



## CHAPTER III: BEHAVIORAL CHANGE COMPONENT

### A. EDUCATION AND SAFETY

A balanced bicycle and pedestrian program should contain a strong educational component. Bicyclists need to develop a thorough understanding of the laws governing motorized vehicles. They also need to develop good cycling skills to co-exist safely with pedestrians and motorists. Educational programs should provide bicyclists with skills and knowledge, emphasize the safety value of helmets, and feature other protective techniques. In designing educational programs, consideration should be devoted to bicyclists of all ages and skill levels. Additionally, a balanced bicycling education program should include special training for motorists.

Through education, an environment will be created in the region where people can bicycle and walk without the fear of injury. Education and training can reach the public, as well as professionals responsible for infrastructure and law enforcement. Public outreach teaches people how to use the bicycle and pedestrian system safely. It is not unusual for communities to provide this type of training for school children. Adults may also need a refresher in the basics of how to walk, bicycle, and drive safely; some drivers show disregard for cyclists while driving and then show disregard for motor vehicle traffic while walking, all within the same commute. Seniors are disproportionately at risk and can benefit from refresher courses as their needs change and they begin to walk more<sup>1</sup>.



Training for local planners, public works directors, highway designers, consultants, and other transportation officials will extend their professional capabilities and make them more sensitive to the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. Special training for law enforcement officers will help them enforce traffic regulations that are crucial to bicycle and pedestrian safety.

The best way to ensure that education, safety and training become part of everyday life is through effective educational programs. A strategy should be developed for educating the public about bicycle and pedestrian safety issues and for identifying safety education programs that have been successful in other regions, states or countries. Innovative ways to fund and sustain safety education programs should be developed.

#### 1. Strategy for Improving Education and Safety

**Educate key target groups in lawful and responsible bicycling, walking and driving.**

- Teach youngsters important bicycling skills. Bicycling is a lifelong skill that can enhance a person's well being and contribute to good health if done safely. Studies have shown that children's mistakes tend to involve a limited set of basic errors and that these errors can be addressed through education. The City of Toronto, for example, has developed a Kids Can Bike program that teaches basic bicycle skills to 9-13 year olds.
- Teach adults important bicycling skills. Adults also make errors while cycling and given that adults tend to ride in more demanding situations the ramifications of those mistakes can be serious. Teaching advanced traffic skills to adults may reduce their chances of crashes and injuries while encouraging increased bicycle use.

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan.



- Teach drivers how to interact safely and courteously with bicyclists and pedestrians. Many crashes between motor vehicles and bicycles result from mistakes made by motor vehicle drivers. Drivers need a better understanding of how to safely share the roads with the growing number of people who walk and ride bicycles. The City of Toronto has developed a Can Bike defensive bicycling course that teaches all ages how to ride defensively.

**Recommendations:**

- An inventory of the existing bicycle and pedestrian education programs in the region should be undertaken. The effectiveness of each program should be assessed.
- Identify successful bicycle and pedestrian education programs from around the region, state, nation and other countries. The City of Toronto’s Kids Can Bike program is one example. Bike rodeo’s that are already offered in some local municipalities are another example.
- Implement appropriate bicycle and pedestrian education programs throughout the region. This could be done through local school systems, police departments (who frequently sponsor bike rodeos) and fraternal organizations.
- Inform the public of key bicycle and pedestrian safety issues.
- Use the media to publicize important safety messages. Various media can help target the many members of the public who cannot be easily reached through schools or organizations.
- The variety of delivery mechanisms for safety messages include transit shelter advertising, radio and TV public service announcements, posters and pamphlets.
- The Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) promotes a “Watch for Bikes” campaign. They offer free decals that can be attached to side view mirrors. The decals remind drivers to look behind them before opening a car door or pulling out from the curb.



**Recommendations:**

- Promote communications and public outreach programs. Effective communication is a crucial component of any program that seeks to educate or increase public awareness of bicycle and pedestrian issues.
- Develop a media campaign to inform the public about bicycle and pedestrian safety issues. For example, the City of Toronto has produced public service announcements for radio that encourage bicyclist’s to respect the rights of pedestrian’s and motorist’s.
- Implement specific safety program initiatives such as the Canadian Automobile Associations “Watch for Bikes” campaign.



**B. ENCOURAGEMENT AND PROMOTION**

There are many ways to promote and market bicycling and walking as modes of transportation. Many people enjoy bicycling and walking for fitness but may not realize their potential for accomplishing errands, visiting friends and making short trips. Encouragement efforts can change people’s perceptions by emphasizing the personal financial benefits as well as the environmental benefits of bicycling and walking. For example, by pointing out air quality and energy conservation benefits of substituting a



bicycling trip for a driving trip, and demonstrating that many of their routine destinations are within walking distance, more people may bicycle and walk more often.

Encouragement efforts can take the form of events, promotions and programs. These efforts can serve to re-inspire people who are already committed to bicycling and walking, as well as encourage new participants. Promotion efforts can also encourage recreational riders to consider commuting to work as well as change people's attitudes towards bicycles as an everyday mode of transportation.

## 1. Strategy for Encouraging and Promoting Bicycling and Walking

### Encourage the increased use of bicycling for transportation and recreation

#### Recommendations:

- Promote bicycle and walk to school programs such as the Safe-Routes-to-School (SRS) pilot program being developed by the NRPC. The purpose of the SRS program is to encourage and enable children to walk and bicycle to school through a combination of educational measures, programs and physical improvements to the transportation infrastructure.
- Promote events, such as a Bike Week or a Bike-to-Work Day. The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT) and the City of Nashua sponsor a bike to work day once a year that takes place on the same day as national bike to work day. These efforts should be continued and expanded.
- Support New Hampshire Celebrates Wellness, which has developed a Livable, Walkable Communities (LWC) program. The LWC program provides a foundation to support human, environmental, economic and community health. The program supports and promotes physical activity, increased safety for children and adults, open space, mixed-use development, trails, paths and on-street bicycle facilities.
- Encourage the Nashua Transit System to promote the combined use of bicycles and transit.

### Use the media to promote awareness of the bicycle and pedestrian network

#### Recommendations:

- Encourage media campaigns that increase public awareness of the economic, environmental and social benefits of bicycling and walking. The City of Portland, Oregon sponsors a program called "it all adds up to cleaner air". This program encourages individuals to reduce air pollution by substituting bicycling and walking for the use of motor vehicles.
- Inform the public about the location of the bicycle and pedestrian network. Signs, posters and "trail days" can be encouraged to draw attention to the recommended bicycle and pedestrian network as it becomes more developed in the region.

## C. ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement promotes a safe bicycle and pedestrian environment. A lack of enforcement contributes to a general disregard for the laws pertaining to bicyclists and pedestrians. Bicycle and pedestrian-related traffic rules and regulations in the region would benefit from increased awareness and enforcement. Increased awareness of these rules and regulations will lead to better compliance among bicyclists and pedestrians as well as motorists. This will lead to increased mutual respect between the users of different transportation modes and ultimately a better environment for bikers, walkers and motorists. Opportunities for improvement include better compliance by motorized and non-motorized roadway users with regard to





vehicular speed limits and yielding to those within the right of way. Increased awareness of applicable rules and mutual respect between bicyclists and all roadway users are among the means to secure better compliance<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, it is essential that police and community enforcement programs be developed.

## 1. Strategy for Improving Enforcement Methods

### Improve traffic laws that affect bicyclists and pedestrians<sup>3</sup>

#### Recommendations:

- Compare the existing traffic rules with the bicycle sections of Uniform Vehicle Code. City or town codes may contain outdated laws that unnecessarily restrict bicycle and pedestrian travel. For consistency's sake, traffic law should follow or improve upon the nation's models.
- Enforce laws affecting bicycle safety and security<sup>4</sup>
- Review and modify youthful violator procedures. For youngsters, crashes between bicycles and motor vehicles most often result from their violating some basic traffic laws. But since they have not taken driver training, they seldom know how the traffic system works. As a result, ticketing young children is an unnecessarily tough approach to handling their violations.
- Review and, if necessary, modify procedures for handling bicycle theft and assault on bicyclists. Bicyclists fall prey to certain characteristic types of crimes. They often complain about being insulted or assaulted while travelling. Bike theft is common in some communities.
- Consider fines as an enforcement tool<sup>5</sup>. They can be phased in over time to progressively raise the public's awareness of their responsibilities as both motorized and non-motorized roadway users.

### Consider adding bicycle enforcement options to routine police department procedures<sup>6</sup>

#### Recommendation:

- Establish a mountain bike police patrol. Police departments all over the country are learning the advantages of community-based enforcement efforts. Mountain bikes can be a key part of such an emphasis. They are fast and quiet, allowing new levels of success in drug enforcement, for example, and keeping officers in good health. Such patrols are also very popular with the public.

## D. SUMMARY

A balanced bicycle and pedestrian program contains a strong educational component. Bicyclists and pedestrians need to know the vehicle laws and need to develop good skills to co-exist safely with motorists. In designing educational programs, consideration should be given to bikers and walkers of all ages and skill levels. Additionally, a balanced cycling and walking education program should include special training for motorists.

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<sup>2</sup> Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

<sup>3</sup> Balancing Engineering, Education, Law Enforcement, and Encouragement in Local Bicycle Programs. John Williams & Kathleen McLaughlin, Adventure Cycling Association, February 1993.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Massachusetts Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

<sup>6</sup> Balancing Engineering, Education, Law Enforcement, and Encouragement in Local Bicycle Programs. John Williams & Kathleen McLaughlin, Adventure Cycling Association, February 1993.



A balanced plan also identifies strategies that promote transportation on foot and by bicycle to encourage more people to substitute bicycling and walking for motorized travel when travelling short distances.

Finally, increased awareness of bicycle-related rules and regulations will lead to better compliance among bikers as well as motorists. This will lead to increased mutual respect between the users of different transportation modes and ultimately a better environment for bikers as well as motorists.





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