



## Chapter 2





# Chapter 2: Policies and Actions

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The Bicycle Master Plan provides a road map for making bicycling in Bellingham a viable transportation option by providing specific guidance on institutionalizing bicycling in City plans, policies and programs. The following policies and actions are intended to support the Plan goals, which in turn, support the Plan vision. The Plan will be incorporated into the revised Comprehensive Plan as a mode-specific plan and will be the primary basis for citywide bicycle facility planning and implementation.

Plan policies and actions were developed through a review of existing City policies, an assessment of what steps are needed to develop a bicycle network for all ages and abilities, and public input.

## **Vision Statement:**

*Bicyclists of all ages and abilities have access to a safe, well-connected network linking all areas of Bellingham.*



**Goals:** These are targets the community wants to work toward over time to support the vision. Each goal has specific policies and actions that are necessary for achieving the goal.

**Policies:** These are initiatives that when accomplished will lead to the realization of the goals and vision statement.

**Actions:** These are specific activities to implement Plan policies.

## **Policies and Actions**

### **Goal 1: Safety**

Improve safety of bicyclists by promoting safe bicycling, driving, and walking behaviors and building appropriate, well-designed facilities.

#### **Policy 1.1:** Use best practices when designing bicycle facilities

Action 1.1.1: Revise motor vehicle lane width guidelines to allow more flexibility in roadway design to accommodate bicycle facilities.

Action 1.1.2: Update the Public Works Development Guidelines and Improvement Standards to reflect guidance from the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, interim guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide, and the design recommendations in Chapter 4 of this Plan.

**Policy 1.2:** Encourage motorists and bicyclists to follow traffic laws that promote safety

Action 1.2.1: Coordinate efforts between Public Works, Planning, and Police Departments to ensure consistent messaging and education for bicyclists and motorists when implementing new facilities.

Action 1.2.2: Work with the Bellingham Police Department to fund and conduct emphasis patrols that target specific unsafe bicycling and driving behaviors such as riding without lights and parking in bike lanes.

Action 1.2.3: Increase helmet use by promoting low cost bicycle helmet distribution and bicycle safety messaging.

Action 1.2.4: Enforce traffic laws equally, targeting behaviors of both cyclists and motorists that are known to cause crashes.

Action 1.2.5: Remove Section 11.48.140 of the Bellingham Municipal Code which requires bicyclists to ride on a sidepath when provided adjacent to a roadway.



**Policy 1.3:** Improve the environment for bicycling through high-quality roadway design and maintenance

Action 1.3.1: Evaluate roadway surface and make maintenance improvements to ensure potential hazards are addressed before bicycle facilities are installed.

Action 1.3.2: Install high-quality bicycle facilities that provide greater separation from motor vehicle traffic whenever feasible (e.g. 6 foot bike lanes, buffered bike lanes, cycle tracks).

Action 1.3.3: Maintain the City's street sweeping program to ensure that all shoulders, bicycle routes, and designated bike lanes are cleared of sand, glass, and debris at least once a month.

Action 1.3.4: Continue to monitor and address citizen maintenance requests (e.g. pothole repairs, debris clean-up, signal detection adjustments) to identify recurring problems and set maintenance priorities.

Action 1.3.5: Accommodate bicyclists through construction zones by providing appropriate warning and detour signage, and temporary facilities where needed for improved safety.

## **Goal 2: Connectivity**

Complete a connected network of bikeways linking and providing access to all neighborhoods and key destinations.

**Policy 2.1:** Connect the city's neighborhoods and activity centers with high-quality bicycle facilities

Action 2.1.1: All new, reconstructed, or retrofitted arterial streets should provide walking and bicycling facilities.

Action 2.1.2: Plan and prioritize bicycle and pedestrian facilities within urban growth areas so that when annexation occurs, the City can address non-motorized transportation deficiencies.

Action 2.1.3: Develop a wayfinding system to reinforce routes between key destinations.

**Policy 2.2:** Promote bicycle access to all schools

Action 2.2.1: Seek Safe Routes to School (SRTS) funding to improve bicycle infrastructure around all schools; and to develop school safety and encouragement programs.

**Policy 2.3:** Improve routes across major barriers

Action 2.3.1 Work with WSDOT to fund, implement and maintain short- and long-term recommendations for improving I-5 crossings.

**Policy 2.4:** Provide route options that are both low stress and direct for bicyclists

Action 2.4.1: Enhance bicyclist comfort and safety at intersections where low-stress bicycle routes cross arterial streets.

**Policy 2.5:** Facilitate bicycling into downtown Bellingham

Action 2.5.1: Improve bicycle routes into downtown Bellingham.

**Policy 2.6:** Connect the City's trail network with on-street routes

Action 2.6.1: Improve key on-street bike facility connections that improve access to the trail network.

## **Goal 3: Equity**

Provide bicycling access for all through equity in public engagement, service delivery and capital investment.

**Policy 3.1:** Provide access to bicycling infrastructure for all city residents

Action 3.1.1: Through a balanced prioritization process, invest in bicycle infrastructure in all Bellingham neighborhoods.

**Policy 3.2:** Provide opportunities for Bellingham residents regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or income to engage in bicycle related activities

Action 3.2.1: When communicating about bicycle related programs or projects, develop outreach materials that are accessible through various media to a wide range of constituents in multiple languages.

## Goal 4: Livability

Build a vibrant and healthy community by creating a welcoming environment for bicycle riding.

### Policy 4.1: Support encouragement programs for bicyclists of all abilities

Action 4.1.1 Partner with everybodyBIKE, local bicycle shops and bicycle-related organizations to disseminate education and encouragement information, and sponsor education and encouragement events.

Action 4.1.2: Partner with local organizations to facilitate access to free or low-cost bicycle repair equipment.

Action 4.1.3: Promote everybodyBIKE's mentor program to help interested bicycle commuters.

Action 4.1.4: Support bike repair, education, and "earn-a-bike" programs for youth.

Action 4.1.5: Work with WWU, Whatcom Community College (WCC) and Bellingham Technical College (BTC) to provide incoming students with bicycle related information, maps, applicable laws etc. to promote and encourage safe student bicycling.

Action 4.1.6: Encourage WWU to become a Bicycle Friendly University through the League of American Bicyclists' program.

Action 4.1.7: Encourage more Bellingham businesses to become "Bicycle Friendly Businesses" through the League of American Bicyclists' program.

*Figure 1.1: The League of American Bicyclists awards businesses bronze through platinum designation.*



**Policy 4.2:** Increase participation in bicycling events

Action 4.2.1: Lend City support to community organizations involved in promoting bicycling. Support may include providing a venue for events, recruiting volunteers and posting events on the City's Public Meetings and Key Events calendar.

Action 4.2.2: Train event sponsors on how to obtain necessary permits for special events.



**Goal 5: Public and Environmental Health**

Develop a bicycle network that enables active, healthy lifestyles and sustains a healthy environment.

**Policy 5.1:** Improve access to active transportation opportunities

Action 5.1.1: Continue to include bicycle and pedestrian improvement recommendations when developing capital improvement program project lists.

**Policy 5.2:** Meet the City's goals to improve air quality per the City's Climate Action Plan

Action 5.2.1: Track progress toward the City's mode shift goals in the Climate Action Plan.

**Policy 5.3:** Improve the health of Bellingham residents

Action 5.3.1: Work with the Whatcom County Health Department to track progress toward objectives related to walking and bicycling in the Whatcom County Community Health Improvement Plan.

Action 5.3.2: Accommodate bicyclists primarily on lower-volume, lower-emission streets.



## Goal 6: Choice

Develop infrastructure that creates viable transportation choices, and accommodates multimodal trips.

### Policy 6.1: Make combined bicycle and transit trips an easy option



Action 6.1.1: Provide convenient auto and bicycle access to park-and-ride facilities on regional routes.

Action 6.1.2 Continue to provide development incentives when amenities for transit users, bicyclists and pedestrians are included in projects.

### Policy 6.2: Invest in high-quality bicycle parking

Action 6.2.1: Using the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP) Bicycle Parking Guide as a model, develop and adopt protocols and best practices for prioritizing and installing bicycle parking throughout the City, including transit stops and stations.

Action 6.2.2: Provide safe, convenient and protected bicycle parking at activity centers such as commercial areas, institutions, parking garages, park-and-ride facilities and transit terminals.

Action 6.2.3 Develop a funding mechanism for the purchase and installation of bicycle parking. Solicit requests from local businesses and organizations for the installation of bicycle parking.



**Policy 6.3:** Provide bicycle access to transit stations

Action 6.3.1: Work with Whatcom Transit Authority to identify barriers to bicycling around transit stations and apply for joint funding to improve bicycle access to and at stations.

Action 6.3.2: Work with WWU to provide bicycle access to and through campus.

**Goal 7: Education**

Provide education on the rights and responsibilities of the users of all transportation modes.

**Policy 7.1:** Expand education campaigns to promote safe bicycling and driving, and respect for all roadway users

Action 7.1.1: Expand education campaigns through BTV10, WWU, everybodyBIKE, the City website and Facebook to promote safe bicycling and driving and respect for all roadway users.

Action 7.1.2: Promote everybodyBIKE bicycle education programs. Encourage class offerings for vulnerable riders and those new to bicycling (e.g. classes for different age groups at the Opportunity Council).

Action 7.1.3: Work with WTA to provide bike maps at bus stops and transit stations.

Action 7.1.4: Work with local driver education programs to encourage awareness of bicyclists' rights to use the roadway, and laws pertaining to bicyclists on the roadway.

Action 7.1.5: Address bicycle and pedestrian conflicts and promote mutual respect among users through signage (i.e. "Use bell or voice when passing", "share the trail").



**Policy 7.2:** Support efforts to obtain funding for bicycle education and enforcement programs

Action 7.2.1: Seek funding to continue the "See and Be Seen" safety campaign, a combined effort of the City, WWU and everybodyBIKE.

Action 7.2.2: Apply for Safe Routes to School grants from the State of Washington.

Action 7.2.3: Support local non-profits in developing and implementing bicycle education programs.



**Policy 7.3:** Encourage the Bellingham School District to incorporate bicycle safety training into the physical education curriculum

Action 7.3.1: Continue and expand SR2S programming, such as assemblies, bicycle rodeos and in-classroom safety education, to all schools in the Bellingham School District.

Action 7.3.2: Encourage the Bellingham School District to partner with the City in funding Safe Route to School sidewalk and bicycle facility improvements.

## **Goal 8: Transportation Mode Shift**

Increase the number and percent of bicycle trips citywide.

**Policy 8.1:** Promote end-of-trip facilities for bicyclists

Action 8.1.1 Require short- and long-term bicycle parking for new and significantly renovated office or commercial development.

Action 8.1.2 Encourage and incentivize provision of end-of-trip facilities such as shower, changing room and storage locker facilities for new and significantly renovated office or commercial development.

**Policy 8.2:** Create a set of benchmarks that monitor bicycle use over time.

Action 8.2.1: Increase the number of female cyclists.

Baseline: Percentage female riders during the 2013 bicycle count

Action 8.2.2: Increase the number of children walking and bicycling to school, and improve safety for children who walk and bicycle.

Baseline: 2013 Bike to Work & School Day tallies

Action 8.2.3: Increase the number of Bellingham commuters bicycling to work.

Baseline: 2012 American Community Survey data, U.S. Census Bureau

## **Goal 9: Economy**

Enhance economic vibrancy by creating a bicycle-friendly community that is an attractive place to live and work.

**Policy 9.1:** Engage local businesses and organizations in promoting bicycling in advertising and promotions

Action 9.1.1: Work with area businesses, WWU, and local colleges to engage them in the League of American Bicyclists' Bicycle Friendly Community programs.

**Policy 9.2:** Encourage employers to provide incentives for their employees to use transit and non-motorized transportation

Action 9.2.1: Continue to offer developers and employers in mixed use Urban Villages trip reduction incentives available through Bellingham's Urban Village Transportation Impact Fee Reduction Program (BMC 19.06.040).

Action 9.2.2: Promote employer programs (e.g. Smart Trips Program) that encourage bicycling through strategies such as giveaways, special events, employee recognition, and incentives programs.

Action 9.2.3 Encourage employers to provide shower and locker facilities, indoor bicycle parking, and bicycles for employees to use for work trips and errands.

