

**Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)
Recommendations for the Implementation of
the Bicycle Master Plan**

(DRAFT – June 2011)

1 Introduction and BAC Role

This Implementation Plan is prepared and routinely updated by the Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) and directly connects to the Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan. It focuses explicitly on the issues that are the regular and ongoing work of the BAC as it oversees and supports the Plan's implementation over time.

Specifically, the BAC will be responsible for the following with regard to the Bicycle Master Plan:

- 1. Routinely review the evaluation objectives and ensure they address the key indicators.**
- 2. Annually report out on goals and key indicators annually.**
- 3. Annually review and support updates to the Master Plan map.** In 2011, review the Master Plan map with regard to the following specific issues:
 - Identify and analyze arterials that could accommodate bicycle facilities through means such as conversions from four to three lanes, narrowing existing lanes, and other means (see Intergovernmental Relations recommendation 2.1 and Capital Program Implementation Strategy 5.4)
 - Potential demonstration projects (for innovation recommendations, see Intergovernmental Relations recommendation 2.3 and Prioritizing Criterion 13, and Capital Program Implementation Strategy 5.3)
 - Potential pilot projects (for innovation recommendations, see Intergovernmental Relations recommendation 2.3 and Prioritizing Criterion 13, and Capital Program Implementation Strategy 5.3)
- 4. Annually review current projects proposed to meet existing needs, and identify and develop new projects that meet changing community needs** (see Prioritizing Criteria 4, 5, 6, and 8, among others).

2 Intergovernmental Relations

Below are intergovernmental relations recommendations put forth by the Bicycle Advisory Committee on topics and issues that support the Minneapolis Bicycle Master Plan but cannot be resolved by the City alone.

2.1 **Advocate for Municipal State Aid (MSA) standards that allow Minneapolis to design streets that safely meet Minneapolis needs.**

Minneapolis uses MSA funding to reconstruct and renovate most arterial and minor arterial roadways. Current MSA standards include minimum lane widths, numbers of lanes, and other requirements that often act as obstacles to new bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in built-out communities like Minneapolis with constrained right-of-way widths. A number of studies indicate that narrower lanes and fewer lanes, in conjunction with bicycle facilities, may actually improve safety. Minneapolis should advocate for the capacity to build arterials using standards that make sense in an urban context.

2.2 **Advocate for increased funding for bicycle infrastructure and programming.**

Much of the progress that has been made in Minneapolis over the last decade has been due to effective partnerships with the state and federal governments, such as the Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot (NTP) Program. Other existing federal and state transportation funding programs could be changed to better support non-motorized uses. Minneapolis should encourage transportation funders to prioritize funding for bicycle infrastructure and programming, continue to fund existing non-motorized programs, and create new non-motorized funding programs.

2.3 **Advocate that new State and Federal funding programs that seek to incentivize innovation in bicycling infrastructure not be required to meet certain existing State and Federal guidelines.**

Some funding, such as the NTP program, has been constrained by a requirement to follow existing MSA standards. These standards have limited the innovation included in NTP projects, and have slowed implementation.

2.4 **Ask the State Legislature for permission for municipalities to create new dedicated funding mechanisms for capital and operations/maintenance for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.**

Funding for bicycle infrastructure, especially operations and maintenance, is constrained. Minneapolis should seek to create a new dedicated source of funding for bicycle infrastructure, not dependent on bicycle user fees. The creation of certain new taxes or fees to create a dedicated revenue source for bicycling infrastructure will require state authorization.

2.5 **Encourage Hennepin County and the State of Minnesota to implement their Complete Streets policies.**

Many of the busiest roadways in Minneapolis are under the jurisdiction of MSA standards and/or Hennepin County. The state and Hennepin County have passed Complete Streets policies, which could translate into revised MSA standards and County Highway policies, but these policies have not yet been fully implemented. In addition to passing its own Complete Streets policy, the City should advocate for the full implementation of policies at other levels of government.

2.6 Advocate at the state legislature for speed limit reductions on City streets, and the capacity to further reduce speeds due to the presence of a bicycle facility.

Maximum speed limits are set by the state, and cities cannot deviate downwards. On many Minneapolis streets, the existing speed limits are higher than conditions safely allow. In addition, Minneapolis has an interest in reducing speed limits on bike/walk streets (low-volume streets with significant bicycle and pedestrian improvements).

2.7 Continue to encourage the Metropolitan Council to create a regional bicycle plan that focuses on connecting routes across municipal and county boundaries.

The City of Minneapolis has already given comments to the Met Council that a regional bicycle plan is needed. The City should continue to advocate for such a planning process, and participate in it to ensure that it meets Minneapolis needs.

2.8 Support a study on the economic impact of bicycling.

The Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota will be advocating at the Legislature for a study on the positive economic impact of bicycling in Minnesota. The City of Minneapolis should support this study.

3 Policy Recommendations

3.1 Pass a Minneapolis Complete Streets policy.

A Complete Streets policy should define how the City will consider including dedicated bike facilities in new construction, reconstruction and renovation projects, and how the City will design streets without bicycle facilities to be bicycle friendly. This policy should encourage safe and convenient bicycle access to neighborhood commercial areas. It should include a new multimodal method for determining “Level of Service” at intersections and along corridors. As part of the policy, operations and maintenance prioritization and practices should be evaluated and updated as needed to ensure support for year-round bicycling. The policy should be used to update the Minneapolis Bicycle Design Guidelines as necessary.

3.2 Minimize both travel lane widths and number of travel lanes where possible and desirable.

In order to accommodate dedicated bike lanes on designated bicycle corridors, and to calm traffic on streets without dedicated bike lanes, the right-of-way space set aside for vehicular traffic may have to be reduced. In some instances, reallocating space from inside travel lanes to wide outside travel lanes may be the preferred solution.

3.3 Include dedicated bicycle facilities on all downtown streets unless there are compelling reasons not to.

Due to the density of destinations in downtown, a greater density of dedicated bicycle facilities is necessary than in other parts of the city.

3.4 Create a new full-time Bicycle Coordinator position within the department of Public Works.

This position should be created at a level that will allow the staff person coordinate the work of all appropriate Public Works departments. This staff person should not be responsible for specific engineering projects; rather, his or her tasks should include tracking projects with bicycle impacts, applying for external funding, staffing the Bicycle Advisory Committee, advocating for the bicycle program, and coordinating between Public Works and other Minneapolis departments and with other agencies.

3.5 Review bicycle projects holistically.

For spot improvements related to bicycle facilities (such as traffic diverters, traffic signal or sign changes, etc), Public Works staff should no longer use the “To The Record” letter process, which gives individual City Council Members sole authority over proposed parking and signage changes. Instead, Public Works should bring proposed layouts for entire proposed bicycle facilities to the City Council.

3.6 For street vacations requested as part of a bicycle/pedestrian project, use a 30% opt-out standard.

Off-street “bike highways” like the Midtown Greenway have proven very successful. Unfortunately, opportunities like unused, grade-separated rail rights-of-way are limited. Some neighborhoods are interested in creating Greenway-style facilities by closing existing low-volume

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streets to vehicular traffic. There is currently no standard process for the City to respond to these requests.

3.7 Continue to reduce regulatory barriers to new bicycle-related businesses.

Minneapolis has made recent changes that have dramatically increased the number of pedicabs, Pedal Pubs, and other bicycle-related businesses. When opportunities arise, Minneapolis should continue to craft regulations that make it possible for entrepreneurs to start small bike-related businesses.

3.8 Adopt a comprehensive bicycle parking policy for City worksites.

Currently, there is no clear policy for bicycle parking and access to buildings owned or leased by the City. Such a policy should be created and implemented. It should adopt goals for the provision of bike racks, secure indoor parking, lockers, showers; uniform rules for bringing bicycles into City worksites; and the provision of bicycle parking spaces for the general public.

3.9 Long-term maintenance and operations should not hinder new on-street bicycle facilities.

Operations and maintenance funding is constrained for all infrastructure, and necessary maintenance on much of the city's infrastructure is being deferred. However, to remain compatible with the City's adopted sustainability indicator targets and the goals of the Bicycle Master Plan, it is important to continue investing in new bicycle infrastructure in spite of widespread infrastructure maintenance funding shortfalls. The City should prioritize maintenance for bike facilities and streets with bike facilities, and work to create dedicated funding mechanisms (not based on a bicycle user fee) to support bike infrastructure maintenance.

3.10 Support workplace bicycle commuting.

Minneapolis ordinance 549.170 requires secure bicycle parking, shower, and locker room facilities at office buildings above 500,000 square feet in downtown. These requirements should be strengthened by reducing the size of buildings covered by the requirement and expanding the requirement beyond Downtown to apply to developments citywide.

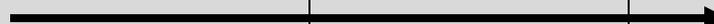
3.11 Create a specific permitting process for closing streets to motorized vehicles for "Open Streets" events.

Open Streets events temporarily create a continuous car-free length of urban roadway for people to use for bicycling and other community activities. Currently, they are being permitted as block events. The block event permit contains requirements that are not appropriate for Open Streets events, so a new permit type should be created.

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4 Prioritizing Criteria

Each year, the Bicycle Advisory Committee should review existing projects and recommend new projects to be included in the City’s 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. The BAC, City staff, and policymakers should use the following criteria to prioritize projects. It is understood that staff will provide the information in each table cell that the group will need to assess the project against the prioritizing criteria. The bulk of this information will be narrative; at some point the BAC may choose to assign scores or weights to the results, but the full system remains under development.

Prioritization Criteria	Project 1 Name and Summary Description	Project 2 Name and Summary Description	Project 3 Name and Summary Description	Project 4 Name and Summary Description
<u>Goal: Increases Bicycling</u>				
1. Numbers/trips: Is the project expected to increase the number of people bicycling and/or increase the number of trips taken by bicycle?	Project information would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> methodology used to determine projected use how project will achieve an increase in bicycle trips anticipated seasonal changes in use for project 			
2. Travel Demand: Does the project meet or help create a demand for bicycling in population and employment concentrations, with a focus on high trip generation areas? Is the project anticipated to serve travel needs in all seasons?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See above 			
<u>Goal: Improves Safety and Comfort</u>				
3. Safety, Appeal: Does the project provide a safer and more appealing alternative to what currently exists in a given corridor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> description of the benefits of safety and perceived safety of the proposed projects 			

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of the appeal of the project for trip convenience 			
Goal: Improves Accessibility				
4. <u>Barriers/ gaps</u> : Does the proposed project supplement the existing bicycle system by removing barriers and closing system gaps?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map of the existing bicycle network, including barriers and gaps, proposed projects, and popular destinations 			
5. <u>Geographic Equity</u> : Does the proposed project close gaps in areas of the City that are underserved by bicycle facilities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above 			
6. <u>Demographic Equity</u> : Does the proposed project serve populations with lower than average rates of bicycling? Considerations will include race/ethnicity, class, gender and age.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of how projects will serve populations from groups based on race/ethnicity, class, gender and age who are currently bicycle at relatively lower rates 			
7. <u>Regional Benefit</u> : Does the project connect Minneapolis to surrounding communities and facilitate the ability to take longer trips by bicycle?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map of regional bicycle connections 			
8. <u>Access to Popular Destinations</u> : Does the project provide bicycle access to popular destinations such as schools, parks, and public spaces (such as museums, theatres, community centers, government buildings, and shopping districts)?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map of the existing bicycle network, including barriers and gaps, proposed projects, and popular destinations 			
Additional Criteria				
9. <u>Timeliness</u> : Is the project timely and will it be ready for construction in the funding cycle? Timeliness will depend on external factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of the anticipated planning, design, funding and 			

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<p>such as redevelopment projects, street reconstructions, availability of external funds and timelines from funding sources. Project readiness will depend on internal factors such as planning, design, right-of-way acquisition, and City funding.</p>	<p>construction schedules for project</p>			
<p>10. <u>Cost Effectiveness</u>: Is the project cost effective? How much will each project cost, how many users will it benefit and what level of safety and convenience benefit will it provide to users? Are the operations and maintenance responsibilities defined? Are there differences between projects in the ability to maintain the facility over time? Does the project leverage funding from external sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of the projected cost for each project and a description of leveraged funding sources 			
<p>11. <u>Adopted Plan</u>: Is the project part of an approved regional, city, agency or neighborhood plan?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of the approved regional, city, agency or neighborhood plans in which the project appears 			
<p>12. <u>Public Support</u>: Has there been or is there public outreach planned for the project? What is the level of community support for the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • summary of planned or completed public outreach for each project and an assessment of the level of public support or opposition for project 			
<p>13. <u>Innovation</u>: Does the project allow the City to pilot a new approach or design element to improve safety, comfort and/or accessibility that is not currently used in Minneapolis? Does the project incorporate a successful approach that has been tried in other cities but not used in Minneapolis?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of any innovative features that have not been used in Minneapolis, including a description of their use in other cities 			

5 Capital Program Implementation Strategies

To meet the identified needs as the bicycle program advances, the Bicycle Advisory Committee recommends consideration of a number of capital program implementation strategies that would help ensure the plan's overall success and long-term stability. The BAC also notes strongly that such capital costs can be significantly reduced if the projects are planned well ahead *and* included as part of other projects as well as layered on top of opportunity projects.

5.1 The capital program for bicycle projects needs a dedicated funding source.

It is recommended that 2% of the City of Minneapolis annual transportation capital budget be set aside for bicycling projects, and also be used to aggressively leverage other funds. Larger projects will require banking funds over several years, or finding matching funds from other sources. A program with a constant funding stream helps balance staff workloads and creates structure for implementing projects at a steady rate. Because the current mode share for bicycling is roughly 4%, and the City's sustainability goals call for increasing that figure, the 2% allocation should be viewed as a minimum commitment, not a cap.

5.2 Property easements for trail projects should be acquired as opportunities arise in important corridors to prevent missed opportunities.

Examples include Upper River corridor, railroad corridors, etc. An opportunity fund could be set up to acquire needed parcels.

5.3 More emphasis needs to be placed on new technology and innovation to help reduce costs without compromising the quality of facilities

Examples include longer-lasting signs and pavement markings.

5.4 Complete remaining arterial connections.

The Minneapolis capital program has begun to shift from large arterial trail projects to smaller on-street signage and striping improvements. However, major arterial trails in Minneapolis function as bicycle highways, and several key connections still need to be made before the system of arterial trails is complete. In particular, North Minneapolis and Northeast Minneapolis are in need of stronger connections to downtown and the overall trail network. In addition, it has been suggested that a north-south trail in the center of South Minneapolis would provide improved access between neighborhoods and downtown, and would complement the three east-west trails in the area: the Midtown Greenway, the River-Lake Greenway, and the Minnehaha Creek Trail.

5.5 The Bikeways Master Plan Map should be consulted when roadway and bridge improvements are made, but not used to eliminate potential routes from consideration.

Maintenance work on a street not shown on the map may present a low-cost opportunity to add much-needed bike lanes or other enhancements, and these opportunities should be evaluated on their own merits as they arise. In order to avoid missed opportunities, every reconstruction or maintenance project should be reviewed for potential bicycle and pedestrian safety enhancements.

5.6 Non-infrastructure capital project responsibilities need to be better shared between local agencies, city departments, and private groups.

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Sharing responsibilities will allow for more collaboration and will result in less redundancy, therefore saving money. Sharing responsibilities will also result in a common message with regard to education and encouragement initiatives.

5.7 More leadership needs to come from other state/regional agencies with regard to capital and maintenance participation.

A regional bike plan needs to be developed that focuses on transportation needs not just on recreational corridors. Regional agencies need to focus limited resources on projects that will serve the highest number of people.

5.8 The City should pursue and advocate for additional State, County, Metropolitan Council, and Federal dollars to be spent on expanding and improving bicycling infrastructure in Minneapolis.

Each of these public agencies spend millions of dollars on other transportation modes within Minneapolis, and the City should advocate for proportional investment in bicycling..

5.9 The City should advocate for more flexibility in design of bicycle facilities.

In some cases, the restrictions associated with a specific funding source could needlessly add cost and complexity to projects. For example, the process of obtaining waivers so that a design can best meet the needs of a local context may add months to the timeline of a project.

6 Maintenance Program Implementation Strategies

As noted elsewhere, while long-term maintenance planning and funding is critical, bicycles facilities should be treated the same as other public investments, with facilities developed according to the needs and priorities and *not* rejected simply because long-term maintenance funds are not firmly secured in advance. The BAC recommends the following maintenance program implementation strategies:

- 6.1 Until other sources are secured, allocate at least 1%, of the Public Works operations and maintenance budget for maintaining bicycle facilities.**
- 6.2 Identify new revenue sources to help reduce pressure on the Public Works budget. Work with IGR team to lobby for new maintenance funding sources.**
- 6.3 Continue to work with Minneapolis Schools on the Safe Routes to School program using shared resources.**