



Section 7: Education and Safety Programs

Residents and visitors to Anne Arundel County currently receive a very limited amount of pedestrian and bicycle safety education. This is a concern, since bicycle and pedestrian injuries and deaths are a serious risk in the County, particularly for children and seniors. The following statistics were taken from the 2000 Anne Arundel County Bicycle Crash Report issued by Maryland SHA.

- ❑ ***In the year 2000, the County recorded 72 bicycle-vehicle crashes and the City of Annapolis recorded 17 crashes for an average of 1.7 crashes per week.***
- ❑ ***55 percent of the recorded crashes in the County involved children age 17 and under.***

The following section of the Plan provides an overview of the existing safety education programs for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists. The chapter then recommends a series of actions to meet the bicycle and pedestrian education needs of county residents.

The *Baltimore Region Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenways Transportation Plan*, approved in 2001 by the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board, set forward the following bicycle and pedestrian safety education milestone and actions:

“All elementary school students in the region will receive bicycle and pedestrian safety instruction by the year 2012”.

The Plan also identifies the following actions:

- ❑ Offer effective cycling instruction classes for adult riders through local colleges and universities.
- ❑ Develop cycling information guides for local college students that contain safety tips.
- ❑ Launch an initiative to offer training to motorists on bicycle and pedestrian safety.

7.1 Recommended Actions

The following section recommends specific Anne Arundel County actions for pedestrian and bicycle education and safety programs. These goals are tailored to provide a basis of education for the Countywide population, and to meet the objectives of the regional plan as well.



Action 1: Work with the Maryland Office of Highway Safety to implement Maryland's new Bicycle and Pedestrian Curriculum for elementary school students (release expected in 2003).

Child pedestrians and bicyclists are a particularly vulnerable group. They often do not understand the rules of the road, and are unable to gauge the speed of oncoming traffic. Pedestrian and bicycle safety are basic skills that should be taught in Anne Arundel County Schools. This can be achieved either through the school systems physical education program or through volunteers. The first step in implementing this recommendation will be to conduct a "train the trainer" event in Anne Arundel County to unveil the new curriculum and teach instructors how to use it. Grants are available through the MD Highway Safety Office to support these activities.

Action 2: *Establish an education and safety task force*

The education and safety task force should confirm the key bicycle/pedestrian education and safety issues and audiences to be addressed, determine who is responsible for implementing the bicycle/pedestrian education and safety programs around the region, recommend necessary legislative or regulatory changes, and coordinate the work of the many agencies, institutions, private groups and businesses who should be involved with the work.

Action 3: *Provide for senior pedestrian safety education*

Develop and implement a senior pedestrian safety awareness component within all bicycle and safety educational projects and within targeted senior oriented programs. Coordinate with the County's Department of Aging.

Action 4: *Apply for community grants for pedestrian and bicycle education, safety and injury prevention.*

A continued effort to apply for community funding will ensure the longevity and effectiveness of proposed safety education programs. Funding sources are provided in a separate chapter.

Action 5: *Offer effective cycling instruction courses for adult riders through regional bicycle clubs, local colleges and advocacy groups.*

The education needs of adult cyclists can be addressed through various cycling programs. Courses can be taught independently through local bicycle clubs. In other areas of the country, universities offer bicycle safety instruction courses for adults. Local colleges and universities such as the Naval Academy, Anne Arundel Community College, St. John's College and the University of Maryland should be encouraged to develop such programs.



Action 6: Encourage the colleges and universities in Anne Arundel County to develop a “Guide to Bicycling” publication for distribution each year to new students.

Many universities have developed bicycling guides both to encourage safe riding and to encourage students to bicycle to class instead of driving their automobiles. A guide of this type should be a standard item in the orientation packages provided to new students each year. A comprehensive bicycle safety handbook usually includes the following:

- Tips on the best routes for getting around and through campus, along with a discussion of troubled areas on campus with congested traffic.
- A section explaining the traffic laws as they apply to cyclists.
- Instructions of what to do in case of a bicycle crash, along with helmet promotion information
- Description and contact name for local bicycle and pedestrian clubs, and bicycle shops.
- Instructions on preventing bicycle theft.
- Rules regarding bicycle parking on campus.
- Bicycle maintenance instructions.

Action 7: Develop a pedestrian and bicycle component of the drivers education training program and manual.

Anne Arundel County should work with state and regional bicycle coordinators and the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) to develop a bicycle and pedestrian component within the driver’s education training manual, and ensure that local driver training programs incorporate these instructions.

In conclusion, all bicycle and pedestrian education efforts should be coordinated with Anne Arundel County’s Highway Safety Coordinator (HSC). The HSC coordinator will work with local and regional task forces to advocate and implement bicycle and pedestrian education safety solutions.

7.2 Existing Anne Arundel County Safety Education Resources

Pedestrian and bicycle education and safety programs in Anne Arundel County are sponsored by several state and local agencies, however; on the whole, there are limited resources for this type of instruction in Anne Arundel County. Based on background research done for this study, it is estimated that less than 2% of the general countywide population receives pedestrian and bicycle safety instruction. Most of the existing programs are targeted toward children.

The following section describes existing organizations in Anne Arundel County that conduct some degree of bicycle and pedestrian safety and motorist education.



Anne Arundel County Police Department

Presently, the Anne Arundel County Police Department devotes time and resources toward bicycle safety education each year. All of the department's bicycle officers receive specialized bicycle safety training. These trained officers conduct bicycle safety events, rodeos and make presentations on a request basis. The target audience is primarily elementary school students. The number of children who participate in these presentations vary from year to year, but on average, the County Police reach 500 students annually. According to the Department spokesperson, these numbers have been dwindling each year. In addition, the Department organizes an annual bicycle safety course for the members of their Youth Activity Program. Other efforts include helmet distribution to low income families (when funding is available).

The Anne Arundel County Police Department does recognize that pedestrians are often overlooked when it comes to traffic safety. In general, pedestrian safety instruction is offered less frequently in comparison to bicycle safety throughout the County. However, the County Police Department is one of the few departments in Maryland to participate in the *Walk a Child to School* event. Each year, the police department helps rally local schools throughout the county to participate in this nationally celebrated activity. During the first week in October, parents, caregivers, faculty, staff and children are encouraged to walk to school together as many days as possible, and to learn and practice safe pedestrian behaviors.

Anne Arundel County Injury Prevention Coalition

A key component to bicycle and pedestrian safety education is injury prevention. The Anne Arundel County Injury Prevention Coalition is a Chapter of the Maryland Safe Kids Coalition and chaired by the Anne Arundel County Health Department Injury Prevention Coordinator. The coalition is comprised of a number of local agencies that work together to share information, ideas and resources relative to injury prevention programs. In the past, this coalition has submitted a safety grant to the Community Traffic Safety Team (CTST) for bicycle helmets. These helmets were distributed to low-income children in bicycle rodeos, safety events, and at presentations carried out by the Anne Arundel County Police Department. Grant funding used to support this program is nearly depleted; therefore more funding will be needed in the future.

Anne Arundel County Public School System

The Anne Arundel County Public School System has a staff of more than 4,100 teachers and educates a culturally and economically diverse population of nearly 74,000 students. The Anne Arundel County Public School system is comprised of 115 schools, including 76 elementary schools, 18 middle schools, 12 high schools and a variety of other special learning centers.¹ This system is considered one of the best in the state and provides an excellent resource for potential pedestrian and bicycle safety education.

¹ Anne Arundel County Public School System web site <http://www.aacps.org/>



Currently, under the direction of Anne Arundel County Schools Physical Education and Athletics Supervisor, 76 elementary schools in the County have access to a 4th and 5th grade bicycle safety curriculum (which includes some bicycle and safety equipment). This program is offered as an optional supplemental unit to the physical education curriculum and not as a part of the Anne Arundel County Public Schools formal education program. This program covers the basics of bicycle instruction, but does not address pedestrian safety.

Approximately six schools offer the curriculum to their students annually, representing less than two percent of the total student population. Schools in Anne Arundel County have not been active in this program due to lack of promotion, lack of equipment, storage issues and lack of training for teachers. Currently, the County has 30 bicycles available for teachers to use with the bicycle curriculum. The program contains a brief number of lessons (ranging from four to six lessons).

Anne Arundel County 4-H and Extension Program

The County 4-H and Extension program organizes an annual Bicycle Safety contest at the County fair for 4-H members between 8 – 18 years of age. Individual 4-H leaders may conduct programs that discuss bicycle and pedestrian safety or include bicycle safety as a component of a project, but it is not otherwise an emphasized topic. All other pedestrian and bicycle safety instruction in Anne Arundel County is carried out by a past 4-H Leader, independently of the 4-H Extension Office.

Support for these aforementioned programs, both financial and non-monetary, has been made available through the State via the Maryland State Highway Administration by way of the Maryland Comprehensive Traffic Safety Program.

7.3 Existing Maryland State Safety and Education Resources

Comprehensive Traffic Safety Program

In addition to County resources described above, there are a variety of State resources available for safety education. The State of Maryland's Comprehensive Traffic Safety Program was created to address transportation safety issues. Within each of the 23 counties and Baltimore City there is a designated Highway Safety Coordinator (HSC) who works with local task forces to identify traffic safety issues/problems, develop countermeasures, and implement or advocate for solutions. Each task force also helps prioritize a pre-determined amount of funding for local projects, such as the helmet give-away program managed by the Anne Arundel County Health Department and the Injury Prevention Coalition. The amount of funding received greatly influences project priorities.

Another example of an innovative awareness project managed by the Anne Arundel County HSC and the Anne Arundel County Traffic Safety Task Force is the Share the Road project. The purpose of the Share the Road project is to identify dangerous roads for cycling and install Share the Road signs in these locations.²

² Share the Road signs are bicycle-warning signs with a sub plate that says, "Share the Road".



Some education materials are available through the Maryland Highway Safety Office for local programs and events (coloring books, safety brochures, etc.). This education material can be used as a resource for future pedestrian and bicycle safety programs.

Maryland's Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)

Maryland's Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA) has mandatory education requirements in order for residents to receive a State of Maryland driver's license. There are very few references to pedestrians and bicycles in the current version of the Driver's Manual. The manual briefly describes the basic actions that should be taken when encountering a bicyclist, and rules for yielding to pedestrians.

Maryland Safe Routes Program

In 2001, the Maryland General Assembly adopted the Transportation - Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Legislation, House Bill 717. One component of the Bill is the development of a pedestrian safety program. This pedestrian safety program will be targeted for children, focusing on local "safe" routes to schools. This program is due for completion in 2003, and should be an excellent resource for Anne Arundel County Schools. It will consist of a toolkit (or set of instructions) for implementing a Safe Routes Project at a local school, and may be associated with special assistance from the State for implementation.

The task of educating children and adult bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists about traffic safety in a region as large as Anne Arundel County is a significant challenge. Currently, bicycle and pedestrian safety education programs in the County are limited. These programs provide a small portion of the population with bicycle and pedestrian safety educational opportunities. Anne Arundel County should build their future pedestrian and bicycle safety education program from this existing base, in coordination with other State and regional initiatives.