Bikeability Checklist

How bikeable is your community?

Riding a bike is fun!

Bicycling is a great way to get around and to get your daily dose of physical activity. It's good for the environment, and it can save you money. No wonder many communities are encouraging people to ride their bikes more often!

Can you get to where you want to go by bike?

Some communities are more bikeable than others: how does yours rate? Read over the questions in this checklist and then take a ride in your community, perhaps to the local shops, to visit a friend, or even to work. See if you can get where you want to go by bicycle, even if you are just riding around the neighborhood to get some exercise.

At the end of your ride, answer each question and, based on your opinion, circle an overall rating for each question. You can also note any problems you encountered by checking the appropriate box(es). Be sure to make a careful note of any specific locations that need improvement.

Add up the numbers to see how you rated your ride. Then, turn to the pages that show you how to begin to improve those areas where you gave your community a low score. Before you ride, make sure your bike is in good working order, put on a helmet, and be sure you can manage the ride

U.S. Department of Transportation
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

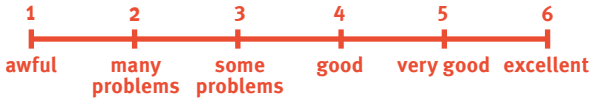
U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

Go for a ride and use this checklist to rate your neighborhood's bikeability.

How bikeable is your community?

Location of bike ride (be specific):

Rating Scale:



1. Did you have a place to bicycle safely?

a) On the road, sharing the road with motor vehicles?

☐ Yes ☐ Some problems (please note locations):

- ☐ No space for bicyclists to ride
- ☐ Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared
- ☐ Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic
- ☐ Too many trucks or buses
- ☐ No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels
- ☐ Poorly lighted roadways

Other problems:

_____

_____

b) On an off-road path or trail, where motor vehicles were not allowed?

☐ Yes ☐ Some problems:

- ☐ Path ended abruptly
- ☐ Path didn't go where I wanted to go
- ☐ Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross
- ☐ Path was crowded
- ☐ Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhills
- ☐ Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills
- ☐ Path was poorly lighted

Other problems:

_____

_____

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

2. How was the surface that you rode on?

☐ Good ☐ Some problems, the road or path had:

- ☐ Potholes
- ☐ Cracked or broken pavement
- ☐ Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.)
- ☐ Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates
- ☐ Uneven surface or gaps
- ☐ Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings)
- ☐ Bumpy or angled railroad tracks
- ☐ Rumble strips

Other problems:

_____

_____

Overall Surface Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

3. How were the intersections you rode through?

☐ Good ☐ Some problems:

- ☐ Had to wait too long to cross intersection
- ☐ Couldn't see crossing traffic
- ☐ Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road
- ☐ Signal didn't change for a bicycle
- ☐ Unsure where or how to ride through intersection

Other problems:

_____

_____

Overall Intersection Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Continue the checklist on the next page...

4. Did drivers behave well?

☐ Good ☐ Some problems, drivers:

- ☐ Drove too fast
- ☐ Passed me too close
- ☐ Did not signal
- ☐ Harassed me
- ☐ Cut me off
- ☐ Ran red lights or stop sign

Other problems:

_____

_____

Overall Driver Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

5. Was it easy for you to use your bike?

☐ Good ☐ Some problems:

- ☐ No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way
- ☐ No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle at my destination
- ☐ No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train
- ☐ Scary dogs
- ☐ Hard to find a direct route I liked
- ☐ Route was too hilly

Other problems:

_____

_____

Overall Intersection Rating: (circle one)

1 2 3 4 5 6

6. What did you do to make your ride safer?

Your behavior contributes to the bikeability of your community. Check all that apply:

- ☐ Wore a bicycle helmet
- ☐ Obeyed traffic signal and signs
- ☐ Rode in a straight line (didn't weave)
- ☐ Signaled my turns
- ☐ Rode with (not against) traffic
- ☐ Used lights, if riding at night
- ☐ Wore reflective and/or retroreflective materials and bright clothing
- ☐ Was courteous to other travelers (motorist, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

7. Tell us a little about yourself.

In good weather months, about how many days a month do you ride your bike?

- ☐ Never
- ☐ Occasionally (one or two)
- ☐ Frequently (5-10)
- ☐ Most (more than 15)
- ☐ Every day

Which of these phrases best describes you?

- ☐ An advanced, confident rider who is comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- ☐ An intermediate rider who is not really comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- ☐ A beginner rider who prefers to stick to the bike path or trail

How does your community rate?

Add up your ratings and decide.

(Questions 6 and 7 do not contribute to your community's score)

1. _____	**26–30**	Celebrate! You live in a bicycle-friendly community.
2. _____	**21–25**	Your community is pretty good, but there's always room for improvement.
3. _____	**16–20**	Conditions for riding are okay, but not ideal. Plenty of opportunity for improvements.
4. _____	**11–15**	Conditions are poor and you deserve better than this! Call the mayor and the newspaper right away.
5. _____	**5–10**	Oh dear. Consider wearing body armor and Christmas tree lights before venturing out again.

Total: _____

Did you find something that needs to be changed?

On the next page, you'll find suggestions for improving the bikeability of your community based on the problems you identified. Take a look at both the short- and long-term solutions and commit to seeing at least one of each through to the end. If you don't, then who will?

During your bike ride, how did you feel physically? Could you go as far or as fast as you wanted to? Were you short of breath, tired, or were your muscles sore? The next page also has some suggestions to improve the enjoyment of your ride.

Bicycling, whether for transportation or recreation, is a great way to get 30 minutes of physical activity into your day. Riding, just like any other activity, should be something you enjoy doing. The more you enjoy it, the more likely you'll stick with it. Choose routes that match your skill level and physical activities. If a route is too long or hilly, find a new one. Start slowly and work up to your potential.

Now that you know the problems, you can find the answers.

Improving your community's score

1. Did you have a place to bicycle safely?

a) On the road?

	What you and your child can do immediately	What you and your community can do with more time
No space for bicyclists to ride (e.g. no bike lane or shoulder; narrow lanes) Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic Too many trucks or buses No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels Poorly lighted roadways	• pick another route for now • tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems; provide a copy of your checklist • find a class to boost your confidence about riding in traffic	• participate in local planning meetings • encourage your community to adopt a plan to improve conditions, including a network of bike lanes on major roads • ask your public works department to consider "Share the Road" signs at specific locations • ask your state department of transportation to include paved shoulders on all their rural highways • establish or join a local bicycle advocacy group

b) On an off-road path or trail?

Path ended abruptly Path didn't go where I wanted to go Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross Path was crowded Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhills Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills Path was poorly lighted	• slow down and take care when using the path • find an on-street route • use the path at less crowded times • tell the trail manager or agency about specific problems	• ask the trail manager or agency to improve directional and warning signs • petition your local transportation agency to improve path/roadway crossings • ask for more trails in your community • establish or join a "Friends of the Trail" advocacy group

2. How was the surface you rode on?

Potholes Cracked or broken pavement Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.) Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates Uneven surface or gaps Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings) Bumpy or angled railroad tracks Rumble strips	• report problems immediately to public works department or appropriate agency • keep your eye on the road/path • pick another route until the problem is fixed (and check to see that the problems are fixed) • organize a community effort to clean up the path	• participate in local planning meetings • encourage your community to adopt a plan to improve conditions, including a network of bike lanes on major roads • ask your public works department to consider "Share the Road" signs at specific locations • ask your state department of transportation to include paved shoulders on all their rural highways • establish or join a local bicycle advocacy group

3. How were the intersections you rode through?

Had to wait too long to cross intersection Couldn't see crossing traffic Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road The signal didn't change for a bicycle Unsure where or how to ride through intersection	• pick another route for now • tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems • take a class to improve your riding confidence and skills	• ask the public works department to look at the timing of the specific traffic signals • ask the public works department to install loop-detectors that detect bicyclists • suggest improvements to sightlines that include cutting back vegetation; building out the path crossing; and moving parked cars that obstruct your view • organize community-wide, on-bike training on how to safely ride through intersections

Improving your community's score (continued)

4. Did drivers behave well?

Drivers:

Drove too fast

Passed me too close

Did not signal

Harassed me

Cut me off

Ran red lights or stop signs

What you and your child can do immediately

- report unsafe drivers to the police
- set an example by riding responsibly; obey traffic laws; don't antagonize drivers
- always expect the unexpected
- work with your community to raise awareness to share the road

What you and your community can do with more time

- ask the police department to enforce speed limits and safe driving
- encourage your department of motor vehicles to include "Share the Road" messages in driver tests and correspondence with drivers
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- encourage your community to use cameras to catch speeders and red light runners

5. Was it easy for you to use your bike?

No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way

No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle at my destination

No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train

Scary dogs

Hard to find a direct route I liked

Route was too hilly

- plan your route ahead of time
- find somewhere close by to lock your bike; never leave it unlocked
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- learn to use all of your gears!

- ask your community to publish a local bike map
- ask your public works department to install bike parking racks at key destinations; work with them to identify locations
- petition your transit agency to install bike racks on all their buses
- plan your local route network to minimize the impact of steep hills
- establish or join a bicycle user group (BUG) at your workplace

6. What did you do to make your ride safer?

Wore a bicycle helmet

Obeyed traffic signals and signs

Rode in a straight line (didn't weave)

Signaled my turns

Rode with (not against) traffic

Used lights, if riding at night

Wore reflective materials and bright clothing

Was courteous to other travelers (motorists, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

- go to your local bike shop and buy a helmet; get lights and reflectors if you are expecting to ride at night
- always follow the rules of the road and set a good example
- take a class to improve your riding skills and knowledge

- ask the police to enforce bicycle laws
- encourage your school or youth agencies to teach bicycle safety (on-bike)
- start or join a local bicycle club
- become a bicycle safety instructor

Need some guidance? These resources might help...

Great Resources

BICYCLING INFORMATION

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center (PBIC)
UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Chapel Hill, NC
http://www.pedbikeinfo.org
http:// www.bikinginfo.org

National Center for Safe Routes to School (NCSRTS)
UNC Highway Safety Research Center
Chapel Hill, NC
http:// www.saferoutesinfo.org

STREET DESIGN AND BICYCLE FACILITIES

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO)
Washington, D.C.
http://www.aashto.org

Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE)
Washington, D.C.
http:// www.ite.org

Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)
Cedarburg, WI
http:// www.apbp.org

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Bicycle and Pedestrian Program
Office of Natural and Human Environment
Washington, DC
http:// www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/index.htm

PATHS AND TRAILS

Rails to Trails Conservancy
Washington, DC
http:// www.railtrails.org

National Park Service (NPS)
Washington, DC
http://www.nps.gov/index.htm

EDUCATION AND SAFETY

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
Bicycle Safety Program, Office of Safety Programs
Washington, DC
www.nhtsa.gov/Bicycles

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Team, Office of Safety
Washington, DC
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/

SafeKids World-wide
Washington, D.C.
http://www.safekids.org

HEALTH

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity
Atlanta, GA
http://www.dcd.gov/nccdphp/dnpa

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Childhood Injury Prevention
Atlanta, GA
http:// www.dcd.gov/ncipc

ADVOCACY GROUPS

Alliance for Biking and Walking
http://www.peoplepoweredmovaement.org

League of American Bicyclists (LAB)
http://www.bikeleague.org

National Center for Bicycling and Walking (NCBW)
http://www.bikewalk.org

FUNDING SOURCES

Transportation Enhancement Activities:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/te/

Safe Routes to School Program:
http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/saferoutes/

Recreational Trails Program:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/

National Scenic Byways Program:
http://www.bywaysonline.org/

Federal Lands Highway Program:
http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/

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