



## **MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF LAUREL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

305-307 First Street • Laurel, Maryland 20707 (301) 725-0088

<http://www.cityoflaurel.org> • email – [dpw@laurel.md.us](mailto:dpw@laurel.md.us) Fax (301) 498-5266

### *Committee Members:*

***Dr. Marcia B. Levi  
R. Ummi Modeste  
Logan W. Staley  
Stanley Spaulding  
Emily Swain  
Lisa Wolfisch***

### *Staff:*

***Thomas Helms, Acting Director  
Department of Public Works  
Arman Safakhah, City Engineer  
Katherine Wright, Administrative  
Assistant II***

## **CITY OF LAUREL BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CITIZENS ADVISORY (BPCA) COMMITTEE MINUTES**

### **FAIRALL FOUNDRY BUILDING**

**Tuesday, April 8, 2025 – 6:00 P.M.**

The meeting was convened in-person, at 6:11 pm with Thomas Helms, Acting Director, Department of Public Works presiding. The following Committee Members were present: Stanley Spaulding, Logan W. Staley, Emily Swain, and Lisa Wolfisch. Absent were: Dr. Marcia B. Levi and R. Ummi Modeste. Staff present: Arman Safakhah, City Engineer and Katherine Wright, Secretary to the Committee. There were zero (0) members of the public in attendance.

Mr. Helms welcomed the attendees and explained the purpose, mission, and goals of the BPCA – to serve in an advisory position to provide recommendations to bicycle related facilities to the City Council. He highlighted several key projects the committee would be reviewing and providing recommendations for in the future including:

- Cherry Lane Bikeway Concept Study and Application for Grant Funding of the Design for the Cherry Lane Bikeway (the primary item of discussion in today's meeting)
- 8<sup>th</sup> Street Improvement Project
- Update of the City of Laurel Bikeway Master Plan to complement the City's Master Plan update.

Agenda Item 2 was to set the next meeting date and location.



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Mr. Helms informed the attendees that the next meeting was scheduled for **June 10, 2025, at 6 P.M.** and would likely continue monthly thereafter. Mr. Helms noted that the June 10, 2025 meeting would be an important meeting to select leadership, a chairperson and vice chairperson, for the committee. He requested attendees give their preference for in-person meetings, virtual meetings, or a hybrid of both.

Agenda Item 3 was Introduction of Committee Members and Staff.

- **Thomas Helms** – former Laurel resident (5 years), City Employee 18 years, prefers virtual meetings.
- **Arman Safakhah** – City engineer, moved from Boston a year ago, with laurel for 6 months, prefers virtual meetings.
- **Katherine Wright** – City resident of 15 years, DPW employee for 8.5 years, prefers virtual meetings
- **Stanley Spaulding** – moved to Laurel 3 years ago. Travels for a living. Prefers virtual meetings.
- **Emily Swain** – lived in Laurel since 2011. Has no preference for meeting type.
- **Lisa Wolfisch** – lived in Laurel for over 30 years. Has no preference for meeting type.
- **Logan W. Staley** – moved to Laurel a few years ago. Is an arborist. Has no preference for meeting type.
- **R. Umami Modeste** – not in attendance.
- **Dr. Marcia B. Levi** – not in attendance.

Agenda Item 4 was Staff Reports. (PowerPoint presentation is available)

Mr. Safakhah provided a PowerPoint presentation introducing the attendees to the City's bikeways (Attached hereto as Exhibit 1)

Mr. Safakhah also presented information about The Cherry Lane Bikeway Concept Study done by KCI technologies in August of 2023 and introduced 3 potential designs for the bike lane with explanations of the benefits and detriments of each to be discussed in turn.

- **Alternative 1: on-road, striped bicycle lanes:** Mr. Safakhah presented information about Alternative 1. It would involve re-striping the existing road and installation of signs. While being more cost effective with less infrastructure modification it would pose a higher risk for accidents (compared to other Alternatives),

Committee members discussed existing bike lanes within the city to compare them to the proposed options and evaluated each from both a biker and pedestrian



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perspective. Members questioned the impact of the bike lane on the local bus route and potential hazards to bikers.

- **Alternative 2: on-road, physically separated bicycle lanes:** Mr. Safakhah presented Alternative 2 which would have the same land use and general design as Alternative 1, except a physical separator (bollards) would be included in the buffer area, providing increased protection for bikers. He noted, however, that bollards that get struck by vehicles, which could become a recurring problem, will require costly maintenance.

Committee members confirmed that a lane for vehicular traffic would be removed and questioned whether this would cause significant delays and what the impact on the local bus route would be. They also were concerned about trash buildup, the impact on snow removal, and the potential for recurring damage to bollards.

- **Alternative 3: off-road shared use path (hiker-biker trail):** Mr. Safakhah presented Alternative 3 - a shared sidewalk and bike trail (hiker-biker trail) that would be 10 feet wide. This alternative would increase safety for bikers but decrease safety for pedestrians. Alternative 3 would be more expensive and require significant modification to the existing utilities and right of way.

Committee members asked for data to show pedestrians were less safe and asked for a comparison of overall public safety between the various bike lane designs. They asked for confirmation if the Master Plan had any guidance for bike lanes and Mr. Safakhah explained each road required unique studies be performed. The committee discussed the need for future bike lane development to focus on connecting existing bike lanes together. The committee was concerned that the hiker-biker trail would be close to the curb and expressed concern about vehicles not stopping at crosswalks.

Mr. Safakhah discussed some negative aspects of the third alternative. It would have a large impact on city street trees that would need removing. It would require changing the stormwater drainage. It would require significant permitting (Stormwater and Maryland Department of Environment) and approvals that could lead to lengthy delays. He presented a comparison of the right-of-way impacts for each option.



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Agenda Item 5 was Questions and Discussion.

The committee members reviewed the planned drawings for the various designs to gain a better understanding of what lanes are being removed or altered. Suggestions were made to have the hiker-biker lane continue from Van Dusen through the western edge of Cherry Lane before transitioning to designs 1 or 2. Members emphasized the importance of being able to walk and bike within the City and encouraged cooperation with the county to bridge sidewalk and bike trail gaps on County and State Highway roads.

A Committee Member asked for studies on which of the alternatives attracts more bikers. Mr. Safakhah does not know of any studies on this, but he would look into it.

Mr. Safakhah invited the Members to look at the paper drawings for the 8<sup>th</sup> Street improvement plans. Mr. Helms explained some of the new features being added to 8<sup>th</sup> Street including crosswalks, sidewalks, signage, etc.

Committee Members suggested the City survey the Laurel High School to ask if they would use the bike lane if it existed. They asked for a timeline and clarification of their duties and goals.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:38 P.M.

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Katherine Wright, Administrative Assistant II  
Department of Public Works

Date: August 5, 2025