



MAYOR AND COUNCIL Meeting Date: June 10, 2024

Agenda Item Type: PRESENTATION

Department: PW - TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION

Responsible Staff: BRYAN BARNETTWOODS

Subject

Presentation of The Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee (RBAC) Report to the Mayor and Council

Department

PW - Traffic & Transportation

Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Mayor and Council receive the presentation briefing on the RBAC Report.

Discussion

RBAC was established in May 1999, by a Mayor and Council resolution (Resolution No. 4-99). The committee works to assist in the development of the city's bicycle and pedestrian specific policies, oversee the implementation of the city's Bikeway Master Plan, review current and proposed capital improvement projects to ensure bicycling needs are incorporated into design and construction, provide updates on the needs and desires of bicyclists in the community, and recommend actions to the Mayor and Council to advance safe bicycling in Rockville.

The committee represents bicyclists of all ages and abilities. Since its inception, RBAC has become a valuable resource for the city to provide guidance and recommendations regarding bicyclists needs, highlight practical considerations for infrastructure projects, and help city staff prioritize projects in the bikeway master plan. The committee's continued success and support helps the city increase multimodal transportation and progress towards achieving Vision Zero.

Mayor and Council History

RBAC members have provided an RBAC report to past Rockville Mayor and Councils. This is the first time that RBAC has presented to this Mayor and Council.

Public Notification and Engagement

RBAC meets virtually on the first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM. The meeting agenda and meeting link are available on the city's online calendar and agenda center prior to the meeting date.

Meetings are open to the public and everyone interested in bicycling in-and-around Rockville and improving bicycling in Rockville is welcome to attend.

Next Steps

RBAC will continue to meet virtually monthly to discuss issues important to Rockville bicyclists, plan bike rides, and provide comments and guidance on multimodal transportation projects in the city.

RBAC welcomes the Mayor and Council, city staff, residents, and interested parties to join RBAC for one of their weekly planned bike rides this summer. The scheduled rides are available online. <https://www.meetup.com/bike-rockville/>

Attachments

2024 Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee Report - 6-10-24



2024 Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee Report

Meeting Vision Zero Goals and Encouraging Cycling

Rockville, Montgomery County, surrounding counties, and Washington D.C. all are committed to Vision Zero, which makes safe travel *for people* the top priority. The Rockville Mayor and Council’s vision for bicycling in Rockville is stated in the [Bikeway Master Plan](#): “Bicycling in Rockville is for all types of trips, for all types of people, and for all parts of the city.” Progress in implementing Rockville’s vision depends on promoting cycling and walking to create parity between cyclists, pedestrians, scooter riders, rollers, other vulnerable roadway users, and motorized vehicles.

About the Rockville Bicycle Advisory Committee (RBAC)

RBAC’s mandate for action includes assisting in the development of the City’s bicycle-specific policies, overseeing the implementation of the City’s Bikeway Master Plan, reviewing capital improvement projects and development plans to ensure policymakers incorporate bicyclists’ needs, and delivering updates on the needs and desires of bicyclists in the community to the Mayor and City Council.

RBAC meetings are open to the public. Meeting attendance in 2023 ranged from 10-20 volunteers. Regular participation by the City Council Liaison and the Rockville Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator ensure communication between elected officials, city staff and RBAC toward meeting our common goal of Vision Zero.

Volunteers take part in discussions about city policies relevant to bicyclists (including e-bike users), scooter riders, and pedestrians. Other frequent topics of discussion include bikeway construction and maintenance; incorporating cyclists’ needs into city planning, design and construction; preparing reports and recommendations to Council and City staff; planning community bike rides; and communicating with the public.

Recent RBAC Accomplishments By the Numbers

- **21 community bike rides** held in 2023, with 363 total participants, to highlight Rockville’s bicycle infrastructure and encourage more bicycling in Rockville.

- **4 capital improvement projects in progress** with RBAC input on their design and feasibility: Fleet Street and Monroe Street shared-use path; Martins Lane bicycle lane; Manakee Street complete street; Halpine Road bicycle lane.
- **3 capital improvement projects completed** since 2021 with RBAC input: Baltimore Ave shared-use path; Town Center bicycle lanes (N. Washington Street and E. Middle Lane); Maryland Avenue bicycle lanes.
- **About 67% fewer speeding tickets** issued per month on Maryland Avenue since the bicycle lanes were installed in November 2021.
- **\$1,325,000 in FY 24 awarded in grants** with RBAC letters of support, including the Transportation Alternatives Program Fleet and Monroe Shared Use Path Design, Maryland Bikeways E. Jefferson Street and Halpine Road Bicycle Lanes Study and Design, MWCOC Transportation Land Use Mannakee Street Complete Streets Study, MWCOC Regional Roadway Safety Program Pedestrian Crossing Guidelines, Safe Streets and Roads for All Intersection Safety Audits, and the Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Twinbrook Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge Feasibility Study and Design .

The 5 Es: Equity, Engineering, Education, Encouragement, Evaluation and Planning

RBAC's advisory role to the city of Rockville is grounded in the [5 Es of the League of American Bicyclists](#): equity, engineering, education, encouragement, and evaluation and planning.

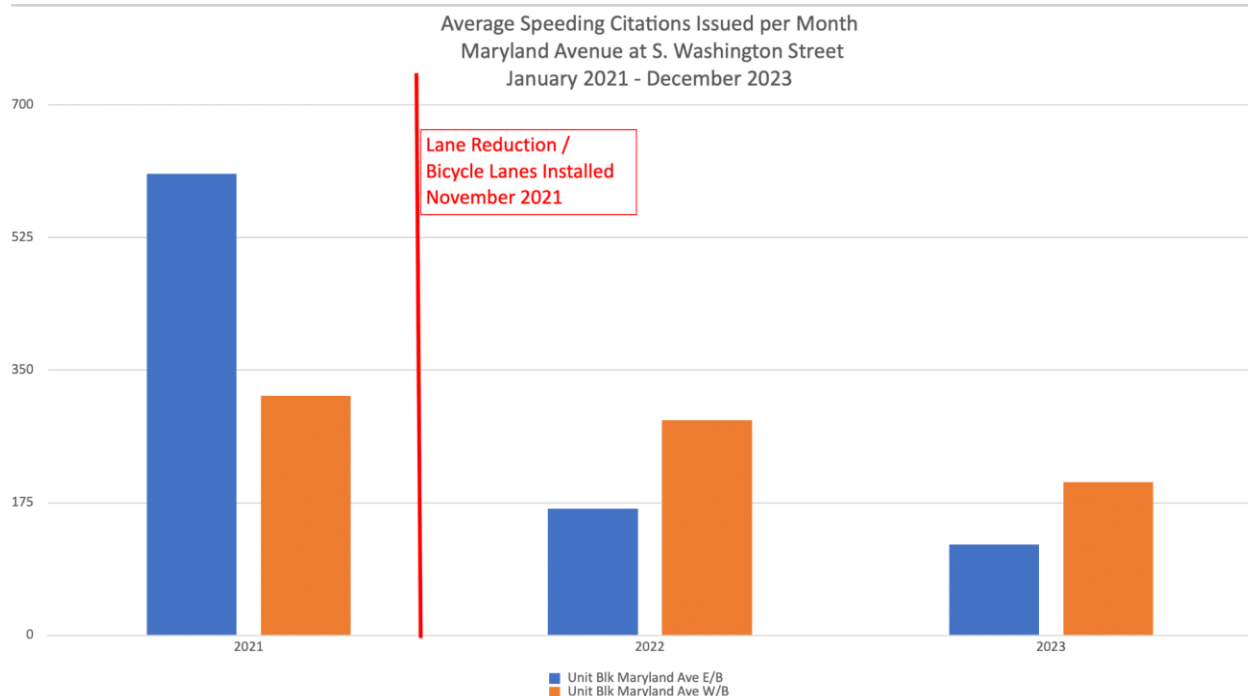
EQUITY: Rockville has earned a bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community designation. Comments from League of American Bicyclists reviewers in 2023 indicated that Rockville is improving but needs to increase equity and accessibility if we are to achieve a silver-level designation. RBAC is committed to advocating for action to address the structural racism in the built environment, bicycling-related policies, and bicycling programming. Areas of focus for RBAC on this front include:

- Advocating for safety improvements that will prevent additional injuries and fatalities on high-crash roads. While there is disproportionate risk posed to non-motorists within the current streetscape, risks are especially high for people of color and people living in low-income neighborhoods. Rockville's Vision Zero Action Plan used data from locations of current crashes to set baselines and will evaluate changes over time. The action plan commits to a fair approach that recognizes the diversity of community needs within Rockville.
- Advocating for the expansion of the Capital Bikeshare system in Rockville, which would make bicycles easier to access for all residents and offers low-cost memberships to low-income residents.

ENGINEERING: With guidance from RBAC, the City of Rockville has long engineered bike infrastructure to overcome barriers to parity for cyclists and pedestrians, including projects that continue to serve as a foundation for newer infrastructure:

- Rockville's bicycle beltway (Carl Henn Millennium Trail), which links all parts of the city
- Sister City Friendship Bridge, which spans I-270 along Route 28
- Unity Bridge - connecting Lincoln Park and Rockville Pike
- Town Center Complete Streets
- Maryland Avenue Complete Streets

The below chart gives an example of the benefits of bicycle infrastructure projects: a steep drop in speeding tickets issued after the completion of the Maryland Avenue bicycle lanes.



ENCOURAGEMENT: Research has consistently shown that more cyclists on the road are associated with fewer bicycle crashes and fatalities. To encourage cycling in Rockville, RBAC organizes regular community bike rides and promotes Bike to Work and School Days and Car Free Days each year. RBAC also helps organize Tour de Cookie, an annual bike ride hosted by the Treehouse Foundation to help raise funds for

their organization. Community bike rides have been held since 2000 and are organized with safety in mind. Below is a list of 2023 rides and the number of attendees.

Ride Name	When (2023)	Number of Cyclists	Average Length of Ride
Tuesday Evening Rides (Weekly)	June 6 - August 29	229	8 – 9 miles
Other themed rides	April – December	134	11 - 15 miles

EDUCATION: Five to ten minutes at the beginning of each ride is devoted to safety education – including demonstration of hand-turn signals, tips on crossing intersections, and group-riding safety. Volunteers teach principles of “quick checks” for bicycles. These routine preventive measures ensure safety for all riders.

Additionally, in 2023 RBAC volunteers participated in videos created by City staff to educate residents on how to safely drive and bicycle through Town Center after the new bicycle lanes were installed.

EVALUATION AND PLANNING: RBAC meets monthly at City Hall to evaluate and plan. Progress in implementing the City’s Bikeway Master Plan and conformity of new developments to the plan are evaluated. How to accelerate progress toward safe cycling throughout Rockville is proposed and discussed. Volunteers are recruited to help with bike rides.

Other Activities

ENFORCEMENT: The League of American Bicyclists has replaced enforcement with equity in its 5 Es, but RBAC still appreciates the value of the Rockville Police Department in advancing bicycling safety and education. Of note, RBAC collaborates annually with RPD on the Ride of Silence, which is a national commemoration of those who have been injured or killed while cycling on public roadways. In 2023, the Ride of Silence had the most participants of all RBAC community bike rides. The RPD provides outstanding ride support.

Next Steps

In 2024 RBAC welcomed a new council liaison, Council Member Dr. David Myles, and longtime RBAC chair Nancy Breen stepped down to allow for a new chair to be elected. Jake Jakubek is acting as interim chair while RBAC establishes new procedures for regular election of new RBAC chairs.

RBAC looks forward to continuing to work with City staff and elected officials to strengthen bicycling culture in Rockville. Offering Rockville safe and convenient places to ride and park bicycles promotes parity for cyclists, walkers and drivers.

Additional Context

As mentioned, Rockville is a League of American Bicyclists-designated Bicycle Friendly Community and has adopted a Vision Zero Action Plan. Maryland is a Bicycle Friendly State and Montgomery County is a Bicycle Friendly County. Our County's strong commitment to both cycling and Vision Zero is shown by the American Planners Association gold award for the stress map developed to support its Bikeway Master Plan and its hiring of a dedicated Vision Zero Coordinator. Rockville's new Vision Zero Action Plan uses tools developed by Montgomery County. Rockville's ability to implement this strategy for our own Vision Zero policy is proven by the Maryland Municipal League Municipal Employee of 2023 awarded to Rockville's Vision Zero Coordinator, Bryan Barnett-Woods.

Key to improving cycling in Rockville is ensuring that Rockville's streetscapes adequately serve all users. The Rockville Pedestrian Advocacy Committee (RPAC) advocates alongside RBAC to ensure Rockville's streetscapes are adequate for all users, as does the Rockville Transportation Mobility Commission (TMC). Bryan Barnett-Woods attends RBAC, RPAC, and TMC meetings and coordinates Vision Zero activities in Rockville.

RBAC looks forward to continuing to work with Rockville's Mayor and a Council and city staff to realize our region's shared transportation goals to increase walking, rolling, and bicycling, and to achieve our Vision Zero goal: ending traffic fatalities and serious injuries for people regardless of their mode of travel.

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