Acceptance of Bike Month proclamation

April 19, 2011

Frank D. Gmeindl

Mr. Mayor,

On behalf of the Morgantown Municipal Bicycle Board and the Morgantown Traffic Commission, thank you for issuing this proclamation. This proclamation recognizes your and the City ‘s commitment to making Morgantown a Bicycle Friendly Community.

Almost 5 years ago, the Traffic Commission formed the Bicycle Board to advise it.

The Bicycle Board organized around a vision that all Morgantown residents can ride their bicycles safely and fearlessly anywhere, anytime for any reason. We have a goal that by 2020, 5% of all trips in and through Morgantown will be made by bicycle.

In 2007, the Bicycle Board formed a relationship with the League of American Bicyclists to learn how to become a bicycle friendly community. The LAB was founded in 1896, before there were cars on the road. Their first accomplishment was the “Good Roads Movement” that gave the US the first paved roads and that led to the FHWA. The LAB administers the Bicycle Friendly Community award.

The LAB taught us that becoming a Bicycle Friendly Community involved work in 6 areas: Education, Enforcement, Engineering, Encouragement, Evaluation and Equity.

Initially, the Bicycle Board had a few false starts trying to improve Morgantown’s bicycling infrastructure. We quickly learned that we had to build many relationships both within the City and up through the WVDOT.

The Bicycle Board expresses its gratitude to Dan Boroff, Jeff Mikorski and Terry Hough for showing us the relationships that we had to build and for providing the linkages that we needed.

Now, we also express our gratitude to Terrence Moore for making Bicycle Friendly Community achievement a priority in City staff goals and objectives.

After a few false starts trying to improve our infrastructure, the Bicycle Board decided to make Education a top priority. In 2007, most Bicycle Board members completed the LAB Traffic Skills 101 course. That same year, 2 of us earned LAB certification to teach it and we now have 5 certified instructors. WV only has 1 other instructor and we brought him along. For 4 years now, we have been teaching Confident City Cycling at the Public Safety Center and at WVU. At the website, BikeMorgantown.com you can learn about Confident City Cycling and register for the courses.

Although we had a few false starts trying to improve our infrastructure, over the past several years, we have made progress with the City and the WVDOH at correcting remarkably dangerous infrastructure defects such as holes and in-line drainage grates that can trap a bicycle’s front wheel.

The Bicycle Board continues to develop a comprehensive Morgantown Bicycling Plan to address all the 6 E’s. In the coming year, we hope to increase our emphasis in Enforcement.

In 1993, Portland Oregon decided to become a Bicycle Friendly Community. From 1993 to 2009, they succeeded in moving more than 5% of their traffic from motor vehicles to bicycles. Portland’s Mayor, Sam Adams recently stated, "for the equivalent cost of a single mile of freeway, we have a bike infrastructure."[[1]](#footnote--1)

Mayor Adams wants to triple bicycling spending[[2]](#footnote-0). In addition to reducing traffic congestion, bicycling represents $63-million for Portland’s economy[[3]](#footnote-1).

Of course, Portland is flatter than Morgantown but Pittsburgh who achieved LAB bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community status last year has achieved the nation’s 4th largest rate of bicycle mode share since 2000 by promoting the 6 Es.[[4]](#footnote-2)

For Encouragement and to kick of Morgantown Bike Month, as they have for almost 40 years, the Monongalia Bicycle Club and the Country Roads Cyclists are hosting their annual Appalachian Spring Spectacular road bicycling event. You can choose from 20, 40 and 60-mile rides through our beautiful countryside. The ride starts at the Wharf Street Parking Garage at 9 am. Registration at 8. You must wear a helmet.

In addition to being a non-polluting, healthful practical means of transportation, bicycling is also a lot of fun so the Bicycle Board encourages you to rediscover the joy and freedom of riding your bike. Morgantown Bike Month is a good time to start if you haven’t already.

1. http://bikeportland.org/2009/09/23/us-census-portland-has-record-jump-in-bike-commuting-23733 [↑](#footnote-ref--1)
2. http://bikeportland.org/2007/12/13/adams-tells-willamette-week-he-wants-to-triple-bike-funding-6183 [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
3. http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?a=120617&c=34812 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
4. <http://bike-pgh.org/blog/2010/10/01/pittsburgh-sees-206-rise-in-bicycle-commuting-since-2000-fourth-largest-increase-in-the-country/> . The bicycle mode share grew from 0.44 % in 2000 to 1.35 % in 2009. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)