

MARYLAND BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN

Public Meeting Summary

The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is leading an update of the current Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which was adopted in 2002. This plan establishes a 20-year vision to guide investments that support cycling and walking, both on-road and off-road, as part of Maryland's multimodal transportation network.

The first public meeting in support of this effort was held on March 21, 2013 at the University of Baltimore. Two more public meetings are anticipated in the coming months as plan development continues. The primary purpose of this first public meeting was to engage stakeholders in the plan update process, to gather input on the draft vision and goals for the updated plan, and to solicit input on key strategies to achieve identified goals. The meeting was also made available through an on-line format which included the full presentation and relevant maps. Web and phone participants were also encouraged to participate through submitting on-line questions and comment cards. The meeting was attended by over 50 people.

MDOT, SHA, and the consultant team provided a presentation to introduce the Plan Update process, assess progress from the 2002 plan, and report on existing conditions relevant to Maryland's bicycle and pedestrian network. The presentation also included an overview of a proposed new vision and draft goals to guide plan development. After a brief question and answer session, attendees were asked to circulate between five stations for more focused discussions on draft goals and related data. Attendees were encouraged to provide feedback to MDOT and project staff regarding the draft vision and goals and to provide input on top priorities for improving biking and walking in Maryland that should be addressed in the Plan update. Concerns and recommendations were recorded on flipcharts and comment cards, which were also made available to online participants.

The meeting participants responded favorably to the draft goals as presented and agreed generally that they would serve as good framework for the plan update. A number of participants also provided comments about inter-jurisdictional coordination issues and the ongoing transportation planning process. Overall, comments included an extensive and varied list of strategies to be considered as the process moves forward. A summary of key themes and observations follows; it is organized around the five proposed goal areas.

1. **Build Connected Networks**

- **Improve connections with transit**
 - Address pedestrian access issues related to transit
 - Expand the ability to bring bicycles on commuter trains and light rail vehicles
- **Focus on improving high demand areas**
 - Prioritize bicycle and pedestrian improvements near schools, university campuses, hospitals, and urban areas
- **Create major "spine" bike corridors**
 - Develop major bike corridors with separated bike lanes along main commuting routes
 - Connect gaps in existing high quality networks
- **Address barriers to bicycle and pedestrian access**
 - Eliminate barriers such as highway crossings, tunnels, bridges
 - Provide connections between individual residential areas and to commercial areas
 - Provide connections between counties
- **Coordinate between State and counties and create combined networks of good bike routes**
 - Improve bicycle and pedestrian data collection and aggregate data at the State level
 - Have the State take a larger role or partner with local governments on bicycle and pedestrian issues

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- Help the public involved in bicycle and pedestrian advocacy better understand the roles and authority of the various levels of government in the various types of transportation projects
- Strengthen the State ability to enforce routine accommodation policies on State projects, as well as proposed plans or projects not directly under their control (i.e. MPO plans, Regional Authorities)
- **Increase funding and focus on implementation mechanisms**
 - Increase funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements
 - MDOT/SHA should have dedicated funding for bike/ped

2. Improve Safety

- **Educate drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians on laws**
 - Educate drivers on the 3-foot law and when to yield to bicyclists and pedestrians
 - Require education for bicyclists and pedestrians on how to operate safely in the street environment
 - Provide training for public bus drivers on operating safely with bicyclists
- **Improve communication/partnership with local police**
 - Educate police on bicycle and pedestrian laws and increase enforcement
 - Improve crash reporting
- **Conduct systemic crash analysis and counter measures**
 - Collect better bicycle and pedestrian count data to analyze crash rates
 - Work with medical community to collect data on unreported crashes
 - Encourage voluntary crash reporting
- **Improve signage and markings, especially in transition areas**
 - Add bicycle and pedestrian signage and markings for motorist awareness, transitions and wayfinding
- **Address local maintenance issues – especially for small jurisdictions**
 - Address process for debris clean up, rail crossing, pavement conditions
 - Improve maintenance of traffic in construction areas

3. Balance User Needs

- **Employ a Complete Streets approach to roadway design**
 - Use context-based roadway hierarchy
 - Allow and encourage flexibility to local conditions
 - Develop methods for involving the public in the road design process, not just the planning
- **Put in infrastructure for casual or new riders and families**
 - Accommodate a range of users and abilities with existing and planned facilities
- **Provide more and better bike facilities**
 - Provide separated bikeways on busy streets and divided highways
 - Create space for bikes in narrow roadways and travel lanes
 - Provide more bicycle rest stations for seniors or children especially for trails facilities
- **Shorten crossing distances, add crosswalks, calm traffic**
 - Provide crosswalk bump outs and raised crosswalks
 - Add strategic mid-block crossings on state roadways
 - Pursue traffic calming where appropriate
- **Evaluate Bicycle Level of Comfort (BLOC) performance measure**
 - Raise State BLOC target of D
 - Improve measures and mapping: Some areas shown as BLOC A or B are not comfortable for most riders

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4. Strengthen Communities

- **Encourage Biking and Walking to School**
 - Address fears/liability related to bike/walk to school
 - Increase biking/walking and Safe Routes to School initiatives to help address health issues
 - Improve routes to schools and commercial centers to aid parents commuting via bicycle with kids
- **Incentivize local planning for biking and walking**
 - Tie state highway funding to local governments who employ a complete streets approach
 - Coordinate local bicycle and pedestrian plans with other planning efforts
- **Develop a series of demonstration projects to promote adoption of best practices**
 - For example: Develop a “signature street” or Cycle track in a high profile area to test and demonstrate outcomes.
 - Study existing best practices in local jurisdictions and around the country
- **Focus messaging on benefits of biking and walking**
 - Document economic development impacts: Job creation, cost savings, etc.
 - Develop data and messaging to promote public health benefits of cycling and walking
 - Clarify benefits of cycling and walking in terms of improved operations for autos and overall transportation network
- **Improve outreach and engagement**
 - Capture input from groups who typically don’t participate
 - Develop methods for involving the public in the road design process, not just the planning
 - Collaborate with advocates to help create viable local level pipeline of projects and facilitate their linkage
 - Address cultural barriers that discourage populations from walking or cycling (related to helmets, etc)
 - Enhance outreach to Spanish-speaking population

5. Attract Marylanders and Visitors to Walk and Bike

- **Make biking/walking a true mode of transportation**
 - Reword this goal to emphasize transportation purpose: Current phrasing sounds recreational in nature
- **Promote bicycle tourism**
 - Provide more service and rest stations to make it easier for seniors and others to safely walk or bike without fear of being stuck without needed amenities
- **Improve user info, maps and wayfinding**
 - Have more mapping and wayfinding information available in multiple formats
 - Only sign appropriate streets as bike routes
 - Provide more trail signage to amenities and way finding