



BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

DULUTH, MN

Fall 2013

The League of American Bicyclists has designated **Duluth** as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the **Bronze** level, because Duluth exhibits a sustained commitment to cycling. The reviewers felt that there is still “room to grow”, but that notable steps are being made in the right direction.

Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts and dedication to make Duluth a great place for cyclists.

Below, reviewers provided key recommendations to further promote bicycling in Duluth and a menu of additional pro-cycling measures that can be implemented in the short and long term. We strongly encourage you to use this feedback to build on your momentum and improve your community for bicyclists. There may also be initiatives, programs, and facilities that are not mentioned here that would benefit your bicycling culture, so please continue to try new things to increase your ridership, safety, and awareness!

To learn more about what federal funds are available for bicycle projects, use Advocacy Advance’s interactive [Find it, Fund it tool](#) to search for eligible **funding** programs by bike/ped project type or review the same information as a PDF [here](#).

The key measures Duluth should take to improve cycling:

- Have your Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) meet more frequently to support the implementation of the

recommendations below, and to ensure that the bicycle program is held accountable by citizens.

- Expanding the Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator’s time focused on bicycle projects would help in scaling up your BFC efforts. This staff person should spend more time on working closely with the Bicycle Advisory Committee, reviewing development proposals to ensure that local bicycle/pedestrian requirements are incorporated and to assess bicycling and walking impacts, developing and implementing educational and promotional programs, writing grant proposals, serving as the public contact for bicycling/walking inquiries and complaints, educating other staff about state and federal facilities standards and guidelines, and coordinating with neighboring cities, transit agencies and other departments to implement policies and projects. See [this report](#) on the importance of Bicycle & Pedestrian program staff.
- Increase the amount of [high quality bicycle parking](#) at popular destinations throughout the community. Residents of multi-family dwellings and public housing should have access to high quality bike parking as well. Regulations that require bike parking, e.g. for new developments, can secure private funding. See the bicycle parking ordinances of [Madison, Wisconsin](#) and [Santa Cruz, California](#). Also consider adding some [artistic bike racks](#) to enhance the sense of place of your community.

- Ensure that there is dedicated funding for the implementation of the bicycle master plan.
- Continue to expand the bike network and to increase network connectivity through the use of different types of [bike lanes](#), [cycle tracks](#) and [shared lane markings](#). On-street improvements coupled with the expansion of the off-street system [will encourage more people to cycle](#) and will improve safety. Ensure smooth transitions for bicyclists between the trail network and the street network. To address the challenging topography, point cyclists towards uphill routes that are not too steep, provide bike climbing lanes and have off-street paths zig-zag up the hill. These improvements will also increase the effectiveness of encouragement efforts by providing a broader range of facility choices for users of various abilities and comfort levels.
- Implement [road diets](#) in appropriate locations to make streets more efficient and safe. Use the newly created space for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Host, sponsor and/or encourage a greater variety of social and family-friendly bicycle-themed community events year-round, such as a bike movie festival, a 4th of July bike parade, an “increase-your-appetite” Thanksgiving community ride, a dress-like-Santa community ride before Christmas, a bicycle fashion show (stylish alternatives to spandex), a Halloween bike decoration competition, a bike to the arts event, etc. Work closely with local bicycle groups, bike shops and

Benefits of Further Improving Duluth for Cycling

Further increasing bicycle use can **improve the environment** by reducing the impact on residents of pollution and noise, limiting greenhouse gases, and improving the quality of public spaces; **Reduce congestion** by shifting short trips (the majority of trips) out of cars. This will also make communities more accessible for public transport, walking, essential car travel, emergency services, and deliveries; **Save lives** by creating safer conditions for bicyclists and as a direct consequence improve the safety of all other road users. **Research shows** that increasing the number of bicyclists on the street improves bicycle safety; **Increase opportunities** for residents of all ages to participate socially and economically in the community, regardless of income or ability.

Greater choice of travel modes also increases independence, especially among [seniors](#) and [children](#); **Boost the economy** by creating a community that is an attractive destination for new residents, tourists and businesses; **Enhance recreational opportunities**, especially for children, and further contribute to the quality of life in the community; **Save public funds** by increasing the efficient use of public space, reducing the need for costly new road infrastructure, preventing crashes, improving the health of the community, and increasing the use of public transport; **Enhance public safety and security** by increasing the number of “eyes on the street” and providing more options for movement in the event of emergencies, natural disasters, and major public events; **Improve the health and well being** of the population by promoting routine physical activity.

schools. Provide appropriate safety measures such as road closures or police escorts.

- Encourage local public agencies, businesses and organizations to promote cycling to the workplace and to seek recognition through the free [Bicycle Friendly Business program](#). Businesses will profit from a [healthier, happier and more productive workforce](#) while the community would profit from less congestion, better air quality, public bike parking in prime locations provided by businesses, new and powerful partners in advocating for bike infrastructure and programs on the local, state and federal level, and business-sponsored public bike events or classes. Your community's government should be the model employer for the rest of the community. See what the Colorado-based New Belgium Brewing Company is doing [here](#).
- Have police officers distribute helmets, bike lights and bike locks (or coupons to the local bike shop for each item) to encourage all types of cyclists to ride more safely, discourage bike theft and remove the barriers to attaining these essential bike accessories.
- Ask police officers to target both motorist and cyclist infractions to ensure that laws are being followed by all road users. Ensure that bicycle/car crashes are investigated thoroughly and that citations are given fairly.

Menu of additional recommendations to further promote bicycling:

Engineering

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Adopt a [Complete Streets](#) policy and offer implementation guidance. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right-of-way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists – making your community a better place to live.
- Develop and implement streetscape design guidelines that foster a pleasant and comfortable environment for pedestrians and cyclists. Beautiful streetscaping has also shown to increase community livability and pride, reduce crime and increase property values.
- Offer more [ongoing training](#) opportunities on accommodating bicyclists for engineering and planning staff.

- Consider passing an ordinance or policy that would require larger employers to provide shower facilities and other end-of-trip amenities.
- Ensure that the standards for bike parking conform to [APBP guidelines](#).
- Promote active transportation by working to reduce traffic speeds where appropriate. Use traffic calming measures and low speed design principles to achieve higher compliance rates and encourage speeds lower than the state minimum. Speed [has been identified](#) as a key risk factor in road traffic injuries, influencing both the risk of a road traffic crash as well as the severity of the injuries that result from crashes. For instance, pedestrians and cyclists have a 90% chance of survival if hit by a car travelling at a speed of 20 mph or below, but less than a 50% chance of surviving an impact of 30 mph or above. [Studies](#) also generally report a positive association between traffic safety (perceived and/or measured) and walking and cycling, particularly among women. Join the statewide coalitions (BikeMN, MN Complete Streets, etc.) in their effort to lower the statewide minimum speed.
- Implement more transportation policies and programs that encourage multi-modal transportation choices, such as no minimum car parking standards or shared-parking allowances to complement your community's infrastructure investments and programs.

- Adequately maintain your on and off road bicycle infrastructure to ensure usability and safety. Increase the frequency of sweepings and address potholes and other hazards faster.

Long Term Goals

- Develop solutions to physical barriers in order to provide convenient bicycle access to all parts of the community.
- Develop a system of bicycle boulevards, utilizing quiet neighborhood streets, that creates an attractive, convenient, and comfortable cycling environment welcoming to cyclists of all ages and skill levels. Learn how to do it at <http://www.ibpi.usp.pdx.edu/guidebook.php>. Use the [Bicycle Boulevards section](#) of the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide for design guidelines.
- Since arterial and collector roads are the backbone of every transportation network, it is essential to provide designated bicycle facilities along these roads and calm traffic speeds to allow bicyclists of all skill levels to reach their destinations quickly and safely. On roads with posted speed limits of more than 35 mph, it is recommended to provide protected bicycle infrastructure, such as [cycle tracks](#), [buffered bike lanes](#) or parallel 10ft wide shared-use paths.

- Make intersections safer and more comfortable for cyclists. Particularly the intersection of E. Skyline, Kenwood Ave and 11th Ave E needs to be fixed. Include elements such as color, signage, medians, signal detection, and pavement markings. The level of treatment required for bicyclists at an intersection will depend on the bicycle facility type used, whether bicycle facilities are intersecting, the adjacent street function and land use. See the [NACTO design guidelines](#) and the 2012 [AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#) for recommended intersection treatments.

Education

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Implement the new Bicycle and Pedestrian Safe Routes to School curriculum in all schools. Encourage the school district to adopt Minnesota's new Walk! Bike! Fun! curriculum
- It is essential to make both motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road. Continue to expand your public education campaign promoting the share the road message.
- Consider creating a volunteer-based Bicycle Ambassador program. Have Ambassadors attend community and private events year-round to talk to residents and visitors of all ages about bicycling and to give bicycle

safety demonstrations. They can also offer bike commuting presentations for area businesses.

- Offer more adult education opportunities at the YMCA and community centers targeting the 'interested but concerned' bicyclist. Ensure that the curriculum addresses the 'vertical challenge'.
- Host a Traffic Skills 101 or bike commuter course for engineers and planners to help them better understand cyclists' needs. For more information visit: www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/
- Host a League Cycling Instructor (LCI) seminar to increase the number of certified LCIs in your community. Having local instructors will enable your community to expand cycling education, recruit knowledgeable cycling ambassadors, deliver education to motorists, provide cycling education to adults and kids, and have experts available to assist in encouragement programs. Visit <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/> for more information.
- Start a bicyclist ticket diversion program. Road users given a citation are offered an opportunity to waive fees for violations by attending a bicycling education course. This course should include a classroom and on-road component. See what [Pima County](#) and [San Diego County](#) have done.

Encouragement

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Consider offering a ‘Summer Streets’ type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and offering the space to cyclists, pedestrians and group exercise events.
- Set up and promote a bicycle-themed community celebration or social ride each time a new bicycle related project is completed. This is a great way to show off the community’s good efforts and introduces new users to the improvement.
- Encourage the University of Minnesota Duluth and other local institutions of higher education to promote cycling and to seek recognition through the [Bicycle Friendly University program](#). Many colleges and universities have embraced the growing enthusiasm for more bicycle-friendly campuses by incorporating bike share programs, bike co-ops, bicycling education classes and policies to promote bicycling as a preferred means of transportation. The community could potentially profit as well: Communities near a BFU such as Stanford or University of California at Davis have a very high number of regular bicyclists (as many students bike to campus, shops and restaurants), less congestion around campus, safer streets and university-hosted public bicycle events, programs and classes.

- Develop a series of short (2-5 mi.) (themed) loop routes around the community and provide appropriate way-finding signage. Integrate these routes into local bike maps. See what Arlington, VA has done at <http://www.bikearlington.com/tasks/sites/bike/assets/File/Arlington-Loop.jpg>

Enforcement

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Ask police officers to use targeted information and enforcement to encourage motorists and cyclists to share the road safely. This could be in the form of a brochure or tip card explaining each user’s rights and responsibilities, such as “A Pocket Guide to Minnesota Bicycle Laws” produced by the Minnesota State Non-Motorized Transportation Advisory Committee. Have information material available in Spanish, if applicable.
- Enforcement practices could also include positive enforcement ticketing. Police officers could team up with local stores to reward safe cycling practices by handing out gift certificates to cyclists who are “caught” following the law.
- Provide safety amenities such as adequate path lighting and emergency call boxes, and offer services such as non-mandatory bike registration and missing bike recovery assistance.

- Pass more laws that protect cyclists, e.g. implement specific penalties for motorists for failing to yield to a cyclist when turning, make it illegal to park or drive in a bike lane (intersections excepted), implement penalties for motor vehicle users that ‘door’ cyclists, ban cell phone use while driving, specifically protect all vulnerable road users, formalize a legal passing distance of 3 feet, and make it illegal to harass a cyclist.

Evaluation/Planning

- Ensure dedicated funding for the Bicycle Master Plan.
- Conduct official pre/post evaluations of bicycle-related projects in order to study the change in use, car speed and crash numbers. This data will be valuable to build public and political support for future bicycle-related projects.
- Adopt a target level of bicycle use (e.g. percent of trips) to be achieved within a specific timeframe, and ensure data collection necessary to monitor progress.
- Expand efforts to evaluate bicycle crash statistics and produce a specific plan to reduce the number of crashes

in the community. Available tools include [*Intersection Magic*](#) and the [*Pedestrian and Bicyclist Crash Analysis Tool*](#). See the report [*Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City 1996-2005*](#)

- Consider measuring the Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) on community roads and at intersections, to be able to identify the most appropriate routes for inclusion in the community bicycle network, determine weak links and hazards, prioritize sites needing improvement, and evaluate alternate treatments for improving bike-friendliness of a roadway or intersection:
<http://www.bikelib.org/bike-planning/bicycle-level-of-service/> (roads) and
<http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/library/details.cfm?id=4425> (intersections).
- Establish a mechanism that ensures that bicycle facilities and programs are implemented in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

For more ideas and best practices please visit the [Bicycle Friendly Community Resource Page](#).