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Annapolis Planning Commission  
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David Iams  
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Pete Gutwald, City of Annapolis

June 18, 2018

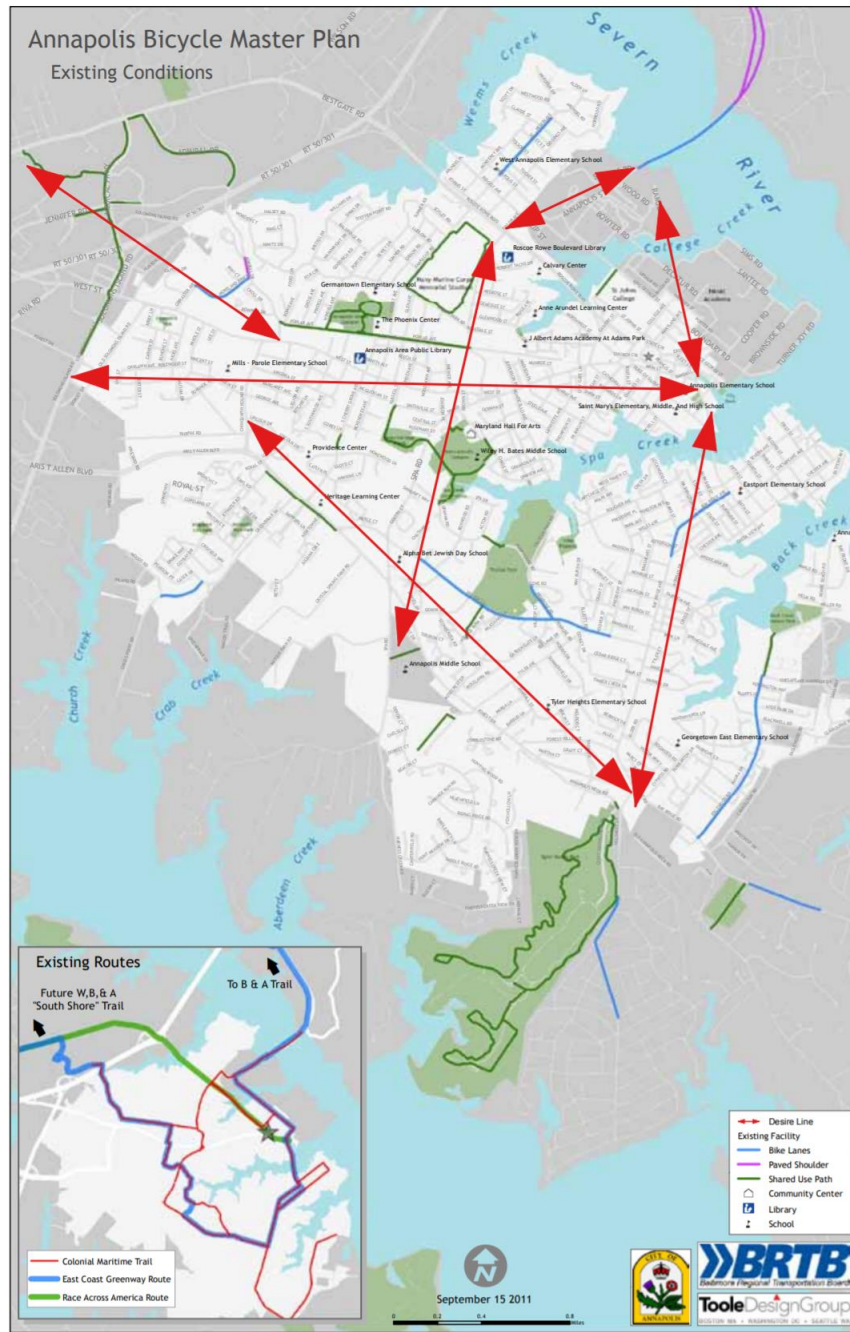
Dear Mr. Waldman-

Please find attached a statement commenting on the plans put forth in the Forest Drive/Eastport Sector Study for a multiuse path along the Forest Drive corridor. In summary, I am encouraged by the additional focus in the latest draft of the study, but want to supplement the options presented with practical implementation suggestions that will result in the highest return on investment.

I am unable to attend the public meeting on June 20, 2018 so please have Ms. Nash enter this letter into the official meeting record. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best Regards,  
Alex Pline

Leaving or entering the City of Annapolis by bicycle requires crossing the ring of automobile-oriented arterial roadways that surround the historic core of Annapolis, including: Roscoe Rowe Boulevard (MD Highway 70), US Highway 50/301, Solomons Island Road (MD Highway 2), and Aris T Allen Boulevard/Forest Drive (MD Highway 665). Bicyclists of necessity can be seen in all parts of Annapolis, weaving routes through neighborhoods and often on sidewalks to access commercial and employment destinations. The existing network of off-street bicycle facilities is similarly discontinuous, but provides the initial links in what will be an exemplary regional trail network, connecting neighborhoods and forming the core of Annapolis’s future Bicycle Network.



1. Desired and Existing Bicycle Network

I appreciate the updates in the May 31 draft of the sector study that brings bicycle mobility to the forefront. Both the short term and long term issues are addressed in section 2.7.2.2, Bike and Pedestrian Networks, as well as the potential solutions in section 3.4 Mobility: Pedestrian and Bikes.

Building on the discussion of the issues and potential solutions, it is important to go into additional detail because the efficacy of bicycle infrastructure for both transportation and recreation is very dependent on the implementation. I refer to an article published on strongtowns.org (<https://www.strongtowns.org/journal/2014/5/19/follow-the-rules-bikers.html>) which discusses the auto-centric cultural bias of planners and engineers and how it affects bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure implementation. Perhaps equally important is how this bias affects public perception of this infrastructure. I encourage you to read the entire article.

*“...the concept of a “complete street” as “separate but equal”, not to diminish the despotism of racial segregation but to show the parallel of mindsets with how most of the country treats bikers and walkers. When we build a trail – or a separate drinking fountain – we’re (engineers, planners, drivers, society) doing something within our comfort zone. It allows us to feel like we’ve fairly accommodated others while not really having to change our approach to be accommodating. We can continue to act in a despotic way only now with a tinge of self-righteousness. We paid for them to have theirs, after all.”*

*“We need to rethink our urban areas. They need to be redesigned around a new set of values, one that doesn’t seek to accommodate bikers and pedestrians within an auto-dominated environment but instead does the opposite: accommodates automobiles in an environment dominated by people. It is people that create value. It is people that build wealth. It is in prioritizing their needs – whether on foot, on a bike or in a wheelchair – that we will begin to change the financial health of our cities and truly make them strong towns.”*

With this in mind, when the city begins to implement infrastructure outlined in the sector study, we have to make sure it is done in a way that does not just accommodate bikes in an auto-centric environment, but results in a network that is not only safe, but also contiguous, fast and comfortable. If we expect to shift mode share based on this infrastructure – that is to fully realize the return on investment – there must be a definite “value add” for bike riders. For example, faster transit time, bike parking at the front door of the destination, and/or a more pleasant trip. If we always give priority to the auto mode, why would someone choose to ride a bike? This is the most common criticism. Or worse, it incentivizes breaking the law which is always most unsafe for the bike rider because this infrastructure prioritizes the mistakes of drivers over the mistakes of bike riders. The following examples illustrate this bias towards the auto mode and implementation suggestions that attempt to remove this bias.



*2. An Unrealistic Expectation For Path Users*

This bike path requires cyclists to stop at every curb cut. Anyone trying to get down this bike path bike will likely never fully stop, resulting in a very unsafe situation.



*3. Shared Use Path Along Forest Drive*

In the study area, the existing path near the Safeway grocery store is typical of US-based infrastructure along arterial roads where it is clear the path users are secondary because the turn radii are large and the auto lanes uninterrupted which promotes fast vehicle movements in an area designed to (minimally) accommodate pedestrians and bike riders.

In a similar vein to the visual examples of community character in the draft document, examples of well-designed bicycle infrastructure – we can look to the Dutch for inspiration – will help guide future



implementation. The Dutch are not only leaders in urban bicycle infrastructure, but also suburban bicycle infrastructure. The You Tube Channel “Bicycle Dutch” (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC67YlPrRvsO117gFDM7UePg>) is an excellent resource for examples of both.

Contrast the above images with this Dutch junction design where the bicycles are given priority and this priority is supported by the visual treatments on the pavement.



*4. Typical Dutch Junction Design*

Additionally, an east/west separated path along the corridor should be as isolated from the major arterial as far as possible. Not only will this make the user experience more pleasant, but will move conflict points away from arterials and allow for vehicle speeds to decrease before a conflict point. This is consistent with the complete streets philosophy and many of these ideas are also discussed in the National Association of City Transportation Officials Urban Street Design Guide (<https://nacto.org/publication/urban-street-design-guide/>).

There are a number of areas that are slated for development along the corridor that the city should require this type of design as a condition for the development such as The Village at Providence Point and Rocky Gorge (at least garnering an easement for when a path can practically be extended along Aris T Allen). Furthermore, around Annapolis Middle School, there is copious right of way owned by Anne Arundel County that could easily be used for this path and would significantly benefit the children who attend the school. This would also mitigate the current safety concerns resulting from the recent crashes involving school children. Funding for this area of the trail could be sought through the federal Safe Routes to Schools part of the Transportation Alternatives Program.

Given the corridor is a priority residential development area, the large number of existing commercial services and the lack of non-auto infrastructure, construction of this path along the entire corridor should be the highest priority in the capital improvement project recommendations.