



2022  
BICYCLE FRIENDLY STATE  
NATIONAL REPORT

# State Leadership for Safer Streets



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## National leadership is calling for safer streets designed for all people—will states answer that call?

In early 2022, the Biden administration and U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Pete Buttigieg launched the National Roadway Safety Strategy in response to record increases in fatalities on our nation’s roadways. Our 2019 Bicycle Friendly State report, **“State Departments of Transportation in the Era of Safe Streets,”** focused on the critical role that state Departments of Transportation play in creating safe streets for all people, especially people who bike.

This year, we reiterate what we said in 2019: “Making roadways safer for people on bikes isn’t a platitude, it requires action.” In this report, we call on state leaders, whether in the governor’s mansion, in legislative chambers, or in the hallways and meeting rooms of state agencies to take action to make streets safer for people.



## State Safety Leadership Needed

The United States has a federal system that relies upon states to exercise leadership. The vast majority of federal transportation funding is distributed to states by a congressionally determined formula and can be used by states with limited federal oversight. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is a juggernaut in transportation policy. The relationship between states and the Federal Highway Administration is one where “FHWA has [generally deferred](#) to states to select what kind of projects they want to fund.” The relationship is so deferential that even a non-binding memo articulating federal priorities has been met with [fierce resistance](#).

If the United States is going to make progress on traffic safety, it must involve leadership from states. State leadership on traffic safety must come from governors, legislators, and state Departments of Transportation. Other agencies may also be important, but those three actors have the greatest capacity and ability to make our roads safer.

The League uses five Bicycle Friendly Actions to document leadership by states. While leadership can, and should, encompass much more, the League of American Bicyclists’ Bicycle Friendly Actions provide a verifiable understanding of key actions a state is taking or not taking. The League of American Bicyclists’ Bicycle Friendly Actions are:

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A Safe Passing Law

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A Complete Streets Action

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An Emphasis on Bicycle Safety

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A Recent Statewide Bike Plan

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A Minimum Level of Federal Funds Spent on Biking and Walking



## Quick Guide: How key leaders in each state can take action to improve bicycle safety.

### Governors

Governors are statewide elected officials with significant ability to influence executive agencies through appointments, directives, and the bully pulpit. Governors often focus on [behavioral](#) strategies to address traffic safety rather than a Safe System Approach that leverages the many executive agencies they lead. At the federal level, the Biden administration recently used its executive influence to endorse the Safe System Approach.

### How Governors can lead on our Bicycle Friendly Actions

Bicycle Friendly Action	Governor's Role	Leadership Opportunity?
Complete Streets Law / Policy	While relatively rare, Governors can issue executive orders or other binding or non-binding directives to executive agencies championing complete streets and other infrastructure policies.	Medium
Safe Passing Law (3ft+)	Governors can introduce legislation in many states or call on aligned legislators to introduce legislation, such as safe passing laws.	Present
Statewide bike plan last 10 years	Governors can issue executive orders or other binding or non-binding directives to executive agencies, including directing the preparation of a bicycle plan.	Present
2% or more federal funds on bike/ped	Governors often prepare state budgets, can approve or veto legislation, and appoint heads of state departments of transportation. Through those powers, governors can significantly influence how much is spent on biking and walking projects.	High
Bicycle Safety Emphasis Area	This is largely within the discretion of the governor. By federal law, governors are responsible for administering highway safety grants, which were increased by nearly 30% in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Emphasis areas usually come from the planning process for highway safety grants.	Very High

### Legislators

Legislators are elected officials with the ability to introduce, sponsor, and guide legislation into law. The United States federal system makes traffic laws a state activity created by state legislatures. In most states, transportation budgets and transportation policies also include significant roles for legislatures.

### How Legislators can lead on our Bicycle Friendly Actions

Bicycle Friendly Action	Legislator's Role	Leadership Opportunity?
Complete Streets Law / Policy	A statewide Complete Streets law is generally considered the strongest possible Complete Streets policy. In 12 states, the first Complete Streets action in the state was a law passed by the legislature. In three states, the first action was a resolution passed by the legislature.	Medium
Safe Passing Law (3ft+)	Traffic laws are within the discretion of legislatures, subject to veto by the governor.	Very High
Statewide bike plan last 10 years	While relatively rare, legislatures sometimes pass laws that direct an agency to adopt a bike plan or create a report that is substantially similar.	Present
2% or more federal funds on bike/ped	In the majority of states, legislatures appropriate both federal and state transportation revenues to state DOTs and legislatures can have a major impact on whether at least 2% is spent on biking and walking projects.	High
Bicycle Safety Emphasis Area	This is largely within the discretion of the Governor.	Low

## Departments of Transportation

State departments of transportation are large entities. Small state DOTs have “[2,500 or less](#)” employees. The highest-ranking state DOT official usually serves in a governor’s cabinet and often is appointed by the governor with legislative approval.

### How Departments of Transportation can lead on our Bicycle Friendly Actions

Bicycle Friendly Action	Department of Transportation’s Role	Leadership Opportunity?
Complete Streets Law / Policy	The most common statewide Complete Streets policy is a policy adopted by the DOT.	Very High
Safe Passing Law (3ft+)	Traffic laws are within the discretion of legislatures, subject to veto by the governor, but state DOTs can study traffic laws and recommend changes.	Low
Statewide bike plan last 10 years	The majority of statewide bike plans are adopted by state DOTs. While other state leaders can push for the adoption of a statewide bike plan, this generally only happens when the state DOT is unwilling to lead on bicycling issues.	Very High
2% or more federal funds on bike/ped	State DOTs have immense power to choose how to plan, select, and build projects. The projects that are planned, selected, and built, and how spending is documented, directly impacts whether at least 2% of federal transportation funding is spent on biking and walking projects.	High
Bicycle Safety Emphasis Area	This is largely within the discretion of the governor.	Low

## Bicycle Friendly Action Progress

Since the League identified five Bicycle Friendly Actions we believe every state should take to show its commitment to bicycling, there has been a marked increase in those actions. In 2015, only 13 states had four or five of the Bicycle Friendly Actions. Now, that number has nearly doubled to 24.

However, between 2019 and now, we also saw an increase in the number of states having only 1 or 2 actions. That increase is driven by two Bicycle Friendly Actions:

### An Emphasis on Bicycle Safety

It's not clear why three states chose not to keep an emphasis on bicycle safety in recent versions of their Strategic Highway Safety Plan. Arizona is particularly worrying as it has the 6<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of traffic fatalities that are bicyclists in the country, but does not make bicycle safety an emphasis area (although bicycle rodeos and helmet giveaways are mentioned under the pedestrian emphasis area).

### A Minimum Level of Federal Funds Spent on Biking and Walking

A decrease in the number of states meeting our 2% spending threshold is not overly surprising. States tend to spend less as a federal transportation bill ends, and the 2015 FAST Act was scheduled to end in 2020. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was adopted in late 2021, and we expect to see a strong change in the coming years.

You can learn more about each action at [bikeleague.org/bicycle-friendly-actions](https://bikeleague.org/bicycle-friendly-actions). We look forward to working with our more than 300-member advocacy organizations to make sure every state takes all five Bicycle Friendly Actions.

Please contact our Policy Director, Ken McLeod, at [ken@bikeleague.org](mailto:ken@bikeleague.org) if you would like to campaign for an action in your state.

## Number of States Taking Each Bicycle Friendly Action Over Time

Over time more states are taking the League of American Bicyclists' priority Bicycle Friendly Actions. But, not all Bicycle Friendly Actions are increasing. Placing an emphasis on bicycle safety and spending at least 2% of federal funds on biking and walking decreased in 2021.

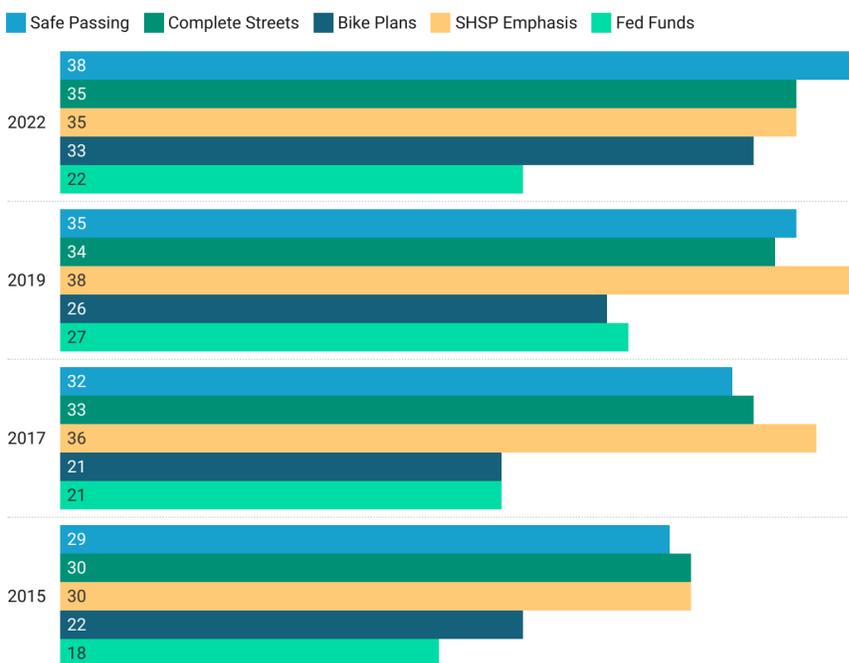


Chart: The League of American Bicyclists • Source: The League of American Bicyclists • Created with Datawrapper

## States and the National Roadway Safety Strategy

“The NRSS sets a vision and goal for the safety of the Nation’s roadways, adopts the Safe System Approach principles to guide our safety actions, and identifies critical and significant actions the Department will take now in pursuit of five core objectives: Safer People, Safer Roads, Safer Vehicles, Safer Speeds, and Post-Crash Care.”

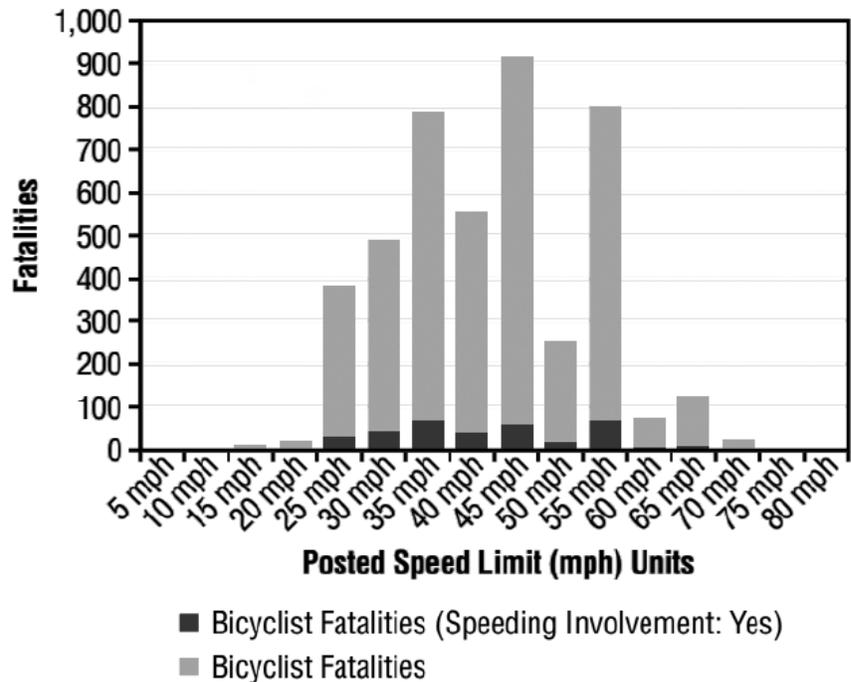
In the Bicycle Friendly State ranking, we share USDOT’s vision: “Zero is the only acceptable number of deaths on our highways, roads, and streets” and there must be “a significant cultural shift that treats roadway deaths as unacceptable and preventable.” In developing our ranking, our data has shown these are some of the most important ways states can improve by embracing the Safe System Approach and pursuing the objectives of the [National Roadway Safety Strategy](#).

## Safer Speeds

Safer speeds are fundamental to the safety of people who bike and walk. Between 2016 and 2020, more than 58% of people killed while biking were killed on a roadway with a posted speed limit of 40 mph or more. According to research by [AAA](#), “At 40 mph, 79% of struck pedestrians sustain [a serious] injury and 45% die.”

According to [NHTSA data](#) on trends in safety, only about 8% of bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities involve speeding, which is significantly lower than for traffic fatalities overall, where nearly 30% of fatalities involve speeding. For people biking and walking, the behavior of speeding matters a lot less than the way that the road is designed and signed for higher speeds. Unfortunately, many states set speed limits according to the [85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed](#) of drivers, leaving the safety of people biking and walking out of the equation.

**Speeding-Involved Bicyclist Fatalities by Posted Speed Limit for 2010 to 2015 Combined**



Source: FARS 2010-2014 Final, 2015 ARF

According to our Bicycle Friendly State survey data, less than half of states said that they use Safe System principles when setting speed limits. In our explanation of this question, we said: “A Safe System Approach to traffic safety prioritizes reducing kinetic energy so that crashes that occur are survivable without serious injury, and emphasizes the responsibility of transportation agencies to design for safety. The Federal Highway Administration has published guidance on [self-enforcing roadways](#) designed to produce a desired operating speed. In a Safe System, the design speed, and the design of the roadway, is based upon the safety of all road users rather than current operating speeds.”

States exercise considerable authority over cities and counties’ ability to set speed limits, making state leadership on Safer Speeds needed. State authority over speed limit setting and speed limit enforcement has been a common topic of advocacy for several years. Advocates have had successful campaigns to lower statutory limits or enable more local control of speed limits in at least 10 states over the last decade according to the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#). A major victory in 2021 was the passage of [AB43](#) in California, which improved local control of speed limit setting by loosening rules that declared some streets “speed traps” and allowing speed limits to be set below the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed.

State laws and practices often make it difficult to plan, design, and operate roadways for safer speeds. These include:

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**Traffic study requirements**—Most states require a traffic study before a locality can lower a speed limit. This imposes a financial burden on a locality that can be prohibitive and can delay speed limit changes.

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**Authority**—At least 16 states maintain some authority over altering speed limits so that localities do not control their own speed limits. This can impose state ideas about the importance of long-distance travel onto local roads.

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**Explicit limitations**—At least a few states explicitly do not allow speed limits of 20 mph or less, and in many states it is unclear if very low speed limits are allowed outside of school zones and hours. This makes it difficult or impossible to plan, design, and operate for very low speeds where they would otherwise be appropriate. The [World Health Organization](#) has a campaign to make 30 km/h (19 mph) streets the norm for cities worldwide.

Bike Counter in Boulder, CO • Photo: People for Bikes



## Safer Roads

Safer roads through better bicycle infrastructure has been a major point of bicycle advocacy for the past two decades. Since the publication of the NACTO Urban Bikeway Design Guide in 2011, there has been a monumental increase in installing separated or protected bicycle infrastructure to provide bicycle facilities that are attractive and safe for most people. Despite a decade of innovation, practice development, and multiple guidance documents from NACTO, FHWA, and even specific state DOTs like MassDOT and MNDOT, a lot of work remains before separated or protected bike lanes are common or connect in ways that provide useful networks to everyday destinations.

The USDOT’s National Road Safety Strategy doesn’t say anything specific about bicycle infrastructure, but FHWA has moved to recognize bike lanes, including separated or protected bike lanes, as a [Proven Safety Countermeasure](#). Additional support should be coming in the update to the [Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices](#) and new research on Crash Modification Factors for those facilities.

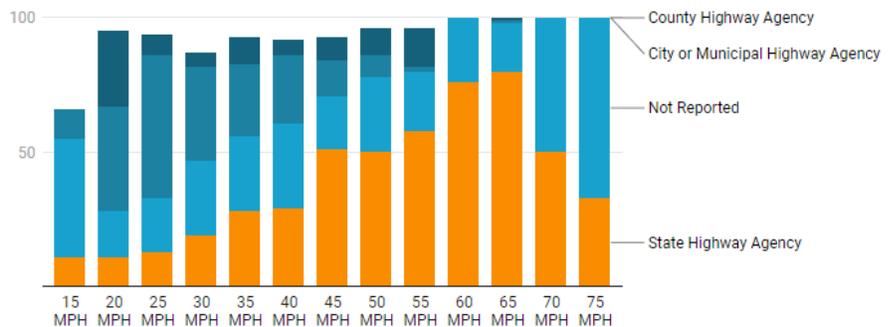
States tend to own higher speed roadways and those roadways are where bicyclists tend to be killed. Providing safe bicycle facilities on these higher speed roadways is important to improve bicyclist safety.

According to our Bicycle Friendly State survey data, 30 states say they have at least one protected bike lane on a state road. This is a very significant increase from 2018 when only four state roadways were identified in the People for Bikes Protected Bike Lane Inventory, and from 2019 when 24 states said they had at least one separated or protected bike lane installed according to our Bicycle Friendly Survey at that time.

According to our Bicycle Friendly State survey data, many states are trying to provide guidance and training on bicycle infrastructure with an emphasis on separated or protected bike lanes. Generally, survey data suggest that guidance for bicycle and pedestrian facilities is more common than training on bicycle and pedestrian facilities, sometimes dramatically. Of the facilities for which training was indicated, protected bike lanes had the highest response rate among states, showing the emphasis that is placed on this facility.

## Roadway Ownership by Posted Speed Limit for Roads Where Bicyclists are Killed

Between 2015 and 2019, 58.2% of bicyclists were killed on roadways with a posted speed of 40 mph or more. 0.4% of bicyclists were killed on roadways with a posted speed limit of under 20 mph. 4.7% of bicyclists were killed on roadways with a posted speed limit where the posted speed was unknown, not reported, or there was no posted speed. States own a plurality of roadways where bicyclists were killed and the second highest ownership is “not reported.”



Based on NHTSA data query for vehicles involved in fatal crashes involving a pedalcyclist for 2015-2019.

Chart: The League of American Bicyclists • Source: The League of American Bicyclists • Created with Datawrapper

## Safer People

The Safe System Approach found in the National Roadway Safety Strategy includes [notable shifts](#) from how the United States has approached traffic safety. These shifts are perhaps most noticeable when discussing the element of Safer People which “encourage[s] safe, responsible behavior by people who use our roads and create[s] conditions that prioritize their ability to reach their destination unharmed.”

This element, “create conditions”, must be considered in the context of the Safe System principles that Humans Make Mistakes and Responsibility is Shared between public agencies and the public. The traditional traffic safety approach has been to eliminate human mistakes through education and enforcement, and share responsibility between individual members of the public without acknowledging the role of public agencies. [FHWA](#) has said, “In the context of pedestrian and bicyclist safety, this means that there will be a need to rebalance responsibility that has largely been placed on individual road users themselves.”

For at least a decade, the primary bicycle safety strategy of many states has been to mandate the use of bicycle helmets, shame people for not wearing helmets, and reinforce personal protective equipment as the most important thing for bicycle safety. A recent [Government Accountability Office](#) report examining approaches to bicyclist safety noted, “Limited advancements in the known effectiveness of countermeasures over time,” “limited or no information on some commonly implemented countermeasures,” and “Limited contextual information on countermeasures’ effectiveness.” In state Strategic Highway Safety Plans, education is the most common strategy for bicycle safety and legislation is more common than engineering. To rebalance responsibility will require that to change so that public agencies, including state DOTs, take more responsibility for creating safe places that encourage safe behaviors by all people using our nation’s roadways.

### State DOT Guidance and Training on Selected Bike/Ped Infrastructure

Guidance and training are how “innovative” infrastructure solutions become adopted and used widely. According to Bicycle Friendly State survey data, many states are providing guidance and training on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, with protected bike lanes being the most common infrastructure where training is provided.

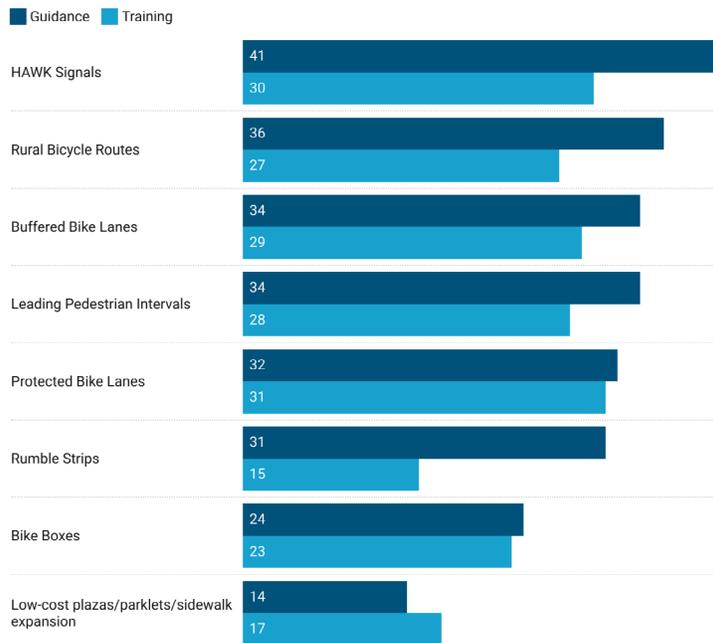


Chart: The League of American Bicyclists • Source: Bicycle Friendly State survey • Created with Datawrapper



## A Special Note on Laggards

Diffusion of Innovation theory is one of the [oldest social science theories](#). It is meant to explain how ideas are adopted and spread over time. Through research, five types of adopters have been developed—innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. Typically, a variety of factors influence adoption of an innovation, with adopters finding advantages and learning from earlier adopters.

Bicycling is at once an old technology, born as the recognizable safety bicycle by the 1880s, and an innovative technology for transportation agencies today. One, admittedly imprecise, way to understand whether states are adopting the bicycle and its related transportation planning, design, and operation innovations is whether a state has adopted a bike plan.

According to our data, the first state bike plan was adopted by Hawaii in 1977. In the 45 years since that first bike plan, 42 states have adopted at least one bike plan. Eight states have yet to adopt their first bike plan. In the Diffusion of Innovation theory, these eight states are “laggards.”

Failing to adopt technologies has consequences. The laggard states that have not adopted a bike plan have:

- Lower rates of biking to work
- Higher rates of bicyclist fatalities
- Lower rates of spending on biking and walking
- Higher traffic fatalities per capita
- Fewer Bicycle Friendly Actions

Large differences are not as noticeable among adopters, regardless of when adoption occurred. The early majority stage was fulfilled by 2008 and most of the late majority adopters had adopted by 2014, giving some time for adoption to impact state performance.

## Adoption of Bike Plan as a Transportation Policy Innovation

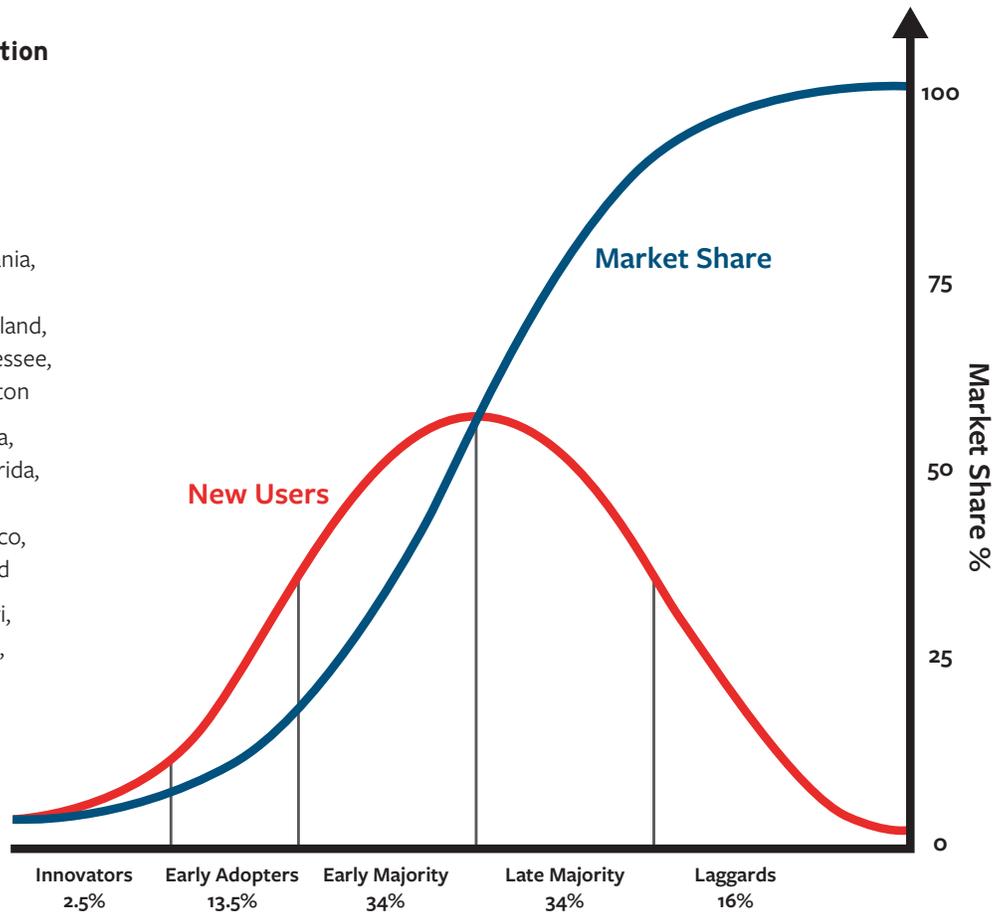
**Innovator:** Hawaii

**Early Adopter:** Ohio, Nevada, Alaska, Kansas, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oregon

**Early Majority:** New York, Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Vermont, Wisconsin, Kentucky, Maryland, Wyoming, Arizona, Minnesota, Tennessee, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Washington

**Late Majority:** Connecticut, Alabama, Virginia, Colorado, West Virginia, Florida, North Carolina, Illinois, Utah, Idaho, California, Michigan, Iowa, New Mexico, Montana, North Dakota, Rhode Island

**Laggard:** Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas



## Bike Plan Adoption and Outcomes

The first state bike plan was adopted in 1977. As of 2021, only 8 states have never adopted a bike plan. Diffusion of Innovation theory has five categories of adopters of technology. Laggards are defined as the last 16% of adopters, or 8 out of 50 states. The relationship between bike plan adoption and outcomes appears strongest for the percent of commuters who commute by bike.

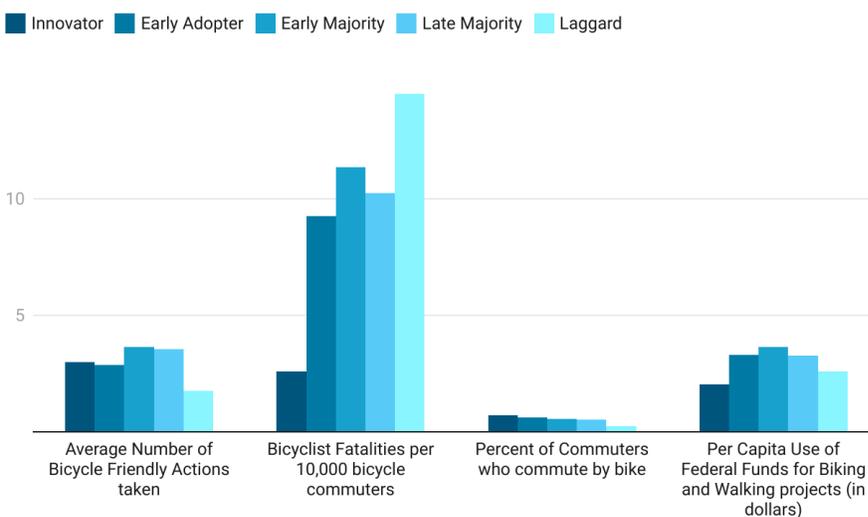


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## Follow-up on data from 2019 report

We note several data here as part of monitoring data and topics used in our 2019 Bicycle Friendly State report.

### Integrating Transportation and Health

There were mostly few changes, health in Long Range Transportation Plans went up to 22 states. [Active People Healthy Nation](#) participation was indicated by 5 states.

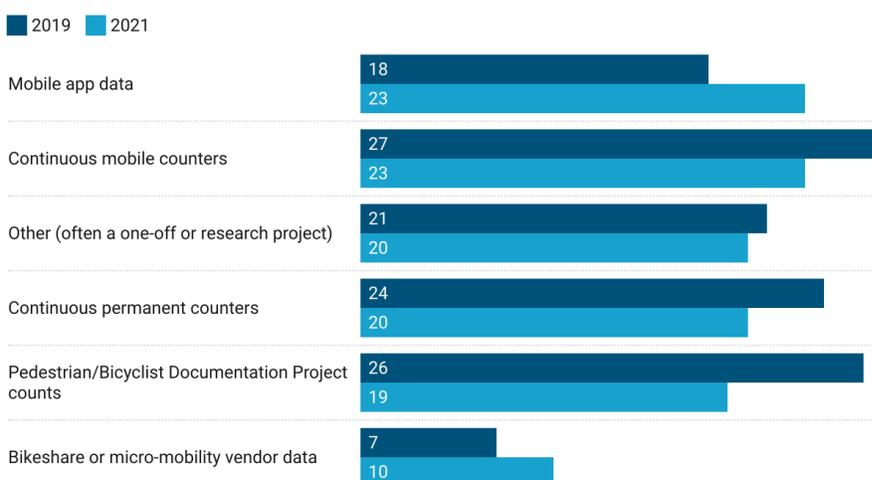
There were no real changes for project considerations. Health is flat, equity and economic benefits are slightly up in consideration.

### Improving Data Systems

In our survey data, 26 states say they fund counts, but funding of continuous counters was down.

## State Support for Bicycle Counting

In our survey data, 26 states said they fund bicycle counts. In the recent Federal Highway Administration Report to Congress on Complete Streets, the agency noted that “non-motorized traveler volumes are the most broadly applicable data that would aid in the implementing of Complete Streets.”



The FHWA's report to Congress can be found at <https://highways.dot.gov/complete-streets/moving-complete-streets-design-model-report-congress-opportunities-and-challenges>

Chart: The League of American Bicyclists • Source: The League of American Bicyclists • Created with Datawrapper

## Conclusion

In our 2022 Bicycle Friendly State ranking we found many states answering the call to design safer streets for all people. The League of American Bicyclists congratulates every state that is taking action to improve the safety and experience of people bicycling. Since 2015, we have seen the number of states taking all five of our recommended Bicycle Friendly Actions nearly double.

Our state report cards highlight positive actions by states as well as areas where states can and must improve. Leadership by states can be seen in places such as Massachusetts and Washington, which led the way on Covid-related responses to demands for more safe outdoor space. States such as Oregon and Minnesota are setting strong climate goals that will require changes to their largest greenhouse gas emitting sector—transportation—if the states are to meet those goals. States such as California and South Carolina have updated their Complete Streets policies to improve implementation and secure the ability of all people to travel safely. States such as Colorado and Virginia are making substantial investments in new safe places to bike and walk. States such as Indiana and Maine are in the process of adopting their first-ever statewide plans to improve biking and walking. These are all positive improvements we hope to see these states and others continue building upon.

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Transportation has recognized the crisis of traffic violence on our roads. Bicycling can help the United States fight the traffic safety crisis by creating slower, safer, self-enforcing streets that reduce conflicts and help people choose to bike. Bicycling can help the world by providing a safe, reliable, and emission free form of transportation that undermines dependence on fossil fuel producing nations. Bicycling can help people be resilient in the face of public health crises and have healthier, happier, lives. We are thankful that so many states are answering the call to design safer streets for all people and hope the call grows louder, and the actions grow stronger, because the benefits of bicycling have never been more relevant to the challenges of today.



## ABOUT THE LEAGUE

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For generations past and to come, **THE LEAGUE** represents bicyclists in the movement to create safer roads, stronger communities, and a Bicycle Friendly America. Through education, advocacy and promotion, we work to celebrate and preserve the freedom cycling brings to our members everywhere.

### WE BELIEVE

- Bicycling brings people together.
- When more people ride bikes:
- Life is better for everyone;
- Communities are safer, stronger and better connected;
- Our nation is healthier, economically stronger, environmentally cleaner and more energy independent.

### OUR VISION

is a nation where everyone recognizes and enjoys the many benefits and opportunities of bicycling.

### OUR MISSION

is to lead the movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. As leaders, our commitment is to listen and learn, define standards and share best practices to engage diverse communities and build a powerful, unified voice for change.