

CASE STUDY: BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Policy Goal

A Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (or Complete Streets Commission) made up of both resident advocates and public officials will be created to hold the municipality accountable for execution of the plan and policy priorities. The Committee/Commission will be formally recognized by the municipality to establish authoritative credentials. An annual Complete Streets Report Card will be developed by the Committee/Commission that includes metrics and an evaluation of the municipality's progress towards their plan and policy goals.



What are Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees (BPACs)?

A Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee is typically made up of both community members and government officials. Committee members are appointed by local officials and responsible for advising the municipality on bicycle and pedestrian projects and policies.

Why are BPACs important?

Effective BPACs provide accountability and hold a municipality responsible for moving forward on biking and walking commitments. BPACs ensure that active transportation issues remain prevalent in discussions among community members and within the municipal government. The committee can help the municipality track progress, garner community input on projects, and make decisions.

BPAC Resources

Best Practices for Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees

<https://tinyurl.com/bpacbestpractices>

- Learn about best practices for establishing a new BPAC, how to advocate for a BPAC, and recommendations for an effective BPAC. The report also includes case studies of successful committees from around the country.

Why Communities & States Need Bicycle and Pedestrian Staff

<https://tinyurl.com/bikepedstaff>

- Bicycle and pedestrian staff members are a critical part of creating a community that prioritizes biking and walking because they “institutionalize the consideration of bicycling accommodations throughout transportation departments and other relevant areas of government.” The League of American Bicyclists conducted a study of 40 U.S. cities and found that “cities with bicycle and pedestrian staff have higher levels of bicycling than the cities without staff.”

Case Study: Arlington Heights

Communities throughout the Chicago region have adopted bicycle plans to encourage safe and easy rides to schools, work, trails and other destinations. Implementation of plans, however, is often challenging due to scarce funding, stretched staff resources and competing priorities.

When Arlington Heights adopted its bicycle and pedestrian plan, the village committed to implementing it by establishing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) to “assist in the development of comprehensive plans for bikeways within the village.”

The commission consists of seven members, residents of the village appointed by the village president—with consent of the village board—to three-year terms. Importantly, the village provides staff support via an engineering department liaison, who offers feedback about the feasibility of projects and village resources, which can assist in moving them forward.

BPAC members have made impressive progress. They have completed an existing condition report for the bike plan, partnered with the Arlington Heights Memorial Library for biking traffic skills 101 classes, reviewed funding options for signage, developed bike valet systems for community events, and provided breakfast to commuters during Bike to Work Week. In addition to his other responsibilities, former BPAC Chair Peter Szabo took on leadership of the Northwest Suburban Active Transportation Council, bringing his expertise of local and regional bike network gaps that needed to be filled.