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County to give 'Boykin option' at Roland Run-Circle road a chance

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Baltimore county executive Donald P. Hutchinson yesterday gave a tentative go-ahead to what has been called the "Bernie Boykin option," an alternative Ruxton residents have proposed to construction of a $675,000 bridge over Roland Run to Circle road.

First mentioned by Bernard C. Boykin, who lives on Ruxton road, the option would allow emergency vehicles to cross through his yard, about 5 feet from his house. Residents of Circle road already use his yard when the bridges—the only public way out of Circle road—flood, he said.

The compromise grew out of a protest last month from about 75 residents who opposed the county's plan to build a two-lane, 25-foot wide bridge, with 20-foot wide access ramps. They said the structure would not serve its intended use and would destroy the character of their isolated hillside neighborhood.

Two small existing bridges were scheduled for replacement by the county because they flood with each major storm and prevent emergency, as well as other, vehicles from crossing.

Harry Pistel, county director of public works, held up construction bids for the bridge when he learned of the residents' complaints. At the same time, however, he expressed concern for the safety of the 60 families that live on Circle road, explaining that the county is responsible for emergency access to all communities.

Mr. Hutchinson agreed to "a dry run" of the residents' proposal during a meeting with Frederick Ritter, president of the Ruxton-Riderwood-Lake Roland Improvement Association; Herbert L. Williams, a Circle road resident who would have an access ramp in his front yard, and Mr. William's lawyer.

Mr. Hutchinson said he wanted to test Mr. Boykin's route by sending fire engines across the next time there is a heavy rain. Mr. Boykin has agreed to the test, as has Walter D. Pinkard, his neighbor, who also owns part of the land

Meanwhile, the county is conducting a safety inventory of all bridges, including the two at Circle road. When the inventory is complete and if the Circle road bridges get a good rating, Mr. Hutchinson said the county may not replace them, providing the safety factor during floods can be resolved.

"I'm not going to force a $675,000 bridge when we have 60 families that don't want this bridge. We've got other places to spend the money," the executive said.

"If the land approach works, we may do that or we can design a smaller bridge that won't flood out," he said.

Neither Mr. Boykin nor Mr. Pinkard said they would automatically grant a permanent emergency easement through their properties, adding they would bave to discuss the impact of such an agreement with their attorneys.

Mr. Boykin said, "I definitely do not want a public thoroughfare, but I do want to cooperate with the neighborhood. This is not exactly a new problem. The old owners [of his house] allowed people to come through. I have no objection to traffic on a heavy basis during floods."

Mr. Pinkard agreed, but added that several neighbors offered this solution to a new bridge about 5 years ago and the county was not satisfied and began plans for the new structure.

The major complaint voiced by residents is that a new bridge will not solve flooding on Ruxton road. Lawrence Naughton, one of the Circle road residents, said of the new structure, if built, "As far as getting out, we'll be able to stand on the bridge and watch the water go by, but if we want to go across; we'd have to take a ferry."