gorman Stream Valley NRA?

It is certain that CA and the County will receive many hundreds of survey responses and emails, mostly from the cycling and sustainability crowds, that express positive support for this project. In fact, the Councilwoman from the area has already supported the project in a Facebook post, and her support is almost entirely based on her statement that the project has received “much support” from the public. I am sure it has – if that is what you are looking for. You will also receive a much smaller number of responses, mostly from residents south of the river, opposing the project. This will be because there are more cyclists than there are residents. It also helps that the project, and the Open House, were certainly much more widely publicized among the cycling and sustainability communities, with little or no attempt to engage the Kindler-side residents.

I fully expect both CA and the County to present a simplistic comparison of the number “pro” responses against the number “con” in order to justify the action that they have obviously already determined to implement. But I hope you will consider two major concerns:

- Of the large number of “pro” comments you receive, how many of those will actually ever use the bridge and the new trail? It will be a tiny fraction. There is no doubt that Bike Howard, and other members of the cycling and sustainability communities, are collecting signatures and soliciting positive responses from large numbers of people who have no intention of ever commuting to APL, no plans to ride the CA trails across the river to engage in dirt-bike riding, and no understanding of the role of mature trees in carbon sequestration. Even of those who will commute to APL or ride the dirt-bike trails, will they do it frequently enough to justify this huge expense and environmental damage? The opinions of these individuals should be disregarded but, since it is clear that the decision to proceed has already been made, they will instead be used to justify the project.
- In contrast, of the small number of “con” comments you receive, how many of those people are Kindler-side residents who would definitely (not potentially) have their quiet neighborhood disrupted? Or fishermen, or birders who enjoy the relative seclusion even this close to home? Or how many are actual environmental professionals who understand the full-range of

environmental impacts? The answer to this is, probably 100 percent of them. But because the overall number of these comments will be small, I fully expect you to dismiss them (and me) as a small number of malcontents who can be disregarded because they have no political influence.

Adverse Environmental Impacts

As mentioned above, I have, in the recent past, spoken in favor of the use of new and redeveloped bridges to create and link regional bike trail networks. As an environmentalist, I am in favor of this practice for two reasons:

- Impacts of construction and presence of new bridge structures (abutments and piers) can be minimized by using already extant structures; and
- Use of the existing right-of-way, roadway, and bridge corridor minimizes environmental impacts, because the roadway and bridge corridor have already been impacted by the previous uses.

At least two cyclists told me, at the Open House, that environmental impacts of the project would be limited because the County would use the existing abutments and the already impacted right-of-way. I strongly disagree with both of these claims, although I am willing to have the County explain otherwise.

For the first of these, I am not an engineer, and have not conducted an engineering assessment of the existing abutments. However, it is obvious, to the casual observer, that they cannot be used as is. Based on the information provided by the County, and my cursory review of historical aerial photos, the previous bridge, with its abutments, must have been constructed before 1943, and probably much earlier than that. The existing abutments are probably close to, or more than, 100 years old. This will not be a small-scale footbridge - the bridge is going to have to meet ADA standards, and may possibly be required to support emergency response vehicles. Also, as mentioned above, I have written books that addressed the use of legacy bridge structures (abutments and piers) for subsequent generations of bridges. For instance, Chain Bridge, in Washington, D.C., is the eighth bridge situated at that location, but sits on the piers constructed as part of the sixth bridge in 1852. Similarly, almost all bridges crossing the Delaware River sit on piers of previous bridges. However, as common as is the use of legacy structures, there is always substantial reinforcement, raising, or complete re-construction of those structures as part of the new bridge construction. There is no way that these 100-year-old abutments can meet any kind of twenty-first century engineering or construction standards. To construct this new bridge, the existing abutments would need to be demolished (which has its own set of adverse environmental impacts to water quality and aquatic ecology in the stream), and new, more robust abutments would need to be constructed.

A similar argument can be made about the “existing” right-of-way, much of which is still paved with asphalt more than 50 years after the bridge was destroyed. On a side note, the fact that 50-year-old unused asphalt is still in place, despite the strenuous efforts of the County to perform stream “restoration” projects to meet MS4 permit requirements, is seriously problematic. The purpose of MS4 permit requirements is to compensate for impermeable surfaces created by pavement and asphalt. Here is one crazy idea for meeting MS4 permit requirements – remove the asphalt that you are compensating for! It is unacceptable to cut down mature trees to compensate for pavement in one part of the County, while still leaving that pavement in place in other parts of the County for over 50 years. My understanding is that the County Council has already approved removal of this asphalt to acquire MS4 credits, and that there has been recent work to reduce the width. Has the County claimed credits for full removal, but only removed half? I need to look into this part, but I digress.

The real issue related to the question of an existing right-of-way has to do with the tree canopy. Yes, some asphalt is still in place, and so an argument can be made that the soil within the right-of-way has already been impacted, and would not be substantially re-impacted by a new trail. However, a review of the aerial photos, and a walk to the river from either side, shows that the tree canopy has largely recovered over the past 50 years. I walked through there on a hot day recently, and the air temperature dropped noticeably as soon as I entered the forest. The noise from the surrounding roadways and overflying planes also dropped noticeably. At night, the trees almost certainly block out light from the city. The mature trees reduce runoff volume and velocity, and therefore reduce erosion of the streambanks, by evapotranspiration of groundwater into the atmosphere, canopy interception, root balls, and multiple other functions performed by mature trees (please see my YouTube video on my Stream Restoration in Suburbia channel at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yo5W9ggd23w&t=702s>). When trees are removed to make room for the new bridge, the river will be exposed to direct sunlight, raising the water temperature and killing aquatic wildlife. If a new bridge had been proposed in 1973, I would have said that it was minimizing environmental impacts by using an existing right-of-way. However, that is certainly not true more than 50 years later. With respect to almost all natural resources and their functions, this bridge will effectively be an entirely new impact in a relatively undisturbed location.

This area, comprising about 900 acres, has been left largely undisturbed for 50 years, allowing it to develop as wildlife, bird, and fish habitat. It has been designated by the County as a Natural Resource Area. It is also identified by DNR as Forest Interior Dwelling Species habitat. Anyone who has an understanding of forest ecology knows the importance of protecting interior forests and their habitat. In a 2020 email exchange with a member of the CA Watershed Advisory Committee (WAC), Mr. McCoy stressed the importance of preservation of mature trees, and also mentioned that "CA's large forest blocks have problems along the edges but have reasonably healthy interiors." This is because forest edges and small, fragmented blocks are more susceptible to invasive plants and insects, and the edge trees are subjected to a different sunlight and hydrology regime than interior trees. The interior forests also, obviously, provide better quality shelter and camouflage for wildlife than edge forests.

These are among the reasons that it is critical, wherever possible, to maintain the interior forests, and avoid fragmenting the habitat into small blocks dominated by edge forests. By cutting directly down the middle through this relatively undisturbed 900-acre block of interior forest, CA and the County will substantially fragment one of the largest remaining blocks of interior forest in the region. Construction of the new trail, the need to create space to bring in the bridge structure, and a widened trail to provide access for heavy equipment will require removal of some number of mature trees along the existing asphalt, especially on the south side of the river. This will pierce the canopy that has taken more than 50 years to heal. Heavy equipment will drive over root systems, and the dirt-bikes and motorized bikes that come to use the trail will bring invasive plants, causing even more existing trees to die off (if this sounds like an exaggeration, go look at ANY stream restoration site, including Longfellow). And that will all happen IF the area is not invaded by irresponsible, joy-riding motorized bikers cutting new trails through the newly accessible forest. The more reasonably foreseeable scenario is that the ecological value of this entire NRA will be destroyed. The area also functions as light/noise buffers, hiking trails, fishing areas, and birding areas for adjacent residents, and for other residents who wish to drive to the current access area on Old Columbia Road and hike in. The use of this area for a new bridge and bike trail is wholly incompatible with the purposes for which it was designated as an NRA, and with the classification as FIDS habitat.

In addition to impacts to mature forest and terrestrial species, both construction and long-term presence of the new bridge would have substantial impacts to hydrology and ecology of the Middle

Patuxent River. Intensive development in this part of the County has largely been concentrated around the Little Patuxent, but development along the Middle Patuxent (especially south of the river) has been much less intense. There are only six bridge crossings of the Middle Patuxent near Columbia, a remarkably small number given the scale of development in the region. There is a straight-line distance of almost two miles between the bridges at Old Columbia Road and Murray Hill Road, and a stream length that is substantially longer. This proposed bridge, with its new abutments that would alter stream hydrology and increase erosion, would cut directly through the middle of this relatively undisturbed section of the river.

Conclusion

Actions, such as bridge and road construction, almost always have unintended, adverse consequences on the environment or on adjacent residents. This proposal to construct a new bridge, and to improve the existing trail to support responsible cyclists using regular bicycles and Class I e-bikes, would, on its own, be very disruptive to this special area. But the fact is that neither CA nor the County will have the ability, or the will, to limit access to bicycles and Class I e-bikes, or to limit their use to the main, existing trail. Instead, the new access will open the area to an unlimited variety of motorized cycles operated by irresponsible riders. The severity of the environmental impacts of this proposal cannot be trivialized. Both the County and CA have long been struggling to correct the adverse effects of past development, and here is a marvelous chance to preserve a large-area that has not yet been destroyed.

As I have stated in many of my past interactions with CA regarding their Open Space, you can manage an area as a park for recreation, or for protection of natural resources. But you cannot do both. By allowing unlimited access by dirt-bikers within an NRA and FIDS habitat, CA and the County are, yet again, trying to do both. When it fails and the environmental damage ensues, it will be too late to turn back.

Before proceeding, I ask that CA and the County consider performing a full-scale, quantitative analysis and comparison of the limited recreational benefits versus the substantial environmental impacts, and reach an informed decision to reject this project. I have no confidence that you will do that.

Unfortunately, when I have recommended that on past projects, both CA and the County are quick with a response – such an analysis is not legally required for them to proceed. I understand that. But the reason that it is not legally required is not because such analysis is a bad idea – it is because County and CA management have successfully lobbied against such requirements. Having done these analyses for federal agencies for 40 years, I can testify that such analyses ALWAYS result in better projects. I would like to see, for once, CA and the County do something protective for the environment, not because it is required by a regulation, but because they make an informed decision that it is a good idea. Rejecting this terrible idea for a new bridge and trail would be a good start.

Thanks.

Bob Dover

6354 Tamar Drive

bobatwaterbury@aol.com



Outlook

Re: CR160-2026, an item on the Legislative Session Agenda, Monday, October 5, 2026

From Richard Love [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Cc Richard Love [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

WARNING!!!

This email originated from someone outside of Howard County
DO NOT CLICK LINKS OR OPEN ATTACHMENTS
unless you recognize the sender and know for sure that the content is safe

Please consider a request for an amendment to CR160-2026 — Approving BikeHoward 2026 and indicating support for bicycle-friendly community designation — scheduled on the Legislative Session Agenda, Monday, October 5, 2026.

See the attachment.

Richard Love

[REDACTED]

Howard County Council Members,

My name is Richard Love, a resident of Kings Contrivance, Dickenson Neighborhood in Columbia Maryland.

I would like to submit testimony regarding CR160-2026, an item on the Legislative Session, Monday, October 5, 2026.

First, I broadly support BikeHoward and the Howard County Office of Transportation in its goals of making our paved roads and neighborhood streets safe for bicycles and pedestrians. They have done a laudable job in Kings Contrivance installing bike safety lanes that protect cyclists, pedestrians, and cars from interfering with each other. I look forward to more of these improvements in our area. In general, I support BikeHoward 2026.

However, the BikeHoward 2026 plan includes the Kindler Road to Eden Brook Drive, which is in the [Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study](#). That study is on-going and has not yet been finalized.

CR160-2026 calls for adopting the BikeHoward 2026 plan as written, with the Kindler to Eden Brook Drive connection as High Priority.

My request to Council is to **remove the Kindler Road to Eden Brook Drive crossing from the High- Priority Network** until the Feasibility Study is finished and its findings, total cost, and expected use are made public.

Thank you,

Richard Love

Kings Contrivance, Dickenson Neighborhood, Columbia Maryland

Feedback to the Howard County Government Office of Transportation on the

[Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study](#)

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Response to the Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study

The Feasibility Study

The Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study session on Tuesday, September 15, 2026 was not, in my opinion, conducted in accord with well-recognized County practices of engaging the community. The session was essentially a show and tell of what the Howard County Office of Transportation and BikeHoward was going to do.

The Survey did not cover all the displays presented in the Materials, leading to much confusion as to what this project was all about.

The session had the appearance of pushing a single agenda without giving the community the opportunity to fully understand what was being proposed. The session crammed a lot of information into a short amount of time. Imposing an arbitrary deadline of Friday October 2, 2026 for feedback seems arbitrary and forced for a feasibility study of this magnitude.

If this is a Feasibility Study where considerable time is required to gather information, form opinions, decide on the proper engineering methods, and have open public debate then it makes no sense to close off discussion when that is the purpose of a Feasibility Study in the first place.

Requests for more Transparency:

1. **Keep the survey and responses open for at least six months or until after the budget request has been submitted and permits have been submitted.** This will give the communities impacted by this project time to collect their thoughts and submit their opinions on the pros and cons of the project.
2. Do what is normally done for county projects of this magnitude: **Start with an in-person Town Hall with slides and oral presentations** where the Office of Transportation and BikeHoward can clearly present what the plans are and provide a justification as to why a pedestrian / bicycle path is really needed in the first place. It would help us understand if this provides a critical infrastructure need or just a nice thing to have.
3. **Have follow-up Town Hall meetings, reports and opinion surveys** that would give the Office of Transportation & BikeHoward the opportunity to make its case with more complete facts in hand and the opportunity for the community to voice their opinions on if they do or do not want this project to proceed.

The Survey

The survey in the Feasibility Study did not seem to be an actual *Opinion Survey*. The Survey did gather some demographic data (where we live) and a general opinion (do we support the project or not). But the survey then asked if we liked the cosmetic look of two bridge concepts, which is irrelevant to a feasibility study. The survey did not include the respondents' views or opinions on the other relevant display materials: (1) The Kindler Pedestrian and Bike Pathway and (2) Bridge Feasibility Study and the Comparison of

potential bridge crossing locations, which has led to some confusion as to what the project really is and where it is going.

The survey did have two comment boxes for respondents to express their overall opinion, which is, of course, a good thing. And the survey did encourage further public comment, which is also a good thing.

The feasibility and survey as presented was, to me, flawed, poorly executed, confusing and seemingly biased, while ignoring the interests of everyone else. It had more the look of a Push Survey, often used by political parties, to push a specific agenda and not giving the opportunity for constructive feedback in the select responses.

- The survey did not include a statement of why The Office of Transportation and/or BikeHoward believe there is an urgent or critical infrastructure need for this project.
- The survey did not include an environmental impact assessment and what potential environmental harms may or may not be caused by the bike / pedestrian paths and a bridge.
- The survey did not include safety considerations, e.g. mixing pedestrians with e-bikes, e-scooters, electric balance boards, etc. capable of going at high speeds on the proposed downhill / uphill slopes.
- The survey did not include an impact statement on how bicycle traffic would or would not disrupt quiet residential communities on Kindler Lane and along Eden Brook Drive.

Request:

Replace this survey with a valid Opinion Survey that covers all the parameters of the project of concern to the residents and public, and keep it open for a longer period of time for better quality responses as mentioned above.

Project Management

From my point of view, this project got started with the Green Streets Improvements Program (D1184), an active capital budget item managed under the Storm Drainage (D Projects) portfolio of the **Howard County Council**.



However, somewhere along the line D1184 was stopped and only half of the asphalt was removed on the Eden Brook side. I do not recall having seen a public notice or posting that D1184 was being stopped. I believe this is contrary to normal County practice to keep the public informed of a change in status to an ongoing project. I do not believe that this conforms to full transparency as to how projects like this are done.

Stopping the D1184 project by removing only half the asphalt on the Eden Brook Drive side has resulted in significant erosion problems caused by leaving narrowed hard-surface asphalt in place on a down-hill slope. The area from Eden Brook to the Middle Patuxent river is now severely scarred as a result of this action. All of the erosion is new within the last six months since the project change was made.

Request for Transparency:

Explain why the Green Streets program (D1184) was stopped on the Eden Brook Drive side.

Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA

Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA seems to be not well defined by the County. What little I can find out is that it is a valuable natural resource for wildlife. See [HCBC](#) post. Almost everyone agrees on that point. On the South side of the Middle Patuxent River, there is a small sign (at the entrance from Old Columbia Road) that the park is managed by Howard County Parks. On the North side it seems to be co-managed by the County and Columbia Association.

The residents of Dickenson and Kindler enjoy year-round the opportunity to hike in this natural area. I have been able to enjoy hikes on both sides of the Middle Patuxent River on numerous occasions (15+ times) for over 40 years. It offers one of the few places to experience a natural area embedded within an urban environment. It is also an area indicated by [Live Green Howard and the Green Infrastructure Network](#) as a place that should be left alone as a natural area, and as a way to mitigate climate change. That's where the designation NRA (Natural Resource Area) comes from.



Green Infrastructure Network

It is a place worthy of protection.

However, nowhere in the Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study is there any mention of an environmental impact statement indicating what benefits a hard surface pedestrian / cycle path would bring to this area.

Nowhere in the Feasibility Study is there a mention of the impact of the soil disturbances caused by the asphalt pathways or building a bridge over the Middle Patuxent River all of which impacts the runoff into the Chesapeake Bay.

Request:

Conduct an independent environmental assessment of the current situation on the Eden Brook Drive side to document the extent of the erosion to date and the maintenance costs that would need to be budgeted to maintain the site into the future.

Bridge

The old bridge that was destroyed in 1972 was over a small island roughly at 240 feet:



Howard County GIS Map

The old bridge was built on abutments that raised the bridge (I'm guessing another 15 feet). So, the old bridge was approximately at 255 feet or more. And that bridge was wiped out in the flood of 1972.

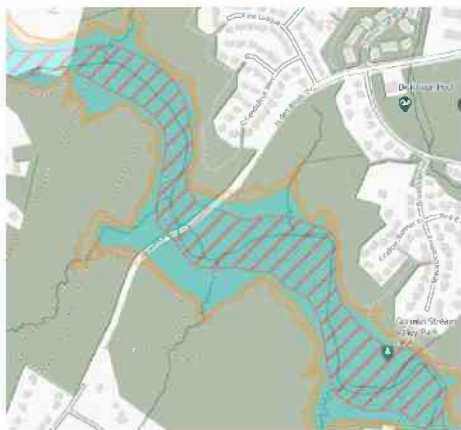
Below is the favored bridge crossings over a calm Middle Patuxent River.



Visually, it looks like the proposed bridge crossing is option A, which is below the level of the old bridge that was destroyed in 1972.



An estimation of the current and future flood zone from Eden Brook to Kindler can be found from the [FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps](#). Below is a snippet from the GIS Map:



Visually comparing this proposed bridge crossing with the flood zone data indicates that the proposed location will have the bridge and footings well underwater during high flood periods. These high flood periods – along with increased force of water flow – are anticipated to increase on a regular basis and become even more severe as a result of climate change and periodic El Nino events.

The proposed bridge design and location does not account for the gigantic trees (e.g. mature tulip poplars) that are regularly uprooted and float down the Middle Patuxent River. Evidence of this can be readily seen by walking the Kings Contrivance Loop Trail to see the fallen trees chugging down the Middle Patuxent River on a regular basis. It is reasonable to expect that a bridge built at that select location would not survive a single significant flood event.

Request:

Review the history of why the original bridge was destroyed in 1972 as a result of hurricane Agnes. History tends to repeat itself. The Office of Transportation and BikeHoward should provide a justification for building a bridge across the Middle Patuxent River at a lower location with a high probability that it will be destroyed within a few years.

Resubmit a more realistic **bridge design, location and cost estimate** accounting for the high flood mark in the FEMA map, plus the clearance needed for those crashing trees, and placement of the footings well outside of the flood zone as required by State and Federal standards.

Permitting

The permit requests would reveal exactly where the bridge and pedestrian / cycle path would be located and that they follow proper engineering guidance and environmental regulations. The site location for the bridge would be crucial information for the public to know that the engineering for this project is properly done.

Request:

Request the Permits and obtain them, then open up for public feedback whether or not the residents want the pedestrian and bicycle path from Kindler to Eden Brook. If the permits for the bridge are denied, then close down the project permanently.

Needs Assessment

Nowhere in the Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study is a clear statement about why this project is even needed. The Project Overview states the study will present a “high-level evaluation” of potential crossing locations and bridge *concepts*, but does not have a clear statement about why the project provides a critical infrastructure need. Most County projects I have engaged with have at least started with a mission statement and goals and objectives, that clearly states why the project is needed or being attempted.

Request:

Explain why normal procedures for a project of this size have not been followed by the Office of Transportation.

Clearly state what this project is with a mission statement, goals and objectives, and why there is a critical infrastructure need for it with respect to the projected financial and environmental costs of the project.

Alternatives

I have not seen a good-faith effort to look at some achievable alternatives for the Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge. In terms of cycle transportation, there are already two infrastructure cycle routes to the exact same spots: End of Eden Brook Drive to the end of Kindler Road. One route is Murry Hill Road from Guilford Road to Gorman Road to Johns Hopkins Road to Kindler Road; the other is Old Columbia Road to Gorman Road, quick left into Kindler Road. If that's the case, then there is no critical transportation need to build the proposed bicycle path through the woods to the exact same spot.

One transportation need that is often mentioned is the ability of Dickenson cyclists to commute to Johns Hopkins APL by bicycle and e-Bike. But there is already a great cycle route approved by Bike Howard for that transit using the Seneca Drive overpass: See

[Google Map](#). Takes about 40 minutes on a good day from the Kings Contrivance Village Center on a regular 23-gear bike, faster on an e-Bike. This is an effective alternate route to go to work at JPL for Dickenson residents. Putting in the proposed cycle path from Eden Brook to Kindler would not serve the bike transportation needs of anyone else in Columbia as they would most likely prefer the Sanner Road / Cedar Lane transit because it would take less time, be safer, and they would avoid the Johns Hopkins / 29 roundabout, which has its own set of safety issues for cyclists.

Request:

The Office of Transportation and BikeHoward should provide real analysis data

showing on a yearly basis how many cyclists commute to work or would want to commute from Dickenson and greater Columbia using Johns Hopkins Road and Gorman Road. That should be part of any needs assessment critical for doing this project.

Safety

When I was cycling to west Howard County, for example Clarksville, Triadelphia Reservoir, or Glenelg, I did this regularly for over a five-year period from 2010 to 2018 when it became too taxing for me at age 72. I normally used the Old Columbia Road transit. It's a great way to start off a ride with a challenging uphill climb, then mostly level terrain for the rest of the trip. I stopped using that route with the increase in traffic and because of the new Hammond Parkway / Johns Hopkins road circle interchange. That, plus the increase in traffic was too hazardous for me to use, and I believe why many cyclists may avoid it now for that reason. Building the proposed cycle pathway through Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA does nothing to relieve that safety concern because all cyclists going to western Howard County will still need to transit the roundabout and hazard the traffic. Many of my cyclist friends don't use any of these routes because they are just too risky given the uptick in traffic and road conditions. Instead, they choose to use their cars and bike racks to go directly to their biking destinations. Putting in the cycle path from Eden Brook to Kindler most likely will not change that behavior.

Both Old Columbia Road and Murrey Hill Road do have multiple safety concerns for cyclists: the narrow bridges and ill-defined bike safety lanes in some places. BikeHoward and the Office of Transportation have done an amazing job addressing bike safety issues on Guilford Road and upper Old Columbia Road. They not only help protect the cyclists, but also slow the traffic around two schools, Hammond High and Columbia Academy. Kudos to Bike Howard and the Office of Transportation for doing this. For some reason the bike safety lanes were stopped from Columbia Academy to Gorman / Johns Hopkins Road. I haven't received a good reason why that safety measure was abandoned or actions were not taken to improve the existing roads there for bicycle safety.

Mixing E-Modes of Transportation with Pedestrians

A serious safety concern is mixing E-Modes of transportation pedestrian traffic. Wherever we mix pedestrians with bicycles and especially eBikes, for example at the Lake Elkhorn loop, there is constant bickering between pedestrians enjoying a pleasant walk and cyclists darting in and out. The design of the combined bicycle and pedestrian plan directly mixes

pedestrian traffic with bicycles and e-Bikes on a significant downhill slope. I believe this is a serious safety issue that needs additional study.

Another safety issue is wet pavement and wet pavement covered in leaves. Cyclists in general do not use, and are advised not to use the CA paths, during inclement weather especially in the fall when the paths are covered in leaves and twigs.

Request:

The Office of Transportation and BikeHoward should do a thorough study on the potential dangers of mixing bicycles and e-bikes with pedestrians on a downhill slope.

One can do a quick back-of-the-envelope calculation by using the Howard County GIS Map to get distances and slope, and using basic trig. My rough calculation is that from Kindler to the Middle Patuxent River, the slope is about 5 degrees, and from Eden Brook to the Middle Patuxent River it is about 4 degrees. On average, say it's 4.5 degrees. Doing a quick [Google Search](#) combining pedestrians, cyclists and eBikes on a 4.5 degree slope is considered to be **extremely dangerous for pedestrians, cyclists and e-Bikes.**

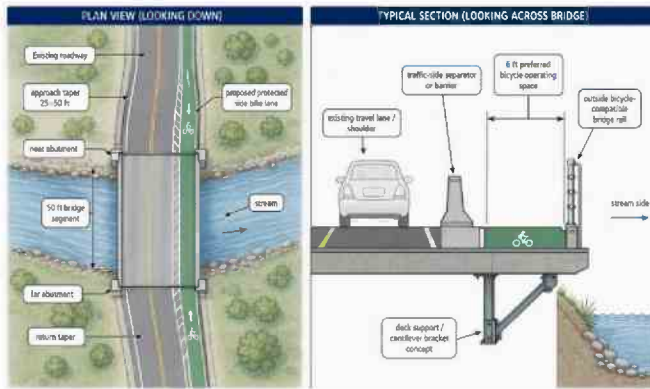
Ironically, the downhill slope from the one lane bridge to the top bend on Old Columbia Road is about 3 degrees. Cyclists often complain that stretch of the road is very tiresome for them. So, the plan for the Kindler to Eden Brook transit seems to be more difficult than the existing Old Columbia Road transit. Why build a bicycle path from Eden Brook Road to Kindler Road that is expected to be more tiresome for cyclists to use?

Options to Explore

The Office of Transportation and BikeHoward, as part of the Feasibility study, should explore some options for Columbia Road and Murry Hill Road that make bicycling more safe for recreational and commuting cyclists.

- Continue installing the bike safety lane from Columbia Academy to the one lane bridge and widening the bike safety lane already in place for the uphill / downhill slope.
- Add bike safety lanes for Murray Hill Road. If the road is too narrow, then consider purchasing an easement. That's a lot less than building a bridge.
- If the one lane bridge on Old Columbia Road is too narrow for both cars and bikes, then explore the feasibility of adding a side bridge dedicated to the bike lane:

Conceptual plan view schematic: Existing roadway approach → taper/merge area → near abutment → 50 ft bridge segment with protected side bike lane → far abutment → taper/return to shoulder, bike lane, or sidepath. The proposed bike facility should stay parallel to the bridge face and avoid unnecessary bends at the abutments.



Copilot generated concept plan for side bridge.

- Add speed bumps to slow the traffic down to 20 mph. This strategy is done all over Columbia on almost every road with residential housing with through traffic. Old Columbia Road from Columbia Academy to Johns Hopkins Road has substantial residential housing that could use this safety measure commonly used by the County.
- Impose a permanent speed limit of 25 mph on that section of Old Columbia Road, again a common practice in residential neighborhoods; Calming circles; A stop sign at the bridge; Radar cameras; Fines for speeding; Use technology to detect cyclists and post flashing yellow warning lights to drivers. All of these options, and many more, should be researched carefully before making a decision to build a duplicate route of transportation.
- The Office of Transportation and BikeHoward should do a cost-benefit analysis on how many days on average cyclists would actually use the proposed bike path considering weather events together with the leaves, twigs, branches, and fallen trees that could harm cyclists on the Eden Brook Drive to Kindler Road path.

For additional perspectives, see: [Uphill Both Ways: Howard County Wants to Build a Bike/Pedestrian Bridge over the Middle Patuxent River](#), The Merriweather Post, October 1, 2026.

Maintenance

The Columbia Association does a very good job of maintaining the Columbia Pathways. Paths are regularly cleared of leaves and snow as needed; trees are removed when they pose a danger to people who walk along the paths. It's a major part of the maintenance service for the Columbia pathways. Much of this work is done for liability reasons, in case someone is injured. The rest is done just to make our pathways inviting and presentable and help rank Columbia one of best places to live. CA Sustainability is doing everything it can to limit salt on the pathways or use more environmentally friendly methods. What are the plans for the bike and pedestrian path maintenance? Will road salt with heavy trucks be used to clear the snow and apply road salt? Will the Eden Brook Road to Kindler Road path be designed and built to withstand heavy trucks? To do that, the Eden Brook to Kindler Bicycle and Pedestrian Path would essentially become a road, which is not part of the plan.

Request:

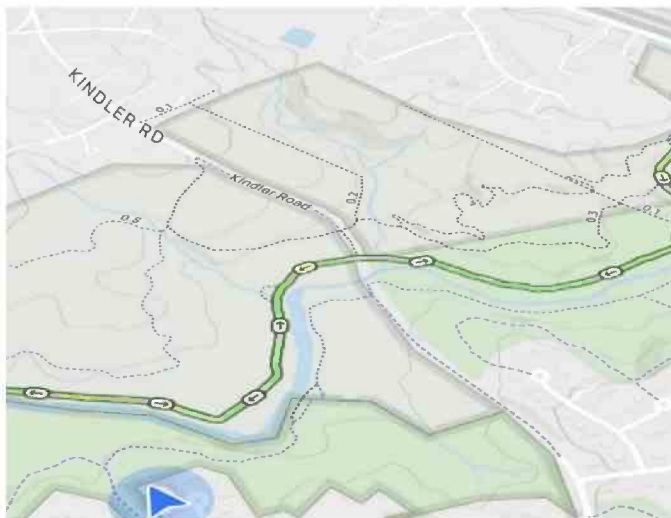
Describe how the Office of Transportation will maintain the paths and bridge consistent with maintaining generally-accepted practices.

Pedestrian Path

The majority of my concerns about this project are with the idea of putting in a cycle path from Eden Brook Road to Kindler Road mixed with pedestrians. As I've tried to point out, that part of the project has many points of failure environmentally, logistically, financially, and even logically.

But what about the pedestrian path? I am entirely in favor of foot traffic through Gorman Stream Valley Park NRA because we are already doing that on a regular basis. Residents on both sides of the Middle Patuxent regularly, year-round use the park for hiking, fishing, birding, and simply taking the opportunity to experience nature.

A quick look at [All Trails for Gorman Stream Valley Park](#) shows multiple walking and hiking pathways already exist through the area:



All Trails

At the point of one of the proposed bridge crossings, a person can ford the stream (sort of risky but done all the time by visitors, especially fishermen). By using the existing and extensive trails already in place, both Dickenson and Kindler residents already have ready access to both sides of Middle Patuxent at any time of year. They do not need an asphalt pathway to do that.

Request:

Please answer this question: Why would Bike Howard and Howard County want to build an environmentally destructive pedestrian path with asphalt pavement at extraordinary costs to replace an environmentally friendly path system that is already in place?

Conclusion

I oppose the Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge Connection between Kindler Road and Eden Brook Drive.

Below are my recommendations for how to proceed going forward:

Remove the arbitrary deadline for comments and community feedback of Friday October 2, 2026. That is not a realistic deadline for a project of this magnitude that has not as yet been described to the communities in sufficient detail for anyone to understand what the project actually is.

Keep this project open for residential and open public feedback with in-person town-hall meetings until the Office of Transportation and BikeHoward have addressed serious safety concerns, made realistic financial estimates, produced a comprehensive environmental impact statement, determined the location for the bridge and path, and received quantitative community feedback from both Dickenson and Kindler residents that they actually want the Kindler Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge project to proceed or not.

Richard Love
Kings Contrivance, Dickenson Neighborhood

Subject: CR160-2026, Legislative Session of October 5: the Kindler Road crossing

From Susan Arday <ardaysusan@gmail.com>

Date Fri 10/2/2026 9:37 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>; Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov>; Jones, Opel <ojones@howardcountymd.gov>; Walsh, Elizabeth <ewalsh@howardcountymd.gov>; Jung, Debra <djung@howardcountymd.gov>; Yungmann, David <dyungmann@howardcountymd.gov>

Cc Susan Arday <ardaysusan@gmail.com>; David At Lockheed-Martin <davidarday@aol.com>; Goldscher, Paige <pgoldscher@howardcountymd.gov>

 1 attachment (87 KB)

kindler-letter-council-CR160 (6).pdf;

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Dear Members of the Council:

We live at the Kindler Road terminus, beside the proposed pedestrian and bicycle crossing of the Middle Patuxent River. Attached is our letter on CR160-2026, which the Council's agenda lists for final consideration on Monday, October 5.

We oppose building a bridge at this location. Our request on Monday is narrower: that the Council remove the Kindler Road to Eden Brook Drive crossing from the High Priority network until the County's own feasibility study is complete and its findings, total cost, and expected use are public. If the plan is adopted as drafted, we ask that the Council state on the record that adoption is not a commitment to build or fund this crossing.

Attached: kindler-letter-council-CR160(6).pdf

Sincerely,

Susan Lewis Arday and David Arday
7640 Woodstream Way
Laurel, MD 20723
410-215-2906

Susan Lewis Arday and David Arday
7640 Woodstream Way
Laurel, MD 20723
410-215-2906
ardaysusan@gmail.com

October 2, 2026

Members of the Howard County Council
The Honorable Opel Jones, Chair (District 2)
The Honorable Christiana Rigby, Vice Chair (District 3)
The Honorable Liz Walsh (District 1)
The Honorable Deb Jung (District 4)
The Honorable David Yungmann (District 5)
George Howard Building, 3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043
councilmail@howardcountymd.gov

**Re: CR160-2026, BikeHoward 2026, Legislative
Session of October 5, 2026: the Kindler Road
crossing of the Middle Patuxent River**

Dear Members of the Council:

We live at 7640 Woodstream Way, at the Kindler Road terminus beside the proposed crossing. We oppose building a bridge at this location. Our request to the Council on Monday is narrower: we are not asking the Council to reject BikeHoward 2026, only to remove

this one crossing from the High Priority network until the County's own study is finished. We support safe bicycling in Howard County. This letter supplements our written testimony of September 22 and September 23, 2026.

The plan would rank the crossing before the County's own study is finished. The draft plan's Southeast map (page 79) designates the Kindler Road to Eden Brook Drive crossing as a High Priority segment. The plan says High Priority segments are "more likely to be selected for capital projects due to a greater need from riders and for prompt construction" (page 74). The plan's own basis for this crossing (page 66) is a cluster of public comments that the path "previously connected to Kindler Road using a bridge over the Middle Patuxent River, according to residents," not a study of need. The Office of Transportation's feasibility study of the same crossing is not finished. Its September 15 display boards state that the hydraulic and environmental studies have not been performed, and its final report is expected at the end of the year. In a written statement reported by WMAR-2 News on October 1, the Office of Transportation called the study "very early in the process," and WMAR reported that no funding has been set aside. On October 2 the Office wrote to us that if the proposal advances, "there would be many future phases and stages, including planning, evaluation, design,

permitting, funding." A project with all of that still ahead is not ready for the tier the plan reserves for prompt construction. No rider need has been measured for it.

This would be a new crossing, not a repair. Hurricane Agnes destroyed the previous bridge in June 1972. No bridge has stood there for 54 years; the County's own announcement of the September 15 meeting states that the earlier bridge "was destroyed by Hurricane Agnes in 1972 and never rebuilt." Kings Contrivance was first settled in 1977, and the houses on our street were built from 1978 on. When we bought in 1994, Kindler Road ended at the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area.

The only published cost covers the bridge alone. The two concepts are estimated at \$644,000 and \$869,000, both labeled "bridge only." Design, permitting, environmental mitigation, and the approaches down both sides of the valley are not included.

The benefit has not been measured. By our own measurement, the crossing would shorten the existing route between Kings Contrivance and the Applied Physics Laboratory by about one mile, with a steep descent to the river and a climb back out. The County has published no estimate of how many

people would use the crossing or how many car trips it would replace.

A better alternative already exists. The existing Old Columbia Road route already reaches the Applied Physics Laboratory. Improving it would serve riders without building in the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area. As a County road, Old Columbia Road is already in the County's regular maintenance for snow and ice, pavement repair, fallen trees, and flooding. The crossing, its approaches, and the path would be new, permanent obligations with no maintenance budget identified.

The cost to the land is certain. The crossing would clear forest in the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area, build in a river the Department of Natural Resources posts as trout water, and pave approaches through a valley whose remaining pavement is already undercut and eroding.

It would be built in a floodway. The County's own flood map viewer shows FEMA's preliminary maps of August 1, 2025, with Zone AE across the valley floor and a regulatory floodway across the part of the valley the old road crossed. The bridge it would replace was destroyed by a flood. The County knows from Ellicott City what flooding costs, yet the study has not done the hydraulic analysis that would show what a bridge

here would do in a flood, at the site or downstream toward Savage.

The plan itself warns about where riders would end up. The draft plan (page 33) says bicycle crashes often happen where bicycle facilities end abruptly. The crossing would deliver riders onto Kindler Road and Gorman Road, which have no bicycle facility. Gorman Road has no shoulder, sidewalk, or marked crossing, and it backs up at the morning and evening rush hours, when bike commuters to the Laboratory would use it.

It would be closed when commuters need it, and no one has said who would maintain it. County parkland closes at dusk. On five weekday mornings this season, beginning October 19, the Department of Recreation and Parks closes the Gorman Stream Valley Natural Resource Area until noon for managed firearms deer hunts. The Department's Trail Planning and Management Guide says nothing about snow or ice, and no County document says who would clear the bridge deck or its steep approaches. The north bank is Columbia Association open space and the south bank is County parkland, so the crossing would join two owners with different maintenance practices.

It would bring cars to a dead end. The Kindler Road terminus has no parking and no turnaround, and Woodstream Way has a single way in and out. A

trailhead here would invite people to drive to it and park on residential streets.

The neighbors at the Kindler Road end were not told.

The Office of Transportation reported the grant for this study at a regional meeting on September 17, 2025. We learned of the study from signs at the end of our street in late August 2026.

Our questions remain unanswered. Our letters to the Office of Transportation of August 29, August 31, September 20, and October 1, 2026 set out detailed questions about cost, flooding, safety, maintenance, and ownership. Most remain unanswered.

Our requests. We ask the Council:

1. To amend CR160-2026 to remove the Kindler Road to Eden Brook Drive crossing from the High Priority network until the feasibility study is complete and its findings, total cost, and expected use have been made public.
2. If the Council adopts the plan without that amendment, to state on the record on October 5 that adoption is not a commitment to build this crossing, does not fund it, and is not a finding that a crossing at this location is feasible, safe, or advisable.
3. To ask that no design or construction funding for this crossing be requested until the study's

findings, total cost, and expected use are public.

We would welcome any member of the Council to walk the Kindler Road end with us.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Susan Lewis Arday

David Arday

Request opposition of the HoCo Bike Plan tonight

From Jennifer Suppa <jensuppa@gmail.com>

Date Mon 10/5/2026 2:57 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>; Rigby, Christiana <crigby@howardcountymd.gov>

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Dear Representative Rigby and Howard County Council,

I am writing to once again express my OPPOSITION to the HoCo Bike Plan being voted on tonight, 5 October 2026, specifically the Kindler Road bridge portion.

When we bought our houses, we bought on a "No Outlet" road on purpose. We wanted a refuge from traffic -- pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle.

There already exists a road, Old Columbia Road, between the Kings Contrivance area in Columbia and Johns Hopkins Road where bike lanes have already been installed at the other end of Old Columbia Road. A better use of our tax dollars would be to extend them on Old Columbia Road to Johns Hopkins Road in order to increase bicycle traffic between those areas.

Our neighborhood, the one that will be impacted by this change, was not contacted to provide inputs into the plan creation nor to participate in the plan review and our opinion should have more weight than the Bike Howard organization as it affects us the most.

There are ways to make HoCo bike friendly without disruption to the road we live on. Please find an alternative way and amend the bike plan before approval.

Regards,
Jennifer Suppa
352-284-8462

My last PLEA! Please Oppose the Bike Plan today

From Jessica (Brunn) Hummel <brunnjl@gmail.com>

Date Mon 10/5/2026 12:15 PM

To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>; Christopher Brunn <cbrunn@gmail.com>; Patricia Brunn <pbrunnpt@gmail.com>; Jason Hummel <jason.d.hummel@gmail.com>; Goldscher, Paige <pgoldscher@howardcountymd.gov>; James Schaub <jamesdschaub@msn.com>; Andrea Ingram <acesingram@comcast.net>; Jennifer <jensuppa@gmail.com>

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Dear Council,

On behalf of the majority of residents on Kindler Road Laurel Maryland, please **OPPOSE** the bike plan today. When we bought our houses, we bought on a "No Outlet" road on purpose. The decision to make a walking bridge/bike path will greatly impact and change our neighborhood in a **negative** way (as discussed in previous emails). We plead for your compassion as you vote today. We don't want this change to our neighborhood street. There are ways to make HOCO Bike friendly without the disruption to the road we live on. You may say that the community wants it but I **want to be clear that our residents were not a part of the bike plan creation** and our opinion should have more weight than the Bike Howard organization as it affects us the most! Please find an alternative way and amend the bike plan before approval.

Sincerely,

Jessica Hummel
(writing on behalf of 13 other houses on our street)

Oppose HOCO Bike Plan!

From Susan Harnstrom <susan.harnstrom@gmail.com>
Date Mon 10/5/2026 1:18 PM
To CouncilMail <CouncilMail@howardcountymd.gov>
Cc Jennifer Suppa <jensuppa@gmail.com>

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Dear Representative Rigby and Howard County Council,

I write once again to express my husband's and my firm OPPOSITION to the HOCO Bike Plan being voted on tonight, October 5th, 2026. As I stated in an earlier email, we developed our property at the end of Kindler Road specifically to be a refuge from traffic...pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle. There is no discernible benefit for a connection to a community in Columbia. There already exists a road, Old Columbia Road, between the Kings Contrivance area in Columbia and John's Hopkins Road. THAT is the appropriate and more cost effective way to implement increased bicycle traffic between those areas. My substantial property taxes should not be used for a bike path that would devalue my property, peace of mind, and way of life, when there is a better alternative. Bike lanes have already been installed at the other end of Old Columbia Road. Use my taxes to extend them on Old Columbia Road to Johns Hopkins Road.

Furthermore, the existing paths in Gorman Valley Stream Park, are already not maintained and are overgrown with invasive stilt grass. Clean that up before considering creating new paths.

Respectfully,
Susan Harnstrom
(410) 707-0584

Sent from my iPad