



## **Technical Assistance Panel Report**

# **Indian Head Rail Trail**

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Charles County

May 22 - 23, 2012



# Indian Head Rail Trail

Charles County, MD

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A Technical Assistance Panel Report

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## **About ULI Washington A District Council of the Urban Land Institute**

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ULI’s mission is to provide leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide. ULI Washington carries out the ULI mission locally by sharing best practices, building consensus, and advancing solutions through its educational programs and community outreach initiatives.

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The objective of ULI Washington’s Technical Assistance Panel (TAP) program is to provide expert, multidisciplinary advice on land use and real estate issues facing public agencies and nonprofit organizations in the Washington Metropolitan area. Drawing from its extensive membership base, ULI Washington conducts one and one-half day panels offering objective and responsible advice to local decision makers on a wide variety of land use and real estate issues ranging from site-specific projects to public policy questions. The TAP program is intentionally flexible to provide a customized approach to specific land use and real estate issues. Learn more at <http://washington.uli.org/TAPs>.

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## Acknowledgments

Both personally and on behalf of the Urban Land Institute Washington District Council (ULI Washington), the panel members and project staff would like to thank Charles County for inviting ULI Washington to explore the Indian Head Rail Trail and assist their efforts to maximize both trail use and the economic benefits related to the trail in Indian Head, White Plains and greater Charles County. Specifically, the panel would like to thank Tom Roland, Chief of Parks and Grounds for Charles County, for his work in preparing for the Panel and defining the scope of work, developing the briefing materials and ensuring that the panelists had access to great information and facilities during the TAP.

The panel would like to thank Catherine Carroll, Charles County Tourism Marketing Coordinator, for meeting with them by phone and providing helpful insight. ULI Washington also thanks the numerous staff and citizens who participated in the stakeholder roundtable sessions and for providing invaluable input and background information to the panel. Finally, the panel was also very grateful to Charles County Supervisors Candice Quinn Kelly, Reuben Collins and Ken Robinson, as well as Indian Head Mayor Dennis Scheessele and Vice-Mayor Edward Rice for attending the final presentation. The input and feedback from each of these stakeholders laid the foundation for the panel's recommendations.

The findings and recommendations provided in this report are based on the collective expertise of the panel and information learned from the briefing materials, bike tour of the trail, sponsor presentations, and roundtable discussions conducted during the panel's one and one-half day effort.



*During the stakeholder roundtables, panelists heard from Charles County staff, local elected leaders and representatives from the community.*

## Forward: Overview and Panel Assignment

The Indian Head Rail Trail is a 13-mile paved trail that traverses roughly half of Charles County, Maryland, connecting the town of Indian Head to the unincorporated community of White Plains. The trail was built in 2008 and 2009 on land transferred to Charles County from the Department of the Interior and with funding from the Maryland Open Space Grant program and Charles County. The majority of the trail traverses scenic, undeveloped terrain along the Mattawoman Creek, near the Myrtle Grove Wildlife Park and through other undisturbed wooded areas. The trail is currently used primarily by local runners, cyclists and bird watchers.

While the trail is well used and valued by people from the adjacent community, Charles County seeks ways to promote the Indian Head Rail Trail to a broader network of users including visitors from neighboring counties and from out-of-state. The County is also interested in identifying ways to support economic development related to the trail, particularly near the trail heads in Indian Head and White Plains.

Charles County asked the Technical Assistance Panel to consider and address the following questions:



### **Question 1: What type of improvements can be made that would enhance connectivity to the trail and improve overall use of the Indian Head Rail Trail?**

- a) What signage or urban design improvements could be made to better connect people from the Village Green parking area to the trail head?
- b) What bicycle/pedestrian improvements should be prioritized throughout Indian Head to increase non-motorized travel generally and especially to improve access to the trail?
- c) What improvements should be considered that would link the Indian Head Rail Trail (IHRT) to existing pedestrian/bike paths in the Westlake/St. Charles areas?
- d) What additional trail spurs or connections should be prioritized in order to create linkages between the IHRT and existing residential/ commercial nodes?
- e) Should an overpass over Route 301 be a priority?
- f) Trail users, coming from the White Plains direction, often turn around before reaching the Indian Head endpoint of the trail. What could be done to entice them to travel the full length of the trail and thus patronize the businesses in Indian Head?

**Question 2: What are the trail-related economic development opportunities at areas adjacent to the trail?**

- a) What development or redevelopment opportunities might exist in downtown Indian Head that would support trail-related economic development?
- b) How can existing vacant buildings in the Town of Indian Head become potential business opportunities or be improved in a way that would support other business growth here?
- c) What incentives are recommended that would help attract and retain small businesses, especially those that could support or benefit from the trail, within the Town of Indian Head?
- d) What improvements or redevelopment efforts should be prioritized in the White Plains industrial park (that surrounds the White Plains trail head) that would support increased trail use and trail-related economic development?
- e) What could be done to draw users from the trail to existing adjacent businesses (restaurants, shops and cafes)?
- f) What partnerships or activities could be undertaken to engage the existing businesses in the White Plains Commerce Park (shopping center fronting Route 301) with the trail?

**Question 3: What improvements and marketing strategies would benefit the trail's value as a tourism destination?**

- a) Should the Indian Head River Trail be considered important to the County's overall visitor/tourism attraction effort? If so, what marketing and promotional opportunities would be recommended that would increase IHRT's visibility as a tourism destination?
- b) What amenities or complementary land uses will be essential to the trail's success as a tourism destination?
- c) We recognize that the IHRT's ability to attract ecotourists and especially cycle-tourists will be greatly enhanced if it links in to other trail networks. What trail extensions or bicycle/pedestrian improvements should be prioritized to link the Indian Head Rail Trail to other trails in the County and region? Potential links to other trails could include Charles County's existing Rosewick Road Trail (5 mile length), the St. Mary's County Three Notch Trail (under development – eventually 28 mile length) and the Potomac Heritage Trail (network of trail/ connections that link the Alleghany Highlands to the Chesapeake Bay).

## Findings and Recommendations

The foremost observation that the technical assistance panel (TAP) made was that the Indian Head Rail Trail, as it is today, is a tremendous asset for Charles County, White Plains and the Town of Indian Head. The IHRT features the highest quality trail design, kiosks, gateways, restrooms and other amenities. Similarly, its peaceful natural surroundings and attractions that range from a working farm to a tranquil estuary distinguish the IHRT from other trails in the region. The IHRT embodies characteristics that are central to the broader effort to market Charles County as an active, outdoors-oriented, entertainment destination. Overall, the panel sees the Indian Head Rail Trail as a top-quality community amenity that has the potential to play an important role in attracting tourists and supporting economic development in Charles County.

Steps in the Lifecycle of a Successful Trail Project	IHRT Status
1. Build the project	✓
2. Provide clear information about the project	
3. Marketing	
4. Programs/Events	
5. Refinement/Additional Physical Improvements	

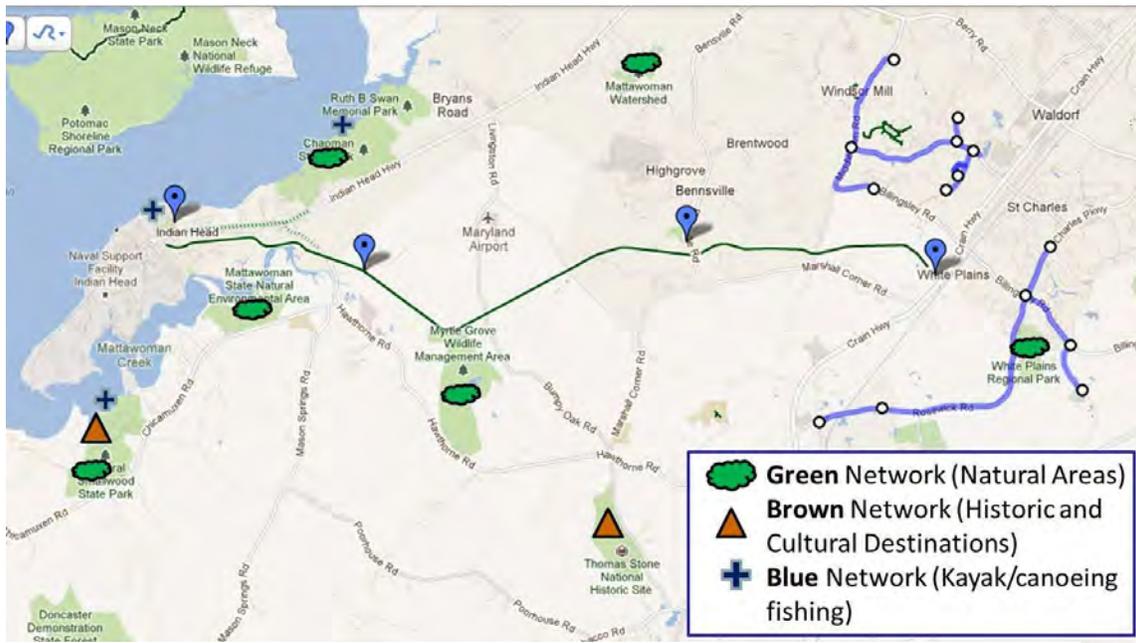
In the lifecycle of a successful trail project, construction should be viewed as only the first step and must be followed by information dissemination, marketing, events and finally project refinement. While Charles County has done some information dissemination and marketing for the trail, the panel believes that more work in these areas is key to realizing the trail’s full potential.

The first step in attracting more users to the trail is to identify the current and potential user groups and to keep those groups in mind when prioritizing all future marketing efforts and physical improvements. The panel believes that some of the key user groups include nature lovers, locals who exercise, families looking for day-trips, commuters to the base, heritage tourists and cyclists. Charles County can use this list to craft outreach, marketing strategies and events that cater to individual user groups, perhaps prioritizing those groups that have the most potential for trail-related economic development through local shopping, dining and overnight stays. Considering these groups separately will also help evaluate the additional amenities (e.g. hotels, shuttle service, convenience store, etc.) that might be needed in Indian Head and White Plains.



Tom Roland leads the panel on a bike ride along the trail.

With regard to targeted marketing strategies, the panel thought that the trail should be viewed as part of a package of attractions rather than as an independent destination that will draw people from outside the County. For example, outreach to eco-tourists such as birders or nature photographers might include the trail as well as opportunities to kayak on the Mattawoman Creek and hike in Chapman State Park. Similarly heritage tourists might be attracted to use the trail on the same visit that they tour Mt. Aventine or the Dr. Mudd House Museum. In other words, the panel saw the trail as one of many destinations that make up the “regional package” of visitor attractions. Similarly, the panel thought that the marketing strategy for the trail must also highlight local amenities in Indian Head and White Plains that can be reached by foot or bike from the trail. For example in Indian Head, a trail user could easily access several restaurants, a playground, basketball courts, a snack counter and a canoe/kayak launch.



*The Indian Head Rail Trail is one part of the “regional package” of tourist destinations.*

With these initial observations in mind, the panel organized their recommendations as short-term and long-term actions that could help strengthen and leverage the IHRT as one of Charles County’s premier assets.

## Short Term Work Program: Years 1 – 3

### Information

The first panel recommendation is that Charles County needs to collect baseline data for trail usage. Having better information about how many people currently use the trail will help track progress over time and make the case for additional improvements in the future. Trail use could be estimated by conducting trail counts or by monitoring the number of cars in the parking lots and using that figure to extrapolate trail usage. Trail counts will provide more accurate information though they can be more time-intensive. Some communities recruit volunteer trail counters from local bicycle clubs, churches or other groups, perhaps as part of a National Trails Day event. Others work with a local college to get help from engineering or urban planning students. The Washington Area Bicycle Association (WABA) has recruited elementary school students to help with this type of counts. The website of the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (<http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>) provides a great deal of information about how and when to conduct counts. In addition to gathering baseline data for trail use, Charles County may also want to conduct a survey to determine user characteristics (e.g. age, home county, etc.), user demand for amenities, or use by Navy employees. Baseline data for property values and the local tax base might also be useful in the future.

Regarding the information that is available to trail users, the panel recommends making some minor changes to the trail map, which is the main document people will use to plan their trip (where to start, where to park, etc.). The map would be more user-friendly if it included the addresses of the trail head parking lots and the locations of local restaurants or other nearby attractions. Also, labeling Charlie Wright Park as “remote parking” might deter some people from going there since it sounds far or inaccessible, when in fact it is just a few blocks from the official trail head. With these minor changes, the panel believes that all future brochures for the IHRT should feature the trail map prominently.

Maximizing patronage of local businesses by trail users will help those businesses grow and, as trail use increases, could attract other businesses to the area. The panel understands that there has been an effort to somewhat limit the number of signs and physical amenities along the trail in order to preserve the natural character of the route. The panel supports this effort since, as was previously noted, the natural seclusion one feels on the IHRT is what sets it apart. To maintain this natural experience while also supporting trail-related economic development, the panel recommends an “amenity zone” in the segment of the trail closest to each trail head. In the amenity zone, signs could direct users to local businesses and benches might be more prevalent to accommodate families or others taking only a short walk. This more engaging atmosphere may also encourage users to travel to the end of the trail rather than turning around as they approach the town limits, as currently happens. The middle of the trail should be considered a “conservation zone,” where signs and amenities would be more limited. On the Indian Head end, the panel recommended the conservation zone starting near Parker Harley Place (see image next page).



*The panel recommends providing signs to link users to businesses near the trail, but also protecting the natural character of the trail's central portion.*

## **Marketing**

Increasing and broadening trail use will be essential to driving future trail-related economic development. The panel believes that a critical step in marketing the trail will be to develop a website that is distinct from the County Parks or Tourism sites, is search-engine optimized and provides updated information about trail activities. The new website should incorporate existing marketing materials, feature a dynamic map (e.g. Google map) of the trail, integrate social media and include creative elements such as live cameras of eagle or redheaded woodpecker nests. The website should include suggested itineraries targeted toward the specific user groups mentioned earlier, such as cue sheets for longer bike rides that include the trail, information on popular bird watching points along the route or more details about historic points of interest.

Especially as interest in the trail grows, there may be a need for a group other than the County to support or even spearhead trail promotion. Charles County may want to form a “Friends of the Trail” Group or there may be an existing business association, bicycle club, church or other group that might “adopt” the IHRT.

## **Programs/Events**

Programs and events that highlight the trail or trail-related activities will attract new users to the area and could generate revenue for the County. Building on the success of existing regional events like

ArtsFest, Charles County or Indian Head should consider hosting festivals or events that either take place on the trail or promote trail-supportive activities in the area. For example, the county could offer guided bird walks to regional nature clubs or similar educational tours to historical societies. On a larger scale, a Criterium Race on the Village Green or annual supported bike ride through the County would attract both cyclists and spectators to the area. Even if these events are not centered on the Indian Head Rail Trail, they will help build the brand of Charles County and Indian Head as active, ecotourism destinations.

**Project Refinement/Physical Improvements**

Now that trail construction is complete, Charles County and Indian Head have an opportunity to focus on improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to the trail, and especially between the IHRT and the existing local businesses. High quality, safe and visible connections to the trail will be essential for locals who want to access the trail from home by foot or bike, tourists who spend the night at a nearby hotel or campground, and bicyclists who want to ride round-trip on the trail and stop for lunch midway. Recognizing that Charles County recently adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan that outlines a long list of important projects, the panel believes that bike racks and on-street bike parking should be



From this...



...to this in Indian Head



Berkeley, CA



Chicago, IL



Oakland, CA

Examples of bicycle route signs that could be used in the trail “amenity zone” and also in Indian Head and White Plains.

prioritized in the near-term throughout Indian Head and at the White Plains Commerce Park. Neighborhood bicycle routes that connect to the IHRT could be identified and marked using shared land markings or “sharrows” (shown below). Improved bike route signs both in the Town of Indian Head and in the “amenity zones” could show distances to these neighborhood routes, local destinations or connecting trails. All of these improvements, which are relatively low-cost to implement, can make it safer and more appealing to use active modes of transportation and also send a visual cue to drivers and visitors that they are in a bike- and pedestrian-friendly place.

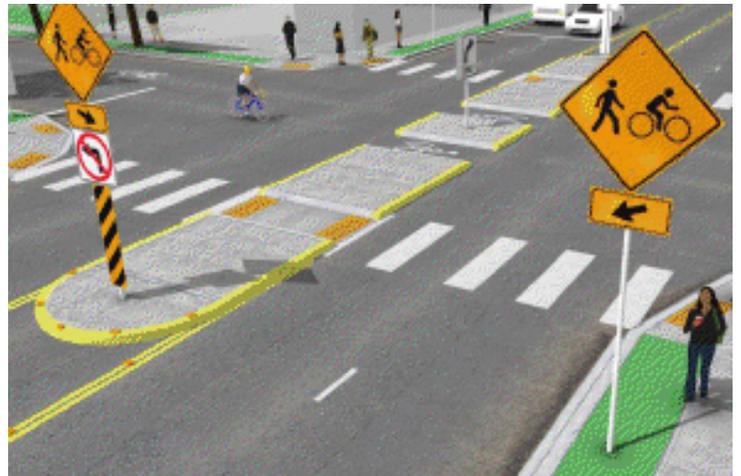
There is also an opportunity for near-term, relatively low-cost improvements to better connect the parking area at the Indian Head Pavilion to the trail head. The panel recommends using signage or pavement markers to make it exceptionally clear how users are supposed to get from the parking lot to the trail via Mattingly Avenue. It may even be worth considering moving the official trail starting point (as shown on maps and indicated by signage) to somewhere closer to the parking lot and visible from Indian Head Highway. In the near-term, the Town of Indian Head should consider building an enhanced pedestrian crossing, such as the one shown below, at the intersection of Indian Head Highway and Mattingly Avenue. Since there is potential for students from Indian Head Elementary School to use the trail with parents or as part of “biking school buses,” similar improvements should also be considered for Raymond Avenue where it crosses Indian Head Highway.



*“Sharrows” marking a neighborhood bike route in Portland, OR*

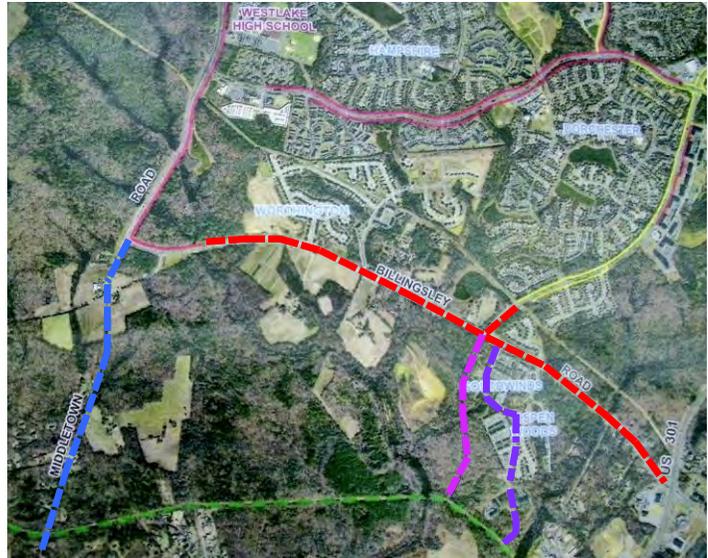


*The intersections at Mattingly and Raymond Avenues should be prioritized for enhanced crossings.*



*Highly visible crossings like this one help pedestrians and signal to drivers that they should use caution.*

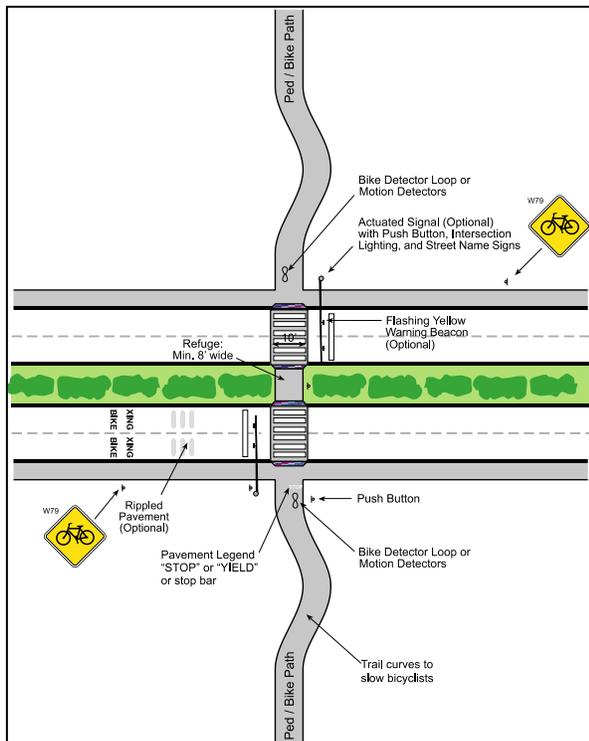
The final recommendation the panel made for near-term improvements in Indian Head is to use the vacant buildings on Indian Head Highway to create a focal point or activity node that attracts people from the Pavilion area toward the trailhead. The empty store-fronts across from Pye Street would be ideal locations for a temporary bicycle repair station or a bike vending machine that disperses items like maps, tubes, patch kits and water bottles. These store fronts may also be candidates for “pop-up businesses,” a new trend where retailers set up a small, temporary shop in a vacant store front. The shop might be a sample sale one day and an art store the next. This would most likely require a partnership between the Town and the building owners.



Dashed lines show priority roads for bicycle improvements near White Plains trailhead.

On the White Plains end of the trail, priority improvements should focus on better linking the IHRT to existing neighborhoods and other trails. The panel does not believe that an overpass over Route 301 is necessary to facilitate improved trail usage and connectivity. They believe that the cost would outweigh

the benefits and that at-grade improvements could safely and successfully link users to destinations in St. Charles and Waldorf. For example, improved on-road bicycle connections (widened shoulders or a dedicated bike lane) on Middletown Road and Southwinds Drive could give cyclists several options for getting to Billingsley Road, which is already prioritized for improvements (see above). This would minimize the need to ride along Route 301. The intersection of Billingsley Road and 301 should be improved for pedestrians and cyclists, perhaps by adding a countdown crossing signal, an enhanced/raised crosswalk or overhead flashing beacons.



Potential crossing design for MD 301 and Middletown Road in White Plains

The White Plains Trailhead itself is in excellent condition and provides the essential amenities that trail users need. The panel does support the idea of



*Historic train car on display in a park in Carver, MN*

installing a vintage train car somewhere near the terminus and recommended that it be used either as a curiosity for guests (no active use inside) or as an interpretive center/visitors station.

## Longer Term Work Program: Years 4 - 10

### Regional Trail Connections

For the IHRT to attract more road cyclists and cycle-tourists, it needs to be part of a larger looped bike network. Using signs and maps to designate a range of route options (e.g. a 20, 40 and 60 mile loop) will attract a broad range of cyclists and will help formalize bicycling as part of the County's culture. This will be especially important as Charles County continues to add households and works toward a more



compact growth pattern. There may be places where no physical improvements are needed other than to designate a particular bike route, install signs and put a map online. In other places like that shown in the map, short segments of new bike lanes or trails might complete an otherwise complete circular route; the County should prioritize these links for mid-term investment.

Similarly, connections or short extensions between the IHRT, the Myrtle Grove Wildlife Management Area, the Mattawoman Creek and other natural viewpoints would create more options for birders, photographers and anyone taking a walk on the trail. In the longer term, these "side trails" could help ensure that heavy use by cyclists and runners does not take away from the experience of passive users seeking a quiet, natural experience.

### Positioning 301 for TOD

The map below shows areas in Charles County that are targeted for more density in the future. This growth plan impacted the panel's thinking about the role the trail could play in connecting these future "villages" and linking to the proposed light rail line running from White Plains to Mattawoman. While the light rail line is likely many years from



implementation, the panel views the IHRT as part of the foundation of this new vision for growth in Charles County. The light rail line would create opportunities for transit-oriented development (TOD), or compact, walkable growth located near high-quality transit. This vision represents an important opportunity for Charles County, since both younger households and retiring Baby Boomers increasingly seek houses and jobs in compact, walkable communities. As the White Plains – Mattawoman light rail line is developed, the IHRT will become an increasingly important link from Indian Head to the transit corridor. In the interim before the light rail plan is realized, Charles County should continue to support active transportation and intermodal trips by providing improved bus service on key routes, installing bike racks on all buses and ensuring that neighborhood bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is built to the highest levels in all new developments.

White Plains has great potential for TOD and the image below shows a potential street grid and bicycle network that could be possible as the areas develops into a transit village. A tight network of smaller blocks is a central characteristic of a compact, walkable transit village. An additional stop light on 301 would help cross-traffic and would slow vehicle speeds in the area; a critical step toward “calming” the highway and eventually making it safe and pleasant for pedestrians and bicyclist. Georgia Avenue in Silver Spring or Connecticut Avenue in Cleveland Park are examples of streets that carry a large volume of traffic but are still walkable, commercial streets. There is also potential to construct a separated bike path running parallel to the light rail line; the panels suggests that this trail become integral to the transit line project.



*Example of a rail-with-trail facility*



*A possible street grid that would help facilitate TOD in White Plains. Dashed lines show bicycle improvements that would link the IHRT to a local bike network.*

## Base Partnership Opportunities

The panel believes that Indian Head should consider exploring opportunities with the Navy to move the base boundary inward and free up a portion of land north of Charlie Wright Park for civilian use. There are examples around the country where this has been done, especially as bases that have experienced a reduction in employees and residents in recent years. For example, the Naval Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut went through a period of downsizing and decided to enter into an “enhanced use lease” with the city for a portion of land near an active local highway. Through the agreement, the base moved their fence and the city plans to develop a retail area that can be used by both base employees and the civilian public. The enhanced use lease allowed the Navy to retain long-term control of the property to accommodate future potential growth.

In Indian Head, moving the Base fence could create an opportunity for compact redevelopment in the town center and could also make a ferry connection between Indian Head and Fort Belvoir in Virginia possible. This proposed ferry could shorten the commute from Charles County to Fairfax and businesses in Indian Head could benefit from the increased visibility and traffic. Cyclists would be encouraged to use the ferry to connect to the bike routes in the County, similar to how they currently use Whites Ferry to ride a loop between the C & O and WO&D trails. When viewed as part of a regional transportation network that includes the IHRT and the proposed light rail line, the ferry could help transform Charles County into one of the region’s leading destinations for families who want to drive less as part of their daily routines.



*Example of Navy Base in Connecticut that shifted its boundaries and fence in order to facilitate local development.*

### **Long Term Reinvestment in Indian Head**

Over the longer-term, as the trail grows in popularity and Charles County achieves some of its broader goals regarding compact growth, the panel believes that business growth will pick up in downtown Indian Head. Rather than offering strong business incentives, the Town should focus on making Indian Head a desirable and distinct place to be and on branding the town in a way that celebrates the authentic local culture that already exists. Focusing on “placemaking” and letting the business development happen organically will lead to a more long-term and stable transformation compared to a more heavy-handed, incentive-based approach. While there are some amenities that are needed in the area to encourage a significant increase in tourism related to the IHRT (e.g. more lodging options, destination hospitality, more sit-down restaurants), the panel similarly feels that these businesses will be attracted to the area as long as Indian Head and Charles County are committed to making the type of investments discussed in this report and to actively supporting compact, walkable growth over sprawl in greenfield locations.

## Tracking Progress and Success

The final panel recommendation is that Charles County should identify a series of metrics that they will use over time to track progress related to the trail and trail-related economic development. Once baseline information is collected, these metrics should be relatively easy to track as long as the timeline and staffing plan for data collection is clear. Performance measurement will be helpful garner support for the project and for future investments from citizens, elected leaders and funders. Commissioners in Arlington County have noted that documenting their accomplishments over time by collecting regular data on trails has been invaluable as the County seeks additional state and Federal funding. Below are examples of the types of metrics the panel recommends for the IHRT. There are separate metrics for the performance of the trail and for the success of the overall countywide bicycle and pedestrian network.

<b>Indicators of Trail Success</b> <i>(preliminary – use as example)</i>				
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Metric</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Success to date (baseline)</b>	<b>Measurement Cycle</b>
Community Livability	Residents using the trail	10% annual growth	90,000 trips	Annual
Health	Diabetes rate	Improvement		5 years
Economic Development	Sales tax revenue	10% annually	2 new food service	
Economic Development	Bike friendly business	100% food service & hospitality		Annual
Economic Development	Annual out of county users	20% annual growth	10,000 trips	Annual
Market Penetration	Hits on website	25,000 hits in first year, 10% increase/yr		
Market Penetration	Download of map	10,000 in first year, 10% increase/yr		
Tax Base	Property values (parcels within 500' of trail)	+ 10% sales price within 500' of trail		

## Overall System Progress and Performance

*(preliminary – use as example)*

Goal	Metric	Target	Success to date (baseline)	Measurement Cycle
Comfort	Percentage of children riding	5% annually (over baseline)		Annual
Network	Percent of network complete	100% by 2020		Annual
Users	Annual count station report	+10% annually @ 4 stations		Annual
Wayfinding	Signs at turns/intersection	100%		Annual
Walkable	Walkability checklist	“4” rating		Annual
Access	% of HHs w/n 0.5 mile of bike facility	75%		3-5 years
Intermodalism	Bike racks on buses	All buses		5 years
Connectivity	Links to historic, cultural, natural, commercial and assets	Mapped links to all sites		10 years

## **Conclusion**

To reiterate, the Indian Head Rail Trail is a first-class facility that already serves as a tremendous asset to the surrounding community. Nationwide data suggests that rates of walking and bicycling are on a rise and that there is a growing trend toward active or nature-based tourism. Furthermore, people are increasingly looking to live in walkable communities and these places often boast higher property values over time compared to places that are less walkable. For these reasons, Charles County chose an ideal time to make an investment in active lifestyles.

To maximize the potential of the trail, it will be important for Charles County to make the IHRT a central feature in its marketing efforts, not necessarily as a stand-alone attraction but as one of the many elements that contribute to the tourist experience in the County. Identifying key user groups will help the County enact targeted marketing strategies, host successful events and prioritize physical improvements. A series of near-term, relatively low-cost infrastructure and signage investments will help connect people to the trail and, equally important, support the broader culture of biking and walking in Indian Head and White Plains. As the use of the trail increases and the word spreads throughout the region, business growth and development near the trail heads should happen organically and lead to increased tax revenue for the Town and County. Finally, the County is right to view the trail as an important step toward building Charles County into a walkable and (someday) transit-oriented hub where new businesses and growing demographic groups like Generation Y will want to live, work and visit.

## About the Panel

### **Nat Bottigheimer (panel chair)**

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Nat Bottigheimer is a transportation planner with extensive experience coordinating transportation service and infrastructure planning with local economic and real estate development. As Assistant General Manager, Planning and Joint Development at Metro, Nat oversees the agency's long range planning and land development and disposition functions.

Prior to joining WMATA in 2005, Nat worked at the Maryland Department of Transportation overseeing a group that focused on transportation and land use development planning, particularly transit-oriented development. Nat has also worked as a real estate economics consultant to FTA, EPA, developers, toll authorities, and local governments. He received a Masters in Public Policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley, and a Bachelors in Government from Harvard University.

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**Torti Gallas and Partners - CHK, Inc.  
Silver Spring, MD**

Brian O'Looney, A.I.A. LEED-AP is a design architect, planner, and an Associate Principal at Torti Gallas and Partners. He lectures around the nation on topics including urban infill, sustainability, and infrastructure management for dense pedestrian-oriented places. He has co-written the chapter on parking for the 2009 edition of the *New Urbanism: Best Practices Guide*.

He guided the design of Torti Gallas' work at Columbia Heights and Poplar Point in Washington, DC; White Flint Crossing, North Bethesda, MD; Clarendon Center, Arlington, VA, and The Greene in Beavercreek (Dayton), OH.

He serves as principal-in-charge for a number of the firm's current design and planning projects, including mixed-use work for Safeway in Washington, DC; Peninsula Town Center in Hampton, VA; and East Village in Philadelphia, PA.

Brian is a graduate of Yale University and the School of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

**Steven P. Hubert**  
**Buchanan Partners, LLC**  
**Gaithersburg, MD**

Steven P. Hubert is a Principal in Buchanan Partners, LLC. Mr. Hubert has been active in speculative real estate development in the Washington, DC area for over 25 years as a builder and developer of office, industrial and mixed-use projects. Buchanan Partners, LLC is the 11th most active commercial real estate developer in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, and has developed a portfolio of over three million square feet of commercial property, including office, industrial, flex and retail space. Buchanan Partners also has acquired, planned or developed over 1,600 acres of commercial land. Buchanan Partners has spearheaded the commercial development of emerging markets, including southern Loudoun County and western Prince William County, and at the same time, has fostered the successful market penetration of new product types such as flex/office condominiums. Mr. Hubert is responsible for directing the design and construction of projects developed by Buchanan Partners, and also directs the Company's sustainable building practices.

**Charles Denney**  
**Senior Associate**  
**Alta Planning + Design/Alta Bicycle Share**  
**Arlington, VA**

Charlie Denney has 20 years experience in bicycle and pedestrian planning, design and program management. The majority of his recent work has been in the Mid-Atlantic and the southeast, including trail alignment studies in Philadelphia and Louisville, a bike parking study for the District of Columbia, and launch and operation of Capital Bikeshare. Prior to joining Alta he served as the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Manager for Arlington County, Virginia overseeing the installation of 23 miles of new bike lanes and management of over 50 bikeway and pedestrian improvement projects. He has a Master of Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia and a Bachelors degree in Recreation Management from the University of Vermont.

**Karina Ricks**  
**Principal**  
**Nelson Nygaard Consulting Associates**  
**Washington, DC**

Karina Ricks is a creative and candid planner and policy leader with 20 years experience in the public and non-profit sectors at the city, state, and national levels as well as internationally. Karina has led multiple plans that have built or revived dynamic, diverse, walkable, and prosperous neighborhoods and communities. Her career has encompassed and united multiple disciplines including transportation, public finance, land use planning, economic revitalization, community development and environmental excellence. She prides herself in creating holistic policies and balanced, implementable, realistic, and affordable solutions for cities and communities.

Karina is currently a Principal with the transportation consulting firm Nelson Nygaard and previously worked as the Associate Director of the District Department of Transportation in Washington, DC. She holds a Master's degree in City and Regional Planning from Cornell University and a Bachelor of Arts from Michigan State University.

**Jim Rapp**  
**Executive Director**  
**Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences**  
**Snow Hill, MD**

Jim Rapp serves as the Executive Director of Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experiences (DLITE), a union of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia businesses, conservation organizations, and local, state, and federal partners which have formed an alliance to encourage nature- and heritage-based tourism and conservation on the Delmarva Peninsula. Jim oversees the group's work to strengthen and promote low-impact tourism on Delmarva through activities such as birding, biking, and kayaking and by working to strengthen area plans for protecting and restoring the region's vast and unique natural, traditional, and historical treasures. Jim is also the Executive Director of the Hazel Outdoor Discovery Center in Eden, Maryland, which is an easement protected 525-acre private property that offers recreation and educational events for youth, students and adults of all ages. Jim also works part-time doing programming and fundraising for the Rackliffe House Trust, an 18<sup>th</sup> Century plantation house located at Assateague State Park.

**Shane Farthing**  
**Executive Director**  
**Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA)**  
**Washington, DC**

Shane Farthing is the Executive Director of the Washington Area Bicyclist Association (WABA), where he leads the effort to grow bicycling as a functional means of transportation throughout the DC region. During his tenure WABA has been a national leader in seeking improvements in enforcement and legal protection of cyclists and in growing the engagement of underserved communities in the bicycle movement, in addition to continuing the improvement of bicycling trails and separated on-road facilities. Prior to coming to WABA, Shane was Director of the District's Office of Green Economy, focusing on workforce development and skills training to match District residents with employment opportunities presented by sustainability requirements and best standards in the District of Columbia. Earlier, Shane worked as the District Department of the Environment's Land Use & Development Coordinator as liaison to the development community on environmental issues, and served as a Capital City Fellow. Shane possesses graduate degrees in law and public policy from the George Washington University in Washington, DC, and a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA.

**Dana W. Wedeles**  
**Urban Planner**  
**City of Alexandria, Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Heritage**  
**Alexandria, VA**

Dana Wedeles, AICP, is currently a Park Planner with the City of Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks, and Cultural Activities. Her work with the City includes management of Alexandria's Parks Planning, Capital Improvement Program, and the Four Mile Run Tidal Restoration Project. Recently, she began the process of developing master plans for the City's six large parks in order to ensure that the parks balances the City's recreational, environmental, and passive use needs.

In her previous role as Park Operations Coordinator for New York's Central Park Conservancy she was a part of the team that developed day-to-day and event operations, including logistics for installation of Christo's Gates project. She also held the position of Development Manager for the Central Park Conservancy, overseeing the fundraising efforts of the Adopt-a-Bench and Playground Partners programs. As a Planner with Starr Whitehouse Landscape Architects/Planners in New York City, she managed development of the Harlem River Promenade Plan in the Bronx, streetscape planning of the Flatiron/23rd Street Business Improvement District, and Water Street Vision Plan in Lower Manhattan. Dana holds a dual undergraduate degree in History and Journalism from New York University, studied Post Civil War US History at the University of Mississippi, and possesses a graduate degree in Urban Planning from Columbia University in New York.

