

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2006 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 1732 (Delegates Cardin and Kaiser)
Environmental Matters

Transportation - Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee - Bicycle-Friendly
Communities Program

This bill requires the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee to develop a Bicycle-Friendly Communities Program (BFCP).

The bill takes effect July 1, 2006.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) expenditures could increase minimally in FY 2007 and annually thereafter for manufacture of signs to designate communities as “bicycle-friendly communities.” Potential additional increase in TTF expenditures for improvement in mass transit access for bicyclists. Revenues would not be affected.

Local Effect: Local expenditures could increase minimally in order to meet the criteria to become designated as “bicycle-friendly.”

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary: BFCP must include:

- a process for a community to apply for designation as a bicycle-friendly community;
- a system for evaluating a community for such a designation; and

- a special highway sign for such communities, designed by the State Highway Administration (SHA) and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee.

Criteria for determining eligibility includes, but is not limited to, the community's ability and willingness to:

- adopt and meet goals relating to community bicycle ridership levels;
- provide safe and convenient bicycle access to all parts of the community;
- design highways and bicycle facilities in a manner to promote use by bicyclists;
- enforce traffic laws to improve the safety and comfort of all highway users, with a particular focus on bicycle crash prevention;
- improve access for bicycle riders to public transportation facilities, including placing racks on buses and improving parking at mass transit parking lots; and
- establish a committee of community members to implement a bicycle-friendly community action plan and evaluate progress toward creating a bicycle-friendly community.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee must report to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1 of each year about the success of BFCP. In addition, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee must submit a plan for this program to the Governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2007.

Current Law: The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) is required to consider access to transportation facilities for bicyclists, and must use best engineering practices for bicycle riders when it is planning a project, including construction, reconstruction, and repair. Modal administrations must work together to remove restrictions on bicycle access to mass transit. In addition, when working on a project, MDOT must work to ensure that transportation options for bicycle riders will be enhanced and access to transportation facilities will not be negatively impacted.

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is charged with providing guidance to State agencies concerning several activities, including funding of bicycle- and pedestrian-related programs and any other issue directly related to bicycling and pedestrians. The committee consists of specified representatives of several State agencies, including MDOT, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of State Police, and citizens either from a variety of geographic areas around the State or representing community interests.

State Expenditures: SHA advises that the cost of designing a sign designating a community as bicycle-friendly would total \$500. Sign manufacture would be approximately \$600 per sign. *For illustrative purposes only*, if five communities annually received the designation of a “bicycle-friendly community” and each community received two highway signs, TTF expenditures would increase by \$6,500 in fiscal 2007 and by \$6,000 annually thereafter.

Some of the criteria concerning mass transit accessibility, including placing bicycle racks on buses and improving parking at mass transit parking lots, are not necessarily under the control of local communities. The Maryland Transit Administration (MTA) has placed bicycle racks on some of its buses, but not all. To the extent that MTA, although not required to do so, decided to assist communities that wish the “bicycle-friendly community” designation and engaged in activities such as improving parking at mass transit parking lots or placing bicycle racks on buses on certain routes, TTF expenditures could increase; however, the magnitude of this increase cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

It is assumed that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee could handle the reporting requirements and program development within existing resources.

Local Fiscal Effect: The bill does not mandate that communities engage in any additional activities, nor does it provide financial incentives to do so, except for a sign. Communities would be eligible to become bicycle-friendly communities based on community demand for certain of the features mentioned as criteria, such as providing bicycle paths. However, in order to become a bicycle-friendly community, the community would be judged on the willingness to update and implement community policies, plans, codes, and programs to create a more bicycle-friendly community. If the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee stressed certain aspects of the criteria, such as enforcement of traffic laws or creating an action plan, local expenditures could increase minimally in order to meet these criteria.

Additional Comments: Many communities in Maryland that are served by mass transit are served by MTA; as such, MTA has final authority over improving access of bicyclists to mass transit and improving parking lots, not the community. In addition, “community” does not specifically refer to a town or municipal corporation. Conceivably, several communities could exist in one town.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Transportation, Department of Legislative Services

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