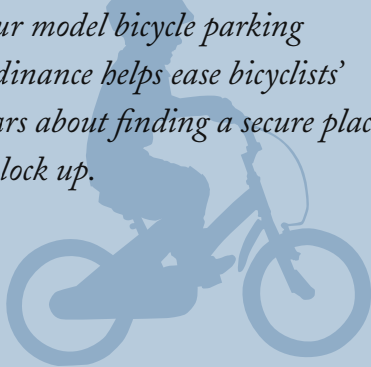




Making a Place for Bicycles Using Bicycle Parking Laws to Support Health, Business, and the Environment

Local laws can encourage bicycling by making bike parking more widely available. Our model bicycle parking ordinance helps ease bicyclists' fears about finding a secure place to lock up.



Bicycling creates healthier communities, supports local business, and leads to less pollution and congestion. But people are reluctant to bike when they worry they won't find a good place to lock their bicycles. Bicycle parking ordinances provide an easy way to ensure plentiful bicycle parking and make it clear that bicycles are welcome.

Bicycle parking promotes health. Cities across the country are looking for ways to address the growing obesity epidemic. Today, more than two-thirds of American adults and one-third of children are overweight or obese,¹ which puts them at higher risk for heart disease, diabetes, cancer, stroke, and other serious illnesses.² One way that cities can make a difference is by encouraging bicycling.

Biking is a great way to get around, and adults and children who are physically active are less likely to become overweight or obese. Many people use their cars to run errands and travel to destinations just one or two miles from home.³ For these short trips, bicycling can be a practical alternative.



**ChangeLab
Solutions**

Law & policy innovation
for the common good.



NATIONAL POLICY & LEGAL ANALYSIS NETWORK
TO PREVENT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Likewise, for the third of Americans who live within five miles of their jobs, biking can turn a tiresome commute into healthy exercise.

People are reluctant to bike, however, when they don't think they'll find a secure place to park. While parking for cars is usually available, parking for bikes is often scarce or nonexistent. Surveys find lack of good bicycle parking to be the number one reason even experienced bicyclists often don't ride to work.⁴

Not surprisingly, where there is bicycle-friendly infrastructure, including parking, ridership increases.⁵ Bicycle parking serves another important role, too: it lets the community know that bikes belong and are welcomed. It can also encourage people to get on their bikes, and can make biking safer by emphasizing that bicyclists are legitimate users of the road.

Bicycle parking helps local businesses prosper. Studies have shown that bicyclists, unlike drivers, travel slowly enough to interact with their surroundings, making them more likely to stop, shop, and explore. The bottom line is that people bicycling through town spend more money.⁶ In Toronto, for example, people who biked or walked to commercial areas reported spending more money there per month than those who drove.⁷ In Davis, Calif., shops along major cycling routes rent at a premium because bicyclists bring in so much business.⁸

Adding bicycle parking can boost tourism and other business. In Madison, Wis., sales tax revenue increased 3 percent in shopping areas with new bicycle racks.⁹



Durango, Colo. boasts on its website that tourists can shop by bike or take a two-wheeled tour of local breweries: “No matter where you go in downtown, you’ll find a place to park your bike nearby.”¹⁰

“More and more developers are realizing that including bicycle parking is the way to go. It’s not that difficult to do, and it brings a lot of benefits to the development and the community.”

~Developer David Tirman,
Executive Vice President of
JMA Ventures

Bicycle parking is good for streets and the environment. Each bicycle trip to shop, work, or run an errand means one fewer car on the road. Bicycles cause virtually no wear and tear on roads,¹¹ keeping costly street repairs down. So encouraging biking by providing parking not only promotes health and supports the local economy, it also reduces traffic congestion, pollution,¹² reliance on fossil fuels, and road maintenance costs. Health, the economy, and the environment all benefit.

Bicycle Parking Laws Around the Country

Local governments can easily and affordably encourage bicycling in their communities by adopting bicycle parking laws. Across the country, more than 150 large and small cities have already taken this step,¹³ and interest is growing as more and more cities see the advantages of bike parking.

Boulder, Colo.

Boulder’s residents ride bikes 20 times more than the national average.¹⁴ The city strongly supports bicycle parking because, as its website points out, “every bicycle trip begins and ends with the need for a safe and secure parking place.”¹⁵ In addition to requiring bike parking in new developments,¹⁶ the city provides bicycle racks throughout the downtown area. One clever design—funded by parking meter revenues—uses recycled car steering wheels from the 1970s and 80s.



Kansas City, Mo.

In 2009, Kansas City rolled out a new set of bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly policies, including substantial bike parking requirements for new buildings and developments. According to the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation, not only is a lack of safe, secure

Bicycle parking provides:

- *Healthier, more active residents*
- *Increased revenue for local businesses*
- *Less pollution and congestion on local streets*

bicycle parking one of the main obstacles to cycling, creating bike parking is “very, very inexpensive when done as part of new development—because bicycle parking locations are so much more simple and inexpensive than the equivalent automobile parking requirements.”¹⁷

Portland, Ore.

The U.S. Department of Transportation recently praised Portland for having the nation’s best policies promoting bicycling as a mainstream transportation choice.¹⁸ The city has seen a sixfold increase in cycling since 1990. Bike parking, in addition to other bicycle-oriented infrastructure and a bike-friendly culture, is an important part of that success.¹⁹

Model Bicycle Parking Ordinance

Our model bicycle parking ordinance can help communities provide safe, adequate, and convenient bike parking. As with all of our model laws, it is designed so that each community can tailor the law to its own needs. The law contains three parts, and a community can choose to adopt just one or all three sections.

1. **New Development and Major Renovations:**

The model law requires that new commercial and multifamily developments, as well as major renovations, provide short- and long-term bicycle parking. A side benefit for developers is that they don’t have to create as many expensive parking spaces for cars as they would have otherwise.

2. **Parking Facilities:**

The law requires licensed parking facilities to provide parking for bikes in addition to cars.

3. **Large Public Events:**

The law requires street festivals and other large events involving street closures to provide monitored bicycle parking. This requirement ensures that there is secure bike parking at large events and decreases congestion.

Visit www.changelabsolutions.org to download our model bicycle parking ordinance, and contact our staff attorneys for assistance.



- ¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Obesity and Overweight*. Hyattsville: National Center for Health Statistics, 2011. Available at: www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/overwt.htm.
- ² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Adult Obesity Facts*. Atlanta: CDC, 2012. Available at: www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/adult.html.
- ³ U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. *2009 Household Travel Survey*. 2011. Available at: <http://nhts.ornl.gov/2009/pub/stt.pdf>. For relevant excerpts, see America Bikes, League of American Bicyclists. "Factsheet: National Household Travel Survey." Available at: www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/nhts09.pdf; see also Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. *Turning Potential into Practice: Walking and Biking as Mainstream Transportation Choices*. 2007. Available at: www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/whatwedo/TrailLink%2007%20Program_Mobility.pdf (citing FHWA 2006).
- ⁴ Department of City Planning (DCP). *The New York City Bicycle Survey*. New York online public opinion survey of 1,086 cyclists, conducted for Bike Month 2006. Available at: www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/transportation/td_bike_survey_results.shtml; Department of City Planning, Transportation Division. *New York City Bicycle Parking Needs*. 1999. Available at: www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/transportation/td_bikeparking.shtml.
- ⁵ Marin County Bicycle Coalition. *Economic Benefits of Bicycling in Urban Environments*. Available at: www.marinbike.org/Resources/EconomicBenefitsOfBicycling.pdf.
- ⁶ See Pucher J and Renne JL. "Socioeconomics of Urban Travel: Evidence from the 2001 National Household Travel Survey." *Transportation Quarterly*, 57(3): 49-77, 2003. Available at: <http://fmip.ornl.gov/2001/articles/socioeconomicsofUrbanTravel.pdf>; see also Barnes G. *The Benefits of Bicycling in Minnesota*. Minnesota Department of Transportation. 2004. Available at: www.lrrb.org/pdf/200450.pdf; *The Economic Impact of Bicycling in Colorado*. Colorado Department of Transportation and the Center for Research in Economic And Social Policy at the University of Colorado Denver, 1999. Available at: <http://atfiles.org/files/pdf/CObikeEcon.pdf>; McMahon ET and Mastran S. *Better Models for Development in California*. Arlington, VA: The Conservation Fund and Local Government Commission, 2003; *The Economic Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin*. Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation. 2006. Available at: www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/econdev/docs/impact-bicycling.pdf; Grabow M, Hahn M, and Whited M. *Valuing Bicycling's Economic and Health Impacts in Wisconsin*. Madison, WI: The Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies, 2010. Available at: www.sage.wisc.edu/igert/download/bicycling_final_report.pdf.
- ⁷ Flusche D. *The Economic Benefits of Bicycle Infrastructure Investments*. The League of American Bicyclists, 2009. Available at: www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/pdfs/economic_benefits_bicycle_infrastructure_report.pdf.
- ⁸ See Marin County Bicycle Coalition. *Economic Benefits of Bicycling in Urban Environments*. Available at: www.marinbike.org/Resources/EconomicBenefitsOfBicycling.pdf.
- ⁹ *Id.*
- ¹⁰ Durango Area Tourism Office. *Durango Bike Shops & Amenities*. Available at: www.durango.org/info/activities/bike_amenities.aspx.
- ¹¹ League of American Bicyclists. *Ride for Economy*. Available at: www.bikeleague.org/resources/why/economics.php.
- ¹² U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. "The 'Carbon Footprint' of Daily Travel: NHTS Brief." 2009. Available at: <http://nhts.ornl.gov/briefs/Carbon%20Footprint%20of%20Travel.pdf>.
- ¹³ A survey undertaken in April 2002 identified over 140 cities in 24 states, plus the District of Columbia, that have bicycle parking requirements. Survey available at: www.masspaths.net/resources/parking. Many more such ordinances have been enacted since 2002.
- ¹⁴ City of Boulder. *Guide to Bike Parking in the City of Boulder*. Available at: www.bouldercolorado.gov/files/Bike_Parking-WEB.pdf.
- ¹⁵ *Id.*
- ¹⁶ *Id.* (provides links to bicycle parking requirements and design and construction standards).
- ¹⁷ Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation. *Kansas City passes new development code with major bicycle parking and bike/ped improvements*. 2009. Available at: <http://mobikefed.org/tags/missouri-tourism?page=8>.
- ¹⁸ Pucher J and Buehler R. *Analysis of Bicycling Trends and Policies in Large North American Cities: Lessons for New York*. The Region 2 University Transportation Research Center, City College of New York, 2011. Available at: www.utrc2.org/research/assets/176/Analysis-Bike-Final1.pdf.
- ¹⁹ *Id.*

The National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) is a project of ChangeLab Solutions. ChangeLab Solutions is a nonprofit organization that provides legal information on matters relating to public health. The legal information in this document does not constitute legal advice or legal representation. For legal advice, readers should consult a lawyer in their state.

Support for this document was provided by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

© 2012 ChangeLab Solutions

Photos courtesy of flickr/gregraisman