



MD175 Bicycle Lanes

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From Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County

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Support for New and Extended Bicycle Lanes on Rt. 175

Bicycle Advocates for Annapolis & Anne Arundel County (BikeAAA) is an all-volunteer 501c3 promoting safe bicycling for transportation, recreation & fitness throughout Anne Arundel County. We originated as a project of the [Leadership Anne Arundel](#) Flagship program and now represent hundreds of cyclists. Rino Sanchez is on the BikeAAA board and leads a Ft. Meade bike commuter group. We support the commitment to *Complete Streets* by the state of Maryland and more recently by Anne Arundel County. *Complete Streets* assures that investment in new roads and maintenance/renovation of existing roads will address the needs of multiple transportation modes including cars, trucks, bicycles and pedestrians. This nationally recognized strategy provides more safe transportation options at little incremental cost. Safe bicycle and pedestrian routes to work, school, shopping and other destinations reduce traffic, protect the environment, stimulate the local economy and addresses Anne Arundel's #1 health issue – obesity. It prepares Anne Arundel County for the transportation demands of the current and next generation.

The section of MD Rt. 175 between the I-295 interchange and MD Rt. 170 is a vital roadway within Anne Arundel County connecting Jessup, Ft. Meade, Severn, and Odenton. For cyclists in this area, there are currently few safe options because of the limitations imposed by large highways (MD 32 and I-295) and military base restrictions (Fort Meade). It connects the largest employment center in Maryland, Ft. Meade, to the 2nd most populous community in Maryland, Columbia, on the west end, and the fastest growing community in Anne Arundel County, Odenton, on the east end, as well as the Odenton MARC station. With the projected increase in jobs in the Ft. Meade area and the consequent growth of residential and retail development of the surrounding region, it is imperative that the area offer safe alternatives for pedestrians and cyclists. For these reasons, we support the funding for all phases of the MD 175 expansion project and consider it critical that this funding include trails and bike lanes as described below. While we are pleased to see the plans include on-road bike lanes, pedestrian sidewalks and a separated hiker/biker trail; we have several concerns about how this will be implemented. Specifically,

1. **SEPARATED BIKE LANES** – With 3 lanes of traffic each way, cars and trucks will be moving at even higher speeds than currently (40 mph limit, with traffic often in excess of 50 mph), with frequent lane changes and turns into commercial/residential areas. This makes bicyclists in a striped lane adjacent to a travel lane extremely vulnerable, and it makes it difficult for cars to provide the 3 feet of space when passing, as required by Maryland law. The design should be changed to provide a protected, or at least a buffered, lane. This might be achievable within the planned project width by reducing the width of the median and /or travel lanes and providing a physical barrier or at least buffer between the travel lane and the bike lane.

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2. **HIKER/BIKER TRAIL ALONG FULL PROJECT LENGTH** -- The project plans call for a hiker/biker trail along the full length of the Rt. 175 widening project from Rt. 170 to 295 and it is critical that this is implemented. This trail will enable bicyclists and pedestrians to safely access the Ft. Meade gates, retail and businesses along Rt. 175, schools and the current and future nearby residential developments. We are concerned about how the hiker/biker trail will continue at pinch points and bridge crossings. It is critical that a physically separated lane be provided at bridge crossings and that the trail traverses the entire project length.

3. **KEY CONNECTORS** -- For the trail and bike lanes to be fully used, there must be safe connections to key origin and destination points. The project should include these connectors or work with appropriate jurisdictions such as Anne Arundel County, MTA, Ft. Meade and developers to assure safe connectors are built. These connectors should include:
 - A. Odenton MARC Station
 - B. Meade High School, Meade Middle School, Odenton Library, Jessup-Provinces Park
 - C. Ft. Meade gates
 - D. Retail and residential areas along the eastern edge of Rt. 175 and in Odenton
 - E. WB&A Trail head, Clark Rd./Milestone Parkway, Race Rd.

4. **ACCELERATED DESIGN & BUILD OF TRAIL** – We advocate early build-out of the hiker/biker trail along the full project length rather than waiting for each phase of the road widening project to be funded, design and built. The trail should be less complex and far less expensive than the road widening and will provide a safe cycling and walking route sooner and while road construction is in process.

Providing a safer route in this key Maryland growth area encourages bicycling to numerous employment, education, shopping and recreation destinations. For some, a bicycle is the only economic means of transportation and for others it is preferred for health, environmental and lifestyle reasons.

The state of Maryland was recently ranked #7 in the nation for bicycle-friendliness and the commitment of MDOT to *Complete Streets* is an important component. We applaud BMC, SHA and Anne Arundel County for supporting the Rt. 175 project and obtaining federal funding to support it. We stand ready to support this and future projects that make Anne Arundel County a more livable, healthy, and economically attractive place to live, work and play.