



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Considerations Concerning Proposed Bike Lanes on Centre Park Drive and Columbia 100 Parkway, Columbia

Memo To: Jenn Biddle, Chief, DPW, Traffic Engineering Division

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

Cc:
Yan Zhang, DPW, Traffic Engineering Division
Bruce Gartner, Administrator, Office of Transportation

Date: May 12, 2021

This memo summarizes the community engagement regarding the proposal to add bike lanes through resurfacing on Centre Park Drive and Columbia 100 Parkway.

On April 21, 2021 I presented to interested community members at a virtual public meeting concerning Howard County's proposed bike lanes for Centre Park Drive and Columbia 100 Parkway. At the meeting, I presented an overview of *BikeHoward*, the Bicycle Master Plan, excerpts from Howard County's Complete Streets policy, summarized the Bicycle Master Plan's recommendations for the two segments, and opened the meeting to comments, input, and questions. The [presentation](#) was posted to BikeHoward.org after the meeting. Five members of the public attended. Several comments were received via the Office of Transportation email and additional comments were collected from phone calls I made following the meeting.

The meeting was advertised to the public via:

- Posting of [flyers](#) along the project site
- The Ball Bulletin
- Office of Transportation (OoT) website meeting announcements
- *BikeHoward* website [meeting announcements](#)
- OoT Facebook posts
- OoT Twitter posts
- Email correspondence to BikeHoCo, Howard County's local bike advocacy group who communicates relevant information to their membership
- Email correspondence to the Horizon Foundation, who communicate relevant information to their interested affiliates
- Email correspondence to the Columbia Association, Downtown Columbia Partnership, Ellicott City Partnership, Howard County Public School System, Howard County Library System, Merriweather District, PTA Council, several bicycle retail stores, bicycle non-profits, and underserved community organizations asking them to communicate with interested affiliates
- Letters sent via postal mail to many property owners, businesses, and community associations in the areas adjacent to the proposed bike lanes.

The detailed proposal developed through consultation with Yan Zhang of the Department of Public Works (DPW) and communicated to the public included:

- Centre Park Drive – Narrowing the 13’ travel and turn lanes to 11’, removing the shoulder, adding in bike lanes along both sides, and adding a buffer along one of the bike lanes.
- Columbia 100 Parkway – Two proposals were offered.
 - o Proposal 1 – Retaining the center turn lane, removing the 8’ shoulder used for parking, and adding bike lanes along both sides
 - o Proposal 2 – Retaining the shoulder used for parking, removing the center turn lane, and adding bike lanes along both sides

The public was also given the opportunity to provide comment by direct communication through the Office of Transportation via the OoT email, website, postal mail, or phone by May 5, 2021. Additional outreach was made by phone to those not represented at the meeting including homeowner associations, property owners, hotel owners and other businesses.

Comments during the meeting were supportive of the markings to better accommodate cyclists. There was no concern or opposition to the bicycle accommodations. Comments offered outside of the meeting were mixed.

There was no objection to the proposal for Centre Park Drive either during the meeting or in comments provided elsewhere. **The Office of Transportation recommends DPW proceed with the proposal for Centre Park Drive as designed.**

While most feedback for Columbia 100 Parkway was positive for bike lanes, it did include some support for maintaining street parking, in particular from the representative from CRE, the property manager of Columbia Park Townhouses on Goose Landing Circle. Based on the community feedback received for Columbia 100 Parkway, **the Office of Transportation recommends a compromise marking design for Columbia 100 Parkway, providing bike lanes on both sides for most of the segment, but interrupting the southbound bike lane to maintain parking on Columbia 100 Parkway for approximately 400 feet between the Goose Landing Circle entrances.** This will require a minor lateral shift since the southbound bike lane is 5 feet wide and the shoulder is 8 feet wide, and will also require some narrowing of travel lanes to accommodate the parking lane and northbound bike lane. The Office of Transportation looks forward to working with DPW on this design.

We appreciate your continued commitment to bicycle safety, comfort, and connectivity in our County and to your ongoing efforts to implement Howard County’s Complete Streets Policy and Bicycle Master Plan.

Details from the meetings and email correspondence with the Office of Transportation are included in the following appendices. There were no phone calls or letters received by the Office of Transportation regarding the proposal.

- Appendix A – Attendance at the public meeting
- Appendix B – Comments made during the public meeting
- Appendix C – Comments submitted to the transportation email
- Appendix D – Comments made after OoT contacted them by phone

We will be in contact with you shortly to arrange a meeting. Please let us know if there is anything further you need at this time. Thank you very much.

Appendix A – Attendance at Public Meeting

1. OOT: Chris Eatough, Molly Nur
2. DPW: Yan Zhang
3. DTCS: 2
4. Members of the public: 5

Appendix B – Comments Made during the Public Meeting

- Will new pedestrian crossings be designed so that people riding bicycles will not be forced into traffic lanes?
 - o Yes, they are. Centre Park bike lanes continue through the crosswalk. The County will not be adding bike lanes on Executive Park on that portion of the road currently (since the road is not being resurfaced). Chris Eatough will check for future bike lane compatibility.
- A 5' bike lane seems narrow on Columbia 100 Pkwy. Is it possible to do a 2-direction bike lane on the right side?
 - o 5 feet is standard. We have several in Howard County. They can be wider, but you don't want to be too wide, then people misread them as multipurpose lanes and start to drive in them. Two-directional bike lanes have some challenges too. If you are driving in the opposite direction of the motor vehicles you can be where drivers don't expect you. Two-directional bike lanes can also be difficult to access. When possible, the County prefers one directional bike lanes on each side of the road.
- Why not a 3.5 ft buffer on each side on Centre Park Drive similar to Centennial Lane?
 - o It's basically an alignment issue. This configuration (with buffer on one side) lines up better with the travel lanes.
- Will a pedestrian bridge ever be considered to get pedestrians and cyclists across from Phelps Luck Dr. to the Giant plaza?
 - o We don't have currently have any plans for a pedestrian bridge. We can pass the question along to MDOT (who maintains the MD Route 108) to see if there are any plans. There is a pedestrian crossing at Phelps Luck/108/Centre Park with signalized control.
- With all of the parking lots along Columbia 100 Pkwy, why would County need to provide a parking lane and restrict bicyclists to narrow lanes?
 - o Many tractor trailers who use the hotels park along Columbia 100. In addition, residents from the townhomes park along there too. Part of an ongoing debate about our streets being used for parking verses for mobility.
- Opposed to option 2 (no center turn lane, keep parking lane) because the safety of the cyclists should be more important than providing convenient parking for the townhouses that already have parking. With Howard High School and the retailers in that area it is likely to used more by bicyclists.
- Doesn't seem like the parking provides that much more added risk for bicyclists except for door openings from parked cars (for option 2, no center turn lane, keep parking lane).
- Center turn lane helps get cars in and out of the parking lots along Columbia 100. Parking lanes are being used by tractor trailers, so an 8-foot shoulder can make it difficult for bicyclists to navigate around them. Go to industrial areas to see.
- Bikers are trying to access the area from Phelps Luck and south of MD 108. Are their efforts to increase safe bicycle access from those areas?

- 108 was resurfaced by SHA. Believe they included standards pedestrian features at that intersections (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks)
- Is there an on-demand signal that the bicyclists can use to cross MD 108?
 - Yes.
- Now for bicyclists (coming from Phelps Luck) traveling on the sidewalks, it is very challenging because the sidewalks have 90 degree bends. On the road, there is a right hand turn lane that everyone “flies” through.
 - Both sides of intersection have crossings. Bicyclists have option of functioning like a pedestrian in the crosswalks or in the road as a road user. An upgrade could be bicycle detection if it doesn’t exist already.
- It is difficult as a bicyclist to transition from road to sidewalk because you have to transition off the road very early to access the curb ramp, or hop a tall curb at the intersection.
- Is it legal to ride a bike on the sidewalk? What about e-bikes?
 - Yes, with a few limited situations (e.g., old Ellicott City). Same laws apply to e-bikes in Howard County as for bikes. State laws (default) say it is not legal unless local jurisdiction has laws, which Howard County does. The Columbia Association sets their own rules which may be different from the County.
- Will there be bike lanes going south along the end of Centre Park Drive to MD 108?
 - There won’t be bike lanes southbound over the resurfaced portion that the State has already completed. If there is utility work or roadwork to be done, then the possibility exists. A northbound bike lane is possible and will be included.
- Is it possible to provide a connection across the grass into the shopping plaza to provide safer access than through the intersection?
 - Not part of current road resurfacing effort, but it is something that could be considered for a future effort in conjunction with the shopping center property owners.
- Exxon station is a key refueling spot before people return rental trucks nearby. That might be a good place to make the bike path green to draw attention to the bike lanes so inexperienced truck drivers are aware of them.
- Is it possible to put bike lanes on Phelps Luck Drive? Or some other markings to slow down drivers? Currently Phelps Luck Drive is mostly unmarked.
 - Depending on the width of the roads. The County needs a 5-foot minimum for a bike lane and a 10-foot wide for travel lane. Also it depends on the road quality. The County can add bike lanes to roads even if they are not resurfacing, if the travel lines align well, there is sufficient road width, and there is enough life in the road surface. Community outreach would be required.
- There is a path to other side of creek on Billow Row. That would be a nice connection.
- Do lines on road help reduce speed?
 - Usually anything you do to cause some constraining has a marginal impact downward on speed (e.g., shoulder line, bike lanes). Parked cars cause speed reduction, too. The problem is that if there are parked cars, then bicyclists have to weave in and out between the shoulder and the road, and many bicyclists do not feel comfortable with that configuration.
- Will there be an entrance or pocket lane for bicyclists to leverage at the Arnold Corner development (where nurse used to be; now a vacant lot)?
 - Uncertain. Will need to check. There is a sidewalk there already. The ramps that show on google maps Street View appear new.

Appendix C – Comments via Transportation Email

- Q: Is there a way for bikes to get to the new courthouse or to Meadowbrook lane from Columbia 100 parkway?

- R: Chris Eatough - There is not a direct connection for the trip you reference.
 - o People on bikes would need to use Columbia 100 Parkway, Centre Park Drive, Red Branch Road and the pathways off Red Branch Road to get to the new Courthouse location or Meadowbrook Park. The current effort, referenced in the flyer below, is to improve Columbia 100 Parkway and Centre Park Drive for people on bikes by adding bike lanes this spring, since the road is being resurfaced.

Appendix D – Comments Made after Calling by Phone

- From Chris Eatough to Matt Wolf, DPW on 4-27-21. I received a request from _____ at the Hampton Inn on Columbia 100 Parkway. _____ asked if the road work for the resurfacing project on Columbia 100 Parkway can begin after 9am on weekends to minimize disturbance to hotel guests. Is this possible? Can you let the work crews know?
- Response: no weekend work is planned for this location.

Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 8:02 AM

To: Eatough, Christopher <CEatough@howardcountymd.gov>

Subject: Re: Columbia 100 Parkway

My only request is that construction begin after 9am on the weekends.

From: Eatough, Christopher <CEatough@howardcountymd.gov>

Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 11:00 AM

Subject: Columbia 100 Parkway

Can you please respond to this email to confirm you received it, and please let me know if you have any concerns or preferences for these options.

To summarize, Howard County is looking to make some changes to the configuration of Columbia 100 Parkway as the road will be resurfaced in the next month or so.

The changes will make the road more accommodating to cyclists and pedestrians.

We are looking at a couple of options:

1. Repurpose the existing shoulder on the west side of Columbia 100 Parkway to provide space for bike lanes. Note, if this change is made, there will be no space for parking on Columbia 100 Parkway.
2. Repurpose the existing center turn lane on Columbia 100 Parkway to provide space for bike lanes. This would allow the shoulder to remain for parking, but would no longer have the center turn, so left turns off Columbia 100 Parkway would be made from the main travel lane.

See below for a graphic showing these options and also more detail in the attached flyer and presentation from a recent public meeting on this topic. Thanks.

Sent: Monday, May 10, 2021 8:17 AM

To: Eatough, Christopher <CEatough@howardcountymd.gov>

Subject: Re: Columbia 100 Parkway

Chris, Thank you. That is correct.

From: Eatough, Christopher

Sent: Friday, May 7, 2021 4:08 PM

Subject: Columbia 100 Parkway

Nice to speak to you today regarding the proposed marking changes on Columbia 100 Parkway with respect to Goose Landing.

To summarize, Howard County is looking to make some changes to the configuration of Columbia 100 Parkway as the road will be resurfaced in the next month or so.

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We are looking at a couple of options:

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See below for a graphic showing these options and also more detail in the attached flyer and presentation from a recent public meeting on this topic.

On the call, you stated your preference for Columbia 100 Parkway road markings is to keep the current configuration, with parking available on the west side, a center turn lane, but no bike lanes.

You also stated your second preference is to keep the parking available and remove the center turn lane to provide space for the bike lanes, although you expressed concern with delay for drivers if the center turn lane is removed.

Please respond to this email to confirm this is an accurate description of your preferences, or if you have any additional input or questions about the road markings.

Thank you so much for your input on this. Chris

Phone call on 5/12/21 between Chris Eatough and _____, at Extended Stay American on Columbia 100 Parkway. Chris explained the concepts for marking changes, including the option to remove parking from southbound Columbia 100 Parkway. _____ was asked if there were any concerns on behalf of the Extended Stay America. _____ did not have any concerns.