

March 2005

Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan

A Comprehensive Amendment to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways

Bike Lanes | Shared Use Paths | Shared Roadways | Bike Lanes | Shared Use Paths | Shared Roadways



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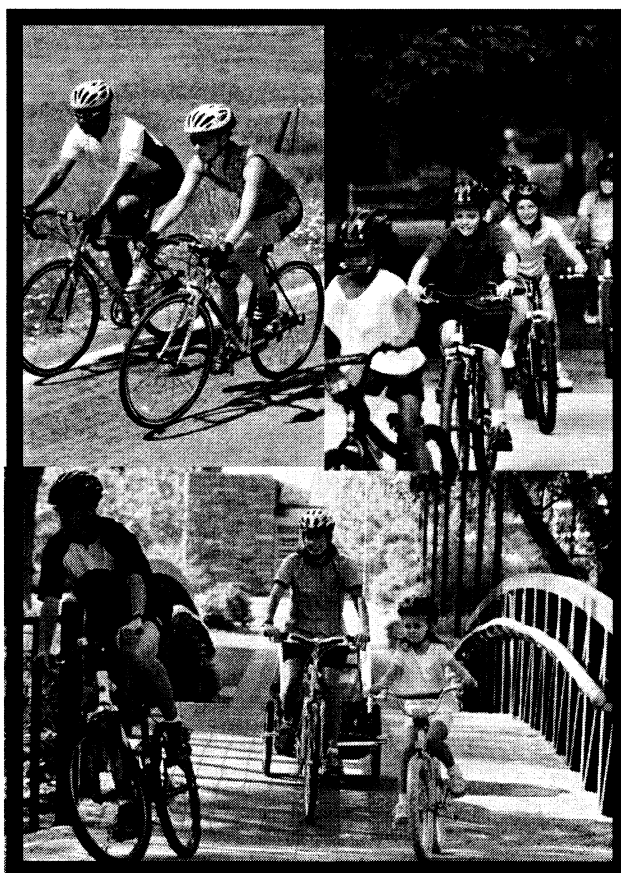
Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

Approved and Adopted

Countywide Bikeways

Functional Master Plan

**A Comprehensive Amendment to the
1978 Master Plan of Bikeways**



March 2005

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission
The Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
8787 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

ABSTRACT

TITLE Approved and Adopted Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan,
A Comprehensive Amendment to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways

AUTHOR The Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning
The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission

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8787 Georgia Avenue
Silver Spring, MD 20910

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ABSTRACT This document contains the text, supporting maps and tables for the Approved and Adopted Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan. It serves as a comprehensive amendment to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways. The document recommends nearly 200 Countywide Bikeways, totaling more than 500 miles. The document also contains recommended bikeway design standards for the County, recommends a methodology for implementation, and identifies related policies and programs necessary to effectively and efficiently implement the plan's goals over the next 15 to 20 years.

THE MARYLAND-NATIONAL CAPITAL PARK AND PLANNING COMMISSION

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission is a bi-county agency created by the General Assembly of Maryland in 1927. The Commission's geographic authority covers most of Montgomery and Prince George's counties. The Commission's planning jurisdiction, the Maryland-Washington Regional District, comprises 1,001 square miles; its parks jurisdiction, the Metropolitan District, comprises 919 square miles.

The Commission has three major functions:

1) The preparation, adoption, and from time to time, amendment or extension of *the General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District Within Montgomery and Prince George's Counties*

2) The acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of a public park system.

3) In Prince George's County only, the operation of the entire County public recreation program.

The Commission operates in each County through a Planning Board appointed by and responsible to the County government. The Planning Boards are responsible for preparation of all local master plans, recommendations on zoning amendments, administration of subdivision regulations and general administration of the parks.

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An area master plan, after approval by the County Council and the adoption by The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, constitutes an amendment to The General Plan (On Wedges and Corridors) for Montgomery County. As such, it provides a set of comprehensive recommendations and guidelines for the use of publicly and privately owned land within its planning area. Each area master plan reflects the vision of future development that responds to the unique character of the local community within the context of the Countywide perspective.

Area master plans are intended to provide a point of reference with regard to public policy. Together with relevant Countywide functional master plans (such as the Master Plan of Highways within Montgomery County, Maryland; the Master Plan for Historic Preservation; and the Master Plan for the Preservation of Agricultural and Rural Open Space), they should be referred to by public officials and private individuals when decisions are made that affect the use of land within the plan boundary. Local municipalities also adopt ordinances and approve plans that may provide guidance for public and private decisions.

Master plans generally look ahead about 20 years from the date of adoption, although they are intended to be updated and revised every 10 years. It is recognized that circumstances will change following adoption of a plan and that the specifics of a master plan may become less relevant over time. Generally, sketches or drawings in an adopted master plan are for illustrative purposes only and are intended to convey a general sense of desirable future character rather than a specific commitment to a particular detailed design.

Functional Master Plans such as this plan are developed through a process similar to that of an area master plan and are also considered amendments to the General Plan for the County. Functional master plans provide guidance for the preparation and update of area master plans. Unlike area master plans, functional master plans do not typically recommend changes in existing zoning and are not accompanied by sectional zoning map amendments.

THE MASTER PLAN PROCESS

STAFF DRAFT PLAN – This document is prepared by the Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning for the presentation to the Montgomery County Planning Board. The Planning Board reviews the staff Draft Plan, makes preliminary changes as appropriate, and approves the Plan for public hearing. When the Board's changes are made, the document becomes the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan.

PUBLIC HEARING (PRELIMINARY) DRAFT PLAN – This document is a formal proposal to amend an adopted master plan or sector plan. Its recommendations are not necessarily those of the Planning Board; it is prepared for the purpose of receiving public hearing testimony. The Planning Board holds a public hearing and receives testimony on the Draft Plan. After the public hearing record is closed, the Planning Board holds public Worksessions to review the testimony and revise the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan as appropriate. When the board's changes are made, the document becomes the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan.

PLANNING BOARD (FINAL) DRAFT PLAN – This document is the Planning Board's recommended Plan and it reflects the revisions made by the Board in its Worksessions on the Public Hearing (Preliminary) Draft Plan. The Regional District Act requires the Planning Board to transmit the Plan directly to the County Council with copies to the County Executive. The Regional District Act then requires the County Executive, within sixty days, to prepare and transmit a fiscal impact analysis of the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan to the County Council. The County Executive may also forward to the Council other comments and recommendations regarding the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan within the sixty day period.

After receiving the Executive's fiscal impact analysis and comments, the County Council may hold a public hearing to receive public testimony on the Plan. After the record of this public hearing is closed, the Council's Planning, Housing and Economic Development (PHED) Committee holds public Worksessions to review the testimony and then makes recommendations to the County Council. The Council holds its own Worksessions, then adopts a resolution approving the Planning Board (Final) Draft Plan, as revised.

ADOPTED PLAN – The Master Plan approved by the County Council is forwarded to The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission for adoption. Once adopted by the Commission, the Plan officially amends the various master or sector plans cited in the Commission's adoption resolution.

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FOLDED MAP (INSERT)

Existing, Planned and Proposed Countywide Bikeways

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADT—Average Daily Traffic

AASHTO – American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities (1999) – A document recognized and used by public and private entities throughout the country to ensure safe, consistently designed and implemented bicycle facilities.

Bicycle – Any two- or three-wheeled, human-powered vehicle on which a person rides. Excludes mopeds, scooters and segways.

Bicycle facility – a general term denoting improvements and provisions intended to accommodate or encourage bicycling, including bikeways, bike parking and storage.

Bicycle parking - An area dedicated and designed specifically for storing and locking a bicycle. Includes bicycle racks and bicycle lockers.

Bicycle route – A bikeway that features appropriate directional and informational signage

Bikeway – A transportation or recreational facility designed to accommodate bicycling. May include shared use paths, bike lanes and shared travel lanes/roadways.

Bike lanes (Class II bikeway) - A portion of a roadway that has been designated by striping, signing and pavement markings for the preferential or exclusive use of bicyclists. Consists of a 4'-6' lane in each direction, with traffic flow.

Bike path – See *shared use path*

BLOC – Bicycle Level of Comfort. Refers to score assigned to nearly all State highways in Maryland by the 2003 Maryland Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Similar to Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS).

CBD – Central Business District. Refers specifically to Bethesda, Friendship Heights, Silver Spring or Wheaton

CBFMP – Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan

CIP – Capital Improvement Program of Montgomery County, Maryland

Class I bikeway – outdated term for a shared use path or bike path

Class II bikeway – outdated term for bike lanes

Class III bikeway – outdated term for a shared roadway

Countywide Bikeways – Bikeways of countywide significance that provide connections to major destinations: municipalities, central business districts, town centers, employment centers, transit centers and regional parks and trails. Function as the skeleton for the County's bikeway network.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS *(CONTINUED)*

CPTP – 1998 Countywide Park Trails Plan

CTP – Maryland Department of Transportation’s Consolidated Transportation Plan

DDOT – District of Columbia Department of Transportation

DPWT – Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation

Dual Bikeway – A roadway that features two types of bikeways: 1) shared use path and bike lanes; or 2) shared use path and shared roadway/travel lane. The roadway corridor accommodates both on-road and off-road bicycling.

GPR – 1993 General Plan Refinement

Hiker-biker trail – An 8'-10' asphalt path located mainly within local or state parkland. Designed, built and maintained by land management agencies such as the M-NCPPC, Maryland Department of Natural Resources or the National Parks Service. Examples include Rock Creek Trail, Sligo Creek Trail and the Capital Crescent Trail.

Local/Neighborhood Bikeways – Bikeways that provide important connections from Countywide Bikeways to community facilities such as schools, libraries, community and recreation centers and local retail centers. Identified as part of community master plans and sector plans.

MCBAG – Montgomery County Bicycle Action Group. An informal, unofficial body formed by the County DPWT to provide guidance on bikeway implementation

MUTCD – Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices. A document recognized and used by transportation agencies throughout the country to ensure consistently designed and implemented signs, pavement markings and other traffic control devices.

M-NCPPC – Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Montgomery County Department of Park and Planning

MTA – Maryland Transit Administration

MWCOG – Metropolitan Washington Regional Council of Governments

SHA – Maryland State Highway Administration

Shared use paths (Class I bikeway) – An 8'-10' asphalt or concrete path that is separated from motorized traffic either by barrier or a minimum five-foot landscape panel. These facilities may be located within a roadway right-of-way and parallel the road (Great Seneca Highway) or within an independent right-of-way (North Bethesda Trail). Can also be used by pedestrians, skaters, wheelchair users, joggers and other non-motorized users if properly designed. Designed, built and maintained by transportation agencies such as State Highway Administration, the County’s Department of Public Works and Transportation, or the Maryland Transit Administration.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS *(CONTINUED)*

Shared roadway – A roadway open to both bicycle and motor vehicle travel. This may be an existing roadway, street with wide curb lanes or road with paved shoulders. Types include: 1) wide outside curb lane (14'-16'); 2) bikeable shoulder (4'-6'); or 3) low volume, low speed streets.

Signed shared roadways (Class III bikeway) – A shared roadway that has been designated as a preferred route for bicycle use using warning, directional and informational signage.

Right-of-way (ROW) – A general term denoting land, property or interest therein, usually in a strip, acquired for or dedicated to transportation purposes.

WABA – Washington Area Bicyclist Association. The largest bicycle advocacy organization in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area.

WMATA – Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Manages Metrobus and Metrorail.

Executive Summary

- This functional master plan establishes the countywide network plan for utilitarian bicycle transportation. It serves as a comprehensive amendment to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways and amends all community master plans and sector plans. The plan complements the 1998 Countywide Park Trails Plan.
- The plan recommends nearly 200 bikeways totaling more than 500 miles. This include 181 miles of existing and proposed shared use paths (formerly called Class I bikeways), 81 miles of existing and proposed bike lanes (formerly called Class II bikeways) and 157 miles of proposed signed shared roadways (formerly called Class III bikeways). Two hundred and four (204) miles of bikeways are newly proposed and not included in adopted and approved master plans. Of these new miles, 21 miles are existing or proposed shared use paths, 18 miles are existing or proposed bike lanes and 97 miles are proposed signed shared roadways. The remaining 67 miles of newly proposed bikeways are “dual bikeways”.
- The plan introduces a new type of master-planned bikeway: dual bikeway. This type of bikeway meets the needs of the total range of bicyclists. Roads recommended for dual bikeways will ultimately feature both an on-road and an off-road bicycle facility. In other words, a roadway may have a shared use path and bike lanes, or a shared use path and signed shared roadway. The plan recommends 114 miles of dual bikeways.
- The plan emphasizes bikeways of countywide significance and focuses on ensuring bikeway connections to the County’s major activity centers: municipalities, central business districts, town centers, transit stations, major employment hubs, countywide park trails and regional parks. Bikeways that provide a direct, or form part of an important, connection to or between these destinations are considered highest priority for implementation under this plan.
- While focusing on countywide bikeways, the plan provides guidance to future community master plan and sector plan efforts to identify and evaluate local bikeway networks. Local bikeways supplement the countywide bikeway network, providing connections to countywide bikeways as well as to basic local destinations such as retail shopping centers, schools, community and recreation centers, libraries, post offices, and local parks.
- The plan strikes a balance between bikeways intended for beginner and intermediate skill levels (shared use paths) as well as more experienced bicyclists (bike lanes and signed shared roadways). The plan highlights the benefits of each type of bikeway and recognizes the desirable application of each type based on land uses, roadway and traffic conditions and destinations.
- The plan reflects basic design characteristics for the three major types of bikeways as recommended in the 1999 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities and supported by the Montgomery County Department of Public Works and Transportation (DPWT). The plan appendix contains innovative bikeway design concepts not yet supported by DPWT, but which are currently implemented by other jurisdictions around the country and could be implemented in Montgomery County in the future.
- The plan describes related County and regional programs and policies that will help the County develop a comprehensive bicycle program, including bicycle safety, bicycle education, and bicycle encouragement and promotion.

- The plan does not evaluate bicycle suitability conditions or identify potential bikeways along all County roads and state highways, but rather focuses on ensuring bicycle access and connectivity to major countywide destinations and activity centers.
- The plan does not specify actual alignments of bikeways along roads, but rather leaves that task to the transportation agencies that are responsible for implementation or for permitting implementation by developers and others.
- The plan is consistent with existing bikeway plans (or currently proposed amendments) of municipalities and adjoining jurisdictions.