



## **Section 2: Introduction**

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Bicyclists and pedestrians are legitimate road users who have the legal right to use our roadways. Each time a person walks or rides a bicycle instead of driving, our region experiences a direct effect in reduced traffic congestion and air pollution. In accordance with the Baltimore Regional Plan and the County's General Development Plan, Anne Arundel County has developed a plan of action to encourage more trips on foot and by bicycle.

### **2.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this effort is to present a Plan for bicycling and walking in Anne Arundel County that ensures that residents and visitors have the convenient and comfortable option of bicycling and walking for transportation and recreation. The following are specific components of the Plan:

- ❑ *Route Network Plan (map) showing high priority routes and pedestrian improvement zones*
- ❑ *An Action Plan for initial projects and programs*
- ❑ *Recommendations for future bicycle and pedestrian policies and procedures*
- ❑ *List of sample corridors for pedestrian and bicycling improvements*
- ❑ *Strategies to establish education and safety programs for children and adults, including bicyclists, pedestrians and motorists.*
- ❑ *Funding recommendations*

### **2.2 Plan Relationships**

Various plans have been produced in Maryland and in Anne Arundel County that either directly or indirectly address bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The following section illustrates significant planning efforts at the state, regional and local levels.

#### **Anne Arundel County Greenways Master Plan:**

This Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was closely coordinated with a parallel planning effort, the Anne Arundel County Greenways Master Plan. While the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan primarily addresses alternative transportation, the Greenways Master Plan is focused on preserving ecological open space corridors that also serve a recreation and transportation purpose. Some County Greenways contain trail corridors that have been shown on the Route Network Plan. These routes reflect opportunities that were identified during the Greenways Master Plan. The Greenways Plan complements this study, particularly in locations where future greenways may serve a transportation purpose.



### **Anne Arundel County General Development Plan (1997):**

The General Development Plan (GDP) is a long range comprehensive plan adopted by the County to provide guidance in regards to future growth, development resource management, protection and the provision of services. The GDP provides polices and recommendations for the County in order to effectively plan for growth in an environmentally sound and efficient manner. The plan recommends adoption of improved development requirements that emphasize mixed land uses and enhanced community design to improve the function and appearance of new development and redevelopment projects.

The GDP provides over a 120 recommendations on how the County can better manage growth, conserve the environment and meet resident needs. A number of these recommendations directly relate to bicycle and pedestrian access including:

- Designing roadways to move people by car, bus, commercial, emergency vehicles and by bicycle.
- Designing roadways to accommodate pedestrians.
- Promote and encourage a safe efficient multi-modal transportation system that adequately serves the public, minimizes negative environmental impacts, improves air quality, reduces resource consumption and reflects and strengthens the County's land use goals.
- Reduce the length and frequency of travel to housing, employment and service.
- Provide walkways and bikeways to connect residential areas with nearby activity centers
- Improve access and safety along major pedestrian and biking routes.
- Develop interconnected pedestrian ways and bikeways through Small Area Planning.

### **Anne Arundel County Small Area Plans:**

Anne Arundel County's General Development Plan recommends that the County begin planning initiatives within sixteen specified community areas, called Small Area Plans. The purpose of the Small Area Plans are to enhance the quality of life in our communities, to help implement the goals and recommendations of the General Development Plan, and to promote citizen, business and County cooperation in the planning and development process.

#### ***Small Area Plans Identify:***

- ❑ *where land uses should occur;*
- ❑ *how land should be zoned;*
- ❑ *where pedestrian and road improvements are needed; and*
- ❑ *how communities can use design to improve their overall function and appearance.*

The following excerpts are taken from Anne Arundel County's web site describing the Small Area Planning purposes and citizen participation:



Citizens play a central role in developing the Small Area Plans. The County Executive appoints Small Area Plan committees. The appointees are selected from community, business and environmental organizations within the boundaries of the small areas.

Most of the Small Area Plans that are completed contain references to a variety of bicycle and pedestrian issues throughout the County. Some have identified networks of paved and natural surface pathways to serve area residents and to link to other small area planning efforts. Primarily the Small Area Plan committees and planning staff work collaboratively to develop the best plan for the area. Together, they agree on a work program and schedule, review land use, zoning, environmental features, and infrastructure, including schools, roads, sewer, water facilities and parks.

### ***Various Local Planning Efforts:***

Other planning efforts at the local level have been done to specifically address issues regarding bicycle and pedestrian planning and design. These additional plans include the Parole Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan (1999) and the MD Route 175 Roadway and Streetscape Plan/Odenton Town Center Master Plan (1999). The Parole Plan identifies conceptual streetscapes for the pedestrian and bicycle routes that will make the route network prominent, attractive and safe. The plan considers treatment for specific problem areas where full design improvements cannot be provided because of limited right-of-way or other constraints. The Odenton/MD175 Plan provided an innovative process in which planners, architects, landscape architects, engineers, and a citizens' advisory committee pooled expertise to develop a plan for the roadway and adjacent land corridor that would respond to Odenton's diverse needs

### **City of Annapolis Take-A-Step Map:**

Although the City of Annapolis has not formally completed a bicycle and pedestrian master plan, the Anne Arundel Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan was coordinated with the development of Annapolis' bicycle and pedestrian "Take-A-Step" wayfinding map, and with the City's bikeway consultant. A number of exciting initiatives have been initiated in the City of Annapolis, including a bike rental program and a bikes-on-bus program (Annapolis Transit).

### **The Maryland Statewide Greenway Atlas:**

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources has done excellent work developing a statewide inventory of greenways and open space throughout the Baltimore region, and has been a central source of support for local greenway projects through Program Open Space funding and technical assistance. The purpose of their work has been to increase the amount of green infrastructure throughout Maryland, with an ancillary benefit being that greenway corridors can also serve non-motorized travel in locations where trails are provided.



## The Maryland Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan:

Simultaneously with the development of this Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan, the Maryland Department of Transportation is conducting the Maryland Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan with a completion date set for October 2002. This is an extremely positive development for bicycling and walking in Anne Arundel County and throughout Maryland.

One aspect of the statewide plan is to collect data on sidewalk conditions on all state roadways, data which was not collected for this Plan, and which may be very helpful to local jurisdictions that wish to make improvements.

In addition to the inventory of bicycling and walking conditions on state roads, the Statewide Plan will set a variety of policies within Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) for accommodating bicycles and pedestrians on state roadways. This is important, because a number of the roadways in the regional network are owned by the state. Local jurisdictions should participate in the statewide planning process to ensure that policies and practices are coordinated at the state and local levels.

### 2.3 Existing Conditions

Anne Arundel County is bounded to the east by the Chesapeake Bay, the north by Baltimore County, the west by Howard and Prince George's Counties, and on the south by Calvert County. The County is home to 527 miles of winding shoreline along the Chesapeake Bay and its various tributaries. The City of Annapolis, a historic bay town where our State Capitol is located is situated in the County. This unique location enables Anne Arundel County to provide its community with a variety of living environments. Due to its reputation as an attractive place to live and work, the population of Anne Arundel County is projected to increase considerably during the next 50 years. According to census 2000 data the County has already grown approximately 15% in the last 10 years from a population of 427,000 residents in 1990 to 490,000 residents in the year 2000.

The county's topography is both rolling and flat and is generally well suited for bicycling and pedestrian travel. The County also retains a rural character between the major population centers and is primarily rural in the southern portion of the County.

#### **Current Bicycling Conditions:**

It is important to identify the current situation in order to analyze, benchmark and improve bicycle and pedestrian conditions.

**According to Anne Arundel County 2000 Census Data:**

*205,415 people drive alone to work*

*27,302 people arrive in car pools*

*14,728 people walk or work at home*

*6,438 people arrive via public transportation*

*1,975 people use other means*

A number of roads in Anne Arundel County provide opportunities for bicycling but dangers still exist in areas that fail to provide for bicycle and pedestrian access. There are limited numbers of bicycle facilities in the County. The following were concerns



raised in the Small Area Plans and local community meetings regarding bicycling conditions in Anne Arundel County:

- Lack of providing bicycling opportunities within the general street infrastructure.
- Lack of striped bicycle lanes.
- Lack of designated bicycle routes.
- Poorly maintained street conditions.
- High speed traffic areas.
- Lack of logical connections for desired destinations

However, despite the lack of on-road facilities there has been a strong effort to increase the amount of multi-use trails within the County. Currently, the County has approximately 28 miles of existing multi-use trails with many more miles planned. The following highlights regionally significant trails within the County.

- Baltimore and Annapolis Trail - existing 13.3 miles
- BWI Trail Park - existing 14.5 miles
- Chesapeake Beach Rail Trail (South County) - proposed 3 miles
- South Shore Trail - proposed 10.5 miles
- West County Trail (WB&A) - proposed
- Poplar Trail (Annapolis) – near completion .5 miles (final link to connect the Annapolis Colonial Maritime Trail, BWI Trail and the B&A Trail.)
- Annapolis Colonial Maritime Trail – Urban trail comprised of on-road bikeways, off road multi-use trails and pedestrian facilities.

Various national trails are proposed to extend through Anne Arundel County, including the East Coast Greenway, American Discovery Trail and the Civil War Discovery Trail. The proposed national trail routes follow existing and proposed County trail routes, and will ultimately enable Anne Arundel County residents to travel cross country.

### **Current Pedestrian Condition:**

Anne Arundel County is home to one of America's most walkable and historic cities, Annapolis. In 1999, *Walking Magazine* named the City of Annapolis as one of the ten best American cities for walking. The city is a draw for thousands of tourists each year and walking is a key mode of transportation.

A number of residential communities have focused on walkability. Piney Orchard is one example of a planned community in the County with sidewalks, trails and other pedestrian-friendly design elements, which make the community a safe and accessible place to walk.



Despite these examples of pedestrian-oriented environments in the County, there are many areas that need to be improved. High traffic volume streets, dangerous intersections, inaccessible connections make it difficult for pedestrians throughout the County. The following were concerns from the local Small Area Plans and community meetings regarding pedestrian conditions in Anne Arundel County:

- Lack of pedestrian links between neighborhoods and activity centers.
- Lack of sidewalks and streetscape improvements on public roads.
- Current pedestrian access is not safe and easily accessible.
- Lack of pedestrian facilities (crosswalks, signs, signals etc.) at intersections

### **Access to Commercial Development**

Many shopping centers and office complexes in Anne Arundel County do not encourage access by walkers and bicyclists. The traditional style of commercial development usually includes a main building that is separated from the street by wide and expansive parking lots. Entrance to many malls and shopping centers offer no sidewalks or crosswalks. There are also very few bicycle racks in these developments.

In addition, many shopping centers do not provide connections between the main complex and adjacent commercial facilities such as fast food restaurants and banks. People are therefore encouraged to drive a few hundred feet to the next location. When there are not logical and accessible connections between retail stores within the same shopping complex, unnecessary trips are made adding to the congestion and potential pedestrian dangers. Section 6 of this report provides a detailed review of local land development and transportation design practices which affect bicyclists and pedestrians.

### **Access to Public Transportation**

Currently Anne Arundel County provides some opportunities for people to use public transportation. The County supports an integrated bus route and commuter train system connecting to places within the county and adjacent jurisdictions. In order for Anne Arundel County to have a complete multi-modal transportation system, public transportation stops need to be accessible by walking or biking.

Pedestrian and bicycle access to bus stops, park and ride lots, and train stations is critical to the success of the overall transit system in the County, since many public transportation users either walk or bicycle to the bus stops, park and ride lots and MARC train stations. In locations where pedestrian and bicycle access to the bus is not provided, residents may be forced to drive to access transit or simply choose to drive instead of using transit at all. With safer and more comfortable sidewalks, waiting areas, bike lanes and paths near the bus stops and stations, it is likely that people will be able to access transit as pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition to the benefits of personal health, the people accessing transit by walking and bicycling will begin to reduce the pollution and congestion that result from making trips by automobile.