

**MARYLAND
BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL REPORT
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Prepared for:

STATE OF MARYLAND

Parris N. Glendening
Governor

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MARYLAND BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Maryland Bicycle Advisory Committee was established by legislation in 1990 and charged with the mission to make Maryland the best recognized bicycle-friendly and safe place in America. To do this, the committee promotes cycling as a fully accepted form of functional transportation and recreation, facilitates cycling safety and education, advocates for bicycling facilities, advises state agencies on cycling issues, and networks with state agencies and local cycling organizations.

Membership on the committee reflects the diverse geographic, economic, and public interests associated with bicycling in Maryland. Thirteen members are appointed to the committee by the Governor. Seven of the members are citizens, representing the five geographic regions of the state. One member represents each of the rural areas in the state; Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, and the Eastern Shore. Two citizen members are selected from both the Baltimore and Washington metropolitan areas. From these members a chairperson is selected. The remaining six members are state government officials who represent the Departments of Natural Resources, Education, Health and Mental Hygiene, Business and Economic Development, Transportation, and the Maryland State Police. Staff support for the committee is provided by the Regional and Intermodal Planning Division of the Maryland State Highway Administration.

The committee is required to meet a minimum of four times each year with at least one meeting in Annapolis. All meetings are open to the public and citizens are encouraged to participate on any of the sub-committees. Subcommittees address specific issues such as trails, commuting, promotion, safety and education, and legislation affairs.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Maryland Bicycle Advisory Committee (MBAC) continues to promote and encourage better cycling conditions for Maryland citizens and visitors to our cycling-friendly state. This year some paradigms were shattered and some were weakened. The advent of full service use of Baltimore's light rail system, a first for Maryland, continued without complaint and with the full support of the transit authorities. The Maryland Toll Authority was instrumental in the establishment of a subsidized service to provide transportation for those wishing to cross the Chesapeake Bay Bridge. Finally, the State Highway Administration expanded its attention to cycling by developing the "Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning/Design Guidelines."

Next year looks even more promising. We are planning to sponsor another symposium in Annapolis, following planning sessions with supportive state delegates. The planning sessions are designed to foster pedestrian and cycling enhancements based on the solid foundation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Access 2000 legislation. We will study aspects of the legislation that were included in the original draft bill but were not passed in the final version with a view toward including those issues in future negotiations. The symposium, scheduled for the legislative period in Annapolis, is an effective forum for cyclists to address a myriad of concerns with their representatives.

Finally, we have undertaken an initiative to meet with adjoining state bicycle and pedestrian advisory groups. Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia have active state groups similar to the MBAC. Each of these states claim significant accomplishments in commuting, highway use, safety, education, transportation, public awareness, and overall promotion of cycling within their jurisdictions. Hopefully, by sharing experiences of successful programs in neighboring states, some of our goals will be realized sooner with less effort.

I look forward to another year of sustained cooperation among the state agencies and citizen representatives of the MBAC and fervently hope to add to the already impressive list of accomplishments. Share the road, ride safely, and enjoy one of the best cycling states in the nation.

Thomas J. Roberts
Chairman, MBAC

INTRODUCTION

In the 1970's, transportation officials recognized that the bicycle, if used for transportation, could help reduce the number of motorized vehicles on our roadways. This reduction of motorized vehicles could then lead to a reduction of auto congestion and a reduction to our consumption of fossil fuels. These two impacts could then work together to improve the quality of the air that we breathe. Therefore, Maryland's DOT like many other states began to promote bicycling as a mode of transportation. In 1983, our DOT went one step further to recognize the bicycle in Maryland as a legitimate vehicle with the same rights to use the roadways in our state as motorized vehicles enjoy. Today all 50 states recognize the impact the bicycle can have on improving our transportation systems.

In 1990 Congress established the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). This act recognized the bicycle as an integral part of a total transportation system and required all 50 states to maintain a full-time Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator to promote bicycling and walking as legitimate modes of transportation. ISTEA also established the Transportation Enhancements Program. This program provided a method where Federal, State, and local governments could work together to fund non-traditional transportation projects such as bicycle trails and pedestrian walkways.

As a supplement to this Act, Maryland's legislators established the Maryland Bicycle Advisory Committee (MBAC). Seven volunteer citizen members were recruited from the bicycling community to represent the five major geographic regions of Maryland. Six state government officials were also included to represent a number of different disciplines from state government. All members were appointed by the Governor. The goal of the committee was to promote recreation, transportation, tourism, economic development and safety.

Maryland's bicycling community has been very successful in promoting bicycling in the past few years. This success has been partially due to the impact of the MBAC, the increased popularity of cycling in Maryland and across the country, and the increased positive attitude toward cycling by the government and public. For example, in 1994 MBAC members participated in the citizen input process when the DOT developed the Maryland Transportation Plan (MTP). This plan established Maryland's vision for transportation in the 21st century and bicycling was included as an integral part of the transportation system.

In 1995 MBAC members worked diligently to get the Bicycle Helmet Law and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Access 2000 bill passed and implemented. The Helmet Law requires all persons under the age of 16 to wear a helmet when riding a bicycle on public property. The Access 2000 bill requires Maryland's state and local transportation officials to take a much harder look at accommodating bicycles throughout the state.

In response to the Access 2000 bill, Maryland's DOT, in 1996, opened the doors of Baltimore's Metro and Central Light Rail systems to bicycles, and they also developed a contract with a private taxi service to provide access for cyclists across the Chesapeake Bay bridge. In 1997, the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) developed their "Planning and Design Guidelines for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities" with the goal of training all of their planning and engineering staff on integrating bicycles, pedestrians, and motorists. Also in 1997, the Governor and the Departments of Health and Mental Hygiene and Transportation worked together to support a bicycle safety campaign that was implemented by Cycle Across Maryland, Inc. This private/public partnership was a statewide effort that targeted bicycle safety through the use of bicycle helmets.

MARYLAND IS BICYCLE FRIENDLY

Maryland is recognized as one of the best places in the United States to bicycle. This is due to Maryland's excellent system of roadways and trails, our geographic variety, and our close proximity to popular tourist destinations and cities.

Great Events

In 1994, Maryland's Eastern Shore was recognized by BICYCLING magazine as one of the top ten places to ride in the United States. In 1995 and 1997, they chose the Sea Gull Century tour in Salisbury as one of the top ten 100-mile rides in the country. They also recognized in 1997, Baltimore's "Tour Du Port" as one of the top five city rides in the U.S. The "Cycle Across Maryland Tour" (CAM), a six-day bicycle tour across the state is nationally recognized as one of the most popular cross state tours. In 1997 CAM attracted over 1200 participants representing 27 states and several foreign countries.

Great Trails

Maryland also has some of the most popular trail systems in the country. The C&O Canal extends for 184 miles, paralleling the Potomac River from Cumberland, Maryland to the center of Washington, DC. (Pennsylvania is currently developing a trail that will connect to the C&O Canal towpath, extending the trail from D.C. to Pittsburgh.) The Baltimore and Annapolis (B&A) Trail in Anne Arundel County and the Northern Central Railroad (NCRR) Trail in Baltimore County are among the top ten used trails in the country, each with over 1.5 million visitors annually.

ISTEA

Under ISTEA, the Transportation Enhancement Program was established. This program implemented a new way to fund non-traditional transportation projects such as pedestrian walkways and bicycle trails. One of the first projects in the country to be approved for funding under this program was the BWI Trail that loops the Baltimore Washington International Airport. When complete, this 14 mile long paved facility will provide bicycle and pedestrian access to residential, educational, commercial, recreational, employment, and transportation centers that

surround the airport. To date over \$100 million federal, state, and local dollars have been spent or authorized in Maryland for Enhancement Program projects of which over 52 percent was targeted to bicycle and pedestrian projects. Some examples include the BWI Trail in Anne Arundel County, the Anacostia River Tributary System in Prince George's County, and the Capital Crescent Trail in Montgomery County. The Enhancements Program also donated \$500,000 to help repair the C&O Canal towpath after the severe winter of 1996.

Maryland Department of Transportation

We think Maryland's DOT has worked diligently to improve conditions for cyclists in our state: In the Spring of 1997, for example, the State Highway Administration drafted their "Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning/Design Guidelines." This document will be supplemented with awareness training to the staff level planners, designers, and construction personnel throughout the state. Most recently, Deputy Secretary John Porcari has agreed to meet the MBAC members on a quarterly basis to discuss and resolve transportation issues that cyclists face.

BICYCLING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

While it is true that we have been successful in accomplishing a great deal for bicycling in the past few years, there are still issues that we feel need to be addressed. The following is a list of our concerns.

Education

issue: Nationally 50 percent of the persons who are injured or killed while riding bicycles are at fault. Most accidents could have been prevented if the riders would have followed some simple rules of the road. Currently bicycle safety in Maryland is promoted through a number of different avenues. Safety rodeos and workshops are provided by police departments, service organizations, school nurses, teachers, and bicycle clubs. The State Highway Administration (SHA) also distributes bicycle safety information to bicycle shops for distribution to bicycle owners. The Baltimore Bicycle Club supports a volunteer who teaches safety to elementary school children. The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) provides grants to states for safety education. In Maryland over \$1 million from NHTSA are distributed each year to county governments for transportation safety education.

Unfortunately, most of the available programs that are being provided throughout the state are inconsistent with each other and bicycle safety trainers can be anyone, with or without formal safety training. Also, under this method of distribution, many children never receive any type of formal training.

solution: The MBAC recommends the Department of Education implement a standardized statewide transportation safety program targeted to all children from grades K-8. The program should be comprehensive, focusing on bicycle safety as well as cars, transit, school buses, walking, etc. The repetitive nature of this type of program would serve to reinforce safety each school year and would result in

reducing the number of injuries and deaths not only from bicycle accidents but all modes of transportation.

“Share the Road” Campaign

issue: The number of motorists and bicyclists continues to grow throughout the state and this has caused some friction between the two user groups. Motorists become irritated when they are impeded by slow moving bicycles and when they see cyclists ignore stop signs and red lights. Many motorists feel that bicycles do not belong on our highways. Cyclists on the other hand will many times defiantly exercise their right to the road even when they knowingly are impeding motorized traffic. There are also many cyclists who simply do not realize that they are required to obey the same traffic laws as motorists. Our concern is that the motoring public may become incensed to the point where they may request legislation to ban bicycles from some roadways or force them to use off-road trails or sidewalks. (A bill was recently introduced in Louisiana that would have banned bicycles from all state highways. Fortunately, it was not accepted by the state legislature.)

solution: The MBAC would like the Department of Transportation and the local and state police to work together to reduce the stress between cyclists and motorists. First, it is important for the DOT to institute a statewide plan to educate both the motorists and cyclists to the rights of cyclists and the rules of the road. We feel this can be done with a statewide distribution of information to motorists and cyclists. The purpose would be to educate both the motorists and cyclists that they BOTH must “Share the Road.” To further support this effort, the MBAC would encourage the police to enforce traffic laws for both motorists and cyclists.

“Save our Shoulders”

issue: There are three groups that utilize our roadway network; motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians. Under the current way of doing business, each competes for space when a roadway is planned and designed. History demonstrates that if there are issues identified during the planning or design phase of a project that require the width of the roadway to be reduced, such as cost or impacts to right-of-way or environmentally sensitive areas, the spaces for bicycling and walking are typically the areas that are reduced or eliminated.

solution: For a transportation system to be totally functional it must take into consideration all users; motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. The MBAC would like legislation passed that would mandate the DOT to integrate into all of its roadway and transit projects a minimum space for all users; motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. A roadway project that improves conditions for motorists at the expense of cyclists and pedestrians should not be approved for funding or construction unless there exists a safety or emergency situation. We understand that the DOT needs flexibility in its planning, design, and construction processes and we also understand that the bicycling and pedestrian communities need to be flexible in their demands for space but too many times the DOT eliminates the space for bicycles and pedestrians with no real thought or discussion. The MBAC feels that a mandated process would require the DOT to plan a more comprehensive transportation facility.

Transit

issue: Bicycle access is restricted on D.C's METRO and is not accommodated in any form on MARC or Baltimore's bus service.

solution: In support of the Access 2000 bill, the Maryland Mass Transit Administration (MTA) implemented in 1996 an open-door policy to allow bicycles on Baltimore's METRO and Light Rail facilities. No additional fees, permits, or restrictive hours were required. The service has operated for over one year with no reported disturbances or issues.

The MBAC feels that the MTA should extend this policy to include MARC service. We recognize there are some internal issues with AMTRAC and CSX that would need to be resolved, but MARC is an integral connection from the Frederick and Baltimore regions to the Washington metropolitan region and could potentially serve additional passengers if bicycles were allowed on board.

Also, the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) currently provides bicycle access on the Washington area METRO but requires a fee, a permit, and restricts hours of service to cyclists. These regulations discourage bicycle usage. Furthermore, they hamper economic development by restricting an element of tourism. The MBAC supports the bicycling community's desire for full service. No restrictions, fees, or permits are required of persons using wheelchairs or persons with baby strollers. The bicycling community agrees that these modes of transportation are not intrusive to the general public and should be permitted. They also feel that bicycles are not intrusive to the general public and should be allowed on METRO.

The MBAC also feels that the MTA should further investigate the possibility of installing bicycle racks on Baltimore City buses. Similar programs have been in effect in a number of areas including Seattle, San Francisco, Portland, and Montgomery County, Maryland. Santa Cruz, California implemented a bikes on buses program and determined that after the first quarter of 1997 ridership increased by 2 percent or roughly 36,000 riders (riders with bicycles).

SUMMARY

We need not travel very far to realize that when we discuss bicycle compatibility the grass is actually much greener in Maryland. We should all be very proud to know that we not only have one of the most beautiful areas in the country to bicycle, but we enjoy the avid support of the Governor and the Departments of Transportation, Natural Resources, Education, Health and Mental Hygiene, Business and Economic Development, and the Maryland State Police. While there is always room for improvement the MBAC must confirm that Maryland is, in many aspects, far advanced in its support of bicycling.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 1997

January 17	Montgomery County - meeting and public forum
March 21	Baltimore City - meeting
July 9, 10, and 11	Salisbury State University - meeting and public forum
August 28	Annapolis - public forum
Oct. 22, 23, and 24	Western Maryland - workshop

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 1998

January	Prince George's County - meeting
February	Annapolis - Bicycle Symposium
April	Southern Maryland - meeting
June	Eastern Shore - workshop
August	Baltimore County - meeting
October	Western Maryland - workshop

MARYLAND BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The advisory committee is comprised of thirteen members; seven citizen members who represent the bicycling communities from across the state and six state officials who represent different disciplines of state government.

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