



**BICYCLE FRIENDLY  
COMMUNITY**

# BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

Spring 2013



Photo: Trek

City of Baton Rouge and  
Parish of East Baton Rouge, LA

The League of American Bicyclists has designated the **City of Baton Rouge** and the **Parish of East Baton Rouge** as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the **Bronze** level, because the City of Baton Rouge and the Parish of East Baton Rouge 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.

Particular **highlights** were the political support for cycling, BikeBR, the Complete Streets policy, the Mayor's Family Fun Ride, Baton Rouge Bike Month, the Bicycle Festival Weekend event, the integration of the bike plan into FUTUREBR, the CPPC's Neighborhood Bicycle Suitability Assessment, the growing on-street bicycle network, and the Mississippi River Levee Path and the Parks & Recreation trails.

Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts and dedication to make the City of Baton Rouge and the Parish of East Baton Rouge a great place for cyclists.

Below, reviewers provided key recommendations to further promote bicycling in the City of Baton Rouge and the Parish of East Baton Rouge 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, use Advocacy Advance's interactive [Find it, Fund it tool](#) to search for eligible **funding** programs by bike/ped project type or review the same information as a PDF [here](#).

**The key measures the City of Baton Rouge and the Parish of East Baton Rouge should take to improve cycling:**

- Hire a full-time Bicycle & pedestrian Coordinator within the Department of Public Works. A Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator works with advocates, state and local elected officials, business leaders, media, law enforcement, public health officials, transit providers and the general public to build partnerships providing leadership and vision so these groups may embrace and implement facilities and programs that increase the number of residents that are safely bicycling and walking. This staff person should also work closely with the Bicycle Advisory Committee, review development proposals to ensure that local bicycle/pedestrian requirements are incorporated and to assess bicycling and walking impacts, develop and implement educational and promotional programs, write grant proposals, serve as the public contact for bicycling/walking inquiries and complaints, educate other staff about state and federal facilities standards and guidelines, and coordinate with neighboring cities, transit agencies and other departments to implement

policies and projects. See [this report](#) on the importance of Bicycle & Pedestrian program staff.

- Ensure that there is dedicated funding for the implementation of the bicycle master plan.
- 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. Also consider adding some [artistic bike racks](#) to enhance the sense of place of your community.
- Promote active transportation by reducing traffic speeds. Consider lowering the speed limit to 25 mph or lower on non-arterial roads, especially in denser areas, around schools and shopping centers, and in neighborhoods. Use traffic calming measures and low speed design principles to achieve higher compliance rates. Speed [has been identified](#) as a key risk factor in road traffic injuries, influencing both the risk of a road traffic crash as well as the severity of the injuries that result from crashes. For instance, pedestrians and cyclists have a 90% chance of survival if hit by a car travelling at a speed of 20 mph or below, but less than a 50% chance of surviving an impact of 30 mph or above. [Studies](#) also generally report a positive association

## Benefits of Further Improving the City of Baton Rouge and the Parish of East Baton Rouge for Cycling

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.

between traffic safety (perceived and/or measured) and walking and cycling, particularly among women.

- 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. Particularly Highway 61 (going to Prairieville) needs to be improved for cyclists. 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.
- Adequately maintain your on and off road bicycle infrastructure to ensure usability and safety. Increase the frequency of sweepings and address potholes and other hazards faster.
- Host a League Cycling Instructor (LCI) seminar to increase the number of certified LCIs in your community. Having local instructors will enable your community to expand cycling education, recruit knowledgeable cycling ambassadors, deliver education to motorists, provide cycling education to adults and kids, and have experts available to assist in encouragement programs. Visit <http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/> for more information.

- 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 or interested parents to expand the Safe Routes to School program to all elementary schools, middle schools and high schools. For more information, see the [National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Safe Routes To School Toolkit](#) or visit [www.saferoutesinfo.org](http://www.saferoutesinfo.org).
- Expand efforts to evaluate bicycle crash statistics and produce a specific plan to reduce the number of crashes in the community. Available tools include [Intersection Magic](#) and the [Pedestrian and Bicyclist Crash Analysis Tool](#). See the report [Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City 1996-2005](#)

## 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.

- Offer more [ongoing training](#) opportunities on accommodating bicyclists for engineering and planning staff.
- Consider passing an ordinance or policy that would require larger employers to provide shower facilities and other end-of-trip amenities.
- Install a [bicycle wayfinding system](#) at strategic locations around the community.
- Ensure that rumble strips do not span the entire shoulder e.g. on the new bridge on Highway 190 to Denham Springs. See [this FHA website](#) for more information on rumble strip design that is safe for cyclists.
- Implement broader transportation policies and programs that encourage alternative transportation choices, such as maximum/no minimum car parking standards, 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. Consider a form-based code to allow for flexible land uses and to provide a

comfortable and convenient built environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Develop solutions to physical barriers in order to provide convenient bicycle access to all parts of the community.
- Implement your Complete Streets policy. Continue to expand the 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 expansion of the 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.
- 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.
- Make intersections safer and more comfortable for cyclists. Include elements such as color, signage,

medians, better 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

- Offer Cycling Skills classes, Traffic Skills 101 classes and bike commuter classes more 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. For more information visit: [www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/](http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/)
- Regularly host Traffic Skills 101 or bike commuter courses for engineers and planners to better understand cyclists' needs. For more information visit: [www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/](http://www.bikeleague.org/programs/education/)

Long Term Goals

- Start a bicyclist ticket diversion program. Road users given a citation are offered an opportunity to waive fees for violations by attending a bicycling education course. This course should include a classroom and on-road

component. See what [Pima County](#) and [San Diego County](#) have done.

- Expand your motorist education program for professional drivers. See San Francisco's [Frequent Driver Education](#).
- 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

- Consider offering a 'Ciclovía' or 'Summer Streets' type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and offering the space to cyclists, pedestrians and group exercise events. Check out LA's [CicLAvia!](#)
- Ask your tourism board to promote bicycling in your area to [boost your local economy](#). A [survey](#) of Portland, OR visitors found that the city's bicycle-friendly reputation played a role for 78 percent of travelers in their decision to visit Portland.
- 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.

- Encourage Louisiana State University and other 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.
- Design and publish a better local bike map in paper and online, addressing diverse needs and skill levels (commuter, recreational cyclist, sport cyclist, mountain biker etc). The map should outline the existing on and

off-road bicycle network by infrastructure type and skill level (if applicable). In addition, the map could identify the locations of landmarks, greenways, low-traffic streets, public restrooms, water fountains, bike routes, designated scenic routes, bike stations, bike repair stations, bike parking and transit stations. Take a look at Pittsburgh's award-winning [bike map](#).

#### Long Term Goals

- 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.
- 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

- Ensure that police officers are initially and repeatedly educated on the "Share the Road" message and traffic law as it applies to bicyclists and motorists. Training is offered by the International Police Mountain Bike

Association, the Law Enforcement Bicycle Association and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Here are some recommended Law Enforcement Products: Bicycle Safety [seminar](#); National Highway Traffic Safety Administration [video](#); Law Enforcement's [Roll Call Video: "Enforcing Law for Bicyclists"](#); and [Enhancing Bicycle Safety: Law Enforcement's Role](#) (CD-ROM Training).

- Have police officers distribute bike lights and bike locks (or coupons to the local bike shop for each item) in addition to helmets to encourage all types of cyclists to ride more safely, discourage bike theft and remove the barriers to attaining these essential bike accessories.
- Ask police officers to increase targeting of both motorist and cyclist infractions to ensure that laws are being followed by all road users. Ensure that bicycle/car crashes are investigated thoroughly and that citations are given fairly.
- 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.
- Increase the number of officers that patrol streets on bikes, as it gives officers a better understanding of the conditions for cyclists. Also ensure that secluded off road paths are regularly patrolled to improve personal

safety and encourage more people to take advantage of this amenity.

- Offer emergency call boxes and adequate street lighting along roads designated as "Bike Roads".
- Offer services such as non-mandatory bike registration and missing bike recovery assistance.
- Pass more laws that protect cyclists, e.g. implement penalties for motor vehicle users that 'door' cyclists, 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.
- Routinely conduct pre/post evaluations of bicycle-related projects in order to study the change in use, car speed and crash numbers. This data will be valuable to build public and political support for future bicycle-related projects.

- 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.
- Implement a community-wide trip reduction program or ordinance. See good examples [here](#).
- Consider individualized marketing to identify and support current and potential bike commuters in your community. See what Bellingham, WA is doing: [www.whatcomsmartrips.org](http://www.whatcomsmartrips.org)
- Consider conducting an economic impact study on bicycling in your community. [Read about](#) what Portland, OR has done.
- Establish a mechanism that ensures that bicycle facilities and programs are implemented in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

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