

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY FEEDBACK REPORT

Fall 2012



Photo: Trek

Albuquerque, NM

The League of American Bicyclists has designated **Albuquerque, NM** as a Bicycle Friendly Community at the **Bronze** level, because Albuquerque 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: Albuquerque has a local policy to engineer streets with the consideration of bicyclists and has adopted good implementation tools. Staff receive regular training in bicycle and pedestrian planning and engineering. The community has a bike parking ordinance. The majority of destinations have bike racks or storage units. All 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. There is a large network of on-road bike facilities that encourage people of all ages and skill levels to bicycle for transportation and recreation. The community uses road diets and speed limits of 20 mph or less on residential streets to make roads safer for all road users. Albuquerque has several transportation policies that indirectly encourage the use of alternative transportation options. Bike facilities are maintained regularly to ensure usability and safety. Cyclists are accommodated at signalized intersections, including innovative solutions such as bike boxes. Off-street path crossings 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. Albuquerque has recently educated motorists and bicyclists on sharing the road safely. Traffic Skills 101, Cycling Skills, Commuter and Bike Maintenance classes are offered frequently in the community. Cycling classes and workshops are conducted by a League Certified Instructor. Community requires safe driving training for some professional drivers. Some bike education programs target traditionally underserved populations.

Encouragement: Albuquerque 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 Albuquerque Century, the BikeABQ Bike Swap, the Ride of Silence, the Tour of the Rio Grande Valley ride, the Can You See Us Now ride, and the Day of the Tread ride. 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 a BMX track and a cyclocross course to encourage recreational cycling. Visitors and residents can rent bicycles in the community. Community youth have access to recreation and/or intervention programs centered on bicycling. Bike maps and route finding services are available to residents and visitors.

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

Evaluation & Planning: Albuquerque is currently working on an update of the bicycle master plan. There is a dedicated funding source available for bike plan implementation. Bicycle mode share is above average for U.S. communities. There is a trip reduction ordinance or program. Mechanisms are in place to ensure that bicycle facilities, programs and encouragement efforts are implemented in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.

Particular **highlights** were the air stations at various locations around the city, the world's largest covered BMX track, and the bi-annual Moonlight Bike Ride for senior citizens.

Reviewers were very pleased to see the current efforts and dedication to make Albuquerque a great place for cyclists.

Below, reviewers provided key recommendations to further promote bicycling in Albuquerque 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 Albuquerque should take to improve cycling:

- Ensure that the standards for bike parking conform to [APBP guidelines](#).
- Adopt the bike master plan update that is currently being prepared.
- 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.

- Expand the 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.
- Use signaled intersections (such as HAWK pedestrian signals) at the major street crossings of the Arroyo paths and consider paving the trails for better usability by cyclists.
- Make intersections safer and more comfortable for cyclists. Include elements such as color, signage, medians, signal detection, and pavement markings. Particularly the intersection of Martin Luther King & University is in need of bicycle-friendly treatments. 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.
- Consider offering a 'Ciclovia' or 'Summer Streets' type event, closing off a major corridor to auto traffic and

Benefits of Further Improving Albuquerque 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.

offering the space to cyclists, pedestrians and group exercise events. Check out LA's [CicLAvia!](#)

- 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/>
- Ask police officers to target both motorist and cyclist infractions to ensure that laws are being followed by all road users. There seems to be a particular problem with enforcing the law that prohibits parking in bike lanes and drunk driving. Ensure that bicycle/car crashes are investigated thoroughly and that citations are given fairly.

Menu of additional recommendations to further promote bicycling:

Engineering

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Adopt a [Complete Streets](#) policy and offer implementation guidance. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, communities direct their transportation

planners and engineers to routinely design and operate the entire right of way to enable safe access for all users, regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. This means that every transportation project will make the street network better and safer for drivers, transit users, pedestrians, and bicyclists – making your community a better place to live.

- 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 shower facilities and other end-of-trip amenities.
- Increase the amount of [high quality bicycle parking](#) outside the downtown and university area 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](#). Also consider adding some

[artistic bike racks](#) to enhance the sense of place of your community.

- Implement broader transportation policies and programs that encourage alternative transportation choices, such as maximum and/or 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. Require a mix of uses throughout the community to further shorten the distances people need to bike. 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.
- 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. Ensure that all 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.

Education

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Work with the Albuquerque Public Schools to ensure that all schools are comfortably accessible by bike and that Safe Routes to School programs are being implemented.
- 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.
- 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.
- Expand the 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 women, adult minorities, adult non-English speakers and the disabled.

Encouragement

Low hanging fruit and fast results

- Host, sponsor and/or encourage a greater 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 for families, a dress-like-Santa social 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.

- Team up with public health advocates to promote bicycling. Bernalillo County was recently awarded a Community Transformation Grant which includes the goal of active living and the New Mexico Healthier Weight Council is heading a Complete Streets Campaign. This is a great opportunity to make new allies.
- 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.
- Encourage more 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](#).
- 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 locks (or coupons to the local bike shop for each item) 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 use targeted information and enforcement to encourage motorists and cyclists to share the road safely. This could be in the form of a brochure or tip card explaining each user's rights and responsibilities. Have information material available in Spanish, if applicable.
- 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 non-mandatory bike registration.

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.

- Conduct yearly counts using automated and manual counters in partnership with advocacy organizations. Consider participating in the [National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project](#).
- 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.
- 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 [PBCAT](#). See the report [Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City 1996-2005](#)
- Consider measuring the Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS) 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 and hazards, prioritize sites needing improvement, and evaluate alternate treatments for improving bike-friendliness of a roadway or intersection:
[\[service/\]\(#\) \(roads\) and <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/library/details.cfm?id=4425> \(intersections\).](http://www.bikelib.org/bike-planning/bicycle-level-of-

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- 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.
- Establish a mechanism that ensures that bicycle facilities are implemented in traditionally underserved neighborhoods.
- 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](#).