



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



Thomas J. Stosur
Director

March 23, 2017

REQUEST: Baltimore City Bike Master Plan Implementation Update

RECOMMENDATION: No Planning Commission action required

STAFF: Matthew DeSantis, AICP

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNER: Citywide

PETITIONER: Department of Transportation

HISTORY

Baltimore's first Bike Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Commission on May 4, 2006 and was subsequently updated at the March 26, 2015 Planning Commission meeting. The 2015 update demonstrated the continued importance of bicycling and provided recommendations for additional infrastructure and policies to promote Baltimore as a more bicycle-friendly city. Per the requirements of that adoption, the Planning Commission is to be informed every two years on the progress of the implementation of the Bike Master Plan. A comprehensive update of the Bike Master Plan is to happen in 2021.

ANALYSIS

The Department of Transportation's 2015 update to the Baltimore City Bike Master Plan outlined a 15-year plan for bicycle infrastructure and policies developed based on national best practices and public input. The updated Plan proposed a comprehensive bicycle network where bicycle facilities will be designed based on the specific street context. Although not every bicyclist may feel comfortable using every bicycling facility type, national standards ensure the necessary safety and comfort for the average bicyclist throughout the proposed bicycle network.

Implementation Progress Highlights:

GOAL 1: IMPROVE BICYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

- **Objective:** Increase bicycle network to include all the proposed routes by 2030 by implementing at least 16 miles of bike facilities every 2 years.

Status: Including the funded infrastructure projects to take place in 2017, there have been/will be a total of 22.7 miles of bike facilities implemented by the end of this year. While not yet reaching the goal of 16 miles per year, this represents an accelerated pace from past years and suggests that the City is on path to reaching this objective.

- **Objective:** Improve integration of bicycle facilities with the streets network by utilizing more Complete Street principles in roadway improvement projects
Status: All resurfacing projects are now evaluated by DOT for bike facility feasibility. Additionally, DOT has adopted a new standard operating procedure where resurfacing projects team with bike grants to leverage a 20% match. The result of this is greater funding for both resurfacing and bike facilities.

GOAL 2: IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS TO BE MORE BICYCLE-ORIENTED

- **Objective:** Incorporate bicycle infrastructure and amenities in Transit Oriented Development projects
Status: Worked with MTA to install Bike Share stations and bike racks at major transit stops and also develop bicycle infrastructure that supports the North Avenue Rising project.
- **Objective:** Increase installation of bike racks to meet demands
Status: DOT currently has a program where the community can request a bike rack and the City will install them for free. Through a collaboration with Bikemore, requests can be easily made online, resulting in the installation of over 300 bike racks since 2015.
- **Objective:** Develop standard bike rack design and placement guidelines to ensure effective installation and usefulness.
Status: Standard bike rack design is now provided by the City. The City also works with businesses and organizations who want to install more creative designs.
- **Objective:** Begin operations of the Charm City Bike Share by 2014 in popular bicycling areas in downtown, midtown, and southeast Baltimore
Status: Albeit delayed, Baltimore Bike Share launched in 2016 with 21 stations and will grow to 50 stations by the spring of 2017. Ridership so far has exceeded expectations with over 15,000 trips and a total of in excess of 20,500 miles ridden in the first 5 months of operation.

GOAL 3: ENACT BICYCLE-FRIENDLY LEGISLATIVE POLICIES

- **Objective:** Increase funding for Baltimore City's bicycle program.
Status: The City contributed nearly \$600,000 in matching funds for the Downtown Bicycle Network. Additionally, the City is leveraging public-private partnerships to 20% matching grants (i.e. casino revenue funds and private developers).
- **Objective:** Target grant sources to supplement funding for the Baltimore City bicycle program.
Status: City DOT has utilized Transportation Alternatives Program, Maryland Bikeway, Rails to Trails, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement funding. The City has been very successful in its grant applications, successfully obtaining grants for 11 of the 12 applications submitted for TAP and MD Bikeway funding.

- Objective: The City Council and Mayor officially recognize the Mayor's Bicycle Advisory Committee in legislation with an established mission and goals.
Status: The MBAC was formally recognized by former Mayor Rawlings-Blake, but still awaiting recognition through a City ordinance.
- Objective: Waive the Minor Privilege fee for any private bike rack installations on public right of way.
Status: The annual fee has been eliminated and replaced with a one-time inspection/installation charge. DOT obtains the right, however, to waive this initial fee as well and usually does to incentivize owners to buy bike racks.
- Objective: Adopt the Transform Baltimore revised zoning code with specific bicycle related components required in development and redevelopment projects.
Status: The legislation was adopted in December 2016 and becomes effective June 5, 2017.

GOAL 4: ESTABLISH AND REFINE BICYCLE FACILITY ENGINEERING POLICIES

- Objective: Track accident locations and identify any common causes for accidents.
Status: Crashes are tracked and analyzed as part of the TowardZero program.
- Objective: Develop and adopt a standard for the roadway markings used for bikeways
Status: Adopted the NACTO Urban Bikeway design guidelines. This is referenced to all consultants and traffic engineers when designing bike facilities on City streets.
- Objective: Increase installation of Bike Boulevards City-wide as a part of the growing bicycle network.
Status: Over 5 miles of bicycle boulevards have been constructed.
- Objective: Promote these routes with signage and mapping
Status: Inner Harbor route and other new facilities received updated signage. Additionally, new routes have been integrated into Google Maps.
- Objective: Coordinate with surrounding jurisdictions to ensure bicycle infrastructure is continuous across City/County lines.
Status: Regularly attend Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Group Meetings at Baltimore Metropolitan Council to coordinate with the region. Baltimore City was the chair of this advisory group in 2016.

GOAL 5: BUILD A STRONGER BICYCLE CULTURE

- Objective: Support the launch and continued operations of the Charm City Bike Share.
Status: Baltimore Bike Share launched in 2016 with 21 stations and will grow to 50 stations by the spring of 2017.

- Objective: Develop bicycle safety education programs for Baltimore area schools.
Status: A new Safe Routes to School Coordinator position has been filled. Additionally, the Safety City program is being more frequently used.

GOAL 7: IMPROVE RECREATIONAL BICYCLING OPPORTUNITIES

- Objective: Establish a new policy allowing bicycle access to the Waterfront Promenade.
Status: 24/7 bicycle access was approved in 2016 as a one-year pilot program.

Where more Work is Needed:

While much progress has been made over the past two years, there are a number of areas where further effort needs to be made to accomplish more objectives listed in the Bike Master Plan. In order to achieve these items listed below, the City will need to provide sufficient funding, staffing, or both. Also, some objectives listed in the Bike Master Plan will require a higher degree of cross-agency cooperation to achieve results.

GOAL 2: IMPROVE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS TO BE MORE BICYCLE-ORIENTED

- Objective: Expand the Charm City Bike Share service city-wide by 2020.
Status: As previously mentioned, Baltimore Bike Share launched in 2016 and will soon consist of 50 stations. In order for this program to be considered “city-wide”, however, many more stations will need to be funded and constructed than what is currently projected due to funding limitations. The expansion of the Bike Share program, especially to historically under-served neighborhoods with poor transportation access, should continue to be a focus of the City. This can be accomplished through a combination of dedicating additional public funding and seeking more private partners.

GOAL 4: ESTABLISH AND REFINE BICYCLE FACILITY ENGINEERING POLICIES

- Objective: Develop a formal Complete Streets training program and manual for Baltimore City Department of Transportation staff and consultants.
Status: The City Council adopted a Complete Street Resolution in 2010, but this legislation fails to adequately define requirements or enforce overall compliance. Councilman Dorsey has released a draft Complete Streets bill that attempts to correct these shortcomings. Assuming that this bill becomes an ordinance, the City should have a formally adopted Complete Streets design manual that would serve to provide design guidelines of where, when, and how complete streets are constructed in the City.

GOAL 6: STRENGTHEN LAW ENFORCEMENT TO IMPROVE BICYCLING SAFETY

- **Objective:** Establish a comprehensive traffic safety public education campaign targeting the general public and high risk populations.
Status: This objective, along with many of the objectives in Goal 6, requires a high degree of staffing resources. Many of these aims, however, are incorporated in the City's TowardZero effort, which is a holistic approach to ultimately eliminate all pedestrian fatalities by 2030.

GOAL 7: IMPROVE RECREATIONAL BICYCLING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Objective:** Prepare a detailed design plan and construct mountain bike routes in City parks (and)
Objective: Improve lightings along trails, and establish a policy to allow bicycle access to trails after dark.
Status: These objectives fall within the jurisdiction of City Recreation and Parks Department. As such, additional collaboration is needed in order to realize these aspirations.

CONCLUSION

While much work has been accomplished towards the vision set out in the 2015 Bike Master Plan, much remains to be done. The Department of Planning will continue to work in assisting the Department of Transportation in the Plan's successful implementation. Per the Planning Commission's approval in 2015, the Bike Master Plan will be due for another implementation update in 2019 and a comprehensive update in 2021.

COMMUNITY NOTIFICATION

In advance of this hearing, the meeting agenda was provided City-wide via GovDelivery.



Thomas J. Stosur
Director