

To all Councilors

Bicycle Fact Sheet

S.O.A.P. (Students Organized Against Pollution) and the local chapter of MassPIRGEast at Tufts University offer the following information as testimony to the need for development of more and better bikeways in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Bicycles are being utilized at an everincreasing rate. "There are at least 73 million bicycle riders in America, a 300% increase over the past decade" (Highway User Magazine, May, 1972). "This surge in bicycle traffic is bringing skyrocketing sales - it's a development that shows no signs of slacking off...In 1971, an estimated 8.5 million bicycles were sold (in this country) compared with the 3.7 million in 1960...For the bicycle industry, 1971 resulted in an estimated half-billion dollars in sales - including parts and accessories" (U.S. News and World Report, December 6, 1971).

"Possibly the most pivotal factor in the growing popularity of bikes, industry officials have pointed out, was the development of the ten-speed bike. This technical advance created a huge adult market by making the steepest grades easy to climb, and consequently the bicycle a practical vehicle" (U.S. News and World Report, December 6, 1971).

Bicycle commuting has been cited as directly combatting four major problem areas in the urban environment: 1) traffic congestion; 2) noise pollution; 3) parking space hardships; and 4) air pollution (Thomas Reid, Congressional Record, April 16, 1970). In addition, bicycles are inexpensive to purchase, cheap to maintain, non-polluting, fast, highly mobile, and good for one's health. Dr. Paul Dudley White, a leading advocate of exercise programs in America, cites the following specific benefits of bicycling: "It is an aid to good muscle tone, much needed by the American people today. It aids the circulation and thereby the heart...it aids the lungs...it aids our digestion, and it may even protect against peptic ulcers...It aids our weight control...it probably aids our longevity...and it aids the nerves by improving sleep and maintaining equanimity and sanity" (Congressional Record, April 16, 1970).

The dramatic increase in bicycle usage in America is thus seen to be a response to quite a number of problems besetting the American public today. Unfortunately, there are also a number of problems which are inhibiting many people from taking advantage of the potential that does exist for travel by bicycle. Chief among these are: 1) the lack of safe and accessible storage facilities at destinations; 2) the long distances that must be travelled in commuting to work; and 3) problems relating to safety en route, such as the sudden opening of doors of parked cars, the lack of cooperation from motorists, and the generally high potential of sustaining injuries resulting from bicycling in the cities. (Association for Bicycle Commuting survey, 1972) In addition, bicycle commuting is thwarted by constraints of weather. Thomas Reid, in his November, 1969 article in the Washington Monthly calls attention to this problem: "One disadvantage is winter, which keeps coming back every year. Although year-round riding is feasible in the Deep South,

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It is just too cold for at least one or two months in most American cities. The only real problem, of course, is that the commuter has to arrange an alternate way to get to work during the winter months. But as soon as spring appears, he can get out his bike and start arriving at work on time again."

The development of a network of bikeways would solve the most important problem of traveling safety. To aid the bicycle commuter, as well as the recreational bicyclist in overcoming this problem, the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation recommends that 25 miles of cycling trails be built for each 50,000 urban residents (Trails for America, 1967). Therefore, for example, approximately 1500 miles of cycling trails should be created for the 3,068,000 persons in the 80 towns of the metropolitan Boston region. "Because over 820 fatalities resulted from bicycle-motor vehicle accidents in 1970, the National Safety Council recommends the construction of Class I bikeways: completely separated rights of way designated for the exclusive use of bicycles and/or pedestrians" (U.S. News and World Report, December 16, 1971). At all times, the bikeways should attempt to minimize the number of interactions and conflicts with the travel nodes. This is true whether the intent of the bikeway is primarily transportation or recreational. (California Bikeway Planning Criteria and Guidelines, April, 1972)

Actions must be taken now to promote and develop bicycling as a viable alternative for transportation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The following legislation is being considered by the Massachusetts State Legislature during the present session. We urge you to support these bills and work actively for their passage.

- H 1444 - One percent of the State Highway Fund would be allocated for bikeway development. March 26th - Transportation - 10:30 - room 443
- H 1646 - Extension of Chapter 765 funding to include highway related bike paths. March 12th - Transportation - 10:30 - room 443
- Were heard in Feb. No action has been taken yet. { - S 26 - Reimbursement under Chapter 132A to cities and towns for bike paths, etc.
- S 784 - Grants authority to towns to purchase and run coin-operated bike lockers.
- S 881 - RIGHT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BICYCLISTS March 13th - Public Safety
- S 1331 - Construction of bikeways with Chapter 90 funds. 10:30 room 473B
- S 1374 - Construction of bikeways with Chapter 81 funds.

Most important to remember is that development of this nature will require a substantial commitment of funds (e.g. 1500 miles @ an average cost of \$5,000/mile would require \$7,500,000). Legislation must be passed now that will authorize such an expenditure.

For further information and discussion, contact any of the following suggested resources:

Association for Bicycle Commuting - Randy Seldon, 262-2060
Bike Institute of America - (212)-697-6340
California Dept. of Public Works, 1120 N Street, Sacramento, 95814
Charles River Wheelmen, 131 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge
Governor's Task Force on the Environment - Marsha Brown, 727-3699
Mass. Dept. of Public Works - George Thomson, 727-5120.
Mass. Dept. of Natural Resources - Sandy Spiers, 727-3174
Metropolitan District Commission - Steve Kaiser, 727-7495
Sierra Club, 14 Beacon St., Boston, 868-9330
S.O.A.P. - Tufts University, 628-5000 ext. 617
MassPIRG East - 120 Boylston St., Boston, 423-1796

10:30 is the beginning of the meeting time - not actually when the bills will be heard.

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