

**CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL 09-0175R
(Resolution)**

Introduced by: Councilmembers Clarke, Henry, Middleton, Branch, Kraft, Young, Reisinger,
Holton, Conaway, Spector, Welch, Curran, D'Adamo

Introduced and read first time: December 10, 2009

Assigned to: Community Development Subcommittee

REFERRED TO THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES: Police Commissioner, Mayor's Office of Criminal
Justice, Department of Transportation, Commission on Sustainability

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

1 A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning

2 **Informational Hearing - Baltimore Police Department - Police and Cyclists**

3 FOR the purpose of inviting the Baltimore Police Commissioner to report to the City Council on
4 the Police Department's procedures for responding to incidents involving cyclists and the
5 Department's general approach to the bicycling community.

6 **Recitals**

7 In response to both improved cycling infrastructure in the City and individuals' desires to
8 make use of a healthy, inexpensive, and environmentally friendly transportation option, bicycle
9 use in Baltimore has been growing in popularity. Unfortunately, some of these cyclists are
10 occasionally involved in traffic accidents or other incidents that require police involvement.

11 When traffic incidents involving bicycles occur, cyclists frequently report that police officers
12 responding at the scene are unfamiliar with issues specific to bicycle involved accidents or that
13 officers are reluctant to file a report on accidents involving cyclists. Cyclists have also reported
14 that many officers seem unaware of all of the laws governing bicycle operation, sometimes
15 requiring riders to operate their bicycles in an unlawful manner or objecting to legal behaviors.

16 Together, these concerns have led to a too widespread perception in the cycling community
17 that the Baltimore Police Department is not responsive to its needs. This perception needs to be
18 addressed before it undermines the City's efforts to promote cycling as a way to improve the
19 health and safety of Baltimore's citizens.

20 Baltimore's 2006 *Bicycle Master Plan*, which guides the efforts to make the City more bike
21 friendly, included a number of specific measures that could be taken to improve the relationship
22 between the Police Department and the cycling community. These recommendations included:

- 23 ♦ training all officers about bicycle safety laws and the issues faced by on-street bicyclists;
24 ♦ providing special training to some officers who would then respond to bicycle involved
25 accidents;

EXPLANATION: Underlining indicates matter added by amendment.
~~Strike out~~ indicates matter deleted by amendment.

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- 1 ♦ increasing the emphasis on enforcing bicycle safety laws and identifying problem spots
2 for cyclists; and
- 3 ♦ systematically filing reports on bicycle involved crashes to identify trends and find
4 problem areas that can be addressed through improved safety programs.

5 In order to ensure the success of the City’s efforts to promote cycling, it is increasingly
6 important that, as the number of cyclists grows, all stake holders be on the same page and aware
7 of each other’s concerns. A public discussion with the Police Department about its relations
8 with the cycling community at this juncture would therefore be helpful to the broader
9 implementation of the *Bicycle Master Plan*.

10 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE,** That the
11 Baltimore Police Commissioner is invited to appear before the City Council to report on the
12 Police Department’s procedures for responding to incidents involving cyclists and what actions
13 the Department can take to improve relations with the cycling community by assisting in
14 implementing the *Bicycle Master Plan*.

15 **AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** That a copy of this Resolution be sent to the Mayor, the
16 Baltimore Police Commissioner, the Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice, the
17 Mayor’s Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Mayor’s Legislative Liaison to the City Council.