Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Council
2024 Annual Report

Background

The Governor's Bicycle Coordinating Council (Council) was originally created under Governor Patrick Lucey in June 1977 and re-created by subsequent Governors including Governor Tony Evers' Executive Order #182 (January 4, 2023). The Council includes 17 members that represent the general public, the legislature, and state agencies. The Council considers all matters relating to unifying and coordinating the efforts of state agencies in encouraging the use of the bicycle as a form of transportation and recreation, promoting bicycle safety, education and regulation; promoting bicycling as a tourist and recreational activity; and disseminating information on available state and federal funding for bicycle related activities and facilities to counties and municipalities; and reviewing bicycle related programs of state agencies and making recommendations to assure a coordinated state program.

In 2024, the Council met quarterly to discuss statewide bicycling issues and various related initiatives in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

Council Members: Andrew Potts (Chairperson), Stephanie Bradley Wilson, Craig Heywood, Brenda Maxwell, James Miller, Scott Peterson, Jessica Wineberg, Christopher Squires representing WisDOT, Michael Schwendau representing WisDOT's Bureau of Transportation Safety, Sara Rigelman representing the Secretary of WDNR (replaced Brigit Brown in October), David Spiegelberg representing the Secretary of Tourism (replaced Jeff Anderson on an interim basis in September), Michael Morgen representing the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Lexi Davis representing the State Department of Health Services, Senator Chris Larson and Representative Kristina Shelton. Vacant appointments from the Wisconsin Senate and Assembly have not been filled since Senator Luther Olsen and Representative Keith Ripp left office in 2020 and 2017 respectively.

Work Activities

Work of the Council and state agencies for 2024 can be divided into the following pursuits:

Legislative Initiatives

- The Council continues to work with legislative representatives on the Council and looks forward to continuing those efforts as vacant appointments are filled.
- The Council was kept informed on several legislative initiatives, including:
    - Stop State Bill (LRB 3392) - This bill would require that drivers stop for pedestrians in certain crosswalks.
    - Bicycle Tax Credits (LRB 2796/2381) – Refundable income tax credit for bicycle purchases and granting an appropriation.
    - Complete Streets Bill (LRB – 5342/5093) – Requiring bicycle and pedestrian facilities in highway projects and granting rule-making authority.
    - Recreational Trail Condemnation (LRB 4825/5280) – Condemnation authority for recreational trails.

State Agency Initiatives

Department of Health Services

- *Ongoing efforts to support physical activity, including bicycling:* The Council received updates on DHS initiatives and grants that promote physical activity.
    - The State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program received Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funding for a 5-year program. The physical activity strategy is focused on community design for physical activity.

Department of Natural Resources

- *Provide and facilitate recreational opportunities on various state trail and park projects:* The Council received updates on proposals, issues and topics related to biking activities on state trails and parks. This includes new trail proposals throughout the state, trail conditions and master plan efforts for WI State Parks as well as information from other State Councils where there is shared interest (e.g. mutual topics on bicycling for the State Trails Council, the Nonmotorized Recreation and Transportation Trails Council, and the Recreation Stakeholder Council).
- *Planning Projects:* The Council received updates on WDNR-let planning and expansion efforts, including the Stewart Tunnel, the Wisconsin River bridge project near Sauk City, and other various bridge and trail repairs and replacements.
- *Events to Promote bicycling and outdoor recreation:* The Council was briefed on WDNR efforts related to events such as Ride Across Wisconsin, National Trails Day, Free Fun Weekend, and Wisconsin Bike Week.

Department of Public Instruction

- *Provide resources on safe bicycling practices:* The Council supports and encourages joint agency efforts in educating and training on safe bicycling practices.

Department of Tourism

- *Increasing visibility of bicycling opportunities:* The Council continued to support and receive briefings on the ways in which the Department of Tourism promotes year-round bicycle tourism. Methods the Department uses to promote bicycling include providing grants to communities that promote bicycle and pedestrian related events, and advertising bicycling opportunities online and in print materials. The Department of Tourism awarded Joint Effort Marketing Grants for the Iron Bull Red Granite Grinder in Wausau and the Treadhead Cycling Fall Tour Ride in Lake Geneva. The Department also awarded a Ready, Set, Go! Sports Marketing Grant to the City of Janesville for the 2024 Para-Cycling National Championships. The Department is working closely with USA Cycling to bring the Masters & Junior Road Nationals road trials to southeast Wisconsin in 2025.

Department of Transportation

- *Planning Projects:* The Council received updates on the Active Transportation Plan 2050 which will combine and update the existing Wisconsin Bicycle Transportation Plan (developed in 1998) and the Wisconsin Pedestrian Policy Plan (developed in 2002). The Council also received updates on the Multimodal Design Guide update which is underway at WisDOT and will combine and update design guidance for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects.
- *Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Programs:* The Council was kept informed on Transportation Alternative Program (TAP) and Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) project solicitation and selection processes. The Council was also appraised by the WisDOT Bureau of Transportation Safety of other available funding opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian safety and outreach projects.
- *Ongoing Programs to Support and Promote Bicycling:* The Council received updates and promotes WisDOT programs that encourage bicycling and infrastructure investments. In September, the Council was updated on the development of the Rustic Roads Bicycling Recognition program, which was developed from recommendations provided by the Council.
- *Other Projects:* Under Council oversight, the WisDOT Bureau of Planning and Economic Development developed an update to the Economic Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin Report, last published in 2019.

Successful Council Initiatives and Accomplishments

- The Council provided feedback on the needs of Wisconsin bicyclists and pedestrians for WisDOT's new Active Transportation Plan 2050 and Multimodal Design Guide update.
- The Council provided oversight for the development of an updated Economic Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin Report.
- The Council provided oversight for the development of a new Council webpage to be hosted on the WisDOT website.

- Participated in annual public records training provided by the WisDOT Office of General Counsel.

Future Goals and Initiatives – 2025

- Stay informed on and advocate for improvements to state bicycle policies and programs.
- Explore equity in cycling and barriers to access. Support the promotion of bicycling in underrepresented communities.
- Support increased funding for bicycle infrastructure and programming.
- Support statewide bicycle planning efforts.
- Work with partners to promote Bike to School Day.
- Update the Bicycle Event Toolkit
- Promote the 2024 update of the Economic Impact of Bicycling in Wisconsin report
- Continue to provide feedback on the needs of Wisconsin bicyclists and pedestrians for WisDOT's new Active Transportation Plan 2050. Promote the release of the Plan once it is finalized in 2025.