



Bicycle Access Council News & Digest

www.BicycleAccess-PA.org

June / July 2017

Hello Members and Supporters of the Bicycle Access Council.

It's a beautiful day in Pennsylvania!

THE BICYCLE OCCUPANCY PERMIT HAS BEEN REPEALED AND REPLACED...

According to a PennDOT announcement. What does that mean? First, an explanation.

The Bicycle Occupancy Permit (BOP) was a formal process whereby municipalities had to sign an agreement with PennDOT listing certain conditions and responsibilities before a Bike Lane could be installed. Once all roadway engineering criteria was met, the municipality accepted responsibility to maintain the Bike Lane, including snow removal, sweeping debris, signage, etc. This was an integral part of PennDOT's Design Manual under Bicycle Facilities, Chapter 16. The wording of the former BOP process gave recourse to bicyclists if Bike Lanes were not maintained and became hazardous and sub-standard (at least in theory it did).

Philadelphia and Pittsburgh were not required to sign a BOP. Bike Lanes were installed as part of the cities' transportation plan. The suburbs of those cities did need a BOP. Advocates from both cities pushed hard to eliminate the BOP with the intended goal to expand Bike Lane networks without a cumbersome and often resisted process by municipalities. Success for those advocates was measured in miles of Bike Lanes without regard for safety standards and actual utility.

The Bicycle Access Council originally opposed the "elimination" of the BOP because of the potential for reduced safety. Many bicyclists perceive a Bike Lane as safer than interacting with motor vehicle traffic directly; however, if a Bike Lane is sub-standard or not maintained, the safety of a Bike Lane is less than having a roadway without one.

Now, according to a PennDOT Strike-Off-Letter dated May 22, 2017 to all districts, the BOP has been replaced with a **Bike Lane Request/Approval Letter** process that revises Chapter 16. The process starts with a request by a municipality that wants a Bike Lane. A significant change now involves direct oversight by the PennDOT Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator and mandatory compliance with the Bicycle & Pedestrian Checklist in the initial scoping process of any new project. It is now less likely to have a substandard Bike Lane created. Standards and guidelines are more precise even though an actual "agreement signing" is not required. All this applies to state-owned roads. It's unclear how this applies to municipal owned roads.

So, while big city advocates are claiming a "win" for their efforts, the end results are actually tougher standards. The real winners are all Pennsylvania bicyclists who will have a carefully reviewed request for Bike Lanes. Pittsburgh and Philadelphia must still coordinate Bike Lane plans with PennDOT, so not much gained there. Any separated (protected) Bike Lanes and experimental designs still need prior approval and maintenance agreements with PennDOT.

BIKE SHARE...

Arrived in York, PA, with a system ribbon cutting on June 30. Starting with fourteen bikes and three docking stations in downtown York, it utilizes the on-line application Zagster™ — usage costs are \$3 per hour, or for a \$20 annual fee, a subscriber has unlimited use of a bike for free up to two hours per trip. A fee of \$2 per hour applies after that. Hershey Medical Center launched a similar system in May with thirty bikes and six docking stations.

HERE'S A POP QUIZ FOR BICYCLISTS...

YOU are struggling to pedal up a steep grade and a motor vehicle is also moving slowly right alongside. Is it okay to hang on to any part of that vehicle to get pulled up with it? The answer will be given in the next News & Digest.

Answer to May's Pop Quiz: Wearing headphones or earbuds while bicycling?

Not only is it illegal, it's an unsafe practice to be distracted and have nearby sounds of traffic obscured. PA Vehicle Code: 75 Pa.C.S. § 3314. There are exceptions to the statute.

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Of this issue is a full page flyer to promote the Pennsylvania Share-the-Road license plate. You may print it out and distribute copies to your local bike shop, athletic store, gym, or any place bicyclists might go.

As of June 30, 2017,
00526
 plates have been issued
 by PennDOT

**Dates to Remember**

July 15 Velodrome, Trexlertown. Tandemonium "Rain Date" BAC will be there.
 Aug 20 *Lancaster Covered Bridge Classic*, 39th Year! For details, see: lancasterbikeclub.net
 Sept 4 *Labor Day Century*, Hanover Cyclers. 39th Year! See: Hanovercyclers.org
 Sept 20 *Three creek Century*. For details, see: harrisburgbicycleclub.org

Mission Statement...

The Bicycle Access Council is a non-profit advocacy organization that serves as a forum for Pennsylvania bicyclists and as an ombudsman for bicycling issues.

It is the objective of the Bicycle Access Council to make bicycling on roads throughout the Commonwealth safe, respectable and a transportation choice by educating its members and the motoring public.

All funding for the Bicycle Access Council comes from memberships and donations. Annual membership is \$20 per year. BAC does not share membership information.

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SHARE THE ROAD

PENNSYLVANIA LICENSE PLATE



To obtain a plate from PennDOT, web search Pennsylvania Share the Road plate. You will find a link to form MV-917. It's a two-page form and all information is clearly explained. Cost is \$40 one time for a new plate and registration card. Annual renewal date and fees do not change.

HELP PENNSYLVANIA BICYCLISTS BY EDUCATING MOTORISTS ONE PLATE AT A TIME!

Created and made possible by the Bicycle Access Council
www.bicycleaccess-pa.org