



BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

MANSFIELD, CT

Fall 2013

Though **Mansfield** has not yet reached Bicycle Friendly Community status, the reviewers felt that notable steps are being made in the right direction.

Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts and dedication to make Mansfield a great place for cyclists, including but not limited to the \$1.8m investment in the transportation center and the growing network of bike facilities.

Below, reviewers provided key recommendations to further promote bicycling in Mansfield 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 Mansfield 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.
- Adopt a local [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.
- Continue to expand the bike network and to increase network connectivity through the use of different types of [bike lanes](#), wide shoulders 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. 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.

Benefits of Further Improving Mansfield for Cycling

- Offer Cycling Skills classes, Traffic Skills 101 classes and bike commuter classes regularly or encourage the university, a local bicycle advocacy group or bike shop to do so. Ideally, the instruction should incorporate a classroom portion as well as on-road training. The classroom portion of Traffic Skills 101 is now available [online](http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/online) as well. 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.

Encourage the University of Connecticut 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.

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.

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.

- 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.
- Develop a [comprehensive bike plan](#) in close collaboration with the community to ensure public involvement, information and ownership. Focus on developing a seamless cycling network that 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 encourage residents to bike more often for recreation and transportation. Ensure that there is dedicated funding for the implementation of the bicycle master plan.

Menu of additional recommendations to further promote bicycling:

General

- 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.

Engineering

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- 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.

- Consider passing an ordinance or policy that would require larger employers to provide shower facilities and other end-of-trip amenities. The new transportation center will be a great resource, but may not be convenient for all employees.
- Ensure that the standards for bike parking conform to [APBP guidelines](#).
- Increase the amount of [high quality bicycle parking](#) at popular destinations throughout the community. 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.
- Promote active transportation by reducing traffic speeds. Consider lowering the speed limit to 25 mph or lower on more non-arterial roads, especially in denser areas, around schools and shopping centers, and in neighborhoods. 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.

- Implement [road diets](#) in appropriate locations to make streets more efficient and safe. Use the newly created space for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Implement broader transportation policies and programs that encourage alternative transportation choices, such as maximum/no minimum car parking standards, to complement your community's infrastructure investments and programs.
- Develop a mechanism that will allow cyclists to report hazards to traffic engineers and planners, such as a hotline or an online reporting tool.
- Consider [a raised crossing](#), a grade separated crossing or a high-visibility treatment where a shared use path crosses a medium or high traffic road. Ensure that both path and road users are clearly informed about who has the right-of-way.

Long Term Goals

- Implement land use policies that minimize large lot/low density development to better facilitate bicycling, pedestrian and transit trips. Require a mix of uses

throughout the community to further shorten the distances people need to bike. Consider a form-based code to allow for flexible land uses and to provide a comfortable and convenient built environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Ensure that all existing and planned bicycle facilities conform to current best practices and guidelines – such as the [NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#), 2012 [AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#) and your DOT’s own guidelines.
- 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. 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

- 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. Take advantage of your local bicycle groups for content development and manpower. See the excellent [“Look”](#) campaign in New York City or the [“Don’t be a Road Hog”](#) campaign in Colorado.
- 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.

- Team with a local bicycle group or shop to offer regular bike maintenance workshops at parks, libraries, community centers or at events. A short tutorial on how to change a flat tire can empower a person to ride their bike more often.

Long Term Goals

- Bicycle-safety education should be a routine part of public education, and schools and the surrounding neighborhoods should be particularly safe and convenient for biking. Work with your Bicycle Advisory Committee, local bicycle groups or interested parents to expand the Safe Routes to School program to all elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. For more information, see the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Safe Routes To School Toolkit](http://www.nhtsa.gov/nhtsa/publications/saferoutes), www.bikeleague.org/programs/saferoutes/index.php or visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.
- Start a bicyclist and motorist 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.
- Expand your Share the Road motorist education program for professional drivers to city staff and school bus operators.
- Increase your efforts to ensure your bicycle education programs reach traditionally underserved populations, particularly seniors, women, minorities, non-English speakers and the disabled.

Encouragement

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Expand encouragement efforts during Bike Month in partnership with local bicycle advocacy groups. Host, sponsor and encourage more bicycle-themed community events, campaigns and programs. Increase your efforts on Bike to Work Day and Bike to School Day. Ensure to widely advertise all bicycle-themed community events and programs. For ideas and more information, visit <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bikemonth/>.
- 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 schools. Provide appropriate safety measures such as road closures or police escorts.

- 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.
- Ask your tourism board to promote bicycling in your area to [boost your local economy](#). A [survey](#) of Portland, OR visitors found that the city’s bicycle-friendly reputation played a role for 78 percent of travelers in their decision to visit Portland.
- 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](#).

- Work with local non-profits to establish a youth recreation or intervention program centered on bicycling, such as an [Earn a Bike program](#).

Long Term Goals

- Recreational bicycling can be promoted through bicycle amenities such as a mountain bike park or a pump track. Ensure that the facilities are accessible by bicycle, so that there is no need to drive to ride.
- 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

- Invite a police officer to become an active member of the Bicycle Advisory Committee and appoint a law-enforcement point person to interact with cyclists. This will actively facilitate stronger connections between bicycle advocates, the wider bicycling community and law enforcement, which will improve road safety for all users, and improve fair enforcement of motorist and cyclist infractions.

- 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.
- 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.
- Increase the number of officers that patrol streets on bikes, as it gives officers a better understanding of the conditions for cyclists. Also ensure that secluded off road paths are regularly patrolled to improve personal safety and encourage more people to take advantage of this amenity.
- Provide safety amenities such as adequate street and 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, specifically

protect all vulnerable road users, and make it illegal to harass a cyclist.

Evaluation/Planning

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Continue to actively involve the local bicycle community in community planning efforts, policy development and public outreach.
- 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 or manual counters in partnership with advocacy organizations. Consider participating in the [National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project](#).
- Routinely conduct 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.

- 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).
- Implement a community-wide trip reduction program or ordinance. See good examples [here](#).
- Consider conducting an economic impact study on bicycling in your community. [Read about](#) what Portland, OR has done.
- Establish a mechanism that ensures that bicycle facilities and programs are implemented in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.
- Work with your mountain bike community to develop a plan for off-road access to increase opportunities for [singletrack](#) riding within the community.

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