

SMART LIVING IN BALTIMORE

STYLE

MAGAZINE



LAUGH MITZVAH!

Charmed Life

Take to the streets!

If you happened to be out for a Sunday drive along Roland Ave. in North Baltimore yesterday, you'd have seen dog walkers, bike riders, scooter-ers, speed-walkers, and my own [toddler](#) pushing her stroller herself in the middle of the road—because the south side of Roland Ave. was closed to cars from Northern Parkway to Coldspring Lane from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., leaving a wide expanse of open road for the rest of us. I'm not sure if everyone felt this way, but I felt definitely felt a thrill strolling leisurely in what is usually a danger zone. It felt forbidden and lovely.

The road closing was part of "Sunday Streets," a new—and hopefully ongoing—program in which city streets are closed to encourage people to come out and exercise, commune with each other, explore, etc. The idea, like most ideas, isn't a new one; the most famous example of this is Ciclovía in Colombia, where, as Wikipedia explains, "Every Sunday and holiday the main streets of Bogotá, Cali, Medellín, and other municipalities, are blocked off for the event to become Carfree. From 7 am to 2 pm, runners, skaters and bicyclists take over the streets. At the same time, stages are set up in city parks. Aerobics instructors, yoga [teachers](#) and musicians lead people through various performances. The largest is Bogotá with 2 million people attending (30% of citizens) on over 120km of carfree streets."

Stateside, [a bunch of cities](#), including Cleveland, Portland and even New York City, have held ciclovías (under various names) but it doesn't seem any city has done it on a weekly basis. That's the goal of "Sunday Streets" organizers—to make it so routine that it's a regular feature of life in Baltimore. Another goal is to expand it from Lake Roland to Lake [Montebello](#).

The idea is so shockingly good, it makes me giggle. Though I'm now in the position of trying to explain to my toddler why she can walk in the middle of the street one day and not the next. Sigh.

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Posted by [Laura Wexler](#) on 10/26/09 at 01:03 PM

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