



## **Bicycling Benefits Maryland**

**Bicycling is booming in Maryland. On a weekday, visit the Capital Crescent Trail or the Jones Falls Trail and you'll find commuters getting exercise and reducing traffic congestion as they commute to work. On the weekend, visit the B&A Trail, Torrey Brown Trail, or the Great Allegheny Passage and you'll see families out for a ride and a scoop of ice cream. You'll find road cyclists in the agricultural areas and mountain bikers in our state parks. Cyclists spend money -- at local bike and coffee shops, as well as at hotels, restaurants, and gas stations as they travel to events.**

**People riding bicycles is the sign of a healthy, vibrant community; the kind of community that draws young people, families, and active retirees. These are the communities that attract employers looking for high-quality employees. These are the types of communities that will help Maryland grow and diversify our economy.**

**With small, targeted investments, Maryland can capitalize on our existing bicycle facilities and culture and take the next steps to help communities across Maryland thrive.**

### **Introduction**

Bike Maryland works to ensure that bicycling throughout Maryland is safe, fun, and a common transportation choice for citizens of all ages and abilities. Bike Maryland promotes the economic, health, and environmental benefits of cycling. Bike Maryland represents cyclists' interests both on and off road through education, legislative action, and policy.

Maryland is ranked seventh in the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly State rankings due to strong legislation, policies and enforcement protecting cyclists, a continuing "Share The Road" education campaign, and dedicated funding for bicycle projects. While just a fraction of the state budget, these programs increase bicycle commuter rates, reduce bicycle related traffic fatalities, and contribute to economic development across the state.

However, while we are ranked near the top, there is still a lot that we can and should do to continually make improvements. If we do not, then other states will surpass us.

### **Benefits of Bicycling**

Building and installing the infrastructure necessary to create bicycle-friendly communities across Maryland is an efficient use of government funds that will enhance economic development and public health initiatives. This infrastructure includes trails, bike lanes, bike parking, and signage designating bike routes and the need to share the road.

Even when governments must make funding cuts, support for bicycling is not just another expenditure; it is a wise investment. According to a study from the University of Massachusetts, an average **11.4**



**jobs per million dollars spent are created with bicycle projects, compared to 7.8 jobs for road-only projects.<sup>i</sup>** As discussed earlier, the long-term economic benefit of investing in bicycling projects, such as trail systems and other infrastructure investments, have significant returns on investment. On the Outer Banks of North Carolina a \$6.7 million investment reaps \$60 million a year, while in Vermont walking and bicycling events, businesses, and infrastructure investments **supported 1,400 jobs and generated \$83 million in economic activity while costing \$9.8 million in 2009.<sup>ii</sup>**

### **Economic Development**

Maryland is only beginning to realize our true potential as a cycling destination. Western Maryland has made the greatest strides to attract families, road cyclists, and mountain bikers. Home to the Great Allegheny Passage, C&O Canal, and the Western Maryland Rail Trail -- **120,000 visitors per year**, one can bike for an hour or for days. The hotels, restaurants, and shops along the trails have seen increased business -- over **\$40 million in direct trail revenue** a year just from the Great Allegheny Passage.<sup>iii</sup>

The Gran Fondo Bicycle Event and Savageman Triathlon brought in **\$2.6 million in direct spending** over two weekends to Garrett County. Participants loved the area; 88 percent reported that they would return to the Deep Creek Lake area to cycle and vacation.

Our Eastern Shore counties attract cyclists for large organized events as well as unorganized recreational trips. The shore is home to numerous triathlons including the Eagleman and Chesapeakeman, which take place in Dorchester County and the Seagull Century, which brings more than **8,000 cyclists** to Wicomico and Worcester Counties. Talbot County has numerous signed bicycle routes including the Easton-St. Michaels-Oxford loop that includes a ferry ride. Both Kent County and Caroline County have readily available bicycle routes on their websites.

However, there is a need for cycling opportunities for families and others who prefer to ride just on trails. Maryland should seek opportunities to develop bicycle trails on the Eastern Shore that provide cycling opportunities to those found in Western Maryland and to realize the true economic value that cycling can bring to these communities.

Improving bicycling opportunities throughout Central Maryland will attract people and employers to grow the economy. Young people are flocking to communities like Bethesda, Towson, and Baltimore's neighborhoods where they can bike to work or to transit for a commute downtown. Closing gaps such as providing a safe cycling route from "downtown" Columbia to the MARC station, would help other communities realize their full potential.

Property values along bicycle infrastructure and trails increase, because these are attractive to residents.<sup>iv</sup> A survey from Portland, Oregon found that **62 percent of new residents cited the city's bike-friendliness as a factor in their decision to move there.<sup>v</sup>**

Businesses with biking employees benefit. Employees who commute by bicycle take fewer sick days.<sup>vi</sup> Sales and revenue increase when bicycle lanes are installed, even at the expense of driver convenience. After New York City installed protected bike lanes on 9<sup>th</sup> Ave, businesses along that street saw a **49**



**percent increase in retail sales** while businesses in the rest of Manhattan saw a only a 3 percent increase.<sup>vii</sup> When retail sales increase, government benefits from increased tax revenue.

Bethesda, Frederick, Rockville, Baltimore, and Hagerstown have all been recognized as “bronze” level Bicycle Friendly Communities. As the District of Columbia is competitively providing its residents with bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, metro Maryland cities have to improve their walking and biking amenities to win the tax base.

A common misconception is that bicycling infrastructure will increase congestion, and that to mitigate traffic congestion more, and wider roads are needed. To the contrary, vehicular traffic can decrease by providing safe infrastructure for local walking and biking trips through “road diets.”<sup>viii</sup> Again, state and local governments, will save money from reduced road maintenance costs, since bicyclists and pedestrian contribute far less to road wear.

### **Public Health**

Bicycling communities are healthy communities. Many Marylanders do not get enough exercise, and as a result they contribute to increased health costs. The rates of obesity and excess weight continue to grow raising the cost of healthcare. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 27.1 percent of adult Marylanders are obese and 65.4 percent are overweight leading to a variety of well-known chronic diseases.<sup>ix</sup> Maryland is suffering more than other states due to obesity-related illnesses, and by 2030 health care costs could climb by 21.3 percent due to our high levels of obesity. Maryland is the 29<sup>th</sup> most obese state, despite our high incomes and top notch education system.<sup>x</sup>

Studies show that **community-based physical activity interventions are cost-effective -- it is three to four times less expensive to teach a sedentary adult how to integrate moderate-intensity physical activity** in their life than to enroll them in a structured exercise program.<sup>xi xii</sup> Physical activity during leisure-time may not be enough to prevent obesity, and Marylanders need to incorporate active transportation in their everyday lives.<sup>xiii xiv</sup> Bicycling is beneficial to Maryland; intervention is necessary now to prevent future inflated health costs related to increasingly sedentary and obese population.

### **Funding Mechanisms**

Funding bicycle projects and programming offers the greatest return on investment for any transportation mode. Dedicated funding is vital to effective and efficient operation. Maryland currently has several avenues for funding bicycle projects; most of which can be used interchangeably to maximize potential. **Combined with the required local government matching funds, these funding mechanisms make bicycle improvements a reality for communities across the state.**

**Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)** - Formerly known as Transportation Enhancements (TEP), this federal aid program has provided millions of dollars to Maryland for the engineering and construction of bicycle projects. Administered by Maryland’s State Highway Administration with USDOT funds, TAP has provided funding for major trail and bikeway infrastructure such as the Jones



Falls Trail in Baltimore, Three Notch Trail in St. Mary's County, and the Western Maryland Rail Trail in Washington County. TAP is structured as an 80/20 local match and can be the major funding source for many bicycling projects.

**Maryland Department of Transportation Bikeways Program** - MDOT's Bikeways Program, provides dedicated state funds for the planning, design and construction of bike-oriented projects across the state. These state dollars can be used as a match to TAP money to stretch local dollars. Since its inception, Bikeways has spent \$12.25 million, funding 97 projects. Frederick and Hagerstown have been especially successful at using Bikeways money to meet federal match requirements. For projects over \$100,000 a 20 percent local match is required.

**Fund 88** - Primarily funded by allocation in the MDOT budget, Fund 88 can also distribute federal money for project construction. To be eligible for Fund 88 projects must be within or directly adjacent to State Highway Administration right-of-way. Currently SHA is allocated \$4 million a year for Fund 88. Typically these projects include bike routes on shoulders, road diets, and off-road paths. Upcoming projects include MD-170 in Linthicum and US-1 in Halethorpe.

**Unified Program Work Plan (UPWP)** - As part of every metropolitan planning organization's (MPO) yearly funding, the UPWP cannot fund engineering or construction, but can be used to fund bicycle planning studies and staff positions such as bicycle planners; based on an 80/20 local match.

**Recreational Trails Program (RTP)** - This is federal money distributed to the states to develop and maintain recreational trails for motorized and non-motorized use. In FY 2012, the Recreational Trails Program awarded \$759,000 for 37 DNR trail grants which paid for the purchase of equipment and seasonal trail crews. This money is vital to the Department of Natural Resources for them to maintain their over 1,000 miles of trails. Trails are the primary way most visitors enjoy Maryland parks, forests, and wildlife management areas.

**Safe Routes to School (SRTS)** – The Maryland State Highway Administration administers this federal money to fund bicycle safety classes and infrastructure improvements in high crash areas. Bike Maryland has a grant for workshops in the Baltimore metropolitan area and Prince George's county.

### **Conclusion**

Bicycling is an inexpensive investment that has significant benefits for Maryland's economic and public health. Across the state towns like Berlin, Rockville, and Cumberland are benefiting from a stronger economy and healthier residents.

Bike Maryland strongly supports programs and policies that support and encourage bicycling throughout Maryland. State funding is absolutely critical to allow all of our communities to capitalize on the economic value that comes along with cyclists. Bicycling is good for Maryland, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Appalachian Mountains and it is imperative that the state of Maryland continue supporting and funding efforts across our beautiful state.

- i Garrett-Peltier, H. (2011). Pedestrian and Bicycling Infrastructure: A National Study of Economic Impact, *Political Economy Research Institute*. Retrieved from: <http://www.peri.umass.edu/236/hash/64a34bab6a183a2fc06fdc212875a3ad/publication/467/>
- ii Vermont Agency of Transportation. (2012). Economic Impact of Bicycling and Walking in Vermont. Retrieved from: [http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/sites/aot\\_program\\_development/files/documents/ltf/BikePedFinal%20Report%20Econ%20Impact%20Walking%20and%20Biking2012.pdf](http://vtransengineering.vermont.gov/sites/aot_program_development/files/documents/ltf/BikePedFinal%20Report%20Econ%20Impact%20Walking%20and%20Biking2012.pdf)
- iii Great Allegheny Passage Impact Study. (2009). Retrieved from: <http://www.atatrail.org/docs/GAPEconomicImpactStudy200809.pdf>
- iv Fuller, Dawn. (2011). *New Research Finds that Homeowners and City Planners Should 'Hit the Trail' When Considering Property Values*. Retrieved from: <http://www.uc.edu/news/NR.aspx?id=14300>
- v Maus, J. (2009). *60,000 free bike maps: A look at Transportation Options' survey results*. Retrieved from: <http://bikeportland.org/2009/01/28/60000-free-bike-maps-a-look-at-transportation-options-survey-results-13989>
- vi TNO. (2009). *Reduced sickness absence in regular commuter cyclists can save employers 27 million euros*. Retrieved from: <http://www.vcl.li/bilder/518.pdf>
- vii New York City Department of Transportation. (2012). Measuring the Street: New Metrics for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Streets. Retrieved from: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/2012-10-measuring-the-street.pdf>
- viii Chicago Department of Transportation. (2011). *Initial Findings: Kinzie Street Protected Bike Lane*. Retrieved from: [http://www.chicagobikes.org/pdf/Kinzie\\_Initial\\_Findings.pdf](http://www.chicagobikes.org/pdf/Kinzie_Initial_Findings.pdf)
- ix Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). *Overweight and Obesity, Maryland's Response to Obesity*. Retrieved from: <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/stateprograms/fundedstates/maryland.html>
- x The State of Obesity in Maryland. (2014). <http://stateofobesity.org/states/md/>
- xi Roux, L., Pratt, M., Tengs, T., Yore, M., Yanagawa, T., Van Den Bos, J., .... Buchner, D. (2008). Cost Effectiveness of Community-Based Physical Activity Interventions, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 35(6), 578-588. Retrieved from: [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(08\)00770-8/fulltext](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(08)00770-8/fulltext)
- xii Sevick, M., Dunn, A., Morrow, M., Marcus, B., Chen, G., & Blair, S. (2000). Cost-effectiveness of lifestyle and structured exercise interventions in sedentary adults: results of project ACTIVE, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 19(1), 1-8. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/10865157>
- xiii Bauman, A., Allman-Farinelli, M., Huxley, R., James, WP. (2008). Leisure-time physical activity alone may not be a sufficient public health approach to prevent obesity – a focus on China. *Obesity Reviews*, 9(Supp. 1), 119-126. Retrieved from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18307713>
- xiv Sugiyama, T., Ding, D., & Owen, N. (2013). Commuting by Car: Weight Gain Among Physically Active Adults, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 44(2), 169-173. Retrieved from: [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(12\)00776-3/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(12)00776-3/abstract)