



THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION
8787 Georgia Avenue • Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-3760

MCPB
Item No. 12
3-11-04

March 4, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Montgomery County Planning Board

VIA: Jeffrey Zyontz, Chief
Countywide Planning Division *JZ*

Richard Hawthorne, Chief
Transportation Planning *RH*

FROM: Charles S. Kines, *CSK* 301-495-2184 for the Park and Planning Department

SUBJECT: Worksession #2 for Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide comments on responses to Board requests and Board-recommended changes to the plan as discussed at Worksession #1:
 - a. Major re-organizational changes to Bikeway Design Chapter
 - b. New prioritization/implementation strategy based on countywide destinations and activity centers
 - c. New bikeway description table that includes characteristics, benefits, desirable applications and issues related to the three primary types of bikeways
2. Review and comment on staff recommendations for significant changes to the Countywide Bikeway network. These recommendations have been coordinated carefully with the Community-Based Planning teams and are considered consistent with applicable community master plans and sector plans.
3. Review staff responses to additional testimony on the plan.
4. Items not yet fully resolved, to be addressed at Worksession #3
 - a. Planning process and history of plan, including relationship to 1998 Countywide Park Trails Plan
 - b. Glossary of Terms
 - c. Page-size maps of complex bikeway routes
 - d. Maps showing overlay of countywide bikeways and local bikeways

- e. Minor rewording and reorganization of plan as recommended by staff in Exhibit A of Worksession #1.
 - f. Highlight the shared-use paths that also will provide significant benefits to pedestrians
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1. RESPONSES TO BOARD REQUESTS AT WORKSESSION #1

1.A. Major reorganizational changes to Bikeway Facility Design Guidelines Chapter

Board recommendations:

- Retain design guidelines as a chapter
- Identify and articulate goals of bikeway design guidelines
- Reference AASHTO where applicable
- Meet with the County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT) and identify concepts covered by AASHTO that are supported by the agency
- Highlight concepts for which M-NCPPC and DPWT staff disagree

Staff response: Staff met with Gail Tait-Nouri, Bikeway Program Coordinator with DPWT to discuss the Board's recommendations. The following changes to the Bikeway Facility Design Guidelines chapter were agreed upon:

- The intent of the bikeway design guidelines will be described at beginning of the chapter, followed immediately by bulleted goals of bikeway design (**See Attachment A, circle page 1**).
- The chapter will include only basic design characteristics, cross-sections, and photographs of concepts currently included in the AASHTO Guide that are supported by DPWT.
- The section on "Innovative Designs" (plan pages 56-60) will be moved to a new appendix. Further, it was agreed that instead of identifying concepts for which M-NCPPC and DPWT staff disagree, a caveat at the beginning of this new appendix would recognize that many of these practices are used by agencies around the country, but are not yet currently practiced or endorsed by the County.
- A section will be added to the chapter that clarifies the relationship between the County road design standards and bikeway design guidelines. (**See attachment A, circle page 1**).
- Any concepts borrowed from the 1999 AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities will be cited. Other sources of design concepts will be cited, where applicable.
- Specific sections will be deleted or moved from the chapter (**See Attachment A, circle page 1**).

1.B. New Prioritization System, Restructured Implementation Chapter

Board recommendations:

- Remove references to timing of implementation
- Flesh out criteria on page 61 and better articulate why certain bikeways are higher priority than others
- Create table or list of bikeways that connect to specific destinations
- Highlight the shared-use paths that also will provide significant benefits to pedestrians

Staff responses:

- All references to timing have been removed. The priority system will be restructured to be consistent with new focus on destinations rather than time frames. A new prioritization system based on countywide destinations and activity centers will replace the old prioritization system based on timing (short range versus long range).
- A list of bikeways serving as principal connections to various countywide destinations will be inserted into the implementation chapter, replacing the current prioritization system on pages 61-62. (**See Attachment B, circle pages 2-8**).

1.C. Types of Bikeways and Desirable Applications

At Worksession #1, the Planning Board concurred with the County Executive's request to create a table showing comparisons between the three main types of bikeway facilities. (**See Attachment C, circle pages 9-16**). The table includes general characteristics, benefits, desirable applications, and issues for the three primary bikeway types; the table will replace the Bikeway Facility Selection Guidelines on pages 24-26 of the plan. In addition, general bikeway descriptions currently included in Chapter 3 will be deleted to eliminate redundant bikeway descriptions.

2. STAFF RECOMMENDATION FOR CHANGES TO COUNTYWIDE BIKEWAY NETWORK

Both the County Executive and the public submitted testimony to the Board requesting additional bikeways for consideration or changes to classifications for certain bikeways. The following items consist of changes to the countywide bikeway network recommended by staff, as well as changes resulting from coordination with ongoing community plan and sector plan efforts. The more significant changes are highlighted in ***bold italics***. A summary of the testimony from the Montgomery Bicycle Advocates (MOBIKE) with staff responses and recommendations is included in the packet as **Attachment D (circle pages 17-28)**. The actual written testimony from MOBIKE is included in the Board packet only.

Bethesda/Chevy Chase/Friendship Heights/Potomac

Bikeway: SP-1, Falls Road (MD 189) (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: *MOBIKE requested designating this road as a signed shared roadway in addition to the proposed path, thus making it a dual bikeway. This is a very popular bicycling route in the County. Falls Road provides a direct connection to both the City of Rockville and the C&O Canal Towpath. More than adequate right-of-way exists for both facilities if/when this road is reconstructed or widened in the future. Community-Based Planning staff supports changing the designation.*

Staff Recommendation: *Change designation to dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway) and assign it a new countywide bikeway number (DB-X).*

Bikeway: DB-4, Bradley Boulevard (MD 191)

Staff Analysis: The County Executive requested the on-road portion of this dual bikeway be changed from bike lanes to signed shared roadway. The right-of-way along Bradley Boulevard is inconsistent. While bike lanes are preferred, signed shared roadway may be the best the State can do until the road is redesigned or rebuilt.

Staff Recommendation: Add language to the comment section of the table to reflect the difficult right-of-way, the preference for bike lanes in the long term, and the designation as a signed shared roadway in the short term.

Bikeway: SP-4, Cedar Lane

Staff Analysis: The County Executive requested the road be assigned as a signed shared roadway in addition to the off-road path, making the road a dual bikeway. The shared-use path from Old Georgetown Road to Wisconsin Avenue is a carryover recommendation from the 1978 plan and is still valid. This portion of the road also could support a signed shared roadway due to existing wide travel lanes. The portion of Cedar Lane from Wisconsin Avenue to Beach Drive is more complicated largely due to space constraints under I-495. A substandard shared-use path currently exists from Wisconsin Avenue almost to I-495 via Cedar Lane and Elmhurst Freeway. The connection also includes a short path connection through parkland. However, a connection to Rock Creek Trail and Beach Drive is not possible presently due to insufficient space for a path or wide sidewalk in the underpass for I-495.

Staff Recommendation: Identify the portion of Cedar Lane between Old Georgetown Road and MD 355 to a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway). Add this new bikeway to the Countywide Bikeway network as DB-X. Change the limits for SP-4 to MD 355 and Beach Drive. Note that the path between MD 355 and Elmhurst Freeway is substandard and needs to be widened. Also note this route uses the existing path through County parkland to connect to I-495, and the need to provide at least an eight-foot path under I-495 when the bridge/underpass is rebuilt.

Bikeway: Luxmanor Lane/Road (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested an on-road alternative to Old Georgetown Road that would connect Tilden Lane with Tuckerman Lane. This route forms part of an important connection between North Bethesda and the Rock Spring Office Park. This route is recommended in the North Bethesda-Garrett Park Master Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Add this route to the plan as SR-X.

Bikeway: Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive (NEW)

Staff Analysis: *MOBIKE requested bike lanes on both Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive to provide on-road accommodation and access through Rock Spring Office Park. As part of the North Bethesda Transportation Management District, on-road accommodation through the Rock Spring Office Park is important to encourage bicycle commuting. Insufficient pavement widths exist along these roads for bike lanes, but bikeable shoulders could be achieved by reducing lane widths. With the exception of Fernwood Road between Democracy Boulevard and Rock Spring Drive, on-street parking is not permitted.*

Staff Recommendation: *Identify both Rock Spring Drive and Rockledge Drive as signed shared roadways (SR-X and SR-X). Descriptions of these bikeways will highlight desirability of reducing lane widths to 11 feet to create bikeable shoulders along the curb. This plan further recommends no on-street parking for these roads in order to ensure bikeability in the future.*

Bikeway: Westlake Drive (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested the extension of bike lanes along Westlake Boulevard from Westlake Terrace to Democracy Boulevard. This short segment forms part of a connection to both Cabin John Regional Park and Rock Spring Office Park. Insufficient right-of-way exists to provide any type of on-road facility, however, this portion of the road features eight-foot sidewalks on both sides.

Staff Recommendation: Identify Westlake Drive between Westlake Terrace and Democracy Boulevard as an existing shared-use path (SP-X).

Bikeway: Massachusetts Avenue (MD 396) (NEW)

Staff Analysis: *MOBIKE requested signed shared roadway to provide connection to the planned bikeway in the District of Columbia. This road forms a vital connection between Goldsboro Road and the Capital Crescent Trail as well as into the District. The road is currently suitable as a signed shared roadway, but sufficient right-of-way exists for bike lanes should the road be widened in the future.*

Staff Recommendation: *Identify the length of Massachusetts Avenue as a new signed shared roadway (SR-X). Note the desirability of bike lanes if and when the road is widened or reconstructed.*

Bikeway: Old Georgetown Road-Wildwood Shopping Center Path (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested a shared-use path connection between Democracy Boulevard and Cheshire Lane. This is a significant gap in the countywide bikeway network. The path should be provided when Wildwood Shopping Center is redeveloped.

Staff Recommendation: Identify Old Georgetown Road between Cheshire Lane and Democracy Boulevard as a new shared-use path (SP-X).

Bikeway: SP-2, Democracy Boulevard (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested on-road accommodation for the portion of the road between Falls Road and Gainsborough Road. Bikeable shoulders currently exist along this road.

Staff Recommendation: Change classification for this stretch of Democracy Boulevard to dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway). Assign it a new countywide bikeway number (DB-X). Change limits of SP-2 to Gainsborough Road and Old Georgetown Road.

Silver Spring/Takoma Park

Bikeway: SP-11, New Hampshire Avenue (MD 650) – Takoma (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: Community planners informed staff that the East Silver Spring Master Plan identifies this road as a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway). The bikeways plan mistakenly identifies it as only a shared-use path.

Staff Recommendation: Change the limits of DB-7 (currently called New Hampshire Avenue – Hillandale) to D.C. line and Lockwood Drive and change name to New Hampshire Avenue – Hillandale/Takoma. Assign “SP-11” to one of the newly recommended shared-use paths.

Bikeway: Sligo Creek – Takoma Metro Connector (NEW)

Staff Analysis: Requested by the City of Takoma Park, this on-road bikeway would be along Maple and Cedar Avenues, which is similar to a framework bikeway identified in the 2000 Takoma Park Master Plan. The route would improve bicycle access to the Metrorail station, which is a major goal of this plan.

Staff Recommendation: Add to the countywide bikeway network as a new signed shared roadway (SR-X).

Bikeway: Forest Glen – Silver Spring CBD connector (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested a parallel alternative to Georgia Avenue from Forest Glen Metro Station to downtown Silver Spring via the Forest Glen Pedestrian Bridge and neighborhood streets including Second Avenue. Bike route 12 in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan provides this connection.

Staff Recommendation: Identify Bike Route 12 in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan as a countywide bikeway (SR-X).

Bikeway: SR-15, Sligo Creek Trail – Silver Spring Metrorail connector (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: Community planners recently alerted staff to Bike Routes 11 and 14 in the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan that already provide a suitable on-road connection between Sligo Creek Trail and Spring Street. These already approved routes make the connection along Crosby Road and Woodside Parkway recommend by this plan redundant and unnecessary.

Staff Recommendation: Identify Bike Routes 11 and 14 from the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan as part of SR-15. Remove Crosby Road and Woodside Parkway as countywide bikeways. Retain Spring Street and Second Avenue as part of SR-15 to connect to Silver Spring Metrorail Station.

Eastern County

Bikeway: Good Hope Road (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested a signed shared roadway connection between New Hampshire Avenue and Briggs Chaney Road along Good Hope Road. The road provides a vital link between two countywide bikeways.

Staff Recommendation: Add Good Hope Road as a signed shared roadway (SR-X).

Kensington/Wheaton

Bikeway: Strathmore – Grosvenor Metro Station connector path (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE and the Garrett Park Estates-White Flint Park Citizens' Association requested this path be added as a countywide bikeway. Although substandard, the path provides an important connection to the Grosvenor Metrorail station from the north. The portion of the path through the American Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA) property features only a public ingress/egress access easement. The portion through the Strathmore Hall property is owned and maintained by the County and is being partly redesigned/realigned as part of the Strathmore Concert Hall project.

Staff Recommendation: Add this path as a countywide bikeway. Assign it a new number, SP-X with limits between Strathmore Avenue and Tuckerman Lane. Add comment about improving bicycle/pedestrian crossing at Strathmore Avenue. Also note coordination with ASHA and Strathmore Hall to re-construct the path in the future to meet AASHTO standards.

Bikeway: Garrett Park – Grosvenor Metro Station connector (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested an on-road route connection to the Grosvenor Metrorail Station from Strathmore Avenue via Kenilworth Avenue, Weymouth Street and Montrose Avenue. The route would provide an alternative, on-road bike route to the Strathmore-ASHA path described above. Staff agrees an on-road connection to Grosvenor Metrorail Station is desirable from this direction, but recommends a different route. From Strathmore Avenue, take Weymouth Street in the Town of Garrett Park. Connect to Weymouth Street in the Parkside community via the connector path and connect to Tuckerman Lane via Montrose Avenue.

Staff Recommendation: Add Weymouth Street and Montrose Avenue as a signed shared roadway route (SR-X).

Bikeway: Rock Creek Trail - Kensington MARC connector (NEW)

Staff Analysis: The County Executive and the City of Kensington recommend a new bikeway on Plyers Mill Road from Rock Creek Trail at Plyers Mill Road terminus, crossing Connecticut Avenue to Howard Avenue at or on a new bridge over the railroad connecting to Kensington Parkway (SR-29). This route would provide an important short connection from the east between the trail and downtown Kensington. The town is specifically requesting a connection under Connecticut Avenue using the CSX railroad. Staff agrees a connection from Rock Creek Trail to downtown Kensington is needed, but CSX will not grant an ingress/egress easement to the County along the railroad right of way. The safest crossing of Connecticut Avenue is the traffic signal at Plyers Mill Road.

Staff Recommendation: Extend SR-24 to Plyers Mill Road's terminus at Rock Creek Park. Add text to the discussion about the need for a safer bicycle/ pedestrian crossing of Connecticut Avenue. Also add text to discussion regarding investigating a connection from Plyers Mill Road to the MARC station and to Kensington Parkway via Saint Paul Street and providing a safe crossing of the railroad tracks as part of the redevelopment of the cement plant.

Bikeway: Plyers Mill Road – Sligo Creek connector (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested an on-road connection between Plyers Mill Road and the Sligo Creek Trail and Parkway. The bike route would fill in a gap that would form a connection between Sligo Creek and the Town of Kensington (and thus also MARC). Staff believes the connection should extend to University Boulevard to better enhance

the overall bikeway network. Brunswick Avenue is recommended as a bikeway in the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan. Dennis Avenue is a new recommendation.

Staff Recommendation: Add Brunswick Avenue between Plyers Mill Road and Dennis Avenue, and Dennis Avenue between Brunswick Avenue and University Boulevard as a new signed shared roadway route (SR-X).

Bikeway: Cedar Lane/Summit Avenue (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested an on-road route connecting the Town of Kensington with the currently proposed bikeway along Cedar Lane terminating at Beach Drive. This route would serve as an important on-road connection to other countywide bikeways, including Beach Drive, Knowles Avenue and Plyers Mill Road. It also helps link the Town of Kensington with NIH and Bethesda. This route is already recommended in the Kensington-Wheaton Master Plan

Staff Recommendation: Add Cedar Lane/Summit Avenue between Beach Drive and Plyers Mill Road as a new signed shared roadway (SR-X).

Midcounty

Bikeway: *SP-28, Muncaster Mill Road/ MD 115 (CHANGE)*

Staff Analysis: *As part of the Upper Rock Creek (URC) Master Plan update, the County Council voted to remove the shared-use path recommendation for the portion of Muncaster Mill Road passing through the URC planning area due to environmental concerns but to retain the recommendation for bike lanes. For regional on-road connectivity, staff recommends that the entire length of Muncaster Mill Road, from Woodfield Road (MD 124) to Norbeck Road (MD 28), be recommended for bike lanes. This change also will be reflected in the Olney Master Plan update.*

Staff Recommendation: *Change classification to bike lanes and assign the bikeway with a new number (BL-X).*

Rockville and Gaithersburg Vicinity

Bikeway: SP-44, East Jefferson Street

Staff Analysis: The NIH Bicycle Club and MOBIKE requested that this road also be considered for bike lanes, thus making it a dual bikeway; the bike lanes would be a continuation of bike lanes proposed under this plan for Executive Boulevard (BL-25). The road is too narrow to support bike lanes and insufficient right-of-way would make implementation of bike lanes difficult, if not impossible. The portion of the road in the City of Rockville is proposed as a signed shared roadway; therefore, extending this shared roadway designation down to Montrose Road makes sense to ensure consistent facility type along these roads.

Staff Recommendation: Make E. Jefferson Street a dual bikeway, shared-use path and signed shared roadway and assign it a new countywide bikeway number (DB-X).

Bikeway: Key West Avenue (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested that the existing shared-use path along Key West Avenue between MD 28 and Gude Drive be recognized as a countywide bikeway. This path serves as part of a vital link between Rockville's Millennium Trail and major employers in this area of the County.

Staff Recommendation: Add Key West Avenue between MD 28 and Gude Drive as an existing shared-use path (SP-X).

Bikeway: SP-56, Piney Meetinghouse Road (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested also designating this road as a signed shared roadway, making this road a dual bikeway. Piney Meetinghouse Road forms part of a connection to the Shady Grove Metrorail Station. Adequate right-of-way and pavement width exists for both facilities.

Staff Recommendation: Change designation to dual bikeway and assign it a new countywide bikeway number (DB-X).

Bikeway: SP-62, Muddy Branch Road (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: The City of Gaithersburg Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee recommended dual bikeway designation (adding bike lanes) for this road. Ample right-of-way exists for adding bike lanes as part of any future road widening and major roadway improvements. The City of Gaithersburg agrees and supports changing the recommendation to dual bikeway, shared-use path and bike lanes.

Staff Recommendation: Change Muddy Branch Road, between MD 28 and MD 117 to a dual bikeway, shared-use path and bike lanes. Assign the road with a new countywide bikeway number (DB-X).

Bikeway: SP-61, Goshen Road/Brink Road (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested on-road bicycle accommodation in addition to the shared-use path recommendation, which would make it a dual bikeway. Goshen Road is currently being studied to widen the road from 4 lanes to 6 lanes between Warfield Road and Odendhal Road as part of CIP 509337. Wide outside lanes (14-15 feet) are included in the design.

Staff Recommendation: Make Goshen Road a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway) and assign it with a new countywide bikeway number, DB-X.

Bikeway: SP-74, Watkins Mill Road (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested on-road bicycle accommodation in addition to the shared-use path recommendation, which would make it a dual bikeway. Adequate right-of-way and/or pavement width exists for most of road to accommodate both. City of Gaithersburg supports this proposed change.

Staff Recommendation: Make Watkins Mill Road a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway) and assign it with a new countywide bikeway number, DB-X.

Germantown and Clarksburg

Bikeway: SP-73, West Old Baltimore Road/New Cut Road (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested on-road bicycle accommodation in addition to the shared-use path recommendation, which would make it a dual bikeway. These two roads offer a direct connection to both the Clarksburg Town Center and to the Corridor Cities Transitway. Because they are new, yet-unbuilt roads, they should provide at least a wide outside lane, preferably bikeable shoulders.

Staff Recommendation: Make both West Old Baltimore and New Cut Road a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway) and assign it with a new countywide bikeway number, DB-X.

Bikeway: SP-67, Germantown Road / MD 118 (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: *MOBIKE requested on-road bicycle accommodation in addition to the shared-use path recommendation, which would make it a dual bikeway. This road offers a direct connection to both the Germantown Town Center and to the Corridor Cities Transitway. While the road features limited right-of-way, at least wide outside lanes should be provided when the road is re-constructed.*

Staff Recommendation: *Make Germantown Road (MD 118) a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway) and assign it with a new countywide bikeway number, DB-X.*

Agricultural Crescent

Bikeway: Sundown Road, Brink Road, West Old Baltimore Road (NEW)

Staff Analysis: MOBIKE requested a new bikeway providing east-west connectivity between Howard County and the I-270 corridor, north of Olney. This part of the County lacks sufficient east-west connectivity. Sundown Road is recommended for signed shared roadway in the draft Olney Master Plan update. Identifying these roads as part of the countywide bikeway network will enhance bicycle access between Laytonsville and the I-270 Corridor. Ensuring bicycle connectivity between satellite communities and the rest of the bikeway network is a major goal of this plan.

Staff Recommendation: Identify Sundown Road, Brink Road, and West Old Baltimore Road as a new collective signed shared roadway in the countywide bikeway network. Assign this route as SR-X.

Bikeway: DB-19, Woodfield Road/MD 124 (CHANGE)

Staff Analysis: *The Damascus Master Plan update, currently underway, is recommending a shared-use path along Woodfield Road only between the Town Center and Woodfield Elementary School. In order to ensure consistency with Damascus plan, this plan will recommend dual bikeway designation only between MD 27 and Woodfield Elementary School and between Warfield Road and Midcounty Highway. The central portion of Woodfield Road, between the school and Warfield Road, primarily travels through agricultural lands where on-road, but not off-road, bicycle accommodation is desirable. An off-road connection along hard surface park trails between the Damascus Town Center and Germantown will be available when the Countywide Park Trails Plan is fully implemented.*

Staff Recommendation: *Divide Woodfield Road into three separate countywide bikeway segments. Woodfield Road-north, between Ridge Road and Woodfield Elementary School, is recommended as a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway) to be consistent with the Damascus Master Plan update, and will be assigned DB-19. Woodfield Road-central, between Woodfield Elementary School and Warfield Road, is recommended for signed shared roadway only as SR-X. Woodfield Road-south, from Warfield Road to Midcounty Highway, is recommended as a dual bikeway (shared-use path and signed shared roadway) as DB-X.*

3. STAFF RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY

Staff recently learned of additional December 2003 testimony on the plan from Mr. Jonathan B. Morrison, a regular participant in the Montgomery County Bicycle Action Group. Below are Mr. Morrison's more substantial comments that were not already

addressed during worksession #1, followed by staff responses and recommendations. Mr. Morrison's testimony is included in the Board packet.

Comment: Revisit the Countywide Park Trails Plan and change the designation of trails therein to revert to their original hard surface designation.

Staff response: While hard surface park trails are considered part of the County's bikeway network as they offer off-road bicycling experiences completely separate from motorized traffic, the bikeways plan only addresses shared-use paths that are owned, operated and maintained by transportation agencies. Park trails are owned, operated and maintained by M-NCPPC. The bikeways plan was intentionally separated from the trails plan by the Planning Board in 1997 and, as a result, this bikeways plan does not recommend any changes to the park trails plan. The park trails plan and the bikeways plan are considered complementary documents.

Staff recommendation: Disagree. Keep the park trails plan and the bikeways plan separate.

Comment: Put measurable goals and objectives with express implementation deadlines in the plan.

Staff response: Disagree. Per comments from the County Executive, which were supported by the Planning Board at Worksession #1, the plan will not include any time frames for implementation. As a result, the plan cannot contain measurable goals and outcomes.

Staff recommendation: N/A

Comment: Mandate that no bicycle facility now or planned may be degraded via changes in other local master plans or other facility planning projects.

Staff response: Master plans are guidance documents. Community master plans and sector plans continuously amend functional master plans and vice versa. It's the nature of planning in Montgomery County. The bikeways identified in the plan are desire lines. They portray roads and corridors along which the Planning Board and the County Council desire a particular bikeway at this point in time. The plan should not include any language that mandates future decisions, particularly decisions made as part of facility planning processes. However, staff agrees the plan should include language about weighing the needs of bicyclists and the needs of motor vehicles equally as part of facility planning projects along roads for which a bikeway exists or is planned.

Staff recommendation: Insert a policy in the implementation chapter that states that the needs of bicyclists and the needs of motor vehicles must be equally considered as part of facility planning projects along roads for which a bikeway exists or is planned. Further, the policy should state that existing bikeways should not be eliminated as part of future roadway and intersection improvements.

Comment: Recommend maintenance funding for all classes of cycling routes after any weather related incident, not just once or twice a year as currently specified in the plan.

Staff response: Disagree. At Worksession #1, the Planning Board concurred with the County Executive's request to remove any detailed recommendations from the plan that direct County agencies to accomplish certain tasks within a certain time frame.

Staff recommendation: In moving Chapter 5 to an appendix per the Planning Board's recommendation, the section on funding for bikeway maintenance will be re-written to make it more generic, e.g. simply requesting that the County consider creating a dedicated, funded program for bikeway maintenance, but not including any language directing the County to accomplish this in a specific manner. In addition, frequency of maintenance ultimately would be determined by DPWT.

CK:kcw
Attachments

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