

How I Became A Bike Advocate...

I never planned on becoming a bicycle advocate. But then, as fate would have it, I became events director for the League of American Bicyclists. I still didn't think I would ever presume to call myself a bike advocate; my job is to plan fun events like the League's annual National Rallies of Cyclists. But it is impossible to work for an organization like the League and not be inspired by success stories from around the country and wonder what might happen in your own community—if only someone tried.

Working for the League inspired me to begin using my bicycle for transportation and touring as well as for exercise. The dearth of bicycle facilities in my area became more and more obvious, and I wanted to do something about it. While there are several bicycle advocacy groups in the state of Maryland, I wasn't ready to enlist in an all-out campaign. I just wanted to fight a couple of battles. Much to my surprise, neither one was much of a struggle.

My first triumph came nearly by accident. I attended a streetscape planning meeting in my community because of my interest in historic preservation. A recurring theme was the desire to make the town more "pedestrian-friendly," so I asked if a bicycle rack had been included in the streetscape plan. The response was, "no one has asked for one yet, but that's a great idea. It shouldn't be a problem." Easy as that. It didn't appear overnight, of course, but it was installed on schedule: an attractive rack accommodating eight bikes, placed in a secure, central location, right outside the firehouse.

My second battle wasn't quite as simple, but it certainly wasn't tough. On May 14, 1999, "Bike to Work Day," I rose to the challenge and rode my bike to the



Attractive and Durable **cycle-safe** System. Six Bicycle Lockers provide needed security at one of Maryland's commuter rail stations (MARTA).

train station. I had previously considered commuting by bike, but on my first day at the train station, a seasoned veteran warned me that a bicycle would be stripped and/or stolen if left unguarded even for a moment. I believed her, since the lot is in a remote area and there is nothing to which to lock a bike except a chain link fence. But at the end of the day, my bike was still there. That did it.

I started biking to the station more and more, and decided I wanted a bike locker.

First I e-mailed the state bike/ped coordinator, who referred me to the Mass Transit Administration (MTA) planning department. There, instead of the resistance I expected, I was told by the planner that the funding for such projects was in place but he was unable to pursue them without "customer demand." That made sense to me. For-profit companies don't waste money on products that no one wants; why should the state? I took his advice and wrote a letter to his boss, the MTA Administrator. Within a matter of weeks, the planner called me with the news that the lockers were on order and the site had been selected. Four months later, three Cycle-Safe lockers, each built to store two bicycles, were installed in a great site, protected from the rain and located right next to the platform (photo above).

It probably doesn't seem like very much to those of you who have successfully lobbied for huge bicycle projects, but these lockers are the first at any station along the Maryland commuter rail's three lines. That's no small accomplishment for a novice advocate working solo. I guess it goes to show that sometimes if you want something, all you have to do is ask.



Maureen Becker
Events Director
Bike Parking Advocate

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THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS was founded in 1880 as the League of American Wheelmen. It promotes cycling for fun, fitness and transportation, and works through advocacy and education for a bicycle-friendly America. Membership includes 35,000 individuals, 455 recreational clubs, and 50 state and local advocacy organizations. To contact the League, call (202) 822-1333 or e-mail bikeleague@bikeleague.org; website: www.bikeleague.org




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Cycle-Safe also manufactures inverted "U" bicycle racks and a wide range of useful cycle locker accessories. For additional information, please call us or visit our web site for details.

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SECURE BICYCLE PARKING...

...making cycling more visible as a form of transport!

Secure storage is fundamental to encouraging commuters to cycle. Lockers are seen more and more on railway stations, major employment sites, at government offices and at hospitals. Health promotion managers, facility managers, and transport planning officers will not persuade the public to switch to cycling unless they make provisions on their own facilities.



Six double access lockers for twelve bicycles

Smart Move for Business:

- The best answer to fears of litigation, dirt, grease, scratched walls and elevators, annoying the Fire Department, and having to pay the dry cleaning bill of someone who gets dirty from brushing up against a bike – is quality bicycle parking.
- Bicycles chained haphazardly to railings, posts or lamp columns can be dangerous and inconvenient to pedestrians, particularly visually impaired people. Proper bicycle parking can reduce this risk, as well as removing unsightly clutter.
- For the cyclist, carefully planned cycle parking facilities can reduce the damage to or theft of increasingly more expensive bicycles & bicycle components. This improved protection and security can do much to raise confidence in making journeys by cycle and also make bicycling more visible as a potential form of transport.

Quality Cycle-Safe bicycle parking keeps the bike footprint outside the building where it belongs and cyclists conduct is improved when outside storage is convenient.



Fast access makes the Cycle-Safe individual commuter locker efficient

Locker programs work best if they can be rented or assigned to specific cyclists for defined lengths of time. This allows the locker owners to target the regular, committed cyclists. Systems which rely on cyclists to provide the locks are only as secure as the lock itself. Facility managers like the fact that they can provide a service that can be booked along with the annual lease. The security aspect of having advanced payment by check or credit card record of the user, and user agreement form, makes rental profitable and easy to manage.

The highly regarded Cycle-Safe made in America, are made of advanced composite materials having a full integral lock, resistant to picking and drilling. This durability clearly demonstrates that organizations are providing a quality bicycle-parking facility, and are taking cycling and car-dependency reduction seriously.

The bicycle lockers retail between \$818 and \$1,389 per locker depending on quantity, and are distributed from Grand Rapids, Mich. by Cycle-Safe, Inc.



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