Baltimore, Maryland

PROFILE:
POPULATION: 620,435  
MEDIAN INCOME: $39,113  
MEDIAN HOME VALUE: $167,500  
% W/ BACHELOR’S DEGREE: 13.6%  
WALK SCORE: 64/100

QUOTES:
“Year after year, Baltimore is becoming a more bike friendly city. We are grateful for Governor O’Malley’s continued support of our efforts to increase bicycle use and safety, which supports our goal of making Baltimore a more attractive city for families.”
—Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor of Baltimore

“Whether for tourism, recreation, exercise or commuting, our message is that Maryland roadways welcome bicyclists. Our State is evolving to include bicycling as a more environmentally beneficial and healthy way of commuting, and to continue those efforts, we need bicyclists and drivers to know and follow the basic rules of the road for everyone’s safety.”
—Martin O’Malley, Governor of Maryland

Trails + Transit = Charm City

Almost every Friday morning from 2007 to early 2010, Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon invited city residents to join her for a bike ride around the city to discuss and promote cycling. While Dixon has now left office, current city leadership continues to support an active transportation agenda.

Baltimore has long been a national leader in developing urban light rail. The city has built several successful transit-oriented developments, in which retail, restaurants, entertainment and residences are clustered around transit stops. The next light-rail project, the Red Line Extension, will be the first to incorporate active transportation. Bicycles will be allowed on all the trains, stations will have bike racks and the line will connect with both the Baltimore Waterfront Promenade and the Gwynns Falls Trail, a 20-mile trail that is the centerpiece of the city’s trail network.

“We’re looking to fully integrate bicycles with our transit system,” says Nate Evans, bike and pedestrian planner in the Baltimore City Department of Transportation. “The city has a very strong interest in bringing cycling to the forefront.” Baltimore adopted a Bicycle Master Plan in 2006 that addresses all aspects of cycling as transportation, including redesigning city streets for bicycle use, creating a citywide network of bike facilities and encouraging safety education through community awareness.

Evans says the city is adding more than 50 miles of bike lanes, sharrows and routes throughout the city. The city’s road resurfacing program, Operation Orange Cone, is required to incorporate bike facilities as space and safety allow. For example, bicycle-safe storm grates are installed for all resurfacing — and new — road projects.

In its case statement, the city has assembled a detailed budget showing how it would spend the federal funds, attaching specific dollar amounts to a vast range of projects, including new trails, trail connections, sustainability efforts and public outreach.
“With current environmental and economic trends, active transportation is a solution for every problem,” says Evans. “But to fully improve our local environment, public health and traffic congestion, Baltimore needs the assistance of federal funds.” — Rails to Trails Fall 2010

Building more active transportation infrastructure in Baltimore is needed. But public education about the benefits of active transportation is also essential to get more people walking and bicycling.

Sometimes, it doesn’t feel like work. RTC national office staff launched an afterschool program to teach Baltimore children about safe cycling. Each student who completed the six-week program received a free bicycle and helmet. This is RTC’s way to provide a little more charm in the “Charm City.”