



City of Baltimore

City Council
City Hall, Room 408
100 North Holliday Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Legislation Text

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INTRODUCTORY*

CITY OF BALTIMORE
COUNCIL BILL R
(Resolution)

Introduced by: Councilmember Clarke

A RESOLUTION ENTITLED

A COUNCIL RESOLUTION concerning
Informational Hearing - Baltimore Police Department - Police and Cyclists

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

Recitals

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

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

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

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

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

* increasing the emphasis on enforcing bicycle safety laws and identifying problem spots for cyclists; and

* systematically filing reports on bicycle involved crashes to identify trends and find problem areas that can be addressed through improved safety programs.

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

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

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

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