



# Bismarck Hosts Bicycle Friendly Community Workshop

## Summary

In May 2025, the League of American Bicyclists (League) visited Bismarck, the capital of North Dakota, to conduct the state's first Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) Workshop. Around 30 community leaders attended the workshop, which included a presentation and brainstorming session led by League staff. Participants also took part in a 7-mile bike audit and a half-day action planning session, sparking new momentum for safer biking infrastructure in the region. Leveraging additional outside funding secured by the League, in addition to support from the Active People, Healthy Nation<sup>SM</sup> action planning process, Bismarck's BFC Workshop was a model of cross-sector collaboration and engaging bicycle planning and networking.

## Challenge/Background

The greater Bismarck-Mandan region is one of three Bicycle Friendly Communities in North Dakota, and is working to create a safe, connected bike network. However, building safe biking options hasn't kept pace with the community's desire and national trends. Bismarck-Mandan received a Bronze BFC award in 2016 and has maintained that level through its recent renewal in 2024. Seeing that progress had stalled despite the passion of dedicated local and regional partners, the League decided to help by organizing a Bicycle Friendly Community workshop in Bismarck in 2025.

## Action(s):

Between January and May 2025, League staff worked closely with local representatives, including the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization, to plan and organize the workshop. This included inviting key partners, securing a venue, and planning the 7-mile bike ride audit route. The Workshop took place over two days, on May 21-22, 2025.



*Left: Attendees take off on the seven-mile bike audit. Right: Attendees stop to discuss a local intersection in Bismarck, ND, during the bike audit.*

In attendance were leaders from across the state as well as neighboring cities, local champions, and regional change-makers. The Mayor of Lincoln participated, along with staff from a range of organizations, including: Bismarck's Healthcare Center; the Park District; Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization; Fargo-Moorhead Metro Council of Governments; Bike Walk North Dakota; SRF Consulting Group, Inc.; Bolton & Menk; North Dakota Department of Transportation; the Forks Metropolitan Planning Organization; and engineering staff from the City of Bismarck.

During the workshop's action planning session, attendees worked together to brainstorm project ideas and identify short-term policy updates and long-term goals for improved bike infrastructure. This process highlighted the need for dedicated bike and pedestrian staff at the city level, state-wide organizing, local programming, and both youth and adult bicycle education.



*Left: Attendees exploring a local multi-modal path as part of the bike audit. Right: Attendees network with fellow bike champions and leaders.*

### **Results/Accomplishments:**

The event sparked concrete next steps, from conducting additional bike audits and hosting bike bus rides to a shared commitment among partners to build capacity for active transportation. Consensus emerged around the need to develop and fund a full-time staff position to lead and advance active transportation goals.

Many attendees found networking with other bike enthusiasts to be valuable. One attendee shared, “Bismarck has never had a conference like this before. It was worth my time.” There was strong support to continue the work that was discussed during the BFC workshop.

As a proud partner of [Active People, Healthy Nation](#)<sup>SM</sup>, the League of American Bicyclists led all workshop planning and coordination efforts, developed workshop materials, and provided in-person presentations and facilitation during the workshop. We ensured that a wide range of perspectives and voices were heard from the community and were centered throughout—from selecting the bike audit route to capturing ideas in the action planning activity. Our technical assistance helped local partners align their work with national goals for safe, sustainable, active transportation.

### Next Steps:

Bismarck will explore ways to do more bike audits to evaluate bike infrastructure and engage with decision makers and members of the public. Workshop attendees also will explore opportunities to host bike buses to school, as well as to boost local and state-wide collaboration around bicycling education. The League is also helping coordinate and connect local leaders across North Dakota on statewide collaboration to support state-level policies around community design for physical activity, including engaging the North Dakota DOT and exploring the potential development of a new statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Local partners also aim to identify at least two participants who can attend the 2026 [National Bike Summit](#) in Washington, DC, and present on their efforts at the conference in March 2026.

“This workshop was an unprecedented event for the Bismarck/Lincoln/Mandan area, made possible through a funding opportunity provided by the League of American Bicyclists, and I’m especially grateful for the interest displayed by [everyone’s] participation! There were just over 30 registered for the event, and while the weather wasn’t ideal for a bike ride audit Wednesday afternoon (it was windy, a little drizzly at times, and only in the 40’s!), 14 chose to participate on the ride. Many thanks to Anna Tang with the League and the many volunteers that made this workshop not only a reality, but a success, as well.”

– Kimberly Riepl, Executive Director, Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization

To learn more about the League of American Bicyclists’ Bicycle Friendly Community program, visit <https://bikeleague.org/community> or contact [bfa@bikeleague.org](mailto:bfa@bikeleague.org).

To learn more about the City of Bismarck and the Bismarck-Mandan Metropolitan Planning Organization, visit <https://www.bismarcknd.gov/133/Metropolitan-Planning-Organization-MPO>.



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