

Opportunities to Increase **Walking and Bicycling**

Richfield, Minnesota

Local policy initiatives play a pivotal role in promoting the health of a community, including supporting active transportation options such as walking, rolling, and biking. A variety of policy options are available to help residents of all ages and abilities make active transportation a part of their daily lives. This document provides an overview of Richfield's municipal ordinances, policies, and plans impacting the active transportation system, and provides recommendations for improving access to active transportation through Richfield's comprehensive plan update, as well as future plans and code amendments.

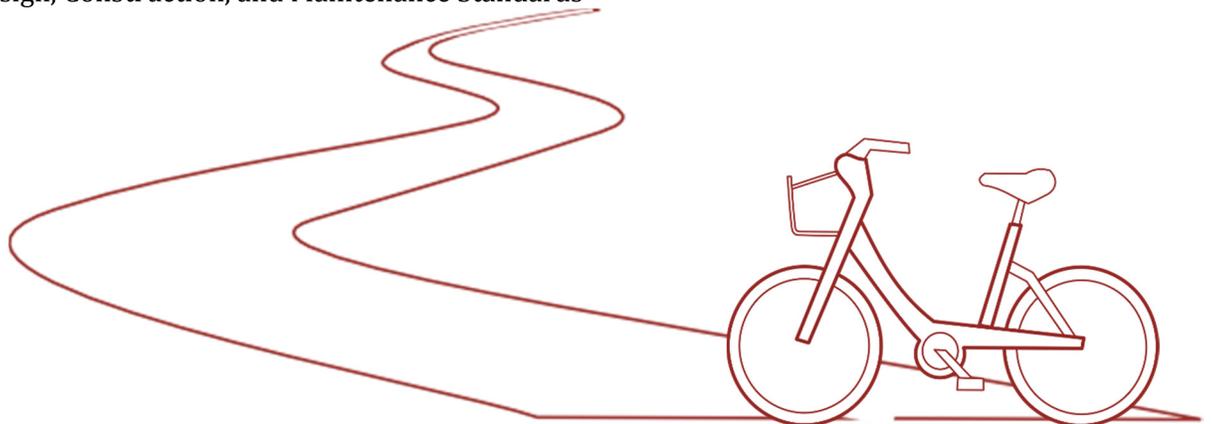
Richfield's policies primarily impact the active transportation system in the following areas:

- Active Transportation Policies and Plans
- Land Use and Local Zoning Designations
- Bicycle Parking
- Traffic Calming
- Municipal Recognition Programs

STATE GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

A number of Minnesota state laws impact active transportation and how bicyclists and pedestrians move throughout the state and the authority municipal governments have to regulate certain areas. Areas impacted by state law include, but are not limited to:

- Signage
- Funding Transportation Facilities
- Speed Limits
- Pedestrian and Bicyclist Rights and Responsibilities
- Accessibility Standards for Individuals with Disabilities
- Design, Construction, and Maintenance Standards



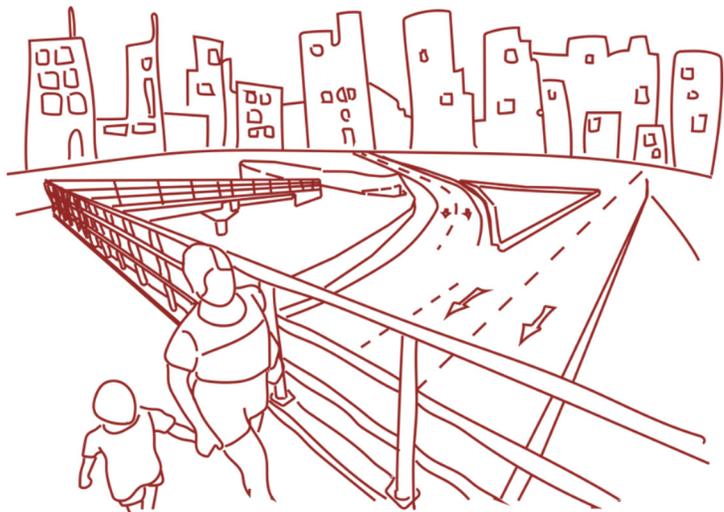
LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY

Active Transportation Policies and Plans

Richfield promotes active transportation by maintaining a citywide network of sidewalks, trails, and bike lanes. The city's Complete Streets Policy establishes that Richfield seeks to enhance safety, accessibility, and convenience for all transportation users, including pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists of all ages and abilities.¹ The Comprehensive Plan and Bicycle Master Plan further guide the implementation of this policy, and propose specific improvements to the active transportation network.² Finally, Richfield's municipal code provides requirements and incentives for sidewalk construction.³

Opportunities to improve Richfield's active transportation policies and plans include:

- Develop a Pedestrian Master Plan, either as a section in the Comprehensive Plan or Bicycle Master Plan, or as a standalone document.
- Explore opportunities to supplement street reconstruction funds with a dedicated revenue stream for active transportation improvements, such as a Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety Fund.⁴
- Provide specific performance measures in the Comprehensive Plan to track progress toward a complete pedestrian/bicycle network, and establish accountability for continued improvement.
- Develop specific implementation steps and benchmarks in an amendment to the Complete Streets Policy.



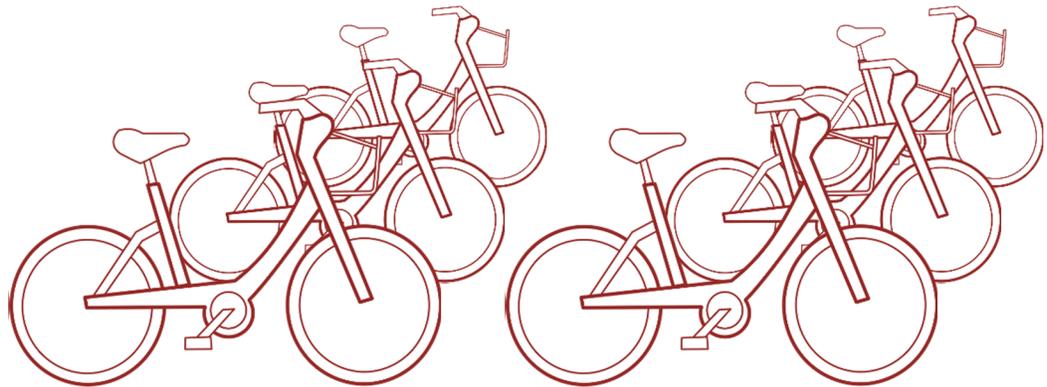
Land Use and Local Zoning Designations

In addition to transportation infrastructure, land use patterns impact the pedestrian environment by determining what destinations are available within walking or biking distance, the number and variety of available destinations, and the distance between destinations. For example, if the only buildings within a quarter-mile of a resident's home are other homes, they can't easily walk or bike to the store, work, school, or any other daily destinations. Zoning ordinances can make residents more likely to choose active transportation options by:

- Allowing a mix of residential and commercial uses in the same area providing more variety of destinations closer to residents' homes.
- Allowing higher density of land use reducing the distance required to reach destinations.

Opportunities for Richfield to encourage active transportation through zoning and land use planning include:

- Implement a Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District, with design standards to improve bike and pedestrian accessibility.⁵
- Provide specific performance measures in the Comprehensive Plan Update to track progress toward the Land Use Strategies established in the Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail section of the 2008 Comprehensive Plan.
- Assess need for two-family dwellings in R districts to be located on an arterial or collector street (as currently required), rather than locations within one block of an arterial or collector.
- Assess benefits of a code amendment allowing residential uses in some commercial zoning districts (similar to Bloomington's §21.302.02 Residential Uses in Commercial Zoning Districts).

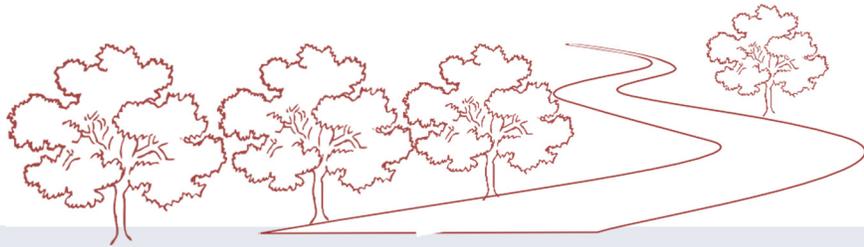


Bicycle Parking

Secure and easily accessible bicycle parking facilities are a much-needed amenity for residents considering biking as an alternative to driving. Richfield currently requires all auto parking lots with 20 or more required spaces to include bicycle racks.⁶

Opportunities to improve the availability of bike parking in Richfield include:

- Assess bike parking availability at businesses and multi-family residential buildings with fewer than 20 required parking spaces.
- Clarify the criteria used to determine the anticipated demand for bike parking at a given site.
- Assess the frequency and location of any bike parking reductions that have been approved in the past.



Traffic Calming

In areas where traffic speeds are too high for the surrounding context, traffic calming measures may be necessary to ensure the safety of pedestrians and cyclists as well as motorists. Traffic calming devices such as speed tables, bulb-outs, or traffic circles help to reduce traffic speeds, making the area safer and more welcoming to pedestrians and cyclists.

Opportunities to improve Richfield's traffic calming policies include:

- Regularly evaluate traffic speeds in residential areas and near schools, and assess need for traffic calming.
- Explore additional opportunities for reducing traffic speed, such as narrower lane widths, roadside trees, and reducing the speed limit to 25 mph for eligible streets.⁷

Municipal Recognition Programs

Various nonprofit and governmental organizations offer recognition programs to municipalities to incentivize progress and recognize achievement in areas such as bicycle/pedestrian-friendly design, aging in place, or environmental sustainability. Recognition programs provide external incentives for improvement, metrics for evaluating progress, and guidance from subject matter experts, which can ultimately help cities improve policies and resident outcomes.

Opportunities for Richfield to promote active transportation through recognition programs include:

- Continue to participate in Minnesota GreenStep Cities and complete the remaining three of five steps.⁸
- Participate in the Walk Friendly Communities program, administered by the University of North Carolina Highway Safety Research Center.⁹
- Join the Network of Age Friendly Cities, administered by AARP.¹⁰
- Contact Smart Growth America to request that Richfield's Complete Streets Policy be included in their annual nationwide evaluation of Complete Streets Policies.¹¹

¹ City of Richfield Complete Streets Policy (2013).

² City of Richfield (2008), Comprehensive Plan, Ch. 6; City of Richfield (2012), Bicycle Master Plan.

³ Richfield, Minnesota, Code of Ordinances Sec. 544.13

⁴ City of Edina. Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety (PACS) Fund. <https://www.edinamn.gov/496/Pedestrian-Cyclist-Safety-PACS-Fund>

⁵ An example of the Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District can be found in the Minneapolis City Code. See Minneapolis Code of Ordinances Ch. 551, Art. II: Pedestrian Oriented Overlay District.

⁶ Richfield, Minnesota, Code of Ordinances Sec. 544.17

⁷ MINN. STAT. §§169.14, Subd. 2. Speed Limits; §169.011, Subd. 64. Residential roadway; §160.263, Subd. 4. Speed on street with bicycle lane.

⁸ Minnesota GreenStep Cities. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. <https://greenstep.pca.state.mn.us/index.cfm>

⁹ Walk Friendly Communities. <http://walkfriendly.org/about/>.

¹⁰ AARP Network of Age-Friendly Communities. <http://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/network-age-friendly-communities/info-2014/an-introduction.html>.

¹¹ Smart Growth America. (2017). *The Best Complete Streets Policies of 2016*.