

January 5, 2016

To the Residents of Howard County,

Today I present to you Howard County's first Bicycle Master Plan. As Howard County continues to evolve and develop, this plan will serve to provide proactive guidance on how to accommodate the growing demand for transportation options in a cost-effective and comprehensive manner. Bicycling is more than just a healthy hobby. It also provides a functional form of travel for many individuals, and developing a stronger infrastructure for people biking provides numerous benefits for the entire county. These benefits include creating an environment for all citizens to lead healthier lifestyles, building opportunities for economic development, and improving our air quality through the reduction of emissions. This plan will serve as another avenue for Howard County to become a more sustainable community.

The key proposals of this plan focus on creating a more bikeable Howard County by recommending a review of certain policies, developing a bicycle network that connects people and places, and promoting awareness and education on living in a bicycle-friendly community.

One of the recommendations of this plan, as well as PlanHoward 2030, is the adoption of a complete streets policy. A complete streets policy outlines a community's vision for how their streets should be designed, operated and maintained so that all users feel secure walking, biking or



driving. Based on these recommendations, I therefore propose that the County hold the following policy and vision to guide future development, re-development and County road projects:

"To ensure that Howard County is a place for individuals of all backgrounds to live and travel freely, safely, and comfortably, public and private roadways in Howard County shall be safe and convenient for residents of all ages and abilities who travel by foot, bicycle, public transportation or automobile, ensuring sustainable communities Countywide."

In fulfilling another recommendation of this plan, I am organizing an implementation team to evaluate and execute the key components of this plan to the maximum extent feasible, and I have asked Christopher Eatough, the County's Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator, to chair this working group. Members of this team will include individuals from the Department of Public Works, the Department of Planning and Zoning, the Department of Recreation and Parks, Columbia Association, and the Howard County Public School System. The first task that I am directing this team to complete is an evaluation of the Howard County Design Manual, *Volume III, Roads and Bridges*, in order to provide recommendations on updating this document to integrate with the aforementioned complete streets policy.

This plan was developed with strong community engagement in order to better understand the direction the citizens of Howard County wish to move towards. This plan presents a strong framework for the future of Howard County and while we have already started to implement a few of the recommendations in this plan, I look forward to our continued progress in developing a bicycle-friendly community. With the adoption of this plan, Howard County reaffirms a commitment to its citizens to provide a healthy and sustainable environment to live in, and therefore I encourage the support of this plan from the entire Howard County community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Allan H. Kittleman".

Allan H. Kittleman
Howard County Executive