

Second ciclovía will be held on Roland Avenue Oct. 31

Street closed to traffic, open for bicyclists, pedestrians

By Larry Perl
 lperl@patuxent.com

Posted 9/08/10

3

2

0

10

Share

Digg

Share



(Enlarge) Bicyclists ride along Roland Avenue during last year's Sunday Streets ciclovía. The even--in which the street is closed to traffic and open to pedestrians, runners, skateboarders, picnickers and bike riders--is back for its second year and will be held Oct. 31 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. 33rd Street will also be closed. (File photo /2009)

For the second year in a row, Roland Avenue will be closed to traffic for one day next month so the street can be taken over by bicyclists and pedestrians in an effort to promote recreation, fitness, neighborhood cohesiveness and local sustainability.

And this year, organizers are adding a second street -- 33rd Street between Druid Hill Park and Lake Montebello.

The Oct. 31 ciclovía (pronounced sick-low-VEE-ah; it's Spanish for bike path) was first organized by the Roland Park Civic League as "Sunday Streets" on Oct. 23, 2009, and drew hundreds of people.

Southbound Roland Avenue was blocked to motor vehicles between Cold Spring Lane and Northern Parkway from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., so that people of all ages could walk, run, have picnics, and ride bikes and skateboards. Area students and other

volunteers were trained and deployed as safety officers. Northbound Roland Avenue remained open to cars because it was the side with businesses and city officials wanted to leave it open, organizers said then.

At the time, organizers hoped to have a larger Sunday Streets event in March 2010, connecting Roland Park, Lake Montebello and Druid Hill Park.

Now, the concept is growing even bigger -- and is being co-sponsored by the Mayor's Office of Neighborhoods, making it a city event.

The BMore Streets for People Coalition, a group of community and business leaders, is working with the city to sponsor a series of Sunday morning ciclovías, as often as four times a year, in which selected streets would open Sunday mornings, exclusively for nondrivers.

BMore Streets for People became an official city program in May, said Mike McQuestion, a co-organizer and member of the Roland Park Civic League.

The coalition tried to organize a ciclovía for this past March, but the expected funding never materialized because the city failed to get a \$4 million federal anti-obesity grant -- of which \$200,000 per year was earmarked for Sunday Streets, McQuestion said.

The budget for next month's event is about \$40,000, much of it for city permits and most of it being raised by the civic and business communities, said McQuestion, who is a member of the Roland Park Civic League.

The city police department will help defray costs by charging less for security and traffic control, he said.

McQuestion said he is encouraged that the city is getting more involved in the event. He said organizers thought the city had given up on the project until a few weeks ago, when the mayor's Office of Neighborhoods called him and suggested the Oct. 31 date. It turned out the office had been holding planning meetings about the ciclovía without his knowledge, he said.

The ciclovía will again be from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The Roland Avenue route will connect with the 33rd Street route. It's not clear yet which side of 33rd will be closed off -- or whether both sides will be, McQuestion said.

Bicyclists on 33rd Street will be allowed to cross North Charles Street and use roads near University Parkway, including Art Museum, Wyman Park and San Martin drives, as well as a carriage road behind the Homewood campus of Johns Hopkins University, he said.

McQuestion said 38 cities in 11 countries have organized such ciclovías or programs like them.

The 2006 Baltimore Bicycle Master Plan called for a network of streets that can be used for bicycling and that the city's 2009 Sustainability Plan incorporates the plan and proposes citywide ciclovías, he said.

Ultimately, McQuestion hopes to see the ciclovías citywide and simultaneously, with as much as 40 miles of streets being closed to motor vehicle traffic.

That could happen next year.

"Every time we do it, we want to add more miles and get more neighborhoods involved," McQuestion said.

user comments (0)