

## **Combined Bike Safety Roundtable Notes - Winter 2021**

December 8th @ 7:00pm & December 10th @ 12:00pm

Facilitated by: Alex Freedman, Planner

The following is a compilation of notes collected during two, digital roundtable discussions with members of the Takoma Park biking community. These comments reflect a summary of issues and suggestions that were brought up, both in response to staff-structured prompts and participant-posed questions and concerns. The comments noted in this document do not reflect a list of committed City action items. These ideas and suggestions will, however, inform City decisions moving forward. If you notice any ideas that are mis-represented or have additional suggestions to make, please reach out to City planning staff; contact information is shared at the bottom of this document.

### ***Short Term Opportunities:***

- Improve maintenance of existing bikeways and infrastructure
  - Ex: Tree roots are damaging the surface on the Metropolitan Branch Trail along Takoma Ave
  - If markings and signs were maintained better, more people would use the bikeways they mark
  - Addition of colored paint on road markings would be helpful for visibility
- Bike Parking is another quick win
  - Parking in Old Takoma is really strained during the Sunday farmers markets
  - Bicycle parking should not add competition to pedestrian spaces; it should add competition to vehicle parking
  - Bike parking in commercial areas increases sales and customers for local businesses - lots of research to prove it
  - If it is contentious or hard to find space, maybe create temporary bike parking that can be put out during big events or on Sundays.
- More visible and easily understood transitions between jurisdictions, road types, and modes of transportation,
  - For example, on Garland Ave at Flower Ave, where the Sligo Creek Trail crosses the road, there are no spots to show that folks are now entering a cyclist/pedestrian/car zone
- Could be more markings to help novice riders know they're in multi-use environments
  - Markings that use high-visibility colors would also increase their safety contribution
  - Mixed feelings about the use of sharrows; some thought they would be appropriate on quieter streets, and some felt that they don't work well

### ***Mid-Term Opportunities:***

- Having striped bike lanes that draw the attention of riders and drivers; lanes with physical separation is better

- No one in Old Town Takoma pays attention to cyclists
- Signage isn't as effective, for example need to use physical barriers to point out to folks bikes are in the area
- Expand bikeshare station networks in Takoma Park
- Reduce the speed limit to 15 mph in the City
  - Some participants felt this is good, but lack effectiveness without improved physical engineering to match the speed
  - Possibly best paired with a strategy, like a Bike Master Plan
- Bicycle Master Plan for the City of Takoma Park that looks 5-10 years ahead
  - Allows for a more holistic analysis of where bike needs are
  - Guides how funding should be acquired and prioritized
- Focus on connectivity, especially to neighboring cities and trail networks
- Maple Ave Complete Street fails to achieve the safety goals that it could
  - The proposed design doesn't seem to meet the need to accommodate hundreds of school children and use of the road as a major connector to civic and recreational uses
  - Before the next design stage, there should be more analyses of parking and traffic to guide the work
  - Would like to ARPA money used to support this plan
  - The condition of the Maple Ave Bridge over Sligo Creek is really rough for pedestrians, bike riders, and even cars - can that be included in the scope for Maple Ave Complete Street?
- Metropolitan Branch Trail
  - The quality of the bikeway surface on the stretch in Takoma Park is abysmal
  - To ride from Eastern Ave (what may eventually become the Northern Alignment of the Met Branch Trail), is really difficult, because the trail is on the far corner of the intersection at Piney Branch.
- There needs to be better connectivity between the commercial areas of the City, especially over on New Hampshire Ave.

***Long-term Opportunities:***

- Takoma Junction intersection is incredibly difficult and dangerous for all users - simplifying the intersection would be a huge asset

***Participant Questions/Comments***

- What can residents do to foster better bike infrastructure?
  - Email ideas and concerns to Alex Freedman, Planner, [alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov), to make sure it is on the radar
  - Bikers as a constituency are sometimes invisible
    - Not an understanding of how many people commute by bike

- Staff proposing regular meetings (quarterly) to act as an opportunity to share concerns, provide feedback on proposed actions, and help keep City staff accountable
- What capacity does the City have to adjust/add to Carroll Avenue? How can we lobby the SHA?
  - Short answer is that it depends on how big the ask is: something like sharrows can be done easily enough.
  - If we are talking about changing curb lines or protected bike lanes, that will be tough.
  - Beyond state bureaucracy, the biggest limitation is funding. Any changes to the roadway need grant funding to move forward, which often delays projects by years.
  - It is more complicated because its SHA but not impossible
- Public input is important but we can't let it drive the plan, the continuing going out to the residents isn't always helpful, it derails progress
- What are some of the particularly difficult intersections that the City needs to pay attention to?
  - The Junction
  - Maple Ave and Sligo Creek Parkway
  - Maple Ave and Hilltop Rd
  - Flower Ave and Garland Ave
- Do you find yourself taking alternative routes? Taking your original route even if it is an issue? Or not riding at all because safety/convenience is poor?
  - One participant takes back ways to avoid New Hampshire Ave
  - To avoid the narrower part of Maple Ave, will use the library cut-through and Cedar Ave
- How can the City do a better job of bringing more of the bike community into the room?
  - WABA has a network, hosting a WABA event would be great to raise the visibility
  - More can be done to communities that use bikes as their main transportation
  - Events out in the community, such as a community ride along the City's existing/new infrastructure would be a fun event.

*For questions or comments, please contact Alex Freedman at [alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov](mailto:alexanderf@takomaparkmd.gov) or 301-891-7213.*