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BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN

BICYCLE FRIENDLY BUSINESS GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

Being a bicycle friendly business means having the proper and reliable infrastructure and enacting policies to support employees and consumers that choose to pedal to your establishment. Many businesses tend to be bicycle *unfriendly*, not by choice, but rather because they find bicycle infrastructure to be an expense they don't know much about. As more people choose to travel by bicycle, it is important that businesses know what types of bicycle storage is preferred, the benefits of having bike friendly amenities, and what incentives will encourage bicycling. Taking action to become bicycle friendly will help attract new employees and customers alike. This Guide will explain different methods to build a bicycle friendly business.

BENEFITS OF BEING A BICYCLE FRIENDLY BUSINESS

A bicycle friendly business has the potential to impact the social and economic profile of the community. Bike friendly businesses often see increased foot traffic compared to their peers, with visitors spending more time and money at their establishment and visiting more often. Since bicyclists save money on travel costs, they often have more cash to spend during their visit ([Bicycles Are Business](#)). Having bike friendly infrastructure (such as bike racks) means that people are more likely to visit again. This also helps business owners establish positive relationships with their community. This in turn leads to increasing the cash flow of a neighborhood and helps expand the economic vitality of the area. By providing bike racks and other bike friendly amenities, businesses can cater to a different demographic and potentially increase their number of visitors. When bicycle riders feel welcome, they are more likely to visit the businesses.

Having bicycle racks, bike amenities, and bicycle friendly policies at your businesses also helps advance sustainability and promotes healthy habits. This impact can be felt by visitors and employees who decide to commute by bicycle to the establishment. As air quality continues to be a crucial topic, bicycle accessibility increases the number of people contributing to zero emission transportation. In 2016, the EPA found that nearly 28% of greenhouse emissions were due to the transportation sector alone ([EPA Inventory Report](#)). Increasing the number of bike friendly businesses can boost the amount of people biking and improve local air quality. Additionally, more people participating in active transportation increases daily activity habits for employees and guests. While being bicycle friendly does not guarantee that more people will start biking, it does improve access to your business and helps improve the quality of life for your community.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY PARKING

As Oklahoma pushes for residents to shop locally, their businesses should better prepare for and provide the needed amenities to support customers who utilize the bicycle as a means of transportation. This means providing appropriate parking for those who decide to bike. Installing proper bike parking helps ensure that bicyclists feel welcomed and safe at the business. Having a designated area for bicycles helps maintain streetscape design, enhances safety for bicycle riders, and makes riders feel at ease about leaving their bikes unattended. Additionally, providing parking for bicycles reduces disruption to vehicle parking and increases convenience for all visitors. Having a designated area for bicycle parking also means that businesses don't have to worry about bicycles taking over sidewalks. The goal of any business should be to make sure everyone has a positive experience. Improved efficiency leads to happy customers who will want to visit again.

The design and cost of bicycle parking depends on the amount of time people are expected to park. The two most common types of facilities used to store bicycles are **bicycle racks** and **lockers**.

Bicycle racks are most common and relatively inexpensive. Costs may vary depending on the finish type, features, and the number of racks installed. On average, a single bike rack can cost around \$250. Bicycle racks are easy to use and best for users who make short visits. The design of bicycle racks is important because this will determine if bicycle riders will use it or not. Designs of these racks vary, but the best option for bicycle riders are those that are easy to use and easily accessible. A properly designed and installed bicycle rack:

- Has the needed support in two places to keep the bike from falling
- Has access to lock the frame of the bike and one or both wheels with a U-lock
- Allows for enough space to not move another bicycle when parking or leaving
- Is anchored to the ground
- Is made of material that does not bend, rust, nor can be cut

If a business decides to purchase bicycle racks, they must ensure that they are easy to use and are sturdy enough to provide security. The most common bicycle racks are typically galvanized, powder coated, and stainless steel types. They are usually placed adjacent to the business and are visible from inside the building. Businesses should plan to have racks spaced out enough to avoid any handlebar or basket conflicts. Enough space should be available between the bicycle racks and on sidewalks to provide enough space for maneuvering. Additionally, because some people will not use the bicycle rack correctly, it is important that enough space is planned for racks to minimize the impact of incorrect parking.



Inverted U-shaped racks are the most common, allowing for enough space for bikers to come and go. These bicycle racks are typically bolted to the ground and are sturdy enough to hold the bike without the bike falling over. They allow for two points of ground contact and come in many variations.

The image to the right is the type of bicycle rack to **avoid**. Wave and schoolyard racks are **not** user-friendly and often unreliable. They take up too much space and do not properly secure the bike. These types of racks lead to bikes clustering and falling over.

A successfully installed bicycle rack should be:

- Placed no more than 50' from the business, otherwise cyclists will lock to street signs or trees
- Located in a high-traffic area with enough surveillance on the rack
- Labeled with signage encouraging public use

For larger storage facilities such as lockers, more upkeep and management is required. If a business decides that lockers are the best choice for its customers and employees, it's important that they are located near the building with sufficient space around the facility. As these storage lockers are often placed in low pedestrian traffic areas, site planning should focus on safety and maintaining exclusive access to these areas. A reliable long-term parking facility has:

- Controlled Access:
 - Smart Cards
 - Keycard/Code access
- Effective lighting and security cameras
- Weather protection
- Signage that warns people about the facilities

While bicycle lockers are more expensive and require more management, it is still important for businesses to know their options as their bicycle program could expand in the future. If a business plans on installing these large structures near their building, it is important that they are not placed too close to each other and there is enough room to access the lockers. Enough aisle space should be provided to allow for easy entry and exit flow of people.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY AMENITIES

Bicycle friendly businesses increase safety to their employees who decide to commute to work on bike. When selecting an office/business location, consider distance to bike lanes and trails. The location of a bicycle friendly business can help business owners decide if they should add additional amenities for bicycle riders. These amenities include repair stations, shower and changing areas, and a bicycle sharing program. Many times, people choose not to bike because they fear feeling unclean at work or they simply do not have a bicycle. Adding these amenities can remove this common barrier.



Source: <https://fiveatheart.com/projects/no-2-forbury-pl-uk/>

BICYCLE REPAIR STATIONS

Bicycle friendly businesses should aim to provide repair stations for the convenience of employees and guests. Having a repair station increases the use of the space and encourages more visits. Additionally, having a repair station at the workplace lets employees make simple fixes to their bikes, cutting out unnecessary trips to a repair shop. Furthermore, having additional tools, like extra bike locks, reassures employees their bikes will be secure while at the workplace.



SHOWERS, CHANGING AREAS, AND STORAGE LOCKERS

Creating a space where employees can shower and store their clothes removes the hygiene barrier often faced by bicycle commuters. People feel more comfortable biking to work when they can properly clean themselves. Additionally, having a space to change would mean employees don't have to ride in their work clothes. As people choose to bicycle and take advantage of this amenity, the more people will show up to work refreshed and ready to be productive.

BICYCLE CHECKOUT

Creating a bicycle sharing program gives employees who don't have a bicycle of their own another means of transportation. Bicycle sharing programs allow employees, and sometimes guests, to checkout a bike for a simple ride during a break or to make short work trips. Additionally, having these bicycles at a workplace can give employees a mental break through a short ride around the community. Having additional bikes on hand helps users take on responsibility of the bicycle and ensures that people take care of this fun amenity.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY POLICIES, PROGRAMS, AND INCENTIVES

A bicycle friendly business not only positively impacts its community, but also benefits its employees. Through organizing community events, clubs, group rides, and recognition events, businesses have the potential to increase the number of employees commuting by bike.

A bike friendly business promotes and supports biking for their employees and the community at large. Some ways to accomplish this include: Celebrating Bike Month and Bike to Work day, organizing group rides, hosting bicycle related trainings, sponsoring bicycle conferences and events, and offering incentives to employees that commute by bike. Businesses also can expand or create benefits for their employees who commute by bike. For example, some Oklahoma City businesses offer free EMBARK bus passes to employees who choose to pedal to work.

Many businesses offer incentives to employees that bike to work. One program often used is the Bicycle Commuter Tax Benefit. Under this program, employers reimburse employees who regularly commute to work by bike (up to \$20 per month, tax free) ([Bike League Bike Benefit & Tax Reform](#)). This credit can be used to buy, repair, or store their bicycle. The employer has the choice of defining the amount of reimbursement. Transportation and workplace policies have historically favored drivers over bicyclists. Providing incentives to employees is an easy way to help your employees and build camaraderie in the workplace.

CONCLUSION

As more businesses decide to be bike friendly, it's important they know about storage options and other benefits they can provide. It is vital that businesses expand on these benefits and offer incentives to those employees who decide to pedal to work. With cities pushing for more density and a focus on local shopping, businesses should better strive to provide the needed amenities and programs for those who decide to travel by bike. While installation, maintenance, and programming does vary, businesses should choose the option that best fits the need of their customers and employees.

Do you consider your business to be bicycle friendly? Apply to the League of American Bicyclists (LAB) to get your bike friendly designation!

LAB recognizes bike friendly businesses at four different levels: Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Platinum. Each applicant receives valuable feedback and assistance from the League on how to be more welcoming to visitors and employees who bike. The designation is available for businesses of all sizes and those awarded will receive national press through the League's social media pages and newsletters. Applications are open twice per year, once in the Summer and once in the Fall. In the application, businesses will share what they are doing to welcome bicyclists and must go into detail in five areas: Engineering, Encouragement, Education, Evaluation, and Planning. Awardees are typically announced three months after the application deadline.

For more details and to complete the application, visit:

<https://www.bikeleague.org/business>

