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Land Use Tracker

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GETTING THE WHEELS ROLLING:

USING POLICY TO CREATE BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

By Sara Zimmerman, J.D. and Karen Kramer, J.D., ChangeLab Solutions

Bicycling improves our health, benefits the local economy, and helps create more vibrant, sustainable communities. But even as more and more people are getting around by bicycle, there is still tremendous room for growth in the number of people who bicycle. One of the most powerful ways to increase the amount of bicycle travel is the adoption of bicycle friendly laws and policies. Policies can remove obstacles to bicycling, create incentives for bicycling infrastructure, and make it easier and safer to bicycle. That means that state and local policymakers have a pivotal role to play in the future of bicycling. But some policymakers aren't sure where to start. Others are daunted by the challenge of how to effectively use policy to promote bicycling, especially in light of the vast array of state and local policy options.

Why Should Communities Care About Bicycling?

The average American drives more than 13,000 miles every year.¹ We use our cars to do just about everything, from picking up milk a few blocks from home, to commuting to work, to visiting friends. Our heavy reliance on cars for transportation is a legacy of extensive public investment in suburbs, highways, and roads designed for cars, and little investment in public transit, bikeways, and walkways. In recent years, the cost of our auto-dependency has become increasingly stark. Motor vehicle emissions pollute the air; increase asthma and respiratory illness, particularly among children and older adults; and contribute to climate change.² Constant travel by car eliminates many opportunities for routine physical activity, which is one reason why two-thirds of American adults today are overweight or obese, and at higher risk for heart disease, diabetes, strokes, cancer, and other health problems.³

Our car centered lifestyle has other negative byproducts as well. Car crashes are one of the leading causes of death in the country, and dependence on a volatile oil market creates economic uncertainty and foreign policy vulnerability.⁴ Congestion is also a serious problem in most urban areas. Each year we waste \$87 billion on lost productivity and fuel while stuck in traffic.⁵ There are also less measureable social impacts. Time spent in traffic is time that could be spent with family or friends. Unlike bicycling or walking, which allows for interaction with passing friends and neighbors, traveling by car can be an isolating experience.

Bicycling on the Rise

Today, bicycling is getting a fresh look as a practical alternative to driving. Bicycling is being welcomed back as part of a movement toward creating lively, sustainable

neighborhoods and city centers where streets are designed to be used not just by cars, but also by people bicycling and walking. After decades of steady growth in driving, the number of miles driven by each American per year has dropped for almost 10 years in a row.⁶ Bicycling rates are also on the rise. Between 1977 and 2009, the total number of annual bike trips in the United States more than tripled.⁷ Almost twice as many commuters biked to work in 2009 as in 2000.⁸

The Role of Policy

Achieving a successful bicycle friendly community involves creating a set of conditions that make bicycling safe, convenient, acceptable, and accessible so that people will choose to travel by bicycle. Not surprisingly, studies show that a coordinated package of policies and programs that support and reinforce each other is “the trademark of every city that has succeeded at

Let's Ride!

4 Requirements for a Bikeable Community
To decide to bicycle, people need biking to be safe and convenient. They need access to a bicycle, and they won't bike unless it seems like something normal and worthwhile. Here are a few of the many approaches that can help get people bicycling around town.

Safety
Travel by bicycle is sufficiently safe
APPROACHES INCLUDE

- BIKE-FRIENDLY TRAFFIC CONTROL & STREET DESIGN** Special bike signals, lanes, and other features keep bicyclists safe
- COMPLETE STREETS** New and renovated streets are required to accommodate everyone, including bikes, cars, and pedestrians
- TRAFFIC CALMING** Streets include features like median islands, speed bumps, and roundabouts to reduce speed and other hazards

Convenience
Travel by bicycle is convenient
APPROACHES INCLUDE

- BIKE PARKING** New housing and commercial developments must have bicycle parking
- BICYCLES ON BOARD** Bikes can be brought on public transit, and vehicles include storage racks
- 20 MINUTE NEIGHBORHOOD** Plans and zoning codes ensure that everyday destinations (work, school, stores, services) are within convenient biking distance

Access
People have access to bicycles
APPROACHES INCLUDE

- BIKE SHARE** Affordable programs make bicycles available to people for short trips around town, especially to and from transit
- BIKE FLEETS FOR GOVERNMENT** Local government agencies provide employees with bikes for short-distance work travel

Social Acceptability
Travel by bicycle is seen as socially acceptable and worthwhile
APPROACHES INCLUDE

- OPEN STREETS** Communities designate certain roadways as "car-free" on select days
- SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOLS** Kids are encouraged to bike and walk to school through education and infrastructure improvements
- DRIVERS' ED** Bike safety principles and rights are included in traffic school, drivers' manuals, and written license tests

Share-a-Bike PROGRAM

STREET CLOSED TO CARS EVERY SAT & SUN

Graphic: Karen Parry, Black Graphics, Getting the Wheels Rolling, 2013.

significantly raising cycling levels and improving safety.”⁹ Many jurisdictions, however, are not aware of the many ways that local and state policies can help to achieve the goal of increasing bicycling rates. The table on page 4 provides examples of policies that local governments and communities can take to promote bicycling. Over time, such policies can establish a new social norm in which residents see bicycling as a practical and appealing way to travel short distances.

Conclusion

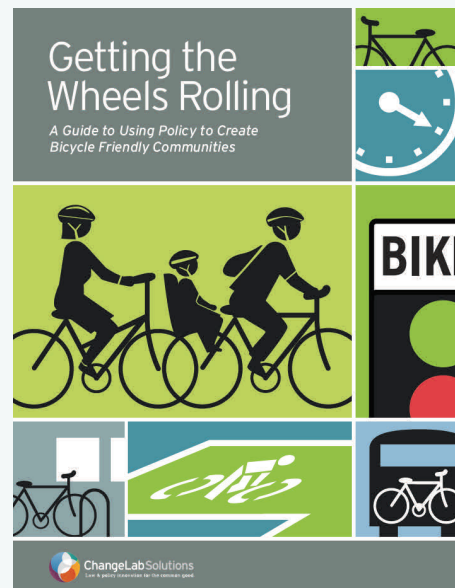
Creating a bicycle friendly community is a significant commitment. But it can be done – even where communities are starting with low bicycling rates and little existing bicycle infrastructure. Using policy to make bicycling an integral part of daily life is a win for everyone, as individuals become active and healthy, neighborhoods grow to be more lively and sustainable, and local economies and the environment benefit.

References

- 1 US Department of Transportation, “Average Annual Miles per Driver by Age Group,” *Federal Highway Administration* (April 4, 2011), www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/onh00/bar8.htm.
- 2 Asthma rates are at their highest levels ever, with nearly one in 10 children and almost one in 12 Americans of all ages suffering from asthma. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Asthma in the US: Growing Every Year,” *Vital Signs* (May 4, 2011), www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/asthma; US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), “Light-Duty Technology, Carbon Dioxide Emissions, and Fuel Economy Trends: 1975 Through 2011,” *Transportation and Climate Division, Office of Transportation and Air Quality* (March 2012), www.epa.gov/OMSWWW/cert/mpg/fetrends/2012/420r12001a.pdf. For every 1 mile pedaled rather than driven, nearly 1 pound of CO₂ (0.88 lbs) is saved. See US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), “Light-Duty Technology, Carbon Dioxide Emissions, and Fuel Economy Trends: 1975 Through 2009,” *Transportation and Climate Division, Office of Transportation and Air Quality*, U.S EPA (November 2009): i, www.epa.gov/oms/cert/mpg/fetrends/420r09014.pdf.
- 3 Cynthia L. Ogden *et al.*, “Prevalence of Obesity and Trends in Body Mass Index Among US Children and Adolescents, 1999–2010,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 307, no. 5 (2012): 483–490, doi:10.1001/jama.2012.40. People who sit all day have 147% increased risk of heart attack or stroke and 112% increased risk of developing diabetes. Andre Picard, “Why the sedentary life is killing us,” *The Globe and Mail*, October 16, 2012, <http://m.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/why-the-sedentary-life-is-killing-us/article4613704/?service=mobility>; See also Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Causes and Consequences: What Causes Overweight and Obesity,” (April 27, 2012), www.cdc.gov/obesity/causes/health.html.
- 4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “Motor Vehicle Safety,” *Injury Prevention & Control* (October 3 2012), www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety. Millions of people are also treated in emergency rooms every year for car accident injuries

For More Information

This article was excerpted from: *Getting the Wheels Rolling: A Guide to Using Policy to Create Bicycle Friendly Communities*. ChangeLab Solutions. 2013. Available at: <http://changelabsolutions.org>.



- (2.3 million in 2009). The economic cost is also high: In 2005, the lifetime costs of crash related deaths and injuries among drivers and passengers were \$70 billion. *Id.*
- 5 In addition to being inconvenient, congestion also wastes nearly 3.9 billion gallons of gas per year in the US. Tim Lomax *et al.*, “Real-Timing the 2010 Urban Mobility Report,” *University Transportation Center for Mobility, Texas Transportation Institute* (February 2011), http://utcm.tamu.edu/publications/final_reports/Lomax_10-65-55.pdf.
 - 6 After peaking in 2004, vehicle miles traveled (“VMT”) per capital has declined each year for a total drop of 7.5%. The trend downward has been attributed to a variety of factors, including: Baby Boomer retirement; decreasing enthusiasm for cars among many young adults; development trends toward more compact and mixed-use designs; and demand-side policy efforts, alongside the culmination of certain broad societal trajectories, including households in which both parents work outside the home and own cars. Eric Sundquist, “Per Capital VMT ticks down for eighth straight year,” *State Smart Transportation Initiative*, February 25, 2013, <http://bit.ly/WK7FyH>. See also Benjamin Davis and Tony Dutzik, “Transportation and the New Generation: Why Young People Are Driving Less and What It Means for Transportation Policy,” *Frontier Group and US P.I.R.G. Education Fund* (April 2012), www.ssti.us/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Transportation_and_the_New_Generation.pdf.
 - 7 The rise since 1990 has been particularly dramatic in urban areas. John Pucher, Ralph Buehler, Mark Seinen, “Bicycling Renaissance in North America? An Update and Re-appraisal of Cycling Trends and Policies,” *Transportation Research Part A* 45 (2011): 459 and Figure 4, http://policy.rutgers.edu/faculty/pucher/TRA960_01April2011.pdf.
 - 8 *Ibid.* at 452.
 - 9 John Pucher and Ralph Buehler, “Promoting Cycling for Daily Travel: Conclusions and Lessons from Across the Globe,” in *City Cycling*, ed. John Pucher and Ralph Buehler (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2012), 350; see also Susan Handy, Eva Heinen, and Kevin Krizek, “Cycling in Small Cities,” in *City Cycling*, 266–67.

Safety	
Complete Streets	Require new and renovated streets to provide safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and people with disabilities. Measure how well roads meet the needs of each of these users.
Road Design Guidelines	Permit and encourage transportation engineers to use designs that maximize bicycle safety and convenience.
Traffic Control	Use traffic control devices (i.e. bike signals, bike boxes and detectors) to limit confusion and risk at intersections.
Traffic Calming	Reduce vehicle speeds by using traffic control infrastructure such as roundabouts, speed bumps, medians, t-intersections, and bulb outs.
Retrofit Existing Roads	Encourage conversion of four-lane streets into three lanes, with a lane going in each direction, a central two-way left turn lane, and bikeways in both directions.
Anti-Dooring Protection	Require safe design of bike lanes adjacent to parallel parking and encourage drivers and passengers to look for oncoming bicycles prior to opening car doors.
Convenience	
Bikeable Destinations	Use zoning, developer incentives, and land use policies to ensure that sufficient destinations are located within biking distance.
Bike Parking	Install bicycle parking racks near government buildings, libraries, recreational areas, and shopping and entertainment districts.
Bicycle Friendly Transit	Provide safe bike access routes and bike parking near transit stops and allow people to take bikes with them when they board buses.
Parking Garages	Require parking lots and garages to provide bicycle racks as a condition of renewing their business license.
Commercial and Multifamily Development	Require new commercial and multifamily development to include short-term and long-term bicycle parking. Use tax incentives to encourage bicycle parking in existing development.
Commuter Policies	Provide a non-taxable reimbursement to employees who commute to work by bicycle; provide a cash allowance in lieu of car parking spaces; and allow employees to bring bicycles into office buildings.
True Costs of Driving	Implement policies such as car-free zones, congestion pricing, and higher costs for parking to shift the cost of driving onto drivers.
Social Acceptability	
Open Streets	Close certain streets to motor vehicle traffic on select days.
Bicycle Friendly Business District	Create a bicycle friendly business district featuring bicycle parking and discounts or promotions for customers who arrive by bicycle.
Safe Routes to Schools	Support biking and walking to school through education, encouragement, and infrastructure improvements.
Bike to Work Day	Establish an annual bike to work day/week/month and provide incentives for participation.
Access	
Bike Share	Provide bicycles for short trips at strategic locations around town.
Employee Bike Fleets	Subsidize or provide bicycles for employees who want to use bicycles for work trips.
Bike Distribution and Maintenance	Establish a bike redistribution program that transfers abandoned or donated bicycles to residents who want them.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLANNING IN ACTION: THE CASE OF PORTAGE COUNTY, WISCONSIN

By Kristy SeBlonka, Center for Land Use Education

Nestled in the center of the state, Portage County is a largely rural county with just over 70,000 people. Many residents enjoy walking and bicycling. On almost any day of the year, residents and visitors of all ages can be found bicycling and walking on urban and rural streets. Each year an estimated 100,000 people use the Green Circle Trail, a 26-mile scenic loop that traverses Stevens Point and connects the city with over 20 miles of additional trails in the county.¹ Some travel by bicycle or foot for recreation or exercise, while others run errands or commute to work or school. Compared to other cities in Wisconsin, Stevens Point has the highest percentage of bicycle commuters in the state at 5.9 percent.²

Portage County resident and visitor interest in bicycling and walking follows national trends. According to the 2009 National Household Travel Survey, trips by walking or bicycling in the United State have increased from 9.5 percent in 2001 to 11.9 percent in 2009.³ Compared to other states, Wisconsin ranks seventeenth in the nation in rates of bicycling and walking.⁴ In addition, the Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020 and the Pedestrian Policy Plan 2020 include goals to increase the level of bicycling and walking in Wisconsin and to reduce the number of crashes involving bicycles and pedestrians. Recognizing this, Portage County and the city of Stevens Point have made efforts to identify and address pedestrian and bicycling issues in their planning and zoning efforts.⁵

A variety of factors influence whether residents and visitors feel that walking and bicycling are safe, efficient, and enjoyable modes of transportation. Studies suggest that policies that “provide provisions for and promote bicycling and walking” result in higher levels of bicycling and walking.⁶ In Central Wisconsin, Portage County and the city of Stevens Point are



In 2010, the City of Stevens Point was awarded \$141,000 from the Transportation Enhancement Planning Program to undertake long-range bicycle and pedestrian planning. In this photo, residents are seen cycling the Green Circle Trail.

embracing policies to increase bicycling and walking, such as (1) planning for bicycling and walking; (2) Complete Streets policies and infrastructure; and (3) bicycle parking. An overview of each issue is provided below.

Planning for Bicycling and Walking

Recently, Portage County led an 18-month effort to create a Countywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which was approved by the county board on April 15. This was the first plan of its type to include both the urban and rural parts of the county, as well as a Safe Routes to School component. As part of the planning process, three ad-hoc committees were formed representing urban, rural and technical concerns. The committees included residents and local government representatives from the county and municipalities. This structure ensured that input from each municipality was integrated into the detailed plan. It also served to enhance relationships among municipalities. Community member and Urban Committee participant Bob Fisch noted, “The overall tone of the discussions



The Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan includes a rural and urban component and input from all local communities. In this photo, cyclists enjoy one of the many unpaved paths found in Schmeeckle Reserve.

acknowledged that there is much to do to improve bicycling and walking in Portage County, while also demonstrating that there is a great deal of interest in working to make such improvements. Time and time again, as these discussions took place, the plan document was heralded as an outstanding blueprint for how to proceed.”⁷

The resulting plan takes a well-rounded approach by focusing on the Five E’s promoted by the League of American Bicyclists: Engineering, Encouragement, Education, Enforcement, and Evaluation. The plan supports these goals using the following language:

- *Strengthen connections between neighborhoods, schools, parks, employment, and commercial centers for bicyclists and pedestrians.*
- *Increase the bicycle and walking commute mode share across the county.*
- *Maintain and enhance infrastructure that supports bicycle and pedestrian activities.*
- *Strengthen and enhance safety for bicycle and pedestrian activities.*
- *Enhance intergovernmental cooperation and coordination of transportation facilities across Portage County.*

- *Provide adequate bicycle and pedestrian education, encouragement, and enforcement efforts targeted at high risk activities by all road users.*
- *Create and provide opportunities for evaluation and assessment of bicycling and walking in Portage County; continue to monitor the implementation of this Plan.*

Each goal includes objectives and policies that support its completion.

Complete Streets Policies and Infrastructure

The term Complete Streets means that transportation is planned and designed for community members of different ages, abilities and modes of travel, including bicycling and walking.⁸ Both the United States and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation have Complete Streets policies.⁹ In addition, some cities and counties have passed Complete Streets policies.¹⁰

The Portage County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan recommends that the county adopt a Complete Streets resolution and encourages local municipalities to adopt their own Complete Streets resolutions. This is an important step for formalizing some of the work that municipalities are already doing. For example, the City of Stevens Point’s 1997 Metropolitan Area Bicycle / Pedestrian Plan advocated for a bicycle route system with signage. The city now has 10 miles of dedicated bike lanes and 30 miles of signed bicycle routes.¹¹ The city was also considering adding bike lanes on high-capacity roads, including those involved in the reconstruction of Business 51. Adopting a Complete Streets policy, as recommended in the county plan, would help formalize and unify the city’s approach.

Bicycle Parking

One barrier to bicycling is not having safe and convenient bicycle parking.¹² The county plan indicates that urban and rural areas should provide adequate bicycle parking, particularly near schools, government buildings, commercial areas, and parks.

While attending a recent meeting of the city plan commission, a local citizen who had been involved in the county planning process proposed bicycle parking regulations for the city's zoning code. The committee developed the following language after reviewing the bicycle parking guidelines developed by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals¹³:

Apartment, mixed use, and non-residential development providing more than 20 but less than 100 vehicle parking spaces shall be required to provide six bicycle parking spaces. Additionally, one bicycle parking space shall be provided for each additional 25 vehicle parking spaces, or fraction thereof.

The zoning code further stipulates that bicycle parking should be within 120 feet of the main building entrance, and be of high-quality construction that is unlikely to damage bicycle wheels.¹⁴

Conclusion

Portage County's impact on walking and bicycling as a mode of transportation will depend on the extent to which their plan is implemented. One of the first major decisions facing the county is the long-term governance structure for plan implementation. As with the planning process, implementation will require communication and collaboration across multiple departments and units of government. This could require a change of behavior.

Associate Planner Sarah Wallace notes, "We're very close to taking a step to do something different than what we've done in the past." Many communities with a bicycle and pedestrian plan form metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to provide governance. Alternatively, the county could maintain an ad hoc committee or choose another path. Regardless of which structure is selected, the plan provides a solid foundation for next steps, and Wallace is available to help municipalities, community groups, and others learn about the plan and how it applies to them.



Photo by KT Element

In 2014, the League of American Bicyclists named the City of Stevens Point a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community for its commitment to bicycling promotion, education, infrastructure, and policies. In this photo, residents walk their bikes along a paved path bordering the Wisconsin River.

For More Information

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References

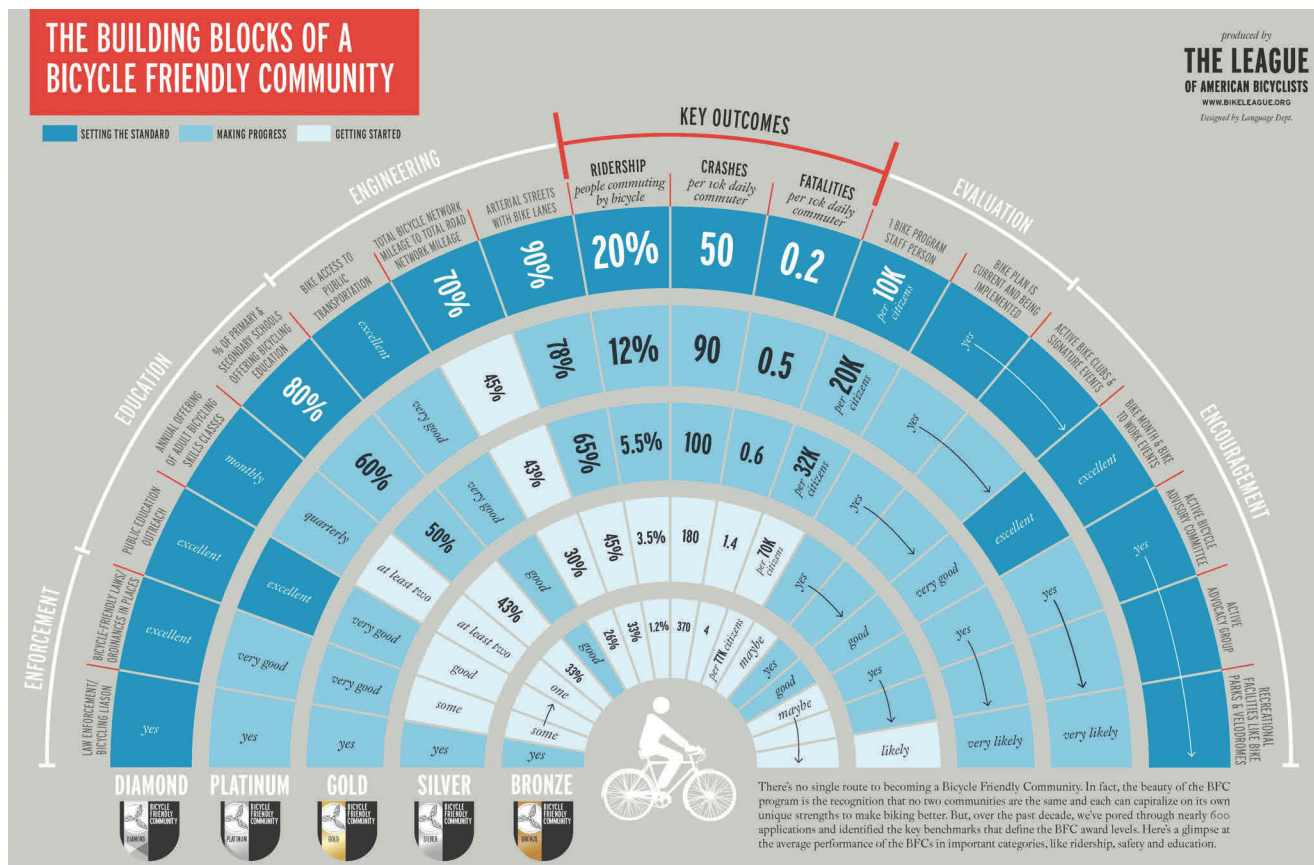
- 1 See the Green Circle Trail website, <http://greencircletrail.org>.
- 2 Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin. 2011 *Wisconsin Bicycling Benchmarking Report*.
- 3 See Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center, available at www.pedbikeinfo.org/data/factsheet_general.cfm.
- 4 Alliance for Biking and Walking. 2013. *Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report*.
- 5 League of American Bicyclists. Bicycle Friendly Cities. Accessed at www.bikeleague.org/bfa/awards.
- 6 Alliance for Biking and Walking. 2013. *Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report*.
- 7 Read the full blog post at <http://pokypedalingstevenspoint.org/2014/03/20/portage-county-bikeped-plan-excellent-discussion-on-final-plan-document-concludes-with-committee-approval>.
- 8 To learn more about Complete Streets, see "Paving the Way for Complete Streets" in the Spring 2013 issue of *The Land Use Tracker*.
- 9 See Wisconsin State Statutes 84.01(35).
- 10 The city and county of La Crosse have adopted Green Street Policies. Available at: www.getactivelacrosse.org/be-active/complete-streets.
- 11 Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin. 2011 *Wisconsin Bicycling Benchmarking Report*.
- 12 Alliance for Biking and Walking. 2013. *Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report*.
- 13 *Bicycle Parking Guidelines*, 2nd Edition, 2010. Available at: www.apbp.org/?page=publications.
- 14 Stevens Point Zoning Code <http://stevenspoint.com/index.aspx?NID=206>.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES: HOW DOES YOUR COMMUNITY RANK?

In May 2014 the League of American Bicyclists announced its latest round of Bicycle Friendly Communities. Thirteen Wisconsin communities attained Gold, Silver or Bronze status through the voluntary ranking system. New to the list this year, the City of Menomonie in Dunn County was awarded Bronze status. Among its many accomplishments, the city was recognized for its city-wide bicycle infrastructure, new bicycle rack and bicycle parking ordinance, access to the Red Cedar State Trail, and efforts to host the North Star Grand Prix. A total of 309 communities were recognized from 48 states.

The League also ranked states across five categories: legislation and enforcement, policies and programs, infrastructure and funding, education and encouragement, and evaluation and planning. In 2014, Wisconsin ranked third among all states with a score of 56.9 out of 100. This is an improvement from 2013 when the state ranked eighth with a score of 52.1. Scoring details and recommendations for improvement are shown on page 9.

Gold	
Madison	(Population) 221,551
Silver	
La Crosse	51,818
Bronze	
Appleton	72,563
Eau Claire	101,353
Fitchburg	25,260
Menomonie (New for 2014)	16,264
Milwaukee	554,965
Onalaska	17,736
River Falls	15,308
Sheboygan County	115,507
Shorewood	13,267
Stevens Point	26,717
Sturgeon Bay	9,144



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BICYCLE FRIENDLY STATE

2014 REPORT CARD

Wisconsin

RANKING # 3

Regional Rankings


Rank (1-50)		Score (1-100)
2	Minnesota	62
3	Wisconsin	57
11	Illinois	53
14	Michigan	50
25	Iowa	39
37	Indiana	27









Category Scores

(1 = Low 5 = High)

3	Legislation and Enforcement
4	Policies and Programs
2	Infrastructure and Funding
4	Education and Encouragement
3	Evaluation and Planning

Top Ten Signs of Success

 = New in 2014

	People Commuting by Bike (> 1%)
	Safe Passing/Vulnerable User Law
	Complete Streets Policy
	Committed State Funding
	Active State Advocacy Group
	State Bicycle Plan (adopted after 2004)
	Share the Road Campaign
	Bicycle Education for Police
	Emphasis in Highway Safety Plan
	Top 10 State for Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Spending

Overall Points

56.9 of 100 **2013:** 52.1 of 100

Suggestions for Improvement

- Adopt a vulnerable road user law that increases penalties for a motorist that injures or kills a bicyclist or pedestrian.
- Develop a Police Officer Standards and Training (POST) curriculum for new and continuing officers.
- Collect data regarding enforcement actions against motorists based on incidents with bicycles such as traffic tickets issued, prosecutions, or convictions.
- Increase the percentage of state highway network that has paved shoulders or bike lanes greater than or equal to 4 feet wide.
- Ensure that no funds from the Transportation Alternatives program are transferred for purposes other than bicycling and walking projects.
- Spend more federal funding on bicyclists and pedestrians. Adopt project prioritization criteria for rules of the road, relevant laws, state bike routes, and other necessary information.
- Hold a bicycle ride sponsored by the Governor and/or legislators to show constituents that their elected officials support bicycling.
- Adopt performance measures to decrease bicycle fatalities.
- Adopt a mode share goal for biking to encourage the integration of bicycle transportation needs into all transportation and land use policy and project decisions.

THE HISTORY OF BICYCLING IN WISCONSIN

Excerpted from the Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan 2020, WisDOT

Bicycles first gained popularity in Wisconsin over 100 years ago as a practical transportation and recreation vehicle for adults. In 1890, a thousand adults in Milwaukee owned cycles or “wheels.” Several years later, this figure climbed to 15,000 statewide. Bicycle enthusiasts quickly began to organize. The Wisconsin division of the League of American Wheelman (now the League of American Bicyclists) made reports on road conditions and urged their club members to contact local and state officials.

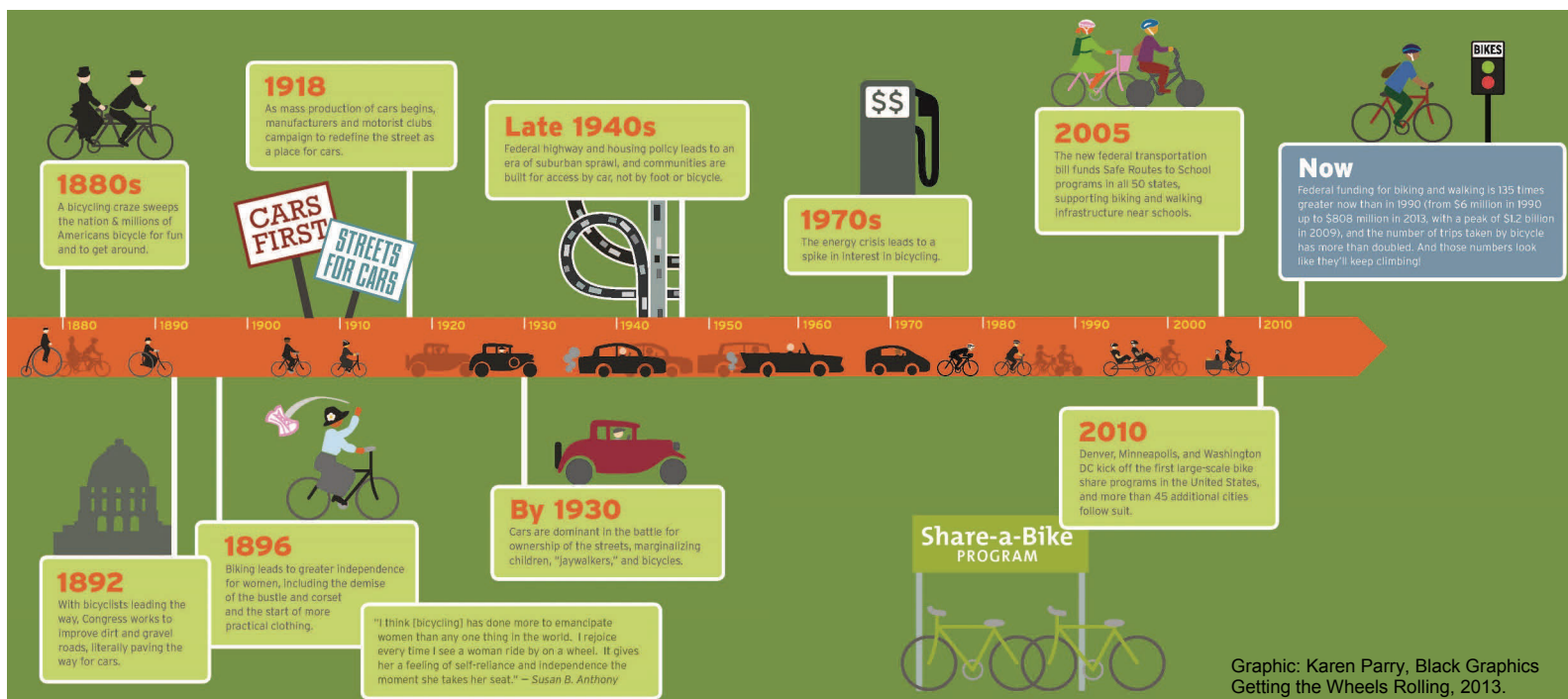
At the turn of the century, enthusiasm for biking waned with the emergence of the automobile. Biking made a bit of a comeback during World War II, but sales were restricted due to the war. At this time, there were an estimated 250,000 bicycles in the state, and 150,000 of those were registered.

During the 1950s and 1960s, growth in the popularity of biking increased as the “baby boom” generation used the bicycle for recreation and short trips. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the “bicycle boom” occurred as young adults returned to cycling and popularized lightweight 10-speed bicycles.

In response to the energy crisis and bicycle boom of the 1970s, state agencies authored several reports providing guidance to local communities and counties experiencing increased bike ridership. During this time, funding became available for bike paths in parks and parkways, counties established countywide bicycle route systems, and the popular rails-to-trails program was established.

In the 1980s, state agencies cooperated to produce the Wisconsin Bicycle Escape Map. It recommended a system of over 10,000 miles of bicycle routes in the state, and identified highways that were unsuitable for bicycling. The state also formalized a shoulder paving policy and spearheaded a “Share the Road” campaign.

In 1991, the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) prompted Metropolitan Planning Organizations to complete bicycle and pedestrian plans. These plans were considered in the development of the state’s first comprehensive statewide bicycle plan. Since that time, interest in and funding for bicycle planning and infrastructure have continued to grow among all levels of government.



Graphic: Karen Parry, Black Graphics Getting the Wheels Rolling, 2013.

BICYCLE PLANNING RESOURCES

Planning and Design Guidance

Wisconsin Bicycle Facility Design Handbook
www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/docs/bike-facility.pdf

Wisconsin Rural Bicycle Planning Guide
www.dot.wisconsin.gov/projects/state/docs/bicycle-rural-guide.pdf

Urban Bikeway Design Guide
<http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide>

Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices
<http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov>

Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities
https://bookstore.transportation.org/item_details.aspx?id=1943

Advocacy

Wisconsin Bike Fed
www.wisconsinbikefed.org

League of American Bicyclists
www.bikeleague.org

National Center for Bicycling and Walking
www.bikewalk.org

Alliance for Biking and Walking
www.bikewalkalliance.org

Education and Safety

National Center for Safe Routes to School
www.saferoutesinfo.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles

Federal Highway Administration, Office of Safety
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike

FHWA University Course on Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation
www.fhwa.dot.gov/publications/research/safety/pedbike/05085/

Paths and Trails

Wisconsin State Park System Bicycle Trails
<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/parks/activities/bike.html>

Rails to Trails Conservancy
www.railtrails.org

Data and Maps

Valuing Bicycling's Economic and Health Impacts in Wisconsin
www.sage.wisc.edu/igert/download/bicycling_final_report.pdf

2011 Wisconsin Bicycling Benchmarking Report
<http://wisconsinbikefed.org>

Wisconsin Bicycle Maps
<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/bike-foot/bikemaps.htm>

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center
www.pedbikeinfo.org

Funding Sources

Transportation Alternatives Program
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives

Transportation Enhancement Activities
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te

Safe Routes to School Program
www.saferoutesinfo.org/funding-portal

Recreational Trails Program
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/air_quality/cmaq

National Scenic Byways Program
www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/scenic_byways

Federal Lands Highway Program
<http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov>

Agencies and Associations

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
www.dot.wisconsin.gov/modes/bicycles.htm

US Department of Transportation
www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
www.apbp.org

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
www.aashto.org

Institute of Transportation Engineers
www.ite.org

Center for Land Use Education

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Submit an Article!

If you would like to submit an article, please contact the managing editor, Rebecca Roberts. Your article should be 1,000 words or less, of statewide concern, and address a land use or community planning issue.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS**American Planning Association Audio/Web Conferences**

June 4, 2014 – Introducing New Density to the Neighborhood

June 25, 2014 – 2014 Planning Law Review

www.planning.org/audioconference

American Planning Association Chapter Webcasts

June 6, 2014 – Retail, Race and Regional Economic Development in Chicago

June 20, 2014 – Creating a Sustainable Landscape for Today and Tomorrow

June 27, 2014 – Health Impact Assessments

July 11, 2014 – Perspectives on Inclusionary and Affordable Housing

July 25, 2014 – Advancing Sustainable Communities in Metro Boston

www.utah-apa.org/webcasts

New Municipal Officials Workshops

June 6, 2014 – Pewaukee, WI

June 13, 2014 – Green Bay, WI

www.lwm-info.org

Planning for New and Expanding Bikeshare Systems

June 9, 2014 – Chicago, IL

www.planning.org/education/training/bikeshare/chicago.htm

Wisconsin Chapter of the American Planning Association Conference

June 12-13, 2014 – Madison, WI

www.wisconsinplanners.org

Frac Sand Mining Environmental Research Webinar

June 18, 2014

www.wisconsinplanners.org/comingevents.html

Congress for New Urbanism: Madison Bike Tour

July 11, 2014 – Madison, WI

www.cnu.org/event/2014/07/redevelopment-and-retrofit-bike-tour

Community Development Society Conference

July 20-23, 2014 – Dubuque, IA

<http://www.comm-dev.org/about-us/2014-conference>

APA-Minnesota Conference: Charting the Course to Resiliency

October 1-3, 2014 – Duluth, MN

www.plannersconference.com

Upper Midwest APA Conference

October 24-26, 2014 – Mason City, IA

www.iowa-apa.org/events/conference-information.html



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