



Bicycle

The City of Decatur is well situated to become a bicycle friendly city. With streets and land use patterns laid out well over a hundred years ago, the city is inherently designed for human-powered transportation. Small neighborhoods within a short distance of a dense downtown commercial core allow for short and easy bicycle trips for both commuting and recreation.

Though Decatur is well-suited to bicycle travel, many residents and visitors are still wary of bicycles as a safe, convenient, and healthy way to travel. Battling automobile traffic on the streets, accessing trails, and lack of suitable racks for parking are all common impediments to bicycle travel. As one of the focal points of the Decatur CTP, bicycles will be accommodated and promoted on all city streets and seen as a viable means of travel in the multi-modal system.



Bicycle Network

Just as the existing street system provides an interconnected network for automobile travel, bicycle travel benefits from a series of clearly marked paths and lanes. An interconnected bicycle network will allow cyclists of all ages and experience levels to navigate the city safely and comfortably. The bicycle network contains a mixture of on-street bicycle lanes, off-street paved trails, and other signage to encourage safe interaction between cyclists and motorists.

The recommended bicycle network is not designed to replace travel on city streets. Bicyclists have the legal right to travel on any road other than limited access highways. Bicycle travel should be anticipated on every street in the city and no roadway design should preclude the presence of cyclists. The recommended bicycle network provides connectivity throughout Decatur, but does not reach every point within the city. Experienced cyclists will continue to use the entire street network while the bicycle network will provide comfortable accommodations for younger or less-experienced adult cyclists.

Recommended Bicycle Network Routes

The recommended bicycle network was created from existing recommended routes, particularly from the Greenspace Preservation Corridor plan, consultation with city staff, field research by team members, and responses from the general public. The routes

highlight lower-volume streets throughout the city that can accommodate a range of bicycle facilities. Map 8-1 displays the recommended bicycle routes.

The recommended bicycle route map seeks to build a network of linkages between neighborhoods within the city, as well as making connections to nearby destinations.

The network utilizes a number of different types of bicycle facilities, including on street lanes and off street paths. Where built facilities were not feasible or appropriate, the map suggests increased signage to designate routes. Specific facility descriptions are outlined below.

Routes were chosen that make connections between greenspaces, commercial areas, schools, and other city activity centers. The routes suggested were oriented towards younger or hesitant cyclists. This plan recognizes that cyclists vary in ability or confidence and that many adult riders prefer to utilize the existing roadway. The designated routes should be seen as linkages to help guide cyclists and provide safe riding opportunities for all ages and abilities.

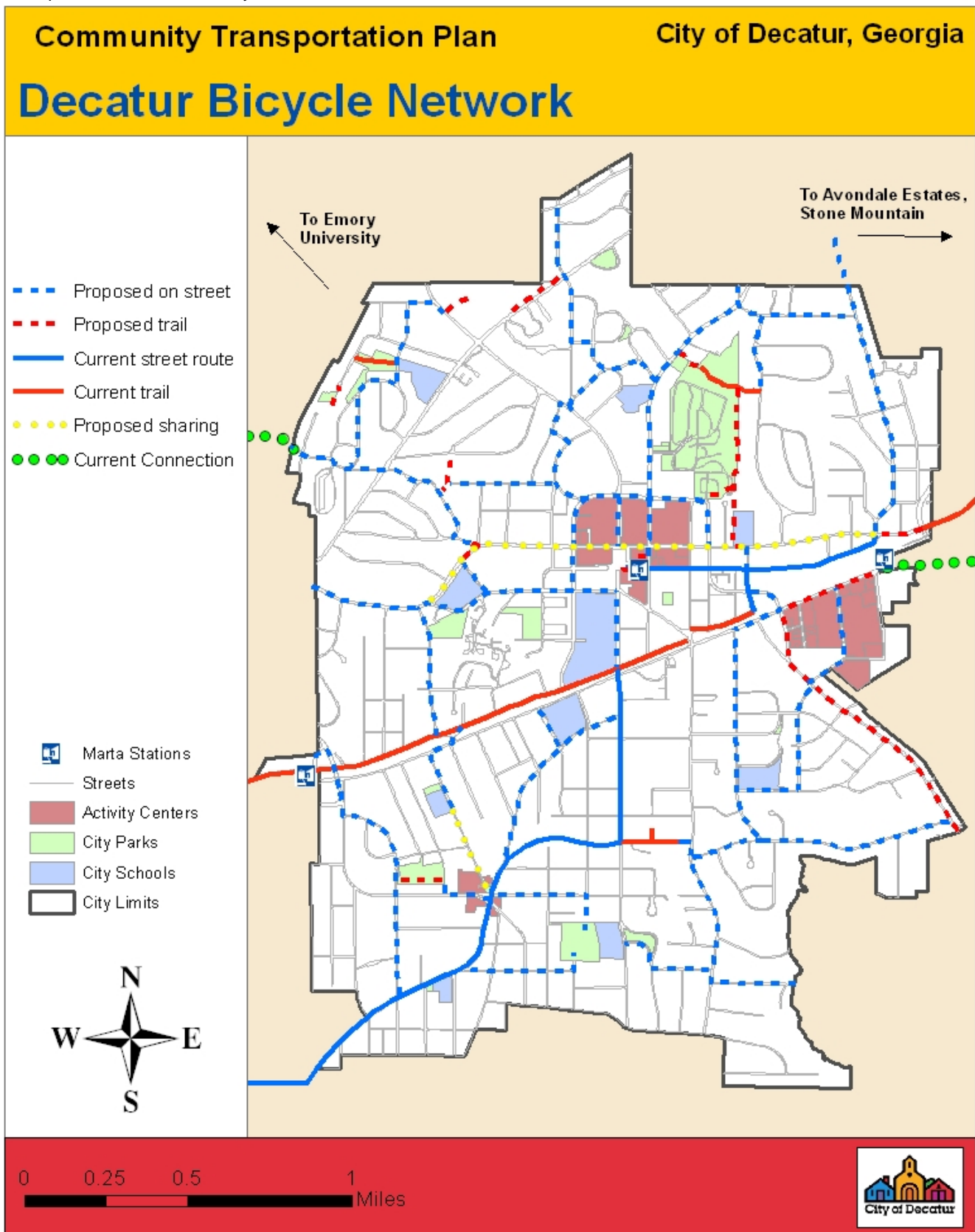
Important linkages were provided along Coventry Rd to connect with the existing Clifton Rd bicycle route and Emory University. Likewise, several routes were designated to connect neighborhoods to existing PATH Foundation routes in Oakhurst and along Howard Ave. Shorter linkages were made between City neighborhoods, the Cemetery, greenspaces, and commercial centers. Along Ponce de Leon, lane widths are too narrow for improved bicycle facilities. For this corridor, “Share the Road” signage should be implemented to inform all roadway users of proper behavior.

The proposed bicycle route map should be seen as a tool for improving and protecting existing streets for the comfort of all cyclists.

“ The City of Decatur is well situated to become a bicycle friendly city... the City is inherently designed for human-powered transportation. ”



Map 8-1 Recommended Bicycle Network



Overview of Recommended Bicycle Facilities

Wide Outside Lane

Also referred to as a “shared lane” or a “wide curb lane,” these facilities provide extra width in the outermost travel lane on either single- or multi-lane roadways to accommodate cyclists. Typically, shared lane facilities have an outer lane width of 14 feet on multi-lane roadways and 15 feet on two-lane roadways. The lane width measured on this facility type does not include the width of the gutter adjacent to the travel lane. The collection of debris, potential for pooling water, and proximity to the curb of the gutter area makes bicycle travel along the gutter hazardous. Wide outside lanes are most appropriate on travel routes with moderate traffic volumes and are suitable for cyclists who are comfortable riding with the flow of regular traffic. While these routes can be ridden by all cyclists, they are most often preferred by advanced cyclists.



Striped Bike Lane

This type of facility consists of an exclusive-use area adjacent to the outermost travel lane. The area delineated for cyclists is a minimum of 4-feet-wide and is marked by a solid white line on the left side, frequent signs, and/or stenciled pavement markings to deter vehicles other than bicycles from traveling in the lane. In situations where a striped lane encounters on-street parking, extra width is required, most often a minimum of one additional foot (5-foot total lane width). Like wide outside lanes, the minimum width for striped bike lanes does not include any gutter that may exist. Striped bike lanes are one of the facilities of choice for basic and intermediate cyclists because they offer a measure of security (separation from vehicles) not found with wide outside lanes.

Signed Route

Signed routes can be an option where room does not permit or the need does not exist to create additional pavement width for cyclists. Local routes are typically found on low volume, low speed local streets. Often, signed routes lead cyclists through the “quieter” streets of a town, using neighborhood streets where traffic speeds and volumes are low. This type of route is used by for cyclists of all levels, provided it is planned on streets that have low traffic volumes and speed. The routes are typically not the first choice of advanced cyclists because local signed routes and streets do not provide the most direct route. Signed routes are helpful in wayfinding to link neighborhoods with networks of greenways and other bike facilities.

State signed bike routes are typically found on higher level thoroughfares and provide relatively direct connections between state parks, forests, and specific areas of interests across the state.

Multi-Use Path (Greenway)

This type of facility can provide a high-quality bicycling experience in an environment protected from motorized traffic. Multi-use paths should be constructed at a minimum width of 10 feet or 8 feet in locations with physical or right-of-way constraints. This facility type should not be constructed where frequent curb cuts and intersections increase potential conflict points between vehicles and cyclists. Beginner and basic cyclists prefer this facility type.

Sharrows

An option to creating a balance between widening to provide striped bike lanes and leaving only unmarked wide outside lanes is to use shared lane markings on major roadways. Such markings can both delineate and make all roadways users aware of the on-street bike facilities. These markings are currently being used in the San Francisco and Portland regions with success and praise from cyclists and transportation professionals. Commonly referred to as sharrows, the markings can be introduced downtown on city streets such as Church St, Ponce de Leon Ave, and Commerce Dr where speeds are 35 mph or less and cyclists of different abilities frequently ride. By initially installing the pavement markings in coordination with familiar “Share the Road” signage, sharrows could help identify bike routes to potential cyclists and motorists. Sharrows are currently under review by the National Committee on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (NCUTCD) for inclusion in the MUTCD and would require coordination to install before any amendments to the manual are made.



Additional Considerations of Bicycle Routes

Types of Cyclists

Cyclists vary in age, experience, and purpose just as much as automobile drivers. From children to seniors and recreational to commuters, cyclists used the transportation system for a wide range of destinations and purposes. Experienced adult cyclists often prefer navigating the roadway rather than confining themselves to bike lanes or off-street trails. However young cyclists require safer facilities which help isolate them from faster moving traffic. New routes and facility improvements must account for and address the needs of different types of cyclists.

AASHTO and the Federal Highway Administration categorize bicycle users into three categories: types A, B, and C. Type A users are advanced, experienced users who operate their bicycles like a motor vehicle and do not need dedicated bicycle facilities. Type B users are less confident adults who ride for transportation or recreation, and who may appreciate bike facilities especially on busier roads. Type C users are children generally of elementary school age. The AASHTO “Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities” outlines the user types and facility needs of each category. All users types should be considered when developing routes, programs, and policies for bicycle travel.

Maintenance

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities need a certain level of maintenance in order to remain both safe and usable. Located at the edge of the roadway, bicycle facilities are particularly prone to gathering debris from the travel lanes as well as surrounding vegetation and wastewater run off. Debris in the roadway is one of the leading factors of bicycle crashes and falls. Regular maintenance consideration should be given to all bicycle facilities, including frequent sweeping, vegetation trimming, and routine repair of pavement conditions.

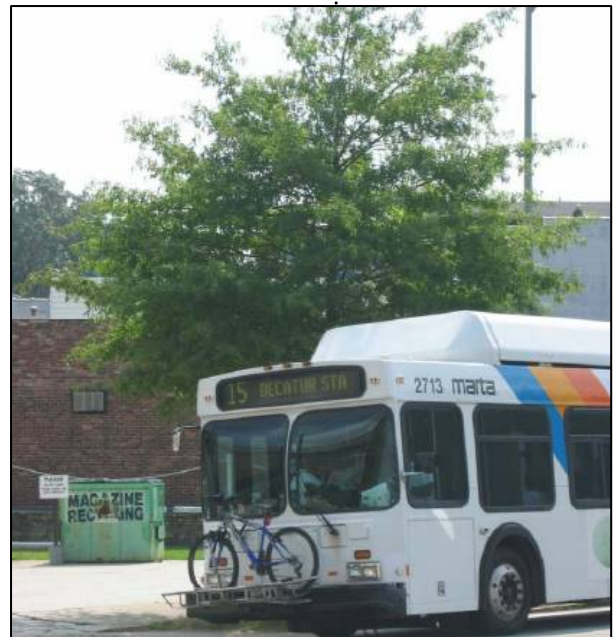
Level and schedule of maintenance can be decided on a corridor-by-corridor basis, or based on an adopted maintenance policy. The level of maintenance for these facilities should be planned and budgeted while a project is being planned. Maintenance for existing facilities also needs consideration.

Intermodal Connections

Building a complete transportation system requires accounting for vehicular transitions throughout the transportation system. Easy and convenient linkages between modes allow residents to use a range of vehicles for different trips. Bicycle facilities should provide access to bus and rail transit and bicycle parking should be provided throughout the system. MARTA and other regional transit providers have adopted policies to accommodate bicycles on both trains and busses so bicycles can be used effectively in conjunction with public transit. See chapter 9 of the plan for further discussion of transit access within Decatur.

Traffic Signals

Traffic signals designed for automobile traffic can serve as a significant challenge for bicyclists. As vehicles on the roadway, bicycles are legally required to obey all traffic lights and signals. Lights are either timed or actuated by magnetic sensors within the pavement. However, actuators are often not sensitive enough to detect bicycles or the most sensitive area is not immediately obvious. New sensors should be calibrated to detect bicyclists. Further, on-street markings can be placed to educate cyclists about stopping over the sensor for effective detection.



Bicycle Parking

Safe, secure, and convenient bicycle parking is essential to promoting increased cycling in the city. Roadway facilities are only as effective as parking at their destinations. Decatur has previously adopted draft bicycle parking guidelines which outline standards for achieving safe and secure bicycle parking. The city should adopt formal guidelines and routine accommodation standards for incorporating bicycle parking into all existing and future developments in the city.

Bicycle Parking Facilities

Bicycle parking racks offer the most efficient and easiest options for temporary bicycle parking. Racks should be strong, well placed, and designed correctly to support a bicycle and offer a range of locking possibilities. All bicycle racks should:

- Support the bicycle upright by its frame in two places
- Prevent the wheel of the bicycle from tipping over
- Enable the frame and one or two wheels to be secured with a standard lock

Racks that support only one wheel and do not support the frame in two places are not recommended. These racks are often called comb, toast, or schoolyard style racks. Rack materials should be strong enough to resist cutting and coated to prevent rust, deterioration, and scratching the bicycle's frame.

The ideal rack design is an inverted "U" shaped rack. Dimensions of the rack should be 32" - 36" high and 24" - 30" wide where they contact the ground. Racks should be made of either 2 3/8" O.D. Schedule 40 round pipe or 2"x2"x0.188" wall square pipe. Surface finish should be galvanized, stainless steel, or powder coated. Racks may be either bolted to the surface or planted at least 10" into concrete. Figure 8-1 shows proper bicycle rack shape and dimensions.



In addition to bicycle racks, lockers offer an increased level of protection for extended parking. Bicycle parking lockers can be secured by either a built-in or user-provided lock and rented by the day or on a monthly basis.

Locating Bicycle Parking Facilities

Bicycle parking spaces shall be at least as close as the closest automobile space, except for handicapped parking spaces, or as near a regularly used building entrance as possible without interfering with pedestrian

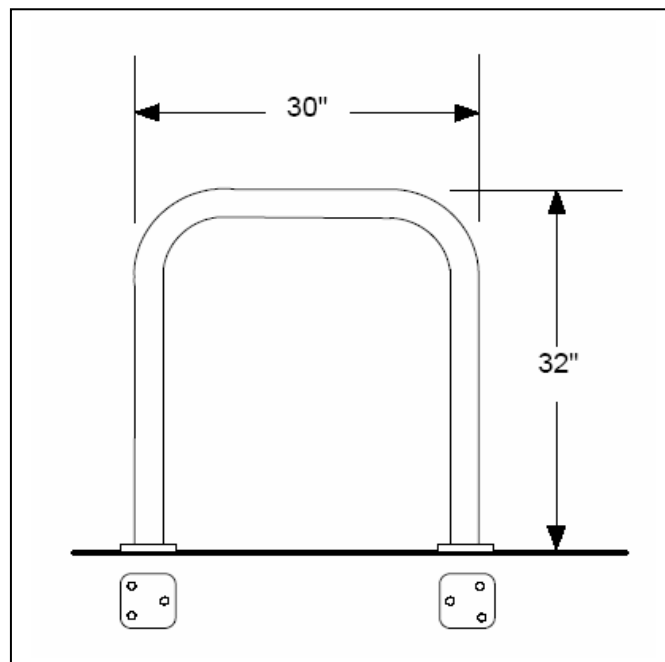


Figure 8-1 Proper Bicycle Rack Dimensions

traffic.

Specifications for siting racks in the public right-of-way:

- There must be at least a six-foot clear walkway, to comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act. This does not include frontage occupied by street furniture.
- The bicycle rack cannot be located directly in front of a store/building entrance or exit, nor in a driveway.
- Any street utility vaults must have a two foot clearance from a bicycle parked at a rack, not the rack itself.
- The rack cannot be located closer to the curb than two feet. Three feet from the curb is ideal, although in certain circumstances, the distance may be greater.
- The bicycle rack should be located two to three feet from any street encroachments, ie: planters, utility poles, etc.



The rack should be located along a major building approach line and clearly visible from the approach. It should be located near each regularly used building entrance. In general, multiple buildings should not be served with multiple distant racks. It is preferred to place fewer racks in locations that are more convenient

Installing Bicycle Racks

The following installation methods are currently required by the City of Decatur:

- Bicycle parking spaces shall be at least two (2) feet by six (6) feet per bicycle.
- Vertical clearance shall be at least seventy-eight (78) inches.
- An aisle a minimum of five (5) feet wide shall be provided behind bicycle parking space to allow for maneuvering.
- Sufficient space, to be a minimum of twenty-four (24) inches, shall be provided beside each parked bicycle to allow access. This access may be shared by adjacent bicycles. Racks shall be installed a minimum of twenty-four (24) inches from any obstruction.

Bicycle Stations

Cities across the nation are beginning to realize that more than just bicycle racks are necessary for supporting and encouraging bicycles as a viable means of transportation. Many jurisdictions and private companies have installed bicycle support stations that

provide basic maintenance and commuter services in addition to covered bicycle parking. Ambitious bicycle stations offer staffed bicycle parking facilities with bicycle rentals, basic maintenance and service, long-term covered parking, bicycles for rent by visitors to the city, small items for sale, and even changing facilities for bicycle commuters.

Bicycle stations can be located to provide access to public transit stations and within easy walking distance of a variety of destinations. Most bicycle stations are non-profit ventures managed by city staff, but partnering with a local bicycle shop to help provide experience, staff, and accessories for sale. Some stations offer vending machines with basic maintenance items such as inner tubes for sale after staffed hours.

Such a station could be very popular in a centralized location within Decatur such as within the downtown square, adjacent to the Stone Mountain PATH route, or near the Decatur Recreation Center and Dekalb County public library. At a minimum, the facility should offer a water fountain, covered bicycle parking, and a regulated air pump for inflating tires. Also, the station should provide local and regional maps.

Bicycle Friendly Community Status

Nationwide, the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) leads a Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFC) program which evaluates and rates cities based on four broad factors: engineering, education, encouragement, and enforcement. The BFC program is recognized as a national standard which includes some of the most progressive and successful bicycling-oriented communities in the country.

The LAB reviews applications annually and awards four levels of status for communities: bronze, silver, gold, and platinum. As of 2007, nationwide only Davis, CA holds platinum status. In the State of Georgia, the City of Roswell, which is comparable in size and demographics to Decatur, was awarded bronze status in 2006.

The City of Decatur applied for Bicycle Friendly Community status in 2006 but did not receive any level of award. However after reviewing the written application, the League provided critical feedback to Decatur on current gaps in the city's bicycle facilities and culture. The League has set clear goals for meeting the basic requirements of a bicycle friendly community. BFC status is a clear benchmark for noting progress towards achieving alternative transportation goals.

Recommendations

The primary goals of the Community Transportation Plan are safety, accessibility, mobility, and active living. Promoting bicycling requires achieving all of these goals and a wider range of objectives. Primary objectives are implementing a designated bicycle route map and achieving national recognition for the city's bicycle initiatives. To support these broad objectives, a number of other safety, accessibility, and educational or encouragement issues have been detailed in this section.

Objective: Implement Bicycle Network

The proposed bicycle network outlined above should be implemented to establish a connected network of dedicated bicycle facilities that support users of all ages and experiences. Specific facility improvements should be considered whenever a street along the bicycle network receives maintenance or new construction. The specific design details of all facilities should be considered on a project basis. Where limited right-of-way exists, modal priorities should be considered and the greatest balance between facilities achieved. See the Streets Chapter for further discussion of a complete streets policy.

The recommended bicycle network includes existing, planned, and proposed facilities. Both short- and long-term projects have been considered as well as a range of signed and built facilities. The current street network within Decatur, especially through neighborhoods, is imminently bikable in its current state. The easiest step to establishing the recommended route is simply signing the roadway segments to promote wayfinding and encourage cyclists.

Objective: Achieve Bicycle Friendly City Status

The League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly City is a national standard for implementing and critiquing bicycle programs. Achieving a bicycle friendly city designation will help promote the city and evaluate the success of future projects.

- Achieve Bicycle Friendly Community status of bronze or better.
- Expand the bicycle network – building additional paths, striping bike lanes, installing bicycle racks.
- Training for city staff on bicycle facility design and planning.
- Increase percentage of arterials that have bike lanes or paved shoulders.
- Update and fully implement Bicycle Master Plan
- Host Enforcement for Bicycle Safety seminar
- Continue to support Safe Routes to School efforts
- Create secure bicycle parking throughout the city
- Hold a Bicycle Friendly Community workshop to involve and educate citizens in bicycle issues within the city.

Objective: Safety

- Post maximum speeds on all city streets
- Signage
- Mark Bicycle Network routes to alert drivers and pedestrians to increased bicycle traffic
- Install “Share the Road” signage along all city streets
- Implement traffic calming program to slow traffic speeds along residential streets



- Assess and correct all street grate and stormwater drain installations for grates aligned parallel with direction of travel
- Adopt a bicycle facilities routine maintenance program for multi-use trails, bike lanes and shared bike routes, to include street sweeping, litter removal, repainting of striping, replacement of unsafe storm drain grates and repair of gutter cracks
- Update section 98-16 of the Code of Ordinances to prohibit stopping, standing, parking a vehicle in a bicycle lane or in any other way obstructing its use. The Police Department should actively enforce the amended code.

Objective: Accessibility

- Adopt and maintain a bicycle priority network
- Develop a system of signage marking priority networks
- Avoid the use of overpasses or underpasses for crossing surface streets or railroad corridors
- Adopt and implement Safe Routes to School designated routes and recommended improvements
- Use bicycle priority network as a basis for designating safe routes to all city schools
- Coordinate traffic guard with designated routes and crossings
- Prioritize roadways and crossings along safe routes for future improvements
- Implement bicycle improvements along transit routes and improve accessibility to transit stations
- Develop and implement improvements to bus stops, including covered stops, improved waiting areas, and signage designating transit connections
- Prioritize bicycle facilities and crossings near bus stops and transit stations
- Increase bicycle parking within the city
- Promote ordinance and parking facility regulations that encourage parking spaces throughout the city, especially central parking for multiple destinations
- Distribute maps of bicycle parking locations along with information about proper locking technique
- Host valet bicycle parking at downtown festivals as well as establish temporary parking facilities at all city events
- Promote land uses that encourage and accommodate bicycle facilities
- Adopt and enforce bicycle parking ordinance for all new and existing developments within the city
- Use zoning and land use codes to encourage mixed uses and improve bicycle access
- Encourage continued street-level retail development that attracts and supports bicycle travel along major corridors



- Encourage or mandate public trails through large private development or redevelopment areas
- Install more pocket parks along bicycle network

Objective: Education, Encouragement, & Enforcement

- Establish a citizens' Health & Wellness committee within the city government to monitor, evaluate, and promote Active Living transportation projects and programs
- Increase coordination with citizen groups, associations, and public or education institutions to promote and implement alternative transportation programs
- Stage an annual recreational bicycle ride around the city as well as a criterium race featuring amateur, semi-pro, or professional cyclists
- Allow full use of showers at the Decatur Recreation Center for bicycle commuters
- Sponsor an annual Bike to Work Day and promote bi-annual Walk or Roll to School Days
- Host valet bicycle parking at downtown events
- Partner with downtown restaurants or retail stores to offer discounts to cyclists
- Continue to apply for Governor's Office of Highway Safety grant money for education and enforcement programs
- Sponsor Bicycle Safety Week to educate both pedestrians and drivers
- Sponsor and coordinate pedestrian and bicycle safety classes through the Recreation Department and in city schools, especially at the elementary grades level
- Publicize the Bicycle Network and other planning initiatives through publications and web resources.
- Publish suggested walking and biking routes in city publications and brochures
- Continue "Caught in the Act" program to reinforce good cycling behavior amongst children
- Continue to use radar trailers in pedestrian areas to control speeding
- Use targeted enforcement at pedestrian crossings to discourage unsafe driving
- Sponsor and coordinate pedestrian safety courses amongst city law enforcement officers
- Encourage increased bicycle patrols in high pedestrian areas

