

## **Bike bills get warm reception at City Hall hearing**

Michael Dresser, *Baltimore Sun*, May 6, 2010

A package of bills intended to promote bicycling in Baltimore received a generally favorable reception from a City Council's Community Development subcommittee at a well-attended hearing this afternoon.

For the most part, city agencies were supportive of the five-bill package, though some suggested amendments. Several dozen bicyclists attended to show support and to offer suggestions for relatively minor tweaks to be bills.

Subcommittee Chairman William Cole said one of the measures, a bill that would require certain developments to include a minimum number of secure places to park bicycles, had to be pulled from the agenda because it involves zoning issues that have to be advertised in advance. He said that bill will be rescheduled for a subsequent hearing.

The subcommittee agreed to schedule a work session to consider the specific language of amendments to the remaining four bills.

One issue that must be dealt with is how to treat motor scooters, which under state law might have to be given access to lanes that are also open to bicycles. Councillwoman Mary Pat Clarke, sponsor of the package, expressed concerns about writing explicit language into the city ordinance allowing such vehicles in those lanes. The city Law Department agreed to draft language addressing her concerns while complying with state law.

The testimony sometimes wandered off the topic of the bills but was nevertheless interesting. Joan Stato of Fells Point used the occasion to raise concerns about the new bus/bike lanes on Pratt and Lombard streets.

"I don't know who came up with the idea of bicycles and buses sharing a lane, but it's crazy," she said.

Carol Schultz of Elsrode Avenue testified that bicycle-friendly policies would attract young professionals to live in the city and help low-income Baltimoreans get to work without the cost of a monthly bus pass.

"It benefits everyone," she said.

Clarke ended the hearing with an admonition to the bicyclists in attendance: "Remember to wear helmets and be safe."