



places**for**bikes

ENGAGE, PLAN, BUILD, MEASURE

A Guide for City Leaders





BETTER BIKING = BETTER COMMUNITIES

More people riding bicycles creates stronger, safer and healthier communities. The key to getting more people biking is to provide **safe**, **convenient** and **attractive** places to ride.

SAFE

The number one reason more people don't ride bikes is that they don't feel safe on the streets. Only a small percentage of riders feel comfortable mixing it up with car and truck traffic. Better places for bikes give more people the confidence to get out and ride.

CONVENIENT

Great places to bike need to be connected. People ride more when they can access networks of biking facilities that get them comfortably wherever they want to go, whether to work or school, running errands, or just riding for fun.

ATTRACTIVE

Those networks have to appeal to all kinds of people — kids, parents, older people, athletes. They also have to be suitable for all kinds of riding — on streets, paths and trails, whether for recreation or fitness, or just around town.

Think about who rides bikes in your community: Is it mostly fit and confident riders? Do you see casual riders, women and families? Do people of color ride bikes? A mix of riders that fully reflects the community is a good indicator of a safe, convenient and attractive network.

As a local leader, you have the power to help better bicycling networks get planned, built and used in your community. This guide will show you how.

Better biking can happen in any city

Maybe you think your city or town can't build better places for bikes because you don't have enough money, or are short on staff, lack strong community support or simply don't have the space for better bike infrastructure. But cities of all sizes across the nation have overcome these and other obstacles to build great bike projects.

What they have in common is the commitment and leadership to make it happen.

This guide will show you creative ways to move the needle — no matter your city's starting point.

How this guide can help you

This guide presents our proven, four-part formula for getting better places for biking built:

PART 1

ENGAGE

Engage other leaders and the community, and get people excited about riding.

PART 2

PLAN

Plan for the community you want to have, and establish the policy framework.

PART 3

BUILD

Build the facilities that will get people riding.

PART 4


MEASURE

Measure progress toward your goals.

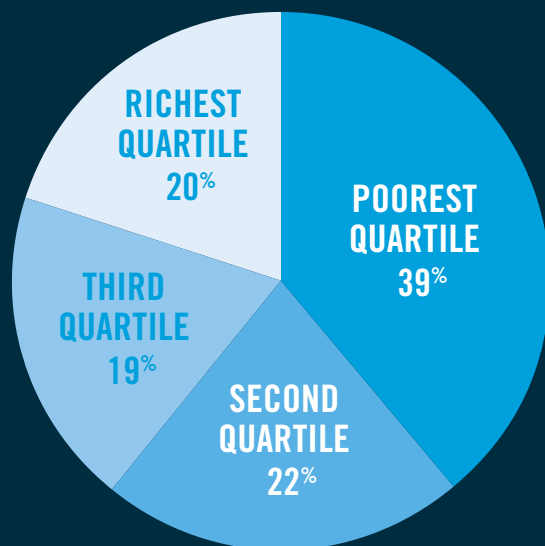
This guide will help you learn about best practices, provide tips on how to be influential and offer ideas for addressing common barriers to getting places for bikes on the ground. Stories from cities around North America and beyond will show you how it can be done.



Great Arguments for Bikes

1. More than half of Americans say they would like to bike more. Of those, 64 percent say they would if bikes and cars were separated by barriers.
2. Bike lanes fight congestion: A person biking on a dedicated bike lane takes up 97 percent less road space than a person driving.
3. Biking is **one of the most income-diverse activities in the United States**, but it's most important to the lowest-income commuters who often have few other options. 
4. Biking is big business. For example, in Colorado more than 1 million residents ride, and bicycling contributes \$335 million a year to the economy through recreation and tourism.
5. Removing on-street parking to make room for protected bike lanes and safer street crossings can boost retail sales. Protected bike lanes also contribute to positive economic and retail development of adjacent communities.

% OF REGULAR BIKE COMMUTERS WHO FALL INTO THE NATION'S...

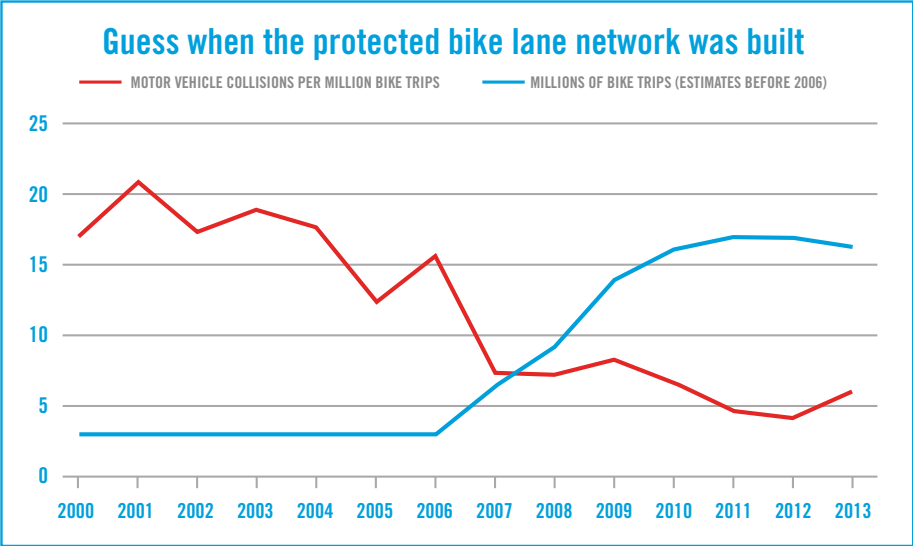


Source: 2006-2010 U.S. Census Transportation Planning Products (most recent available) via AASHTO

Different paths to the same goal: a connected network

In most places, bicycling networks develop from a series of projects that link together and eventually connect people to the places they want to go. An incremental approach can be successful if it is grounded in a strong plan to create a complete network, and if leaders work to speed project delivery.

Some cities have built out their networks quickly — and produced rapid, large increases in cycling as a result. Seville, Spain, for example, put a 40-mile network on the ground in a single year and engineered a 400-percent increase in biking to about six percent of trips citywide in three years. Calgary, Canada, created a small but connected downtown network as a pilot and doubled bike traffic in the area in one year. In 2016, its city council voted to make the improvements permanent.



"On the effect of networks of cycle-tracks on the risk of cycling. The case of Seville, Spain."
R. Marqués and V. Hernández-Herrador, 2017.





GREAT PLACES FOR BIKES = COMPLETE NETWORKS

For decades, U.S. traffic engineers assumed that people on bikes could almost always share the road with cars. But a shoulder — even a striped bike lane — on a street with fast traffic isn't an appealing place to ride for most people. And putting a bike symbol in the middle of a busy thoroughfare doesn't make it a place where parents will ride with their children.

We now know, based on both U.S. and international experience, what kind of infrastructure designs give people of all ages and abilities the sense of safety, comfort and enjoyment that makes them want to ride.

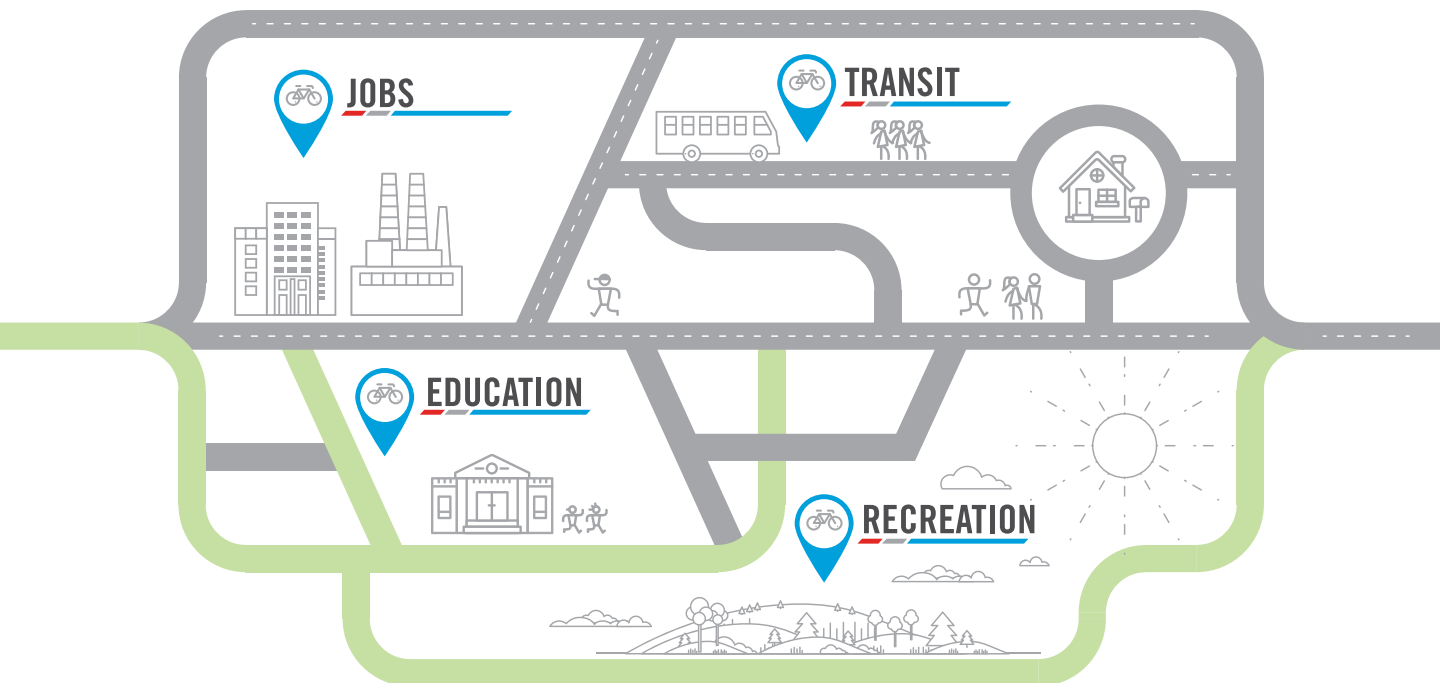
Complete networks

Most cities have built bits and pieces of good places to ride bikes: A path or two along a river, some appealing neighborhood streets and maybe a protected bike lane. The trick, though, is to move from individual projects to connecting a complete network. The street network allows drivers to travel anywhere the community without needing to think much about wayfinding. Complete bike networks offer the same flexibility to people who bike.

While every street won't be bike-friendly in the short term, linking a functional bike network — called a “minimum grid” by urbanist Gil Penalosa — is within reach in many places. But planning and leadership are essential.

New tools are available to help cities understand the degree to which their investments in bicycle infrastructure are working to complete a network of connected places comfortably accessed by bike. The PeopleForBikes Bicycle Network Analysis (BNA.peopleforbikes.org) is an online resource that calculates how effectively local bike networks and quiet-residential streets connect residents to popular destinations like schools, parks, places of employment, public transportation hubs, grocery stores, etc. Cities can use tools like this to evaluate projects and establish priorities for completing their bike network.

BETTER BIKING TAKES MANY PATHS



EVALUATE YOUR CITY AT [BNA.PEOPLEFORBIKES.ORG](https://bna.peopleforbikes.org)



Major components of complete networks:

SEPARATED PATHWAYS

Paved paths, often shared with people on foot, can provide good connections between neighborhoods and key destinations. The best ones are wide enough to reduce conflicts between users, with careful designs at street intersections or underpasses for uninterrupted riding. Many are routed along waterways, and some communities have retrofitted old rail corridors into popular cross-town connectors. Today, separated pathways are often built in conjunction with new housing and commercial developments. Many communities have ambitious plans to build more.

SPINE FACILITIES

Places where biking works well typically have a central spine facility, usually a separated path, that runs through the community. The Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis, the Burke-Gilman Trail in Seattle, and the Razorback Greenway in Northwest Arkansas are good examples. Connections branching off the spine facility help link people to the places they want to go.

Some spine projects are so transformational that they redefine a neighborhood or an entire community. The Atlanta Beltline is an ambitious plan to circle the city on an old rail corridor. While only partially complete, in 2016 the Beltline was visited by more than 1.3 million people on foot and bike, and it has triggered more than a billion dollars in new development on the east side of Atlanta.

PROTECTED BIKE LANES

Protected bike lanes are the newest member of the low-stress bikeway family. A tool for busy streets, they are a space just for bikes on or adjacent to the roadway, separated by some sort of vertical barrier (posts, curbs, planters). Some cities start with simple, low-cost separations using paint and plastic posts, then transition to more robust, permanent facilities like curbs and planters.

On busier streets, separating bikes from the cars is a win for everyone: Drivers like the predictability, bike riders like having their own space, and pedestrians get to walk without dodging bikes on the sidewalk.

NEIGHBORHOOD BIKEWAYS

Also called bike boulevards, neighborhood bikeways are quiet streets where the speed and volume of traffic are low enough that cars and bikes can mix comfortably. Designs range from simple markings to diverters that allow through-traffic by bikes but not motor vehicles. These designs are relatively inexpensive and quick to deploy. Most cities have extensive networks of neighborhood streets that can be fine-tuned to provide better biking connections.

SAFE CROSSINGS

Busy streets are a major barrier for people on bikes. Dodging across several lanes of speeding traffic doesn't feel safe and isn't much fun. A variety of treatments can help people on bikes get through intersections safely, including simple stop signs, median refuge islands, special traffic signals and protected intersections.



BIKE PARKS AND TRAILS

Many of us have childhood memories of racing bikes around on a dirt loop in a nearby vacant lot. Today, communities across the country are building the modern version: Bike parks that attract both beginners and skilled riders.

These facilities range from small neighborhood pump tracks built for a few thousand dollars, to municipally operated bike parks costing millions. Large bike parks can include jumps of various sizes and flowing singletrack mountain bike trails. Bike parks are often built by city park departments on public lands, usually with significant volunteer support.

Cities lucky enough to have large swaths of public land nearby are developing mountain bike trail systems, offering recreational opportunities to a host of riders. In the best places, low-stress routes lead out of the city and connect to mountain biking loops and quiet roads for longer rides.





BUILDING BETTER PLACES FOR BIKES:

OUR FOUR-PART STRATEGY

PeopleForBikes has identified a four-part strategy (**engage, plan, build, and measure**) to help cities build better places for bikes. The process is not linear nor necessarily sequential. The process of community engagement, in particular, must be ongoing to be successful.

PART 1

ENGAGE

Engaging the community in three key ways will increase the likelihood that your city can make significant progress on improving its bike infrastructure:

- » Local leaders work together in support of biking.
- » The community is invited and encouraged to ride bikes.
- » Proposed projects are introduced and considered in ways that strengthen rather than divide communities.

LOCAL LEADERS WORKING TOGETHER

In places where things get done, we see leaders from various sectors working together. Most champions don't have "bikes" in their job title, but they find ways to be involved.

While anyone with passion and dedication can emerge as a local leader, champions are often found in these roles:

Elected officials: Mayors and other elected officials generally wield huge influence. They approve budgets and sometimes decide on whether challenging projects move forward. They provide high-level vision and priorities for the community.

City staff: This group can include the city manager, heads of transportation and public works departments, and staff that implements. Department heads draft budgets and queue up projects. Mid-level staff make it all happen.

Business leaders: Developers, business improvement district leaders, employers, retailers and tourism officials engage through appointed boards and groups such as chambers and improvement districts. Their interests in bike infrastructure can include better mobility in crowded downtowns, attracting and retaining young talent and customers and more prosperous developments.

Neighbors leading community-improvement efforts: Many of the best projects are introduced and championed by locals looking to make their neighborhood safer, better-connected and more attractive. They bring strong local vision and support.

Local foundations: When local funders add better biking to their agenda, they bring not only financial support, but also raise the visibility of biking and validate it as a community priority.

Advocates and volunteers: They are at the heart of progress in most communities. Concerned individuals come together to strategize, speak with a united voice and do crucial legwork.

For many local champions, better biking is not the ultimate goal. Rather, they are working to improve their neighborhood or community, and bikes are a useful tool to help address a number of issues.



In Chicago, local businesses stand up for bike lanes

When Chicago wanted to remove parking to create a crucial protected bike lane on Milwaukee Avenue, advocacy group Active Trans identified a retail owner who supported better bike access to his restaurant. The retailer found two like-minded peers, and they stood up publicly for the project, countering the stereotype that "business" opposes bike lanes.



Community leaders from Portland and San Francisco on a study tour in the Netherlands, 2013. © Jonathan Maus, BikePortland.org.



Tips for Effective Leaders

- » **Know your local advocates.** In many cities, the local bike advocacy group has members who are ready to effectively back good projects. Well-organized groups can show that projects have broad appeal and big constituencies that help justify the investment. A smart advocate whom you trust can be an excellent source of information and a guide to the intricacies of the bike landscape.
- » **Be a good listener.** Bike issues aren't the top priority for many, but they can help address many problems that communities face. Whether it's housing affordability, air quality, storm water management, traffic congestion or safety, bikes could be part of the solution. Listening carefully to community concerns can lead to innovative solutions.
- » **Empower your staff.** Your staff can be great sources of information — both for you and for groups engaged in the issue, especially if you make sure your staff know the topic is important to you. Encourage your staff to be engaged on bike issues and reward innovation and creative thinking that recognizes and overcomes challenges.
- » **Take a trip.** Seize opportunities to attend field trips, study tours and conferences where you can interact with leaders and advocates from other cities. It will pay dividends. You'll be able to discuss important issues with more nuance than you can in the typical short office meeting. You'll also get to know each other on a more personal level, and these relationships can help when politics get messy.

GET PEOPLE ON BIKES

One of the best way to build support for biking projects is simple: Invite people to ride.

The joy of riding a bike is powerful. Touring your town by bike provides a firsthand look at the challenges and opportunities. Riding a bike in traffic makes you a more compassionate and careful driver.

New research shows that changing behavior is a powerful way to change attitudes. People who ride bikes are more likely to support bike projects.

START EARLY + BE INCLUSIVE

Ideally, efforts to get people out on bikes will start before projects are introduced. A neighborhood that sees itself as a place where people bike will be far more receptive to changes to nearby streets.

Efforts should reach all neighborhoods and demographics. You can support simple bike events by helping with organizing, funding and marketing. The power of these outreach efforts can be multiplied with strong social media, photo/video documentation and public opinion policy.



SOCIAL RIDES

Social riding groups are popping up all over the nation. The original Slow Roll in Detroit — a slow bike parade through the city, with a focus on conversation and community — now attracts as many as 12,000 people per event.

Social rides often start organically with a few locals organizing some friends. Some are unofficial while others receive permits and police escorts from the city. Many don't have a specific agenda beyond having fun while some are geared toward community causes.

“In Chicago, the general perception has been that bicycling is something that white people do, that little kids do. It’s something that poor people do who don’t have a car, that fitness fanatics in spandex do on the lakefront. Slow Roll gives people the experience of seeing cycling as something that people in the neighborhood do. The rides show community leaders, aldermen, city council people and the city, that — given the opportunity, given the infrastructure to help people feel safe and comfortable — people will ride bikes.”

—Oboi Reed, founder of Slow Roll Chicago



Slow Roll Chicago ride in Englewood, 2015. © Slow Roll Chicago.

OPEN STREETS EVENTS

Open Streets programs are celebrations on city streets closed to cars and trucks. Inspired by the time-tested weekly event that closes 70 miles of streets in Bogotá, Colombia, and often attracts nearly 2 million people, hundreds of U.S. cities are now hosting these events, which are often free and generally open to everyone.

These events allow people and businesses to come together and meet in a safe and car-free environment. Open Streets programs give communities the ability to imagine their streets in new ways and can help build community support for transportation projects.



Since 2010, more than 1,000,000 people have taken to the streets of Los Angeles for CicLAvia making it the biggest open streets event in the nation. CicLAvia Southeast Cities, 2016.

© Metro Los Angeles.

BIKE-TO-WORK DAYS

Bike-to-work days encourage people to commute by bicycle. Often organized by cities or local groups, they provide incentives such as free breakfasts and prizes to reward regular commuters and encourage others to give it a try in a supportive environment. Employers serve as helpful partners, and friendly competitions between businesses can increase participation.

PROGRAMS FOR KIDS

Seeing children out riding indicates a healthy biking ecosystem for everyone. Students who get excited about bikes often bring that enthusiasm home and get the whole family riding. School-based programs, such as physical education classes and after-school clubs and mountain bike racing programs, are effective strategies to get kids riding. Summer camps provide more in-depth opportunities for mountain biking or learning to repair bikes.

BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

People generally have positive attitudes toward biking. Things get tricky, though, when it's time to make changes on the ground.

Carving out space for bikes often means rethinking how we use the biggest public space in our communities — our street system. Changes to street operations and parking can seem particularly difficult for the people who live, work and travel on a particular corridor. Cities usually take the lead on convening those conversations. Some projects are simple and have enough public support that they can move quickly. Most, though, require thoughtful public engagement.

“Understanding a community’s goals and building relationships in each neighborhood has been critical to each project’s success. We can’t just come in, do whatever we want, and then leave at the end of the day. There’s no sense of ownership in that approach.”

– John Paul Shaffer, Executive Director, BLDG Memphis



TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

For most projects, cities must go through a formal process of presenting the proposal to the community and gathering feedback on it. Too often, this process doesn't work well, and people feel like their concerns weren't heard and honored.

Good community outreach is thoughtful, thorough and authentic. Long before a project is proposed in a community, city staff should be working to build long-term relationships with neighborhood leaders. Building relationships takes time and there are no shortcuts to creating collaborations built on trust.

» **Let communities be experts on their community**

Local residents are experts on their community's needs, interests and priorities. Trust that they know what's best for them. The job of staff and consultants is to advise, educate and help focus that community knowledge, not supersede it.

Partner with local festivals, artists and community-service organizations to expand the types and opportunities for outreach. Schools and youth programs are good places to seek creative input from often-overlooked, but observant, members of our communities — children and young adults.

» **Create opportunities for genuine input**

Communities know when they are invited for the purpose of checking a box rather than providing meaningful input. Instead of bringing a finished product to a meeting, ask the community to create their own design concepts. Let them explore creative ways to give feedback in non-traditional formats, for example, through photos, asset mapping, or visual or performing arts. Then show how community feedback is informing the process at every step.

» **Be prepared to address concerns beyond bikes**

During public outreach on bike projects, staff often will hear about other issues that are important to the community. If people express concerns about garbage pickup, crumbling sidewalks or broken street lights, the city should be ready to address those challenges, too.

» **Set clear expectations for process, timeline and outcomes**

Projects often face stringent deadlines, funding constraints and political obstacles that can clash with the organic, time-consuming process of building community trust. You can mitigate the community's fears by establishing standard written procedures that outline the key decision points, timelines and decision-makers for a project.

» **Make engagement easy and accessible**

Work with community leaders to design a process that consistently involves a wide range of people. Make sure that they can provide input at convenient times and places, and use materials they can understand. Meetings should offer food, drinks and childcare.



*Open Streets Lake + Minnehaha, Minneapolis, 2017.
© Mike Beck for Our Streets Minneapolis.*



Tips for Overcoming “Bikelash”

There’s a word for the misunderstanding and anger that can arise around proposed bicycling infrastructure: bikelash. Even with carefully crafted community engagement and broad support for better biking, many projects are opposed — and sometimes derailed — by a small but vocal group of critics.

Use inclusive language: To break down the tribalism implied in words like “biker” or “driver,” instead use the phrases “people biking,” “people driving” or “people walking.” Avoid technical terms like “cycletrack” in favor of more easily understood phrases like “protected bike lane.” Beware of euphemisms, such as “right-sizing,” which can backfire.

Avoid the bikes-versus-cars narrative: Don’t engage in conversations about what motorists will lose; talk about what the community will gain. Instead of focusing on just the biking elements of a project, talk about the benefits to everyone of safer street designs — for example, fewer car collisions, and safer streets for kids out playing, seniors getting off the bus and people walking.

Consider the messenger: Bike advocates are not always the best public face for a project, because their prominence may lead other groups to assume that the project doesn’t benefit them. Neighborhood groups, top city leaders and a diverse coalition of community members often make better front-line messengers.

Be ready to fail: Some projects won’t go as planned. When that happens, admit the problems and apply the lessons learned to future efforts.

PART 2

PLAN

Most cities have a bike plan for their community. Sometimes it’s a stand-alone document, other times it’s part of a regional transportation or community master plan. Once these plans are adopted by a city, they are the blueprint for what projects get built, and many have some legal clout.

But a lot of plans sit on the shelf gathering dust. That’s because turning lines on a map into projects on the ground requires political commitment, funding, community engagement and more. How the planning is done affects the likelihood a plan will get implemented.



CREATING GOOD PLANS:

Lay out a complete, low-stress biking network that includes key destinations such as businesses, schools, and shopping areas. These plans shouldn't pretend that painting shared lane markings on roads with a 45 mph speed limit creates a real bike network. The concept of complete, low-stress networks is new, so many cities are updating older plans to include them.

Include an open and public planning process, with lots of voices invited into the process. The process itself, if done well, can build momentum for projects. See our “tips for community engagement” earlier in this document for more guidance. When it comes time to implement the plan, continue your outreach to keep people engaged and up to date on your actions.

Set realistic goals for bike use. A lot of older plans adopted the goal of “20 percent of trips made by bike by the year 2020” because it sounded catchy, not because it was doable. It's important to figure out what must happen to achieve the goals you set.

Prioritize underserved communities. Plans should be designed to support all sections of a city, with extra emphasis and additional resources focused on those neighborhoods that have been traditionally marginalized. They must also consider the specific needs and concerns of different communities.

Calculate the cost to build out the network. A detailed cost analysis of completing your plan helps to establish a clear goal and places the plan in the context of other capital projects. Transportation staff in Portland can tell you that they've spend about \$75 million building their bike network. That sounds like a lot of money until you consider the cost of rebuilding *a single mile* of I-5 adjacent to the city is more than \$200 million.

Specify an implementation schedule. Spell out the projects that need to be built, prioritize routes that will have the biggest impacts, and establish a transparent process local residents can understand. A short-term plan is often more relatable for engaged citizens: take special care to have an accurate and detailed work plan for the next three to five years.

Move to implementation quickly. If there's too long a gap between plan and implementation, people get frustrated waiting for progress, businesses become annoyed by the uncertainty of project timing, and it's easier for projects to get derailed because consensus erodes as people forget earlier conversations.



LAY THE POLICY FOUNDATION

The companion to the plan is policy, the guiding principles of an agency. Often they are adopted by the city council or other governing body.

A lot of policies affect bikes, but three are especially helpful:

1. **Complete Streets Policy:** Streets are designed so that people of all ages, incomes and abilities can safely and comfortably get around their community, whether walking, bicycling, driving or taking public transportation.
2. **Vision Zero:** Strategies to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries through multi-departmental approaches that consider roadway design and speeds, behaviors, technology and regulations. One key focus point here should be areas that are especially dangerous for people walking and biking.
3. **Traffic-Calming Policies:** Methods to slow cars in order to increase safety for all roadway users and make neighborhoods more comfortable to walk, bike, shop and live. Techniques include lower speed limits, speed humps, raised crosswalks, traffic circles, roadway narrowing and more.

“If city leaders just went bold, advocates could really come out and champion the plan for them. If you water it down, you’re going to appease people who don’t want any bike lanes. But then you risk losing your supporters, the people who could really be celebrating it. And that’s where the real success stories come from.”

— Tom Fucoloro, founder, Seattle Bike Blog

A protected bike lane demonstration in Atlanta, GA.



Cities are becoming increasingly adept at delivering projects faster. While the process of building infrastructure contains multiple layers of simultaneous activities, cities are beginning to streamline and refine their efforts to make implementation easier, more time efficient, and less expensive.



A protected bike lane demonstration in Atlanta, GA. © Robin Urban Smith.

ACCELERATING PROJECTS

Cities are experimenting with materials, processes and funding that allow them to install bike lanes, public plazas and other street improvements in just months, rather than years — the typical lengthy timeline needed for traditional infrastructure projects. We call this evolving approach “quick-build project” delivery.

Quick-build projects are:

- » Led by a city government or other public agency.
- » Installed within about a year of initial planning.
- » Planned with the expectation that they may undergo change after installation. Projects often begin as a short-term pilot or pop-up, which helps identify unforeseen problems and allows for design tweaks.
- » Built using materials that allow such changes.

Successful quick-build projects require different tools and approaches:

- » An interdisciplinary team led by a strong project manager.
- » A process that can swing into action rapidly when opportunities arise.
- » Firm installation deadlines.
- » A funding strategy that doesn't depend on protracted state and federal grant cycles.
- » On-call contracts or in-house crews, rather than traditional bidding processes.
- » An outreach game plan that focuses on the initial installation as part of achieving public buy-in.
- » A maintenance plan that recognizes that low-cost, flexible materials require more frequent upkeep.
- » Objective metrics to inform adjustments and measure success.



Low-cost pop-up projects build community support in Memphis

Sometimes the best way to get people excited about a bike project is to build it.

For a few thousand dollars and a lot of donated time and supplies, Memphis transformed its beleaguered Broad Avenue arts district for one weekend in 2010. Local businesses, private funders, school kids, and community volunteers used paint to create pedestrian curb bump-outs, protected bike lanes and crosswalks. They added bike racks, street lights, benches and planters.

“It ended up being embraced by the neighborhood and was allowed to remain on the ground while waiting for a more permanent infrastructure project to come through,” said John Paul Shaffer, executive director of BLDG Memphis, a coalition of community development groups that organized the demonstration project.

The community then got behind a permanent protected bike lane, called The Hampline, raising the final \$70,000 needed to design the project through a crowdfunding campaign.

FINDING MONEY

“We don’t have money for bike projects,” is a common refrain from city leaders. Often what that really means is that bike projects are not valued as a priority. The truth is, even cash-strapped cities have found money to build projects. Funding tends to follow vision and excitement.

In the big picture of transportation funding, bike projects are relatively inexpensive and can provide great return on investment. A mile of urban interstate starts around \$60 million, but often costs much more. Protected bike lanes can often be built for \$100,000 per mile. Pump tracks can be built for just a few thousand dollars. Some pop-up projects cost only hundreds of dollars. If projects are rolled into existing resurfacing plans, costs can be minimal.



FOUR WAYS TO FUND PROJECTS

- 1. Resurfacing budgets:** Every year, cities put money toward resurfacing existing streets to keep the pavement in good repair. These standard budget items offer opportunities to improve biking by (for example) narrowing lanes and adding crosswalks. While an efficient and cost-effective way to get more bike projects on the ground, completing a network will require that the resurfacing project list overlays priority biking corridors.
- 2. Regular funding streams:** Some cities have found success by tapping into ongoing federal and state funding streams, often complemented with local money. Others have gained the political support of local elected officials that approve funding from the city's general fund for discretionary use to build comfortable places to bike.
- 3. Ballot measures:** Cities often put measures on the ballot to raise money for transportation, through either new taxes or bonds against future revenues. Bundling bike projects into the measures has proven effective for raising significant amounts of money. In 2016, voters in a dozen jurisdictions from Texas to California approved \$4.7 billion in funding for new bike facilities.
- 4. Crowdfunding:** Soliciting many small donations from community members via a crowdfunding campaign can be an effective way to fill in modest funding gaps, while also building community investment and excitement about a project.



Edge district from above. Memphis, TN





Fargo Gets Creative

After suffering a series of devastating floods along the Red River in 2009, the city of Fargo, North Dakota set out to mitigate future flooding impacts and rebuild this water corridor through its downtown. Rather than using disaster mitigation funds to simply control the flow of water, city leaders took the opportunity to create a network of off-street trails, bike parks and natural areas as an asset for local residents.

SMALL TOWNS ARE ON THE MOVE

Most small towns are short on staff and funds. Sometimes communities places find it difficult to get started, because tackling a whole package of biking improvements seems daunting and expensive. Adopting an attitude of “get going” and taking some small first steps can demonstrate incremental success and build momentum.

The good news is that many small towns are doing great things, powered by community partners, volunteers, and creativity.

Inspired by local leaders, Minnesota Rust Belt cities Duluth (large) and Cuyuna (small) have built mountain bike trail networks that are drawing visitors and attracting new residents. Kingston, New York has ambitious plans to connect four regional trails into the heart of its community, funded by a local land trust and an array of partners.

Setting clear, definable goals and monitoring your progress is essential to staying on track. When you weave data with stories, you make a compelling case that bike projects are a worthwhile investment.

KEY ITEMS TO MEASURE

Progress on completing the bike plan

Knowing that the network is 27 percent complete, for example, is a powerful number that sets an expectation for future updates.

The outcomes of individual projects

Evaluate before-and-after street retrofits, measure vehicle traffic and speeds, bike traffic, pedestrian traffic and crashes by all modes. Economic and community vitality measures are also valuable. The Federal Highway Administration's Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide suggests 16 categories of before-and-after measurements.

Community engagement

How many people were contacted, and what did they have to say? Were all sectors of the community engaged? Focus groups can help pinpoint the most effective messages for a particular community. PeopleForBikes works on polling and messaging and we share strategies on our website.

Behaviors + opinions

Smartphones and GPS tracking offer a plethora of data about travel behavior and opinions. Phone apps can track user trips and develop stress maps of the system based on rider feedback. Bike share systems offer detailed data on travel patterns. Mining the mountains of data to glean useful trends is an emerging challenge and a big opportunity. Low-tech options like trip diaries and surveys can also help you understand behaviors and opinions.



Parking data makes the case in Montreal

When people think about removing parking from one side of a street, the first response is usually, “You’re removing half the parking from Main Street! Are you insane?”

But what actually matters to a neighborhood is the number of available spaces within a reasonable walking distance in all directions from a destination. Aerial photography can help people think about whether the problem is lack of space to park, or just a failure to use the space efficiently.

In 2005, when Montreal was considering removing 300 parking spaces for one of its first protected bike lanes, planners conducted a survey of every parking space within 200 meters. There turned out to be 11,000. The bike lane moved forward. Today, it's the city's signature bikeway and the area is thriving.



THE PLACESFORBIKES CITY RATING SYSTEM

Our PlacesForBikes City Rating System is a data-driven approach to identifying the best U.S. cities and towns for bicycling. Data gathered from our Community Survey, City Snapshots, and Bicycle Network Analysis (BNA) tool combine with publicly available data from government sources to score five key factors: Ridership, Safety, Network, Acceleration and Reach.



1. **Ridership** estimates how many and how often people are riding bikes. We evaluate census data, self-reported rates of bicycling by residents, and consider both recreational and transportation-oriented riding.



2. **Safety** includes an analysis of vehicular crashes occurring in communities. Crashes resulting in fatalities or injuries for all types of road users, including people riding bikes, are used to assess the degree to which a city's infrastructure and safety programs are supporting the ways people move around. Our Community Survey provides residents of cities an opportunity to provide feedback on their personal perceptions of safety that also contribute to this analysis.



3. **Network** establishes a numeric score assessing the quality of a community's bike network. It looks at how well distributed bike infrastructure is, and how effective those networks are at connecting people to the places they want to go. The PeopleForBikes Bicycle Network Analysis (BNA) is a stand-alone measurement tool that provides a consistent measure of network that feeds into the network score.



4. **Acceleration** measures short-term infrastructure improvements, such as new protected bike lanes and programs to get more people on bikes. This element reflects the tangible commitment to making progress for bikes on the ground, not just on paper. It can also indicate your community's trajectory for potential growth in bicycle use. The City Snapshot, solicited annually through your city's bicycle program, is the primary data source for this evaluation.



5. **Reach** is a method of expressing how consistently the bike network serves everyone in the community. By identifying traditionally underserved neighborhoods, including those of color and those with low-to-moderate incomes, the Reach score evaluates the differences in connectivity between those neighborhoods and the rest of the city using the PeopleForBikes Bicycle Network Analysis. A separate evaluation looking specifically at the gap between the number of men and women riding combines with the previous analysis to calculate the Reach score.



JOIN PEOPLEFORBIKES

Boulder, CO. Eco-Counter's products create camaraderie with a visible daily bike count.

PeopleForBikes is the nation's largest bike advocacy group working to get more people riding bikes more often. Our list of supporters is 1.3 million strong and each member plays a role in achieving our mission to make riding better for everyone. If you're already involved, thank you. If you're not, join us today at peopleforbikes.org/join.

PLACESFORBIKES SPARKS BIKE INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRESS

This guide is one of four key components to our PlacesForBikes program, which develops and connects great places to ride while encouraging people to use them.

- » PlacesForBikes offers a data-driven and easy-to-understand **City Rating System**, powered by a Community Survey that everyone is invited to complete. City leaders can use the annual ratings to accelerate change in their communities.
- » The annual **PlacesForBikes Conference** brings together the best minds in the bike world to provide inspiration, tools and strategies to achieve broad community goals through biking.
- » The **Big Jump Project** connects 10 dynamic U.S. cities with the world's best ideas to quickly build biking networks and measure what happens next.

PEOPLEFORBIKES HELPS YOU MAGNIFY YOUR VOICE

- » Our local engagement portal alerts you and other city leaders to important issues or votes in your community, tapping into our 1.3 million grassroots supporters.
- » Our lobbying efforts assure ongoing, cost-effective government investments in bike projects in your community.
- » We monitor federal and state regulations that affect bike use and let you know when to speak up.
- » We promote the many benefits of bike riding and inspire people to ride.

SHARE YOUR STORY

We'd love to hear what you are doing in your community that has been effective. We'll add your stories to this conversation as, together, we build better places for bikes across the U.S.

Visit PlacesForBikes.org or contact us at placesforbikes@peopleforbikes.org to get involved.



SCORECARD: ARE YOU MAKING BETTER PLACES TO RIDE?

DO YOU ...	YES	NO
1. Connect with local advocates who know about bike project plans?		
2. Sponsor or host events that encourage people to ride bikes?		
3. Convene gatherings of community partners to discuss the ways of making biking better and easier to access?		
4. Attend our annual PlacesForBikes conference?		
5. Measure the effectiveness of your existing network with the BNA?		
6. Promote infrastructure projects that make biking comfortable for riders of all types and ages resulting in complete networks?		
7. Experiment with quick-build project delivery to show what's possible?		
8. Explore opportunities to create dedicated funding for bicycling?		
9. Use our City Rating system to compare and learn from other cities?		
10. Support efforts to collect data demonstrating the benefits of biking?		
11. Celebrate your successes and communicate them?		

Thank you for all you have done — and will do — to grow bicycling!

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peopleforbikes