

Feedback

Bicycle Friendly Community Application

Morgantown, WV

Spring 2012





The League of American Bicyclists has designated **Morgantown, WV** as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the **Bronze** level, because Morgantown exhibits a strong commitment to cycling that is still in its beginning stages. The reviewers felt that there is still “room to grow”, but that notable steps are being made in the right direction:

- *Engineering:* Morgantown recently implemented a policy to engineer streets with the consideration of bicyclists. The community has a bike parking ordinance. Most public buses are equipped with bike racks. The community uses area wide traffic calming to make roads safer for all road users. Nearly half of arterial streets have paved shoulders. All natural surface trails and singletrack are open to bicyclists.
- *Education:* Morgantown has recently educated motorists and bicyclists on sharing the road safely through public service announcements, community newsletter articles, dedicated bike page on the community website, blogs on cycling, billboards, share the road signs and by including share the road information in driver’s education. Traffic Skills 101 classes, Cycling Skills classes and Commuter classes are offered regularly in the community.
- *Encouragement:* Morgantown promotes National Bike Month through a city proclamation, a community ride, a mayor-led ride, public service announcements, a Bike Month events guide, a Bike Month website and a commuter challenge. The community celebrates cycling outside of Bike Month through community rides, mayor-led rides, public service announcements and trail construction/maintenance days. Community has a mountain bike park and a cyclocross course.
- *Enforcement:* A police officer is an active member of the bicycle advisory committee and the community 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 are penalties for motor vehicle users that 'door' cyclists. There is a ban on texting while driving.
- *Evaluation & Planning:* Morgantown has low number of cyclist/motor vehicle crashes. The community has a bicycle master plan and meets annual targets for bike plan implementation.

Particular **highlights** were the Confident City Cycling education program; 15-second educational video spots; Let’s Start Biking video; Share the Road information cards and bumper stickers; Street Smarts is handed out with every bike sold; tips for better bicycling in Yellow Pages; Positive Spin programs; Appalachian Spring Spectacular; Mountaineer Med Express Triathlon; Habitat for Humanity and BOPARC Sprint, Splash and Spin mini-triathlon; and the Mountaineer Station.

Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts, potential and commitment to make Morgantown a great place for bicyclists which can be seen in the growing number of cyclists. The BFC review team expects great things in the future given the good local team and the coming improvements to the network and programs.

Below, reviewers provided recommendations to further promote bicycling in Morgantown in the short and long term. 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.

The key measures Morgantown should take to improve cycling in the community are:

- Expanding the bicycle and pedestrian manager’s time focused on bike projects would help in scaling up your BFC efforts. Current work of the BPAC and TDM staff could be complemented by a staff person devoted to acquiring bike/ ped grants and making the community bicycle-friendly. See this report on the importance of Bicycle & Pedestrian program staff.
http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/why_bike_ped_staff_april_2010.pdf
- Continue to expand the bike network and increase network connectivity through the use of bike lanes, bike tracks, shared lane arrows, signed routes and bicycle cut-throughs. Since arterial and collector roads are the backbone of every transportation network, it is essential to increase the number of wide shoulders, bike lanes or cycle tracks along these roads to allow bicyclists of all skill levels to reach their destinations quickly and safely. On-street improvements coupled with the expansion of the off-street system will continue to increase use and improve safety. 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.
- Accommodate bicycles at intersections and multi-use path crossings to improve efficiency and safety of all road and path users. At intersections, time traffic lights for bicycle speeds and incorporate microwave cameras, loop detectors or bicycle signal heads, and include on-street pavement markings that indicate where cyclists should locate their bicycle to trigger the signal. Consider adding bike boxes to make bicyclists more visible to motorists. Consider incorporating raised multi-use path crossings or other high-visibility treatments on medium



and high traffic roads. Ensure that both path and road users are clearly informed about who has the right-of-way at every crossing.

- Ensure that bicycle-safety education is a routine part of public education and that schools and the surrounding neighborhoods are particularly safe and convenient for biking. Work with your Bicycle Advisory Committee and local bicycle advocates to develop and implement [Safe Routes to School programs](#) that emphasizes bicycling for elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. Strongly encourage all schools to participate.
- Encourage more local businesses to promote cycling to the workplace and to seek recognition through the [Bicycle Friendly Business](#) program. Businesses will profit from a [healthier, happier and more productive workforce](#) while the community would potentially profit from some bicycle-active businesses as well: increasing the bicycle mode share, less commuter traffic, 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 public bike events, skills and maintenance classes hosted or sponsored by businesses. The city should be the model employer for the rest of the community.

Reviewers provided the following menu of recommendations to further promote bicycling:

Engineering

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Ensure that new and improved bicycle facilities conform to current best practices and guidelines – such as the [NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide](#), [AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities](#) and your DOT’s own guidelines. Consider innovative bicycle infrastructure such as bicycle tracks, contra-flow bike lanes or colorful bike lanes.
- Ensure that the standards for bike parking conform to APBP guidelines: http://www.apbp.org/resource/resmgr/publications/bicycle_parking_guidelines.pdf
- Consider hosting a [Smart Cycling](#) course for city staff to better understand cyclists’ needs, behavior, and their right to use city streets as well as multi-use paths for transportation. Your local bicycle advocacy group are a great resource for this kind of training.
- Set up training for city staff and area consultants on bicycle facility design and planning. Consider a membership to the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals www.apbp.org for city Bicycle and Pedestrian Staff. Training opportunities and the listserv provided by this organization are excellent resources.



- Install way-finding signage at strategic locations around the community. Here are some best practices from the Washington, DC area Council of Governments:
<http://www.mwcog.org/uploads/committee-documents/t1dZW1k20070516090831.pdf>
- Improve the coordination and communication between city departments and state paving and rehabilitation projects and facilities maintenance. Consider offering oversight to state DOT staff and contractors working within municipal boundaries. Ensure that facility design follows current best practice and that they are properly installed.
- Consider measuring the bicycle level of service (LOS) on community roads and at intersections, to be able to identify the most appropriate routes for inclusion in the community bicycle network, determine “weak links” in the network, prioritize sites needing improvement, and evaluate alternate treatments for improving bike-friendliness of a roadway or intersection: [http://www.bikelib.org/bike-planning/bicycle-level-of-service/\(roads\)](http://www.bikelib.org/bike-planning/bicycle-level-of-service/(roads)) and <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/library/details.cfm?id=4425> (intersections).
- Consider road diets in appropriate locations to make streets more efficient and safe. Use the newly created space for bicycle and pedestrian facilities:
<http://www.walkable.org/assets/downloads/roaddiets.pdf>

Long Term Goals:

- Increase the amount of [secure bicycle parking](#) at popular destinations such as transit stops, schools, recreation and entertainment facilities, retail and office clusters and churches throughout the community. More and more communities also ensure that multi-family residential developments provide secure and covered bike parking.
- Develop a system of bicycle boulevards that creates an attractive, convenient, and comfortable cycling environment welcoming to cyclists of all ages and skill levels. See more on how to do it at <http://www.ibpi.usp.pdx.edu/guidebook.php>

Education

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- 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 has done:
[http://bikeped.pima.gov/Safety%20\(pdf\)s/April%20-%20May%202011%20Bicycle%20Diversion%20Class%20\(No%20Locations\).pdf](http://bikeped.pima.gov/Safety%20(pdf)s/April%20-%20May%202011%20Bicycle%20Diversion%20Class%20(No%20Locations).pdf)
- Education on bicycling is not only important for bicyclists but for all road users - including motorists. Start a motorist education programs for professional drivers such as bus and taxi drivers in the city. See what San Francisco has done <http://www.sfbike.org/?drivertraining>



Classes can be offered by League Cycling Instructors or local bicycle advocates and material is available through the League of American Bicyclists.

- Team with a local advocacy group, bicycle shop, or League Cycling Instructor to offer regular public maintenance classes to residents at public parks, libraries, community centers and in conjunction with city events. A short tutorial on how to change a flat tire can empower a person to ride their bike more often. You can find local instructors and bike shops here: https://members.bikeleague.org/members_online/members/findit.asp

Encouragement

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Promote, host, sponsor and/or encourage a variety of bicycle-themed, fun and family-friendly 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 (fashionable alternatives to lycra), a Halloween bike decoration competition, a bike to the arts event, etc. Work closely with local bicycle advocacy groups, bike clubs, bike shops, bike teams and schools. Provide appropriate safety measures such as road closures or police escorts.
- Consider passing an ordinance or local code that would require larger employers to provide shower facilities and other end-of-trip amenities.
- Encourage local institutions of higher education to promote cycling and to seek recognition through the [Bicycle Friendly University](#) program. College and university campuses are unique environments for their high density, stimulating atmosphere and defined boundaries. These factors make them ideal environments to incorporate bikes. Many colleges and universities have built upon these good conditions and embraced the enthusiasm for more bicycle-friendly campuses by incorporating bike share programs, bike co-ops, clubs, 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.” See what Stanford University is doing for cyclists: http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/bicyclefriendlyamerica/communities/bfc_stanford_university.php
- Set up and promote bicycle-themed community celebrations and/or rides each time the community completes a new bicycle related project. This is a great way to show off the city’s good efforts and introduces new users to the improvement.



- Consider offering a ‘Ciclovia’ or ‘Summer Streets’ type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and offering the space to cyclists, pedestrians and group exercise events.
<http://cicloviarecreativa.uniandes.edu.co/english/index.html>
- Consider partnering with a local bicycle advocacy group or bike club to launch a bike buddy or bicyclist mentorship program for inexperienced riders. A bike mentorship program that teams experienced cyclists with newcomers is a great way to encourage and educate novice commuters. See what Spokane, Wash. and Charlotte, N.C. are doing
<http://groups.google.com/group/bikementor>,
<http://www.spokanebicycleclub.org/bikebuddy.htm>
- Consider creating a Bicycle Ambassador program like Chicago’s:
<http://www.bicyclingambassadors.org/>
- Develop a series of short (2-5 mi.) (themed) loop rides around the community and provide appropriate way-finding signage. Integrate these rides into local bike maps.

Enforcement

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Have police officers distribute helmets and bike lights (or coupons to the local bike shop for each) to encourage all types of cyclists to ride more safely and remove the barriers to attaining these essential bike accessories. See the helmet and light promotions at Stanford:
http://transportation.stanford.edu/alt_transportation/BikeSafetyEd.shtml#helmet.
- 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. See what Tewksbury, MA is doing: <http://www.wickedlocal.com/tewksbury/news/lifestyle/x1837747400/Tewksbury-police-reward-young-cyclists-for-wearing-their-helmets#axzz1WdjHHfMo>
- Adopt fair, equitable and uniform traffic laws that are “vehicle-neutral” to the greatest extent possible. Local laws that discriminate against cyclists, or restrict their right to travel, or reduce their relative safety, should be repealed.

Evaluation/Planning

Low hanging fruit and fast results:

- Regularly conduct research on bicycle usage beyond the U.S. Census’ Journey to Work report to more efficiently distribute resources according to demand. Conduct yearly counts using automated and manual counters in partnership with advocacy organizations. We also strongly encourage you to participate in the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project: <http://bikepeddocumentation.org/>.



- Consider conducting an economic impact study on bicycling in your community. See what Portland, OR has done:
http://www.altaplanning.com/App_Content/files/fp_docs/2008%20Portland%20Bicycle-Related%20Economy%20Report.pdf

Long Term Goals

- Ensure that there is dedicated funding for the implementation of the bicycle master plan.
- Integrate the implementation of the bike plan into the master plan, all land use plans, zoning ordinances and larger development projects.
- Allow and encourage a mix of uses, a well-connected street network and compact development patterns throughout the community to shorten the distances people need to bike.
- Work with the [mountain biking community](#) to develop a plan for off-road access and increase opportunities for [single-track](#) riding within the city.

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