



## City of Big Lake Environmental Education Newsletter

June

#BikeBigLake

Have you noticed the City of Big Lake's recent push to get more residents biking? This summer, we are going to #bikebiglake! In June, we are kicking off the campaign with a Bikeable Communities Workshop. Community Education will be sponsoring a Bike Rodeo on June 13<sup>th</sup>. The City's Spud Fest parade float will even feature City employees biking! Later in the summer, the Farmers Market will be promoting two Bike to the Market days. We hope to see residents at these events, and out utilizing our trails and biking to various destinations around the City!

"I want cycling to be normal, a part of everyday life. I want it to be something you feel comfortable doing in your ordinary clothes, something you hardly think about." – Boris Johnson<sup>1</sup>

### Minnesota: Nationwide Leader in Bikability

- Minnesota is ranked second in the nation for bicycle friendliness. These rankings are based upon scores in infrastructure and funding, education and encouragement, legislation and enforcement, policies and programs, and evaluation and planning<sup>2</sup>
- More than two million Minnesotans ride a bike each year for fitness, recreation, or transportation.<sup>3</sup>
- Nearly half of Minnesotans choose to get on a bike each year for vacations, errands, recreation, commuting, fitness, and fun. All those rides add up to about 90 million trips and 180 million miles. The bicycle industry alone contributes more than 5,500 jobs and supports nearly \$800 million in economic activity in our state. Approximately 65,000 Minnesotans work for a Bicycle Friendly Business, 73,000 attend Bicycle Friendly Universities, and 2.5 million people live in a Bicycle Friendly Community.<sup>4</sup>

### Why Bike?

"Every year, [air, water, and land pollution cause roughly 8.9 million premature deaths worldwide](#). Recent data show worsening trends in morbidity and mortality attributed to pollution in most regions of the world, where rapid urbanization and motorization are taking a toll on air quality. China is a prime example where motorcars are rapidly replacing bicycles and rickshaws as the traditional mode of transportation. In 2004 there were just 10 million private cars in circulation in China; by 2020—just 5 years from now—there are forecast to be 150

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2015/03/12/how-the-bicycle-can-drive-green-development-on-planet-earth/>

<sup>2</sup> [https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFS2017\\_StateRanking\\_Chart.pdf](https://bikeleague.org/sites/default/files/BFS2017_StateRanking_Chart.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bikemn.org/education>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bikemn.org/education>

million. While those in Europe and the U.S. are beginning to return to the bicycle, millions of others are forsaking their bikes for cars. Reversing this trend could be of huge benefit to our future climate and the health of our cities, but only if we act now.

Pollution is toxic to our economies and exerts a higher burden on the cost of health care. It leads to a diminished quality of life. Investing in bicycles and the infrastructure needed to make them convenient and affordable would help in many ways to reclaim a cleaner environment and make a contribution to the mental and physical health of the population.



Some see the bike as just a form of recreation or kids play. However, bicycles are a major and practical form of transportation for hundreds of millions. One-third of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions are from motorized transport. Of course, cycling may not be the best option for every trip or by everyone. But if we improve the availability of bicycles and the facilities to support safe cycling, then they could offer a zero-carbon alternative to the car. It would also save us from

billions of tons of CO2 emissions in the coming decades.<sup>5</sup>

#### It's Good for You Too!

**“1. It's easy on the joints.** When you sit on a bike, you put your weight on a pair of bones in the pelvis called the ischial tuberosities, unlike walking, when you put your weight on your legs. "That makes it good for anyone with joint pain or age-related stiffness."

**2. Pushing pedals provides an aerobic workout.** That's great for your heart, brain, and blood vessels. Aerobic exercise also triggers the release of endorphins, the body's feel-good chemicals—which may make you feel young at heart.

**3. Cycling builds muscle.** In the power phase of pedaling, you use the quadriceps in the thighs, and the gastrocnemius and soleus muscles in the calves. In the recovery phase, you use the hamstrings in the back of the thighs and the flexor muscles in the front of the hips. Cycling works other muscles, too. You use abdominal muscles to balance and stay upright, and you use your arm and shoulder muscles to hold the handlebars and steer.

**4. It helps with everyday activities.** "The benefits carry over to balance, walking, standing, endurance, and stair climbing," says Dr. Safran-Norton.

**5. Pedaling builds bone.** "Resistance activities, such as pushing pedals, pull on the muscles, and then the muscles pull on the bone, which increases bone density," says Dr. Safran-Norton.<sup>6</sup>

**June 27<sup>th</sup> and August 1<sup>st</sup> – Bike to the Farmers Market**

**Find the Bike to the Market Days on Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/biglakefarmersmarket/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2015/03/12/how-the-bicycle-can-drive-green-development-on-planet-earth/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-top-5-benefits-of-cycling>