

Springfield Applies for Bicycle Friendly Status

By the Springfield Bicycle Advisory Council

The following summary is excerpted from the Bicycle Friendly Community application submitted by the Springfield Bicycle Advisory Council to the League of American Bicyclists in August 2016. New Bicycle Friendly Communities will be announced later this fall. Regardless of the outcome, the City of Springfield and Sangamon County have made great strides in this area in the past two years.—The Editors.

The first Bicycle-Friendly Community application for the City of Springfield was submitted in fall 2014. The process of completing that application and receiving feedback from the League of American Bicyclists helped to coalesce the story of bicycling in our community – the many efforts already undertaken, both publicly and privately; the many resources we have available; the plans that have been developed; the solid base we have to move forward and improve the bicycling experience.

The most positive outcome of the City's support for bicycling is how it has served as a catalyst for citizens, organizations, and businesses in the community to put forth their own efforts to encourage and support bicycling so that it is becoming part of the fabric of our City. These efforts include:

- Citizen volunteers and organizations have joined forces to significantly expand youth and adult bike safety and fitness programs;
- A south-central business area has worked to become welcoming to bicyclists and has encouraged biking to their special events;
- A neighborhood association provided all the financial resources to build a trail connector to their subdivision;
- The Illinois Department of Revenue in Springfield has become the first state agency in Illinois to earn LAB's Bicycle-Friendly Business designation;
- The local state university has created a bicycle advisory committee and is working to be designated a Bicycle Friendly University by LAB;



Photo courtesy of Kevin Greene



Photo courtesy of Kevin Greene

- Local businesses [and Springfield Bicycle Club—*The Editors*] sponsored the installation of bike repair stations along trails and at other locations in the City;
- The public transit system has created a brochure and video on how to use the bus bike racks and provides demonstrations at local events;
- The Springfield Bicycle Club has conducted historic site bike rides and the trail network is becoming a tourist attraction;
- More bike racks are being installed by businesses;
- Discussions are underway to develop bicycle friendly business district; and

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- New programs are being developed to provide more opportunities for public/private partnerships that promote bicycling.

Over the next 12 months major projects are planned that will affect bicycling in Springfield, particularly providing connections to jobs, education, and other community amenities:

- Expansion of the Sangamon Valley Trail five miles north to the county line, including one of the longest trail bridges in the state over the Sangamon River.
- Construction of a missing link and reconstruction of Stanford Avenue that will provide cross-town connection of this roadway and will include a bicycle path that will complete a bicycle corridor to the Lost Bridge Trail.
- Construction of a missing link on 11th Street that will complete a connection of this roadway from the core of Springfield to the UIS and will include bike lanes that will connect with existing bike lanes that go to the University.
- Widening of Wabash Avenue that will include bike lanes/wide shoulders. This will provide a connection between the Sangamon Valley Trail and the Wabash Trail.

- Widening of Dirksen Parkway between Clear Lake Avenue and Ridgely Road that will include bike lanes for the first time on this roadway.
- Extension of bike lanes on Iles Avenue to Archer Elevator Road will facilitate another on-road connection between the Sangamon Valley Trail and the Wabash Trail.
- Widening of Woodside Road will include wide shoulders between Veterans Parkway and Chatham Road.

For 2016-2017, the Springfield Bicycle Advisory Council has identified the following priorities for improving bicycling conditions in the community:

- Conduct targeted outreach to community and civic groups to educate motorists and cyclists on how to share the road.
- Work with the business community to create a bike friendly business district program that encourages people to use their bikes for commuting, shopping and running errands.
- Partner with the police department on a project to promote smart riding skills to people who ride bikes for transportation purposes.
- Create a self-guided bicycling route to the Lincoln historic sites in the community.
- Engage the medical community in developing a campaign to promote bicycling as a way to improve public health.



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