



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Considerations Concerning Proposed Bike Lanes on Warwick Way and Birmingham Way, Marriottsville
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: July 8, 2021

This memo summarizes the community engagement regarding the proposal to add bike lanes through resurfacing on Warwick Way and Birmingham Way. The two segments specifically include:

- Warwick Way – from Marriottsville Road to Birmingham Way, and
- Birmingham Way – from Warwick Way to Dorchester Way.

Presentation. On April 28, 2021 I presented to interested community members at a virtual public meeting concerning Howard County’s proposed bike lanes for Warwick Way and Birmingham Way. At the meeting, I presented an overview of *BikeHoward*, the Bicycle Master Plan, excerpts from Howard County’s Complete Streets policy, some benefits of bike lanes, summarized the Bicycle Master Plan’s recommendations for the two segments, and opened the meeting to comments, input, and questions. Seven members of the public attended. Several comments were received via the Office of Transportation email – most prior to the meeting. After the meeting the presentation was posted on BikeHoward.org and can be found [here](#) for reference.

Advertising. The meeting and public comment period 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 community associations, the Howard County Public School System, Howard County Library System, PTA Council, several bicycle retailers stores, bicycle non-profits, and underserved community organizations asking them to communicate with interested affiliates
- Letters sent via postal mail to many property owners and businesses in the areas adjacent to the proposed bike lanes.

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

- Warwick Way
 - o Option 1 – Remove the center turn lane, narrow the travel lanes, and add buffered bike lanes along both sides
 - o Option 2 – Narrow the center turn lane and travel lanes and add a 3-foot shoulder along both sides. These are not bike lanes and do not comply with the recommendations of *BikeHoward* but would make travel easier for bicyclists than under the current scenario.

- Birmingham Way
 - o Retain the center turn lane, remove the 8-foot shoulder used for parking, and add bike lanes along both sides

Public comment. 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 12, 2021.

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.

Specific feedback. There was no objection to the proposals for Warwick Way and Birmingham Way during the **meeting**. Comments were all positive and supportive of the markings to better accommodate cyclists. Comments provided elsewhere were mixed.

Comments made via **email** were mixed. The majority of the comments were very supportive and positive about bike lanes. Some comments were negative, in part because of their perceptions of bicyclist behaviors, expectations of increased bicycle traffic, or perceptions that bike lanes are visually unappealing. Some more relevant concerns were expressed about reduced parking, the continued need for the center turn lane, and the space required to accommodate both vehicles and bicyclists.

One topic that was discussed and found support at the public meeting and that has also been requested by email is providing bike lanes along **Dorchester Way** to improve the connection by bicycle to MD 99. We understand that that Dorchester Way is being patched but not resurfaced at this time. The road is very wide (two 18-foot wide travel lanes for 36 feet total), accommodating bike lanes would be possible and would also help slow traffic.

As a result of this outreach, OoT recommends marking bike lanes on Warwick Way as per option 1 above (remove the center turn lane, narrow the travel lanes, and add buffered bike lanes along both sides). OoT also recommends marking bike lanes on Birmingham Way as was presented (retain the center turn lane, remove the 8-foot shoulder used for parking, and add bike lanes along both sides).

We would be happy to set up a meeting to review these recommendations with you if you wish.

We appreciate DPW’s 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. For additional detail please see:

- 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 – Images from the presentation

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.

Thank you for your assistance and coordination on this.

Chris Eatough.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Eatough". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Appendix A – Attendance at Public Meeting

1. Office of Transportation: Chris Eatough, Molly Nur
2. Department of Public Works: Yan Zhang
3. Department of Technology and Communication Services: 2
4. County Council: Representative from Liz Walsh's Office
5. Members of the public: 6

Appendix B – Comments Made during the Public Meeting

As a resident I am fully in favor of adding bike lanes. Wanted to thank you for all your work.

Response: We have a lot of support from the County. We have these public meetings to let local residents know about the project as well as about the Bicycling Master Plan and to give everyone an opportunity to provide input.

My son and his friends (teens) use their bikes a lot and as a parent, I'm very much in favor of it being as safe as possible.

Do traffic studies indicate removing the turn lane on Warwick cause a congestion problem? If not, let's make real (bike) lanes through there.

Response: Observed traffic volumes are not very heavy here, although this is not from a specific traffic study. It seems like the center turn lane may not be necessary, but it is something the Office of Transportation and the Department of Public Works will need to do more research on.

You mentioned Dorchester was being patched. If this could be micro surfaced and restriped there would a way to get to Route 99 and connect more of Waverly neighborhood.

Response: Micro surfacing is a new method of resurfacing roads. It is a thinner top coat which would require repainting but does not last as long as resurfacing. However, DPW does feel that Dorchester Rd requires patching rather than micro surfacing, so we won't be able to add bike lanes there at this time.

Can you go into more detail about Frederick Road?

Response: It is on our Bicycling Master Plan, but it is a state road, within the responsibility of the State Highway Administration. The County is not looking to add bike lanes on Frederick Road at this time, but we would like the state to add bike lanes when they resurface. Portions of Frederick Road near Mt. Hebron High School already have bike lanes. Sometimes when there is a development project underway, the developer can be asked to provide bike lanes. They are coming piece by piece along Frederick Rd from the State and from developers.

For logical termini, can we look into providing bike lane along Dorchester to Waverly Elementary?

Response: Dorchester can receive similar treatment when it is resurfaced, so yes -- it can happen, but it will have to wait until it is resurfaced, and currently budgets are tight. However, we will pass along these requests to DPW.

Also, was there a thought about protected Cycle track? in lieu of 5' bike lane?

Response: We did not consider physical separation (cycle track) for this location. We don't have any facilities currently that provide physical protection, although there are some being considered and designed in County projects. Many major cities do have them. This is probably not the first location we would choose as a test site for the County. They do offer more security for users of bike lanes, but they are more difficult to maintain (e.g., snow removal) so it does become more complicated when you add those elements.

I would definitely go for Option 1 on Warwick.

Will there be green paint, hashed at intersections, driveways?

Response: Green paint is sometimes used for bike facilities especially for conflict points. We are still in the early stages of bike facility design in Howard County and it is not typically used here. We will consider green paint options in our Complete Streets Design Manual that is being drafted. It is good to know there is interest in this element by County residents.

Again, I would still request you to consider adding/revising pavement markings on Dorchester to provide bike facility.

Response: We will look at it.

Really like the proposal to narrow down the lanes.

Appendix C – Comments via Transportation Email

Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 7:33 AM

I just have one main concern with the development of bike lanes off of Warwick way in Waverly Woods and that is the increase it may create with noise, crowding and overall traffic in the community. The concern is that it can possibly encourage bike riders to utilize these roads when they may normally use different routes. Because of this, the change may create increased bike traffic, noise, and crowding on roads that were designed primarily to handle traffic for the Waverly Woods Community and not the surrounding area in addition to growing bike traffic. There already is a young man that rides his bike up and down Birmingham often blasting a radio tied to his bike. These bike lanes can bring a lot of unwanted traffic to the community. The addition of bike lanes would serve better in locations of Howard county where there are already established county parks or bike trails to assist the bikers in accessing those accommodations. Dorchester and Birmingham are not very heavily driven at this time and tend to be very wide roads which can easily accommodate bikes as well as cars. I do not see any need for bike lanes at this time. Has there been a road study to count the traffic and observe the traffic patterns and bike patterns to see if there is a viable need for bike lanes?

There is also parking (allowed) along the road when you drive down Warwick that causes such crowding there is room for only one car, yet other cars have not stopped at the stop sign and barrel down expecting you to move over? Parking should not be allowed on that road.

Sent: Wednesday, April 21, 2021 10:39 AM

I am NOT in favor of bike lanes. In general, to me, they're a waste of space as bikers tend to do what they want anyway. Re Waverly Woods, adding the lanes will only narrow these streets and within the neighborhood make little sense.

Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 9:02 PM

For Bike Lanes, I DO NOT want to make it on Birmingham Way. I reside in Turnberry Way townhouse (Fairway Villas II) near Birmingham Way and I am one of the FVII Home Owners Association Board members.

Many times, all or some of townhouse owners need to park their car on the side of Birmingham Way due to asphalt construction, tree removal, landscaping, and something like that. If Bike Lanes are there, there are NO places to park their car.

Second reason is that there is only one gate to go out and come inside to the community to get to home. If many bikes cross the main entrance, especially on weekend, it will be very hard to go out and come in. A potential car accident can be expected.

So, please understand my concerns and think one more time for that. Sincerely, __

Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 7:00 PM

I would like to share that I completely disagree with painting bike lanes on Birmingham Way and Warwick Way. They aren't needed since bike riders using those roads stay to the side if they're not going fast enough (uphill) and car drivers are careful to leave room around them to keep everyone safe. What we have is working! Adding lines to these roads only make for more visual noise and they are unsightly. They're not providing a safer roadway. Save the paint.

Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 1:34 PM

I am a Waverly Woods resident and I LOVE the idea of the bike lanes. I would like to further ask if it could be considered to put a sidewalk connecting Waverly Woods to Turf Valley. Since those two neighborhoods go to school together at Mount View Middle, there are a LOT of kids trying to get to each other by walking/riding along Marriottsville Road. My wish is for some sort of sidewalk or walking path along Marriottsville to give these kids a safe place to walk. Many of them are also sneaking out and doing this at night. I worry that someone isn't going to be expecting that and not see them and hit them. But, either way, it is not safe during the day or night.

Sent: Tuesday, April 20, 2021 1:20 PM

While I won't be able to attend the meeting, I wanted to share my support and excitement for this proposition. I sincerely hope that the paths are approved and added to our neighborhood—that would be terrific for the entire community to enjoy!

Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 2:40 PM

I strongly support bike lanes on Warwick Way & Birmingham Way. I am a cyclist & use these roads quite often. I live on the opposite side off Barnsley.

Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2021 8:41 PM

I am a resident in the area and look forward to the addition of bike lanes. I initially supported Option 1 (5' bike lanes) for Warwick Way. However, as I think about it, I realize there are a considerable number of vehicles turning left into the various commercial areas along Warwick Way, including the Weis Shopping Center and the various commercial centers along Warwick as well as the Waverly Woods golf course, the Waverly pool and Playground. I'm concerned that traffic will back up behind those attempting left turns and impatient drivers might do foolish things. I think that for that reason, I would support Option 2, (turn lanes plus 3' shoulders - no formal bike lanes).

Sent: Thursday, April 29, 2021 10:35 AM

I am in support of bike lanes in the Waverly Woods neighborhood.

Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 2:12 PM

I received the letter about the project that will put a bike lane on Warwick and Birmingham Way. I have no objection to installing those lanes to aid in having bike traffic have a safer way to travel on those roads. Yet I have great concern in the way the people who use those bike lanes and have put drivers at risk. I'm a county resident and travel route 99 and the roads under review and have often come upon cyclists that aren't obeying the proper traffic laws for vehicles. Some of the violations have been going through red lights, riding side by side impeding motorized vehicles right of way, and other unsafe practices that endanger drivers and cyclists alike.

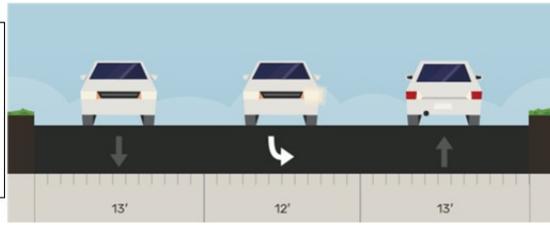
I like to see if the county is serious about providing safe bike lanes for cyclists that a program would also be available to educate the cyclist how to properly follow safe road habits. I must register my vehicle and take a test in order to drive a vehicle. Maybe that is needed to address some of my concerns for cyclists. At times I have been given the finger when I come upon riders riding side by side if I blow my horn to let them know that I'm approaching. I have been forced to go into oncoming lanes of traffic to avoid hitting a cyclist not staying in their lane. I see bike lanes that end with no apparent reason and no notice to anyone.

I applaud the Counties effort with this issue to make bike traffic better. I just think it's time to make the people using these lanes to be held accountable to understand safe habits. Thank you for your time.

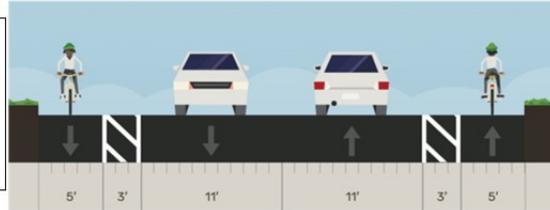
Appendix D

Warwick Way

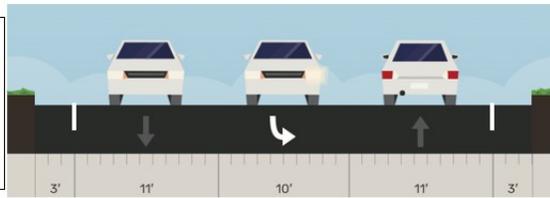
Current



Proposed Option 1
Bike lanes
No turn lane

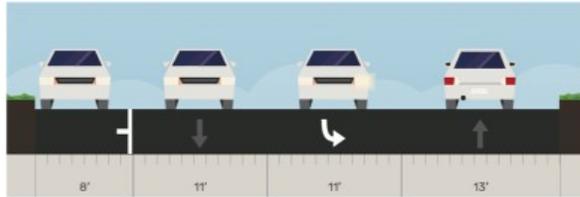


Proposed Option 2
Turn lane
3' shoulders



Birmingham Way

Current



Proposed Option 1
Bike lanes
No shoulder for parking

