



# TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

FOR RELEASE TO KANAWHA COUNTY MEDIA OUTLETS (TV, RADIO, PAPER)  
PRIOR TO MARCH 13, 2008

## ***Public Information Open House for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Kanawha and Putnam Counties***

South Charleston, WV - The Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) is in the process of developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Kanawha and Putnam Counties. The plan will serve as a guide for communities in the two counties interested in improving bicycle and pedestrian access and mobility.

RIC, with their consultant Michael Baker Jr., Inc., is holding a Public Information Open House for Kanawha County Residents on Thursday, March 13, 2008 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the South Charleston Woman's Club, 214 D Street, South Charleston, WV. Residents are invited to attend and provide feedback on bicycle and pedestrian issues in the County. Comment cards will be provided to document feedback.

The Open House will provide an opportunity for residents to view the findings of the study to date, including online survey results, and provide valuable feedback on potential issues and opportunities for enhancement. All are encouraged to attend. Light refreshments will be served. Stop by any time between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to tell us what you think!



**Comments Received From the  
Kanawha County Public Information Center #1  
South Charleston Woman's Club  
March 13, 2008**

- EDUCATE AND ENFORCE – The public needs to know the laws re: bicycles on the road. The police need to enforce the laws. Thanks for the chance to share my views.
- Very interested in the Elk River Trail from Barlow Drive to Cooskin below the airport. [pamgrady@hotmail.com](mailto:pamgrady@hotmail.com)
- Great project. We really need to improve and encourage bike & ped transportation options. Please keep me informed: Julie Pratt, [jpratt1@aol.com](mailto:jpratt1@aol.com)
- Create marked bike route in downtown South Charleston similar to the one in Kanawha City (near river/UC area). Sidewalks in corridor G shopping area – make it work for pedestrians/bikes.
- Add to email – [rml\\_mph@yahoo.com](mailto:rml_mph@yahoo.com)
- The City of Charleston and State DOH need to do more of widening paved streets to allow for safer pedestrian traffic. In particular Connell Road should be widened since its near Holz school and is a gateway to Kanawha State Forest.
- The City of Lewisburg in Greenbrier County is in the process of developing hiking/biking trails in and around the city. I have been charged with finding as much of the info we need up front. Previously safety regs and highway code, any advice and input we can gather would be so welcome. Funding/school involvement etc. John Francis – (304) 645-1320 (Home) (540) 521-5105 (cell), [johncfrancis@verizon.net](mailto:johncfrancis@verizon.net)



# **TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!**

**FOR RELEASE TO KANAWHA COUNTY MEDIA OUTLETS (TV, RADIO, PAPER)  
PRIOR TO MAY 20, 2008**

## ***Public Information Open House for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Kanawha and Putnam Counties***

South Charleston, WV - The Regional Intergovernmental Council (RIC) is in the process of developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for Kanawha and Putnam Counties. The plan will serve as a guide for communities in the two counties interested in improving bicycle and pedestrian access and mobility.

RIC, with their consultant Michael Baker Jr., Inc., is holding a Public Information Open House for Kanawha County Residents on Tuesday, May 20, 2008 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the South Charleston Public Library in Meeting Room B, 312 Fourth Avenue, South Charleston, W.V. Residents are invited to attend and provide feedback on bicycle and pedestrian improvements for areas identified with barriers to access and mobility. Comment cards will be provided to document feedback.

The Open House will provide an opportunity for residents to view the findings of the study to date and provide valuable feedback on potential improvements and opportunities for enhancement. All are encouraged to attend. Light refreshments will be served. Stop by any time between 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to tell us what you think!



**Comments Received From the  
Kanawha County Public Information Center  
South Charleston Public Library  
May 20, 2008**

Entire Kanawha Blvd. recreation trail

At locations where there are large numbers of crossings, align the access holes with streets to allow for safe crossings for bicycles. Locations include downtown Charleston at Summers Street and the State Capitol at both Greenbrier and California.

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Intersection of Greenbrier and Washington St. East:

- 1) Trim or remove bushes at corner of state parking lot near 7-11
  - 2) Put a "Stop Here on Red" sign on the road for traffic coming downhill and traveling right on Washington Street, East
  - 3) Put up a sign "Yield to Pedestrians in Walkway" signs.
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Improved pedestrian acces from Holz School to the Wallace Hartman Preserve (Hampton Rd./S. Fuffner)

Put in parking and bike racks at the entrance of the Wallace Hartman Preserve at the end of Adrian Road.

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Close down two lanes of the Boulevard in accordance with Riverfront Dev. Plan in order to allow more pedestrian usage.

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The intersection of Oakwood and Tennis Club Road needs improvement with regard to safety for pedestrians and for improved traffic conditions. This is a major intersection for school traffic from three different schools. Lewis Payne 549-1826

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The State DOT should develop a long term plan for improved pedestrian usage from the intersection of 119 and Oakwood Rd. all the way to the end of Connell Rd. Lewis Payne 549-1826

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From Oakwood Rd. to Bridge (you have on map), Bridge to Loudon Hgts to Connell, down Connell to Loudon Gate to Kan. St. Forrest. (Many bikes use this way to Kan. St. Forrest).  
Mary Jean Davis

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Suggestion: The new bridge currently under design to connect Jefferson Road to Dudley Farms should incorporate a wide bicycle lane and access to the trails on Trace Fork of Davis Creek. Also, please check the alignment of the "existing" trail in Little Creek Park. It appears to roughly follow the County Road Trail – but alignment is incorrect.

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Pave the shoulders and berm on Connell Road for easier access for pedestrians.  
Keep Greenbrier Street pedestrian friendly by keeping the shoulders clean of debris.

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Very supportive of this plan. Biker, father of 3. Support this life enhancing and healthy project.  
What can I do? Please call. Thanks. Michael H. Foster, 605 Briarwood Road, Charleston, WV  
25314, (304) 343-9496

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The Kanawha Trestle Project has been talked of for a long time and nothing has happened. I  
am reminded of Alice and the White Queen – “I am yesterday, I am tomorrow, but NEVER I AM  
TODAY!”

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To cross McCorkle Ave. – westbound side from the south side, bridge access is extremely  
difficult because of the continuous flow of west bound traffic. JF Lacaria – [jayeph@aol.com](mailto:jayeph@aol.com)

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Patrick St. Bridge to the railroad overpass on McCorkle – westbound – is severely compromised  
by debris on the roadway and sidewalk. JF Lacaria – [jayeph@aol.com](mailto:jayeph@aol.com)

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I think the improvements are much needed. It would encourage outdoor activity for more  
people. Need to connect the surrounding areas.

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#### Kanawha Blvd. – Center Building

This area – the sidewalk around the Center Building is a prime location for serious accidents.  
Why is it not addressed in your study?

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#### South Charleston – End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave to Patrick St. Bridge

This area, which includes the sidewalk beneath the bridge, to the Patrick St. Bridge, receives  
numerous cyclists and pedestrians. The sidewalk along Rt. 60 (from end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. Bridge to  
Patrick St. Bridge) is covered with sand, glass and rock debris. This area should be regularly  
cleaned. Plus, the railroad crossing beneath the bridge is a hazard.



### Comments Received Via Mail/Email After the PIC

I hope these will be relevant –

- 1) MacCorkle Ave. thru Charleston is on the Coal Resource Transportation Network list, meaning it can accept 120,000 LB. haulers. This was a little known fact until a steady stream of such traffic began in 2007. Mining operations south of Charleston sent haulers north on Corridor G, then east on MacCorkle Ave. en route to the distribution facility near Marmet. This traffic is not compatible with any other human activity, particularly bikers and pedestrians. Apparently, in a “Behind the Scene” discussion, the industry responded to community complaints by verbally agreeing to redirect the traffic. This may have been to avoid a precedent-setting successful effort to delist the road. But it is no guarantee against future traffic resuming. For a variety of reasons, the road must be delisted.
- 2) The Kanawha Trestle Rail Trail must become a reality as soon as possible. It would serve as the keystone for the promotion of all other secondary biking and pedestrian projects. It would be the most effective tool in providing fitness, recreation and viable alternative transportation opportunities.
- 3) The MacCorkle Ave. corridor thru Kanawha City is not pedestrian friendly. At 40<sup>th</sup> Street, here is an example of a mid-block crossing which allows walkers/bikers to safely cross two lanes at a time using a comfortable median area. At other blocks, the left-turn lanes could be shortened to create similar conditions. Perhaps some trail blocks at potentially high foot traffic areas could be considered: 3800 Blk. (Rite Aid); 4300 Blk. (Horace Mann Middle School); 4800 Blk. (Chamberlain, St. Agnes Elementary Schools); 5000 Blk. (\*Foodland); 5100 Blk. (Drug Emporium).

Sincerely, Russ Young, Member, Charleston Municipal Planning Commission; Kanawha Trestle Rail Trail Committee; Kanawha City Comm. Assoc. B.O.D.

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Ms Delvecchio,

I was disappointed to see the majority of proposed projects are in Charleston or serve to connect Charleston to surrounding cities. I understand that the largest population base is in Charleston. However, I believe the heavy concentration of proposed projects there is more of an indicator of the number of Charleston officials attending the charette, who believe their city is "entitled" to more than any other city, town or community in the state. In addition, surrounding towns and communities have fewer resources to dedicate to bicycle/pedestrian issues, after all, they don't steal \$2 a week from people employed in their community.

I am limiting the rest of my comments to those projects I have personal knowledge of. They may indicate issues which also affect other projects.

Items 10 and 11 on the list of Improvement locations address bicycle deficiencies only. Both of these locations should address both or pedestrian only issues rather than bicycle only issues. Both of these locations should be eligible for funding under the Safe Routes to School program.

Numerous children walk to the schools and church located along this stretch of Kanawha Terrace (Item 10). The deteriorated, inadequate and missing sidewalks make this dangerous.



Similarly the potential for children and residents in the Tornado community to walk to school, church and the post office is limited by the absence of sidewalks along Coal River Road (Item 11). Side streets in this unincorporated community have a low ADT and low speeds. There is seldom a problem walking on them. Coal River Road however has much larger number of vehicles traveling at speeds in excess of the posted speed limits. This makes it very dangerous to walk on the road and the absence of a sidewalk or paved shoulder eliminates any other option. Residents must drive there children the four blocks to school and must drive similar distances to the post office. Then they drive home and walk the side streets for exercise.

Finally, I noticed the proposal to develop bicycle/pedestrian connections between and among the multitude of privately developed housing sub-divisions in the Teays Valley area disappeared from the list of projects. While this proposal would be more difficult to implement and complete connections may never be possible, I felt it was one of the more valuable and innovative ideas to be generated during the Putnam County charette.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my views on this list of projects.

Jim Hudson  
Community Development Specialist  
Building 5, Room 863  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E.  
Charleston, WV 25305-0430

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Thank you for talking with me on both nights of the recent presentation.

I would like to know if the documents you provided me are available in .PDF format.  
I plan to forward the files to fellow riders who could not attend the meetings for their comments.

I am currently training for a 150 mile charity ride from Charleston to Buckhannon.  
After my weekend rides I will offer you my further comments about each section I travel.

Thanks again,  
Austin Amos  
General Manager  
[www.conveyweigh.com](http://www.conveyweigh.com)  
Office: 304-201-2354  
Mobile: 304-545-6505  
Fax: 304-755-3883

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Dear Mr. Callahan:

I believe it was on Monday while reviewing the Charleston Newspapers on line that I noticed that public meetings regarding; bicycle and pedestrian planning were to be held yesterday and today. I was able to spend a few minutes at last evening's meeting in South Charleston and hope to attend the meeting this evening at West Teays Elementary School.



Please accept this letter as my "comment card" for the information I received last night. Also please note that while the following comments focus on my primary field of interest (i.e. bicycles) many of the comments would closely mirror my thoughts regarding pedestrians. And due to time constraints I am only responding to the documents I received at last night's meeting.

**Problem #1 Time Frame** - The various pieces of information consistently refer to data collected between 2003 and 2006. But what does this mean? Does it mean the difference between the two dates or three 1/ear's worth of data (i.e.  $2006-2003=3$ )? Or does it mean only the intervening years between 2003 and 2006 or two year's worth of data (i.e.: the data for:2004 & 2005)? Or perhaps it means the data for each of the years or four year's worth of data (i.e. 2003, 2004, 2005 & 2006)? Until otherwise indicated, I will presume that four year's data was examined.

And what is meant by a year? Is it a calendar year, the state's fiscal year, the federal fiscal year or some other time frame?

The Plan would be stronger if the date was stated something similar to: "Data from January 1, 2003 through December 31, 2006 was examined."

**Problem #2 Agency Contact Information** - I was given the URL for the agency's website ([www.wvregion3.org](http://www.wvregion3.org)) and I spent a few minutes visiting this fine site, However I would like to suggest that it would be helpful to list the agency's address and phone number on the initial (i.e. H.OME) page perhaps as part of the "HEADER" or at least in the "FOOTER" Much time was lost while searching through the various pages while trying to discover this information.

In a similar fashion all items that are distributed to the public should contain the Agency's contact information. People need to know how to reach you if you want their input. None of the items I received last night had this information. That's a small problem easily corrected.

**Problem #3 Limited Data Source** - The data presented yesterday evening appears to rely on information from the Traffic Record Information System (TRIS) maintained by the Traffic Engineering Office of the West Virginia Division of Highways which obtains the data primarily If not exclusively from "Police Reports" submitted by the various law enforcement agencies throughout West Virginia. I suspect that many, many pedestrian and bicycle accidents, especially those not involving motorists, go unreported via submission of "official" Police Reports.

Your Plan may benefit greatly from an exanimation of Trauma Registries maintained by our local hospital Emergency Rooms, a review of records available from local Clinics, and a survey of local family physicians for those pedestrian and bicycle injuries not involving law enforcement agencies,



Problem # 4 **Limited Depth of Data** - Nothing is presented to help define the specifics of the accidents, for instance when thinking of bicycles, are the incidents happening to youth or older riders? Are the incidents during the day or evening? Are the incidents located in a "home" neighborhood or are they as a result of commuting between two points? Did the day of the week, month, weather conditions, etc. have an impact?

'With such a limited number of pedestrian and bicycle crashes, the plan would be significantly strengthened by an in depth analysis of each incident.

Problem #5 **Present the Data / Don't Interpret or Sensationalize It** - The data is what it is. It should not be presented in a fashion to generate only support for the Plan. To do so only leads to my belief that the Plan was decided and then data was presented in such a manner as to only support the conclusions already determined, For instance the number of bicycle crashes in Kanawha County in 2002 was twenty-five (25) and in 2003 was twenty (20) for it 20% reduction. Of course this does not support the premise of the plan and it is perhaps intentionally not included. Indeed even the raw data is not even included so that a reader might draw informed conclusion(s).

The Plan would be significantly stronger if all raw data was presented and not just selected items that support the Plan's conclusions. Indeed from the above example of a 20% reduction, the Plan should include a discussion of why any future action is necessary. An examination of all sides must be fairly presented before conclusions are made.

Problem #6 **Avoid the use of Percents when Presenting Data** – Whenever data is limited or numbers are low, authors of plans habitually resort to the use of percentages to support conclusions already made. For instance it sounds significant that South Charleston had 5% of the bicycle crashes in Kanawha County. But is it really? Five percent of the 85 bicycle crashes is only 4.25. And the 4.25 is for a four year period of 2003-2006 or slightly over 1 crash per year.

Is the average of one crash per year in South Charleston and Dunbar, the average of three crashes per year in St. Albans, the average of three crashes per year on Washington Street in Charleston, or even the average of 10 crashes per year in all other areas of Charleston a problem? A thorough discussion on both side of this and similar issues should be presided.

Problem # 7 **Data Doesn't Support Improvement Locations** – Acknowledging that there may be additional information available that was not provide at yesterday evening's meeting, there is nothing in the materials I received connecting the data to the selected Improvement locations. For instance from the above there is little presented to justify that the average on one bicycle crash in South Charleston and the average of three bicycle crashes in St. Albans for a total of approximately four bicycle crashes per year for the inclusion of Improvement Location #20 (McCorkle Avenue from St. Albans,



Jefferson, South Charleston). Similarly there is no data presented which supports the inclusion Improvement Location #19 (Davis Creek Road from Corridor G to Kanawha State Forest. This type of omission can also be said of the other improvement locations.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) Include contact information of everything the Agency distributes as a courtesy to those who wish comment on your activities. Make it easy for the public to be a part of your activities.
- 2) Secure more data to support the Plan. The summary of the limited data available from the Division of Highways is inadequate.
- 3) Present all data available. Do not exclude information which may not support the hope for outcome.
- 4) Realize that after a thorough examination of all the facts that the conclusion of the Plan may not support any actions or expenditures of time, energy or money.
- 5) Clearly identify the actual reasons for the inclusion of each Improvement Location. If the Improvement Location is not supported with crash data or other viable information as part of this plan, then why is it included? Be specific.

I apologize for being so lengthy but I am truly interested in improving the safe bicycling opportunities available in the Kanawha valley. And I sincerely believe any improvement begins with sound planning. I support your efforts and if I can be of any assistance please contact me.

Jim Grate, (304) 744-6126, jimgrate@verizon.net

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"Wilson, Bruce" <[BruceWilson@courtsww.org](mailto:BruceWilson@courtsww.org)> 5/22/2008 3:10 PM  
<<trailsandgreenways.url>>

The Trails & Greenways discussion at Yahoogroups:

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/trailsandgreenways/?yguid=50187747>

Many interesting essays about cycling, livable cities, and sustainable development: [www.bicyclefixation.com](http://www.bicyclefixation.com)

Another good site: <http://bicycledriving.org/>; especially  
<http://bicycledriving.org/bikeways/bike-lanes>,  
<http://bicycledriving.org/bikeways/bike-paths>,  
<http://bicycledriving.org/bikeways/sidepaths>

Some good information here: <http://bicycleuniverse.info/index.html>

Good discussions of bike related matters here:

<http://www.bikecoalition.com/> and here [www.bikeforums.net](http://www.bikeforums.net)



Lots of good links from here: <http://www.ibike.org/>

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I was most interested in seeing your presentation at the South Charleston Public Library on the evening of 20MAY08. The issue of making the area more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly is something on which I have thought a great deal and done a great deal of reading and research. Hitherto I have had no opportunity to present my ideas on the matter to anyone in a position to give them consideration.

The League of American Bicyclist's Bicycle Friendly Communities Program lists five criteria on which a community is rated towards such designation:

- *Engineering*
- *Education*
- *Encouragement*
- *Enforcement*
- *Evaluation*

Your plans are long on the first (Engineering) but give scant treatment to the other four. I realize that you are not necessarily planning to have Charleston be designated a Bicycle Friendly Community; nevertheless, the program presents a useful framework.

I would like first to address the Engineering aspect. As a transportational cyclist—I do not own a car any longer, as I found that I was using it too seldom to make car ownership financially sensible—I have cycled from Dunbar to Malden on one side of the river and from Kanawha City to St. Albans on the other.

On the Kanawha City-St. Albans side, the most problematic part of the trip is from the Patrick Street Bridge through to South Charleston. Where the road goes over the humpbacked bridge, one can slip down one side, over the bridge, and then through back streets to the Mound, and from there one can cycle either on the main drag or (preferably) on secondary streets and allies parallel to it. The only place where it becomes problematic is the area opposite the cemetery, especially eastbound.

Going eastbound from South Charleston to the Patrick Street Bridge is highly problematic; there is no shoulder, and the motor traffic is so fast and heavy that, especially for an inexperienced or timid rider, it is quite frightening. The railroad right-of way is broad enough that a cycle path could be constructed between the tracks and the road. Indeed, I have ridden that way several times; I suppose that, technically, it is trespassing, but I would plead 'necessity', as the road is not really safe for cyclists. (I have a mountain bike and a hybrid; the area is too rough and rutted for a road bike.) If one is eastbound, getting across the street to the foot of the Patrick Street Bridge is difficult, particularly during rush hour, and even more so at night.



I would suggest that the trestle conversion be given high priority, as there is no provision for non-motorized crossing of the River between Patrick Street and the South Side Bridge, and both of those are less than comfortable for that purpose.

Further down, getting into the Kanawha City area, things are easier until one gets to the Kanawha Landing area (where Lowes, Kroger, and the like are located.) There are wide shoulders which are, in effect, bike lanes already, and after Porter Road one may (if eastbound) cross over to the Columbia Gas parking lot and hence to the Frontage Road, the University of Charleston campus, and then to the designated bike way or other secondary roads parallel to the main drag; alternatively, if one continues down the main drag to where the baseball stadium used to be, the shoulders continue. However, the road narrows at that point to such an extent that aggressive drivers can make cycling there somewhat nerve-wracking. Beyond there, if one is eastbound, one can take a right down past the municipal tennis courts to Venable Avenue. (This is somewhat better than the designated bikeway if one's goal is a business on the main drag. One can generally see down the cross-streets to landmarks, even if one does not keep track of the street numbers.) I would suggest that a cycle-path be constructed across the former baseball field to Venable.

Beyond Kanawha Landing, there are no shoulders and again the traffic can become intimidating.

On the other side, the Kanawha River Path is a wonderful resource, but it has certain problems.

On the Patrick Street end, getting from the end of the path to either the bridge or to Patrick Street (assuming that one is heading towards Dunbar) can be difficult. The traffic coming around the corner under the bridge comes around a blind curve, and it can be difficult to get across the Patrick St./Kanawha Boulevard connector. Really, the best place to cross is several yards closer to the bridge than where the pavement ends; you can see already a worn place in the grass which pedestrians and cyclists have made---would it be that difficult to extend the path's pavement that far?

I do not use the lower path much, as for cyclists moving from the lower to the upper path is difficult; if one has great upper-body strength one can carry one's machine up the various steps—but many are not strong enough to do it, and even if one can, it is awkward. Once one descends to the lower path at the Patrick Street end, one cannot easily ascend until Magic Island. Then, having ascended to cross the Elk River, there is no way back down to the lower path for the cyclist.

From the Elk down to the end of the path, the only problematic place for the cyclist is just beyond Haddad Park where the Union Building forms a barrier. It is not impossible to pass, but it is difficult, the path being very narrow and visibility around the building poor; many is the time when, eastbound, I have nearly collided with pedestrians or fellow-cyclists at that point.



The other end of the path is problematic because it *just stops*. There is nowhere to go. Crossing the road at that point is difficult. It is possible, if one is continuing eastward, to ride on the Boulevard, but at certain times of the day that can be intimidating. Daniel Boone Park and the Moose Club could be good destinations if the path could be extended so far.

The biggest problem with the Kanawha Path is getting on or off it to or from the streets of the city. The cuts in the barrier are seldom aligned to the streets, and the fact that for a great deal of the length the lane of the Boulevard nearest the river is non-stop makes crossing getting to or from the path difficult, especially for walkers who may not be swift and nimble and for cyclists.

I mentioned that I have sometimes ridden to Malden. To do so, one crosses the Boulevard to Piedmont Road and rides it down to where it ends at Port Amherst. One then gets on the highway and rides to the Malden exit. This is possible, but except during some low-traffic time like early on a Saturday or Sunday morning, it can be intimidating. Would it not be possible to build a path along the rail line from Port Amherst to Malden?

On the other end, going from Patrick Street to Dunbar, the only problem is getting from Dunbar proper to West Virginia State University. Roselawn Drive, the main drag there, is not good for bicycles, and the secondary roads off of it are a maze of cul-de-sacs and other dead ends. The only way I have discovered of getting onto the WVSU campus from the backstreets of Dunbar is by the 'emergency egress route.' This is a hard-packed gravel lane, about wide enough for one car, which goes from the back of the campus, between the golf course and the railroad, coming out in a Dunbar back street from which one can easily work ones way through the town to either the bridge (if one wants to go over to St. Albans/Spring Hill) or the road to Charleston. *However*, the University usually keeps the gates locked. If the could be persuaded to open the gates and designate it as a bike path, cycling might become more attractive an option to students and faculty at the University.

Another area recognized as problematic for cyclists and pedestrians is the west end of Washington Avenue. Repair of the sidewalks there—many of them are in such shape that walking on them would be a good way to get a broken ankle—would certainly make them more attractive to pedestrians, as well as cutting back some of the vegetation and repairing the retaining walls particularly on the uphill side. I don't see that much can be done to make that part of Washington more friendly to bicycles; the road is simply too narrow and too heavily used by motor vehicles, with no room for expansion.

Coonskin Park, the crown jewel of the area park system, is nominally accessible by bicycle through the Elk River Path. However, the path is steep and in many places muddy and is frequently blocked by fallen trees and other debris. Maintenance should be more aggressive. Access to the bottom of the path is not easy, as Slack



Street/Barlow Drive is somewhat challenging for less experienced cyclists. The abandoned railway line that goes along Slack Street/Barlow Drive, and then parallel to the current path, but at a much easier grade, should be given strong consideration for conversion to a bicycle/pedestrian path.

While we are on the subject of Engineering, I would like to address the issue of bike lanes. Over on this forum: <http://www.bikeforums.net/forumdisplay.php?f=8> and this Yahoo group: <http://sports.groups.yahoo.com/group/chainguard/> there has been a considerable amount of discussion, citing studies from both the US and Europe, and the consensus is that bike lanes are actually more dangerous than bikes and cars sharing the road. This seems counterintuitive, but I will summarize why.

The danger comes mostly at intersections with cars wishing to make right turns or bicycles wishing to make left turns.

If there is a right turn lane at a given intersection, what usually happens is that the bike lane vanishes and the right turn lane takes its place. What is a cyclist who does not wish to make a right turn do? There are two alternatives:

1. Go on from the right turn lane, not making a right turn. This violates the general principle that bicycles are vehicles and are bound by the same Rules of the Road that bind other vehicles.
2. Cross the turn lane into the straight-through lane, then back to the bike lane afterwards. I am sure that you can see the dangers of that.

If there is no designated right-turn lane and the bike lane continues up to the intersection, this presents a danger when the motorist makes a right turn and crosses the bike lane. This sort of accident, called the 'right cross' is said to be the second most common car-bike accident. (The most common is said to be the 'door prize', when the cyclist is riding past a line of parked cars and the occupant of one of the cars opens a door right into the cyclist's path.)

And what if the cyclist wants to make a left turn? If there is no separate bike lane, and the cars and bicycles share the same lane, the cyclist sticks out his left hand in the normal signal in right-side-driving countries for a left turn, then works his way to the center lane and makes the turn. With a cycle lane, the cyclist must wait until he gets to the intersection and then swing across all lanes of traffic. This can result in the third most common form of bike-car collision, a called the 'left hook.')

In the words of John Forester, "Cyclists fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles." <http://www.johnforester.com/>

This leads me to discuss the other factors which the League uses: Education, Enforcement, Encouragement, and Evaluation.



From the West Virginia Code:

***§17C-11-2. Traffic laws apply to persons riding bicycles.***

*Every person riding a bicycle upon a roadway shall be granted all of the rights and shall be subject to all of the duties applicable to the driver of a vehicle by this chapter, except as to special regulations in this article and except as to those provisions of this chapter which by their nature can have no application.*

This means that bicycles have as much right to use the road as cars (except on the Interstate and other places where they are specifically forbidden) and that cyclists are bound by the Rules of the Road as much as cars.

Many people, on both sides of the equation, do not seem to know this.

Many motorists seem to think that cyclists do not belong on the roads because they are not licensed and pay no fees, which pay for the road. (In fact, gas taxes, automobile licensing and registration fees, and the like pay for less than 40% of what is needed to build and maintain the roads; the rest comes from general revenues.)

Conversely, many cyclists seem not to think that the rules apply to them. I have seen many cyclists riding on sidewalks (forbidden by the Charleston City Code, and I suspect by other cities as well), riding against the traffic (either on the left side of two-way streets or wrong way on one-way streets), veering back and forth across the roads without signaling, riding at night without lights, riding two and three people on one bike, running stop signs, and otherwise engaging in behaviors both dangerous and illegal. It seems that there are a great many riders out there who do not know how to drive a bicycle. (They may know how to *ride* one, but they do not know how to *drive* one. The distinction is critical.)

I have never seen or heard of any of these behaviors earning a ticket or even a warning from the police.

Any plan to make us a more bicycle-friendly community requires Enforcement and Education as well as Engineering. Facilities are good, but motorists must be educated about cyclists' rights, cyclists must be educated in their responsibilities. And motorists who infringe on cyclists' rights as well as cyclists who do not cycle in accordance with their responsibilities should be issued tickets, or warnings at least.

Concerning the last two 'E's, Encouragement and Evaluation, I will say little, as they are matters of which I have little knowledge. Doubtless you have access to marketing professionals who can cover the Encouragement side of it, and I am sure that you know all about Evaluation.

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Regina,

It was good to meet you and other members of the Baker Corporation at the public comment event in South Charleston. As an avid bicycler, and relatively new bicycle commuter, I appreciate all the advance work that you are doing to identify and prepare Charleston's new bicycle corridors. Recently driving with my bike to Fort Worth, TX for business, I had the opportunity to bicycle on Fort Worth's Trinity Trail system and the less formal street routes prepared by Fort Worth's bicycle community. Along the way I also experienced the wonderful bike routes in Little Rock, AK, including the "Big Dam Bridge." These metropolitan areas, along with Minneapolis, MN offer excellent models for Charleston. Internationally, there is much to learn from China. Although I have never experienced them from the seat of a bicycle, I have seen and walked along the pedestrian/bicycle systems in Beijing, Shanghai, Suzhou, and Nanjing, China - all models of excellent proactive planning. My experiences in Bangalore Mumbai, and Delhi, India represent more of the reactive options of route and corridor planning, resulting in less desirable conclusions.

Please allow me to share some thoughts arising from yesterday's presentations and daily riding.

- 1) Shared ped/bike space: bikeways need enough room to allow bikes to travel 15-20 mph, pedestrians need to be protected from this. I have not found lane marks to be very helpful. Most helpful are warning signs, some bicycle speed limits, and a 14ft pathway (Little Rock). Too narrow shared space is well illustrated on Charleston's Kanawha Boulevard, where faster bicyclers are forced to move off the asphalt sidewalk and into the auto lanes to maintain speed.
- 2) Paving the shoulders of bike corridors: One of the proposed bike corridors is Route 62, West Washington Street, from "Lock Six" to Cross Lanes. This roadway does not include paved shoulders from Big Tyler Road to Shamrock Village, Cross Lanes. I would suggest that the expansion of the paved surface be staged if it cannot be undertaken in one upgrade. In this case the most critical portion, in my opinion, is the crown of the hill. Here, ascending bikes are going the slowest, and the sight line for the traffic is the shortest, this is especially true at the intersection of Dutch Hollow Road. For descending, most bikes will move into the roadway in order to feel safe going 30 mph+, and to avoid debris that accumulates on the shoulders. Across WV, our mountain roads were upgraded in stages by adding passing lanes on uphill grades. Doing the same for bike corridors by paving shoulders in strategically selected spots would be even simpler, it seems to me.
- 3) High auto traffic keeps road surfaces clean: Bicyclers value highly the way that road surfaces are cleaned of glass, metal, and rocks by high auto traffic. This must be taken into account when planning paved shoulders. Planners for bikeways along roads like Corridor G need to consider carefully the placement of rumble cuts in the shoulder pavement as warning devices for autos. Often this placement forces bicyclers to choose between the auto lanes which are clean, or



the curb side of the shoulder that is littered with glass, metal, and other debris.  
(Do I take my chances with traffic, or with a flat tire)

- 4) City Streets: I would suggest for consideration the establishment of some marked bike lanes beginning to appear in and around Charleston. These would not necessarily need to be on high traffic streets, i.e., Kanawha Blvd., Washington St. E., but could be on less traveled parallel tracks, i.e., Quarrier-Randolph, Central Ave. Kanawha City has led the way in establishing bikeways on their residential streets. When I ride these pathways, I have an increased sense of confidence that motorists know they are sharing the roads with bicycles.

I hope these thoughts are helpful. Again, thank you for all the advance work you are doing. I hope I live long enough to see the fruits of your labor.

J. F. Lacaria, 5104 Tamarock Dr., Cross Lanes, WV 25313, [jayeph@aol.com](mailto:jayeph@aol.com)