

50 Keys to Transforming Communities and Empowering People, One Pedal Stroke at a Time

1. Look beyond the bike: bicycle transportation succeeds best when combined with investments in compact development, transit, and walking. Engage in and support various efforts to help shape your sustainable community.
2. Key human elements: strong local political leaders, effective community advocates and well trained and supported City staff. With one or two, you can make some progress, but it is the combination of all three that is the recipe for success.
3. Develop and adopt a robust, visionary, comprehensive bicycle transportation plan. Use the planning process to engage your community in a deep conversation about the future of transportation.
4. Develop a network of bikeways that is connected, comprehensive, and gets people from where they are to where they want to go. It should be a combination of off-street paths, on-road separated bikeways, and low-stress neighborhood greenways and must appeal to a wide variety of ages, cycling skill levels, and trip purposes.
5. It's not just the bikeway infrastructure, it's the attitude. Embrace the role of encouraging people to bicycle as part and parcel of the way you do business.
6. Get your traffic engineers on bikes as a regular part of their job.
7. Start with the low-hanging fruit: easy-to-implement projects.
8. Court the media and don't freak out if you get negative press. It's important to get 'bike' in the public consciousness.
9. Set aside at least one percent of your transportation budget to get the ball rolling.
10. Adopt "Complete Streets" policies and/or legislation, then execute! Unenforced policies and plans that sit on shelves gathering dust are worthless.
11. Backlash is normal. Expect it, prepare for it, but don't back down. Changing built infrastructure and deeply ingrained habits is really hard stuff.
12. Look to the world's best cycling cities for planning and design guidance.
13. Work hand-in-hand across bureaucratic boundaries to create complementary off- and on-street bikeways.
14. Iconic, highly visible, albeit costly off-road urban pathways are worth the investment. Garner funding via grants, partnerships, local funding, tax measures, hook, crook, and creativity. The more you invest, the more your community will reap the benefits of active transportation.
15. Top priority: upgrade bridges and pinch points.
16. Institutionalize care of bikeway facilities into daily maintenance practices.
17. Fully integrate bicycling with your transit system through low-stress bikeways to stations, storage at stations, and provisions for bikes on transit vehicles.
18. Build relationships with local leaders, and take them on rides to see the good and bad and to envision future possibilities.
19. Retrain officials throughout every facet of government to understand the needs of people on bikes.
20. Integrate requirements and incentives for bike parking, showers, and lockers into building codes.
21. Train developers, architects, and all staff involved in building permits, planning, development and design.
22. Encouragement key #1: celebrate bike commuters with events and contests.
23. Encouragement key #2: invest time and effort in the personal touch: one-on-one mentoring (a.k.a. personal travel planning programs or individualized marketing programs) to overcome resistance and mental barriers.

24. Tie your network together with bikeway signage noting destinations, mileage and time.
25. Whenever you ride, be courteous, obey the law, and smile and wave at any motorist who shows you the slightest shred of kindness.
26. Send thank you notes to public officials who support bicycle transportation.
27. Encouragement key #3: hold mega-fun car-free community events, which are a wonderful way to connect people with public space and open their hearts and minds to bicycling.
28. See the bicycle as a tool for empowerment and social change, not just sport or transportation.
29. Foster community groups to recycle and reuse bikes for the good of underprivileged youth.
30. Don't let weather challenges dissuade you from creating bicycle friendly infrastructure.
31. Encouragement key #4: focus on women! When women and children ride in significant numbers, then you know you're making progress.
32. Put away the Lycra for short trips; embrace cycle chic.
33. Encouragement key #5: integrate bike safety education into schools and invest in comprehensive Safe Routes to School programs. Start now.
34. Face the naysayers with solid research and facts.
35. Understand all sides of an issue, then look for and create win-win solutions.
36. Fight just as hard to avoid car-exclusive, bike-hideous roadway, bridges and interchanges as you do to create something new.
37. In the suburbs, focus on building off-street paths and shifting short trips in neighborhoods to bike or foot. Let go of the focus on the long, hard-to-impact journey-to-work trip.
38. Use the shared lane marking (a.k.a., 'sharrow') where the speed differential between cyclists and motorists is low, to advertise neighborhood greenways, or to fill in short gaps. Detailed guidance on the sharrow at <http://nacto.org/cities-for-cycling/design-guide/>.
39. Wherever you are, that's where you start. Tailor solutions to your community's unique topography, urban layout, demographics, and growth patterns.
40. Have hope: even the most closed minds can open.
41. Design for what you want to achieve rather than what is dictated by traditional traffic models.
42. Do not let fear of being sued prevent you from doing the right thing. (It rarely happens, and you'll be fine if you follow key #44.)
43. Carefully document your decisions, base them on best practices, monitor the situation, make adjustments as necessary.
44. Collect data on the number of people on bikes, estimate and project usage, measure your success, continually report back.
45. Design your bikeway network not for those who are already cycling but those you would like to attract - those interested in bicycling but concerned about safety and desire low-stress bikeways separated from motor vehicle traffic or shared in low-speed conditions.
46. Take leaders on a ride in a bicycle-friendly city like Portland, Boulder or Ft. Collins, Colorado, Minneapolis, Vancouver B.C. or Davis, California.
47. It starts with us: find at least one driving trip per week - to the store, school, restaurant, park, or friend's house - and switch it to foot or bike.
48. Have patience, persistence and faith.
49. No matter what obstacles you encounter, keep going.
50. Open your streets to people on foot or bike and celebrate every success. Most of all, enjoy the ride!

