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Bicycle Friendly Community

A Step by Step Guide to Turn Your Town into a Bicycle Friendly Community.

As you review the materials, you'll see that all types and sizes of communities can be positively affected by increased bicycle accommodations.

1. DOWNLOAD THE BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY OVERVIEW HERE.

As you review the materials, you'll see that all types and sizes of communities can be positively affected by increased bicycle accommodations. Whether decisions that affect your bicycle plan, routes, and facilities occur in a township, town, borough, city, or county level, this application can help framework a discussion with your decision makers.



2. EVALUATE YOUR COMMUNITY WITH OUR BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY SCORECARD.

Take a few minutes to complete this [quick scorecard](#) to see how your community stacks up in bicycle friendliness. The scorecard allows you to take an objective look at your community to determine if it already has the basic foundation for a Bicycle Friendly Community. [Click here to see the scorecard.](#)

3. REVIEW THE APPLICATION YOURSELF TO SEE HOW BICYCLE-FRIENDLY YOUR COMMUNITY IS TODAY.

Is there a written policy on maintaining bicycle safe streets? Is there a bicycle advisory committee and/or a bicycle coordinator? These basic resources can be vital to a town's ability to respond to bicyclist's needs. Highway engineers often will not change their practices unless written policy tells them to do so. A bicycle advisory committee is a good structure for getting such new policies written and formally proposed. Having someone on staff designated as bicycle coordinator can be crucial in achieving these measures. (Remember, it is a

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

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cardinal rule in every bureaucracy that any task not specified as someone's job is a task that will never get done.) [Click here to view the application](#). Please note that only applications submitted on-line will be accepted.

4. PLAN YOUR STRATEGY FOR PITCHING BICYCLE-FRIENDLY IMPROVEMENTS.

Obviously, if the mayor is a ride leader in the local bicycle club, your strategy is simple - show him or her the application! Most communities will take a little more work. First, you must identify the decision makers responsible for the policy changes you seek. In big cities, the mayor's office would typically delegate responsibility to the city's head of transportation or public works. In a smaller town, there may be a full-time city manager that reports to a citizen city council. In any event, you must make some calls to determine who needs to be persuaded before you can set out to persuade them. Next, find one or two bicyclists who have some influence with the decision maker. If you're lucky, there is a local government official who is an avid cyclist. Without such a person, identify the most visible bicycle dealer in town and the leader of a local bicycle club. Ask around and find support. If you find a bicyclist who is already known and trusted by government leaders, your work will be much easier.

5. GATHER SUPPORT.

Ask for a letter recommending the Bicycle Friendly Community program from any organization that might be inclined to support better bicycling. The local bicycle club is a natural first choice, but local environmental groups, civic organizations, businesses and others will tend to cooperate if you make it easy enough for them. Draft the letter for them so they know exactly what you need to minimize the amount of work you ask of them. The Bicycle Friendly Community program frames positive change for bicyclists into the form of a "yes or no" question to a political leader: "Will you support this program?" Politicians hate to say "No" to anyone. They especially do not want to say "No" to an organized group of people. And it's not likely they will want to say no to many different groups. [Click here to find clubs, shops, and other bicycle-affiliated groups in your area](#).

6. CALL YOUR GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL AND REQUEST A MEETING.

Attend with your best spokesperson and copies of the letters of support with you to the meeting. Talk about the benefits that the bicycle improvements you desire, as well as the benefits of a Bicycle Friendly Community designation.

7. ASK FOR SOMETHING SPECIFIC AND TRY TO GET A SPECIFIC COMMITMENT.

A good starting point is to ask if the person will submit the application for Bicycle Friendly Community status. Another good ask is how long it will take to designate a bicycle coordinator. One way the city can show its support for building a Bicycle Friendly Community is by adopting the [Action Plan for Bicycle Friendly Communities available here](#). You could also propose working with the new coordinator on implementing the other bicycle-friendly criteria items (such as convening the bicycle advisory committee, proclaiming Bike to Work Day, developing bicycle safe engineering policies, etc.). Be specific in your requests and, if the official raises concerns, ask him or her to be specific. Following the meeting, write a thank you

memo that spells out your understanding of what was agreed to.

8. FOLLOW UP AND FOLLOW UP (AND FOLLOW UP).

Lack of persistence is the downfall of many a bicycle advocate. Motivated people motivate politicians and their employees. If you raise an idea and then don't pursue it, they grow suspicious about just how important that idea is to you. So many people are clamoring for their time and attention, they will forget if you make yourself forgettable. Keep calling back and keep going back. Commit to the result and make it happen!

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