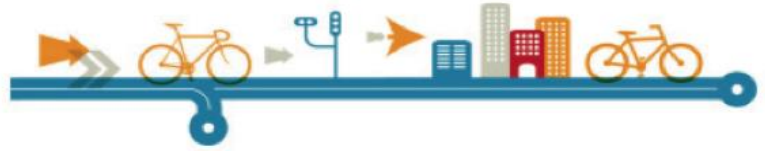




# BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK



## NORTHAMPTON, MA

Fall 2015

Our Bicycle Friendly Community review panel was very pleased to see the current efforts and dedication to make Northampton a safe, comfortable and convenient place to bicycle.

Below, reviewers provided recommendations to help you further promote bicycling in Northampton. **Key recommendations are highlighted in bold.** Underlined phrases are links to further information and resources online.

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.

The cost of bicycle facilities and possible funding options are discussed on the last page of this report.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Engineering

**Adopt bicycle facility selection criteria that increases separation and protection of bicyclists based on levels of motor vehicle speed and volume.**

Develop a design manual that meets current NACTO standards or endorse the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide.

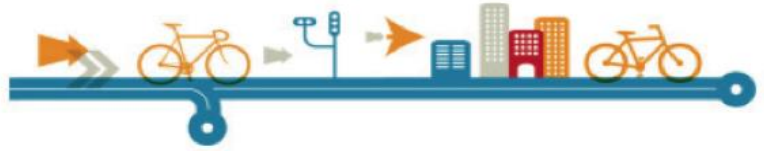
Regulations that require bike parking for new developments and major renovations of existing developments can secure private funding. Consider including provisions for assessing bike parking in communities that aren't currently slated for development or revitalization. See this model bicycle parking ordinance for guidance.

**Continue to expand the bike network, especially along arterials, through the use of different types of bicycle facilities.** **On roads where automobile speeds regularly exceed 35 mph, it is recommended to provide protected bicycle infrastructure such as protected bike lanes/cycle tracks, buffered bike lanes or parallel 10ft wide shared-use paths (in low density areas).** Note that shared lane markings should only be used on low speed roads. 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 local and regional trail network, and the street network. 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.

**Increase road safety for all users by reducing traffic speeds. Lower the speed limit especially downtown, around schools, and in neighborhoods.** Relative to other applicants, your community reports a lower



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than average percentage of roads with posted speeds of 25 mph or less. Use traffic calming measures and low speed design principles to achieve higher compliance rates. 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.

**Local reviewers were very appreciative of the efforts made by Northampton to improve the on and off-street bicycle network, however maintenance of that effort was identified as an area in need of improvement.**

## Education

Bicycle-safety education should be a routine part of education, for students of all ages, and schools and the surrounding neighborhoods should be particularly safe and convenient for biking and walking. Particularly as students learn to drive cars; it is important that they continue to learn about safe bicycling practices and how to safely share the road as drivers. **Work with your local bicycle groups or interested parents to expand the Safe Routes to School program to all**

**schools.** Click here for an exemplary bicycle safety curriculum designed for fourth and fifth grade students. For more information on Safe Routes to School, see the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Safe Routes To School Toolkit or visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.

Expand adult bicycle education opportunities. Classes that teach skills that improve bike commuting can help people make what is possible practical. Education can also be helpful for adults who are recommended exercise by health care providers, check to see if any area doctors or hospitals are interested in partnering for education programming.

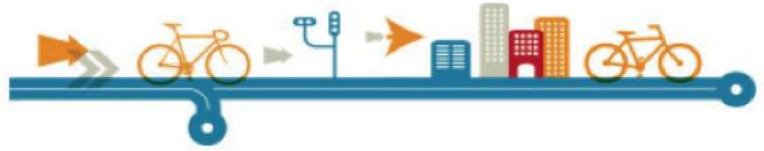
Ensure that there are bicycle education opportunities specifically for women, seniors, families and other specific demographic groups. By specifically targeting education opportunities to certain groups you can ensure that those groups are better reached and their specific concerns are addressed by the curriculum.

## Encouragement

Consider offering a 'Ciclovía' or Open Streets type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and offering the space to cyclists and pedestrians. See Open Streets in action. This event can also be a great place to engage people about improvements they would like in their



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community and barriers to biking more often than they experience.

**Expand encouragement efforts during Bike Month** in partnership with local bicycle advocacy groups. Host, sponsor and encourage a greater variety of bicycle-themed community events, campaigns and programs. Increase your efforts on Bike to Work Day and Bike to School Day. Create benchmarks for participation and work with local employers and schools to foster competition about participation in Bike to Work Day and Bike to School Day activities. Ensure to widely advertise all bicycle-themed community events and programs. For ideas and more information, visit

<http://bikeleague.org/bikemonth>.

**Provide a variety of targeted bicycle events to engage women, seniors, and other demographic groups that may benefit from non-traditional or group-specific bicycle events.** Targeted events may help to encourage groups that have specific concerns about bicycling or which have not previously been engaged in supporting bicycling improvements.

**Encourage Smith and other colleges in the Five College Consortium to promote cycling to students, staff, and faculty 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 will benefit as well: Communities near BFUs have a higher 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. The League offers many tools to help promote the Bicycle Friendly University program in your community.

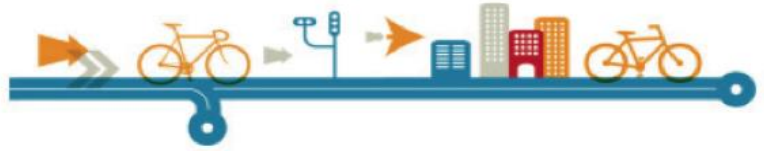
## Enforcement

**Continue to ensure that police officers are educated on traffic laws as they apply to bicyclists and motorists and bicycling skills.** Ensure that law enforcement officers who are not certified or trained as bicycle patrol officers nevertheless have basic training or experience with bicycling in your community in order to foster great interactions between bicyclists and police officers.

Implement the grant from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to foster better understanding of why motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists break certain laws in certain places in order to create a better functioning environment for all parties. As you increase ticketing of bicyclists and pedestrians, consider offering



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a diversion program or other education in lieu of monetary fine program so that bicyclists and pedestrians who may be unaware of safe practices have the opportunity to learn rather than pay a fine.

## Evaluation & Planning

**Your community reported that you have implemented a high percentage of your current bicycle plan. Update your 2011 bicycle plan to ensure that you continue to improve bicycling in your community; that state-of-the-art bicycle facilities are included; and that infrastructure planning is complemented with encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to increase usage.**

Ensure that your bicycle counts capture the gender of cyclists. If women ride significantly less than men, this gender gap can be addressed through infrastructure improvements, and targeted education and encouragement efforts. Learn more at [bikeleague.org/womenbike](http://bikeleague.org/womenbike).

Adopt a target level of bicycle use (percent of trips) to be achieved within a specific timeframe, and ensure data collection necessary to monitor progress.

## COSTS AND FUNDING OPTIONS

### Costs

Building a new roadway for motor vehicles can cost millions of dollars to construct, and many

of the pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure facilities are extremely low-cost in comparison. Use [this database](#) to review up-to-date estimates of infrastructure costs of pedestrian and bicycle treatments from states and cities across the country.

## Federal Funding

Since 1992 bicycle and pedestrian projects have been eligible for federal transportation funding. 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](#).

## State Funding

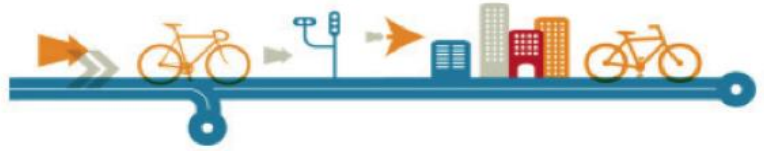
Biking and walking dollars aren't only available from the federal government. States can also have their own revenue sources that can be used to fund active transportation. Use this [report](#) and an [online tool](#) to explore your state's funding sources for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.

## Local Funding

Local governments can also create their own revenue streams to improve conditions for bicycling and walking. Three common approaches include: special bond issues, dedications of a portion of local sales taxes or a voter-approved sales tax increase, and use of the annual capital improvement budgets of Public Works and/or Parks agencies. Bicycle



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facility improvements can also be tagged on to larger projects to create economies of scale that results in reduced costs and reduced impacts to traffic, businesses, and residents. For example, if there is an existing road project, it is usually cheaper to add bike lanes and sidewalks to the project than to construct them separately. To learn more about public funding of bicycle infrastructure improvements, visit [pedbikeinfo.org/planning/funding\\_government.cfm](http://pedbikeinfo.org/planning/funding_government.cfm).

## Resources and Support

Advocacy Advance offers several tools, resources, and workshops to help advocates and agency staff maximize eligible funding programs.