

**ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT #H590502
BELLE GROVE ROAD SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS
COMMENTS/ QUESTIONS/ RESPONSES**

The following are comments, questions and responses submitted during the September 28, 2023, Public Meeting:

Comment 1 (Ted Kaniewski)

How many bicyclists are expected to use these new proposed bike paths?

Response 1:

As there is an existing pathway and sidewalk along the corridor, we expect the numbers of cyclists to increase up when provided safer, more comfortable and connected areas to ride.

Comment 2 (Rose Grabowski)

Shared use path already exists. Road is too narrow when approach by emergency vehicles.

Response 2:

The current path is not Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant in many locations due to width and obstructions within the path, as well as damaged sidewalks and portions of roadway without any sidewalks. Improving transportation alternatives along the road will decrease traffic, improving emergency response operations.

Comment 3 (Lamont)

Keep up the good work!

Response 3:

Thank you for your feedback.

Comment 4 (no name left)

Belle Grove Rd. is already an extremely narrow road in some places, how do you intend to fit a 10' wide "pedestrian walkway"?

Response 4:

The GBA plans depict the following: West of 10th Street the existing roadway width is maintained and right-of-way from adjacent property owners would be needed. East of 10th Street right-of-way would need to be acquired from adjacent property owners and the existing roadway would need to be narrowed slightly, but standard 11-foot lane widths would be maintained to provide adequate roadway width.

Comment 5 (Stephen Hennessey)

Bike trail crime. Money goes to education.

Response 5:

Thank you for your feedback. Looking through many studies on bike paths, as well as walkability in urban environments, research suggests that they reduce crime, in large part due to increasing pedestrian presence in the community.

Comment 6 (no name left)

It is interesting that in the beginning of this project it was called the "connected trail" and now being marketed as a bike trail. It's been changed to the "BGR Safe Improvements Project" and it just [seems] like it's being pushed as a "safety" project. Why did GBA drop the project and why are you so [insistent] on getting the project approved and built?

Response 6:

The project was first conceived as a bike trail during the initial process with GBA, and it is currently designated by the Eastcoast Greenway as the best route for cyclists to take between established bike paths; however, due in part to the community feedback, the County has taken over the project but with a higher emphasis on pedestrian safety, as opposed to a dedicated bike lane. The County feels it's important to continue with the design because Belle Grove Rd. has an alarming safety record, and the funds allotted for this project can go a long way in improving the safety and traffic conditions of a major road.

Comment 7 (Jack Keene)

Realign street intersections with Belle Grove Road to meet at 90 degree angles rather than oblique angles: 2nd Ave. & Marshall, 3rd Ave & Chatham, 10th Ave., 1st Ave & Morgan. Reduces number of crosswalks.

Response 7:

Thank you for your feedback. As the County proceeds with design, it will take these suggestions into consideration.

Comment 8 (no name left)

5700 Block Belle Grove Rd. - opposed 5ft bike path opposite new 10' side existing. There is a water/drainage right of way from Belle Grove that crosses under Belle Grove Rd. to pond/environmental issues.

Response 8:

Thank you for your feedback. As the County proceeds with design, it will take these suggestions into consideration.

Comment 9 (no name left)

We do not want the sidewalk on the odd side of Belle Grove Road! The sidewalk on the even side is too wide, the lanes are uneven as is. We also do not want access to the water near 5746 [Belle Grove

Response 9:

Thank you for your feedback. As the County proceeds with design, it will take these suggestions into consideration.

Comment 10 (Rose Grabowski)

Why not put the path as an extension (on the same side as the current path, so peds do not have to cross Belle Grove? Do not make road so narrow so there is no pull off when approached by emergency vehicles.

Response 10:

See response 2. Additionally, there are too many right-of-way constraints (e.g. park land) to leave the trail on the norths side of Belle Grove Road.

Comment 11 (Moses Lattimore)

Section B. - 10th Ave. - a lot speeding will need some kind of pedestrian access/support, i.e. bridge.

Response 11:

In addition to this project, the county is also working to reduce speeds on the road itself. We have initiated the six to eight month process of putting in a speed camera in front of Belle Grove Elementary School, and Councilman Smith has indicated that he will be advocating for public safety cameras further west along the route as well.

Comment 12 (Ronald Johnson / Owen Langford)

Where/how will the trail connect to the train from Bingo.

Response 12:

There will be no additional connections; however, once completed the project will make the 1.2-mile walk between locations safer for those who wish to utilize it.

Comment 13 (no name left)

My concern is the influx in crime that will come with connecting a trail from the city to the county.

Response 13:

There is no new infrastructure being put into place that would make it easier to walk from the city into the county. There are already several roads and alleys where this is currently possible. Local law enforcement has indicated that they do not anticipate an increased crime issue because the path is not offset from the road and therefore visible. Our research suggests that transportation alternatives in urban environments reduce crime because it leads to more eyes on the streets.

Comment 14 (no name left)

Our major complaint is the intrusion into Pumphrey from Shenandoah thru Gibbons and down Belle Grove.

Response 14:

While this is the way it's drawn in the existing design plans by GBA, there's already been a decision to adjust the end of the route to connect straight from Belle Grove Rd, therefore avoiding the streets you've mentioned.

Comment 15 (no name left)

Belle Grove Rd is lumpy, patched not maintained - no traffic calming

Response 15:

Thank you for your feedback.

Comment 16 (audience member)

Is the route set in stone? Can it be changed?

Response 16:

Yes, it can be changed. Please provide feedback or suggestions on a better route if you believe one exists.

Comment 17 (audience member)

What does "SWM" stand for?

Response 17:

Stormwater Management.

Comment 18 (audience member)

I just wanna make sure I have a full understanding of those designs and I want to make sure we were all on the same page. The designs that you have up there are the ones that were from the Greater Baybrook Alliance (GBA). There are some changes that need to be made and the county is going to decide which changes need to be made to those basic designs. Now my question is how do we find out what those changes will be?

Response 18:

Those who filled out the sign-in sheet during the public meeting will receive updates and there will be a project page online at the Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works website. You can also email Hannah Thompson (exthom22@aacounty.org) or Marcus Tadros (pwtadr20@aacounty.org), the Project Manager, at any time and we'll be happy to update you. Additionally, we will hold another public meeting as we get further along in the design process.

Comment 19 (audience member)

Now, I noticed on that design that you had up there, it had a right of way through Pumphrey down Shenandoah Avenue. My understanding is that is not going to be part of the design. That was an integral portion of the opposition.

Response 19:

In recent meetings for the BWI / Nursery Spur Trail Project (H508427), we discovered that there's an opportunity to cross from the trail to Belle Grove Road without using the alignment indicated. That alternative connection will be incorporated into the County's design plans.

Comment 20 (audience member)

You said there was \$750,000 for design. How much of that has been spent?

Response 20:

None.

Comment 21 (audience member)

Well, GBA didn't collect any money?

Response 21:

GBA had funded their work separately.

Comment 22 (audience member)

So GBA is not taking any of this \$750,000?

Response 22:

Correct.

Comment 23 (audience member)

Yesterday, I went to my mailbox. I had my back turned. I a truck coming. So I turned. If I hadn't turned, I would have been in the hospital. The buses backup is far. It's dangerous. You need to put Belle Grove Road back like it was, so you can go home and get out and go where you have to go. It's disgraceful that you're so worried about a bike trail. Please. If you want to ride a bike... they've been riding bikes for years with no problem. We're not worried about no bike trail. We're worried about being safe. Right? That's what we're worried about. I get it every Saturday night, and when you're coming home from work, you hardly get them back to your house before the traffic. One day we will have a bad accident on Belle Grove. We need to stop being so concerned about a bike trail and be concerned with having people safe.

Response 23:

Thank you for your feedback. The Belle Grove Road Safety Improvements Project intends to improve safety for all users.

Comment 24 (audience member)

Will there be additional lighting as part of the changes?

Response 24:

There may be areas where additional lighting can be provided, in areas where it may be needed. Please provide feedback as to where you think additional lighting would be most needed or beneficial.

Comment 25 (audience member)

On the plans Belle Grove Road is designated as "E Coast Greenway." Who gave them the right to claim the road as their own?

Response 25:

It is the County's understanding that the East Coast Greenway, about three or four years ago, worked in concert with the State Highway Administration (SHA) and local governments to designate on-road connections between all the trails that are part of the greenway, and Belle Grove Road was one of those routes that were selected and were approved by SHA or by local government traffic organizations. Signing was placed on those routes so that any through bikers would know how to get between one trail and another.

Comment 26 (audience member)

Is it a sidewalk or a trail? And how wide is it? What is the minimum and the maximum

Response 26:

On the plans generated by GBA, there is a sidewalk west of St. Charles Road (approximately) and a Shared Use Path (SUP) east of St. Charles Road. The sidewalks are 5 feet wide; the SUPs are 10 feet wide.

Comment 27 (audience member)

Can bicyclists ride on the sidewalk?

Response 27:

Yes, it is legal to ride a bike on sidewalks in Anne Arundel County.

Comment 28 (audience member)

How long would you estimate for a timeframe for when the next meeting will be and when those boards will be updated with the current design?

Response 28:

The next public meeting will take place after we've advanced the County's design beyond the 30% design stage. The County is currently in the procurement process to hire a design firm. We're currently writing the Request for Proposals (RFP) so we can solicit proposals from companies and then rate them. However, this project is grant funded with State/Federal funding, which means the State has certain requirements which are different from typical County projects. The State will be reviewing the RFP and all related documentation and providing feedback. The back and forth between the State and the County can be time consuming, so it is difficult to determine at this time when our next meeting will occur, but it is likely at least a year away.

Comment 29 (audience member)

I don't know if you realize this, but there's a lot of environmental issues too.

Response 29:

Yes, the County will comply with all applicable environmental regulations and obtain the proper permits prior to construction.