As the newly elected chair of Morgantown’s Municipal Bicycle Board, I want to commend the DA staff for your March 9th editorial “Becoming bicycle-friendly in W.Va.” The $1.1 million grant for Charleston will go a long way to promoting cycling in their city and should be celebrated accordingly.

The heavy traffic congestion and deteriorating air quality in our area fuel widespread desire for increased cycling infrastructure in spite of Morgantown’s topography. Just look for the saddlebags – you’ll see bicycle commuters everywhere. Our residents and city officials recognize the challenges and work in tandem to address them.

The bicycle board is comprised of voting members from every city neighborhood and the surrounding community – as well as ex-officio representatives from each transportation related department within the municipal government and even within WVU. Established in 2006 but with roots in the 1970’s, the board advocates for and implements cycling-focused transportation facilities and educational campaigns all in the name of making Morgantown more hospitable to cyclists.

In 2012, after a multi-year effort with stakeholders throughout the area, Morgantown was recognized as West Virginia’s first (and currently only) bicycle-friendly community as defined by the League of American Bicyclists. The League grants this designation for four years and we are currently in the process of reapplying to extend the recognition.

Spring and early summer will witness the installation of covered bicycle racks at many bus stops. Further, we will install a network of on-street lane markings and signage designed to better communicate updated cycling laws that no longer require cyclists to ride as far to the right as practicable. These projects are all results of grant funding partially matched by the municipality. We regularly hold Confident City Cycling classes through CPASS for those interested in learning safe techniques of riding with traffic.

We were recently approved to seek funding for construction of a nearly three mile long multi-use path and bike lanes to serve the growing number of residents east of WV705 through the federal Transportation Alternatives Program. These programs add to a growing list of amenities available to Morgantown cyclists including bike racks on 100% of city buses as well as our extensive rail-trail network.

The enthusiasm in our local planning and engineering departments as well as our champions on city council lead me to find Morgantown one of the most bicycle-friendly places I’ve ever lived. Our history demonstrates a creativity with limited resources and a dedication to improving the environment for all transportation users. We should be proud of our designation as a bicycle friendly community.

If you’d like more information regarding these projects, classes, or even group rides please visit our website at [www.bikemorgantown.com](http://www.bikemorgantown.com). We value any input regarding Morgantown’s cycling community and would like to invite you to our monthly meetings every first Thursday from 6:30-8:30pm in the Public Safety Building on Spruce Street. We hope to see you there. Just remember – where there are ups, there are also downs!

Sincerely,

John “Drew” Gatlin

Chair, Morgantown Municipal Bicycle Board

Student, WVU – Civil and Environmental Engineering