

From: [Jim Titus](#)

Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 11:01 PM

To: shaadmin@sha.state.md.us

Subject: Did SHA overrule MDOT Secretary on R4-11 Bicycle Sign?

Dear Administrator Peters

The Washington Area Bicyclists Association is happy to see that under your leadership, SHA has continued to take important steps toward building and maintaining highways that will be safe and useful for bicycle transportation. I am writing to alert you about a matter of bicycle safety where SHA's actions appears to be at odds with a decision made by the Secretary of Transportation.

Cyclists must share the road with motor vehicles on many highways, but drivers and cyclists often do not have a common set of expectations about what that means. Maryland's Driver Manual says that often "[the safest place for a cyclist to ride is in the center of the lane](#)". Yet most drivers do not realize that is so. The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices has a new sign to warn drivers that "[Bicycles May Use Full Lane](#)," known as R4-11. Last year, SHA [originally announced](#) that it would not approve that sign, because it thought that a sign that said "Bicycles May Be In Roadway", W16-1(2), would be sufficient. Many of our members wrote to the Governor and other officials, asking for that policy to be reversed. On July 1, 2011, Secretary Swain-Staley responded, and said that the initial plan to which we objected had been reversed, and that MDOT would move forward with the R4-11 signs (see attached letter). The [Washington Post](#) covered the story. Several month later, the [R4-11 sign was adopted into the Maryland MUTCD](#), but after an extensive debate, MDOT decided not to adopt the W16-1(2).

A few months ago, I heard that the SHA officials in charge of actually posting the signs disagreed with MDOT's decision favoring the R4-11 sign. They felt that the W16-1(2) sign was better, and intended to post it instead. I asked Greg Slater if it was true that the rejected "Bicycles in roadway" sign would be used instead of the R4-11 sign. Greg told me that some lower level officials may not have gotten the message, but that every official at the level of Tom Hicks and above understood that the plan was to use the R4-11 sign. That was a relief. But when I got the actual plan for signage in the Washington area, it showed that the W16-1(2) "bicycles in roadway" sign would be posted along the various roadways, and that the R4-11 sign would not be posted (or would only be posted at the DC line). I asked Greg Slater to reconcile his previous assurance with the actual plan; I got an email back from Tom Hicks seeming to say that the plan was still to use the R4-11 signs, and that there had been a misunderstanding.

Today when I got home, I saw that MD-953 in Glenn Dale had a brand new W16-1(2) sign almost every half mile. I very much appreciate the staff effort to get some signs up by bike-to-work day. The density of these signs is so great on that road that they probably will do some good. But they aren't the signs that Secretary Swaim-Staley previously promised, which was adopted into the Maryland MUTCD, which SHA and MDOT officials repeatedly told us would be posted, which we need. And SHA has not explained why the very sign that was explicitly rejected by cyclists and the Secretary for inclusion into the MUTCD is the one that is being posted instead.

I'm sure there are some extenuating circumstances that explain how this happened. We recognize that MDOT and SHA will not always agree with what we suggest. But to an outsider, it seems as if the Secretary of Transportation agreed with us, but that SHA staff overruled the Secretary for reasons that have never been communicated to either MDOT headquarters or the public. We hope you can look into this.

Best regards
Jim Titus, Board Member
Washington Area Bicyclists Association
6718 Glenn Dale Rd.
Glenn Dale, Md. 20769

From: [Melinda Peters](#)
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2012 8:23 PM
To: 'Jim Titus'
Cc: [Doug Simmons](#) ; [Gregory Welker](#) ; [Gregory Slater](#) ; [Tom Hicks](#) ; [Billy Hwang](#) ; [Valerie Burnette Edgar](#) ; [Kirk McClelland](#) ; [Michael Jackson](#) ; [Brian Young](#) ; [Cedric Ward](#) ; [Marlyn Hill](#)
Subject: RE: Did SHA overrule MDOT Secretary on R4-11 Bicycle Sign?

Dear Mr. Titus,

Thank you for conveying your concerns regarding installation of new signs to warn motorists that bicycles may be operating anywhere within a traffic lane. Several issues arose as we worked to develop guidelines for implementation of the various signs under discussion. In our haste to get some of these signs installed in time for Bike 2 Work day on May 18, the wrong signs were fabricated and installed. I apologize for the confusion and frustration that occurred because of this error. As the new signs are fabricated, our SHA sign crews will replace the errant signs with the new W16-1(3) sign, or the R4-11 sign, as the particular situation may dictate, in line with the guidelines noted below.

SHA will be using the following guidelines for all future installations:

**GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF
R4-11, R4-11(1), W16-1(3),**

AND *SHARE THE ROAD* ASSEMBLIES

R4-11



R4-11

This sign may be used in the following circumstances:

- 🚲 At entry points onto the State highway system as information about Maryland law;
- 🚲 At the beginning of a section of roadway where the lane is 13 feet or less wide (i.e. where motorists are forced to cross a double yellow line in order to pass a bicyclist with the mandated 3 foot clearance);
- 🚲 At the beginning of a section of roadway where curbside parking or other encroachments narrow the width usable for travel to 13 feet or less;
- 🚲 Additional signs may be placed at intervals of about ½ mile through the length of a lane effectively 13 feet or less wide in urban areas;
- 🚲 At the point where an existing Bike Lane or other bicycle facility ends and bicyclists are forced to share a lane with motorized vehicles;
- 🚲 In advance of locations where a significant number of left turning bicycles are expected (i.e. along Bike Routes)

R4-11(1)



An R4-11(1) sign – a modified R4-11 with a yellow **NOTICE** plate - may be used as an alternate to R4-11 on major routes as they cross major jurisdictional boundaries such as the state line or the Baltimore or D.C. city limit.

W16-1(3)



Figure 3.5

A W16-1(3) should be installed at locations where lane width and/or other conditions create an extraordinary hazard for bicyclists sharing a lane with motorized vehicles on roadways where no specific bicycle facilities such as bicycle lanes, shared lanes, or adjacent shoulders, exist.

SHARE THE ROAD assembly (W11-1 over W16-1P)



Figure 3.3
SHARE THE ROAD assembly
W11-1 and W16-1

This sign assembly, currently in some use around the State, may be used where lane width is wider than that noted for the W16-1(3), shown above, where bicyclists may be forced into a motor vehicle lane due to a very narrow or nonexistent shoulder.