



BICYCLE FRIENDLY UNIVERSITY FEEDBACK REPORT

2014



Western Michigan University

While **Western Michigan University** was designated as an **Honorable Mention** in the Bicycle Friendly University program this year, reviewers are optimistic of your commitment and look forward to working with the campus to reach an award level in the coming years.

Highlights of the application include The Bike Stable Open Bike Shop; BroncoBikes rental program; weekly bike maintenance classes; and the 2014 Transportation Survey.

Below, reviewers provided key recommendations to further promote bicycling at Western Michigan University and a menu of additional pro-cycling measures that can be implemented in the short and long term. **(Short-term recommendations that often see fast results are highlighted in bold.)**

We strongly encourage you to use this feedback to build on your momentum and improve your campus for cyclists. 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!

The key measures Western Michigan University should focus on to improve cycling on campus:

- Appoint a full-time, permanent staff member as official Bicycle Program Manager or create a new position. (See *Evaluation & Planning*)
- Repeal campus laws that discriminate against cyclists, unnecessarily restrict their right to travel, or reduce their relative safety. (See *Enforcement and Campus Reviewer Comments*)
- Expand the bike network and increase network connectivity through the use of different types of [bike lanes](#), [cycle tracks](#) and [shared lane markings](#). (See *Engineering*)
- Develop an education program including an ongoing safety and awareness campaign, as well as regular [bicycle safety and maintenance classes](#). (See *Education*)
- Create a [campus bike master plan](#) that will guide future plans with a long-term physical and programmatic vision for your campus. (See *Evaluation & Planning*)
- Increase the amount of [high quality bicycle parking](#) at popular destinations on campus. Prioritize indoor, secure, and/or covered parking where possible. (See *Engineering*)

Menu of additional recommendations to further promote bicycling:

Engineering

- Adopt a [Complete Streets](#) or Bicycle Accommodation policy to guide roadway construction, and offer implementation guidance. By adopting a Complete Streets policy, institutions 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 campus a better place to live, work and study.
- **Provide [ongoing training](#) opportunities for engineering and planning staff on accommodating bicyclists. Consider [providing APBP memberships](#) for one or more related staff.**
- Develop a policy requiring end-of-trip facilities such as a minimum number of bicycle parking spaces per occupancy at all new and reconstructed buildings on campus. Consider a policy requiring showers and locker rooms in non-residential buildings. One of the most common excuses people use to not commute by bike is that they don't have a shower at their destination. Also make sure to provide showers and lockers as a benefit not as an additional cost to students and employees.
- **Increase the amount of [high quality bicycle parking](#) at popular destinations such as transit stops, class room/lab buildings, dorms, recreation and entertainment facilities, and retail and office locations on campus. More and more institutions also ensure that off-campus student housing provides secure and covered bike parking.**
- **Ensure that the standards for all bike parking conform to [APBP guidelines](#).**
- Consider constructing a bike station to provide secure and covered parking for cyclists. Similar to the [Bike Center at University of Minneapolis](#), the bike station can serve as a hub for commuters including repair services, shower and locker facilities, and bike route and event information. [Check out other areas that have already implemented a facility.](#)
- Expand the bike network and to increase network connectivity through the use of different types of [bike lanes](#), [cycle tracks](#) and [shared lane markings](#). 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](#), [AASHTO Guide for the](#)

[Development of Bicycle Facilities](#) and your DOT's own guidelines.

- Develop a system of bicycle boulevards that creates an attractive, convenient, and comfortable cycling environment welcoming to cyclists of all skill levels. [Learn more about bicycle boulevards here.](#)
- Consider lowering the speed limit to 20 mph on campus streets. 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 between traffic safety (perceived and/or measured) and walking and cycling, particularly among women.
- Place way-finding signage with distance and/or time information, at strategic locations around campus. [Here are some best practices](#) from the Washington, DC area council of governments.

Education

- Incorporate bicycling into the [new student and employee orientation](#) program in order to reach all incoming students, faculty and staff. This can include

distribution of bike maps, bike registration, reviews of bike laws and helmet and bike light promotions. This should include information for cyclists and motorists on their rights and responsibilities as users. Everyone should know that this campus wants to be truly bicycle-friendly.

- It is essential to continually make both motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road. Continue to expand your education campaign promoting the share the road message. Take advantage of your local bicycle groups for content development and manpower. Check out some of the promotion that Emory has done to support their [Why Not? Campaign](#). Or consider Stanford's multi-pronged approach to Bike Safety through events and programs such as a Dorm Challenge, a bike ambassador program led by [Sprocket man](#), and a [bike safety pledge](#).
- Start a bicyclist and motorist ticket diversion program. Students given a 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 UC Davis' Bicycle Education and Enforcement Program](#).
- Offer [cycling skills classes, Traffic Skills 101 classes and bike commuter classes](#) more frequently or contact your local bicycle group to see if there are classes in your area that could be promoted to students and employees. Ideally the instruction would incorporate a

classroom portion as well as on-road training. The classroom portion of Traffic Skills 101 is now available [online](#) as well.

- **[Host a League Cycling Instructor \(LCI\) seminar](#)** to increase the number of [local LCIs](#). Having local instructors will enable your institution to expand cycling education, recruit knowledgeable cycling ambassadors, deliver education to motorists, and have experts available to assist in encouragement programs.
- The League of American Bicyclists now offers a handy Smart Cycling Quick Guide that can be purchased for distribution on your campus. Preview the guide and learn more at <http://bikeleague.org/quickguide>.

Encouragement

- **Host, sponsor and/or encourage a variety of social and non-competitive bicycle-themed events on campus year-round, such as a bike movie festival, a 4th of July bike parade, a bicycle fashion show (stylish alternatives to lycra), a Halloween bike decoration competition, a bike to the arts event, etc. Ensure to widely advertise all bicycle-themed events and programs. Provide appropriate safety measures such as road closures or police escorts. [Read about what UC Santa Barbara does during CycleMAYnia](#).**

- Establish a formal incentive program for those who bike commute. This could include such benefits as cash incentives, a Guaranteed Ride Home program, Zipcar discounts and coupons for local bike shops. [Check out the University of Minnesota's Zap! program](#).
- **Consider offering bike valets at events throughout the year to solve parking issues at well-attended events. For example, Boise State University offers bike valet service at football games. See what the University of Arizona is doing to encourage bicycling through an [all-year bike valet](#).**
- **Ensure that your marketing department promotes cycling at your university to current and prospective students and employees. Cycling is becoming an important lifestyle choice for more and more young people and catering to these interests will improve your institution's competitiveness.**
- Recreational bicycling can be promoted through bicycle amenities such as a mountain bike park, a cyclocross course or a pump track.
- Increase the number of bikes available in your bike share system, and consider offering both short (hourly or daily) and long-term (semester or academic year) rentals. A successful campus bike share system is a convenient, cost effective and healthy way of encouraging students and employees to make short trips by bike. [See what is being done at Emory University in Partnership with Fuji](#) and [see](#)

[how Yale is using Zagster bikes for its Bikeshare program.](#)

- Encourage your surrounding community to work toward [Bicycle Friendly Community](#) designation.
- Create a bike map that gives bicyclists and potential bicyclists a wide variety of choices for transportation and recreation at the various cyclist comfort levels. [See how University of Arizona has incorporated bike routes, bike-share and bike parking into their campus map.](#)

Enforcement

- 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.
- **Appoint a law-enforcement point person to interact with cyclists. This will actively facilitate stronger connections between the bicycling community and law enforcement, which will improve road safety for all users and improve fair enforcement of motorist and cyclist infractions.**
- Ensure that all 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](#); 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 both helmets and bike lights (or coupons to the local bike shop for both) to encourage all types of cyclists to ride more safely and to remove the barriers to attaining these essential bike accessories. [See the helmet and light promotions at Stanford.](#)**
- **Ask police officers to target 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.**
- Pass campus laws or ordinances that protect cyclists, e.g. implement specific penalties for motorists for failing to yield to a cyclist when turning, make it illegal to park or drive in a bike lane (intersections excepted), implement penalties for motor vehicle users that ‘door’ cyclists, ban cell phone use and texting while driving, specifically protect all vulnerable

road users, and make it illegal to harass a cyclist.

- **Adopt fair and equitable traffic laws. Campus laws that discriminate against cyclists, unnecessarily restrict their right to travel, or reduce their relative safety should be repealed.**

Evaluation & Planning

- Having an official campus Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) that meets frequently is critical to building support for bicycle improvements as it ensures that the bicycle program is held accountable to the campus population and surrounding communities. It creates a systematic method for ongoing staff, faculty and student input into the development of important policies, plans, and projects. BACs should be involved in developing relevant policy and planning documents, setting priorities, reviewing annual bicycle program work plans, and reviewing major projects. Ensure that the members of the committee reflect the diversity and ability levels of cyclists on your campus. [See this guide to forming a Bicycle Advisory Committee.](#)
- Appoint a full-time staff member as Bicycle Program Manager or create a new position. A Bicycle Program Manager works with the campus administration, advocates, local elected officials, law enforcement, transit providers and the general campus community to build partnerships and implement facilities and programs that increase the number of students, faculty and staff that are safely bicycling and walking. This staff person should also

Benefits of Further Improving Western Michigan University for Cycling

Increasing bicycle use can **improve the environment** by reducing the impact on the community 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 campuses more accessible for public transport, walking, essential car travel, and emergency services; **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 students, faculty and staff to participate socially and economically in campus and community activities, regardless of income or ability.

Greater choice of travel modes also increases independence; **Boost the economy** by creating a campus environment and community that is an attractive destination for new students, residents, tourists and businesses; **Enhance recreational opportunities** and further contribute to the quality of life on campus; **Save university funds** by increasing the efficient use of public space, reducing the need for costly new road infrastructure, preventing crashes, improving the health of the campus community, and increasing the use of public transport; **Enhance campus 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 campus events; **Improve the health and well-being** of the campus population by promoting routine physical activity.

work closely with the [Bicycle Advisory Committee](#), review development proposals to ensure that bicycle requirements are incorporated and to assess bicycling impacts, develop and implement educational and promotional programs, write grant proposals, serve as the public contact for bicycling inquiries and complaints, educate other staff about facilities standards and guidelines, and coordinate with neighboring communities, transit agencies and other departments to implement policies and projects. [See this report on the importance of Bicycle & Pedestrian program staff.](#)

- Create a [campus bike master plan](#) that will guide future plans with a long-term physical and programmatic vision for your campus. Focus on developing/completing a seamless cycling network that emphasizes and creates short distances between residential buildings and popular destinations such as classroom buildings, cafeterias, recreational facilities and transit stops. Complement infrastructure planning with encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to increase usage. Develop a clear vision statement and set ambitious but attainable targets. The overarching goal should be to increase the percentage of trips made by bicycle on campus. [Check out University of California Berkeley's plan as an example.](#)
- Ensure that there is dedicated funding for the implementation of the bicycle master plan, as well as ongoing bicycle infrastructure and programming needs. Dedicating a portion of automobile parking fees toward non-automobile facilities and services is a great way to establish a baseline annual budget for bicycle

improvements. You can also reach outside the university for grants and private funding for specific projects.

- **Regularly conduct research on bicycle usage to more efficiently distribute resources according to demand. Conduct at least yearly counts using automated and manual counters in partnership with advocacy organizations. Consider participating in the [National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project](#).**
- **Expand efforts to evaluate crash statistics to produce a specific plan to reduce the number of crashes on campus. Available tools include [Intersection Magic](#) and [PBCAT](#). See the report [Bicyclist Fatalities and Serious Injuries in New York City 1996-2005](#).**
- **Be sure to continue to distribute a [satisfaction survey](#) to students, staff, and faculty annually. Analyze responses to assess barriers, and direct resources according to demand and the needs of the commuter. Distributing the same survey regularly over time will also help to benchmark and track progress in bicyclist satisfaction.**
- Consider conducting an [economic impact study](#) on bicycling within your college/ university.

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

Please also see the attached document for additional comments and feedback from bicyclists on your campus.