CREATING AN ACTIVE AMERICA, TOGETHER

ACTIVE PEOPLE, HEALTHY NATION℠

BIKING & WALKING: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Philadelphia, PA

Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) Status: Silver
BFC Since: 2006 • 2020 Population: 1,581,531

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY — SILVER — THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS

CITIES REPORT

THE MISSION:

Getting 27 Million People More Physically Active

Biking and walking are two of the most common forms of physical activity

This fact sheet provides a snapshot of biking and walking for physical activity. Increasing the safety of biking and walking can contribute to increasing physical activity through biking and walking. This fact sheet identifies proven strategies to increase the safety of people biking and walking and can help decision makers and community partners identify ways to help more people be physically active.

Fast Facts

- Inadequate levels of physical activity are associated with $117 billion in annual healthcare costs[1]
- Physical activity can reduce the risk of at least 20 chronic diseases and conditions and provide effective treatment for many of these conditions[2]
- Only 1 in 4 adults fully meet physical activity guidelines for aerobic and muscle-strengthening activities

COMMUTE TO WORK RATES

RATE OF **BIKING** TO WORK: **2.1%**

RATE OF **WALKING** TO WORK: **7.9%**

RATE OF TAKING **PUBLIC TRANSIT** TO WORK: **23.2%**

2020 5-YEAR AVERAGE

DID YOU KNOW? Transit users spend a median of 19 minutes a day walking to and from transit, fulfilling 2/3rds of the recommended amount of physical activity over 5 days of commuting by transit.[3]

PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES

36%

PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES AS A % OF ALL TRAFFIC FATALITIES (AVG. 2016-20)

BICYCLIST FATALITIES

3%

BICYCLIST FATALITIES AS A % OF ALL TRAFFIC FATALITIES (AVG. 2016-20)

DID YOU KNOW? Multi-lane road reconfigurations to provide more bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure can reduce total crashes 19% in urban areas and 47% in suburban areas.[5]

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PREVALENCE

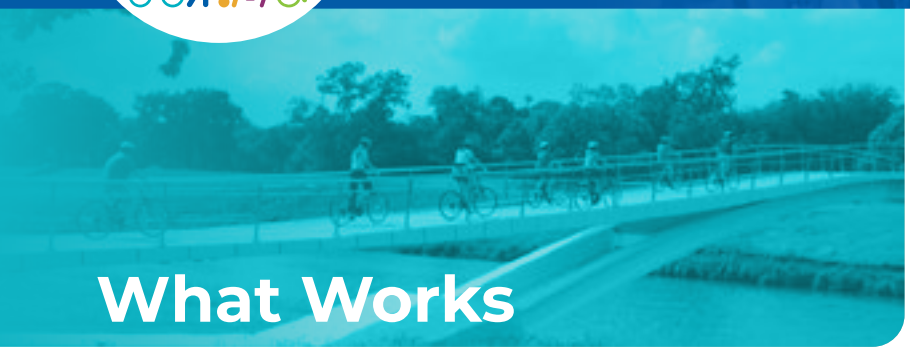
47.1%

ADULT POPULATION PARTICIPATING IN PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES (AS OF 2019)

DID YOU KNOW? A single session of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity provides immediate health benefits such as improved sleep, reduced anxiety, and reduced blood pressure.[4]

BIKING & WALKING: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Philadelphia, PA



What Works

When bicycling and walking infrastructure connects people to places they regularly visit, there are higher levels of physical activity for transportation, recreation, and all other purposes.

Combining infrastructure changes with land use and environmental design elements contributes to increases in physical activity.

Providing easier access to transit can also increase bicycling and walking.

Multi-lane roadways are often the most dangerous for people biking and walking, infrastructure is key to making them safer.

Crossing islands—raised islands located between lanes at intersection or midblock locations—can reduce pedestrian crashes by 56%.[6]

Cities that grew both their bicycle network and number of bicycle trips had decreased rates of crashes, fatalities, and serious injuries per trip, where data were available.[7]

"Safety in numbers" has been observed in many places individual risk of crashes with motor vehicles (crash rate) is lower as numbers of pedestrians and bicyclists increase.[8]

The FHWA's Bikeway Selection Guide recommends separated bike lanes or shared use paths on roadways with more than 7,000 vehicles per day and observed speeds of 35 mph or more.

Providing walkways—such as shared use paths, sidewalks, or wide shoulders—reduce crashes involving people walking on roadways by 65-89%.

Investing in low-income, Black, and brown communities contributes to transportation equity, environmental justice, and improved health.

Residents of those communities are less likely to live near or travel along roads with safe, accessible, and high-quality pedestrian and bicycle facilities despite often lacking access to a vehicle or relying more on walking, biking, and transit for transportation.

The Benchmarking Project tracks public data on bicycling and walking in the United States, for all 50 states, the 50 largest cities in the United States, the largest city in each state, and all Platinum-level Bicycle Friendly Communities to serve as benchmarks of excellence.

You can find more information about the Benchmarking Project at data.bikeleague.org
Data includes:

Fatality and injury data • Commute to work data • Spending data

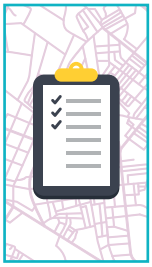
Detailed discussions about efforts to improve bicycling and walking

In City

POLICIES

A Complete Streets policy requires that roadways are planned, designed, and operated for the safety of all people, including people biking and walking. Many cities have multiple policies and laws based on an iterative process of culture change.

Philadelphia adopted a policy to ensure Complete Streets in 2012.



PLANNING

A Bicycle, Pedestrian, or Active Transportation plan helps guide city decisions about safe infrastructure for people biking and walking, and aids collaboration with local jurisdictions. Maps, project lists, and cost estimates can be helpful in building political understanding of planned needs.

Philadelphia last adopted a combined Bike and Pedestrian Plan in 2012.

GOAL TO ELIMINATE TRAFFIC FATALITIES AND COMMITMENT TO VISION ZERO OR ROAD TO ZERO

Recent traffic safety efforts emphasize setting a goal of Zero Traffic Deaths and engineering Safe Systems.

Has Philadelphia made a commitment?

» Vision Zero City: Yes

» Road to Zero Coalition Members: City of Philadelphia

DANGEROUS ROADS FOR BIKING & WALKING

At 35 mph there is a greater than 50% chance of serious injury to a person walking.[9]

» Philadelphia reported that 7% of roads have posted speed limits of 35 mph or more in their community.

LOCAL PROGRAMS TO BUILD INDIVIDUAL & SOCIAL SUPPORTS FOR BIKING & WALKING

Social supports provide supportive networks and actions to help people start, maintain, or increase physical activity by teaching individuals how to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines.

» Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee or Similar?—None

» Local bicycle or walking advocacy group?—Yes

» # of local League Cycling Instructors: 4

DATA CURRENT AS OF FALL 2016 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

1. https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/activepeoplehealthynation/why-should-people-be-active.html
2. https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jpah/15/7/article-p469.xml
3. Lilah Besser and Andrew American Journal of Preventive Medicine (2005). Walking to Public Transit: Steps to Help Meet Physical Activity Recommendations. Available at https://www.cdc.gov/healthyplaces/articles/besser_dannenberg.pdf
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5. https://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/step/docs/techSheet_RoadDiet2018.pdf
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7. Ralph Buehler and John Pucher. American Journal of Public Health (December 2016, Vol 106, 12). Safer Cycling Through Improved Infrastructure. Available at https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/pdf/10.2105/AJPH.2016.303507
8. https://www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.gov/files/2021-09/15100_Countermeasures10th_080621_v5_tag.pdf
9. https://aaafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/2011PedestrianRiskVsSpeedReport.pdf

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