

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

Fall 2012



Photo: Trek

Lee's Summit, MO

The League of American Bicyclists has designated **Lee's Summit, MO** as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the **Bronze** level, because Lee's Summit exhibits a sustained commitment to cycling. The reviewers felt that there is still "room to grow", but that notable steps are being made in the right direction:

Engineering: Lee's Summit has a local policy to engineer streets with the consideration of bicyclists and has adopted good implementation tools. There are additional policies in place that make cycling and walking more comfortable, convenient and enjoyable. Staff receive regular training in bicycle and pedestrian planning and engineering. The community has a bike parking ordinance. Parking facility guidelines conform to the currently recognized design standards. Public buses are equipped with bike racks. There is an extensive network of off-street facilities that can be used by cyclists. The majority of streets have posted speed limits of 25 mph or lower, which increases the safety of cyclists. Most bike facilities in the community meet or exceed AASHTO, MUTCD and NACTO standards. Lee's Summit uses road diets, area wide traffic calming and speed tables to make roads safer for all road users. Cyclists are accommodated at signalized intersections. Path crossings are raised or have high visibility markings.

Education: Most elementary and middle schools have Safe Routes to School programs. Children and youth have the opportunity to learn cycling skills outside of school. Lee's Summit has recently educated motorists and bicyclists on

sharing the road safely. Traffic Skills 101, Cycling Skills and Bike Maintenance classes are offered regularly in the community. Cycling classes and workshops are conducted by a League Certified Instructor. Community requires safe driving training for most professional drivers.

Encouragement: Lee's Summit celebrates Bike Month, Bike to Work Day and Bike to School Day with a variety of events and programs that target different skill levels. Several programs and events that encourage cycling are offered throughout the year. Signature cycling events include the Tour De Lakes Tom Logan Memorial Ride, Jackson County Triathlon and the Tour of Kansas City. The events are actively supported by the local government. There are several bicycle clubs that cater towards a variety of cycling sports and skill levels. Community has themed loop routes around the community to encourage recreational cycling. Bike maps and route finding services are available to residents and visitors.

Enforcement: Lee's Summit 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 is a program that provides free helmets and lights to cyclists. Police officers target motorist and cyclist infractions. Most arterials and non-arterial streets have street lighting. The community has several local ordinances that protect cyclists. There are no major restrictions on cycling in the community.

Evaluation & Planning: Lee's Summit has a current bicycle master plan. There is a dedicated funding source available for bike plan implementation. Annual targets for the realization of the plan are met. The community has a trail master plan that addresses mountain bike access. An on-going bicycle counting and/or survey program that allows for long-term trend analysis of cycling trips. The community routinely conducts pre/post evaluations of bicycle-related road projects. Bicycle mode share is above average for U.S. communities. Community has low number of cyclist/motor vehicle crashes. There have been no cyclist fatalities in the last 5 years. The community has a specific plan or program to further reduce bicycle crash numbers. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that bicycle facilities, programs and encouragement efforts are implemented in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

Particular **highlights** were the Livable Streets Policy, and the Bicycle Lesson and Safety Training (BLAST) program.

Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts and dedication to make Lee's Summit a great place for cyclists. Below, reviewers provided key recommendations to further promote bicycling in Lee's Summit 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 funds are available for bicycle projects, please visit http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/overview/bp-broch.cfm and <http://www.advocacyadvance.org/>.

The key measures Lee's Summit should take to improve cycling:

- 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.

Benefits of Further Improving Lee's Summit for Cycling

- Increase the amount of [high quality bicycle parking](#) at popular destinations such as major transit stops, schools, universities, recreational and entertainment facilities, retail stores, office buildings, and churches throughout the community. Residents of multi-family dwellings and public housing should have access to high quality bike parking as well. Regulations that require bike parking, e.g. for new developments, can secure private funding. See bicycle parking ordinances of [Madison, Wisconsin](#) and [Santa Cruz, California](#).
- Continue to expand the on street bike network and to increase network connectivity through the use of different types of [bike lanes](#), [cycle tracks](#) and [shared lane arrows](#). On-street improvements coupled with the existing excellent 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. Ensure that new and improved 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.

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.

- Improve connectivity of bicycle facilities with neighboring towns to take advantage of each municipalities employment, recreational and retail establishments.
- 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 and interested parents to implement the Safe Routes to School program at all elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. Work with school principals to remove policies that discourage walking and biking to some schools. For more information, see the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Safe Routes To School Toolkit](#), www.bikeleague.org/programs/saferoutes/index.php or visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.
- Offer Cycling Skills classes, Traffic Skills 101 classes and bike commuter classes frequently or encourage a local bicycle advocacy group or 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](#) as well. For more information visit: www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/

Menu of additional recommendations to further promote bicycling:

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 [bicycle parking](#), shower facilities, and other end-of-trip amenities.
- Allow access to suitable public lands for mountain bicyclists. Ensure to connect any off-road trails and facilities to your bicycle network. If applicable, look for ways to bridge the divide between the bike community and equestrian community by creating dedicated trails for each user group and multiuse trails where feasible.
- Install a [bicycle wayfinding system](#) at strategic locations around the community. Click [here](#) for some best practices from the Washington, DC area Council of Governments.

- Implement broader transportation policies and programs that encourage alternative transportation choices, such as maximum/no minimum car parking standards or paid public parking to complement your community's infrastructure investments and programs.

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.
 - Improve the [connectivity of your street network](#). Both increased intersection density and additional street connectivity are associated with more walking, biking, and transit use due to greater directness of travel and more route choice options.
 - 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 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

- Consider creating a Bicycle Ambassador program like [Chicago's](#). 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 also offer bike commuting presentations for area businesses.

- Team with a local bicycle group or shop to offer more frequent 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.
- Regularly host Traffic Skills 101 or bike commuter courses for city engineers and planners to better understand cyclists' needs. For more information visit: www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/

Long Term Goals

- 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](#) and [San Diego County](#) have done.
- 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

- Host, sponsor and/or encourage a 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 lycra), 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.
- 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.
- Ensure that visitors and residents are able to rent bicycles in your community.
- Continue to 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](#).

- Encourage 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. 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. Learn about what Stanford University is doing for cyclists [here](#).
- Establish more youth recreation or intervention programs centered on bicycling. See what the Community Cycling Center in Portland, OR does: <http://www.communitycyclingcenter.org/>

Long Term Goals

- Consider launching a bike share system that is open to the public. Bike sharing is a convenient, cost effective, and healthy way of encouraging locals and visitors to make short trips by bike and to bridge the “last mile” between public transit and destinations. See what is being done across the country at <http://nacto.org/bikeshare/>

Enforcement

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Invite a police officer to become an active member of the Bicycle Advisory Committee. 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.
- 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.

- Provide safety amenities such as adequate path lighting and emergency call boxes, and offer services such as 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, ban cell phone use while driving, and specifically protect all vulnerable road users.

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.
- 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 individualized marketing to identify and support current and potential bike commuters in your community. See what Bellingham, WA is doing: <https://www.whatcomsmarttrips.org/login.aspx>
- Consider conducting an economic impact study on bicycling in your community. [Read about](#) what Portland, OR has done.
- Work with your mountain bike community to develop a plan for off-road access to increase opportunities for [single-track](#) riding within the community.

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