



# THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY **BICYCLE MASTER PLAN**

PLANNING BOARD DRAFT | MAY 2018

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## Abstract

The Bicycle Master Plan contains the text and supporting maps and tables for a comprehensive amendment to the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways, 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan and all bikeway recommendations in past functional plans, area master plans and sector plans, bringing Montgomery County in line with leading practices in bicycle planning. The plan is a key element in Montgomery County's Vision Zero Two-Year Action Plan to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries.

This plan makes recommendations for a low-stress network of bikeways throughout Montgomery County. The goal of this system is to ensure cyclists of all ages and abilities are comfortable and safe riding to transit stations, employment centers, shops, public facilities and other destinations in Montgomery County.

A new classification system is proposed in the plan to evaluate cycling routes based on their level of separation from traffic. A new concept, the Breezeway Network, is recommended to create a high-capacity system of arterial bikeways between major activity centers. This network allows faster bicyclists to travel with less delay and is one in which all users – including slower moving bicyclists and pedestrians – can safely and comfortably coexist.

Long-term bicycle parking stations are recommended at all Metrorail Red Line and many MARC Brunswick Line, future Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway stations to encourage bicycling to transit.

In addition, this plan recommends capital, educational and outreach programs, and a legal and policy framework to encourage bicycling.

### **Source of copies**

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission  
8787 Georgia Avenue  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Online at [montgomeryplanning.org/bikeplan](http://montgomeryplanning.org/bikeplan)

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Bicycle Master Plan is a **comprehensive overhaul** of the 1978 Master Plan of Bikeways, 2005 Countywide Bikeways Functional Master Plan and all bikeway recommendations in past functional plans, area master plans and sector plans, bringing Montgomery County in line with leading practices in bicycle planning.
- To create a world-class bicycling community, this plan focuses on **four key goals**: 1) increasing bicycling rates in Montgomery County, 2) creating a highly-connected, convenient and low-stress bicycling network, 3) providing equal access to low-stress bicycling for all members of the community, and 4) improving the safety of bicycling.
- This plan recommends an **extensive network of low-stress bikeways** in Montgomery County. This will create an environment where people of all ages and bicycling abilities feel comfortable and safe riding bicycles to work, shop, transit, public facilities and other destinations in the county.
- A **new bikeway classification system** is proposed to organize bikeways based on their level of separation from traffic. The system ranges from trails, which are fully separated from traffic, to shared roads, where it is appropriate for bicycles and automobiles to share the same space.
- After applying the **Level of Traffic Stress** methodology to Montgomery County's road network, appropriate bikeway recommendations were selected to create a low-stress bicycling network. The 1,100-mile network of bikeways includes 573 miles of sidepaths, 172 miles of trails, 128 miles of bike-able shoulders, 99 miles of separated bike lanes and 48 miles of neighborhood greenways. More than one-quarter of this network currently exists.
- The plan uses a **data-driven approach** to assess the amount of discomfort that people feel when they bicycle close to traffic on roads in the county. Currently, 14 percent of potential bicycling trips can be made on a low-stress bicycling network in Montgomery County. This plan aims to increase this measure of low-stress connectivity to 55 percent by 2043.
- A new concept, the **Breezeway Network**, is recommended as a high-capacity network of arterial bikeways between major activity centers, enabling bicyclists to travel with fewer delays, and where all users – including slower moving bicyclists and pedestrians – can safely and comfortably coexist.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- To complement the low-stress bicycling network, the plan recommends **abundant and secure bicycle parking**. These facilities include bicycle parking stations at all Metrorail Red Line stations and at the higher demand MARC, future Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway (CCT) stations. The plan also includes guidelines for short-term and long-term bicycle parking at commercial and multi-family residential developments.
- The innovative **Bicycle Facility Design Toolkit** is included to guide planners and designers on building high-quality bikeways and intersections.
- A strategic, thoughtful and effective **outreach program** was executed for the plan with traditional and new ways to engage with the community. This outreach included a stress-reducing coloring book to educate the public about bicycle facility types, a bicycling photo contest to collect real-world examples of bicycling in Montgomery County and multiple online maps for crowdsourced feedback and documenting of bicycling conditions.
- To encourage bicycling, the plan recommends bicycle-supportive **programs and a legal and policy framework**.
- The plan creates a **two-step approach to implementing** networks of **separated bike lanes** in urban areas of the county. In the first step, the county constructs low-cost separated bike lanes through retrofits to existing roads. Over time, these bikeways are upgraded as part of development approvals and county facility planning studies. These permanent designs will incorporate more aesthetically pleasing treatments and stormwater management, and increase the capacity of the bikeways.
- The plan creates a new approach to understanding **potential bicycle demand** by converting the regional travel demand model to a potential demand model for bicycling. This analysis was a primary factor in prioritizing bikeway recommendations.
- A **biennial monitoring report** will track progress in implementing the Bicycle Master Plan's vision. The report sets goals, objectives, metrics and targets that enable transparency and accountability in plan implementation.
- The plan is a key element in Montgomery County's **Vision Zero Action Plan** to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries by 2030.

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Photo: City of Calgary Bike Program