

220356



Maryland Department of Planning

Martin O'Malley
Governor

Anthony G. Brown
Lt. Governor

Richard Eberhart Hall
Secretary

Matthew J. Power
Deputy Secretary

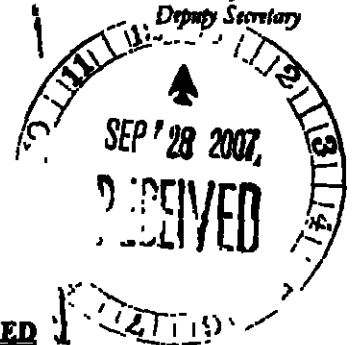
September 18, 2007

Mr. Vernon A. Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

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Office of Proceedings

SEP 28 2007

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Public Record



STATE CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW - ADDITIONAL REVIEWER COMMENTS RECEIVED

State Application Identifier: MD20070710-0740

Applicant: Surface Transportation Board

Project Description: Chesapeake Railroad Company - Certified of Interim Trail Use and Termination of Modified Rail
Certificate concerning use of +/- 54.1 miles of rail line [known as the Clayton-Easton line Finance Docket No. 32609
(see MD20060712-0772)]

Project Location: Counties of Caroline, and Talbot

Clearinghouse Contact: Bob Rosenbush

Dear Mr. Williams

We are forwarding the enclosed comments made by the Maryland Department of Transportation, Talbot County, the Towns of Henderson and Ridgely, and this Department including the Maryland Historical Trust regarding the referenced project for your information.

The Town of Henderson stated, in their submission of these adverse comments, that the project raised problems concerning compatibility with their plans, programs, and objectives. "The Town of Henderson would rather see the railroad track revitalized rather than become a walking trail. Pertaining to the creation of a walking trail along the railroad tracks, the officials of The Town of Henderson believe that the tracks are dangerous to walkers, and a possible threat to property owners who live near the tracks. In many locations the path would be limited to the width of the rails as steep grade drainage ditches are close to the tracks. Walkers would be exposed to a risk of falling into the ditches or they might circumvent the narrow path and walk on neighboring property. In several areas, the path would be hidden from view and could provide a tempting location for misconduct."

Talbot County stated that their findings of consistency are contingent upon the Applicant taking certain actions that are summarized below. Talbot County affirmed that "any immediate attempts at such conversion to a rail-to-trail initiative are premature at this time. A comprehensive planning exercise, outreach initiative and review are necessary to properly evaluate the interim use of surplus rail lines." Talbot County also expressed an interest in working with the Maryland Transportation Administration, and this Department to discuss a future rail-to-trail initiative in Talbot County. See the attached letters, and enclosures.

The Maryland Department of Transportation found this project to be generally consistent with its plans, programs, and objectives, but included the following qualifying comments. The Maryland Department of Transportation stated that "as far as can be determined at this time, the subject has no unacceptable impacts on the plans or programs of the Department of Transportation."

It is understood that the Maryland Transit Administration has leased the +/- 54.1 miles of rail line (not including the +/- 5.514 acres known as the Easton Spur) to the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for a rail-to-trails project. It is recommended that DNR make an effort to address the concerns of the Town of Henderson and Talbot County before DNR proceeds with this project.

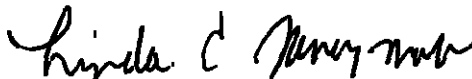
Mr. Vernon A. Williams
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The Town of Ridgely affirmed that "this fits well into our Greater Ridgely Rails to Trails project."

The Maryland Historical Trust has determined that the referenced project will have "no effect" on historic properties.

Should you have any questions, contact the State Clearinghouse staff person noted above at 410-767-4490 or through e-mail at brosenbush@mdp.state.md.us. Your cooperation and attention to the review process is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Linda C. Janey, J.D., Assistant Secretary
for Clearinghouse and Communications

LCJ:BR

Enclosures (Comments Received)

cc: George Fabula - MTA*
Ray Dintaman - DNR*
Cindy Johnson - MDOT
George Kinney - TLBT

Sandy Cook - HENDERSON
Robert Willey - EASTON

Linda Jo Epperly-Glover -
RIDGELY
Beth Cole - MHT

07-0740_OLRR OTH doc



TALBOT COUNTY OFFICE OF PLANNING & ZONING

COURT HOUSE

11 N. WASHINGTON STREET
EASTON, MARYLAND 21601

PHONE: 410-770-8030

FAX: 410-770-8043
TTY: 410-822-8735

August 7, 2007

Ms. Linda C Janey, J.D , Director
Maryland State Clearinghouse for Intergovernmental Assistance
Maryland Department of Planning
301 West Preston Street – Room 1104
Baltimore, Maryland 21201-2305



Re: Maryland State Clearinghouse – Agency Review Request
Chesapeake Railroad Company
Certified of Interim Trail Use and Termination of Modified Rail Certificate
MD20070710-0740

Dear Ms. Janey,

In response to your request for comment regarding the above referenced County Agency Review Request, please find the following.

- A Talbot County finds the referenced Clearinghouse item to be generally consistent with the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan contingent upon certain actions. Specifically, the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan identifies two (2) policies and two (2) action strategies as follows:

Non-Motorized Transportation

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Chapter 4, Policy 20 | The County should support development of safe, convenient and inviting bike routes and walkways |
| Associated Action | Work with the State Highway Administration to prepare a Talbot County Scenic Byway Management Plan. A Scenic Byway Management Plan will provide a blueprint for state, county, and town actions to improve vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle travel on selected State roadways in the County. |

Rail Service

Chapter 4, Policy 24 The County should work with the Mass Transit Administration to preserve existing rail service rights-of-way in the Talbot County and the Upper Eastern Shore for future rail service.

Associated Action: Initiate a review process to evaluate surplus rail lines so that the County has a position on whether the right-of-way should remain in place for future rail use, or alternative transportation and recreation.

This section of the Comprehensive Plan further notes: "The County encourages the retention of rail rights-of-way for future use. Pedestrian/bike trails are appropriate interim uses of these corridors"

- B. In addition, Talbot County finds the referenced Clearinghouse item to be generally consistent with the local Heritage Plan. Specifically, the Heritage Area Plan notes the following.

Bicycling Linkages

"Region-wide recreational planning and bicycle-pedestrian planning are key needs. Bicycling is an excellent recreational pursuit to promote here, but several proposals for off-road bicycle routes have run into landowner resistance, in all four counties".

In addition to these two guiding documents, it is important to note that Talbot County discussed a past proposal regarding a rails-to-trails conversion along this same rail corridor. This discussion took place in 1991 and I have attached relevant materials for your consideration. In summary, Talbot County chose not to pursue the conversion of this rail line outside the Town of Easton. This was primarily due to the positions presented by the Talbot County Farm Bureau and adjacent property owners, which articulated a variety of concerns (i.e. liability, trash, crime, etc.). This historical context must be recognized and is likely the genesis for the 'Rail Service' action statement noted above.

Talbot County is certainly committed to working with the Mass Transit Administration and the Maryland Department of Planning to discuss a future rails-to-trails initiative in Talbot County. That said, the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan and local history suggest additional public outreach and evaluation are necessary prior to such conversions. In summary, it is the opinion of this office that any immediate attempts at such conversion are premature at this time. A comprehensive planning exercise, outreach initiative and review are necessary to properly evaluate the interim use of surplus rail lines

Thank you for the opportunity to respond and please feel free to contact me if additional information or comment is necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Kinney". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping "G" and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.

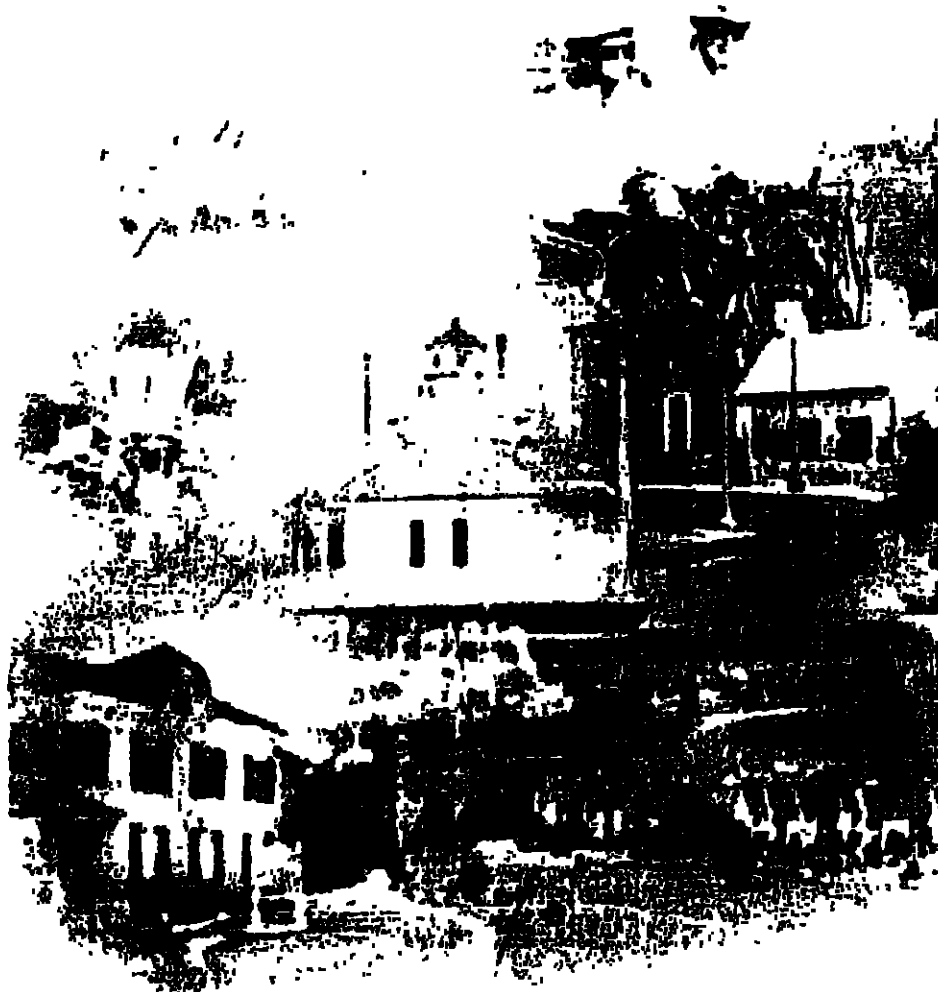
**George Kinney, AICP
Talbot County Planning Officer**

**Cc Tom Duncan, President Talbot County Council
 Andy Hollis, Talbot County Manager
 Michael Pullen, Talbot County Attorney**

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

TALBOT COUNTY

MARYLAND



Adopted February 15, 2005
Effective April 16, 2005

Rural and town residents are able to access an on demand transportation service provided by the Upper Shore Aging, a nonprofit corporation. The Upper Shore Take-A-Ride (USTAR) program includes various trip destinations, including shopping centers, employment centers, educational facilities, medical facilities, adult day care centers and senior centers. Fares (donations) range from one to five dollars for general ridership to between fifty cents and two dollars for elderly and disabled riders. Hours of operation are from 8.00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Forty percent of the funding for the USTAR service is derived from fare box receipts and other donations and the remainder comes from a combination of local and State funding. Current annual ridership is on the order of 15,000 passengers and 68,000 trips.

Transit Policies

- C04.P. 19. At the appropriate time, the County should explore the feasibility of improved transit service for County residents and encourage such services when needed and economically feasible.

Transit Implementation Strategies

In the immediate future, the County can be most effective in reducing drive alone auto trips by cooperating with the State in the planning and provision of "park and ride facilities" to encourage ride sharing and commuting.

Action: Encourage business and industry to provide reserved parking spaces for carpools and vanpools at office and industrial sites to accommodate and encourage ride sharing

V. Non-motorized Transportation

Non-motorized transportation includes sidewalks and pedestrian and bicycle trails. Although there are no County "designated" bicycle routes in Talbot County, the MD 33 to Bellevue Ferry to MD 333 route (the "loop") is a very popular and heavily-traveled bike route. This route is along two-lane public roads including MD 33, a high traffic volume segment. In addition to the popular "loop," other routes on the west side of the County are frequently used by bicyclists (see Map 4-3). They include the road to Bozman and Neavitt (MD 579) and the Tilghman Road (MD 33).

There are a number of potential alternative bike routes on the east side of the County. These routes traverse scenic rural areas, are long enough to appeal to bikers and form a loop with Easton as the hub. They also intersect with existing popular routes.

The County has not required new development to include sidewalks or pedestrian connections within the community. As the County's growth strategy has shifted to encouraging a more urban development pattern in the Towns and Designated Growth Areas, several of the Towns have encouraged the County to require easements for these future pedestrian facilities to permit development of an integrated and connected pedestrian network once these areas are annexed into the town

Non-motorized Transportation Policies

- C04.P. 20** The County should support development of safe, convenient and inviting bike routes and walkways.

Non-motorized Transportation Implementation Strategies

- Action:** Review the recommendations regarding sidewalks in the County's designated growth areas and establish a policy for sidewalk easements and installation.
- Action:** Amend the Talbot County Zoning Ordinance to require space be provided for parking of bicycles in the appropriate service retail developments.
- Action:** Work with the State Highway Administration to prepare a Talbot County Scenic Byway Management Plan. A Scenic Byway Management Plan will provide a blueprint for state, county, and town actions to improve vehicular, pedestrian, and bicycle travel on selected State roadways in the County.

VI. Air Travel

The Easton Airport is a County-owned facility located at the north end of the Town of Easton. Primary access to the airport is from US 50. The Easton Airport Manager and County Council manage and operate the airport assisted by a five-member Airport Advisory Board appointed by the County Council.

Easton Airport is a general aviation airport that services corporate jets and privately owned and military aircraft. Charter service to destinations throughout the United States and the world is provided by East Coast Flight Services, Easton Jet Services and Easton Aviation, LLC. Easton Aviation, LLC also provides flight training. The airport presently averages between 240 and 250 operations per day (takeoffs and landings), with some peak days reaching 350 operations per day. Several air service related businesses and industries are located at the airport.

According to the information contained in the Easton Airport master plan, management expects to have a total of 190 aircraft based at the facility. This number is likely to increase due to the flight restrictions around Washington, DC. Annual operations, which were estimated to be 92,000 in 2003, are expected to increase to approximately 121,000 by 2016. Total peak hour operations are expected to climb from 42 landings in 2003 to 54 in 2016.

County policies should encourage the continued vitality of the Easton Airport, by protecting the airport from encroachment from residential, retail or commercial uses. Compatible uses, such as airport related businesses and light industry should be encouraged in appropriate areas near the airport. Current zoning regulations prohibit residential uses adjacent to the airport and control the height of structures within the clear zones of the runways.

Air Travel Policies

- C04.P. 21. The County should continue to improve air transportation services at the Easton airport.
- C04.P. 22. Private air strips and helipads are discouraged within the County as these uses often cause nuisances to the surrounding community.

Air Travel Implementation Strategies

- Action: As the opportunities arise, the County should acquire aviation easements on properties surrounding the airport.

VII. Port Services

Although use of the port facilities at Easton Point has been declining in recent years, some materials are still delivered by barge to terminals on the Point. The draft Easton Comprehensive Plan states, "the future role of Easton's port facilities is clouded. A great many people have suggested that this area has tremendous redevelopment potential, although no one has come forth with a proposal to annex and redevelop it. If this ever comes to be, the future of the port is most likely more towards recreational uses such as an expanded marina, boat ramp, and associated uses with less emphasis on truly industrial uses."

Historically the County has recommended that the northern and western edges of Easton Point should continue to be used and reserved for port-related and marine transportation activities, including regular dredging of the Tred Avon River approach channel.

Port Services Policies

- C04.P. 23. The County should continue to insure that adequate access is provided to County waters for marine transportation.

VIII. Rail Service

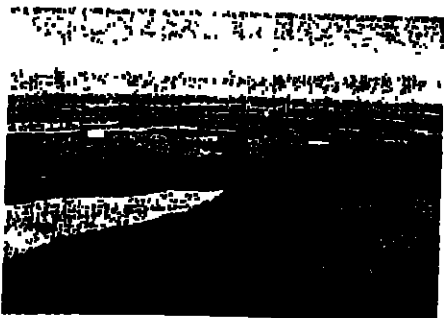
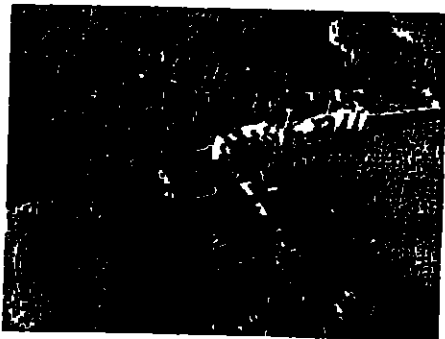
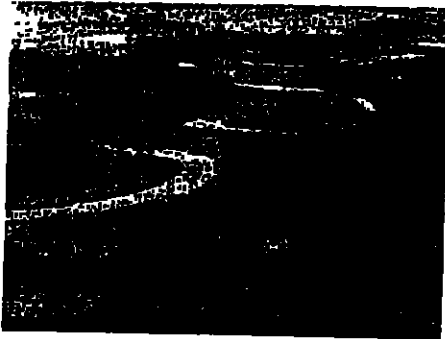
Rail service in Talbot County has been discontinued for some years. Future service through the planning period may include the revival of limited light rail service on rail rights-of-way owned by the Mass Transit Administration. Many of the rail rights-of-ways in Talbot County have reverted to private property owners. The Town of Easton has constructed a pedestrian/bike trail along a portion of the old rail right-of-way. The Easton rail-trail runs from Idlewild Avenue to US 50. The trail connects two local parks, Idlewild Park and North Easton Park. The historic railroad station has been restored and currently is being used as private offices. The County encourages the retention of rail rights-of-way for future use. Pedestrian/ bike trails are appropriate interim uses for these corridors.

Rail Service Policies

- C04.P. 24.** **The County should work with the Mass Transit Administration to preserve existing rail service rights-of-way in the Talbot County and the Upper Eastern Shore for future rail service.**

Rail Service Implementation Strategies

- Action:** **Initiate a review process to evaluate surplus rail lines so that the County has a position on whether the right-of-way should remain in place for future rail use, or alternative transportation and recreation.**



STORIES OF THE CHESAPEAKE HERITAGE AREA

A MARYLAND RECOGNIZED HERITAGE AREA

PUBLIC DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN

JUNE 7, 2004

**A PLAN FOR CONSERVATION,
INTERPRETATION & HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT**

**CAROLINE - KENT - QUEEN ANNE'S - TALBOT
COUNTIES**

PRESERVE - PROTECT - INTERPRET - PROMOTE

Finding

Potential Bicycle

Trails: A number of abandoned or lightly used railroad rights of way exist in this region, some with more potential than others for conversion to recreational trail use, and all with a degree of controversy attending to their potential development. Eastern Shore Heritage, Inc., should stand ready to assist responsible local and state agencies in their planning and development when those jurisdictions determine it is time to proceed. Some linkages are important to the completion of the American Discovery Trail route planned across the Delmarva Peninsula, an important national off-road trail initiative. A partial listing of these includes:

Chestertown to
Kennedyville and
beyond

Easton to Claiborne

Easton to Maryland

Kent Narrows to
Tuckahoe State Park

various forms of packaged visitor services (bike/bed & breakfast packages, and coordinated passport ticketing for museums, for instance).

Chapter 3 offers guidance on creating interpretive linkages, and Chapter 4 outlines possibilities for packaged visitor services. This chapter addresses physical linkages. These include wayfinding and visitor orientation, roads and highways, and recreational linkages. Recreational opportunities are especially rich in the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area and are to be an explicit subject of heritage area planning for the visitor experience wherever possible

FINDINGS

Transportation: There are a number of major transportation projects underway or under consideration that will affect the landscape and potentially the visitor experience. "Hot spots" include proposed bypasses east of Chestertown and Easton and the dualizing of Route 404 between Route 50 and Denton. [photo-98] Long range, Route 301 as the "eastern bypass" for the crowded western shore roads could experience additional use and change (A second overpass is already proposed for an access road to Centreville to improve the safety of access to Queen Anne's County High School.) St. Michael's faces an especially critical problem of expanding development beyond the town on the Bay Hundred peninsula, with the only route being the main street through a heavily visited area. Construction traffic there could be a concern as well as traffic from an expanding number of residents, both conflicting with traffic generated by visitors.

Bicycling linkages: Region-wide recreational planning and bicycle-pedestrian planning are key needs. Bicycling is an excellent recreational pursuit to promote here, but several proposals for off-road bicycle routes have run into landowner resistance, in all four counties.

Denton has completed a bicycling guide for Caroline County, and DLITE (Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences) is now completing a peninsula-wide bicycling guide.

Water Linkages and Access: Water trails are the most appropriate for this region for an initial focus. They are less likely to raise property owner concerns, and opportunities for these are extensive. Moreover, significant audiences for the Stories of the Chesapeake Heritage Area are cruising audiences—both powerboating and sailing (More than 16,000 of these boats are registered in the four counties.) Paddlers of "hand carried boats" (kayaks and canoes) are growing in numbers. It should be possible to connect with all of these audiences through the existing, large system of public landings and the public and private marinas that dot the

number. Please advise if you'd like
me to arrange for Mr. John Ohler
to come for a work session on
this matter

TALBOT COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

605 Port Street
Easton, Maryland, 21601
410.770.8173 (voice); 410.770.8176 (facsimile)
jfearns@talbgov.org

RECEIVED

APR 23 2001

TALBOT COUNTY

MEMORANDUM

To: Andy Hollis

From: Jesse Fearins 

Date: April 20, 2001

Subject: Rails- to-Trails from the Town of Easton to the Town of Queen Anne

Jesse -
I would be
interested in
hearing a
presentation
HS

I do not know if you are aware that the Maryland Forest and Park Service has been working with Caroline County for the last two years in developing the rail line from Hillsboro to Greensboro into a trail that could be utilized by pedestrians, equestrians and bikers. This is the same rail line that the Town of Easton has converted into a trail for a distance of approximately 1.5 miles.

The Caroline County Commissioners appeared to be in favor of the project until recently when they received pressure from the local Farm Bureau. It is my understanding that the Farm Bureau has a national policy against the conversion of any rail line to a trail. The Maryland Forest and Park Service is now only working with the towns of Greensboro and Ridgely in developing those sections of the rail line within their corporate limits.

I believe that it would be a good time to work with the Maryland Forest and Park Service in exploring the conversion of the line from Easton to the Town of Queen Anne. This line is approximately 11 miles long. It is my understanding that they would fund the project entirely with Federal and State funds and would maintain it. They will only do it if they have local support for the project. I'm sure that several local farmers and those people that front along it would be opposed to the project. However, the benefits of this project should far outweigh the negatives.

If there is any interest whatsoever on the County's part, I would suggest that your office contact John Ohler, Superintendent at Tuckahoe State Park, and ask

him to make a presentation to the County Council regarding this project. He can answer a lot of the preliminary questions regarding crime, liability, ownership, maintenance, etc.

I believe that this project would be of high benefit to the citizens of the County especially if it were to connect to the Easton's trail. State Highway is currently studying the northern intersection of U.S. Route 50 and MD Route 322 and it would be proper for them to include a pedestrian bridge with that project to serve this trail and also serve the Chapel East subdivision. The SHA is also reviewing the dualization of MD Route 404. There is an existing railroad bridge crossing over Route 404, however another bridge should be constructed over the other proposed lanes, if and when dualization occurs. This would enable the trail to be connected to Tuckahoe State Park and also the Caroline portion of the Rails-to-Trails if and when it is ever developed. A bike ride from Easton to Greensboro on this trail would be 40 miles round trip, which would be a good days bike ride and would attract a lot of users from across the State of Maryland and beyond. Development of the entire route would probably attract 50,000 to 100,00 users per year.

I have attached hereto a drawing showing the alignment and a "Hillsboro-Greensboro Rail-to-Trail Fact Sheet".

Enc.

HILLSBORO-GREENSBORO RAIL-TO-TRAIL FACT SHEET



1. Q. What part of the rail line would be converted from Rails to Trails?

A. The first section of the trail to be developed would be an eight mile section from Tuckahoe State Park to Greensboro. Future additions could include a spur to Denton and perhaps the towns of Queen Anne and Cordova.

2. Q. Who owns the railroad tracks?

A. The R/R right of way is owned by the MD Dept of Transportation. They bought the right of way from the Penn Central Railroad in 1981. The right of way is 66 feet wide.

3. Q. Who's going to operate the trail once it's completed?

A. When the trail is completed it will be managed by the State Forest and Park Service. The management of the parts of the trail within the towns of Ridgely and Greensboro will be some kind of partnership between the Forest and Park Service and the towns.

4. Q. Won't the trail create a crime and trash problem?

A. Experience has shown that there is a negligible amount of trash generated by trails such as the one being proposed here. Criminal activity on trails like this has also been found to be minimal. The kind of people who use trails such as these are more apt to pick up litter than cause it.

5. Q. Who would deal with crime and unauthorized use of the trail if it did happen?

A. The Ranger staff of Tuckahoe State Park and the local jurisdictions would police the trail, enforce the regulations, and deal with problems such as ATVs.

6. Q. This trail is going through agricultural land. Won't that in some way harm agriculture?

A. If you go out and look at the railroad tracks with your own eyes you will see that this proposed trail doesn't harm agriculture in any way.

7. Q. If the trail is established does it mean that it will never be used as a railroad again?

A. The trail is just a temporary use of the railroad right of way. If the trail is needed for railroad use it will go back to being a railroad.

8. Q. Who will pay for the trail?

A. The trail will be funded with a mix of State and Federal trail grants and funds. The county government will not have to pay for development of the trail.

9. Q. Who will be able to use the trail?

A. The trail will be open to pedestrian, equestrian, and bicycle traffic. If the trail were to be developed as planned, the sections in the towns will be paved which will allow for roller blading as well. Outside the town limits the trail will be a crushed stone dust surface.

10. Q. Will people be able to park anywhere along the trail?

A. Parking will only be permitted in the towns and at Tuckahoe State Park.

11. Q. What impact will the trail have on the area?

A. The trail will draw the kind of tourists into the area that we want. When they finish using the trail they will be thirsty, hungry, and will need a place to stay if they come from any distance. The county can only benefit from this kind of tourism.

To Get Involved:

Contact "Caroline Rails-to-Trails"
swes@dmv.com
410-479-0338

More about rail trails on the Web:

www.railtrails.org or www.trailsandgreenways.org

Upcoming Events:

Thursday, April 19 2001, 7 p.m.: Public Information & Planning Meeting at Ridgely Firehouse

Saturday, May 26, 2001: Clear the rail trail from Ridgely to Tuckahoe Park (Write or call for details.)

Sunday, May 27, 2001: Walk the Rail/Trail/ Ridgely Strawberry Festival.

TALBOT COUNTY COUNCIL
TAKEN ON MAY 29, 2001

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1 MR. OHLER: It's warming up.

2 MS. SPENCE: Oh, okay.

3 MR. WILSON: Go ahead and do the introduction.

4 MR. OHLER: Okay. I believe one of your
5 administrators asked me to come and do a short presentation
6 on the Rails to Trails.

7 MR. FOSTER: I don't know if it makes any diffe-
8 rence, but you're covering the mike with your laptop, so.

9 MR. OHLER: Okay. Fortunately for me, John
10 Wilson's a planner. He's going to do most of the talking,
11 so he'll be at the mike.

12 MR. FOSTER: Okay.

13 MR. OHLER: As soon as we get this thing going,
14 John will be talking.

15 MR. WILSON: Well, my name's John Wilson. I'm a
16 planner with the Department of Natural Resources, and it's
17 my understanding John Ohler, who is the manager of Tuckahoe
18 State Park, was contacted by someone within the County, and
19 they asked if we couldn't come and give a presentation as
20 far as the possibilities of converting the Easton-Clayton
21 rail line to a trail. I think some of you may be familiar

TALBOT COUNTY COUNCIL
TAKEN ON MAY 29, 2001

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1 with this concept because already, some of the rail line
2 within the Town limits of Easton has been converted to a
3 multi-use trail, and I guess what we want to do today with
4 this presentation is sort of just talk about the
5 possibilities of converting the rest of the line within
6 Talbot County.

7 MR. OHLER: You're going to have to wing it, John.

8 MR. WILSON: It'll come up. Don't touch it. One
9 of the things I would say that as far as these types of
10 projects are concerned, there's over a thousand of these
11 multi-use trails that have been developed from converted
12 rail lines all across the United States, and every one of
13 the projects has been an incredible asset for the community
14 that they were located with, within.

15 MR. FOSTER: Have you presented your idea to the
16 Farm Bureau in Talbot County to see if they have --

17 MR. WILSON: No, we haven't at this point.

18 MR. FOSTER: The other question I have since
19 you're waiting to warm up, I was contacted shortly after the
20 election, was it 2 1/2 years ago, by somebody who was
21 interested in developing that railroad line. Nothing ever

1 went anywhere, but it's been talked about ever since I've
2 been here. I guess I would have some concern that when you
3 do this, although I suppose you could put it back into the
4 form of a rail line, the expense would probably be enormous
5 and you're probably closing that door forever.

6 MR. WILSON: No. One of the things, if this ever
7 became a reality, one of the things currently -- and this
8 will be covered in the presentation -- currently, that line
9 is owned by the State of Maryland Department of
10 Transportation, but -- and one of the things that they've
11 told us is if, you know, the County wanted to convert that
12 to a trail, this would be "an interim use". They want to
13 maintain that corridor for the possibility of future rail
14 use if that ever becomes economically viable, and this is
15 one way to actually maintain that corridor and its viability
16 for that, so basically any trail development they would
17 consider as interim. You know, they're, they're preserving
18 the rail line for the future, and what they would do
19 essentially is a lease agreement with the Department of
20 Natural Resources.

21 MR. FOSTER: But you're taking the rails up,

TALBOT COUNTY COUNCIL
TAKEN ON MAY 29, 2001

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1 aren't you?

2 MR. WILSON: Well, yes, I think in our initial
3 discussions with them, they want to salvage the rails, but I
4 will tell you, for that ever to be a viable rail line,
5 whoever would be interested in that would have to take them
6 up, anyway, because the ties are all rotten, so the rails
7 would have to come up and they'd have to replace those ties,
8 anyway, so that's something in order to make that a viable
9 line, that would have to be done, anyway.

10 MS. SPENCE: Okay.

11 MR. FOSTER: Did they replace all of the rail ties
12 in that tourist train that they run from Hurlock, you know,
13 sometimes, runs about five miles, about five miles an hour?
14 It's mostly a ride, almost.

15 MR. WILSON: I don't know.

16 MR. FOSTER: It's a real train.

17 MR. WILSON: Yeah. I'm not familiar with that. I
18 mean, there was -- and I'll get into this later -- there was
19 someone that was interested in using this particular line as
20 a potential scenic railroad, and I think when they looked at
21 the economics of restoring that track to the ability of

TALBOT COUNTY COUNCIL
TAKEN ON MAY 29, 2001

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1 carrying a train, they saw that it was going to cost
2 considerable amount of money because they were going to have
3 to pull up the rails, replace all the ties, and then put it
4 back down.

5 MR. FOSTER: Well, my understanding is the main
6 thing that stopped them was they couldn't get across Route
7 50 --

8 MR. WILSON: That's possible.

9 MR. FOSTER: -- into Easton, so that --

10 MR. OHLER: Takes a while. I'm sorry.

11 MS. SPENCE: Are you logging onto the Internet?
12 Is that what you're trying to do?

13 MR. OHLER: No.

14 MS. SPENCE: No?

15 MR. OHLER: When I turn the projector off,
16 sometimes it doesn't read, come back up.

17 MR. WILSON: What happens is you need to turn on
18 the projector first because it's a plug and play operating
19 system, so the computer has to recognize the projector.

20 MS. SPENCE: And the projector takes a while to
21 warm up and --

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1 MR. WILSON: Yeah. Okay.

2 MS. SPENCE: There you go.

3 MR. OHLER: Ready.

4 MR. WILSON: Hit it, John. One of the things, we
5 just wanted to tell you about this concept, and you know, if
6 you have any questions, ideas, whatever, we're more than
7 happy to hear those. Like I said, you know, we were
8 contacted by someone at the County and asked to come and
9 give this presentation.

10 MS. SPENCE: Was that someone Mr. Jesse Fearins,
11 by any chance? That's who our memo is from.

12 MR. HOLLIS: It was me.

13 MS. SPENCE: Oh, it was Mr. Hollis. Okay.

14 MR. FOSTER: Oh. Interesting.

15 MR. WILSON: Okay. Some of the benefits of rail
16 trail projects, and I got into this a little bit, is it does
17 preserve the rail corridor for the long term, and like I
18 said, if this, you know, went further down the road, one of
19 the requirements by the Department of Transportation would
20 be that, you know, there's always this possibility of using
21 this corridor for rail transportation.

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1 One of the good things that it does for the local
2 community is it does provide a recreational opportunity. It
3 also can provide alternative transportation routes. Instead
4 of people using their automobile, they can use a bike or
5 walk to work, and it does provide some economic development
6 within the local jurisdiction as well. A lot of times,
7 there are trail related businesses such as bike shops. It
8 also increases tourism to the County, and we've done
9 studies, and either property values adjacent to the line
10 either stay the same or increase. I know we have a rail
11 line in Baltimore County, and they actually in their real
12 estate ads advertise that they're adjacent to the trail as a
13 selling point.

14 Some of the rail trails projects that are currently
15 within the State, there's the Baltimore-Annapolis rail
16 trail, there's the Northern Central, Western Maryland and
17 Cross Island. Just to give you a little background on each
18 one of these, the B&A rail trail is in Anne Arundel County.
19 It's essentially 13.3 miles. It runs from Annapolis to Glen
20 Burnie. At Glen Burnie, it also links with a trail around
21 BWI Airport now. It's a multi-use trail, which means that

1 bikes and hikers and roller blades can use it. This
2 particular one has a paved asphalt surface. It's operated
3 by Anne Arundel County Parks and Rec, and it gets incredible
4 amount of use. Last year it was used by 1.7 million people.

5 The Northern Central rail trail is in Baltimore County.
6 It is 20 miles from Ashland, Maryland, to the Pennsylvania
7 border. In addition, Pennsylvania has decided to complete
8 20 miles from the border up to York, Pennsylvania, so
9 essentially, this rail trail goes 40 miles now. Once again,
10 it's a multi-use trail. However, it has a crushed stone
11 surface, and within Maryland, it's operated by Maryland
12 Department of Natural Resources, and it's used by
13 approximately 350,000 people a year.

14 The Western Maryland rail trail is a relatively new one
15 out in Washington County. It runs from our Fort Frederick
16 State Park to Hancock, Maryland, approximately 20 miles.
17 It's a multi-use trail. It has a paved asphalt surface.
18 It's operated by Maryland DNR. It's used by approximately
19 30,000 people, and it was very popular with the locals,
20 particularly the Town of Hancock, because they had been in
21 sort of economic depression, and this has done a lot to help

1 boost the town's economy.

2 One rather close in Queen Anne's County and just in
3 development is the Cross Island trail. It's slated to be 6
4 miles across Kent Island. Currently, one mile exists, and
5 they're hoping to complete an additional 5 miles this year.
6 Once again, it's a multi-use trail. It has a paved asphalt
7 surface. It's operated by the Queen Anne's County
8 Department of Parks and Rec, and it is also very popular
9 with the local folks.

10 Just to give you a little background information on the
11 Easton-Clayton rail line, it was purchased by the State of
12 Maryland in 1982 from the Penn Central Railroad. It's
13 approximately 45 miles in length running from Easton to
14 Clayton, Delaware. There's also a 9 mile spur from Queen
15 Anne over to Denton. The purchase of the acquisition by the
16 State was to maintain this corridor for possible rail
17 transportation, and currently, the line is managed by the
18 Department of Transportation's Mass Transit Administration.

19 MR. FOSTER: Are you aware of the plans to use
20 that right-of-way to run Cordova Road down and join it to
21 the Easton Bypass, overpassing Route 50?

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1 MR. WILSON: I am not.

2 MR. FOSTER: Would that have -- you haven't
3 planned to accommodate that in --

4 MR. WILSON: I would have to see what it is. I'm
5 sure we can accommodate it.

6 MR. FOSTER: It was the No. 1 priority for the
7 County in its roads plan for -- how many do we have?

8 MS. SPENCE: Five.

9 MR. FOSTER: Five?

10 MR. HARRISON: For this year.

11 MR. FOSTER: Yeah, for this year.

12 MR. HARRISON: For SHA funding.

13 MR. FOSTER: It is something that we're very
14 serious about. It would overpass Route 50, and basically,
15 the bypass would take you straight up to Queen Anne --

16 MR. WILSON: Oh, okay.

17 MR. FOSTER: -- if you wanted to, but it would
18 only involve, the right-of-way would only involve that piece
19 that comes down, and maybe the County engineer could tell
20 you better. It would connect us in rather than -- so rather
21 than Cordova Road going off, it would come straight,

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1 straight down, and I don't know how much, how big the right-
2 of-way is. Would it accommodate your trail and this or not?

3 MR. CLARKE: I'd have to look at it.

4 MR. WILSON: Well, I'll tell you. Typically,
5 these right-of-ways are approximately 60 feet, and what I'm
6 going to talk about later is typically, we use 10 feet for
7 these trails, so it seems to me that there's probably enough
8 room within the right-of-way there.

9 MS. SPENCE: And I do recall in the discussions
10 about that that we didn't rule out the notion of having some
11 portion of it or the ability to have biking along that
12 route. I mean, it makes a lot of sense if you're trying
13 to --

14 MR. FOSTER: Well, it's only a piece, small piece
15 of it that we would be talking about.

16 MS. SPENCE: Yeah.

17 MR. FOSTER: The rest of it would be --

18 MS. SPENCE: Yeah.

19 MR. FOSTER: -- unaffected.

20 MR. WILSON: Just to give you a little background,
21 we were talking about this earlier. There was this local

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1 entrepreneur that leased the rights to the Easton-Clayton
2 segment in 1988. They intended to use the line for freight
3 and scenic tours. However, they found it not to be
4 economically viable, and their lease expired on Halloween
5 night in 1998.

6 As far as private sector interest, at that time in
7 February '98, the Department of Transportation made an
8 effort to identify on a national as well as a regional basis
9 any other private sector entity that might be interested in
10 establishing freight service along that line. Several
11 companies requested a packet of information that they had
12 put together on the line, but after they received those
13 packages, no one ever contacted the Department of
14 Transportation and expressed any further interest for
15 whatever reason.

16 MR. OHLER: One note just to clarify, on the
17 northern end of the line, which is from Clayton down as far
18 as Goldsboro, there is someone who may have interest, but so
19 far, from Goldsboro down to Easton, no one has an interest
20 for rail service.

21 MR. WILSON: In addition, just give you a little

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1 further background, in October of '99, DOT did meet with
2 representatives from the Eastern Shore just to talk about
3 options for the potential use of the rail lines, and there's
4 a whole network of them on the Delmarva Peninsula, and they
5 talked about the fact that some lines might be converted to
6 trails on an interim basis.

7 Just to give you a little background as far as some of
8 the support, in 1989, we did a study of the potential
9 conversions of rail lines to trails, and Easton-Clayton was
10 one of ten that were recommended rail-to-trail projects. In
11 addition, the Mass Transit Administration is interested in
12 transferring their interest in the line to us if folks are
13 interested.

14 If this was converted to a trail, the State would
15 maintain ownership. There wouldn't be any transfer of
16 ownership. Simply responsibility would shift from where it
17 is currently with Department of Transportation to the
18 Department of Natural Resources. As I indicated, the trail
19 would be considered an interim use, basically maintaining
20 the right-of-way for possible future use if rail
21 transportation ever became economically viable, and it would

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1 be used for transportation, albeit a different form, people
2 on bicycles and feet and that type of things.

3 The concept right now -- and this is, you know, just a
4 concept -- we possibly would be looking at a multi-use trail
5 just like the other projects that I talked about which would
6 provide for hikers, bikers as well as equestrian use. It
7 would be approximately 10 foot wide, possibly a crushed
8 stone surface, and DNR would construct, operate and maintain
9 it, and it would probably be done in phases, you know, a
10 couple miles at a time.

11 Just to give you a little input, we did have a focus
12 group back in May where we invited some people to Adkins
13 Arboretum to talk about this potential project, and I've
14 worked on a number of these, and some of the issues that
15 they raised were issues that we've heard on every one of
16 these projects. They were concerned about who owns the
17 right-of-way, particularly folks that are adjacent to it.
18 They also were concerned about crime. They were concerned
19 about any liability that they might have as a landowner, and
20 they were also concerned about the economics, how much did
21 the trail cost, what kind of economic benefits are realized

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1 by the community.

2 Just so you know, as far as ownership, you know, as I
3 indicated, it is owned by the State of Maryland. We got a
4 quitclaim deed from the railroad. If an adjacent landowner
5 had some information that they felt demonstrated their
6 personal ownership, certainly, the State would review that
7 and see if they had a valid claim, and if there are -- I
8 know that there are some places where there are existing
9 easements where someone has a crossing across the rail line.
10 All those would be honored, so.

11 As far as crimes, I'm just going to sum this up,
12 basically, without going through all this. One of the
13 things we've seen in all these projects is that crime is not
14 a big problem. Typically, there's far less crime occurring
15 on these rail trail projects than are occurring in the
16 general population as a whole, and typically in these
17 projects, crime in that particular area usually decreases
18 because prior to that, these are somewhat abandoned areas,
19 you know, that people go to for various purposes, and once
20 you convert them to a trail, people are using them, and
21 those type of activities tend to cease.

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1 You know, once again, I'm not going to go through all
2 the statistics, but you know, our experience, particularly
3 on the Northern Central, which is one that we operate, the
4 Department of Natural Resources operates, what we've seen is
5 there is periodic vandalism, but you know, that's part of
6 our job to operate, maintain that. We go and take care of
7 that. In addition, periodically, there is someone that gets
8 unauthorized motor use, particularly ATVs, and part of, you
9 know, our park ranger's job is to try and control that use.
10 One of the things we do as far as the design is concerned,
11 and you can see it here in Easton, is they put up these gate
12 situations, which try and preclude that kind of access.

13 And you know, typically, what we see, the major crimes
14 that occur are usually break-ins of people's vehicles that
15 are using the trail as opposed to landowners have concern
16 that people are going to commit crimes against them. It's
17 usually the trail users that have crimes committed against
18 them.

19 Just, you know, to give you a summary of the projects
20 that I talked about, Northern Central, like I said, mostly
21 vehicle break-ins, some drinking in the parking lots, but

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1 that's a park management, something that they have to
2 control. B&A, it's primarily vandalism. Once again, the
3 County handles that. Western Maryland, it's been vandalism,
4 and the Cross Island trail is relatively new, so they
5 haven't had any problems so far.

6 As I said, there's a lot of ways to try and reduce
7 crime, even if it is rare. One of the things is people
8 using the area helps minimize undesirable behavior. One of
9 the things we do is patrol the project, and we limit the
10 time that it's open from dawn to dusk. In addition, as part
11 of the design, there would be emergency phones and lighting
12 at trail heads and parking lots. As I indicated, you can
13 prohibit vehicle access by using a bollard system just
14 somewhat like they do in Easton.

15 As far as landowner liability, which is always a big
16 concern that adjacent property owners have, we haven't seen
17 much situation where people are leaving the trail. I mean,
18 they're really there to use the trail. However, if they
19 did, the trail users who leave the trail are not invitees to
20 a property and are considered to be trespassing, and
21 landowners are not required to keep their premises safe for

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1 entry for trespassers, and usually, your liability policy
2 will help protect you as well.

3 Just to give you some of the economic benefits that can
4 be associated with these types of projects, we did an
5 economic analysis of the Northern Central rail trail in '93,
6 and what we saw was the value of goods purchased by people
7 using the trail were approximately \$3 million, and these
8 were like bikes and clothing and, you know, that kind of
9 thing, and on the average, the user spent \$6.50 per visit
10 for drinks, food and that kind of thing. The annual tax
11 revenue on these goods that were purchased was \$303,000, and
12 the annual cost of operating the trail was \$191,000.

13 As far as the potential visitors to this particular
14 trail is that Caroline and Talbot Counties have over 25,000
15 residents near the rail line. You also have Tuckahoe and
16 Martinak State Parks in relative close proximity, and they
17 had a combined visitation of over 100,000 people in 2000,
18 and I think if this trail became a reality, it could
19 certainly be linked to a lot of other Talbot and Caroline
20 and Queen Anne County other tourism type efforts going on,
21 and that's pretty much it.

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1 MR. HARRISON: How do you come up with your
2 figures for the amount of users per trail?

3 MR. WILSON: Amount of users per trail? The swag
4 method. You know that?

5 MR. HARRISON: Yeah.

6 MR. WILSON: I mean, basically --

7 MR. OHLER: Not always.

8 MR. WILSON: Huh?

9 MR. OHLER: Not always.

10 MR. WILSON: No, not always. Sometimes we do
11 counts, you know, at the trail heads and stuff. A lot of
12 times we go by and count the number of cars in the parking
13 lot, and you use, you know, an estimate there of people per
14 car and kinds of things, so you know, I know on the Northern
15 Central, we've done several surveys of people, got summer
16 interns to do that, sort of count the number of people using
17 the trail and ask them where they were coming from and how
18 much money they spent and how they liked it and that kind of
19 thing.

20 MR. HARRISON: Okay.

21 MS. SPENCE: I have a couple questions.

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1 MR. HARRISON: Miss Spence?

2 MS. SPENCE: I think you covered this in your
3 presentation, but I just want to be sure. Who would, who
4 would be responsible for building the trail? Is that DNR?

5 MR. WILSON: Yes, ma'am. If this local government
6 was interested in proceeding with the project, DNR in this
7 case would construct it, operate and maintain it.

8 MS. SPENCE: Okay. And security, monitoring,
9 policing of the area, does that fall under DNR, also, or
10 Department of Natural Resources police, or park police?

11 MR. WILSON: Well, right now, we envision it being
12 a part of Tuckahoe State Park, so it would be John Ohler and
13 his staff's responsibility to patrol. If he wanted to call
14 in the local, you know, police to give him assistance, he
15 could do that.

16 MS. SPENCE: And that, would that mean that you'd
17 need to hire more people --

18 MR. OHLER: Yes.

19 MS. SPENCE: -- in order to -- I mean, what's the
20 distance we talking? This is a pretty long stretch of land,
21 right? Twenty miles?

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1 MR. HARRISON: Twenty miles.

2 MR. OHLER: Total length is 45.

3 MR. WILSON: Right. Total length is 45 all the
4 way to Clayton.

5 MS. SPENCE: Right, but within Talbot, we're
6 looking at being around 20?

7 MR. WILSON: I guess 20, yeah.

8 MS. SPENCE: Okay. I guess my biggest concern or
9 question for you is I think it's a great idea to want to
10 connect into north Easton park and the rails to trails in
11 the Town of Easton. I think that's been a terrific benefit.
12 It's Route 50. What happens -- what do you do with Route
13 50, or you just decide the whole thing is going to go east
14 of the highway and leave it at that? I mean --

15 MR. OHLER: I think one of the things you're
16 looking at is you're also putting bridges across Route 50.
17 One thing I look at as an example is if you've ever been to
18 Assateague, there used to be one bridge that crossed to the
19 island from the shore, and they built a bridge just to walk
20 and ride their bikes across --

21 MS. SPENCE: Right.

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1 MR. OHLER: -- the bay, and if they can afford to
2 put a bridge which would be much more expensive than
3 crossing Route 50, I think we can afford to cross Route 50.
4 Again, we're looking recreational trail grant funding, and
5 that comes from different Federal agencies, and that's --

6 MR. FOSTER: We need to move you into the
7 Department of Transportation.

8 MR. OHLER: Pardon me?

9 MR. FOSTER: We need to move you into the
10 Department of Transportation. We can't even get them to
11 replace the bridge at Dover Road.

12 MR. WILSON: To further address your question a
13 little more, I mean, obviously, one option is to just start
14 it on the other side of Route 50 and go from there.

15 MS. SPENCE: Right.

16 MR. WILSON: However, I think it becomes a far
17 greater asset if you can connect to the Town of Easton --

18 MS. SPENCE: Sure.

19 MR. WILSON: -- because that's what people are
20 going to want to do, so I think, you know, what we would
21 need to do is talk with DOT about the possibilities. I

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1 mean, certainly, you can build a pedestrian overpass, you
2 know.

3 MS. SPENCE: Right.

4 MR. WILSON: I mean, Assateague is the classic
5 example. The big kicker is the funding. They're expensive.
6 Right now, there currently is Federal highway money. How
7 long that's going to be available remains to be seen, but
8 right now, there is currently Federal highway money
9 available for that.

10 MS. SPENCE: And you all know this, I'm sure.
11 Biking, recreational biking is already very, very popular in
12 Talbot County.

13 MR. WILSON: Uh-huh.

14 MS. SPENCE: But unfortunately, it's on very --
15 what do we call them -- the roads are not safe. I mean the
16 roads are safe, but for bikers, particularly up and down
17 St. Michaels Road, up and down Oxford Road where people are
18 traveling 45, 55 miles an hour is, can be a potentially
19 really dangerous situation. I think the whole area is ripe
20 for this kind of, for this idea of a more protected area out
21 in the middle of nature. However, if we're looking at using

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1 crushed stone, that's not going to really help the bikers
2 much. I mean, it's pretty hard to ride a bike on crushed
3 stone.

4 MR. OHLER: Crushed stone, if you want to know,
5 it's actually stone dust.

6 MS. SPENCE: Do you mean that sort of crusher run?

7 MR. OHLER: Yes. It's actually like sand, like a
8 grey sand.

9 MS. SPENCE: But it's very compact.

10 MR. OHLER: It's packed down real well. You ride
11 on it and everything else.

12 MR. WILSON: Yeah, the Northern Central is crushed
13 stone surface, and bikes ride all up and down that.

14 MS. SPENCE: They do? Okay.

15 MR. WILSON: Not just mountain bikes, regular
16 bikes. I mean, that becomes compacted over time that it's
17 almost, it's impervious as asphalt. You know, it's a very
18 durable surface. Yeah, I mean, I know. I live up in Kent
19 County, and Chestertown just had the Tea Party Festival, and
20 Baltimore bike club was up there for that. They come up
21 every year, and those folks were riding all over, you know,

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1 the County roads.

2 MS. SPENCE: Oh, yeah, they are.

3 MR. WILSON: And I know every time I encounter
4 them, they always ask me is there a safe place to ride. I
5 mean, people like to sort of move themselves away from that
6 vehicular traffic because, you know, it is potentially an
7 unsafe situation.

8 MR. HARRISON: So what's our next step if we want
9 to further this project?

10 MR. WILSON: I would say if you're interested in
11 furthering this project, you would want to write a letter of
12 support to our secretary indicating that you support it and
13 would like to see us move forward.

14 MS. SPENCE: Mr. Harrison?

15 MR. HARRISON: Yes, ma'am.

16 MS. SPENCE: I would like to see us move forward,
17 but I certainly don't feel like we can -- I'm not
18 comfortable doing that without our Farm Bureau having a
19 total update from these gentlemen perhaps and a
20 presentation, because my understanding is in the past, that
21 has been the group that's been a little nervous about the

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1 whole idea, because you are -- I mean, it just cuts a swath
2 through the heart of the farmland and that whole part of the
3 County, the eastern part of the County, and there may be
4 some concerns there, and I guess where the trail is now,
5 it's surrounded by woods pretty much. Are you on any open
6 land where in other words, a farmer would have to go from
7 one side of the path to the another with a combine or some
8 big heavy farm equipment? I think that would be a concern,
9 but -- or is it totally enclosed in woods?

10 MR. OHLER: There is one farm north of Cordova,
11 and it's one large farm that's got one major field that it
12 does go through, and I would see that would be one of the
13 issues.

14 MS. SPENCE: Yeah.

15 MR. OHLER: One of the things that we have
16 committed to is any farmer that needs to cross it, they're
17 going to cross.

18 MS. SPENCE: Right.

19 MR. OHLER: The North Central, which is on up in
20 Baltimore County, we've had farmers who have negotiated to
21 actually use the trail to get their equipment from one farm

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1 field to another, so it's not, it's certainly not going to
2 try to stop farming in any way. The object is make it as
3 good for them as it is for anybody else.

4 MR. WILSON: I mean, one thing we could do if you
5 wanted, I mean, we certainly could have an informational
6 meeting where the public would be invited, and we could give
7 a similar presentation and hear what kind of input. I mean,
8 if that's something that you would like to do.

9 MR. HARRISON: Yeah. Perhaps it's something that
10 we could take up, also, with our next quarterly meeting with
11 the towns and see if they have any interest in continuing
12 that end of the trail, No. 1, and we can also ask Larry
13 Ewing if the Farm Bureau is interested in having a
14 presentation from these gentlemen or a public presentation.

15 MS. SPENCE: Would that be appropriate to ask
16 Mr. Hollis to perhaps contact him to set that up?
17 Mr. Hollis?

18 MR. HOLLIS: Sure.

19 MS. SPENCE: And any other staff, either Public
20 Works staff or Planning and Zoning staff. I see Debbie
21 Dodson is here. I certainly would want to know what she

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1 feels, how she feels about this project, who's director of
2 tourism for the County.

3 MR. FOSTER: And anybody that might be interested
4 in using this as a railroad, we want to make sure that they
5 find out and have their chance to come in and make their
6 pitch if they have a pitch to make.

7 MR. WILSON: Well, we're certainly willing to talk
8 to anybody or any group that you would want us to.

9 MS. SPENCE: I'd just like to get the impact, the
10 input from the farming community and also potentially from
11 our tourism board, particularly if they could perhaps maybe
12 also attend the meeting with the Farm Bureau to get an
13 overview. Debbie, can you just speak for a moment, how up
14 to date are you about this project, or is our tourism board
15 up to date about it? Do they know about it? Do they
16 support it? Do you know?

17 MS. DODSON: We certainly support it from the
18 standpoint this is a wonderful opportunity. It has not been
19 presented to our tourism board. I talked to John, and
20 John's coming to do that at one of our upcoming board
21 meetings.

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1 MS. SPENCE: Okay. What, what would a potential
2 time line for this be in terms of if the County was very
3 much supportive of it, what would the next steps -- I guess
4 Mr. Harrison was asking that. Once our sort of community is
5 informed and we -- what are the next steps following that?

6 MR. WILSON: Well, the next steps, if the County
7 supported it and all the other groups supported it, the next
8 step from our standpoint is we would go to the Department of
9 Transportation and negotiate a lease agreement where they
10 would transfer their interest in that line to us. Then
11 subsequent to that, then we'd start seeking funding for
12 construction, and you know, depending on how we go about
13 doing that, whether we're using, you know, trying to get
14 Federal highway money or whether we're using our capital,
15 you know, it may take a couple years in order to get this
16 funding in place.

17 MS. SPENCE: So we're talking this is a long-term
18 project here.

19 MR. WILSON: It's not around the corner.

20 MS. SPENCE: Okay. Thanks.

21 MR. HARRISON: Any other questions or comments

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1 from the Council?

2 MS. SPENCE: Thank you.

3 MR. HARRISON: All right, gentlemen. Thank you.

4 Very good presentation.

5 MR. WILSON: Thank you.

6 MR. HARRISON: We're a little behind schedule at
7 this point, so I'll ask for the County Manager's report.

8 MR. HOLLIS: Just four items, Mr. Vice President.

9 The first is to request approval of the assistant County
10 engineer's recommendation to award Bid 01-12, parking lot
11 resurfacing, Bellevue Landing, to the low bidder, R. L.
12 Ewing Contractors, in the amount of \$15,500. This is being
13 funded by surplus from other waterway improvement projects.

14 MR. HARRISON: Pleasure of the Council?

15 MS. SPENCE: I'd like to make a motion that we
16 approve the contract to R. L. Ewing for the Bellevue parking
17 lot for \$15,500.

18 MR. FOSTER: Second.

19 MR. HARRISON: It's been moved and seconded.
20 Harrison votes aye.

21 MS. SPENCE: Spence, aye.



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

COURT HOUSE

11 N. WASHINGTON STREET

EASTON, MARYLAND 21601-3178

PHONE: 410-770-8010

R. ANDREW HOLLIS
County Manager

TTY: 410-822-8735

FAX: 410-770-8007

ahollis@talbgov.org

June 4, 2001

John Ohler, Superintendent
Tuckahoe State Park
13070 Crouse Mill Road
Queen Anne, Maryland 21657

Dear Mr. Ohler:

Thank you for your presentation on the "Rails to Trails Program" at the Talbot County Council meeting on Tuesday, May 29, 2001. As the Council indicated, they are interested in pursuing this project and have requested that you meet with both the County Tourism Board, and the Farm Bureau to receive their input. To schedule a meeting with the Farm Bureau you may contact Larry Ewing, President of the Farm Bureau by dialing (410) 822-2221.

Please advise me of your meeting date with the Farm Bureau as I may wish to attend this meeting. Thank you again for taking the time to meet with the County Council.

Sincerely,

R. Andrew Hollis

R. Andrew Hollis
County Manager

RAH;jkm



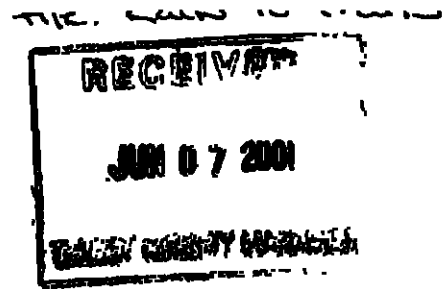
TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

OFFICE OF TOURISM

COURT HOUSE

11 N WASHINGTON STREET

EASTON, MARYLAND 21601-3178



DEBORAH L. DODSON
Director

PHONE: 410-770-8000
FAX: 410-770-8013

To: Talbot County Council
Andy Hollis, County Manager

From: Debbi Dodson 

Re: Rails to Trails Program

Date: June 6, 2001

On June 6, 2001, John Wilson and John Ohler, Department of Natural Resources, presented DNR's Rails to Trails Program to the Talbot County Tourism Board.

After the slide presentation and discussion, the Board fully endorsed the Council's effort to move the Easton to Clayton Rails to Trails Program forward.

The Rails to Trails Program offers bicyclists, hikers, joggers, and equestrians the ability to enjoy their outdoors activities in a well-maintained environment. We envision the trails providing recreation to our youth, residents and tourists as well as an opportunity for business development, i.e., bike rentals, food or beverage outlets, and the ability to link water and rail trails, etc. Through appropriate marketing cyclists can be encouraged to use these trails rather than several of today's unsafe biking routes.

Please let me know if I can assist with the upcoming meeting planned for the Farm Bureau

Talbot County

FB

Farm Bureau

32380 Geib Road

Cordova, Md. 21625

{410} 820-2062

RECEIVED

SEP 26 2001

TALBOT COUNTY COUNCIL

September 23, 2001

To: Mr. Wayne Dyott
President, Talbot County Council

Dear Mr. Dyott;

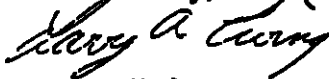
I humbly apologize for missing last month's meeting with you and all of those who were involved in the discussion concerning the Rails to Trails issue. Margaret and I went away for a much needed vacation and to be honest with you, it's has been hard to get readjusted after such a relaxing two weeks. However, leaving the matter in the capable hands of our vice president, Lewis Smith, as well as the remaining board members gave me complete peace of mind during our trip.

Upon my return, I heard that both the preliminary meeting with you and then the open discussion at our August board meeting went well. I have always felt a genuine closeness with our County Council and I sincerely appreciate your consideration of us on this matter.

It has been brought to my attention that perhaps a written statement concerning the Rails to Trails issue should be sent to the Talbot County Council as a matter of record. ***According to our 2001 County Resolutions (#39 under Planning & Zoning), Talbot County Farm Bureau opposes the implementation of the Rails to Trails program through our farming operations.***

Thank you so much for the open dialogue that we share on this matter as well as on any issue that may affect us all in the future. Please relay the sentiments behind this letter to all of our council members. We are here to help you in any way and we are always grateful of your consideration of us.

Most sincerely,



Larry A. Ewing
President, Talbot County Farm Bureau

2001
Officers & Board
Members

President
Larry A. Ewing

Vice President
Lewis H. Smith

Secretary-Treasurer
Mary Ellen Hutchinson

Board of Directors

David Altmater
Mike Boyle
Phillip Council, Jr.
H. Wade Dudrow
Robert Garret
Robert Hutchinson
Wesley Brown
Cerald O'Mara
John Swaine III
John Trux

Past President
Raymond Harrison, Jr.

Information Director
John Sewell

Farm Bureau Women
Chairperson
Karen Callahan

Young Farmers
Chairman
Raymond Harrison III

David Almqvist
County Extension
Agent



**TALBOT COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
TALBOT COUNTY COMMUNITY CENTER**

Memo

RECEIVED

SEP 27 2001

TALBOT COUNTY MANAGER

TO: Talbot County Council

FROM: Ronald E. Kidd/Director *R.E.K.*

DATE: September 25, 2001

RE: Rail To Trails

At a regular scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on September 20, 2001 the Rails to Trails Program was discussed.

After discussion the Parks and Recreation Department fully endorsed the Rails to Trails Proposal.

This would give the residents of Talbot County additional Recreation Facilities to pursue activities of their own choosing. Activities on the trail could include biking, hiking, walking, jogging and perhaps a learning experience for our youth.

23234

11/2

The Star Democrat
Easton, MD

We Hereby Certify

That the annexed Notice was
published in

The Star Democrat,

One of the newspapers printed

and

published in Talbot County,

Maryland,

1 times in each of 2

successive weeks beginning the

26th day of Oct

2001

and the last insertion on the

2nd day of Nov

2001.

Chesapeake Publishing
Corporation
Publishers of ***The Star Democrat***

Per


**TALBOT COUNTY
PUBLIC NOTICE**

**COMMUNITY MEETING
Rails to Trails Project - Maryland Route 309**

Notice is hereby given that the Talbot County Council will hold a Community Meeting in the County Council Meeting Room, South Wing, Courthouse, 11 North Washington Street, Easton, Maryland on Tuesday, November 13th at 5:00 p.m. The Council will hold an open community forum to accept comment regarding a possible Rails to Trails Project that would run from the Town of Easton through the Town of Queen Anne and connecting to Tuckahoe State Park, adjacent, for the most part, to Maryland Route 309. Specific information is available from the Talbot County Planning Office, (410) 770-8030. The public is encouraged to attend.

COUNTY COUNCIL OF TALBOT COUNTY

SD 10/26 11/2

E129560

COUNCIL REVIEW
DATE 11-26-01

DYOTT
FOSTER
HARRISON
HIGGINS
SPENCE

✓
✓
✓
✓
✓

ROL KABLER
P.O. BOX 85
ORNE, MD. 21624

November 13, 2001

To: Members of the Talbot County Council
The Court House
Easton, MD 21601

Dear Council Members:

As I am unable to attend the forum tonight, I am writing to express my support for the Rails-to-Trails project under consideration. Here are my reasons:

The quality of life which we so greatly cherish will be enhanced by the existence of a Trail in the County connecting with other areas to the north. I have children and grandchildren in Talbot County and I covet for them the opportunity to enjoy a safe and attractive trail for bicycling and walking.

The existence of Rails-to-Trails here will be an attraction for tourists who will patronize B&B's, restaurants and other local businesses.

To those landowners who fear the presence of users of the trail, I would say that friends whose property adjoins a similar trail in Severna Park tell me they have never had a problem from its proximity.

Very sincerely yours,

Carol V. Kabler

Carol V. Kabler



TALBOT COUNTY, MARYLAND

COURT HOUSE

11 N. WASHINGTON STREET

EASTON, MARYLAND 21601-3178

PHONE: 410-770-8010

R. ANDREW HOLLIS
County Manager

TTY 410-822-8735

FAX 410-770-8007

ahollis@talbgov.org

March 5, 2002

J. Charles Fox, Secretary
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Secretary Fox:

Talbot County, Maryland is requesting assistance from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to plan, design, fund, and construct a one-mile pedestrian/bicycle trail within the village of Cordova along the abandoned Easton Clayton rail line. The trail proposal, located within an approved Certified Priority Funding Area, will link the village of Cordova with the Chapel District Elementary School and possibly serve as the anchor for future trail extensions in the direction of the Town of Easton and Tuckahoe State Park. A vicinity location map is attached.

The County Council, and Office of Planning and Zoning, have discussed this project with Mr. John Wilson, Mr. John Ohler, Mrs. Lisa Gutierrez, and Mrs. Raj Williams, all of the Department of Natural Resources. It is their opinion that this Rails to Trails project is worthy of State support. Mr. Frank Hall, Assistant Planning Officer, would be the County contact for this project.

Thank you for seriously considering State support of this Rail to Trails plan. The County Council appreciates the continued cooperative partnership between the Department of Natural Resources and Talbot County government. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Mr. Hall at (410) 770-8032.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Andrew Hollis".

R. Andrew Hollis
County Manager

RAH/jkm

Attachment
Vicinity Location Map

cc John Wilson, Department of Natural Resources
Lisa Gutierrez, Department of Natural Resources
John Ohler, Department of Natural Resources
Raj Williams, Department of Natural Resources
Frank Hall, Assistant Planning Officer, Talbot County



RECEIVED

APR 15 2002

TALBOT COUNTY

J. Charles Fox
Secretary

Parris N. Glendening
Governor

Kathleen Kennedy Townsend
Lt. Governor

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

Tawes State Office Building
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Karen M. White
Deputy Secretary

April 1, 2002

R. Andrew Hollis
Talbot County Manager
11 N. Washington Street
Court House
Easton, MD 21601-3178

Dear Mr. Hollis:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding the Easton/Clayton rail trail. As you are aware the Maryland Department of Natural Resources is fully committed to the trail project. I am truly happy to hear of your commitment to proceed with the one-mile segment, which will connect the village of Cordova with the Chapel District Elementary School.

With regards to your request for assistance, my staff will help with planning and design of the trail plus identify possible outside funding sources for the County's construction of the trail. Further, we hope that this trail segment will serve as an anchor for future trail extensions to link up with the planned trail system within DNR's Tuckahoe State Park.

Again, we applaud the County for your commitment to this project and look forward to a partnership between DNR and Talbot County. Thanks again and if you have any questions during the interim, please call me at (410) 260-8101 or the Department's Eastern Region Planner, Raj Williams, at (410) 260-8416.

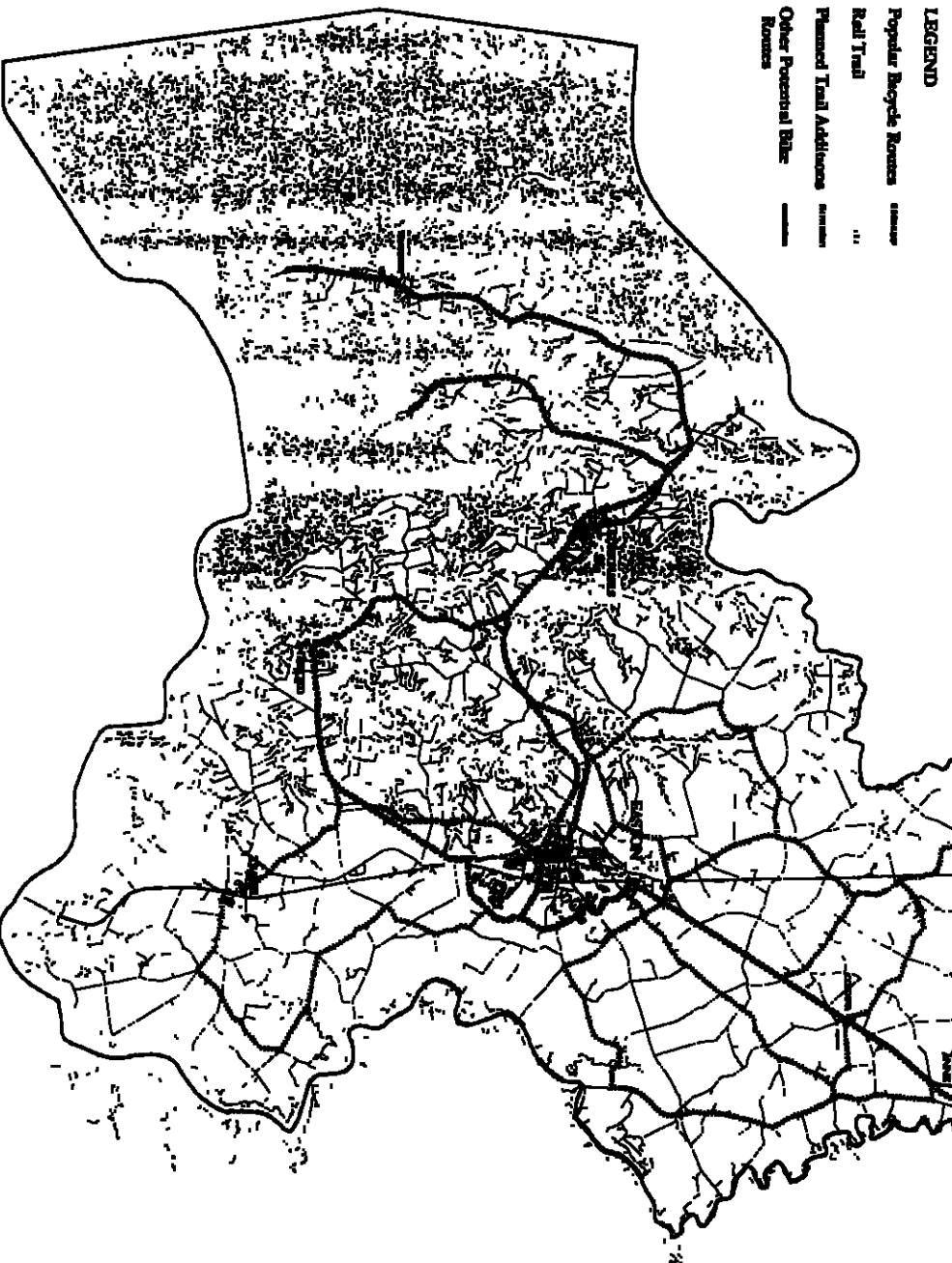
Signature
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JCF", is written over the printed name and title.
J. Charles Fox
Secretary

JCF JWD GP:rw

cc Raj Williams
Lisa Gutierrez

Talbot County Comprehensive Plan

MAP 4-3 Pedestrian and Bicycle Trails



FEBRUARY 2005

