

# Feedback

Bicycle Friendly Community Application

**State College – Centre Region, PA**

Spring 2012



The League of American Bicyclists has designated **State College-Centre Region, PA** as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the **Bronze** level, because State College-Centre Region exhibits a strong commitment to cycling that is still in its beginning stages. The reviewers felt that there is still “room to grow”, but that notable steps are being made in the right direction:

- *Engineering:* State College-Centre Region has a good amount of bike parking, particularly at the university. Most public buses are equipped with bike racks. Bike infrastructure includes innovative facilities such as bike cut-thrus and way-finding signage with distance and/or time information. More than half of arterial streets have bike lanes or paved shoulders. Most natural surface trails and singletrack are open to bicyclists. Cyclists are accommodated at busy intersections through timed signals and video detection.
- *Education:* All middle schools have Safe Routes to School programs. State College-Centre Region has recently educated motorists and bicyclists on sharing the road safely through community newsletters, new resident packets, dedicated bike page on the community website, blogs on cycling and share the road signs. Traffic Skills 101 classes and Cycling Skills classes are offered regularly in the community.
- *Encouragement:* State College-Centre Region promotes National Bike Month through a city proclamation, a community ride, a mayor-led ride, a Bike Month events guide and a Bike Month website. Community celebrates cycling outside of Bike Month through community rides and trail construction/maintenance days.
- *Enforcement:* State College-Centre Region has an identified law-enforcement point person to interact with cyclists. Officers have received specific training on the relationship between bicycling and law enforcement. There are specific penalties for failing to yield to a cyclist when turning and/or it is illegal to park or drive in a bike lane (intersections excepted).
- *Evaluation & Planning:* Bicycle mode share is way above average for U.S. communities. State College-Centre Region has low number of cyclist/motor vehicle crashes.

Particular **highlights** were the student-developed informational packet and videos on how bicycling improves health, safety information and bicycle maintenance; family friendly "Bike in Movies" at public parks; Centre Volunteers in Medicine Charity Ride; Bestwick Foundation Ride; CRBC Sponsored Four Townships and a Borough Tour; Annual Eastern Collegiate Cycling Conference; Stoopid 50; Wilderness 101; Transylvania Epic; MS 150; RBR Recumbent Rally; College of Education Fund Raiser Ride; and the Linden Loop.

Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts, potential and commitment to make State College-Centre Region a great place for bicyclists which can be seen in the growing number of cyclists. The BFC review team expects great things in the future given the good local team and the coming improvements to the network and programs.

Below, reviewers provided recommendations to further promote bicycling in State College-Centre Region in the short and long term. 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 in cities)





out of cars. This will also make cities 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 city 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.

**The *key measures* State College-Centre Region should take to improve cycling in the community are:**

- Having an effective Bicycle Advisory Committee is critical to building public support for bicycle improvements. Ensure to invite a police officer to become an active member of the bicycle advisory committee. An effective committee ensures that the program will be accountable to citizens. It creates a systematic method for ongoing citizen input into development of important policies, plans, and projects. BACs should be involved in developing relevant policy and planning documents, setting priorities, reviewing annual pedestrian program work plans, and reviewing major public and private projects. See [this guide](#) to forming a Bicycle Advisory Committee.
- Expanding the bicycle and pedestrian manager’s time focused on these projects would help in scaling up your BFC efforts. This staff person could assist the new Bicycle Advisory Committee by devoting their time to acquiring bike/ ped grants and making the community bicycle-friendly. See this report on the importance of Bicycle & Pedestrian program staff. [http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/why\\_bike\\_ped\\_staff\\_april\\_2010.pdf](http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/why_bike_ped_staff_april_2010.pdf)
- Adopt a [Complete Streets](#) or Bicycle Accommodation 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.
- Continue to expand the bike network and increase network connectivity through the use of bike lanes, bike tracks, shared lane arrows, signed routes and bicycle cut-throughs. On-street improvements coupled with the expansion of the off-street system will continue to



increase use and improve safety. Focus on making the campus and downtown more accessible by bike. Extend any existing bike infrastructure into the downtown area and address a missing link to the east of downtown. 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.

- Develop a [comprehensive bike plan](#) in close collaboration with the community to ensure public involvement, information and ownership. Focus on developing/completing a seamless cycling network that emphasizes and creates short distances between residential areas and popular destinations such as schools, commercial areas, recreational facilities, cultural resources and transit stops. Complement infrastructure planning with encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to increase usage. Develop a clear vision statement and set ambitious but attainable targets. The overarching goal should be to increase the percentage of trips made by bicycle in the community. Ensure that there is dedicated funding for the implementation of the bicycle master plan.
- Ensure that police officers are initially and repeatedly educated on the “Share the Road” message and bicycle-related traffic law as it applies to bicyclists and motorists. Trainings we recommend are offered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. You can find an example of a good Bicycle Safety seminar here:  
[http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/bikesafe/case\\_studies/casestudy.cfm?CS\\_NUM=801](http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/bikesafe/case_studies/casestudy.cfm?CS_NUM=801). See the video put out by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/portal/site/nhtsa/menuitem.810acaee50c651189ca8e410dba046a0/> Here are some Law Enforcement Products: Law Enforcement's Roll Call Video: “Enforcing Law for Bicyclists”; Enhancing Bicycle Safety: Law Enforcement’s Role (CD-ROM Training); Training provided by the International Police Mountain Biking Association: <http://www.ipmba.org/instructors.htm>

### **Reviewers provided the following menu of recommendations to further promote bicycling:**

#### **Engineering**

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Ensure that new and improved bicycle facilities conform to current best practices and guidelines – such as the [NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#), [AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#) and your DOT’s own guidelines. Consider innovative bicycle infrastructure such as bicycle tracks, contra-flow bike lanes or colorful bike lanes.
- Ensure that the standards for bike parking conform to APBP guidelines:  
[http://www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/publications/bicycle\\_parking\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/publications/bicycle_parking_guidelines.pdf)



- Provide [ongoing training](#) opportunities on accommodating bicyclists for engineering, planning staff, and law enforcement. Consider hosting a [Smart Cycling](#) course for city staff to better understand cyclists' needs, behavior, and their right to use city streets as well as multi-use paths for transportation. Your local bicycle advocacy group are a great resource for this kind of training.
- Consider a membership to the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals [www.apbp.org](http://www.apbp.org) for city Bicycle and Pedestrian Staff. Training opportunities and the listserv provided by this organization are excellent resources.
- Improve the coordination and communication between city departments and state paving and rehabilitation projects and facilities maintenance. Consider offering oversight to state DOT staff and contractors working within municipal boundaries. Ensure that facility design follows current best practice and that they are properly installed.
- Consider measuring the bicycle level of service (LOS) 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” in the network, 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).
- Consider road diets in appropriate locations to make streets more efficient and safe. Use the newly created space for bicycle and pedestrian facilities: <http://www.walkable.org/assets/downloads/roaddiets.pdf>
- Accommodate bicycles at intersections and multi-use path crossings to improve efficiency and safety of all road and path users. At intersections, time traffic lights for bicycle speeds and consider adding bike boxes to make bicyclists more visible to motorists. Consider incorporating raised multi-use path crossings or other high-visibility treatments on medium and high traffic roads. Ensure that both path and road users are clearly informed about who has the right-of-way at every crossing.

#### Long Term Goals:

- Since arterial and collector roads are the backbone of every transportation network, it is essential to increase the number of wide shoulders or [bike lanes](#) along these roads to allow bicyclists of all skill levels to reach their destinations quickly and safely.
- Increase the amount of [secure bicycle parking](#) at popular destinations such as transit stops, schools, recreation and entertainment facilities, retail and office clusters and churches throughout the community. Regulations that require bike parking, e.g. as part of new developments, can secure private funding for bike parking. More and more communities



also ensure that multi-family residential developments provide secure and covered bike parking. See bicycle parking ordinances of [Madison, Wisconsin](#) and [Santa Cruz, California](#).

- Develop a system of bicycle boulevards that creates an attractive, convenient, and comfortable cycling environment welcoming to cyclists of all ages and skill levels. See more on how to do it at <http://www.ibpi.usp.pdx.edu/guidebook.php>

## Education

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Ensure that bicycle-safety education is a routine part of public education and that schools and the surrounding neighborhoods are particularly safe and convenient for biking. Work with your Bicycle Advisory Committee and local bicycle advocates to develop and implement [Safe Routes to School programs](#) that emphasizes bicycling for elementary schools and high schools. Strongly encourage all schools to participate.
- It is vital to make motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road. Continue to expand public education campaigns to promote the share the road message and the rights and responsibilities of all users, e.g. through public service announcements. Consider taking advantage of your local bicycle advocates for content and strategy development and manpower. See a motorist education video at <http://www.bikelib.org/safety-education/motorists/driver-education/>. Also, see the excellent Look Campaign from New York City: [http://www.nyc.gov/html/look/html/about/about\\_us\\_text.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/look/html/about/about_us_text.shtml).
- Improve the reach of the community's bicycle safety campaigns. Use valuable information from the League's Ride Better Tips in your outreach education and encouragement efforts. See the Ride Better Tips pages at <http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/better/index.php>, PSA's <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth/psas.php> and the downloadable Bicycle Safety Tips for Adults video at <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/shortversion.wmv>. Again, consider taking advantage of your local bicycle advocates for content and strategy development and manpower.
- Add bicycling and motorist education messages to local routine activities such as drivers licensing and testing, or include inserts in utility bills.
- Start a bicyclist and motorist ticket diversion program. Road users given citation are offered an opportunity to waive fees for violations by attending a bicycling education course. This should include a classroom and on-road component. See what Pima County has done: [http://bikeped.pima.gov/Safety%20\(pdf\)s/April%20-%20May%202011%20Bicycle%20Diversion%20Class%20\(No%20Locations\).pdf](http://bikeped.pima.gov/Safety%20(pdf)s/April%20-%20May%202011%20Bicycle%20Diversion%20Class%20(No%20Locations).pdf)



- Education on bicycling is not only important for bicyclists but for all road users - including motorists. Start a motorist education programs for professional drivers such as bus and taxi drivers in the city. See what San Francisco has done <http://www.sfbike.org/?drivertraining> Classes can be offered by League Cycling Instructors or local bicycle advocates and material is available through the League of American Bicyclists.
- Team with a local advocacy group, bicycle shop, or League Cycling Instructor to offer regular public maintenance classes to residents at public parks, libraries, community centers and in conjunction with city events. A short tutorial on how to change a flat tire can empower a person to ride their bike more often. You can find local instructors and bike shops here: [https://members.bikeleague.org/members\\_online/members/findit.asp](https://members.bikeleague.org/members_online/members/findit.asp)
- Offer bike commuter classes on a regular basis or encourage a local bicycle advocacy group, club or shop to do so. You could invite a League Cycling Instructor (LCI) to conduct the classes. Ideally the instruction would incorporate a classroom portion as well as on-road training. For examples of educational materials visit: <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/>.

## Encouragement

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Expand encouragement efforts during National Bike Month in partnership with local bicycle advocacy groups. Host, sponsor and/or encourage bicycle-themed community events such as a bicycle festival or a commuter challenge. Ensure to widely advertise all bicycle-themed community events. You and the local bicycle community can increase your efforts on Bike to Work Day/Week, for example by offering breakfast for bike commuters: <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth/>
- Promote, host, sponsor and/or encourage a variety of bicycle-themed, fun and family-friendly community events year-round, such as a 4<sup>th</sup> of July bike parade, an “increase-your-appetite” Thanksgiving community ride, a dress-like-Santa community ride before Christmas, a kids triathlon, a bicycle fashion show (fashionable alternatives to lycra), a Halloween bike decoration competition, a bike to the arts event, etc. Work closely with local bicycle advocacy groups, bike clubs, bike shops, bike teams and schools. Provide appropriate safety measures such as road closures or police escorts.
- Encourage local businesses to promote cycling to the workplace and to seek recognition through the *Bicycle Friendly Business* program. Businesses will profit from a [healthier, happier and more productive workforce](#) while the community would potentially profit from some bicycle-active businesses as well: increasing the bicycle mode share, less commuter traffic, 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 public bike events, skills and maintenance classes hosted or



sponsored by businesses. The city should be the model employer for the rest of the community. For more information about the free program please visit <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/bicyclefriendlybusiness/>.

- Consider passing an ordinance or local code that would require larger employers to provide [bicycle parking](#), shower facilities, and other end-of-trip amenities.
- Encourage local institutions of higher education to promote cycling and to seek recognition through the [Bicycle Friendly University](#) program. College and university campuses are unique environments for their high density, stimulating atmosphere and defined boundaries. These factors make them ideal environments to incorporate bikes. Many colleges and universities have built upon these good conditions and embraced the enthusiasm for more bicycle-friendly campuses by incorporating bike share programs, bike co-ops, clubs, 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.” See what Stanford University is doing for cyclists: [http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/communities/bfc\\_stanford\\_university.php](http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/communities/bfc_stanford_university.php)
- Actively involve the local bicycle community in community planning efforts, policy development and public outreach.
- Set up and promote bicycle-themed community celebrations and/or rides each time the community completes a new bicycle related project. This is a great way to show off the city’s good efforts and introduces new users to the improvement.
- Consider offering a ‘Ciclovía’ or ‘Summer Streets’ type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and offering the space to cyclists, pedestrians and group exercise events. <http://cicloviarecreativa.uniandes.edu.co/english/index.html>
- Consider partnering with a local bicycle advocacy group or bike club to launch a bike buddy or bicyclist mentorship program for inexperienced riders. A bike mentorship program that teams experienced cyclists with newcomers is a great way to encourage and educate novice commuters. See what Spokane, Wash. and Charlotte, N.C. are doing <http://groups.google.com/group/bikementor>, <http://www.spokanebicycleclub.org/bikebuddy.htm>
- Consider creating a Bicycle Ambassador program like Chicago’s: <http://www.bicyclingambassadors.org/>





- Implement a mechanism that ensures that facilities, programs and encouragement efforts are implemented in traditionally underserved communities.
- Recreational bicycling can be promoted through facilities and programs like mountain bike parks, pump tracks, cyclocross course or similar bicycle amenities. Ensure that the facilities are accessible by bicycle, so that there is no need to drive to ride.

### **Enforcement**

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- 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. See what Tewksbury, MA is doing: <http://www.wickedlocal.com/tewksbury/news/lifestyle/x1837747400/Tewksbury-police-reward-young-cyclists-for-wearing-their-helmets#axzz1WdjHHfMo>
- Pass laws or ordinances that protect cyclists, e.g. implement penalties for motor vehicle users that ‘door’ cyclists and ban cell phone use and texting while driving.
- Adopt fair, equitable and uniform traffic laws that are “vehicle-neutral” to the greatest extent possible. Local laws that discriminate against cyclists, or restrict their right to travel, or reduce their relative safety, should be repealed.

### **Evaluation/Planning**

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Regularly conduct research on bicycle usage beyond the U.S. Census’ Journey to Work report to more efficiently distribute resources according to demand. Conduct yearly counts using automated and manual counters in partnership with advocacy organizations. We also strongly encourage you to participate in the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project: <http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>.
- 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*: <http://www.pdmagic.com/im/> and [PBCAT](#). See the report [Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City 1996-2005](#)
- Consider implementing a trip reduction program/ordinance. See good examples at <http://bikepeddocumentation.org/> and <http://www.portlandonline.com/transportation/index.cfm?c=43801>
- Consider conducting an economic impact study on bicycling in your community. See what Portland, OR has done:



[http://www.altaplanning.com/App\\_Content/files/fp\\_docs/2008%20Portland%20Bicycle-Related%20Economy%20Report.pdf](http://www.altaplanning.com/App_Content/files/fp_docs/2008%20Portland%20Bicycle-Related%20Economy%20Report.pdf)

#### Long Term Goals

- Integrate the implementation of the bike plan into the master plan, all land use plans, zoning ordinances and larger development projects.
- Allow and encourage a mix of uses, a well-connected street network and compact development patterns throughout the community to shorten the distances people need to bike.
- Work with the [mountain biking community](#) to develop a plan for off-road access and increase opportunities for [single-track](#) riding within the city.

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