

# NEIGHBOURHOOD BIKE AUDIT



## STEP 1: RIDE YOUR BIKE

Grab your helmet, hop on your bike, and **go for a ride** around your neighbourhood. Notice the places where you felt safe or unsafe and why.

**Tip:** Read through the bikeability checklist on the next few pages first to get an idea of what to look for!

## STEP 2: CHECKLIST

**Complete the checklist** on the following pages from the Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Centre. While this checklist was developed in the US, it is relevant for our communities too!

Read the section on **'Improving Your Community's Score'** for tips on what can be done to fix some of the problems that you might have noticed.

## STEP 3: WRITE A LETTER

Did you find things that you want to change? If yes, write a letter to your local politician such as your city councillor, MP, or the Mayor, to discuss your results and what changes you would like to see in your neighbourhood.

Need help getting started? Try using the template on the last two pages. Consider creating a drawing to add to your letter!

## STEP 4: SEND IT!

Look up the contact information for your local politician and send your letter!

Not sure where or how to send it? Email or mail your completed bikeability checklist and letter to Green Action Centre and we will take care of it for you.

Mail: 3rd floor, 303 Portage Ave,  
Winnipeg, MB, R3B 2B4  
Email: [asrts@greenactioncentre.ca](mailto:asrts@greenactioncentre.ca)

**BIKE EVERYWHERE  
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# BIKEABILITY CHECKLIST



## HOW BIKEABLE IS YOUR COMMUNITY?

### Riding a bike is fun!

Bicycling is a great way to get around and to get your daily dose of physical activity. It's good for the environment, and it can save you money. No wonder many communities are encouraging people to ride their bikes more often!

### Can you get to where you want to go by bike?

Some communities are more bikeable than others: how does yours rate? Read over the questions in this checklist and then take a ride in your community, perhaps to the local shops, to visit a friend, or even to work. See if you can get where you want to go by bicycle, even if you are just riding around the neighborhood to get some exercise.

At the end of your ride, answer each question and, based on your opinion, circle an overall rating for each question. You can also note any problems you encountered by checking the appropriate box(es). Be sure to make a careful note of any specific locations that need improvement.

Add up the numbers to see how you rated your ride. Then, turn to the pages that show you how to begin to improve those areas where you gave your community a low score. Before you ride, make sure your bike is in good working order, put on a helmet, and be sure you can manage the ride.



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Take a walk and us this checklist to rate your neighborhood's bikeability.

# HOW BIKEABLE IS YOUR COMMUNITY?

## LOCATION OF BIKE RIDE \_\_\_\_\_

### RATING SCALE:



### 1. DID YOU HAVE A PLACE TO BICYCLE SAFELY?

A) On the road, sharing the road with motor vehicles?

- Yes     Some problems (please note locations):
- No space for bicyclists to ride
  - Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared
  - Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic
  - Too many trucks or buses
  - No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels
  - Poorly lighted roadways
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Location of problems: \_\_\_\_\_

B) ON AN OFF-ROAD PATH OR TRAIL, WHERE MOTOR VEHICLES WERE NOT ALLOWED?

- Yes     Some problems:
- Path ended abruptly
  - Path didn't go where I wanted to go
  - Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross
  - Path was crowded
  - Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhill
  - Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills
  - Path was poorly lighted
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)  
1 2 3 4 5 6

### 2. HOW WAS THE SURFACE YOU RODE ON?

- Good     Some problems, the road or path had:
- Potholes
  - Cracked or broken pavement
  - Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.)
  - Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates
  - Uneven surface or gaps
  - Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings)
  - Bumpy or angled railroad tracks
  - Rumble strips
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)  
1 2 3 4 5 6

### 3. HOW WERE THE INTERSECTIONS YOU RODE THROUGH?

- Good     Some problems:
- Had to wait too long to cross intersection
  - Couldn't see crossing traffic
  - Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road
  - Signal didn't change for a bicycle
  - Unsure where or how to ride through intersection
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)  
1 2 3 4 5 6

### 4. DID DRIVERS BEHAVE WELL?

- Good     Some problems, drivers:
- Drove too fast
  - Passed me too close
  - Did not signal
  - Harassed me
  - Cut me off
  - Ran red lights or stop sign
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)  
1 2 3 4 5 6

### 5. WAS IT EASY FOR YOU TO USE YOUR BIKE?

- Good     Some problems:
- No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way
  - No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle
  - No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train
  - Scary dogs
  - Hard to find a direct route I liked
  - Route was too hilly
  - Something else \_\_\_\_\_

Overall "Safe Place To Ride" Rating: (circle one)  
1 2 3 4 5 6

Continue the checklist on the next page. . .



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Continued . . .

# HOW BIKEABLE IS YOUR COMMUNITY?

## 6. WHAT DID YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR RIDE SAFER?

Your behavior contributes to the bikeability of your community.

Check all that apply:

- Wore a bicycle helmet
- Obeyed traffic signal and signs
- Rode in a straight line (didn't weave)
- Signaled my turns
- Rode with (not against) traffic
- Used lights, if riding at night
- Wore reflective and/or retroreflective materials and bright clothing
- Was courteous to other travelers (motorist, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

## 7. TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF.

In good weather months, about how many days a month do you ride your bike?

- Never
- Occasionally (one or two)
- Frequently (5-10)
- Most (more than 15)
- Every day

Which of these phrases best describes you?

- An advanced, confident rider who is comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- An intermediate rider who is not really comfortable riding in most traffic situations
- A beginner rider who prefers to stick to the bike path or trail

## HOW DOES YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD STACK UP? ADD UP YOUR RATING AND DECIDE.

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 26-30 Celebrate! You live in a bicycle-friendly community.
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 21-25 Your community is pretty good, but there's always room for improvement.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 16-20 Conditions for riding are okay, but not ideal. Plenty of opportunity for improvements.
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ 11-15 Conditions are poor and you deserve better than this! Call the mayor and the newspaper right away.
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ 5-10 Oh dear. Consider wearing body armor and Christmas tree lights before venturing out again.

TOTAL: \_\_\_\_\_

## DID YOU FIND SOMETHING THAT NEEDS TO BE CHANGED?

On the next page, you'll find suggestions for improving the bikeability of your community based on the problems you identified. Take a look at both the short- and long-term solutions and commit to seeing at least one of each through to the end. If you don't, then who will?

During your bike ride, how did you feel physically? Could you go as far or as fast as you wanted to? Were you short of breath, tired, or were your muscles sore? The next page also has some suggestions to improve the enjoyment of your ride.

Bicycling, whether for transportation or recreation, is a great way to get 30 minutes of physical activity into your day. Riding, just like any other activity, should be something you enjoy doing. The more you enjoy it, the more likely you'll stick with it. Choose routes that match your skill level and physical activities. If a route is too long or hilly, find a new one. Start slowly and work up to your potential.



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Now that you know the problems, you can find the answers.

# IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNITY'S SCORE

## 1. DID YOU HAVE A PLACE TO BICYCLE SAFELY?

### a) On the road?

No space for bicyclists to ride (e.g. no bike lane or shoulder; narrow lanes)  
Bicycle lane or paved shoulder disappeared Heavy and/or fast-moving traffic  
Too many trucks or buses  
No space for bicyclists on bridges or in tunnels  
Poorly lighted roadways

### b) On an off-road path or trail?

Path ended abruptly  
Path didn't go where I wanted to go  
Path intersected with roads that were difficult to cross  
Path was crowded  
Path was unsafe because of sharp turns or dangerous downhill  
Path was uncomfortable because of too many hills  
Path was poorly lighted

## 2. HOW WAS THE SURFACE YOU RODE ON?

Potholes  
Cracked or broken pavement  
Debris (e.g. broken glass, sand, gravel, etc.)  
Dangerous drain grates, utility covers, or metal plates  
Uneven surface or gaps  
Slippery surfaces when wet (e.g. bridge decks, construction plates, road markings)  
Bumpy or angled railroad tracks  
Rumble strips

## 3. HOW WERE THE INTERSECTIONS YOU RODE THROUGH?

Had to wait too long to cross intersection  
Couldn't see crossing traffic  
Signal didn't give me enough time to cross the road  
The signal didn't change for a bicycle  
Unsure where or how to ride through intersection

## WHAT YOU & YOUR CHILD CAN DO IMMEDIATELY

- pick another route for now
- tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems; provide a copy of your checklist
- find a class to boost your confidence about riding in traffic
- slow down and take care when using the path
- find an on-street route
- use the path at less crowded times
- tell the trail manager or agency about specific problems

- report problems immediately to public works department or appropriate agency
- keep your eye on the road/path
- pick another route until the problem is fixed (and check to see that the problems are fixed)
- organize a community effort to clean up the path

- pick another route for now
- tell local transportation engineers or public works department about specific problems
- take a class to improve your riding confidence and skills

## WHAT YOU & YOUR COMMUNITY CAN DO WITH MORE TIME

- participate in local planning meetings
- encourage your community to adopt a plan to improve conditions, including a network of bike lanes on major roads
- ask your public works department to consider "Share the Road" signs at specific locations
- ask your state department of transportation to include paved shoulders on all their rural highways
- establish or join a local bicycle advocacy group
- ask the trail manager or agency to improve directional and warning signs
- petition your local transportation agency to improve path/roadway crossings
- ask for more trails in your community
- establish or join a "Friends of the Trail" advocacy group

- participate in local planning meetings
- encourage your community to adopt a plan to improve conditions, including a network of bike lanes on major roads "Share the Road" signs at specific locations
- ask your state department of transportation to include paved shoulders on all their rural highways
- establish or join a local bicycle advocacy group

- ask the public works department to look at the timing of the specific traffic signals
- ask the public works department to install loop-detectors that detect bicyclists
- suggest improvements to sightlines that include cutting back vegetation; building out the path crossing; and moving parked cars that obstruct your view
- organize community-wide, on-bike training on how to safely ride through intersections



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Continued . . .

# IMPROVING YOUR COMMUNITY'S SCORE

## 4. DID DRIVERS BEHAVE WELL?

Drivers:

- Drove too fast
- Passed me too close
- Did not signal
- Harassed me
- Cut me off
- Ran red lights or stop signs

## WHAT YOU & YOUR CHILD CAN DO IMMEDIATELY

- report unsafe drivers to the police
- set an example by riding responsibly; obey traffic laws; don't antagonize drivers
- always expect the unexpected
- work with your community to raise awareness to share the road

## WHAT YOU & YOUR COMMUNITY CAN DO WITH MORE TIME

- ask the police department to enforce speed limits and safe driving
- encourage your department of motor vehicles to include "Share the Road" messages in driver tests and correspondence with drivers
- ask city planners and traffic engineers for traffic calming ideas
- encourage your community to use cameras to catch speeders and red light runners

## 5. WAS IT EASY FOR YOU TO USE YOUR BIKE?

- No maps, signs, or road markings to help me find my way
- No safe or secure place to leave my bicycle at my destination
- No way to take my bicycle with me on the bus or train
- Scary dogs
- Hard to find a direct route I liked
- Route was too hilly

- plan your route ahead of time
- find somewhere close by to lock your bike; never leave it unlocked
- report scary dogs to the animal control department
- learn to use all of your gears!

- ask your community to publish a local bike map
- ask your public works department to install bike parking racks at key destinations; work with them to identify locations
- petition your transit agency to install bike racks on all their buses
- plan your local route network to minimize the impact of steep hills
- establish or join a bicycle user group (BUG) at your workplace

## 6. WHAT DID YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR RIDE SAFER?

- Wore a bicycle helmet
- Obedied traffic signals and signs
- Rode in a straight line (didn't weave) Signaled my turns
- Rode with (not against) traffic
- Used lights, if riding at night
- Wore reflective materials and bright clothing
- Was courteous to other travelers (motorists, skaters, pedestrians, etc.)

- go to your local bike shop and buy a helmet; get lights and reflectors if you are expecting to ride at night
- always follow the rules of the road and set a good example
- take a class to improve your riding skills and know edge

- ask the police to enforce bicycle laws
- encourage your school or youth agencies to teach bicycle safety (on-bike)
- start or join a local bicycle club
- become a bicycle safety instructor

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am in Grade \_\_\_\_\_ .

I completed a bikeability audit of my neighbourhood area, \_\_\_\_\_ using a checklist created by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. I would like to share the results of my neighbourhood audit with you.

Neighbourhoods must be built to feel inclusive for all members of our society. What “safe” means to drivers is very different from what safe means to children as pedestrians and cyclists.

Positives: Things that made me feel safe on my bike ride.

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Negatives: Things that made me feel unsafe on my bike ride.

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To improve my neighbourhood's street design, the top three things I would change are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

I sometimes ride my bike to \_\_\_\_\_. If I felt more safe/comfortable riding my bike in my neighbourhood, I would ride my bike \_\_\_\_\_.

Bike-friendly neighbourhoods promote walking and cycling and encourage a shift in behavior at the neighbourhood level away from car travel. This is an important part of keeping our area active, safe, and healthy for community members of all ages. I encourage you to continue to make the creation and maintenance of bike-friendly neighbourhoods a priority.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_