



When ClevelandBikes, Cleveland Benefits!  
ClevelandBikes.org

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**Respond to:**

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Thank you for the opportunity to add our thoughts to the NOACA report.

In prior reports, NOACA expressed the policy that "[b]y the year 2030 ...We envision that many people will bicycle in the NOACA region safely and conveniently with bicycle facilities which are fully integrated into the transportation systems and which encourage using the bicycle to commute to work, for recreation, and for many other daily trips."

However, even the most ardent cyclist will admit we are far from implementing those goals and, given the changing transportation and energy environment in recent years, we should accelerate the timeline, setting a more ambitious goals for cycling in the community.

## **I. General Points**

***Northeast Ohio residents deserves transportation options!*** Bicycling provide a number of community benefits, addressing traffic congestion, poor air quality, costly energy dependence on uncertain countries and health risks due to inactivity. Support for cycling will encourage more area residents to join the more than 60 million Americans who have already adopted personal transportation, energy and health solutions by riding a bicycle. Consider the following important points:

- ***A sedentary lifestyle is a leading contributor to heart attacks, diabetes and other diseases.*** A sedentary lifestyle is a factor in 10% of total deaths and 25% of chronic disease related deaths. Becoming more physically active can reduce health care costs. *If inactive American adults participated in the recommended levels of physical activity, annual national medical costs, by one estimate, could be reduced by more than \$75 billion.*
- ***Nation-wide, bicycles account for 10% of all trips, 13% of all fatalities, but only 1% of federal funding.*** Transportation officials, at all levels of government, need to attach greater priority to cyclist safety.
- ***Ohio is the third leading state for commuting by single occupancy car driving!***
- ***More than half of Americans want to bicycle more and drive less,*** yet transportation officials have not translated the public goals to public facilities.
- ***In 2000, the US Department of Transportation advised states*** receiving federal funds that "bicycling and walking facilities will be incorporated into **all transportation projects** unless exceptional circumstances exist," but acknowledges that ***fewer than half the states comply.***

- **Cycling can support strained household budgets:** For most Americans, transportation is an expense second only to housing (more than health care, education and food). Even before runaway gas prices, the average American spends 19% of their income on transportation, with households that heavily rely on cars for transportation spending 50% or more. *Based on AAA reports of typical transportation costs 56.1 cents/mile and \$5 daily parking, typical car commuter costs are more than \$6,860/year.*
- **Cycling support helps create communities where people want to live, offering shared, Family Activities:** Families can enjoy the parks, with fun riding activities.
- **Approximately ¼ of Cleveland households operate without a motor vehicle and still more households have two workers, sharing one automobile,** representing seniors, children and many low-income Americans, while many more households with two working members relying on a single car. *More than 50% of nondrivers indicate they stay at home on a given day due to reduced transportation options.*
- **Cycling Increases Are Linked to Improved Air Quality:** Air quality in our urban areas is poor and linked to increases in asthma and other illnesses, particularly among children. *If each resident of an American city of 100,000 replaced one car trip with one bike trip once a month, carbon dioxide emissions would drop by 3,764 tons.*
- **Cycling Can Match Today's Daily Routine:** Sustainable transport represents America's future. A majority of Americans indicate they want to bike more and drive less, with more bikeways between home and stores, more bike paths and improved road conditions. For individuals, approximately 50% of metrotrips are less than 3 miles and over one-quarter (28%) are less than 1 mile. Further, half of Americans work within five miles of home. These distances are easily traveled by bicycle, and in some cases may be covered faster on bike, yet more than 82% of trips of five miles or less are made by personal motor vehicle.

***Bicycling is clean and efficient, getting people where they need to go.***

## **II. NOACA Report**

**In a 1997 Bicycle Plan, NOACA endorsed five principals to make cycling more viable.** By reviewing these NOACA-identified principals, ClevelandBikes can offer views on current cycling practices and areas where greater progress is needed:

**1. Create a regional network of safe bikeways and supporting bicycle facilities.** Under the laws of the state of Ohio, as well as all other states, cyclists are vehicles, entitled to the same rights, rules and responsibilities as cars on all but the freeways in Ohio. The roads are a bikeway, which needs to be treated by planners and engineers, as well as the automobile driving public. The streets need to be safer for cyclists and separate travel facilities are not the solution. The safest bikeways are correctly-designed, properly-built and well-maintained roads.

**2. Increase bicycle planning and provision of facilities at the local level.** This goal isn't entirely clear and more sound, experienced cycling planning needs to be addressed at all government levels. Steps need to be taken that all training reflects best national practices and actually involve licensed cycling instructors and cycling nonprofit organizations.

**3. Increase bicycle ridership in the region, in particular, for transportation.** The most effective way to increase the number of cyclists on the road is to improve safety and promote awareness by the automobile driving public. Safe cycling education activities, hosting and promoting bicycle commuting rides and public service announcements are important opportunities.

**4. Promote safer bicycling in the region and reduce accidents.** Again, NOACA can promote

safety through appropriate education. Data indicate that the more cyclists on the road, the safer riding circumstances become as motorists know to expect cyclists on the road. NOACA can support cyclists on the road through education of motorists and, in some cases, law enforcement regarding cyclists' rights and responsibilities.

**5. Encourage involvement of the private sector and other support for bicycling for transportation and recreation.** We absolutely support the idea of building support for cycling in the private sector. Some opportunities include hosting safe cycling classes, encouraging cycling commuters, supporting a local bicycle station or provide bicycle parking, shower and locker facilities at a place of employment, offering benefits for cycling commensurate to automobile drivers (who may enjoy subsidized parking or convenient, nearby parking facilities) and inquire of health insurance providers how cyclists may reduce premiums for employee health insurance.

### **III. Additional Points**

**Bike Facilities and Mileage Counts:** Simply measuring miles and lanes is inadequate measure of an effective bike system. As mentioned previously, the road is an effective bicycle transportation system, when properly promoted and safety is encouraged for all who share the roadway system.

**Bikeways and Support for Cyclists:** As stated previously, under the laws of Ohio, every street and road is a bikeway. A properly promoted roadway system for bikes would include prominent signage, adequate space in any street bicycle lane, safe from "door zones," glass, chuckholes, debris accumulation and hazardous drains. Cyclists are concerned that bike lanes often are nothing more than road shoulders and rarely result in additional pavement. They are contrary to safety as they teach motorists that the lane, and only the lane, is where to expect the cyclists, regardless of safety or road condition and can often lead to accidents as motorists turn in front of a cyclist, not considering that the cyclist might be proceeding straight ahead with the flow of traffic. Additionally, any road system needs to connect destinations that people need to go to, directly and efficiently, including places of employment, shopping, schools, libraries, parks and entertainment centers.

The following are examples of steps to support cycling and cyclists:

1. Fix the pavement (holes, slots, cracks and other road hazards)
2. Test, adjust and mark vehicle detectors.
3. Add extra space to the outside lane, especially on two-lane roads.
4. Ensure traffic lights have adequate clearance time so cyclists will not be trapped in the intersection at light change.

**The amount of cyclists and riding depends upon the government support extended to cyclists and the views among the motoring public that government activities helps shape.** As cycling infrastructure increases, bicycle commuting grows. The percentage of commuters using bikes rises a point for every mile of bike lane added per square mile of U.S. cities (2003 study, *Transportation Research Record, "If You Build Them, Commuters Will Use Them"*). Here are a few examples of investment in a cycling infrastructure supporting increases in cycling:

- **New York, NY** - expanded bike trails in 2003 on Manhattan's West Side, as well as bike paths on bridges, contributing to a 50% increase in cyclists since 2000 to 120,000 cyclists a day.
- **Louisville, KY** - bike racks on buses contributed to a nearly doubling of bikes to 91,000 between 2002- 05 period.
- **Toronto, OT** - 23% increase in bicycle traffic after the installation of a bicycle lane.

→ **Portland, OR** - planners identified a 74% increase in bicycle commuting during the '90s.

→ **Cleveland, OH** –

**ClevelandBikes membership** rose dramatically, since its inception.

**RTA data verify** strong increases in the number of cyclists utilizing bikes in conjunction with RTA. These steps should increase, given the changes to provide more access for bikes on RTA trains.

***Creating the cycling infrastructure, encourages the cycling activity***, generating the desired public health, transportation and environmental benefits.

Multipurpose paths should not be expected to offer improvements for cyclists as they are share by walkers, dogs, baby strollers and others, often with turns provided to highlight attractive features, rather than safety. They are more dangerous than adjacent roadways and unsafe for cyclists at speeds above 10 miles/hour, and are not kept clear of wet leaves, ice or snow. Further, their existence can encourage motorists to believe, incorrectly, that cyclists do not have a right to the road. Again, proper signage is an important feature for the road, in the event a jurisdiction should desire to create a multipurpose path. Here are some points to consider:

- Bike routes potentially, have some utility pointing out routes which are more suitable for bicycle transportation, perhaps avoiding heavily trafficked roads which are intimidating to some cyclists. But, to be useful, a bike route must be signed in such a manner that you know what route on and where its going. The route must go someplace that's relevant to some purpose, ideally in the most direct and straight-forward manner, such as people want to get there from here, and they should do so in an efficient manner.
- ***Routes in Northeast Ohio are not numbered.*** Compare with Columbus, San Francisco and Vancouver. This should be a simple matter to tell you which route getting on.
- ***Routes do not indicate destination or direction of travel.*** Either information would be useful. State and County route signs usually provide one or both of these pieces of information. This is particularly important for Bike Routes as they are not likely to be shown on road maps. Bike routes should match routes cyclists actually use.

- 1 Simply counting the number of bikeways in Northeast Ohio is a poor measure of success, particularly when no reference is made to quality of usage. It is helpful to understand other standards of "bike friendly" roadways, particularly pavement improvements near the curb, which would also benefit motorists as well. Through adequate training for motorists, safe cycling transportation can increase and provide the public with important transportation options.

We would also like to point out that cities do not need to wait to road paving, widening or other reconstruction to do something positive for cyclists: "share the road" signs, sharrows, maintenance and cleaning of debris along the side of the road are positive steps for cycling safety.

**Cycling Advantages for communities, in an era of high and rising gas prices:** High and still rising oil and gas prices mean high-cost commutes for suburban and rural commuters. Health and cost-conscious commuters need transportation options like a bike station. Let's look at the numbers. As crude oil prices reach \$100 per barrel, cycling becomes a cost-effective, safety step for more and more residents. As the Wall Street Journal recently wrote, *"The Cycling Commute Gets Chic"* (5/11/2006). Consider the cost of a typical commute: Assuming a five days/week job, \$3 gas, 26 mpg and 50 cents a mile for maintenance and no parking fees, a 50-mile roundtrip commute costs \$646.15 a month, or \$7,753.80 a year. But even a short 10-mile, roundtrip

commute still costs \$1,550.76 yearly. Add parking, which, at \$5/day, totals about \$1,250.

**Bicycle Counts:** We support the county bike counts and encourage more. Through testing, and retesting, better understanding is possible. It is our understanding that most existing studies are not "before and after" but comparisons with non-bikeway roadways. Roadways are chosen to be bikeways because they are better suited for bicycle use before they become bikeways and probably had greater bicycle use at that time.

**Bicycle-related accidents:** Officials need to be careful with accident data. The draft report included map comparisons that do not attempt to reconcile the increasing number of cyclists, with the stable accident rates. If there are more riders, but not more accidents, than the roads are getting safer for cyclists, perhaps through better and more experienced cyclists or more aware motorists.

#### **IV. Comments on NOACA Bicycle Priority Plan**

ClevelandBikes agrees that a Bicycle Facility Priority Plan reflecting priorities for roads that should accommodate bicyclists is important. We point out it has been transportation policy that road reconstruction, major rehabilitation, and widening projects on these routes using NOACA-attributable dollars shall include bicycle facilities. Despite the requirement, jurisdictions have evaded these basic responsibilities with impunity. We believe that an "evasion" option based on the ability to make a determination that bicycle facilities are simply "not feasible" offers far too much opportunity for jurisdictions to evade their responsibilities to promote and support cycling in their communities.

We would point out that, where traffic calming is appropriate it may not be necessary to retrofit and jurisdictions should look and consider options to accommodate cycling in their communities. For instance, three 10 foot lanes in one direction can be restriped as two wider lanes and a bikelane or wide curb lane. Four 10 foot lanes (2 each way) may be restriped as 1 thru-lane in each direction, a center turn lane, and a bikelane in each direction. Localities can do this without major infrastructure changes.

ClevelandBikes agrees that cycling routes need to connect cyclists in transportation quickly and directly, uniting destinations and routes that cyclists want to visit and utilize. ClevelandBikes supports the idea, as part of the creation of a Priority Plan, that NOACA mapped trip attractors from its databases, including shopping centers, all schools, parks, libraries, recreation centers and employment sites. This mapping would be an important tool to encourage the replacement of short-hop car trips with bicycling trips. To do so, jurisdictions need to provide secure bicycle parking, like the proposed downtown bicycle station at Gateway, provide and encourage employers to offer showers and lockers for employees or the ability to bring in bicycles into stores and facilities that are generally open to the public.

#### **V. NOACA Goals and Strategies**

ClevelandBikes wants to comment on the important NOACA goals and strategies. The ordering of our comments reflects the NOACA order and we do not endorse them as our rank order. ClevelandBikes considers promoting cyclist safety, public education, safe and better roads and encouraging and support cyclists on the road as most important. Generally, ClevelandBikes supports NOACA's goals and strategies, adding a few comments and specific suggestions.

**GOAL 1: Encourage stronger attention to maintenance, clearing and repairing the roads, a strategy that serves automobiles as well, as well as creating new bikeways and paths.**

**Strategies:**

1. Refine and continue to implement the process of reviewing transportation projects that are submitted to NOACA for federal funding to determine how best to accommodate bicyclists. NOACA needs to be more assertive regarding city obligations to meet their cycling transportation accommodation obligations.
2. Implement a system to track Board-approved projects for carrying out NOACA staff and/or BAC recommendations to better accommodate bicycle transportation.
3. Continue to obtain bicycle counts throughout the region in order to assess where more facilities are needed, and to gage progress toward making the NOACA region bicycle friendly.
4. Generate a system for encouraging construction/completion of identified routes on the NOACA Bicycle Facility Priority Plan and prioritize funding for them.
5. Continue to work with the Bicycle Advisory Council that advises NOACA on bicycle transportation-related matters, as well as nonprofits working on cycling education and advocacy, providing funding, when possible for strained volunteer organizations.
6. In addition to the priority of street maintenance/repair, jurisdictions need to repair and replace metal grates or drainage basins to ensure they promote safety. Grates with openings parallel to the curb can be unsafe as they can catch tires, but significant cracks and potholes are safety risks as well and need to be repaired. Metal bridge decks can also be a significant safety concern.
6. Promote increased awareness and use of public transit to transport bicycles.
7. Continue to provide technical assistance on bicycle issues to the communities, public agencies, and citizen groups in the region when requested.
8. Encourage ODOT to incorporate requirements for bicycle transportation throughout those portions of the transportation system for which it is the lead agency.
9. Identify state, county, and municipal highway design practices that are not conducive to bicycle safety and recommend bicycle-safe alternatives.

**GOAL 2: Increase Bicycle Planning and Provision of Facilities at the Local Level****Strategies:**

1. Conduct workshops for local elected officials, planners, law directors, engineers, and police departments that focus on various areas of concern, such as engineering, costs, safety, liability, and promotional programs, and others as appropriate, utilizing licensed cycling instructors and nonprofit organizations to incorporate cycling principals.
2. Create a "how to" bicycle planning manuals, drawing upon the best practices of others cities and regions. Research will need to be identify the best resources.
3. Provide local jurisdictions with information about funding sources for bicycle facilities and programs. Provide greater flexibility in NOACA's own funding by allowing nonprofit organizations to pursue NOACA funding, without the requirement to partner with transportation project administering jurisdictions and other government entities.
4. Continue to promote the League of American Bicyclists' "Bicycle Friendly Community" program throughout the five-county region, as well as projects of other nonprofits such as the Ohio Bicycle Federation.
5. Work with bicyclists, individually and in advocacy groups, to participate at their local government level and with their employers about the necessity to provide bikeways, supporting facilities, and safe bicycling practices.

**GOAL 3: Increase bicycle ridership for transportation.****Strategies:**

1. Continue to produce and distribute bicycle transportation maps for each of the five counties in the region and update them as necessary. Ideally, these should be made available to nonprofit groups to assist in this distribution, at no cost.
2. Work with other public agencies, bicycle groups, or others as appropriate to assist with and promote bicycle to work events, employer outreach activities and safe transportation education opportunities for cyclists, members of the general public who may wish to ride with greater

frequency, as well as motorists.

3. Participate in bicycle expos and other appropriate events, such as Earth Day events, to promote the concept of the bicycle as a transportation mode and to distribute bicycle transportation maps. This support can also include working through and supporting cycling nonprofits also participating in these events.

4. Assist with the establishment of an annual regional bicycle event, for the distribution of information and the promotion of best practices.

5. Support the development of bicycle facilities, like the bicycle station parking facility at Gateway, by nonprofit organizations, financially and organizationally.

#### **GOAL 4: Promote safer bicycling in and to the region and reduce accidents**

##### **Strategies:**

1. Continue to produce and distribute bicycle transportation maps, which include information on how to ride safely and the laws that pertain to cyclists.

2. Produce a bicycle safety brochure and send copies to bicycle shops, libraries, nonprofit cycling organizations and other appropriate venues to be distributed to the public. These brochures may rely on local nonprofits to assist in the development, as well as distribution.

3. Work to have substantial information in driver's education classes about the bicyclists' right to the road and proper road-sharing techniques. In addition to educating new drivers, education steps need to be developed for current motorists to ensure more widespread understanding of cyclists rights to utilize the roads.

4. Encourage the Ohio BMV to include more information about the bicycle/auto interface in the Ohio Drivers Manual and include more questions regarding this in the Ohio Drivers Test.

5. Sponsor or support two safe bicycling classes per year, offered in each of NOACA's five counties on a rotating basis.

6. Provide training to law enforcement officials on cyclist's rights to the road and proper law enforcement for both bicyclists and motorists, involving area cycling instructors and groups.

7. Obtain more media coverage regarding safety and other bicycle issues through public service announcements on radio, television, and cable.

8. Providing safe cycling opportunities to the community also present important tourism opportunities, which support hotels, bars and restaurants. Support for the bicycle station and mapping options can provide important support for the cycling tourism opportunities and benefit our region's economy.

#### **GOAL 5: Encourage private sector involvement and other outside support for biking.**

##### **Strategies:**

1. Obtain corporate sponsorship for bicycle promotion and education events.

2. Encourage wider participation by all employers in a bicycle to work events by educating their workforce and supporting their employees with showers and lockers facilities.

3. Make special efforts to involve hospitals/medical centers in bicycle programs because they tend to be large employers and have a special concern with health.

4. Promote the development and implementation of *Safe Routes to Schools* programs throughout the NOACA region.

5. Encourage commercial and industrial centers to accommodate bicyclists with safe and adequate facilities.

### ***CYCLING IS A COST EFFECTIVE TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT FOR THE REGION!!***

**ClevelandBikes:** Created in 2003, the 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization is a coalition of all segments of the NE Ohio cycling community (commuters, club, instructors, retailers and planners). The organization is committed to the principal of advancing all forms of bicycling as economical and healthful recreation, sport

and transportation. ClevelandBikes publishes *Crankmail, the Voice of Cyclists in Northeast Ohio* monthly at no cost to members.