

Meeting Minutes

TO: Anthony Ricottilli

FROM: Jonthan Norman, RLA

DATE: March 26, 2025

SUBJECT: South Shore Trail Phase IV Revised Schematic Design Community Meeting

On March 6, 2025, a Revised 30% Schematic Design Community Meeting was held at the Crofton Library at 6:00 pm for the South Shore Trail Phase IV. After the presentation, County and Pennoni Staff talked with the community about the project. Below is some of what was discussed:

1. Multiple residents spoke up in support of trail and asked about timing for the trail.
2. The resident at 1393 Fairfield Loop, who backs up to the trail was very opposed to the trail and raised concerns about a previous easement that he had granted being used for the trail.
3. A number of residents were very concerned about the level of tree trimming that has been on going by BGE.
4. Therese Gately and other residents along MD178 adjacent to the fairgrounds, were very opposed to the current alignment and voiced their opposition.
5. Spoke with one of the residents along Genco Lane whom we had met with previously and reviewed the changes that were made in the trail alignment there. Discussed providing a fence between Genco Lane and the trail and limiting access to the MDOT r/w through maintaining the existing MDOT fence along I-97/MD 178.
6. Spoke with Jack Keane after the presentation. Jack suggested the following design changes:
 - a. There are several culverts along the Eisenhower GC that come under MD 178. In these areas the trail swings back toward the road to avoid modifications to the culvert and potential wetland impacts. Jack suggested keeping the trail straight here.
 - b. At Fairfield Loop (north), Jack questioned the crossing of Fairfield Loop at the MD 178 intersection. He suggested crossing further down Fairfield Loop where the County has r/w. We reviewed the reasons for crossing at the location where we are crossing, mainly topography and the safety of a mid-block vs. intersection crossing.
7. Spoke with Michael Coale before the meeting. He is located between Fairfield Loop and MD 178. Generally supportive of the project and excited to see it complete. Concerned about recent BGE tree trimming.
8. Spoke with Steve Deterding and Scott Noll after the meeting. They are neighbors and live between Fairfield Loop and MD 178. Generally supportive of the project and excited to see it complete. Concerned about recent BGE tree trimming. Scott abuts the property that contains the existing billboards (Barbara Quinn). We discussed the need to work around the billboards and the possibility that this may necessitate an easement from Scott to the County for a trail realignment around the billboards. Scott was generally receptive. Scott also spoke up during the meeting indicating that while he may not prefer to have the trail immediately adjacent to his property, he is generally supportive of the trail and sees the benefit and is anxious to see it built.
9. Spoke with Jon Korin, President of Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (www.bikeaaa.org). He described what his organization is about and how this section of trail is important to the overall bike network of AA County and beyond. Mentioned there is mapping on his website that shows the connectivity of all the County trails. He is very excited about this project and can't wait to see it constructed. He gave out his business card and mentioned he will be attending the South Shore Trail Phase III Community Meeting next month.
10. An attendee questioned the need for a traffic study for the implementation of the trail.
11. A separate shoulder/separation/barrier was discussed on the Waterbury Road overpass. Discussions

- regarding this item are ongoing with SHA.
12. A separation/barrier along MD 178 will be designed per AASHTO guidelines.
 13. The Crownsville Park spur was discussed. Coordination and timing of each project will need to be coordinated.
 14. Trail operation is dusk to dawn and the trail will be maintained by AACO Department of Recreation & Parks.

The following is a transcript of the Question-and-Answer portion of the meeting:

Question: What is a specimen tree?

Answer: That's a large tree, 30" around at chest height and there are some mitigation regulations associated with trees that large.

Question: So, they are very old?

Answer Yes. It's a County requirement that they be surveyed and measured and the conditions checked and noted in a report and that basically gets taken care of at the beginning of the project.

Question: The crossing at Crownsville Road where the hospital is, that is very challenging during the summer when you have the Renaissance Fair or County Fair, are you guys going to have a "walk", "don't walk" sign there? How are they going to get through? How are those bike path people going to get across Crownsville Hospital when the traffic is really, really bad in the summertime?

Answer: So there will be pedestrian signals as part of that whole, part of that signal redesign and pedestrian signals will be added.

Question: Crownsville Hospital is going to put a traffic circle there at some point too. Yea the intersection is going to move down to Cranberry.

Answer: Unfortunately, yea we don't really know about that separate project, but I think that's been floated out there.

Question: What I was going to ask that's going to impact that trail because they're moving Crownsville Road where there's a Hospital Park and make a new cut for it, I don't know what's going to happen with the intersection that's there now, maybe a circle or something. And also, what is your timeline for construction of Phase IV, do you have any idea?

Answer: Timeline wise, it's hard to tell at 30% because then we get into the 60% and other issues may arise between property discussions and right-of-way issues.

Question: Are we talking years?

Answer: 18 to 24 months. It may be sooner depending on how smoothly things go.

Question: I have a question on reforestation. I happen to live where the transmission lines are. If you've been down there lately you'll see what they are doing to that property. They have made a tragedy out of Generals Highway. Especially where we live, all the way down the road going towards Crownsville. What, if anything, is going to happen to reforestation on that, you say about 30" trees? Those guys just cut them down.

Answer: Call BGE.

Question: We have talked to BGE.

Answer: They have a certain area that they can maintain for their transmission mains.

Question: We've been here for years and now they are expanding.

Answer: We understand. The County didn't even know that this was occurring. BGE just has that area and they just do it. They come in and it's just maintenance for their transmission lines. The county wishes we could help out with that but we don't have an answer.

Question: Has there been a traffic study done of the area? It is ludicrous that bike riders, pedestrians are going to cross an off ramp of I-97 on to Generals Highway right at that park area. Ludicrous.

Answer: There is a traffic signal there already and there will be pedestrian signals that will be coordinated with that traffic signal.

Question: Have you done a traffic study? A traffic study? The amount of traffic that comes down Generals Highway on a regular basis and then you've got the summer Fridays which the Bay Bridge impacts Generals Highway then you've got all the events at the Anne Arundel County Fair that is going to back Generals Highway up a lot, then you have 9 weeks of Renaissance traffic coming in. Has a traffic study been done?

Answer: No. A traffic study hasn't been done.

Question: Why not? The trail, where it starts in Millersville is a nice backroad path. Why can't this trail continue in the back? All of Crownsville Hospital grounds, which everybody wants that to stay green. It's a beautiful scenic route. You are not bothering homeowners there. This trail is coming right in my driveway. You will not get an easement from me. Absolutely not. You can request it, you will not get it.

Answer: Understood.

Question: We fought this before. Another plan was looked at, at Crownsville Road and I guess the AACO Fair has a little more clout than homeowners do.

Answer: If we could speak one-on-one, we'd love to speak with you about the driveways in that area. No a traffic study hasn't been done. It's something the County could possibly look into. When looking at the traffic signals they look at the number of trips and there is data they can gather for the traffic signals and go through that area and look at that. The pedestrian signals will be designed to deal with the amount of traffic coming through the area according to State and County safety and codes. It's all being looked. Again, this is a 30% stage. We still have more design to do but no we haven't done a wide traffic study.

Question: What is the proposal to go over the fair or over the golf course? Is it going to be a pathway through or a bridgeway?

Answer: It'll just be a path. There will be surface crosswalks.

Question: Some of the design challenges you mentioned early in, is that some of the challenges going back to 178? What were some of those challenges that you ran into?

Answer: We dealt with a lot of topography in getting from point A to B in a logical, accessible fashion. There were a number of property owners, environmental features, wetlands, streams, back narrow roads with limited right-of-way.

Question: I notice that the trail appears to be located on the south shoulder of the Waterbury Road bridge over I-97, will that shoulder be barrier separated from traffic?

Answer: That is the plan, yes. It is an ongoing discussion with MDOT because it is their bridge. There will be a barrier of some sort. They have indicated that they don't want a Jersey barrier, for instance but they do want some sort of separation. Since we are operating in state right-of-way they have a big say in that area so there are ongoing discussions in the design moving forward. We will have an update on that as we move into 60%.

Question: Just an FYI, the most recent version of the Crownsville Hospital rollout from just a few weeks ago, they have another intersection where they are building a new Crownsville Road as well that is then going to mean there will be another intersection that will have to cross so you might want to be talking because its going to be germane to your planning it there is another intersection that you will have to cross.

Answer: We are aware. It is a question of which project comes first. We don't believe this Crownsville Hospital plan has been finalized.

Question: Yes, I don't believe so, but I think it is in your next 0-5-year plan so given the fact that these two are sort of coming concurrently we just want to make sure nothing is delaying anything. We are excited about sidewalks.

Answer: For sure. Absolutely.

Question: The prior stretch, the Odenton stretch, it's been delayed several years now. Is it actually under construction? I haven't seen anything.

Answer: Phase II is under construction.

Question: It is? They are actually doing something now?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Because it's been delayed 2 years.

Answer: Yes. The contractor mobilized December 5. So, they are doing a lot of the sediment erosion control, preliminary clearing and grubbing. A lot of dirt work is going in. We'll be ramping up construction with that. You'll see some pavement going down here in the next couple of months when it gets warmer out. If you go up to the Sappington Station Circle, you'll see construction equipment.

Question: Parks around here are dusk to dawn, is this trail open 24 hours a day?

Answer: No. Dusk till Dawn.

Question: Is there a spur into the planned Crownsville Park?

Answer: That is an ongoing discussion that we are coordinating with Rec and Parks on.

Question: When the path gets right up against Generals Highway, what kind of separation will there be between the road and the path?

Answer: There will be fencing and walls, walls with fencing. There will also be guardrails. So, there will be plenty of separation. It kind of depends on how much distance there is between the two. Over a certain distance there won't be anything but when you get within, I think the AASHTO Requirements are anything less than 8' between the edge of the pavement, not the travel lane, and then the trail there has to be some sort of separation or barrier.

Question: When this is complete, who is in charge of maintaining it?

Answer: AACO Recreation and Parks.

Question: These crosswalk improvements, are they going to be accompanied by any kind of traffic light? Especially at the Honeysuckle Lane and the golf course area?

Answer: Only where there are existing traffic lights. There will be signage and pedestrian signals.

Question: Where you have people cross coming out of Belvoir Farms and the golf course and the intersection with the road, that's already a hassle to make left turns. You're going to throw up a pedestrian crossing there and think all those four different directions are going to be able to watch for the pedestrians?

Question: Fairfield Loop and Generals highway, same thing. Every single intersection that is on that road is treacherous. Twenty years ago, there was barely any traffic here. You need to add another lane to 97 or something. The traffic on Generals highway, then you put pedestrians walking down Generals Highway, I'm with her it's just ridiculous. There are people going 70 – 80 mph 8 feet from that 8-foot easement you were talking about. 8 feet to stop from going 70 mph to hit a pedestrian? What's there going to be a stockade fence or a split rail fence going between there? Then how about the properties that we didn't buy, properties that are right up against the public, right behind my house now? I've got a pool, a hot tub. The trail is going to be 15' from my pool. Do we have any say in that?

Answer: Yes. This is why we are having this meeting.

Question: Can you put a fence or something in between us?

Answer: We can't guarantee that right now.

Question: If I have to buy a fence, I'm going to go get something, you know I'm going to do it in all graffiti. All the way down. Seriously. I'm totally against this. Its 15' from my yard. The railroad bed you are talking about goes right through my yard. We sold this property to the County and they were supposed to just maintain it. We sold it and they had this idea a long time ago. They never told us this when we sold our property to them. We sold the property that you are going to use to the County, back to the County on conditions that they were supposed to just keep it nice. They had this in mind the whole time when we sold it. They did. They had it in mind the whole time. It's been 15 -20 years since we sold it to them. The property I'm talking about has been family owned for over 80 years. I don't want a public trail right up against my property. Of course, everybody else had a say. The parks have say, the road's got say, everybody else got say. But it sounds like the people that own the properties right up against the trail, we don't have much say. We don't have a say, and we bought the property. I'm sure it's going to change our property value. I'm sure it's going to do all that. Other trails that have been put in elsewhere, all it's done is bring riff-raff to other neighborhoods. The B&A Trail, I own a house in Millersville, all it did was bring crime to our neighborhood. I'm done. I mean, I will have a nice graffiti wall about 175' of my property when you open that trail there.

Question: I'm also impacted and of course I don't prefer a bunch of random people riding and walking by my house but, I also see the benefit. I also see the benefit of the community and I know that our family would love to jump on the trail and go. So, I realize that it's controversial and I may not work for everyone and it's not going to work for everyone and so you just have to make the best of it.

Answer: And again, that's why we're coming out here now instead of slapping the hey we're going to do this in 2 weeks. We appreciate the input. We use the input.

Question: You had the same meeting last year. It sounds like none of it was heard and you're doing the same exact thing. Nothing changed.

Answer: We spent 2 years trying to come up with a solution. We really did try to find a solution.

Question: But nothing changed. This is the same exact plan.

Answer: It has changed somewhat in front of your property. We pushed it as close to the road as we can get. Let's talk about that offline. Any other general questions.

Question: The metes and bounds of what you have drawn along the right-of-ways, do not coincide with what we have been dealing with for BGE. So saying that, what side of that fence coming down from Waterbury Road to the intersection at Crownsville Park, what side, is it going to be on the road side or the residential side? That fence that goes down through there?

Answer: Close to Waterbury it's on the fence side. On the left side looking the traffic signal towards the ramp it will be on the left side. Close to the traffic signal it crosses to the other side of the fence.

Question: So, it crosses the stream that feeds the South River?

Answer: Yes. That's where we have a bridge and a boardwalk.

Question: The South Shore Trail has been a proposed County project; I think the first plans that I saw was 1990. I don't think that was the first plan. Do you know?

Answer: 1989.

Question: So, I would say to the people who think they are getting bushwhacked, this thing's been planned since 1989.

Question: We've lived there longer than that though.

Answer: We understand. We don't want to take this time to go back and forth about that. We appreciate everyone's concerns. Some people may be opposed, and other people do like it. We can't please everyone. We apologize for that but it seems like there are no more general questions.