

Columbia Association testimony on CR 35-2016

Jane Dembner [jane.dembner@columbiaassociation.org]

Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 12:21 PM
To: CouncilMail
Cc: Feldmark, Jessica
Attachments: CA_TestimonyCR35-2016.pdf (93 KB)

Good afternoon. This is a copy of our testimony that I delivered last evening on CR 35-2016. Please do not hesitate to be in touch if you have any additional questions or would like CA presence at the Council Legislative Work Session on March 28.

Jane

Jane L. Dembner, AICP
Director of Planning & Community Affairs
Phone: 410-715-3107
Email: Jane.Dembner@ColumbiaAssociation.org
ColumbiaAssociation.org

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March 21, 2016 Testimony Supporting CR 35-2016

Good evening Chairman Ball and members of the County Council. My name is Jane Dembner. I am here representing the Columbia Association at 6310 Hillside Ct, Columbia.

I am here to testify in support of the adoption of BikeHoward.

I want to provide three reasons why we strongly recommend that the Council adopt BikeHoward.

1. BikeHoward **fills an important policy and planning gap** for the County - adoption of the plan will enhance Howard County as one of nation's top communities
2. The **plan is based on sound analysis and extensive civic engagement** – it is a model in best practice for other communities
3. BikeHoward has a **strong implementation focus and action plan**.

As strong as our support is for BikeHoward, our disagreement with the proposed amendment is just as strong, if not stronger. We do not support the proposed amendment to remove a pathway from the plan – one line on a map in a plan that is has hundreds of lines and recommendations.

The pathway is known as the Downtown to Patuxent Branch Trail Extension. The name says it all – Downtown to Patuxent Branch Trail. We urge that this recommended facility be maintained in the plan.

Columbia Association has been working closely with Howard County on this project for over three years. The **pathway is the number one priority** in our Connecting Columbia Plan, which was approved by the CA Board of Directors in 2012.

The county received a state grant for the design of the first phase from Downtown to Steven's Forest Road. The second phase – the subject of the amendment - will extend the reach and utility of this pathway. The second phase is exclusively on land owned by Columbia Association to which we have granted an easement to the county.

The pathway segment is an amazing one-of-a-kind opportunity to connect Downtown to the county's existing Patuxent Branch Trail via a route that is **flat, scenic, already cleared of trees, and which has no intersections with cars making it a carefree greenway for people who walk and bicycle.** This recommended pathway is an unusual opportunity. It would provide a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists to connect from Savage north to Downtown and then east-west along the cross Columbia pathway, now being completed by Howard Hughes Corporation.

The amendment states that the pathway is proposed to be removed: "in response to community opposition and because an alternative pathway is proposed along Broken Land Parkway." Based on our engagement with the community, I can state that there is significant support for this pathway and urge you to consider all community needs not only some views. **At the planning stage, we urge you to think of a network of pathways and bike lanes and not to foreclose options in a 20 to 30 year plan.**

The wording of the amendment also states that there is an alternative to the car free route at the river's edge. And while the feasibility study for the pathway stated that there were two alternatives and that both needed further study, there are clear advantages to the river side one over the Broken Land Parkway option. The Broken Land Parkway option would necessitate the removal of a lane of auto traffic (Is this really feasible along this highly traveled road to and from Downtown?) And if that were to happen, I ask you to consider, which route you would rather walk or bicycle on with your family or loved ones – the one with fast-moving auto traffic along Broken Land Parkway or the calm and bucolic and safe car-free route along the river? We ask you not to foreclose the continued evaluation of the river option at this early point in the process.

Reasonable minds can differ about what is reasonable, but we are unable to conclude that removing a potential pathway line drawn in a 20 to 30 year plan that would provide one of the most important green connections in our community is reasonable. This is a plan – and Council approval will be done by resolution, not legislation. That reinforces for us **that this is a guide,** not regulation or law. The plan is written in ink and not etched in stone. Columbia Association respectfully requests that the council not approve the amendment and that this long-range opportunity be included in BikeHoward.

Thank you.

Patuxent River trail extension

Kathy Osborne [kathyosborne1@gmail.com]

Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2016 7:04 AM

To: CouncilMail

Hi,

My name is Kathy Osborne. I live in Columbia, Maryland. I have a family of four and we ride bikes.

We support the bike master plan and would use the Patuxent River trail extension. Please approve the master plan as is, including the Patuxent River trail extension to downtown Columbia.

That would be such a great safe addition to Columbia. We don't feel safe all the time riding our bikes - having to cross busy roads and such.

Thank you for your attention.

Kathy Osborne
Village of Long Reach

Comments on Howard County Bicycle Master Plan

Kristine Amari [kristine.amari@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 8:22 PM

To: CouncilMail

Hello,

I would like to voice my strong support for the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan. I am an avid user of current paths and believe that continued expansion on them will strengthen our community and make it more vibrant and healthy, while simultaneously reducing both congestion on the roads and air pollution. I would love to see the current plans go even further than they currently do; I hope that this is just the beginning of making our community more walkable, bikeable, and further interconnected by safe and well-maintained trail systems.

This is an investment in the future; I have young children who already enjoy the paths and as they get older I hope there will be even more options for them to explore and use. Howard county can and should be a leader in modeling this type of sustainable, integrated development that focuses on bikers and pedestrians.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I hope that you agree and strongly support the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan as well as even more ambitious future projects!

Kristine Amari
Columbia, MD

Howard County Bike Master Plan

Mark Thober [mthober@cs.jhu.edu]

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 5:46 PM

To: CouncilMail; Terrasa, Jen

Howard County Council,

As a resident of Kings Contrivance, I write to express my support for the bike master plan. Specifically, I would and would use the patuxent river trail extension. Please approve the master plan as is, including the patuxent river trail extension to downtown Columbia.

Sincerely,

Mark Thober
8434 Kings Meade Way

Testimony on CR35-2016 Phase II of T7107

Bill&Sally Ryder [onebyke2ryders@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 5:38 PM**To:** CouncilMail**Attachments:** BikeHowardTestimony2016.docx (16 KB)

Dear Council Members,

Here is a copy of testimony I plan to present at tonight.s public hearing. I also include it as an attachment for your convenience.

Thank you!

My name is Sally Ryder. Address 6735 Allview Dr. 21046

I speak on behalf of neighbors who support construction of the portion of the Patuxent Trail Extension on the Columbia Association land bordering Allview Estates. Our neighborhood has very few sidewalks, cul-de-sacs and other places for children to practice riding a bicycle and we are not directly connected to the wonderful Columbia Pathway Network. This path will provide a safe and scenic route for our nature lovers, walkers, runners, and cyclists who otherwise have to dodge traffic and cars parked along our hilly and winding roads. The route will run along a sewer easement along the Little Patuxent River flowing behind our neighborhood and abutting property of several landowners, some of whom have voiced strong opposition to the path. Other neighbors, including several abutters, are willing to drive in order to ride and walk along Columbia pathways would like to see the extension but hesitate to speak out against their neighbors. Many others who may be unfamiliar with the existing pathway network have been persuaded that having this pathway built would increase parking problems, crime, and other problems in the neighborhood. Having lived in Allview since 1978 and ridden most of the Columbia trails, I firmly believe that these fears are unfounded.

Like many Columbia bike paths, this route is in the flood plain and my experience is that the Columbia Association does an excellent job of keeping these paths clear and in good repair. I will acknowledge that this area is prone to flooding, although I am not aware of any recent time that the river has gone over its banks. There appears to be a river monitoring device installed at the lowest point, so data should be available for analysis and perhaps there can be a way to notify CA to close the path when and if necessary. In any case, warning signage would probably be advisable.

I realize that there are strong feelings on both sides of this issue and, indeed, have friends on both sides. I will continue to support construction of this path and hope that those who are now opposed may change their minds when and if it is built. In any case, I hope that we can all agree to disagree on this matter and remain on good terms. Thank you for your attention.

Testimony on the Bicycle Master Plan CR35-2016 -- Phase II of T7107
for the Public Hearing March 21, 2016

My name is Sally Ryder. Address 6735 Allview Dr. 21046

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Howard County Bike Master Plan

Chris Kennedy [ctkmusic@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 4:55 PM

To: CouncilMail

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of Owen Brown and fully support the bike master plan, especially the Patuxent River trail extension. My family and I would extensively use this trail to *safely* travel to the lakefront and other amenities of downtown Columbia. Please approve the master plan as is, including the Patuxent River trail extension to downtown Columbia.

Thank you,

Chris Kennedy

Approve Bicycle master plan as-is

James Harris [james.baltimore@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 4:42 PM**To:** CouncilMail

I am writing to voice my full support for approving the bicycle master plan as-is, including the proposed extension to the Patuent Branch Trail. I have been in support of the trail since it was first proposed. The alternative plan of a bike lane that is adjacent to Broken Land Parkway is not acceptable as I would not consider it safe for children and it would be far from scenic. I understand there is a small minority of residents opposed to the plan, but please understand there are thousands of us who would use the new trail for work commuting, transportation and recreation. I anticipate my job will relocate to downtown in the next few years and this would be my primary commuting route. I will be attending the hearing tonight to voice my support.

Thank You,

James Harris & Colleen Cotton
6918 Garland Lane
Columbia, MD 21045
410-707-2742

Bike Master Plan

Scott Wiessinger [swiessinger@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, March 21, 2016 4:41 PM**To:** CouncilMail

Dear County Council,

I, my wife, and our two children are all cycling enthusiasts living in Owen Brown, just off of Carved Stone. We often use Columbia's fantastic network of trails to go on outings, and to connect to other areas of the community. We firmly support the bike master plan, particularly the Patuxent River trail extension. We have friends in Allview and this would allow us to easily ride to visit them. It would also allow us to have a very pleasant ride to the mall and the central library. The only way there by trail at the moment is much more convoluted, and requires many more road crossings. The trail extension would see a great deal of use from all four of us.

Please approve the master plan as it is, including the trail extension to downtown Columbia. We would all be thrilled to see this great idea become a reality.

Respectfully,

Scott Wiessinger



Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony in Support of County Council Resolution to Adopt BikeHoward, the Howard County Bicycle Master Plan

Date: February 23, 2016

To: Lonnie R. Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer

Through: Clive Graham
Administrator, Office of Transportation *URG*

From: Chris Eatough *CSE*
Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, Office of Transportation

Summary:

The General Plan for Howard County (PlanHoward 2030) calls for the development of a Bicycle Master Plan and recognizes the importance of improving conditions and connections for bicycling as part of a multimodal transportation system.

The benefits to the county from quality accommodations for bicycling are significant, including improved public health, cleaner air, a stronger economy, reduced congestion and enriched quality of life. The Bicycle Master Plan (also known as BikeHoward) creates the vision and path forward for Howard County to become a bicycle-friendly community.

The plan was developed with extensive public input and with oversight from the Howard County Office of Transportation, a multi-disciplinary Technical Advisory Group, and a consultant with extensive experience drafting similar plans around the country (Toole Design Group). With these inputs, BikeHoward draws from the experiences and best practices from around the country, and applies them effectively to Howard County's local context.

The Plan overall has received an overwhelmingly positive response at all stages of development and review, making it evident that people appreciate the many benefits and importance of improved bicycling accommodations in Howard County. Concerns have been raised regarding some specific proposed projects; these will be addressed with a public process throughout the detailed planning, design and implementation phases.

BikeHoward will be a useful and effective guiding document for county and state agencies, developers, grant administrators and the public. It will enable enhanced coordination between these groups, providing the guidance to keep projects, policies and programs moving in the same direction. Ongoing communication and engagement will occur through the Office of Transportation's BikeHoward webpage and through annual open house workshops.

BikeHoward's goal is to make it easy for people of all ages and abilities to get around Howard County by bicycle. To do this, the plan provides guidance and recommendations in three general areas:

1. Policy updates
 2. Programs for education, encouragement/promotion, and traffic law enforcement
 3. Infrastructure improvements to create a connected bike network
-
1. Recommended policy updates include the development of a "Complete Streets" policy to ensure Howard County streets are designed, built and operated to enable safe access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.
 2. Programs for education, encouragement and enforcement are important to help foster a community culture where bicycling is a safe, popular, and everyday choice.
 3. Infrastructure improvements are critical to providing a network so that people can reach their destinations by bicycle safely and conveniently. This includes on-street elements, such as bike lanes and intersections, and off-street elements, such as shared-use-pathways. The Bicycle Master Plan categorizes recommended infrastructure improvements as short-term (within 10 years), mid-term (within 20 years) and long-term (within 30 years).

Fiscal Impact:

Funding for the recommended infrastructure improvements is expected to come from a combination of grants, developer contributions and county capital projects.

The total estimated cost of all the short-term projects is approximately \$32 million. This is a planning level cost estimate that does not take into account savings from coordination with other projects and improvements. In practice, costs can often be lower through coordination and timing, for example, striping on-street bike lanes in conjunction with ongoing road resurfacing which has been shown to reduce costs by 90%.

The short-term projects would provide 95 miles of new bicycle facilities (combined on-street and off-street), 15 miles of upgrades to existing bicycle facilities (combined on-street and off-street) and 46 spot improvements (mostly at intersections).

The County established a capital budget project (K5066) for bicycle infrastructure improvements in fiscal year 2014. Combined allocation of county funds into K5066 for fiscal years 2014, 2015 and 2016 was \$1.2 million. The Bicycle Master Plan recommends that this budget maintain a fund balance of at least \$750,000 per year.

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2016 FEB -4 AM 10:26
HOWARD COUNTY COUNCIL
RECEIVED



Oakland Mills Community Association
The Other Barn • 5851 Robert Oliver Place
Columbia, MD 21045
410-730-4610 • oaklandmills.org

January 29, 2016

Howard County Council Members
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Road
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

Dear Howard County Council Members,

In the very near future the Council will review the proposed Howard County Bike Master Plan. We urge you to consider the inclusion of the new bicycle/pedestrian/transit bridge over U.S. Route 29 which is also referred to as Bridge Columbia. There is no mention of the bridge in the proposed Bike Master Plan and this is an important and unexplained omission.

We commend the County Executive and County staff for this comprehensive plan and are equally excited that the County supports the development of Complete Streets policy and the County's commitment to seek a Bicycle-Friendly Community Designation. Omitting the proposed bridge is contrary to the goal of a Complete Streets Policy, which will guide road design and make it both safe and convenient to travel by foot, bicycle, public transportation or automobile. Bridge Columbia fulfills the complete street design by safely incorporating pedestrian, bicycle, and public transit on the bridge.

County Executive Kittleman has, on numerous occasions, voiced his support for the Bridge Columbia project, organized a "Bridge Columbia Summit, included it in his capital budget proposal, and added it to the County's Priority List for transportation projects requesting state funding last fall. During the Planning Board testimony there was discussion about the total cost of the proposed bridge. There was the impression that the County would bear the total cost of the new bridge and that the cost of the bridge would push aside the other 49 short-term projected in the Bike Master Plan to build out the bike network. This is not true and 20 percent of the local share for the bridge is a manageable cost in a large urbanized County over a multi-year period. It would be important to include the bridge in the Bike Master Plan when the County pursues intergovernmental assistance. Supporting Option 3B, outlined in the *Downtown Columbia Bridge Feasibility Study*, would be important as we seek to get firm costs estimates and move forward with grant applications.

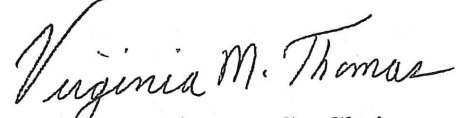
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This bridge is the only dedicated bicycle crossing over Route 29 in Columbia and connects across US 29 the 98 miles of shared use paths in Columbia, paths that serve not just Columbia but other communities such as Allview, Dalton, and Beaverbrook. It is the most convenient crossing over US 29 for regional trails serving Ft. Meade and beyond.

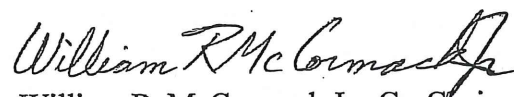
The inclusion of the bridge in the Bike Master Plan is a vital. This will put the bridge on the "map" for all current and future users. It will show that the County is committed to connecting its 98 miles of pathways; it will show that the County is committed to providing a direct connection between Columbia villages and major employers downtown and firmly state that the bridge is the most important link crossing Route 29.

In closing we want to reiterate that we fully support the Proposed Bike Master Plan and the Complete Street Design. We hope that omitting the new pedestrian/bicycle/public transit bridge was an oversight and urge that you include this in the final Bike Master Plan for Howard County. Please let us know how we can assist in this effort and what additional information you may need.

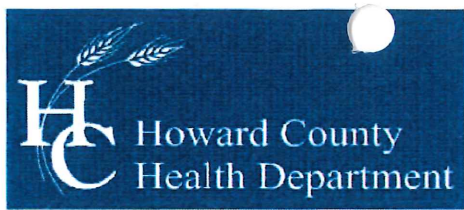
Sincerely,



Virginia M. Thomas, Co-Chair
Oakland Mills Board of Directors



William R. McCormack Jr., Co-Chair
Oakland Mills Board of Directors



Office of the Health Officer
8930 Stanford Boulevard
Columbia, MD 21045
410-313-6300 Fax 410- 313-6303
TDD 410-313-2323 Toll Free 1-866-313-6300
website: www.hchealth.org

Maura J. Rossman, MD, Health Officer

FILE COPY

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/>.

