

Work Session Agenda Item IV.



BIKE EDINA

Bicycle Friendly Community Application

Program of League of American Bicyclists (<http://www.bikeleague.org>).

90+ questions covering engineering and maintenance, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation and planning.

Application submitted February 2014. Decisions to be announced in May.

Prepared by Jennifer Janovy, Bike Edina; Mark Nolan, City of Edina; and Nick Mason, Bicycle Alliance of MN

Current Bike Friendly Communities in Minnesota: Minneapolis (gold), Duluth (bronze), Grand Marais (bronze), Richfield (bronze), Winona (bronze), Bemidji (bronze), Grand Rapids (bronze), Greater Mankato (bronze), Rochester (bronze), St. Paul (bronze).

Edina applied in 2010 and received Honorable Mention.

Excerpts from the application:

What was your community's most significant achievement for bicycling in the past 12 months? (500 word limit)

Three related achievements have significantly advanced bicycling in Edina in the past 12 months. In December 2012 the Edina City Council approved two new franchise fees, creating an approximately \$1.1 million annual revenue stream dedicated solely to bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The City began collecting revenue from this fee in April 2013. In June 2013, the City hired a Transportation Planner (new full-time position). The Transportation Planner administers the Living Streets program and Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety (PACS) Fund, and assists with planning and design of traffic operations within the City. In August 2013, the City Council approved a Living Streets Policy (complete/green streets). Living Streets balance the needs of motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians and transit riders in ways that promote safety and convenience, enhance community identity, create economic vitality, improve environmental sustainability, and provide meaningful opportunities for active living and better health. The City is currently working on a Living Streets implementation plan.

If you have applied to the BFC program before, describe any improvements that have occurred for cycling in your community since your last application. (500 word limit)

Along with the achievements listed above, Edina has made notable improvements to benefit cycling in our community. In 2010 the community worked with Three Rivers Park District to identify an alignment for the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail. Final planning for this 7.4-mile recreational trail (Edina segment) begins in February 2014, with construction to start in 2015. In 2011 the Edina Transportation Commission updated its establishing ordinance to reflect a multi-modal focus. In 2012, using a \$250,000 grant from the Non-Motorized Transportation Program, the City installed experimental advisory bike lanes and green shared lanes along a route connecting Edina to SW Minneapolis. Also in 2012, the Edina City Council adopted a bicycle lane ordinance. In 2012-2013, Edina added six centerline miles of dedicated bike lanes on primary bike routes in our community. In 2013, Edina worked with Hennepin County to mark dedicated bike lanes and make bicycle friendly intersection improvements on a county road within the city. Also in 2013, the City of Edina, Edina Public Schools, and Bloomington Public Health completed a comprehensive Safe Routes to School plan. Bloomington Public Health has also contracted with BikeMN to provide an Active Transportation Education and Bike Parking Action Plan, which is in final draft form. The plan includes goals that are targeted for completion before the end of 2015. In addition, BPH sponsored a Bikeable Community Workshop for the city of Edina in October. It was well attended by a variety of community stakeholders and led by BikeMN, MN Department of Health, and MnDOT. The objectives of a Bikeable Community Workshop are: (1) Describe how the 5 E's (engineering, education, enforcement, encouragement, and evaluation) can improve the safety of bicycling in communities; (2) Explain Minnesota's traffic laws related to bicycling; (3) Recognize the importance of collaboration and the roles other professions have in supporting bicycling in communities; and (4) Apply effective strategies in communities to facilitate bicycling as an easy, safe, and healthy choice with available resources. All of the above improvements involved bicycle advocates and other community volunteers.

What specific improvements do you have planned for bicycling in the next 12 months? (250 word limit)

The community will work with Three Rivers Park District on final design for the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail. Preliminary design work for Tracy Avenue (primary bike route) will begin in the summer. City Transportation Planner Mark Nolan will continue to draft the Living Streets Implementation Plan with input from a citizen advisory committee. The final plan is expected to be adopted in the fall of 2014 and will include an updated bicycle plan and design guidelines for bicycle facilities. Planned new bicycle facilities for 2014 include striping bike lanes on Olinger Boulevard and Ohms Lane (approximately 2 miles). The Active Transportation Education and Bike Parking plan will be implemented. Goals include mapping bike parking locations, prioritizing and filling in bike parking gaps, and developing a cost sharing program to encourage businesses/retailers to provide bike parking. Education goals include integrating the MN bicycle safety curriculum Walk! Bike! Fun! into summer Community Education and Parks and Recreation programs, and beginning planning for a 2015 Open Streets event. The Bike Edina Education and

Outreach committee is implementing a plan to extend communication and education to Edina residents in a systematic way, as well as to coordinate communication with our neighboring communities (Minneapolis, Richfield, St. Louis Park, Three Rivers Park District, and Hennepin County) and their bicycle advocacy groups.

Describe any other education efforts in your community that promote safe cycling. (500 word limit)

The Edina Transportation Commission (citizen commission appointed by and advisory to the City Council) provides a forum for educating the public about safe cycling. The Commission meets monthly, with every third meeting televised. The televised meetings typically include presentations intended to be broadly educational--for example, the most recent televised meeting included a presentation on the new Active Routes To School (SRTS) plan. A member of Bike Edina sits on the Transportation Commission and gives a report at each meeting. Transportation Commission meetings are open to the public and meeting minutes are posted on the City of Edina website.

In 2011, the ordinance establishing the Edina Transportation Commission was revised to give the commission a multi-modal focus. Since 2008, the ordinance has required that one member of the Commission also be a member of Bike Edina or similar group, or otherwise have an expertise or interest in bicycling as a mode of transportation. The full ordinance is below.

Sec. 2-311. Policy and establishment. The city transportation commission is established to help guide the city in implementing its vision for an integrated, multi-modal local transportation system as stated in the city's comprehensive plan. The system will provide safe and efficient transportation options for all users (motorists, transit riders, bicyclists, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities) in a way that promotes the economic, environmental, social, and personal vitality of the city and its residents. **Sec. 2-312. Definitions.** The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this division, shall have the meanings ascribed to them in this section, except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning: Local means those roadways under city control; also called "residential" and "collector" roadways and including municipal state aid roadways. Multi-modal means pertaining to all modes of transportation, including but not limited to motor vehicles, mass transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. **Sec. 2-313. Purpose and duties.** The commission shall: (1) Advise the city council on the operation of the local transportation system (all modes, users, and abilities). (2) Develop strategies, plans and recommendations to implement the city's multi-modal transportation vision. (3) Review neighborhood street capital investment projects for adherence to adopted city policies and planning documents. (4) Review and comment on large development proposals, such as those requiring an alternative urban areawide review, environmental assessment or small area plan. (5) Discuss regional transportation improvements by outside agencies that may affect the local transportation system. (6) Promote the city's transportation vision through education and open forums. (7) Review and comment on citizen transportation concerns, traffic complaint reports, and data. (8) Review and recommend transportation-related funding. (9) Advise the city council on additional matters when directed by the city council. **Sec. 2-314. Membership.** The commission shall consist of nine regular and two student members, appointed from the different

geographic areas of the city. One member of the commission shall also be a member of the Bike Edina Task Force or any existing similar organization, or shall otherwise have an expertise or interest in bicycling as a mode of transportation.

In addition, the City has produced educational videos and other materials to promote safe cycling:

Agenda: Edina segment on Edina Commuter Challenge

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OAS92H75ET8>

Green Shared Lanes instructional video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xykZ_k5lJtI

Advisory Bike Lanes instructional video http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJx_3HiSFnl

Edina Police Department bike education video (Not available online.)

Understanding Bicycle Facilities in Edina handouts:

http://edinamn.gov/edinafiles/files/City_Offices/Engineering/Transportation/Bike_Facilities_Handout_2013.pdf.

Bike Edina, a citizen-led bicycle advocacy group formed in 2006, promotes safe cycling through its website (www.bikeedina.org), monthly meetings that are open to the public, and events. The mission of Bike Edina is to advance bicycling in Edina by: Advocating for a complete bicycle transportation network that serves cyclists of all ages and abilities, safely and conveniently; Serving as a voice and resource for city staff and elected officials, school district, and the community on bicycling-related issues; Furthering public awareness and acceptance of bicycling as a fun, safe, convenient, healthy and sustainable mode of transportation and form of recreation, year around; and Working collaboratively with other organizations to advance our vision for a progressive bicycle-friendly community where everyone can integrate cycling into their daily lives.

Bike Edina is working in partnership with Quality Bicycle Products on a program loosely called "commuter in a box," a how-to program for businesses interested in or considering implementing a bicycle commuter program for their employees. QBP will be developing a "commuter in a box kit" in 2014, and Bike Edina will be promoting the program to 2-3 local businesses.

In 2013, the City of Edina, Edina Public Schools, and Bloomington Public Health completed a comprehensive Safe Routes to School plan. The plan includes "develop a walking and biking section of the school district website;" incorporate walking and biking safety education into the physical education curriculum;" and "create a pedestrian and bicycle safety education campaign." A pedestrian and bicycle safety campaign is currently being developed through a grant from Bloomington Public Health (Edina's public health agency). The MnDOT and BikeMN curriculum "Walk! Bike! Fun!" is being shared with the Edina school district for consideration in both physical education curriculum and after-school programs. Implementation of this curriculum is a goal in the Edina Active Transportation Education and Bike Parking Plan developed by BikeMN (currently in final draft form).

In addition to the public and private schools, Edina hosts a NICA community mountain bike team which accepts Edina youth from all middle- and high-schools whether they are within Edina boundaries or not. The Edina Mountain Bike team is coached by certified

NICA instructors, who educate the youth on all aspects of mountain biking, and in addition, on rules of the road as well for urban commuting.

What are the three primary reasons your community deserves to be designated a Bicycle Friendly Community?

Reason One (250 word limit)

Edina has made significant progress in three key areas: policy & planning, funding, and implementation.

Policy & Planning: Edina was one of the first MN communities to have a comprehensive bicycle transportation plan and the third MN community to adopt a Living Streets policy. The City is currently work on a Living Streets implementation plan. The implementation plan will include design guidelines and standards for on-street bicycle facilities and an updated bike route plan that identifies specific improvements by route and prioritizes implementation. The community's new Safe Routes to School plan (http://edinamn.gov/edinamn/files/City_Offices/Engineering/Transportation/EdinaActiveRoutes_DRAFT-Report_2013-10-24_Compressed.pdf) includes recommendations for bicycle parking and education. The school district is currently working to integrate bike parking recommendations into their facility improvement plans.

Reason Two (250 word limit)

Funding: In 2013, Edina established a dedicated special revenue fund (PACS) to finance bicycle and pedestrian improvements. This fund will collect approximately \$1.1 million per year. Also in 2013, Edina received a grant from Bloomington Public Health (Edina's public health agency) to create a comprehensive Safe Routes To School plan and \$15,000 to create a public education campaign for Living Streets. In 2012, Edina implemented a \$250,000 project funded by the Non-Motorized Transportation Program. This project made Edina the second community in the state to implement advisory bike lanes. The project also included bike boulevard segments and green shared lanes. Both advisory bike lanes and green lanes are experimental. The advisory bike lanes on Wooddale were removed in July 2013 after significant and continuing community opposition. The advisory bike lanes on W. 54th remained and the City continues to evaluate both the advisory bike lanes and green shared lanes through 2014. The City intends to keep the advisory bike lanes on W. 54th and the green shared lanes after the evaluation period ends.

Reason Three (250 word limit)

Implementation: Since 2010 Edina has implemented 11 lane miles of dedicated bike lanes and over nine lane miles of marked, shared on-street bicycle facilities. In 2012, Edina got permission to experiment with advisory bike lanes and green shared lanes. This process has provided valuable information, not only about how to implement these treatments, but also about the need to educate and prepare the community and the Police Department for these changes. Final design for the long-awaited Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail begins this year, with construction anticipated to begin in 2015. This trail will connect to other regional and local trails, greatly expanding transportation and recreation possibilities

(please see attached map). A primary focus of 2014-2015 will be to identify on-street routes to the regional trail that serve cyclists of all ages and abilities.

What are the three aspects of your community most in need of improvement in order to accommodate bicyclists?

Aspect One (100 word limit)

Designing facilities with all ages and abilities in mind. All of Edina's existing on-street bicycle facilities are on collector and minor arterial streets. Even with dedicated bike lanes, many cyclists (or would-be cyclists) are not comfortable riding on these streets. Just one uncomfortable segment can deter people from riding. By identifying and improving challenging segments, providing protected facilities, and identifying alternative routes on quieter streets, our community can meet the needs of a wider range of cyclists.

Aspect Two (100 word limit)

Bicycle accessibility. Edina is divided into four roughly equal quadrants by two major highways. A lack of bicycle-accessible and safe highway crossings makes bicycle travel from one part of the community to another extremely difficult. A bicycle and pedestrian bridge over one of the highways will be constructed in/by 2017 as part of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail. A lack of bicycle parking also limits accessibility. While bicycle parking is provided at many schools, parks and public buildings, there is a need to provide incentives to businesses in Edina to provide bike parking for customers and employees.

Aspect Three (100 word limit)

Education and encouragement. This process identified that bicycle education and events are available in the community; however, these efforts need to be better coordinated so that they are both more consistent and visible. Most bicycle education in Edina is aimed at elementary school-aged children. There is a need to reach older children and adults and to focus not only on bicycle skills but also on educating motorists on how to "co-exist" with bikes on the road. There is also a need to work closely with the Police Department on education. Community surveys consistently give the Edina Police Department high favorable ratings (In 2013, 99% of respondents indicated they trust the EPD and 98% rated police protection as excellent or good). These high approval ratings, along with their responsibilities to enforce traffic laws, make the Edina Police Department a valuable and necessary partner in bicycle education.

Has completing this application made you more aware of what your community needs to do to be bicycle friendly?

Yes

If yes, describe (250 word limit)

The application required us to identify the people and organizations who could answer the questions. Through this process, we created, renewed, and strengthened connections. These connections will be built on as we continue our work to make

Edina a more bicycling friendly community. At first pass, the application was daunting, but the more we worked on it, the more we were able to see where we, as a community, are currently strong and where we need to improve. Not being able to answer a question, or answer it to our satisfaction, identified opportunities. If the question hadn't been asked, we might not have thought of it. If we hadn't tried to track down the answer, we might not have made a connection. Perhaps the biggest takeaway is that we need to maintain these connections and build on them in order to successfully complete our goals.

Are you planning any new projects based on your completion of the Bicycle Friendly Community application?

Yes

If yes, describe (250 word limit)

Along with the projects already planned, the process of completing this application either identified or put a higher priority on the following projects: Hosting a Skills 101 class this spring. Participants from this class can then attend the League-certified instructor training this summer. Developing a cost-sharing program to encourage businesses/retailers to provide bike parking. Modifying City ordinance that prohibits riding or parking a bike on a public sidewalk. Working to include bicycle education in all schools and in Parks and Recreation programs. Planning an Open Streets or similar event for 2015. Sharing our findings from this application process with the individuals and organizations that participated in providing information, so that the knowledge gained and connections made from this process are shared.