

Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County

January 18, 2020

The Honorable Howard County Council
George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, MD 21043

RE: CR14-2020, Adoption of WalkHoward – Support

Dear Council Members:

The Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County is an alliance of local and state organizations working together to foster healthy, equitable and sustainable communities through smarter development and transportation decisions and improved protections for the county's natural, historic and cultural resources.

We support Resolution 14-2020 to adopt the Howard County Pedestrian Master Plan, WalkHoward. Howard County needs better sidewalks, crosswalks, bus landing pads and paths so people can safely and comfortably walk anywhere they need to go. Investing in our pedestrian infrastructure will positively impact our environment, public health and economic vibrancy.

We appreciate the great work that went into developing WalkHoward, which outlines a vision, goals, guiding principles and recommendations to create a more walkable Howard County. As an alliance that values equity and inclusion, we are pleased that the project prioritization process will take existing conditions, community destinations and socioeconomic factors into consideration to make sidewalks and pedestrian facilities safer and compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The plan will also utilize the Vulnerable Populations Index (VPI) and performance measures included in the Complete Streets Policy (CR120-2019) to yield greater coordination and accountability. Indeed, it is crucial to implement these projects in neighborhoods with the most need first.

Fortunately, we have witnessed historic investments in biking and walking over the last few years – and it is critical for that trend to continue. Implementing WalkHoward will require significant investment over the next several years. The Smarter Growth Alliance urges the County Executive and County Council to put forth the necessary funding to ensure projects and priority connections are completed in a timely fashion.

*Audubon MD-DC • Audubon Society of Central Maryland • Clean Water Action • Coalition for Smarter Growth
Community Ecology Institute • Earth Forum of Howard County • HARP • Horizon Foundation
Howard County Citizens Association • Howard County Conservancy • Howard County Sierra Club
Maryland Conservation Council • Maryland League of Conservation Voters • Maryland Ornithological Society
Patapsco Heritage Greenway • Preservation Maryland • Safe Skies Maryland • Savage Community Association
The People's Voice • Transition Howard County*

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Again, WalkHoward provides a clear trajectory forward. Now is the time to get the job done. The Smarter Growth Alliance for Howard County looks forward to seeing WalkHoward become reality and positively impact the lives of Howard County residents.

Sincerely,

Bicycling Advocates of Howard County
Jack Guarneri
President

Clean Water Action
Emily Ranson
Maryland Program Coordinator

Earth Forum of Howard County
Sue L. Harris
Director

Horizon Foundation
Jennifer Arice White, MSPH
Senior Community Engagement Officer

Howard County Citizens Association
Stu Kohn
President

Howard County Sierra Club
Carolyn Parsa
Chair

Maryland Conservation Council
Paulette Hammond
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Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Benjamin Alexandro
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Preservation Maryland
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Safe Skies Maryland
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Legislative Director

Savage Community Association
Susan Garber
Board Chair

The People's Voice, LLC
Lisa M. Markovitz
President

Transition Howard County
Margo Duesterhaus
President

cc: The Honorable Calvin Ball, County Executive