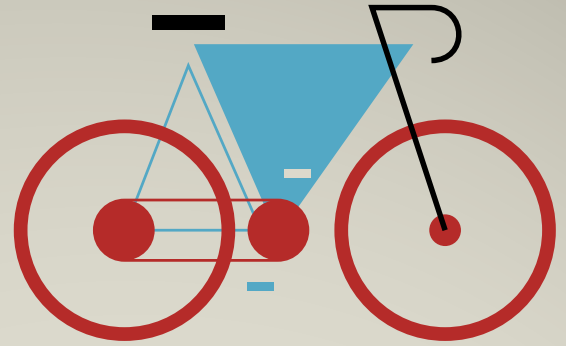


A guide for higher education departments responsible for the promotion of biking on campus



ELEVATE YOUR
CAMPUS
BIKE
Program



DERO
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U of M Bike Center

University of Minnesota
The Hub
BICYCLE
CO-OP
for all types of people

The Hub is a student-owned, cooperative that supports alternative modes of transport, the environment, and the campus community.

This guide is a resource to help those who want to improve bicycling conditions on their campus and will suggest strategies to achieve long-term success. While program decisions will vary by location, this guide provides many foundational principles for building a successful program. We'll touch on evaluating your current conditions, how to build useful departmental relationships while securing the support of students, staff, and faculty, as well as outlining various funding strategies.

INTRODUCTION

GETTING
STARTED



Breaking Down Barriers

At the outset of your efforts to build a program, it's useful to think of yourself as being in the concern-reduction business. For varied and understandable reasons, people keep a list in their heads of barriers to using their bikes for purposes beyond recreation. For some the list is long and hard to overcome. For others it is short and manageable. Your task is to provide practical solutions to barriers both real and imagined – solutions that will make your campus a safe, pleasant place to bike.

STEP 1:

Assess Current Conditions

An important first step is thinking about the current bicycling conditions on your campus and what it is that inspired you to try and improve those conditions. What's currently working? What isn't? Since there's no substitute for direct observation, let's start by walking around campus and observing how bikes are currently used.

- Are there defined spaces for people on bikes?
- Are those spaces obvious to other campus users?
- Are they delineated by paint or other physical features?
- Is there an adequate supply of quality bike parking?
- Is it located in visible, well-lit areas at campus destinations?

A sure sign of improperly located or ill-designed bike parking is bikes locked to railings, fences, and other landscape fixtures. The convenience and safety of riders and their bicycles provided by dedicated spaces and adequate bike parking should be considered essential ingredients for increasing bike ridership on campus.

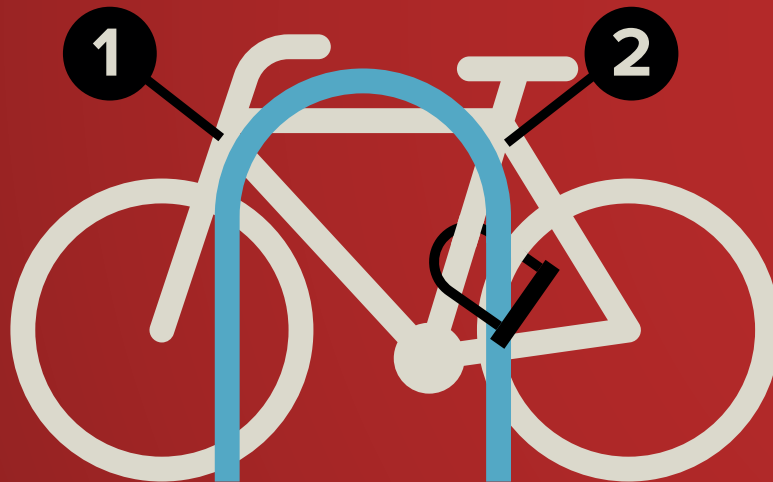




BIKE PARKING 101

Providing adequately secure, organized, and convenient bike parking is a fundamental step to address perhaps the biggest barrier to bike commuting, and this can be accomplished relatively easily with standard bike racks.

For a more in-depth look at bike parking best practices, please consult Dero's other handy guides (see back cover), but at the very least your racks should support bike frames at two points, be u-lock compatible, provide adequate spacing between racks for easier access, and be located close to building entrances.



Staple-shaped racks are simple, provide two points of contact along the bike frame, and are u-lock compatible.

SPACE USE

These diagrams illustrate the amount of space used by average sized bikes parked in various ways.

2
Bikes



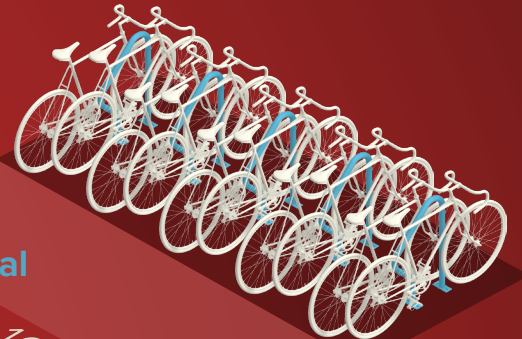
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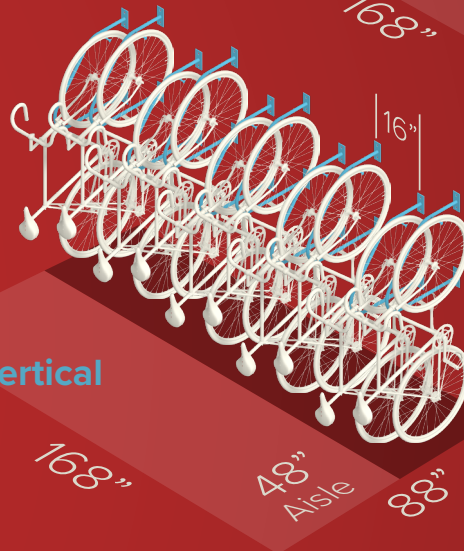
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10
Bikes

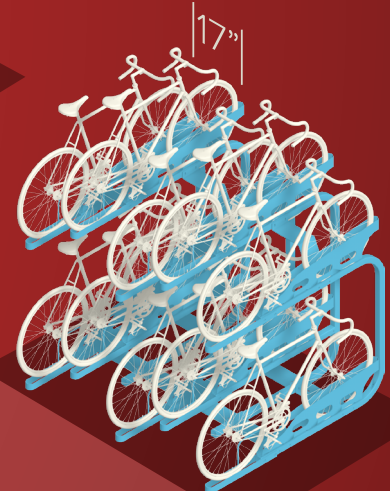
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Vertical



Two Tier



MASTERS of BIKE PARKING

If you want to go the extra distance to make cyclists feel truly valued and welcome on campus, consider installing more robust facilities, such as enclosed bike shelters, indoor bike rooms, or even a network of smart bike parking stations.



Bike Lockers

Lockers offer even more protection than shelters and can be accessed individually. Renting locker space can also provide a source of revenue for your bike program.



Bike Shelters

Covered bike shelters provide a layer of protection from sun, rain, and snow. Enclosed shelters can be further secured or monitored with swipe cards or other systems.



Bike Rooms

Indoor bike rooms can be a hub of cycling activity when outfitted with storage, repair stations, lockers, and additional conveniences like changing rooms and lounges.



Smart Bike Parking Stations

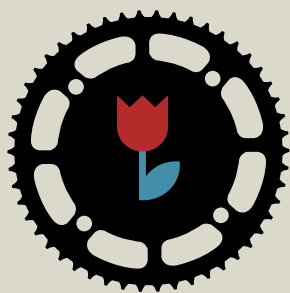
Networked smart stations can be operated through a phone app or swipe card. They provide ease-of-use to the cyclist, as well as a wealth of usage data to system administrators.





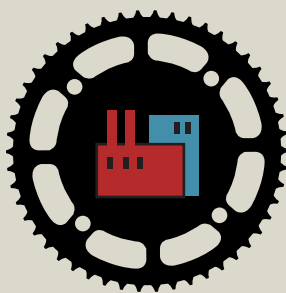
**BUILDING
RELATIONSHIPS**

The quality and durability of the relationships you establish while building your program will have a long-lasting impact on its ultimate success. There are elements under your control and elements controlled by others, and one of the hardest things to figure out in a campus setting is who's responsible for what, especially in a larger institution. Let's first consider the presence of bicycles in the shared physical space, a space that can be managed by multiple entities at your institution. Who are your friends here? The following are examples of potential allies.



Landscaping Team

An excellent first call to make is to your campus landscape team. They share your distress at seeing bikes locked to trees, benches, and fences, with the resulting damage to the things they're responsible for maintaining. While it's true that one of their goals is to maximize campus green space, with your help they can be persuaded that the selective addition of bike parking in appropriate places will lead to less damage and an overall improvement to campus landscaping.



Facilities Management

Another future ally is the facilities management or physical plant department. Their area of responsibility is campus-wide, like yours, but is typically focused on buildings and hard surfaces. Think of the overlap in your areas and how your knowledge of campus biking can help them when they're planning construction or repair projects that impact bikes.



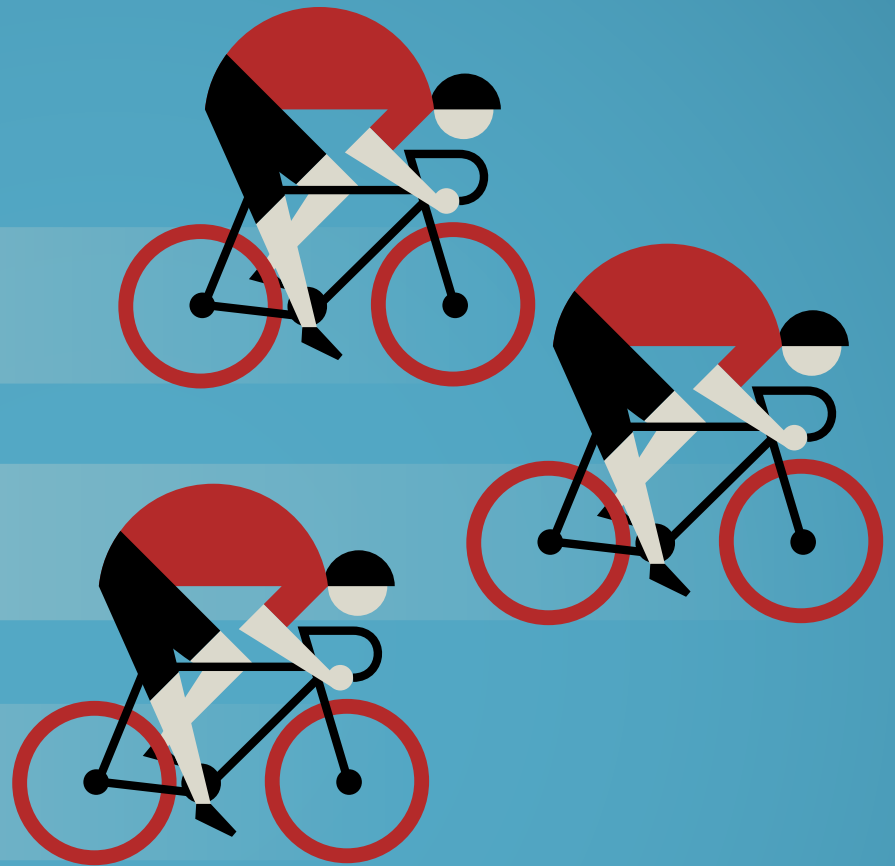
Disability Services

An often overlooked partner in improving cycling conditions on your campus is the disability services department. They have a keen awareness of the physical attributes of your campus and can help identify areas of conflict between people who ride bicycles and people whose disabilities affect their mobility. It's important to confront potential areas of conflict between these community members head-on so as not to minimize them or pretend they don't exist.

BUILDING **M**OMENTUM

Now that you've established some on-the-ground contacts who can help you with advancing physical campus cycling conditions, let's turn our attention to creating relationships in the policy and regulatory sphere.

An important categorical distinction to make at the outset are the differences between student, staff, and faculty support. All three are crucial for success, but they differ significantly for some not always obvious reasons. The key is building institutional momentum for student initiatives in the form of staff and faculty support. Campus cycling conditions are an issue that has support across all three groups (all three have members who use bikes, often at a high rate) and cycling organizes support in ways that, for example, opposition to tuition increases or improvements to the student union do not. Look to students for ideas and enthusiasm, and recruit staff and faculty to shepherd them through to completion.





BIKE COMMITTEE and BIKE PLANS

A good place to start is by forming a bike committee. There are a variety of potential forms for your committee, and those forms can change over time. As your program matures the committee might serve primarily as a project-based advisory group, while in its early stages it might have a wider membership that represents broad-based institutional interests. Set specific goals and agendas. You will make committed members by instilling a sense of accomplishment and worth.

A word of caution on bike plans—their utility depends on the degree of adherence to the plan and/or its adoption as part of a campus master plan. Before you commit tens of thousands of dollars to consultants to develop a plan, or embark on producing one yourself, think of what you want it to accomplish, along with potential strategies to ensure it's adopted and enforced.



FUNDING

While there are a variety of elements contained in successful collegiate bike programs, one of their hallmarks is a consistent funding stream. Identifying a funding source for your bike initiatives will help define the scope of your work. The following are some common funding examples:



Parking Fees

One of the institutional advantages of using parking money to provide improved bicycling conditions is that it mitigates some of the damaging effects of SOV travel. These include the exorbitant cost of providing parking, which can range anywhere from \$10,000-\$50,000 per space. Not to mention the subsequent loss of green space needed for new parking facilities and the increasingly serious consequences of GHG tailpipe emissions.

Large universities with thousands of parking spaces can collect tens of millions of dollars annually in fees, even small operations generate excess revenue. These are easily the best reasons to have your program situated in the parking/ transportation department.

Student Transportation Fees

Transportation fees are most-commonly approved for support of a campus transit system or to provide low or no-cost transit passes for a municipal system. However, once the fee is established, portions of it are typically eligible to be used for other transportation-related needs such as your budding bike program. Be prepared for a long process, but when you're successful the stability of a transportation fee will have been worth the work and the wait.



General Fund

As you're undoubtedly aware there are far more funding requests than there are available resources. Bike program needs will be weighed against lab upgrades and library acquisitions—not to their advantage. The plan here should be highlighting the benefits accruing to the institution by the increased adoption of bicycle transportation. Detail the reductions in GHG emissions and how that reduction contributes to overall institutional commitments to mitigate climate change. Point out the link between increased bicycle use and the benefits to the individual, as well as how those benefits also accrue to the institution via reduced health care costs. If your university doesn't charge for vehicle parking, point out the cost savings of not building additional parking.

Overall, the idea here is to outline a credible claim to university resources, subject to the same scrutiny as other claims. Always be prepared to defend your proposals as benefiting the entire university community, which they most certainly are.



Image by Freepik



Sustainability Funding

Linked to general funds are sustainability resources. While many institutions, especially larger ones, have sustainability departments, many serve as a resource to suggest and help implement projects, rather than as a direct funding source for those projects. So, while getting your ideas financed with sustainability resources may not be entirely possible, collaborating with those working on sustainability issues is quite valuable, insofar as their scope and mandate includes a wide swath of university operations.

After heating, cooling, and lighting, an institution's carbon footprint is most impacted by travel to, from, and around campus, and once the bigger contributors to emissions have been addressed, your campus sustainability friends will be looking for new reductions and can champion your work.

Bike Registration Program

Does your campus have a bicycle registration program? Can that program finance other bicycle initiatives? Maybe. Available funding obviously depends on the number of bikes on campus. Registering bikes in the low hundreds annually—at a price people will willingly pay—does not generate revenue much more than costs to run the program, but if the numbers climb into the thousands, registration initiatives not only pay for themselves, but they also generate revenue that can be used for other aspects of your program. Much depends both on the frequency of registration and the cost of the permit.

As you're deciding whether to proceed with a registration program, ask yourself foundational questions. What, if any, are the benefits to the permit holder? The success rate of stolen bike retrieval is modest at best, but there is real value in being able to identify the owners of potential abandoned bikes before they are removed. This saves you the work of removing and storing bikes that aren't truly abandoned while saving the owner the cost of a lock and a potential fine.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of these programs is the ability to use registration information to communicate with permit holders through newsletters, announcements, and surveys.





Image by Freepik

Campus

Bike Shop

Another potential revenue source is a campus bike shop to be run either as a volunteer organization or with paid staff – or as some combination of the two. In addition to funding your program, a campus shop also provides education and job training opportunities for students to learn about the bicycle business while strengthening your campus biking environment. The intrinsic rewards for a successful volunteer-run program are great, although there can be considerable work required to consistently recruit and train volunteers. A full-service shop with paid staff, both student and professional, set up as a dealer of selected bike brands would require some bike business acumen, at least one professional mechanic who can train student employees in the basics of bike maintenance, an inviting space and considerable outreach to the university community to promote the shop.

An alternative to running your own bike shop is to work with a privately run shop on university property. This approach limits revenue opportunities, but depending on how agreements are structured, can still provide a financial benefit. Program components written into an agreement that indirectly support a program financially but directly support the wider mission of increasing campus bike use include a discount on purchases at the shop for all members of the university community, how-to programming for basic bike maintenance and commuting, and fixed hours of year-round operation.



Grants

The last funding possibility we'll discuss is grants. It can be confusing to find and intimidating to apply for grant funding, but with the right research and clear ideas and goals for your program, you can be successful! Let's start by defining what you're trying to fund, since this will direct you to an appropriate program. Are you trying to establish a campus bike shop and you're seeking money to build out a space? Do you have ideas about starting a bike share program? A program to reward bike commuters with healthcare benefits? Potential funding for your initiatives will vary both between and within grant programs, so it's important to be flexible and to refine your ideas to fit the contours of the funding source.

SUMMARY

We've talked about a variety of methods to start or strengthen your campus bike program, from ways to assess your current conditions, to finding partners and building enduring relationships, to funding methods. We hope you've found this short guide to campus bike programming useful in your efforts to improve cycling on your campus. Even though it sometimes may feel like it, remember that you're not alone in your work. There are people across the country engaged in the same work. Your efforts do not go unnoticed and are appreciated by everyone who passes through that small corner of campus life entrusted to your care. Good luck in building your program and if you have questions or feedback, please don't hesitate to contact us!

MORE RESOURCES



[Dero Bike Parking Guide](#)

With a little planning and consideration, bike parking can be easy. Follow the basic guidelines in our handy guide to help make your bike parking project a success.



[Dero Bike Room Design Guide](#)

Build the better bike room with our tips and suggestions for creating an amenity your cyclists will love to use.



League of American Bicyclists

An extremely valuable ally in your efforts is the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). The LAB's [Bicycle Friendly University \(BFU\) program](#) provides a framework which acknowledges your accomplishments, advises you on improving your program and introduces you to what's happening in colleges and universities across the country.