

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

September 16, 2011

Minneapolis Bicycle Advisory Committee Recommendations for the Implementation of the Bicycle Master Plan

1 Introduction and BAC Role

This document 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 bike plan's implementation over time.

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

- 1. Periodically review the evaluation objectives and ensure they address the key indicators.**
- 2. Periodically report out on goals and key indicators.** The BAC and city staff need to review the progress of goals and key indicators on a regular basis. The frequency of this evaluation will be dependent on available resources.
- 3. Annually review and consider updates to the Master Plan.** The Bicycle Master Plan is expected to last 10 years without major revisions, but the Plan will be amended as needed.

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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. Minneapolis is currently participating on a state-level committee that is working toward a recommendation for adjustments to the current MSA design standards. Minneapolis also participates in NACTO, a multi-city collaborative that is working for change at a federal level. The city will continue to work with state and federal agencies to promote innovation and to reform the MSA process.

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 include appropriate flexibility on design standards.

Some funding, such as the NTP program, has been constrained by a requirement to follow existing standards, in spite of the fact that one of the goals of the funding was to spur innovation. The process for varying from these standards was time-consuming and in some cases delayed project delivery. Recognizing the overall importance of standards, and the need for systematic procedures to evaluate variances, Minneapolis should advocate for increased flexibility in creating context-sensitive designs. Funding programs that are initiated to increase innovation should include variance review procedures that reduce the barriers to innovation.

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.

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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 Continue to 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). The City of Minneapolis has and currently supports a reduction in the speed limit for local residential streets from the existing 30 mph limit, and should continue to do so.

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. A regional bicycle transportation plan is needed to ensure that communities are designing both on-street and off-street facilities to acceptable standards and to facilitate collaboration and cooperation across borders. A regional bicycle transportation plan will also help direct limited resources. 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. This information can help the hospitality industry, can promote new business within the city, and can better defend bicycling investments. The City of Minneapolis should support this study.

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3 Policy Recommendations

3.1 Pass a Minneapolis Complete Streets policy.

Pass a Minneapolis Complete Streets policy that promotes modal equity and is consistent with the Minneapolis Comprehensive Plan, Access Minneapolis, the Pedestrian Master Plan, Minneapolis Street and Sidewalk Design Guidelines, and the Bicycle Master Plan.

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, it may be appropriate to reduce the right-of-way space set aside for vehicular traffic. In some instances, reallocating space from inside travel lanes to wide outside travel lanes may be the preferred solution. The transportation system must be optimized to ensure mobility for all modes. This may result in minimizing travel lane widths or reducing the number of travel lanes in certain locations. The Bike Plan and a Complete Streets policy, along with the judgment of Public Works staff, can help ensure that individual locations are appropriately designed.

3.3 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.

3.4 Review bicycle projects holistically.

For many bicycle-related spot improvements, the “To the Record” (or “TTR”) process makes sense. However, for spot improvements related to longer bicycle facilities (such as traffic diverters, traffic signals or sign changes, etc) such as bicycle boulevards, the TTR letter process may not be the most appropriate. For bicycle facilities that have a broader impact than a single ward, Public Works staff should bring proposed layouts before the City Council.

3.5 Develop a process by which the City shall consider the conversion of low-volume roadways to greenway style bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Public Works staff have proposed the creation of a report to the BAC by May 1, 2012. Elements to be considered in the report shall include but not be limited to:

- Emergency vehicle access
- City planning documents (Comprehensive Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan, Bicycle Master Plan)

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- Traffic Impacts
- Neighborhood and resident support
- Infrastructure needs
- Funding of staff time to review requests
- Capital funding sources
- Maintenance plans
- Neighborhood amenities

3.6 Continue to reduce regulatory barriers to 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 succeed in bike-related businesses.

3.7 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.

Staff Comments: Refer this topic to the Facilities Space and Management Committee (FSAM).

3.8 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.

3.9 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.

3.10 Continue to support on-street bicycle parking.

Minneapolis has had significant success with the 50/50 cost match program, by which the City pays for half of the costs of a limited number of new bike racks every year, with the other half being paid by private property owners. This program should be continued.

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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.

Public Works strongly recommends that the BAC and staff work together to create and prioritize a 5-year capital program for bicycles.

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
Goal: Increases Bicycling				
1. <u>Numbers/trips</u> : 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 			

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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
Goal: Increases Bicycling				
<p>2. <u>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?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above 			
Goal: Improves Safety and Comfort				
<p>3. <u>Safety, Appeal: Does the project provide a safer and more appealing alternative to what currently exists in a given corridor?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • description of the benefits of safety and perceived safety of the proposed projects • description of the appeal of the project for trip convenience 			
Goal: Improves Accessibility				
<p>4. <u>Barriers/ gaps: Does the proposed project supplement the existing bicycle system by removing barriers and closing system gaps?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • map of the existing bicycle network, including barriers and gaps, proposed projects, and popular destinations 			
<p>5. <u>Geographic Equity: Does the proposed project close gaps in areas of the City that are underserved by bicycle facilities?</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above 			

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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
<p>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.</p>	<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 			
<p>7. <u>Regional Benefit</u>: Does the project connect Minneapolis to surrounding communities and facilitate the ability to take longer trips by bicycle?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> map of regional bicycle connections 			
<p>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)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> map of the existing bicycle network, including barriers and gaps, proposed projects, and popular destinations 			
<p><u>Additional Criteria</u></p>				
<p>9. <u>Timeliness</u>: Is the project timely and will it be ready for construction in the funding cycle? <u>Timeliness will depend on external factors 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</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> description of the anticipated planning, design, funding and construction schedules for project 			

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<u>funding.</u>				
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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
<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</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> description of any innovative features that have not been used in Minneapolis, including a description of their 			

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<u>Minneapolis? Does the project incorporate a successful approach that has been tried in other cities but not used in Minneapolis?</u>	use in other cities			
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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 City's five-year capital program should demonstrate the City's commitment to supporting and promoting bicycling.

The City's five-year capital program should demonstrate the City's commitment to achieving the goals of the Bicycle Master Plan and to reaching the targets established in the City's Sustainability Indicators, while recognizing the capital funding needs of maintaining a multi-modal transportation system that includes pedestrian, transit, and vehicular facilities.

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

Examples include the Upper River corridor, railroad corridors, etc.

5.3 More emphasis needs to be placed on new technology and innovation to help reduce maintenance 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. To achieve regional equity, North Minneapolis and Northeast Minneapolis are in need of stronger connections to downtown and the overall trail network. In addition, South Minneapolis is also in need of an arterial bikeway from Downtown Minneapolis to the southern city limits. Such a trail 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 Bicycle 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 significant

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reconstruction or maintenance project should be submitted to the BAC, and 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.

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. A regional bike plan is needed not only to coordinate routes between cities but also to ensure that minimum bikeway standards are achieved.

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 the design of bicycle facilities.

Staff Comments: Unnecessary restrictions add to project costs and incur project delay. The City supports the use of context sensitive solutions that meet the needs of the community without compromising the quality or safety of the transportation system. When a specific problem arises that can not be solved with traditional treatments or methods, innovative treatments may be pursued. The city should advocate for more flexibility in the design of bicycle facilities when traditional treatments do not meet community needs or when costs and timelines exceed common sense expectations. 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.

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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 needs and priorities. Because bicycles have relatively little impact on road surfaces, increased bicycle mode share offers the benefit of reducing overall maintenance costs for transportation infrastructure in Minneapolis. The BAC recommends the following maintenance program implementation strategies:

6.1 The City's operations and maintenance program should demonstrate the City's commitment to supporting and promoting bicycling.

The City's five-year capital program should demonstrate the City's commitment to achieving the goals of the Bicycle Master Plan and to reaching the targets established in the City's Sustainability Indicators, while recognizing the operation and maintenance needs of a multi-modal transportation system that includes pedestrian, transit, and vehicular 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.