

Bicycle Friendly Community Resource Guide

A Toolkit for Minnesota



bikeMN

BICYCLE ALLIANCE OF MINNESOTA

www.bikemn.org

[t](#) [f](#) [/bikemn](#)

Version 1.0; 2017

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank all of the communities and partners who contributed their time and knowledge to these resources. Their commitment to community improvement and bicycles makes resources like this possible.

Thanks to Austin Hauf, Cindy Habedank, Dan Farnsworth, Dave Sanderson, David Anderson, Discover Austin, Jack Broz, Jan Matheus, Jean Johnson, Jenny Smith, Jim Schrecks, Judy Jones, Kristin Asher, Michelle Kiefer, Naomi Carlson, Natalie Gille, Sara Witte, Shawna Mullen, Tina Moen, Tom Engstrom, Austin Vision 2020, Wayne Hurley, and Willmar Bikes.

With reference to the information presented in this guide, the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) seeks to be equitable and mindful of all communities. As an organization working to make Minnesota more bikeable and accessible, we would like to acknowledge that the State of Minnesota was built on Indigenous People's land (www.bikemn.org/IPD).

Support for development of this resource guide has been generously provided by the Otto Bremer Trust, Minnesota GreenCorps, Minnesota Department of Health, McKnight Foundation, and BikeMN Members.

Special thanks to the Minnesota Green Corps and Service Member Mae Hanzlik for the Best Practices and Community Profiles sections of this guide.

© Copyright 2017 Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota. The content of The Bicycle Friendly Community Resource Guide may not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written permission of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota.

About the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN)

The rest of the country looks to Minnesota as an example of forward thinking. They know our state is becoming one of the healthiest, most vibrant, most resilient places in the nation—and that is due in part to the popularity of bicycling. More than two million Minnesotans ride a bike each year for fitness, recreation, or transportation. For nearly a decade, the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) has been working in small towns and big cities, in suburbs and state parks, in boardrooms and school gymnasiums to transform the North Star state into the most bike friendly place in America. Here's how we do it.

Education

Knowledge is power. That's why we're committed to ensuring every Minnesotan has access to quality bike education. It takes many forms, and BikeMN tries to increase the reach of all of them. We ensure that elementary school kids learn the rules of the road in their gym classes and afterschool programs, that commercial drivers understand their blind spots, that adult cyclists know how to travel safely and respectfully from point A to point B, and that new immigrants can learn to ride in constructive environments. We believe that making bicycle education accessible to every person of every age, of every skill level, and hailing from every part of Minnesota is a crucial step in making bicycling better for everyone.

Advocacy

The law doesn't change itself, so BikeMN has stepped up as the impassioned voice for cyclists of all stripes at the Minnesota State Capitol. Whether it involves writing statutes that make bicycling on county highways more safe or encouraging our legislature to invest in active transportation funding, we are there for you. On the city-level, BikeMN is helping dozens of communities catch up after decades planning their streets and neighborhoods around the needs of automobiles. We're assisting more and more local leaders and business owners who realize bicycle friendliness this will help attract families, young talent, and loyal customers—which in turn keeps Minnesota's communities and businesses strong.

Encouragement

Why do you ride your bike? Is it how you commute to work? Or a fun way to bring your kids to school? Does it help you feel healthy and active? Or maybe it saves you money on fuel? Do you want to do your part to protect our environment? And does riding your bike connect you to this beautiful state we live in? Could it be that you ride your bicycle because it's just plain fun? No matter the reason and never mind the season, we encourage you to do more of it! By putting together fun bike rides, encouraging tourism and trail development, incentivizing daily bike commuting and errand-running, and many other activities, BikeMN helps thousands of Minnesotans spend as much quality time as possible on two wheels.

We hope you'll get involved in this exciting and momentous work. Learn more by visiting www.bikemn.org.

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 1

What is Bicycle Friendliness?.....2

Pursuing the “Bicycle-Friendly” Designation.....3

The State of Bicycling in Minnesota.....5

Why Encourage Bicycling?.....6

Preparing to Become Bike Friendly.....8

Best Practices.....9

Minnesota Community Profiles.....12

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook.....25

 Section 1: Team and Capacity.....26

 Section 2: SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats).....27

 Section 3: Quick Assessment Checklist from the League of American Bicyclists.....28

 Section 4: 6 Es Worksheet.....29

 Section 5: Your Bike-Friendly Action Plan.....30

 Section 6: Meetings.....31

 Section 7: Technical Assistance.....32

 Section 8: Communicate and Connect.....33

Introduction

Minnesota is currently home to 22 Bicycle Friendly Communities, among the more than 400 across the United States, demonstrating that interest in bicycling is skyrocketing—and it's easy to see why. A bike is a ticket to health, mobility, freedom, and fun. Bicycling is one of the most popular transportation and recreation activities in the world. Communities and organizations which support bicycling are vibrant, healthy, and sustainable places. Bicycle Friendly Communities attract new residents, visitors, businesses, and investment. This guide is designed to help Minnesota advocates foster bicycle-friendliness in their communities and to improve health and safety, the efficient conduct of commerce, delivery of government services, and overall quality of life. This brochure contains context and a helpful workbook designed to guide communities through the process to become more bicycle friendly, starting with an assessment of your community.

Each community and organization is unique. The approach to be a bikeable community will vary to reflect those unique conditions. This guide and workbook will help you assess and take advantage of your situation and meet your goals for bicycling.



What is Bicycle Friendliness?

Being bicycle friendly means that it is **easy, safe, and fun for everyone to ride a bicycle.**

Bicycle friendly communities come in all shapes and sizes—big or small, densely or sparsely populated.

Bicycle Friendly Communities:

- Have networks of interconnected trails, lanes, and/or routes that make bicycling safe and convenient.
- Have programs and events that encourage more bicycling (“Share the Road” campaigns, training courses for safer cycling, Bike to Work Day, Safe Routes to Schools, community sponsored rides, etc.) to support bicycling.
- Are places where a child can safely ride their bike to school and children learn to ride safely around their community in school.
- Value bicycling for transportation, sport, and recreation by people of all ages and abilities.
- Have public planning that includes human-scale concerns by integrating walking, bicycling, transit, and vehicles.
- Are places that motorists respect bicyclists and bicyclists respect motorists.
- Offer safe and comfortable bicycle parking, repair shops, rental opportunities, and accommodation on public transport vehicles.
- Engage law enforcement in making the community safe for everyone, including bicyclists.
- Incentivize local businesses to work together to make it easy and safe to access businesses by bicycle.



Fifth Street North, Grand Rapids, photo by Meghan Brown, Get Fit Itasca.

Pursuing the “Bicycle FriendlySM” Designation

Your town may feel bicycle friendly, but is it? There is one national organization that can officially designate a town, business, or university as “Bicycle Friendly.” That organization is the League of American Bicyclists.

The League of American Bicyclists

The League of American Bicyclists is a national advocacy organization that provides information, certification, and promotion to create safer roads, stronger communities, and a more bicycle friendly America. The League has been in existence since 1880 and from that time on has advocated at a national level for bicycle infrastructure and programs. Through their years of research, experience, and outreach the League has identified the DNA of bicycle friendliness.



The League uses their expert knowledge and works with its members and supporters to identify specific projects, policies, programs, and plans that really make a difference.

The Bicycle Friendly America Program

The League’s Bicycle Friendly America (BFA) program provides a roadmap, hands-on assistance, and recognition for states, communities, universities, and businesses. The BFA application collects data and evaluates how communities encourage people to bike for transportation and recreation within five broad areas known as “The Five Es.”

1. Engineering: Physical infrastructure and hardware to support cycling.
2. Education: Programs that ensure the safety, comfort, and convenience of cyclists and fellow road users.
3. Encouragement: Incentives, promotions, and opportunities that inspire and enable people to ride.
4. Enforcement: Equitable laws and programs that ensure motorists and cyclists are held accountable.
5. Evaluation and Planning: Processes that demonstrate a commitment to setting goals, measuring results, and planning for the future.
6. BikeMN also works to support a sixth E, Equity, which is incorporated into all aspects of program work.

The BFA program is more than an assessment. All applicants get feedback on their application and access to technical assistance. The League evaluates each application and provides input and recommendations for next steps to achieve increased bicycle friendliness. For applicants that achieve Bicycle Friendly Community recognition, the League will assess and identify a community’s ranking, which ranges from recognition as an Honorable Mention to an award with a Bronze, Silver, Gold, Platinum, or Diamond designation. This is a competitive process with requirements to receive an award, so not all communities are recognized.

If you aren’t bicycle friendly yet, applying is well worth the time. The application process will help you create new partnerships and momentum for bicycle improvements, allow you to gather essential bicycle-related data in one place and will in result show you how you stack up on the scale of bicycle friendliness. Once you’ve made the ranks of a Bicycle Friendly Community, Business, or University, the BFA program helps you get to the next level. The BFA framework and designation is the core standard to look to and work to achieve. Learn more about the BFA program at www.bikeleague.org/bfa.



Pata de Perro bike club members in Rochester. Photo by Jo Anne Judge-Dietz PHN, Olmsted County SHIP

The Five Es + Equity

Engineering - creating safe and convenient places to ride and park. The most visible and perhaps most tangible evidence of a great place for bicycling is the presence of infrastructure that welcomes and supports it. Survey after survey shows that the physical environment is a key determinant in whether people will get on a bike and ride. The most advanced Bicycle Friendly Communities and Bicycle Friendly Universities have well-connected bicycling networks, consisting of quiet neighborhood streets, conventional and protected bike lanes, shared use trails, and policies to ensure connectivity and maintenance of these facilities. Secure, convenient, and readily available bike parking is also a key component. For Bicycle Friendly Businesses, great bike parking in addition to showers and locker facilities are vital to promoting bicycling both in the workplace and wider community.

Education - giving people of all ages and abilities the skills and confidence to ride. Offering many ways for people to get the skills and confidence to ride is key to building great places for bicycling. At the community level this begins with bicycle safety education being a routine part of education in schools and community education. Communities, businesses, and campuses can offer options for adults looking to improve their biking skills with everything from online tips and brown-bag lunch presentations to in-depth on-bike training opportunities. The League created Smart Cycling and League Cycling Instructors (LCIs) programs that are great resources in delivering high quality education programs. BikeMN has customized the Smart Cycling curriculum for Minnesota and its needs, developed an elementary school curriculum called *Walk! Bike! Fun!*, and trained teachers and LCI volunteers to implement them. It is also vital to make motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road through public education campaigns that promote “Share the Road” and similar messages.

Encouragement - creating a strong bike culture that welcomes and celebrates bicycling. Communities, businesses, and universities play a critical role in encouraging people to ride by giving them a variety of opportunities and incentives to get on their bikes. This can be done through the celebration of National Bike Month and Bike to Work Day, producing community bike maps or route-finding signage, bicycle-themed celebrations and events, and rides and commuter/riding challenges like the National Bike Challenge. Many places are investing in public bike sharing systems and internal fleets, which are a convenient, cost effective, and healthy way of encouraging people to make short trips by bike.

Enforcement - ensuring safe roads for all users. Basic laws and regulations need to govern bicycling and the rules of the road to ensure safety for all road users. Minnesota has a good set of laws and regulations in place that treat bicyclists equitably within the transportation system, so the next key issue is enforcement. Law enforcement officers must understand these laws, know how to enforce them, and apply them equitably to ensure public safety. A good relationship between the bicycling community and law enforcement is essential. For example, a police representative can participate on a community’s bicycle advisory committee to share the unique perspective law enforcement brings to the discussion. Similarly, having more police officers on bikes helps increase understanding of cyclists’ issues and can foster stronger connections with residents. On college and university campuses, theft prevention is a huge undertaking. Having law enforcement partners and great policies in place is essential to promoting bicycling.



Pillsbury Pedal Power riders in Minneapolis. Photo by Annie Van Cleave.

Evaluation & Planning - planning for bicycling as a safe and viable transportation option, and for children walking and biking to school. Goals and metrics are essential. A comprehensive bicycle master plan, in combination with dedicated funding and active citizen/organizational support is the foundation of a great bicycling community, business, or university—indeed, progress without it is difficult. A successful plan focuses on developing a seamless cycling network that emphasizes short trip distances and multi-modal trips, and is complemented by encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to increase usage. A bicycle program coordinator and an effective bicycle advisory committee can play an important role in helping decision makers create, implement, and prioritize those bicycle programs and policies. Needless to say, these things are scalable depending upon community size. A coordinator need not be a full-time job and the bicycle plan does not need to be a stand-alone document.

Equity - fair and even distribution of bicycle facilities, programs, activities, and funding. Equity is framework of thinking that takes into consideration that different populations have different barriers to living healthy and fulfilling lives. It’s necessary for us to adjust our programming, policies, funding mechanisms, processes, etc to account for unique challenges facing different populations which will allow everyone to be successful. Race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexual orientation, and disability can disproportionately effect access to quality education, careers, healthcare etc. Stakeholders need to be make sure that community improvements benefit everyone, not just those with privileged identities. An equity lens should be applied to the other 5 Es to understand how evaluation, engineering, education, enforcement, and encouragement can be done most successfully.

The State of Bicycling in Minnesota

More people are riding more often—and the proof is in the numbers!

50%

Of the state's population bicycles at least once a month

15%

Increase in women riding bikes from 2008-2013

14%

Increase in biking in Saint Paul from 2015-2016

#2

In 2017, MN was ranked second-most Bicycle Friendly State in the U.S.

5,880

Jobs created by bicyclist-related spending

49%

Increase in biking in Minneapolis 2007-2016

\$750M

Estimated amount that the bicycling industry brought to MN in 2014

4,000

Miles of paved state, regional and municipal bicycle trails

64,900

Minnesotans employed by Bicycle Friendly Businesses

5,000

Bicyclists ride on the Midtown Greenway daily (365 day avg)

\$1M

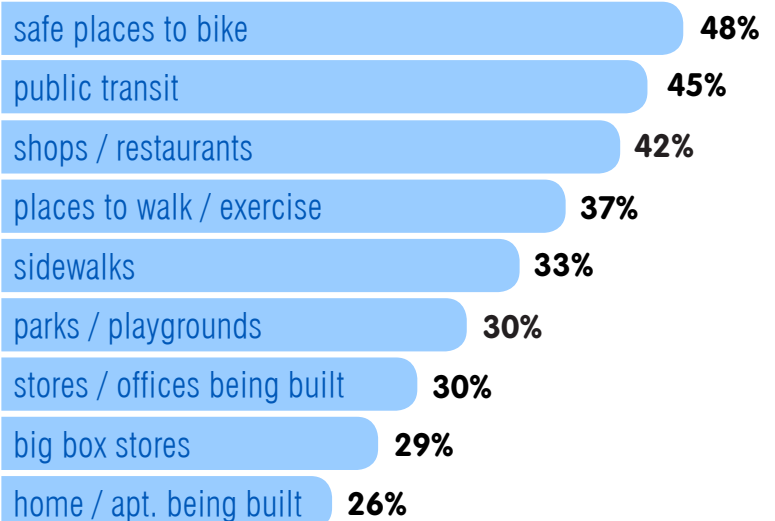
Of bike/ped infrastructure projects creates 11-14 jobs

86

Bicycle Friendly Businesses in Minnesota

Americans recognize several areas in which their communities need help. Nearly half say their communities do not have enough public transportation or housing for people with low incomes. Many say their communities lack features that provide them more pleasant places to bike, walk, or exercise. Many would be willing to pay more taxes for the government to make community improvements such as new roads, sidewalks, and bike trails, as well as better and expanded public transportation.

Percent of U.S. residents wanting more:



Why Encourage Bicycling?

About half of Minnesota adults, and many more children, ride a bicycle each year, and that number is growing in all communities throughout the state. Simple steps to make bicycling convenient and safe can pay huge dividends in civic, community, and economic development—as well as overall quality of life. Given the opportunity to ride, residents enjoy dramatic health benefits, reduced congestion, increased property values, and more money in their pockets to spend in the local economy. When your community welcomes bicycling, tourism booms, local businesses attract the best and the brightest, governments realize savings, and the environment thrives.

The dollars and sense of being bicycle friendly

Minnesota's Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) includes working to be more bicycle friendly as an approved community strategy. And for good reason. Americans spend more on healthcare than any other country in the world. (\$8,700/person/year vs. \$3,400/person/year in average developed countries). A big reason for that is our lack of regular physical activity, which can lead to heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and stroke. Inactivity in 2012 was estimated to cost \$200 billion per year in preventable health care costs and lost productivity in the U.S. and \$3 billion per year in Minnesota. Being bicycle friendly helps reduce these costs by making physical activity easier to integrate into our daily routines. SHIP strategies appear to be working. The growth of obesity and related disease has slowed more in Minnesota than in surrounding states.

Studies show that more and more people (80% or more of young adults) would like to live in a place where they don't need to depend on a car to get around. Businesses know this and many are incorporating a community's walking and biking assets into their employee recruiting practices and decisions where to locate. This is translating into higher real estate values in places where it is convenient and safe for both children and adults to walk and bike. Bicycling can also reduce both individual and business transportation costs. In communities, it can make a difference in energy use, improve air quality, decrease traffic congestion, and reduce car-parking demands. Forty percent of Minnesotans do not drive; better bicycling conditions improve mobility and increase transportation options for those who do not have access to cars, especially children. Bike use supports Smart Growth and other sustainable growth-management goals and can help meet local, state, or federal requirements. Being bicycle friendly can also make a significant contribution to the economy of communities that rely on tourism.



Lonsdale Elementary's Bike to School Day event. They had 65 students participate, which is about 30% of the school enrollment.

YMCA Executive Director and former Get Fit Itasca Community Health Coordinator with the bike repair station at the Itasca County Family YMCA. The YMCA has been recognized as a Bronze Level Bike Friendly Business and Grand Rapids is a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community. Photo by Meghan Bown.



The health benefits of being bicycle friendly

Walking and bicycling are increasing throughout Minnesota. A 2014 statewide survey found that 70 percent of Minnesotans, or members of their household, walk daily or at least once a week in their community—and more than a third walk every single day. An additional 22% said they or members of their household bicycle at least once a week in their community and 6% said they or members of their household bicycle every day.¹

More than 60% of Minnesota adults are overweight or obese and, by 2020, Minnesotans will spend an estimated \$3.7 billion on the healthcare costs associated with these health conditions. Lack of physical activity, along with unhealthy eating habits, are leading contributors to the obesity epidemic.² Investing in active forms of transportation such as walking and bicycling and encouraging people to walk and bicycle more can help significantly reduce costs associated with healthcare, health insurance, tax, and lost productivity for all Minnesotans.



Employees at KGP Companies in Faribault utilizing the two bikes that Rice County SHIP funded for their workplace wellness initiative of improving physical activity. Photo provided by Josh Ramaker.

Nearly half of the places that Minnesotans go are within three miles of their homes, and 27% are one mile or less, distances that are suitable for walking and bicycling for most people.³ If half of all short trips in the Twin Cities alone were done by bike in just the summer, each year an estimated 300 deaths and \$57 million in medical costs from lung diseases, obesity, and heart disease would be prevented.⁴

1. Minnesota Active Transportation Poll, American Heart Association, 2014. Available at http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Affiliate/Minnesota-Active-Transportation-Poll_UCM_469043_Article.

2. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/causes.html>.

3. Federal Highway Administration, National Household Travel Survey, 2009, source referenced in Bicycling and Waling in the United States: 2014 Benchmark Report, Alliance for Biking & Walking, 2014.

4. Grabow, Spak, Holloway, Stone Jr., Mednick and Patz, Air Quality and Exercise-Related Health Benefits from Reduced Car Travel in the Midwestern United States, Environmental Health Perspectives, 120(1): 68-76, January 2012, source referenced in the StarTribune article: "Federal funding for bike routes pays off in the Twin Cities," May 4, 2012.

BIKE FRIENDLY FACTS



- A community's infrastructure can have an impact on its citizens' health, especially in regard to obesity and physical activity.
- Cities that incorporate bicycle routes have a higher percentage of bicycle commuters.
- Studies have shown that even moderate increases in physical activity can have a substantial impact on health.
- Cycling 30 minutes per day regularly can reduce the risk of a heart attack by about 50%.
- Research shows that increasing the number of bicyclists on the street improves driver awareness and bicycle safety—and saves lives.
- Bicycling one mile instead of driving prevents about one pound of carbon dioxide from being released into the atmosphere.

Preparing to Become Bike Friendly

Who needs to be part of the team to make a community bicycle friendly?

Improving bicycling conditions is a holistic effort involving area residents, businesses, developers, schools, local public health, bicycle advocates, elected and appointed officials, and government staff (including administration, engineering/public works, parks and recreation, health professionals, planning, police, and others). Creating a Bicycle Friendly Community also needs champions—people who are passionate and knowledgeable. Buy-in from local officials is critical. A local bicycle advisory committee made up of a cross-section of the community is a key group to help plan, advocate for, and guide improvements on an ongoing basis. For a complete team checklist see page 26.

Keys to success

The following tactics are important for the successful initiation and implementation of bicycle friendliness measures:

- Build champions and broad support among individuals, organizations, schools, businesses, and public officials.
- Engage stakeholders and the general public in planning, funding, and implementation. “Listen, Learn, Plan, and Act” is good advice.
- Get support of local politicians.
- Engage knowledgeable and supportive community staff.
- Develop a strong local cyclist advocacy group, powerful enough to influence decision-makers.
- Raise a sense of urgency about livability, quality of life, traffic, safety, the environment, or health consciousness.
- Agree that you must do more than “just build it” and hope that people will use infrastructure by offering local bike education events and activities that encourage use of bikeways, and equitable law enforcement for all road users.

The Bicycle Friendly America process (and who can help)

Anyone can submit an application to the Bicycle Friendly America program, however the application is extensive and does require much time and knowledge around bicycle infrastructure, facilities, community leaders, policy, supporters, and more. At BikeMN, we’ve been working with cities striving to become bicycle friendly since 2009. In our experience, a slow and thoughtful approach to submitting the application yields much higher rewards.

The League of American Bicyclists does offer a “Quick Assessment Checklist” (see page 28) so you can gauge whether or not your city is ready to submit an application, but this checklist is rather high level and won’t help you build the network and gather the data you need to start on the path toward submitting your application. To remedy this, we’ve assembled this intermediary document and a workbook, which is found at the back of this packet. The workbook will help you jump-start your process, begin community building, gather information, and pinpoint the resources you will need to prepare your town to become more bicycle friendly or work toward submitting an application to the League.



Perham/Battle Lake Bike Fleet by Karen Nitzkowski, ParterSHIP 4 Health Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin Counties.

Best Practices

Introduction to best practices

The following best practices are helping many communities lead the way as the most bike friendly places in Minnesota, which you'll see in the profiles starting on page 12. Some of the best examples of active transportation, recreational rides, and creative bicycle opportunities can be found within this guide.

As an organization, BikeMN seeks to amplify the communities that are modeling best practices for bikeability. Our hope is that this information will provide guidance and inspiration to other Minnesota communities who are looking to make their towns more bikeable, walkable, and livable. By listening to their community members and taking tangible action steps, these 12 communities implemented creative plans, infrastructure, programming, and events that make sense for their unique challenges.

This report gathers stories sourced from interviews, blog posts, and news articles. It is by no means all-inclusive but rather is meant to give readers a taste of what is happening in some non-urban communities across Minnesota.

Find your partners

Communities that have had the most success with bike-friendliness have been intentional about creating partnerships and building relationships across sectors. The best kind of community change happens when all voices are heard and contribute to the cause. Think about the following list of potential partners. Are you in touch? Who should you be talking with?

- Engineers and Public Works
- Minnesota Department of Transportation
- Law enforcement
- Parks and Recreation
- Planners
- Statewide Health Improvement Partnership
- Public Health
- Healthcare
- School administrators
- Business and tourism
- Chamber of Commerce
- Elected officials
- Local advocates
- Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota



Listen to your community

Community engagement needs to be a pillar of your bicycle friendly work. By working to intentionally engage community and gather opinions, you are able to collect feedback that is helpful when designing infrastructure and programming in the future. If you are looking to make bicycling available for everyone in your community, you need to make sure that you are creating accessible community engagement. Some examples of community engagement are community surveys and tabling at community events. Make it easy for your community to give feedback; don't make residents go out of their way to share their opinions, because they won't and then they may feel left out of the process. Try integrating your community engagement into existing events, businesses, routines, etc.

Look to your neighbors!

The biggest and best practice is to look to your friends and neighbors to scope out who has already completed successful projects. It is rare to talk to a Minnesota community about bicycle improvements and not have them reference communities they learned from before. For example, the City of Austin looked to Willmar for bike share tips, and Goodhue County's SHIP Coordinator was inspired by Dinkytown bike racks. One of the goals of this guide is to amplify the great work communities have already done. Who is looking to whom about what?

Ensure community access to bicycles

Recognizing that not everyone has access to affordable, functioning bicycles is an important first step to becoming a bikeable community. Many Minnesota communities have addressed this issue with one, or several, of the following solutions.

Bike shares

The goal of bike share programs is to provide affordable or free bicycle access on a short-term basis to the community. Bike share allows tourists to explore your community on bike, fills local transportation needs, and helps bicycling become an activity for everyone.

Bike share is sweeping the state, and it ranges from a small, free program like the one in Lake City to the mobile-phone-operated Zagster program in Hastings. Throughout this guide we will highlight several examples of bike share.

Bike share examples

- **Nice Ride: Bemidji**
Originally funded by Blue Cross Blue Shield through a 3-year pilot program. They are currently updating their funding methods. To learn more see page 14 or visit their website at <http://bemidji.niceridemn.org>.
- **Great Rides: Moorhead (Fargo, ND)**
This program serves the community and local university. This program has more usage per bike than Washington, D.C., New York City, or Paris. To learn more, see page 22 or visit their website at <https://greatrides.bicycle.com>.
- **Yellow Bike Program: Willmar**
A completely free program where the bikes remain unlocked all day. To learn more, see page 24 or visit their website at www.willmarlakesarea.com/attractions/biking/yellow-bike-program.



Yellow Bike Program in Willmar, photo courtesy of Steve Brisendine.

Bike fleets

Broadly defined, a bicycle fleet is a number of bicycles which are meant to be shared between individuals. Fleets come in many shapes and size, but are often centrally managed groups of between 5 and 50 bicycles. BikeMN maintains several bicycle fleets that can be used by communities across Minnesota for bike education and bicycle access purposes. The case for having a bike fleet is similar to bike shares in that it reduces barriers to bicycling by providing a bike for free or reduced cost for a short term. Bike fleets are helpful because they are versatile and help ensure temporary bike access. For example, teachers can use bike fleets for education in schools and communities can use bike fleets for neighborhood rides. Local fleets are also popping up around Minnesota. The Greater Mankato area, for example, now has three bike fleets. Advocates in the area purchased the bike fleets with funds raised at their annual community bike ride! MnDOT has awarded bicycle fleet grants as well.

Earn-a-bike program

Just gifting bikes is not the answer helping people ride more often. Earn-a-bike programs allow people to serve their community while learning maintenance skills and working toward a free bicycle for their efforts. Pairing bicycle giveaways with education and maintenance training leads to more sustainable bicycle use and fewer abandoned bicycles.

Fill the “bike shop” gap

It is very common for smaller communities not to have a local bike shop. However, having a space to fix your bike or have someone fix your bike is essential because bikes inevitably break down, get old, and regularly need a little love and care. Alex Sigmundik of the RezCycle organization saw this gap on several of the American Indian reservations in Minnesota, so he decided to bring a bike shop to them in a trailer and provide service and education. A mobile bike shop is a solution many Minnesota communities are considering or already implementing. Crookston recently purchased a set of bike tools and bike stands that they will make available at their local farmers market.

Back it up with data

Collect bicycle data so local administrators and authorities can make data-driven decisions. Data brings authenticity to the conversation and can help communities make decisions about funding and policies. It serves a dual purpose: to gauge both current biking activity as well as future interest.

- Hutchinson, Minnesota, conducts both automated and manual bicycle counts in their community. They like to do bike counts because it helps them understand trail and road usage. Measuring over time allows them to show trends, which can justify investment and funding later.
- Crookston, Minnesota, recently conducted a community survey to understand what actions are most needed and desirable to improve bikeability in Crookston. The data indicated that the community values health and safety when it comes to bicycling.



Photo courtesy of David Anderson.

Spotlight your local bicyclists

Show that bicycling is for everyone in your community! You can do this by gathering a group of bicycle role models in your community who are willing to share their story. Try to include people who bike for recreation, people who bike as a family, and people who bike to destinations like work or the grocery store. Make sure you put together a varied group of people that represent all genders, ages, and races within the community. When BikeMN travels to new communities to present workshops, we like to share some varied bicyclist profiles that demonstrate that biking isn't just for "spandex-clad, older, white men," a common criticism.

Apply to become a Bicycle Friendly Community

Anyone can apply for their community to become a Bicycle Friendly Community. Applying to become a Bicycle Friendly Community can result in national bronze, silver, gold, or platinum designation from the League. Arguably, the most beneficial part of the program is the application process itself. Many communities learn about what it takes to become more bike friendly and often stumble upon creative ideas they hadn't thought of before.



**BICYCLE FRIENDLY
COMMUNITY**



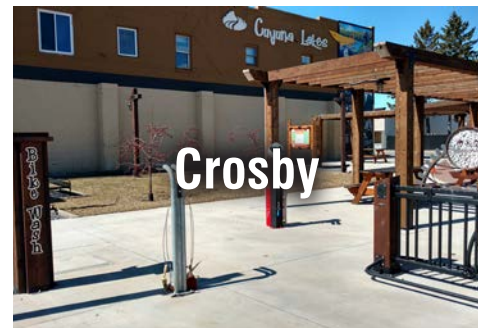
Photo courtesy of Mae Hanzlik.

Minnesota Community Profiles

It's incredible to recount how far Minnesota has come in terms of bike-friendliness in the past five years or so. Cities with robust cycling infrastructure programs like Minneapolis to smaller communities with only one lonely stop sign like Frazee are getting excited about the opportunities that bikes offer. Across the state bike cops, government officials, and community members are leading slow roll-style bike rides, trying adaptive bikes, and learning bike safety in elementary schools.

Thanks to the work of advocates, state agencies, and local organizations across the state, Minnesota is one of the most bike-friendly states in the country. We've chosen 12 communities to shine the spotlight on. Our hope is that advocates across the state can learn from each other. In the following section we'll highlight some best practices from Austin, Bemidji, Crosby, Duluth, Fergus Falls, Goodhue County/Red Wing, Hutchinson, Lake City, Mankato, Moorhead, Richfield, and Willmar.

As always, BikeMN is available to help cities in their bicycle-friendly pursuits. See page 35 for more details.



Austin, Minnesota

Mower County

Population Size: 24,718

Advocacy Group: Bike Austin



Nicknamed “SPAM Town USA,” this community houses the Hormel corporate headquarters and has recently been named one of the “Best Small Cities in America.” Back in 1985, the town underwent a strike at the meatpacking plant, which ended up being a 10-month-long struggle and years of hard feelings. Since that time, Austin has been intentional about revitalizing their town and including transportation improvements within that revitalization.

Harness the power of volunteers

Some of the best bike-friendly improvements happen by listening to community members and making sure that all voices are represented. That’s what Austin did with their Vision 2020 program. Vision 2020 is a community revitalization program that is composed of nine all-volunteer committees that are dedicated to improving quality of life in Austin. One of the nine is the Biking and Walking Committee, which strives to connect community members and welcome guests through a safe, integrated trail system that includes bike lanes on major streets. That will link neighborhoods, parks, shopping, and attractions throughout the greater Austin area.

Make your bike share free

One of the programs that resulted from the Vision 2020 biking and walking conversations was the creation of the Red Bike program. Austin took a page from the book of a neighboring community, Willmar, and their wonderful Yellow Bike program. Like the Yellow Bike program, the Red Bike program also strives to make biking more accessible in the community by operating at no cost to the user. Recognizing the diversity in their community and the need for inclusion, the Red Bike bike share program has signs and instructions printed in both English and Spanish. Their long-term goal is to expand this beyond Spanish and English to include all the languages spoken in Austin.



Tip: Does your community have a bike share? Are the languages spoken in your community represented on your signage and in your programming?

Bike education: spread the word

Austin has created unique bike safety initiatives in their community. For example, a couple organizations in Austin banded together to pay for a billboard in their community that had messaging around bike safety. Austin has also had success handing out helmets to community members or subsidizing them at reasonable prices. Research shows that the more times your message is shared, the more effective the message is.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Schnable.



Photo courtesy of Nancy Schnable.

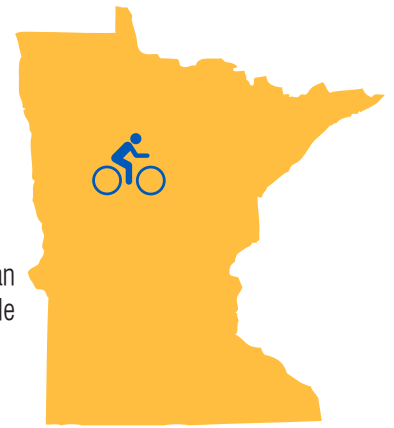
Bemidji, Minnesota

Beltrami County

Population Size: 13,431

Advocacy Groups: Bike Bemidji, Bemidji Area Mountain Bikers (BAMB)

Located in northern Minnesota, Bemidji is a bustling college town and hub for many of the nearby American Indian reservations, such as Red Lake, White Earth, and Leech Lake, as well as other communities. Their growing bicycle culture coupled with a strong tourism economy and arts influences make this a destination town for travelers.



A bounty of bike access

Bemidji might have the most creative array of bicycle services and programs in all of northern Minnesota. Between the Nice Ride bike share, a Wheel Being bicycle prescription program, and an earn-a-bike program through the local ministry, this town has it all.

Nice Ride

The Nice Ride program has operated for the past three years in Bemidji with the title sponsor being Blue Cross Blue Shield. As their website states, this program is built for residents to use the bikes on quick commutes to the grocery store or for visitors to grab a bike for a long day of trail-riding.

Wheel Being

The Wheel Being program allows health care professionals to prescribe patients with exclusive access to use one of the Nice Ride bicycles from May until October. The requirements are that you need to ride your bike twice a week and participate in some of the Wheel Being social rides.

Shifting Gears

Shifting Gears is a ministry of People's Church, and their mission is to get folks of all ages, races, and socioeconomic statuses out on bicycles. Sometimes this is an earn-a-bike program, and sometimes it is a bicycle giveaway event. Regardless, Shifting Gears is a place for all folks to gather, get a bicycle, and learn about maintenance and safety.



Loop the Lake Festival

Since 2014, Bemidji has hosted a community bicycle ride called Loop the Lake Festival. This ride is designed for all skill levels and promoted as a festival, not a race, to encourage everyone to join. An example of this is the "Spinning Spokes - Art on the Go" event, which is youth-centered and allows kids to decorate their bikes and helmets before the festival. The decorating event was a product of a partnership between Watermark Art Center and Bike Bemidji advocates.

This festival continues to steadily grow in size; in the first year they had 350 riders, and most recently they hosted almost 1,000 riders.



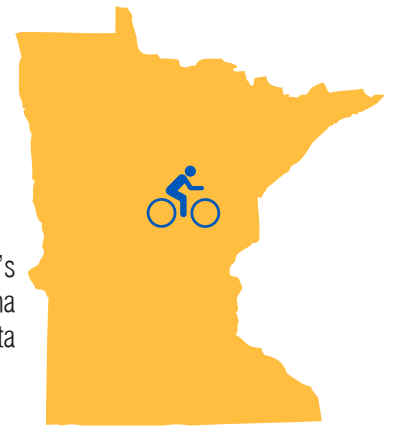
Photo courtesy of Natalie Gille.

Crosby, Minnesota

Crow Wing County

Population Size: 2,386

Advocacy Group: Cuyuna Lakes Mountain Bike Crew



Back in the early 1900s, Crosby, Minnesota, was one of the many towns in the U.S. trying to meet the country's demand for steel. Now, with mining no longer driving the local economy and the opening of the Cuyuna State Park nearby, Crosby has refocused on biking and recreation, which has allowed this small Minnesota community to be recognized on the international bike tourism map.

An employment perk!

Unsurprisingly, having a world-renowned mountain bike park in your backyard is a big plus for companies who are looking to attract talent. Local businesses have whole-heartedly incorporated biking into their work culture by organizing bike rides and touting the bicycle trails when recruiting new talent.



Tip: How can your community capitalize on existing bicycle infrastructure, whether it's a mountain bike park, local trails, or a downtown filled with bike lanes?

High school cycling—getting students on bikes

Crosby-Ironton is one of many Minnesota high schools who participate in the Minnesota High School Cycling League. Competitive mountain biking is a growing sport that has recently found traction in Minnesota. Founded in 2012, the Minnesota High School Cycling League focuses on being inclusive and equal, building strong bodies, strong minds, and strong character through cycling.



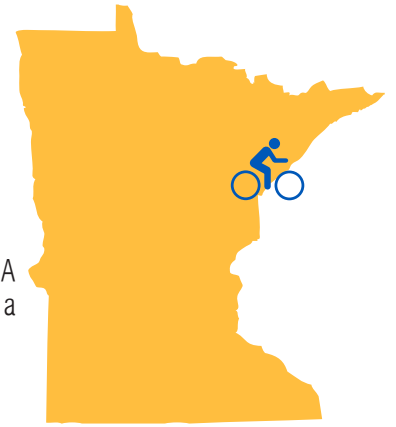
Photo courtesy of Jenny Smith.

Duluth, Minnesota

St. Louis County

Population Size: 86,128

Advocacy Group: Duluth Bikes



One of Minnesota's biggest cities, Duluth is located on Lake Superior in the northern part of the state. A regional hub for higher education, industrial shipping, healthcare, and business services, this town has a strong bicycle culture composed of commuters and mountain bikers alike.

Know your “bike angle”

As a community bicycle advocate, you need to figure out your “bike angle” in order to change culture and policies. Duluth advocate Shawna Mullen believes that you need to find the thing that motivates your community and work on strategic messaging from there. There are so many different benefits to biking that it is important to think about your community's values and relationship to biking. Maybe your community is driven to be healthier. Or is your community environmentally motivated and interested in reducing greenhouse gases? Get to know your motivation and use that when trying to improve bikeability.



Tip: Use bikes as a foundation for community conversation. How can you create system-level change that benefits everyone in the community?

Create capacity

Duluth is just one of many Minnesota communities whose government, nonprofits, and businesses have recognized the importance of bikeability and have allocated paid staff time toward the effort. Paid staff can help ensure that bike-friendly plans and projects move forward. And, combined with engaged community members, they can significantly help improve bikeability.



Tip: Paid time may include creating new positions centered around bikeability, hosting a Minnesota GreenCorps member, giving out stipends for interns, or reworking existing employees' work plans!

Bikes: a tool for community building

BikesPlus helps fill transportation needs while building a socially just community in Duluth. A program of Community Action Duluth, BikesPlus brings together elected officials, police officers, bike mechanics, and lower-income community members to share a meal, bike together, and learn about transportation policy. At its core, the program gives out bikes, helmets, and other accessories to people who need reliable transportation for work. By providing a meal, the program goes one step further by providing a space to have humanizing conversations and break down power barriers.



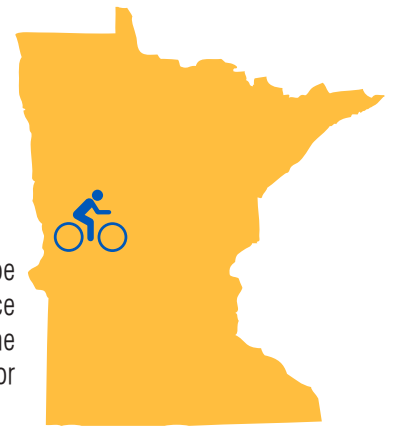
Photo courtesy of Duluth Bikes.

Fergus Falls, Minnesota

Otter Tail County

Population Size: 13,351

Advocacy Group: Pedal Fergus Falls



This mid-sized community in west central Minnesota is a vibrant arts and culture hub that continues to be a leader in bike-friendliness. Not only does their local newspaper write about biking regularly, their police department is one of the first of its kind to receive the Bicycle Friendly Business designation from The League. The local public health agency, PartnerSHIP 4 Health, manages a bike fleet used by schools and for community events.

Partner with local media

One of the more effective ways to spread the good news of biking is by having your local media outlets champion the movement. We see this example in Fergus Falls, where their *Daily Journal* often will partake in community rides and write pieces highlighting the benefits of biking infrastructure or promoting the local bike events. Having the media outlets on your team can make a big difference in a community.

30 Days of Biking success

This community has taken the 30 Days of Biking program and integrated it into their community. Many local advocates say that 30 Days of Biking has changed and expanded the amount of people on bikes throughout the year because it helps people kick-start warm weather biking. In 2016 they had more per capita participation than Minneapolis! The local advocates chalk this up to the wide promotion of the opportunity and the excellent support system created in this community every year. 30 Days of Biking changed community culture in Fergus Falls.

The Details: 30 Days of Biking is a pledge to ride your bike every day in April and share your adventures online with the hashtag #30daysofbiking. There's no minimum distance — just get out there and pedal at least once a day, then tell them about your adventures. And, yep, spin class counts!



Bike friendly enforcement

Fergus Falls works very closely with their police department. After applying to the Bicycle Friendly America program earlier in 2017, the Police Department ended up receiving Bronze Bike Friendly Business status from the League of American Bicyclists. Yes, police departments can be bike friendly too!

For the summer months, at least two officers are always on bike patrol. The Police Department receives bike education, which includes both classroom instruction and on-ride training, from their local League Cycling Instructor (LCI). They even have a couple officers attend the Pedal Fergus Falls advocacy meetings!



Photo courtesy of Wayne Hurley.



Photo courtesy of Wayne Hurley.

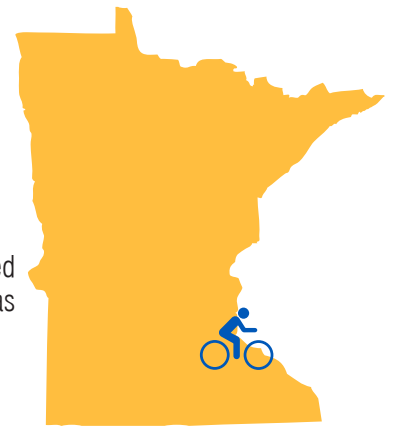
Goodhue County/Red Wing, Minnesota

Goodhue County

Population Size: 46,464

Advocacy Group: Red Wing Area Mountain Bike Association

Located on the eastern edge of Minnesota, Red Wing is home to many local businesses and is surrounded by beautiful bluffs making it a popular tourism destination along the Mississippi River Trail Bikeway. But as beautiful as they might be, geographic barriers can make changing a culture around bicycling difficult.



Work with your geographic barriers

Geographic barriers can be difficult to address on a local level. Consequently, it is important to adapt your programming, plans, and projects around existing barriers and understand how the community interacts with these barriers. For example, large hills can be a deterrent for someone who is looking to begin biking. This is one of the reasons why Red Wing and Goodhue County spend time making promotional videos and placing way-finding signs that encourage residents to utilize their well-developed trails system instead.

Apply for Safe Routes to School funding

The City of Red Wing is one of many Minnesota communities who have received funding from the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program. The goal of the program is to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bicycle to school. Funded on both a federal and state level, Safe Routes to School allocates grants to be used on a local level, like in Red Wing.



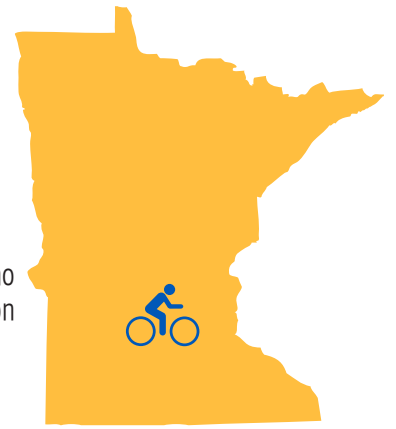
Hutchinson, Minnesota

McLeod County

Population Size: 13,871

Advocacy Group: Hutchinson Area Mountain Bike Association

With one of the oldest park systems in the nation (second only to New York City's Central Park!) it's no surprise that this community is prioritizing biking. An example of collaboration and persistence, Hutchinson is working to improve their community's bikeability and livability.



Persist!

Advocates in Hutchinson believe that persistence is important. Persistence and commitment to bikeability is essential for everything from finding your community change makers, to moving projects forward and creating partnerships. As in all work, there can be confusion and disappointment. Hutchinson's advice: "don't let that stop you!"



Tip: When you are doing your annual bike counts, track success of helmet distribution programs by measuring how many of those same helmets you see on your bike counts.

Bike counting makes a difference

Hutchinson knows that biking can bring economic benefit to their community. Motivated by data, they wanted to measure number of bicyclists over time to better understand the relationship.

In a true example of partnership and collaboration, Hutchinson's bike counters were requested from the Department of Natural Resources, purchased by the hospital, installed by the City and Public Health, and the data is collected by the Parks Department. They count in both Spring and Fall, and change locations to collect several data points.

As mentioned before, data brings authenticity to the conversation, which makes decision-making for funding and policy development easier to attain. It serves a dual purpose: gauging currently biking activity as well as future interest.



Photo courtesy of Jean Johnson.

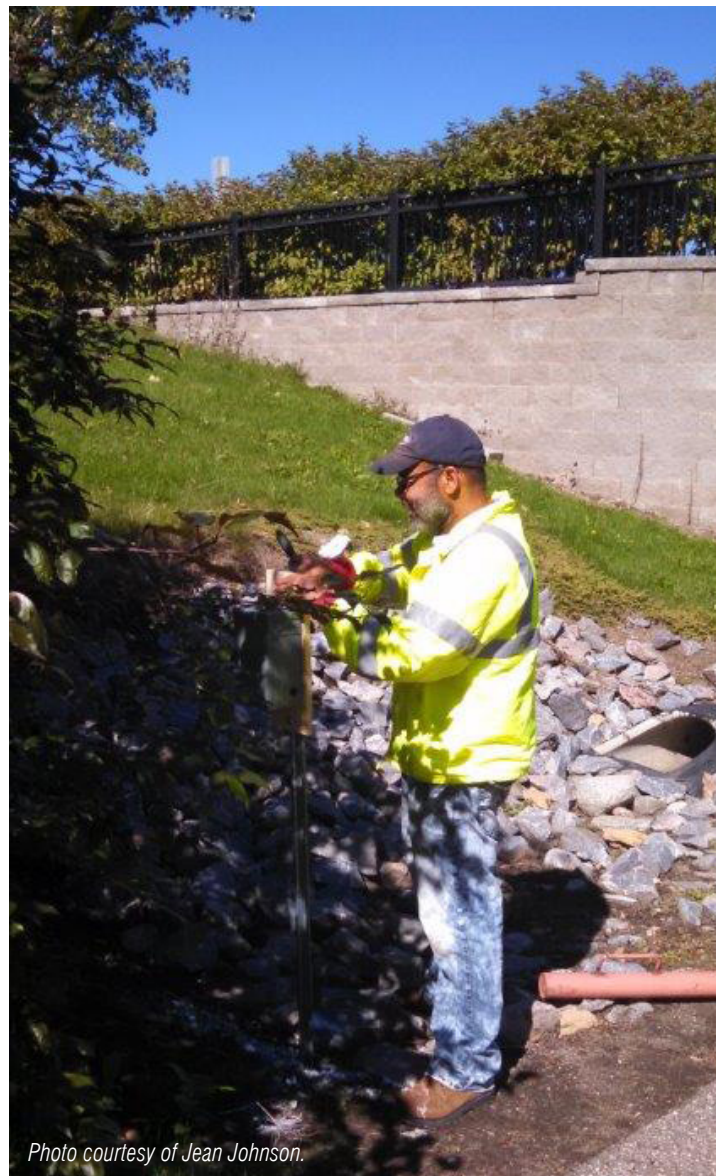


Photo courtesy of Jean Johnson.

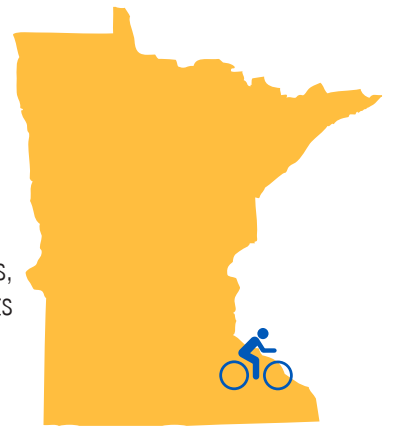
Lake City, Minnesota

Goodhue and Wabasha counties

Population Size: 4,980

Advocacy Group: Lake City Active Living Group

Situated near Lake Pepin, a widening of the Mississippi River, this town has always attracted water lovers, fishermen, and, more recently, bicyclists. Lake City hosts an annual bike ride, the Tour de Pepin, and boasts a significantly high percentage of people who bike to work.



Small, but mighty, bike share

Lake City is home to one of Minnesota's smallest bike shares. Public Health-sponsored Lake City Bike Share is a project of the local active living group who champions biking and walking in Lake City. Between April and October, you can rent the bikes for free from the local marina. This is a perfect example of creating projects that work well in your community. A small bike share is a perfect size for this city, and it's well used by tourists and residents alike.



Tip: Stay engaged with local transportation policy and meetings! Call your city council and advocate for a more livable community.

Advocacy in action: "3 for Me!"

Road rebuilding is an ideal time to make communities more livable and bikeable through lane conversions, like the four-to-three-lane conversion, often called a "road diet." This is an excellent infrastructure technique that increases safety for all bike users without impacting traffic flow.

In Spring 2017, Lake City's City Council was set to vote on a road diet for Highway 61, which cuts through the middle of downtown. The community mobilized both for and against the road diet. Community members in support of it crafted the "3 for Me!" campaign. BikeMN extended assistance with a letter of support and briefing paper, and provided testimony at the City Council meeting. After hearing from so many engaged community members, city staff, and BikeMN, the Council voted 5-2 to support road diet.



Photo courtesy of Tina Moen.

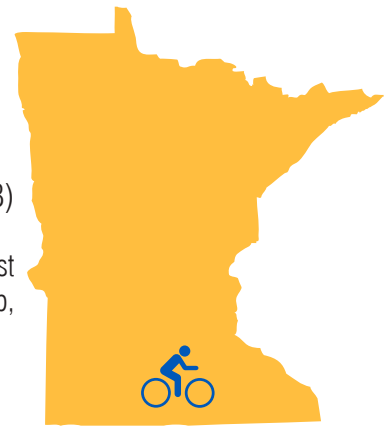
Mankato, Minnesota

Blue Earth, Nicollet, and LeSueur counties

Population Size: 40,641

Advocacy Groups: Greater Mankato Bike & Walk Advocates, Mankato Area Mountain Bikers (MAMB)

Home to three colleges and the popular Mankato State University, Mankato is one of Minnesota's largest education hubs. With bike fleets, signature events, strong partnerships, and a very engaged advocacy group, Mankato continues to lead bike-friendliness in southern Minnesota.



Signature events can change everything!

Mankato is a perfect example of how a signature bicycle event can change and improve bicycle culture in a community. After applying for a Bicycle Friendly Community designation back in 2011, they received feedback from the League of American Cyclists suggesting that they hold a signature event in the community to bring bicycling back into the spotlight. Adding a signature event was a turning point for the community.

The Mankato River Ramble helped many people see that biking could play a major role in the community. It brought in a lot of money for local businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, and other stores. Excited to use the money to improve equity and biking in the community, the Greater Mankato Bike & Walk Advocates dedicated the profits from the ride toward purchasing their first of three bike fleets. Mankato's tourism bureau has even changed their logo to include a bicycle symbol!



Photo courtesy of Jerry Hass.



Tip: Make your events accessible. The River Ramble offers scholarships, group rates, and a family-length route.

Bike fleets—equity and kids

Enthusiastic about providing all children with a chance to learn to bike, Mankato has dedicated their profits from the River Ramble toward purchasing community bike fleets that are brought to local schools for bike education. The spokesperson for the Greater Mankato Bike & Walk Advocates says they are “all about getting more people on bikes,” and this is one way to do that. Bringing bikes to kids reduces the barriers usually faced by students who don't have bicycles or would typically not be exposed to learning how to bike.



Photo courtesy of the Greater Mankato Bike & Walk Advocates.



Tip: If you are looking to change bicycle culture in a community, start by focusing on your kids. Changing adult behavior is often harder than changing children's behavior.

Creating an advocacy group

Back in 2008, North Mankato and Mankato were preparing a transportation plan. They wanted pedestrians and cyclists to be included in that planning. Five of the cities' advocates went to the planning meeting. The majority of the conversation was around trails. Someone posed a question about bicycling on roads, and the rest is history. Once the plan finished they continued the work and eventually formed the Greater Mankato Bike & Walk Advocates organization in 2010.

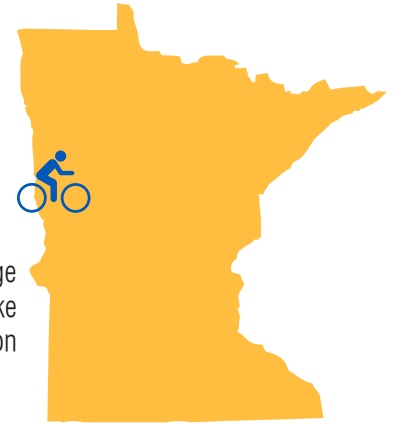


Moorhead, Minnesota (and Fargo, North Dakota)

Clay County

Population Size: 39,398

Advocacy Groups: Local & Regional Education Network (LREN), BikeFM



This sizable community in northwestern Minnesota spans one river and two states. Filled with college students and innovation, the Fargo-Moorhead area is championing bike share and always testing new bike education strategies. As they grow their infrastructure, the cities continue to adjust the community perception that streets are just for cars.

Pop-up bike lanes: try it out!

Streets Alive, the local Open Streets community celebration, is using a savvy demonstration technique to show their neighbors what a protected bike lane could look like in their community. The temporary bike lanes consist of planters that provide a barrier between cars and bikes. This pop-up bike lane introduces bike infrastructure to folks who might not have otherwise formally engaged with biking in Fargo-Moorhead. It allows organizers to gain community feedback about what people like and what they have concerns about. It both demonstrates and engages.



Tip: Partner with existing community events to set up demonstration bike lanes! This integrates the idea into the community, ensures attendance is high, and makes it more fun. Recently, other cities have started bringing pop-up lanes to their Farmers Markets. They were able to gather community feedback and bring bike joy to downtown.

Ramp up your bike education

Recently BikeFM (Bike Fargo-Moorhead), the local advocacy group, tried a new strategy where they hold short bike education classes throughout the month and offer a 9-hour Traffic Skills 101 (TS101) class for students who are interested in learning more. The short classes cover a variety of topics (fixing flats, commuting, and riding at night, etc.). They refer to this as “ramp style” education because it allows participants to try out classes and, if they get hooked, give them an opportunity to learn more. They are hoping that this new strategy will increase participation in their TS101 classes.



Tip: Figure out creative promotion strategies that work for your community. BikeFM was able to get their picture on the front page of the community education catalog as a way to promote classes. They also recently rented billboard space to share their bike safety messaging.

Bike share partnerships

Great Rides, the local bike share service in the Fargo-Moorhead area, is setting national records for bike usage. The usage per bike in this program is more than Washington, D.C., New York City, or Paris!

Why is this program so popular? Great Rides made a strategic partnership with the local university, North Dakota State University, where the cost of a bike share membership is already included in all students' annual fees. All students need to do is register on the

Great Rides website. The convenience of this program is seen in the numbers—90% of all rides taken on Great Rides bikes are by students.



Tip: Think about what strategic partnerships could help to integrate a bike share program in your community.



Photo courtesy of Austin Hauf.



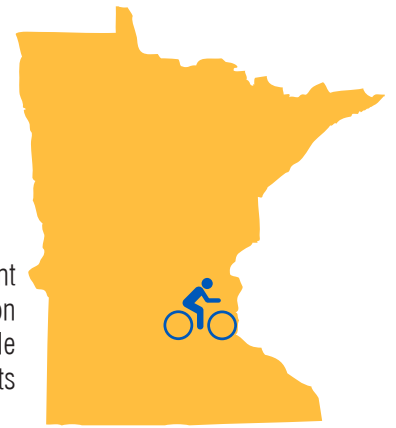
Photo courtesy of Concordia College.

Richfield, Minnesota

Hennepin County

Population Size: 36,175

Advocacy Group: Richfield Bicycle Advocates



A thriving inner-ring suburb, Richfield has spent the last couple of years ramping up their public engagement and corresponding marketing campaign that is based on an extensive mill-and-overlay plan. Capitalizing on this citywide street resurfacing has given Richfield a blank canvas to work closely with the county, bicycle advocates, and their community members to rethink, redesign, recreate, and reallocate space on their streets so that they are safer for everyone.

A road redesign for all

Some years ago it became clear to the City of Richfield that they were going to have to make significant improvements to the majority of their major roadways. They needed to make sure the community was not only aware of the improvements, but also involved and excited about them. They did so by creating a huge marketing plan called Sweet Streets that informed and motivated citizens to voice their opinions. In the words of Public Works Director Kristin Asher: "It's going to be sweet!"

A mill-and-overlay was the perfect opportunity to create more equity among different modes of travel. For example, instead of prioritizing cars, they were able to think about bicycle commuting and walking. Through this plan they have increased walking and biking access to all local schools.



Tip: Implement a Complete Streets policy! By prioritizing pedestrians and bicyclists through policy, you ease the complexity of infrastructure tradeoff conversations in the future.

Think ahead

Richfield is always thinking about their next step. According to the Director of Public Works, after promoting Sweet Streets and all the capital improvements coming to Richfield, they believe that their next step is to provide the community with bike education explaining how all users can interact on the road. In a similar fashion to Sweet Streets, they hope to roll out a program called "Better Roads, Better Richfield," which will provide education around the new Complete Streets, explaining concepts like how using medians will slow down traffic. They also hope to provide way-finding signs so that people find their way to parks and other community destinations.

Think like an advocate: Engage your government

Richfield Bicycle Advocates is also a proponent of thinking ahead. As an advocacy group, they believe it is important to organize your people, organize your ideas, and then advocate for including funding those for ideas in future budgets.

Elected officials and government staff champion bike-friendliness in Richfield. Here are some of the concrete steps they took to make it happen:

- They surveyed political candidates on their active transportation stance and made survey results public. They also hold forums during which they ask bike-specific questions to the candidates.
- Bike Richfield shows up to public meetings, making their voices heard as bicyclists who live and commute in the city.
- They engage their local police department by inviting them to present at Traffic Skills 101 classes. This makes sure that both bicyclists and law enforcement understand the laws and it provides a platform to have conversations about the law.

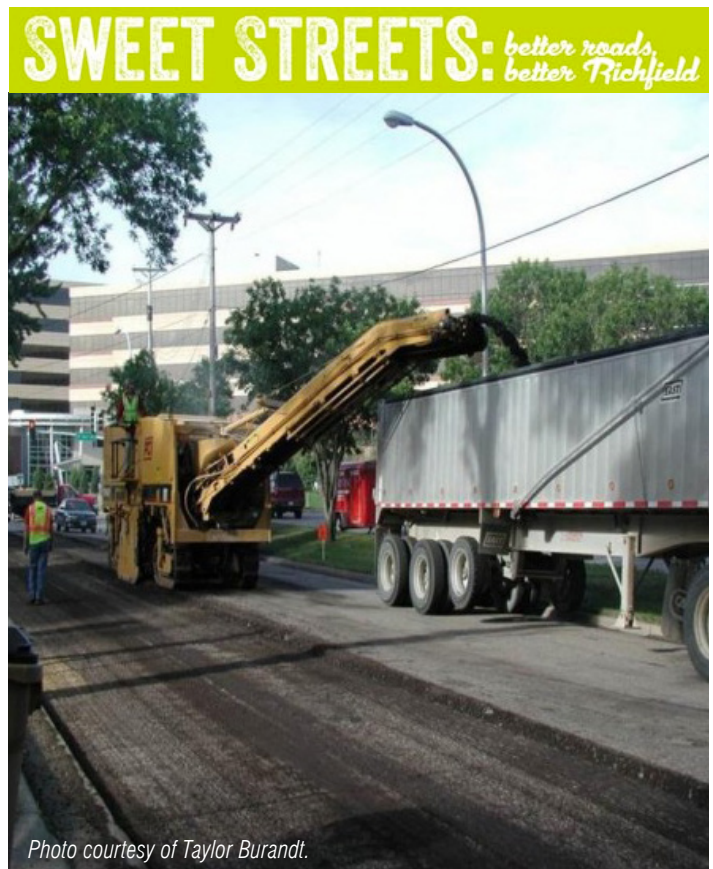


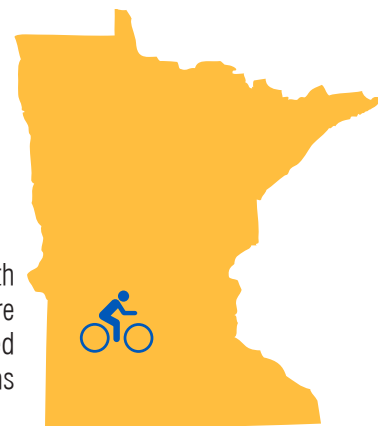
Photo courtesy of Taylor Burandt.

Willmar, Minnesota

Kandiyohi County

Population Size: 19,610

Advocacy Group: Willmar Bikes



A regional center in west-central Minnesota, Willmar is known as an agriculturally strong community with a vibrant downtown district. In the past eight years, Willmar has made huge strides in becoming more bike friendly. Much of that success can be attributed to their advocacy committee, which has championed creating a free community bike share while holding onto their long-term vision of creating bike connections throughout the community and to surrounding areas.

Building cross-governmental partnerships

When you pull up a chair at one of the monthly Willmar Bikes meetings, you notice that there are several partners at the table. On one end you see Parks & Recreation, on the other the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership, and in the middle representatives from the community and the regional development commission. The wide variety of stakeholders that come together and share perspectives at these meetings are key to Willmar's success in creating bike culture in the community.



Tip: Willmar suggests two things that make bicycle change easier. First, work to get bicycling into someone's job description. This helps keep people accountable. Second, create a reliable volunteer network to support these efforts.



Tip: Engage local businesses in your bike share program by having them sponsor bike racks.



Tip: Celebrate cycling in your community. The mayors of Spicer, New London, and Willmar host a bike ride between their communities each year.

Connecting towns, trails, and culture

Willmar is interested in continuing to strategically build their trail network across town and to nearby communities. By highlighting the Glacial Lakes Trail connection to nearby New London and Spicer, they provided several bike opportunities for their residents and visitors. Trail connections help make active transportation a more realistic choice, increase local tourism, and help create a network of success in the region.



Tip: It has taken about five years for bicycling to become more accepted in the community and for real change to happen. Make sure you continue to push and prioritize bicycling.

Filling a transportation need

In an effort to make bicycling accessible to everyone, Willmar began a completely free bike share program. In their first year they were able to put out 60 bikes and 20 bike racks in the community. They hope to continue to increase the number of bikes each year.



Photo courtesy of Willmar Bikes.

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

This workbook has been created to provide community members with a tool to prepare for a Bicycle Friendly Community project with BikeMN. Your group may include only yourself, a few people, or an organized committee of many. Through the process of completing this workbook, your team will have an opportunity to identify and document what bicycling means in your community and learn about the process of working with BikeMN to become more bicycle friendly...and seek out recognition for it!

Completing this workbook will prepare you for working with BikeMN to prepare a plan, goals, and strategies to seek recognition as a Bicycle Friendly Community through the League of American Bicyclists.

Workbook Sections

1. Team and Capacity
2. SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)
3. Quick Assessment Checklist from the League of American Bicyclists
4. 6 Es Worksheet
5. Your Bike Friendly Action Plan
6. Meetings
7. Technical Assistance
8. Communicate and Connect

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 1: Team and Capacity

BikeMN has worked with dozens of communities across Minnesota to help them become more bike friendly. What's the number one predictor of success? A strong, balanced team. Below, use the space on the left to write down as many names with contact info as you can. Then use the list on the right to draw lines and match them to our list of types of recommended team members. The size of your bike friendly team is much less important than having a balanced team with capacity and focus. Are there any categories of team players you're missing? Research, reach out, and engage someone from each category to strengthen the group.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Advocate or community member

Public Health

Healthcare

Law Enforcement

Parks and Recreation

Engineer (city, county,
MnDOT district)

City council members

Mayor or mayor's office

Commissioners (county,
relevant committees)

Educators (elementary, high school, community education, higher education institutions)

School administrators

Business (local business organization, supportive businesses, major employers)

Tourism

Chamber of Commerce

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 2: SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats)

A SWOT Analysis may be conducted by you, a local leader, or a staff member of BikeMN. This is a valuable exercise to help determine the current bicycle friendly status of your community.

This SWOT Analysis will help set and prioritize strategic communications goals by identifying the strengths and weaknesses currently facing the bike friendly status of your town and identifying the external opportunities and threats that could affect work toward becoming more bike friendly.

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What, in terms of bike friendliness, does our city do well?</i>• <i>What unique, bike friendly resources can we draw on? (Ex. A mayor who bikes, local bike path, etc.)</i>• <i>What might other neighboring cities see as our bike-related strengths?</i>	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What could our city improve to become more bike friendly?</i>• <i>When thinking about active transportation, where do we have fewer resources than others?</i>• <i>What are others likely to see as our weaknesses in terms of bike friendliness? (Ex. A highway through town.)</i>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What good opportunities are open to our city? (Ex. A regional trail being planned, a few local Bicycle Friendly Businesses, etc.)</i>• <i>What trends could our city take advantage of? (Ex. Walking/biking to school, healthy living, etc.)</i>• <i>How we turn our city's strengths into opportunities for becoming more bike-friendly?</i>	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What could derail our city's bike-friendly work? (Consider infrastructure threats as well as financial, staff, community members, etc.)</i>• <i>What threats do our city's weaknesses expose us to?</i>

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 3: Quick Assessment Checklist from the League of American Bicyclists

The Bicycle Friendly America program is more than an assessment. All applicants get feedback on their applications and access to technical assistance. Use this Quick Assessment to get an idea of where you are now and where you want to go. We're here to help you get there. Take the League's assessment at <http://bikeleague.org/bfa/quick-assessment/> for immediate guidance.



1 ENGINEERING

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE, CONNECTED AND WELL-MAINTAINED BICYCLING NETWORK?

☐ YES ☐ NO

IS BIKE PARKING READILY AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY?

☐ YES ☐ NO

IS THERE A COMPLETE STREETS ORDINANCE OR ANOTHER POLICY THAT MANDATES THE ACCOMMODATION OF CYCLISTS ON ALL ROAD PROJECTS?

☐ YES ☐ NO

2 EDUCATION

IS THERE A COMMUNITY-WIDE SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL PROGRAM THAT INCLUDES BICYCLING EDUCATION?

☐ YES ☐ NO

ARE THERE BICYCLING EDUCATION COURSES AVAILABLE FOR ADULTS IN THE COMMUNITY?

☐ YES ☐ NO

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY EDUCATE MOTORISTS AND CYCLISTS ON THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS ROAD USERS?

☐ YES ☐ NO

3 EVALUATION

IS THERE A SPECIFIC PLAN OR PROGRAM TO REDUCE CYCLIST/MOTOR VEHICLE CRASHES?

☐ YES ☐ NO

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE A CURRENT COMPREHENSIVE BICYCLE PLAN?

☐ YES ☐ NO

IS THERE A BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE THAT MEETS REGULARLY?

☐ YES ☐ NO

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE A BICYCLE PROGRAM MANAGER?

☐ YES ☐ NO

4 ENFORCEMENT

DO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS RECEIVE TRAINING ON THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL ROAD USERS?

☐ YES ☐ NO

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE LAW ENFORCEMENT OR OTHER PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICERS ON BIKES?

☐ YES ☐ NO

DO LOCAL ORDINANCES PROMOTE SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR BICYCLISTS?

☐ YES ☐ NO

5 ENCOURAGEMENT

DOES YOUR COMMUNITY HAVE AN UP-TO-DATE BICYCLE MAP?

☐ YES ☐ NO

DOES THE COMMUNITY CELEBRATE BICYCLING DURING NATIONAL BIKE MONTH WITH COMMUNITY RIDES, BIKE TO WORK DAY OR MEDIA OUTREACH?

☐ YES ☐ NO

DOES THE COMMUNITY HOST ANY MAJOR COMMUNITY CYCLING EVENTS OR RIDES?

☐ YES ☐ NO

IS THERE AN ACTIVE BICYCLE ADVOCACY GROUP IN THE COMMUNITY?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 4: Six Es Worksheet

Evaluation and Planning	Engineering	Education	Enforcement	Encouragement	
Small Impact					
Bring your mayor or elected officials on a bike ride!	Add bike lane stripes to road during restriping projects	Provide education at local community events	Have your police department host a <i>Walk! Bike! Fun!</i> Rodeo	Host a semi-regular community ride in your community	
Sit down or ride with community partners to assess current assets and barriers to biking	Tactical Urbanism: Pop-up bike lanes at community events	Have your local bike shop distribute copies of the <i>Minnesota Bicycling Handbook</i>		Celebrate Bike Month, 30 Days of Biking, Biketober, or National Bike Challenge!	
Conduct an annual bicycle and pedestrian count in your town using volunteer power	Add bike parking at public buildings and commercial nodes	Work with your local bike shop to offer basic bike maintenance classes	Bike patrol during key community events	Create programs that support an inclusive bike community for women, people of color, immigrants, etc.	
Medium Impact					
Include biking and walking goals in your Comprehensive Plan	Put a bike boulevard in your community	Host a class like Bike Basics, Traffic Skills 101, etc.	Officers teach bike education at schools (in class or on bike)	Create an earn-a-bike program or community bike shop in your community	
Apply for MnDOT Safe Routes to School funding					
Create a community bike routes map that can be utilized for planning, education, or encouragement	Connect and/or create your pedestrian and bicycle networks	Encourage your community members to become League Cycling Instructors	Set up bike education sessions for your police officers	Set up a bike fix-it station in your community	
Borrow bike counting equipment from MnDOT to gather more extensive annual data	Look for opportunities to make 4-to-3 lane conversions on key corridors	Provide on-road bicycle instruction at your local driver's education classes	Review bike/ped crash data annually; create reduction plan	Encourage businesses and local organizations to purchase bike racks	
Large Impact					
Create a bicycle and pedestrian plan	Put in protected bike lanes or off road trails in your town	Bike/ped education at all schools	Regular use of bike patrol/fleet in traffic/community policing engagement	Hold an Open Streets event in your community	
Implement a Complete Streets policy	Long term Tactical Urbanism: Make changes to built environment that favor biking and walking	Become an Local and Regional Education Network or have a local bike education team that meets regularly and executes annual plan		Host a signature bicycling event in your community	
Put in a permanent bike counter					
Integrating Equity					
Who is included in your planning process? How is the community opinion integrated?	What are some physical improvements that increase street safety for all?	Who receives bicycle education? Do the recipients reflect the demographics of the community or region?	Are traffic laws being enforced? Are the laws being enforced equally?	Does participation at your encouragement event reflect the demographics of the community?	
Is the program or initiative decreasing health disparities and increasing equity?	Are infrastructure improvements equitably occurring in all parts of the community?	Are you tailoring your education to be engaging and useful for your audience?	What methods are being used to evaluate enforcement?	What barriers are there to participate in encouragement events?	
Are there any unintended consequences of a program? Is anyone being impacted negatively?	What would good community engagement around engineering look like in your community?	Is there a cost associated with education? Are scholarships available?	Is there trust between the whole community and law enforcement?	What can be done to eliminate these barriers?	
Can you think of an example of how equity intersects with evaluation and/or planning in your community?		What ways can you think of to make education more equitable?	If not, what is being done to build trust and relationships?		
			Reflect on your community and its law enforcement? What's working well? What needs improvement? How can equity play a role?		

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 5: Your Bike Friendly Action Plan

Using the Six Es Worksheet, list your ideas and next steps here.

Evaluation and Planning	Engineering	Education	Enforcement	Encouragement
Action Steps				

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 6: Meetings

Identify your team's next meeting with date and time before you leave: _____

How often does your team have the ability to meet? BikeMN recommends no less than once per quarter, but many groups meet more frequently. Consider your action plan and what's needed to complete it. If your team is smaller and has time constraints, it is better to cut back on your action plan than to feel overwhelmed later.

Our team will meet ☐Quarterly ☐Monthly ☐Bi-monthly

Optional: Our regular meeting date will be: (i.e. 2nd Tuesday at noon)

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 7: Technical Assistance

BikeMN offers varying levels of technical assistance to communities working to become more bike friendly. Contact us at info@bikemn.org to find out more. At a minimum, BikeMN will provide at least one conference call to communities who use and share their completed Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook with us.

BikeMN can help you identify goals to include in a proposal to partner with BikeMN. We have worked with many communities across Minnesota and can quickly help identify, through conversations, what might be helpful to focus on and include in your proposal. We can offer a proposal template as a starting point for you to work with.

BikeMN support options (summary):

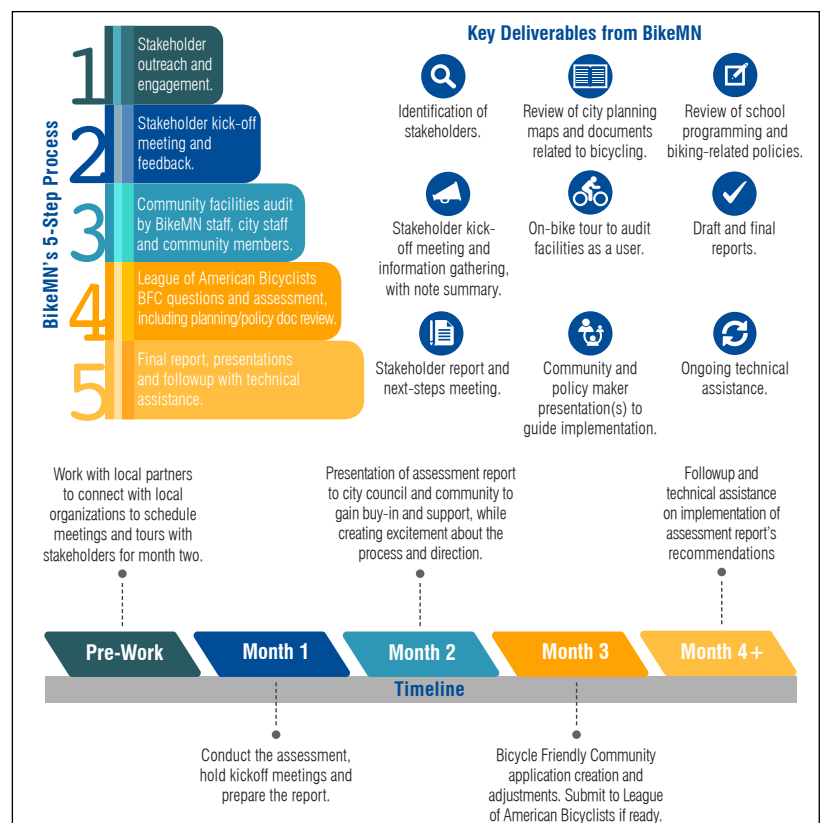
- BikeMN has experience working with communities, businesses, and universities who are applying for bicycle friendly recognition or simply working to become more bicycle-friendly places.
- BikeMN staff offers assistance that ranges from conversations to on-bike assessments, written reports, and more. Each community is in a different place so there's no one-size fits all solution. BikeMN has experience customizing project plans that fit each unique community.
- BikeMN facilitates identifying strengths and weaknesses of each community and identifying what it is that they want to work on to become more bicycle-friendly. For some towns, that means paint on the road, for others it's programming. Each community has their own goals and plans, and BikeMN works hard to help them achieve those goals.
- Typically the conversation starts when someone from the community approaches BikeMN and in some cases progresses to a full project plan.

Project scoping: charter, funding, and contract

Defining a project by creating a project charter helps the project stay in scope and on track. A project charter will also help to establish the funding source(s) and, if needed, capture required details for setting up a contract with BikeMN. Components the team should discuss and document include the following: project name (e.g. Bicycle Friendly Bemidji), local project manager (or community champion), start and end dates, stakeholders, project goals, measures of success, key milestones, and timeline. If you're not certain of some of these details, BikeMN can help you through this process.

Funding to complete a Bicycle Friendly Community project may be locally sourced or funded through state agencies, such as the Minnesota Department of Health or Minnesota Department of Transportation. BikeMN receives funding from the Minnesota Department of Health and other funding sources to work with communities to become more bicycle friendly, so you will want to check to find out if your community might qualify to be in-scope as a funded project through BikeMN. It is critical that the local lead or group identify a funding source and secure funding, since unfunded projects tend to have a difficult time getting off the ground and maintaining momentum to keep the project rolling.

Any community member is welcome to reach out to BikeMN to discuss the feasibility of a local Bicycle Friendly Community project. It may seem daunting to ask BikeMN about launching a project, if many of the details are not yet known. However, this should not be a concern. BikeMN staff is friendly and open to conversations about potential projects. If the project isn't ready to launch, BikeMN can help you identify that, guide you through the process to define your project next steps, and work with you to secure funding.



The typical BikeMN Bicycle Friendly Community Project Process.

Bicycle Friendly Community Workbook

Section 8: Communicate and Connect

Blog about your results

Storytelling is an excellent way to captivate your audience and provide an update to readers about an initiative that community members are interested in pursuing. Completing the workbook has guided you through the process of collecting and documenting data. Writing about the results will help you take one step further to share this information with local community members and others who may read your blog.

Documenting the results of the workbook in a blog post will also provide you with the opportunity to collect and organize your thoughts so future conversations with potential funding sources and BikeMN will be more focused and effective.

BikeMN would be interested in sharing your blog on our website and social media.

Like BikeMN on Facebook and follow us on Twitter

Did you know that BikeMN is on social media? BikeMN has a presence on both Facebook and Twitter. Please take a few minutes and Like our BikeMN Facebook page and follow us on Twitter.

BikeMN on Facebook, www.facebook.com/bikemn

BikeMN on Twitter, www.twitter.com/bikemn

Walk! Bike! Fun! Educators Network on Facebook, www.facebook.com/groups/WBFEducators

MN Corporate Bike Advocates Network on Facebook, www.facebook.com/groups/MNCorpBike

Sign up for the BikeMN newsletter at www.bikemn.org.

Join a network

BikeMN currently has two network groups. Monthly webinars alternate between advocacy and education topics. These groups make it easy for anyone to join from across the state of Minnesota. Would you like to join one of the networks? Check out the details and make a commitment to becoming more connected with others to share ideas and strategies. Contact BikeMN to join the listserv for one or both of these network groups.

MN Bicycle Advocates Network: Purpose – Connect local bicycle advocates statewide to share ideas and strategies, provide you with BikeMN representation at the State Capitol, and to foster dialogue and communication.

MN Bicycle Educators Network: Purpose – Connect local bike education stakeholders statewide to share ideas and strategies, provide you with BikeMN education tools and materials, and to foster dialogue and communication.

To join either of these networks, email info@bikemn.org.