

Maura J. Rossman, MD, Health Officer

To: Howard County Council

From: Maura J. Rossman, MD, Health Officer *MR*

Date: March 9, 2016

Re: Council Resolution 35 – 2016, Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Policy

The Howard County Health Department submits this written testimony in support of Council Resolution 35-2016. This resolution will formally approve a Bicycle Master Plan and a Complete Streets policy for Howard County. Creating a safe, bicycle-friendly, walkable community will promote public health by supporting the Health Department's efforts to increase the physical activity levels of Howard County Residents. Regular physical activity is one of the most important things you can do for your health. Physical activity can help: control your weight; reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and some cancers; strengthen your bones and muscles; improve your mental health; improve older adults' ability to do daily activities and prevent falls; and increase your chances of living longer.¹

The Health Department also agrees with the County Executive that the streets of Howard County should be safe and accommodating for everyone, whether they are driving, walking, biking, or taking public transit. It is also in the public health interest of our residents that an environment is created to facilitate and encourage everyone to get outside and get moving. Therefore, I urge the Council to support the passage of Council Resolution 35-2016, and approve the Bicycle Master Plan and Complete Streets Policy. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and for your attention to this important issue.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The Benefits of Physical Activity, June 4, 2015.
<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/pa-health/>.