

The GPTN Newsletter is published quarterly and is distributed to GPTN members and other interested parties.

For more information, contact: Elaine Hammer, 402-477-0242, or [www.gptn.org](http://www.gptn.org)



**Great Plains Trails Network**

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# Great Plains Trails Network

Fall 2014

Issue 117

## AND NOW EVERYONE KNOWS..... OUR TRAILS ARE A GREAT PLACE!

by Roger Hirsch

While we knew it all along, the jury has come back in. It's official. Lincoln's trails are a "Great Place".

So says the American Planning Association (APA), which designated the Lincoln's Trails as a "Great Public Place"—one of the nation's top 10 Great Public Spaces named in the APA's annual award. The APA started its award program in 2007, and recognizes communities in three categories—Great Neighborhoods, Great Streets, and Great Public Places—each category consisting of 10 communities every year.

The whole thing is outlined at the APA's web site, along with information on other communities recognized for their efforts, and the history of the award. See <https://www.planning.org/greatplaces/>.

Long thought to be an excellent network of hiking and biking trails, Lincoln's 131-mile network has attracted the attention and praise of trail users both in and outside of Nebraska. Unofficially Lincoln's trails are often cited as an excellent example of what a community can do when governments, private and non-profit organizations, volunteers and other supporters can do when they focus cooperation and plan for development.

The APA's Great Places Award made it more than official. It is a prestigious award—and the second one for Lincoln. In 2009 the APA recognized Lincoln's Haymarket area as a "Great Neighborhood". Omaha has also been recognized by

the APA; in 2011, its Dundee-Memorial Park was recognized as a "Great Neighborhood". (Council Bluffs' Bayliss Park was also recognized as a "Great Place" in 2014.)

Many factors entered into the recognition of Lincoln's trails. According to William Anderson with APA, the awards program "highlights the role planning plays in adding value to communities." The APA cited the planning history behind Lincoln's trails development, key developments in community support and activities, and actual trail improvements through the years.

The APA noted that "the backbone of Lincoln's trails was built along two major rail corridors, passing through greenways and along passages away from major arterials. The trails network connects many of Lincoln's parks, gardens, schools, commercial areas, colleges and universities, swimming pools, and major ball parks. The trails connect to other notable destinations such as Lincoln's Children's Zoo, the Pinnacle Bank Arena, and Pioneers Park Nature Center."

Further, the APA noted "Lincoln is considered one of the top 10 biking cities in the Midwest — ranking fourth in bike commuting compared with cities of comparable populations. Over 2 million people use the trails annually, and 94 percent of Lincoln residents have access to a trail within one mile of their home.

Continued on page 3

### Put Lincoln on the Map!

*The N Street Protected Bike Lane will provide a two-way protected bike lane on N Street. It links the Jamaica North trail at 4th and J Street with the Antelope Valley Trail.*

*The connection will offer easy, safe access to downtown businesses and the Haymarket district. GPTN is raising \$250,000 to support this once in a life time opportunity. Let's continue the Great Place legacy!*

**Make contributions payable to:  
Nebraska Trails Foundation**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Designated Project: \_\_\_\_\_



**Mail to: GPTN  
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Lincoln, NE 68521**





# Great Plains Trails Network

since 1988

*dedicated to the goal of developing a network of commuter and recreational trails within Lincoln and Lancaster County*

2014

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## A Note from the President

This issue of the Great Plains Trails Network newsletter has some fantastic news to report about an honor bestowed on our trails by the American Planning Association. But before we can discuss any such news, we are saddened to report about several tragedies on our trails and to our greater bicycling community on our roads recently. It is for this reason I start out our newsletter, and speaking for the entire board, send our deepest condolences to the families of the three cyclists killed and several injured recently in Lancaster County. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families and friends of the victims.

Safety has always been one of the main reasons that our wonderful trail network began and it is why it has grown to the point of national recognition. The primary mission of the trail network is to provide a safe means to get out and enjoy the parks, neighborhoods, and businesses across the community. Please know that GPTN continues to work with the City of Lincoln and the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District to provide safety features like lighting at crosswalks, signage about helmets, and center lines along our trails. We recently testified at a state legislature transportation committee hearing for signage on the roads and highways. We hope that there can be visual reminders like the sign at the Bike Rack in south Lincoln that reads, "Share the Road".



At GPTN, we care deeply about safety issues and look to facilitate solutions where problems arise. We would like to hear more from you if you have ideas on areas where improvements can be made. Please send us a note or better yet, come to one of our meetings if you can, we would love to hear from you.

I thank you again for your ongoing support of our trails now recognized as one of America's Top Ten Great Spaces, enjoy and be safe.

*Karen Griffin*

## GPTN NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Thank you to New Members: Dirk Brom, Patty Pansing Brooks, Deb Brown, Sandy Burkhardt, Don & Crystal Day, Bev DeVore-Wedding, Robert Elwood, Angela Franssen, Manuel Gallegos, Dave & Beth Gosselin, Jason & Allison Hamata, Greg Howell, Brad Hunt, Eric Hunt, Bill & Nancy Ingham, Gary Kearney, Charles Kingsbury, Barb Kortum, Cindy Kugler, Jon Large, Michael Laughlin, Patricia Lisee, Randy Nitz, John O'Niell, Gregory & Brande Payne, Bruce Pray, Char Ratkovec, Kelly & Justin Reineke, Arlan Ristow, Terry Rush, David B. Schmidt, Mark Schrieber, Lisa Schulze, John & Jean Slieter, Thad Smoyer, Jim Spalding & Jan Garvin, Matthew Steger, Ray & Katie Taddeucci, Klare & Logan Veath, & Loren Warren.

Thank you to renewing members: Rebecca & Ron Ackermann, Robert C. Anderson, Catherine Angle, Beverly Ashley, David Atkinson, Derek Augustine, Wendy Austin, Earl & Barbara Barnawell, Byron & Elaine Barner, Sean Barry, Monica Beck, Marsha Belz, Gary & Cara Bentrup, Ray Bloomquist, Barb & Phil Bohaty, Gene & Jane Boilesen, Judy & Perley Boucher, Dick & Paula Boyd, Scott Braly, Jack Broderick Ariana Brocius & Karl Shaddock, Mark Brohman, David Burd, Tammie Burns, Larry & Ruth Cada, Kathryn Campbell, Mark Canney, Walter Canney, Jim & Liz Carney, Carol & Richard Cartier, Ron & Karen Case, Alan & Roseann Christensen, Carol & Wes Christensen, Julie Cole & Brian Sivill, Ray Coulter, Dick Cumming, Brent & Mandi Daugherty, Shirlene Davis, Judith DeGraff, Pete & Christie Dionisopoulos, Gerry & Kit Dimon, Alice M. Dittman, Mike Dosskey & Milda Vaitkus, Kathy & Gary Duncan, Al & Vicki Eastman, Tyrell Eichele, Judy Eicher, Richard Eisenmenger, Deborah Eisloeffel, Mick & Jeri Eschenbrenner, Peggy Forcier, Larry & Cindi Fosler, Holly Foster, Jeanen France, Barb & Ted Fraser, James & Sandra Gallentine, Barbara & George Gammel, Sue & Scott Gardner, Jan Gauger, Bill Genuchi, Lillian Gibson, Pat Gilles, Bill & Marsha Glover, Georgia Glass, Mike Gloor, Mark & Nanette Gokie, Richard & Ursula Goodban, Robin & Janet Goracke, Ron & Connie Gormley, Ned Sharp & Marynelle Green, Charles & Carolyn Gregorius, Tom & Sue Guild, Gary Gustafson, Pat Hackley, Martin Hager, Pat & Bruce Hammond, George & Sandi

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*Thank you from the 2014 GPTN Board of Directors. Your memberships are crucial to GPTN.*



Consider joining our friends!

# Lincoln Track Club Membership Application

The Lincoln Track Club, Inc. was established in 1975 by an eager group of track enthusiasts. Although our title contains the reference to track, we have become a distance oriented club. Our membership includes some of the nation's finest road racers as well as a great number of fun runners.

In essence, our club is a nonprofit community service organization, established to promote running throughout this area and provide educational assistance for its runners. Our quarterly newsletter has become an informational running publication for local runners. The LTC is a member club of both the Road Runners Club of America (RRCA) and USA Track and Field.

The Lincoln Track Club is not just about running. It's also about volunteering. This is the one ingredient that makes LTC work. The whole organization is made up of volunteers and we can always use more. Please consider joining one of Nebraska's finest volunteer-run organizations.

LTC members receive entry forms for all LTC races, *FastTimes* (our newsletter, which is e-mailed quarterly), an invitation to our annual meeting, a one dollar (\$1.00) discount off the entry fee of each LTC road race. All memberships expire at the end of the calendar year (December 31).

## 2014 LTC Calendar

3/29	State Farm (10M/5K/1M)
4/12	Novartis (10K/2M)
5/3	Mayor's Run (1M)
5/4	Marathon/Half-Marathon
6/7	Havelock (10K/3K)
7/13	Lincoln Mile
7/20	Uplifting Athletes Run (5K/1M)
8/9	Thunder/KFOR (5K/1M)
9/7	Buffalo (5M)
10/19	Governors (15K/5K/1M)
12/7	Holiday Run (5K)

### Type of Membership:

Student/Senior: **\$10**  
(under 22 or over 62)

Single: **\$12**

Family: **\$16**

Patron: **\$35**

The Century Club: **\$100**

Check if NEW member:

Make checks payable to  
LTC and mail to:

Michelle Bivens  
5841 Box Canyon Circle  
Lincoln NE 68516

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Family Members (for Family level memberships or above)

Name	Birthdate	Sex	Email

### Club Membership Application Waiver:

I know that running and volunteering to work in club races are potentially hazardous activities. I should not enter and run in club activities unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a race official relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risks associated with running and volunteering to work in club races including, but not limited to, falls, contact with other participants, the effects of the weather, including high heat and/or humidity, the conditions of the road and traffic on the course, such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts, and in consideration of your acceptance of my application for membership, I, for myself and anyone entitled to act on my behalf, waive and release the Road Runners Club of America, the Lincoln Track Club and all sponsors, their representatives and successors from all claims or liabilities of any kind of arising out of my participation in these club activities even though that liability may arise out of negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons named in this waiver. I understand that bicycles, skateboards, baby joggers, roller skates or blades, animals, and radio headsets will not be allowed in LTC races and I will abide by this guideline.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature (if under 18): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## GREAT PLACES

Continued from page 1

The APA specifically mentions the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department as playing a "key role" in trail development. Other governmental agencies mentioned were the City Parks and Recreation Department and the Mayor's Pedestrian/Bicycle Advisory Committee. The APA also mentioned the *Lincoln Journal-Star* and our own Great Plains Trails Network as instrumental entities. (GPTN would also add the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District as a significant governmental entity in city trail development.)

On-going planning was critical for trail development. The APA specifically mentioned the 1989 Lincoln Area Trails Plan, the 2005 updates to the Lincoln Comprehensive Plan and the Long Range Transportation Plan, the 2013 Bicycle and Pedestrian Capital Plan and the recently adopted LPlan 2040 as important planning developments leading to its award.

The planning process—a cooperation between governmental agencies, private and non-profit organizations and citizens—led to Lincoln's "Great Place" recognition for its trails. That process continues today with plans for new trails and new development—assuring that Lincoln will remain a great place to enjoy the trails.

## Whole Foods Community Support Day

On September 24, our friends at Whole Foods hosted a Community Support Day for GPTN. Whole Foods donated 5% of the purchases made on that day and raised \$1,237.70 for GPTN. *Thanks Wholes Foods!*



Marvin Krout, City Planning Department, Lynn Johnson, City Parks and Recreation Department, and Karen Griffen, President of GPTN receiving the Great Public Places award for the Lincoln Trails System from the American Planning Association.

## MARKET TO MARKET BOASTS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL RACE

By Dena Noe

The 7th Annual Market to Market (M2M) Relay left from Omaha's Memorial Park bright and early the morning of October 11 and ended late into the evening at Haymarket Park in Lincoln. The M2M relay is seven runners and a van enjoying a 79-mile team journey. The race, with over 4,000 runners and 500 teams, takes advantage of our scenic MoPac trail as it heads into Lincoln. With the numbers participating in this year's event M2M is now the largest day-long relay in the nation.

Members of GPTN participated in the relay and many came out to volunteer. Our group helped out at four exchange points helping raise money for GPTN in the process. A big thank you to all of you that volunteered, the event couldn't have been accomplished without you.



Team Dum and Dummer Divas enjoying the M2M Relay.

## U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY FOXX ANNOUNCES NEW INITIATIVE TO ENHANCE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE SAFETY

U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx recently announced a new initiative to reduce the growing number of pedestrian and bicyclist injuries and fatalities through a comprehensive approach that addresses infrastructure safety, education, vehicle safety and data collection. The 18-month campaign will begin with road safety assessments conducted by U.S. Department of Transportation field offices in every state, and will produce multiple resources to help communities build streets that are safer for people walking, bicycling, and taking public transportation. Secretary Foxx made the announcement at the Pro Walk, Pro Bike, Pro Place conference, the largest gathering of transportation engineers, city planners and professional bicycle-pedestrian safety advocates and practitioners in the country.

"Safety is our highest priority and that commitment is the same regardless of which form of transportation people choose, including walking and biking," Secretary Foxx said. "This initiative is aimed at reversing the recent rise in deaths and injuries among the growing number of Americans who bicycle or walk to work, to reach public transportation and to other important destinations."

Injuries and fatalities of pedestrian and people bicycling have steadily increased since 2009, at a rate higher than motor vehicle fatalities. From 2011 to 2012, pedestrian deaths rose 6 percent and bicyclist fatalities went up almost 7 percent.

The new pedestrian and bicycle safety initiative will promote design improvements to ensure safe and efficient routes for pedestrians and bicycles, promote behavioral safety, and provide education to help individuals make safer travel choices. The initiative will also encourage vehicle safety by drawing on current crash avoidance technologies to alert motorists to the presence of bicyclists and pedestrians.

The initiative will begin when the Department's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) field offices survey routes for pedestrians and cyclists with local transportation officials and stakeholders to understand where and why gaps exist in the non-motorized transportation network and strategize on ways to close them. Gaps are areas where the risk of a crash increases due to the lack of sidewalks or other safe infrastructure. The Department's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will participate in assessments to gain understanding of non-motorized crashes involving truck and trains.

Among the many resources the Department will provide will be a guide to creating "road diets," in which roadways with lower traffic volumes are redesigned to add space for bicycle riders and pedestrians. Studies show that road diets reduce all traffic crashes by an average of 29 percent, and when used on rural highways that pass through small towns, they can reduce crashes by almost half – 47 percent. Additional resources will help practitioners incorporate small safety improvements into many road projects, address "last mile" safety for people taking buses and trains, and make it easier for jurisdictions to count and plan for people traveling by foot and bicycle.

The Department will work with local officials, advocacy groups, and safety organizations to help champion the use of the new resources by practitioners, law enforcement, and safety organizations. It also will convene meetings with practitioners and researchers about practices and policies that have been barriers to creating safer streets for non-motorized users.

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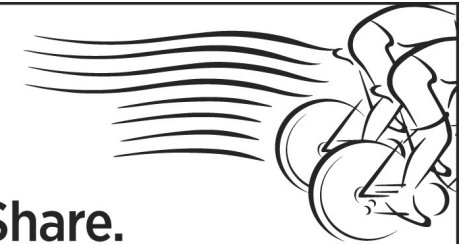
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**BICYCLING LINCOLN™**

BicycLincoln is a community group that supports and promotes bicycling in the city of Lincoln. Our mission is to provide information and a unified voice for bicycle advocacy in an effort to make cycling in Lincoln more friendly, safe, easy, accepted, and "so that more people bike and bike more often."

Check them out at <http://bicyclincoln.org/>



## Ride. Share.

That's what the Great Plains Bike Club is all about. We actively promote bicycling with rides for all levels of riders in and around Southeastern Nebraska.

Weekly rides with a leader | Show 'n go rides  
Ice cream & coffee shop rides | Moon-lit rides  
Hammering training rides | Trail rides

We sponsor the Spring Fling ride in April and Heatstroke 100 in August. We also promote bicycling safety through community-sponsored events. For more information and an on-line application to join the club, go to [greatplainsbikeclub.org](http://greatplainsbikeclub.org).



The Nebraska Bicycling Alliance is a nonprofit corporation primarily supported by public donations, memberships and grants. Our mission is to promote health and safety for all who ride bicycles in Nebraska.

The vision of the Nebraska Bicycling Alliance does not compete with existing clubs or organized bicycling groups, but rather enhances and supports all of these groups, bike shops, health and safety groups, city planners, policy makers and NDOR. We plan to promote bicycling in Nebraska when needed at the State and local levels in any way we can with project design, seeking federal funding, promoting safe routes for kids, and public education.

Learn more at: <http://www.nebike.org/>

## NOT RESTING ON OUR LAURELS

Lincoln's bicycle system has much to celebrate. Lincoln was named a League of American Bicyclists (LAB) Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community in 2012. Lincoln was also recognized recently for being a top-rated Let's Move! City and the trails system received a Great Places award from the American Planning Association.

A recent visit by Stephen Clark from LAB and numerous bike crashes in the local area highlight a continued need for improvement and strengthening of our bicycle transportation system in the community. The LAB, through a TREK supported grant, has been sending Clark to communities around the country to learn what works and to provide insight to those communities as to how to maintain and improve their level of "bike-friendliness." Currently, the City has 27 out of 100 points on the LAB's rating scale. The adjacent figure is part of Clark's report on his visit to Lincoln and we have a ways to go to achieve the "silver" level.

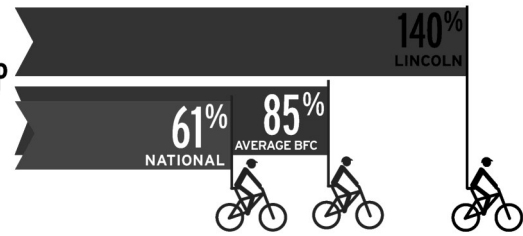
The key steps to achieving the next level, the silver level, are:

- 1) Increase the on-street bikeway network with good connectivity to the off-street system.
- 2) Create an official full time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator position to implement a comprehensive program.
- 3) Implement bike sharing especially to link campus with downtown.

GPTN and our many partners are working together to move Lincoln to the next level. Currently the City of Lincoln is working on updating the signage for the on-street bikeway network. Through our great collaborative partnerships, we can continue to improve our bicycle and pedestrian network.

# LINCOLN IS A BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY

2000-2012  
RIDERSHIP  
GROWTH

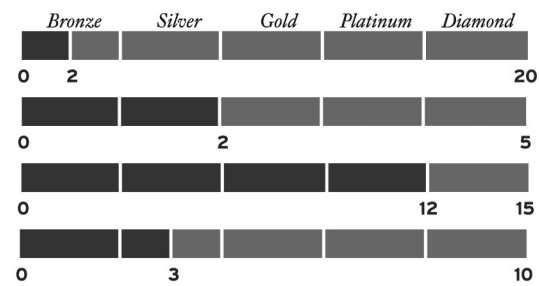


**RIDERSHIP**  
2.3%  
Commuting by bicycle

**CRASH RATE**  
241  
Per 10k daily cyclists

**FATALITY RATE**  
0.34  
Per 10k daily cyclists

**PUBLIC RATING**  
Local cyclists' take on Lincoln



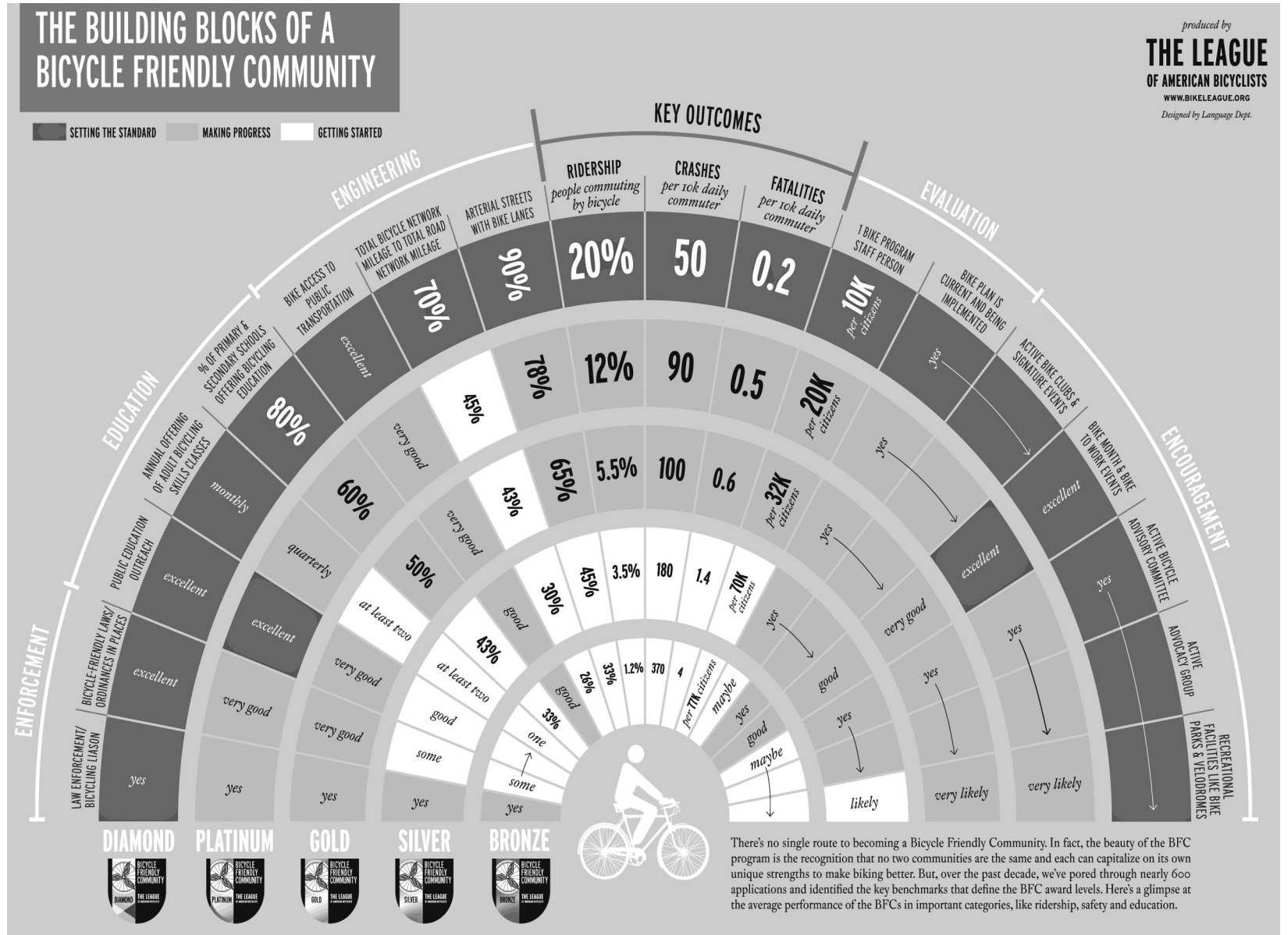
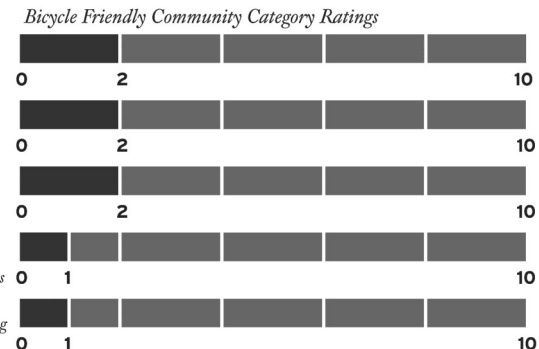
**ENGINEERING**  
Bicycling network and connectivity

**EDUCATION**  
Motorist awareness and bicycling skills

**ENCOURAGEMENT**  
Mainstreaming bicycle culture

**ENFORCEMENT**  
Promoting safety and protecting bicyclists' rights

**EVALUATION**  
Setting targets and having a plan



## 103, 276 AND COUNTING

Earlier in 2014, GPTN purchased an automatic trail counter for the City of Lincoln which was installed on the Rock Island Trail just south of Bishop Heights Park. Now the counter is providing valuable data on how this section of trail is used and how frequently it is used. The counter differentiates between pedestrians and cyclists as well as the directional traffic. Information can be calculated in intervals of 15 minutes, hour, day, week, month, and year.

During the months of July through September, over 103, 000 pedestrians and cyclists passed by the counter. The breakout was 29,831 pedestrians and 73,445 cyclists during that three month time period. Daily averages were around 320 for pedestrians and 900 for cyclists. The busiest days were the weekends although the data also revealed significant usage during the work week, suggesting a high number of cyclists are commuting. As we head in the fall and winter months, it will be fascinating to see what the data reveals. We will keep you posted. More data is available at <http://lincoln.ne.gov/city/plan/bike/trailcount.htm>

July 2014 Data	Total Traffic for the Analyzed Period	Daily Average	Busiest Day of the Week
Pedestrians	10,212	329	Saturday
Cyclists	28,273	912	Sunday



## TRAIL UPDATES!

- Construction of the north bridge in Wilderness Park will be completed this winter when the ground is frozen and the trusses can be brought in without damaging the park.
- An extension of the Salt Levee Trail will open this fall between the Bob Devaney Sports Center and the old Charleston Street Bridge at Haymarket Park. The trail is being constructed along the top of the NRD's Salt Creek Levee and will complete a trail connection to Wilderness Park. Eighty percent of the new \$935,000 extension, which will include underpasses at I-180, 10th and 14th streets, is being funded by federal Transportation Enhancement funds.
- The North Jamaica Trail will be open in mid November.



The newly constructed North Jamaica trail looking north from the Salt Creek Levee trail junction.

## National Bike Challenge

By *BicycLincoln*

The stroke of midnight on October 1<sup>st</sup> marked the end of the 2014 National Bike Challenge, and Lincoln once again stood on the podium. The yearly event aimed to unite cyclists across America, and promote new riders to take on a healthier lifestyle, was a huge success, with over 47,000 riders nationwide logging more than 23 million miles between May 1<sup>st</sup> and September 30<sup>th</sup>.

BicycLincoln was excited to host our local challenge for the third straight year, and watch 1311 riders sign up in our community alone to log 683,083 miles. With 37% of those miles coming from commuting, and 63% from sport/fun, Lincoln finished the challenge 2<sup>nd</sup> in the nation, only narrowly being beat by Madison, Wisconsin. With the help of riders across the state, especially Omaha who placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the nation, the state of Nebraska also stood on the podium in 2<sup>nd</sup> amongst the 50 states!

To celebrate everyone's hard earned miles, we did what cyclist do best... we partied! Our gracious hosts at the Bourbon Theater had us all down for complimentary beers from Zipline Brewing Company, and much needed calorie filled pizza from Topper's.

Of course the End of Challenge Party is never complete without an epic raffle drawing, and this year we had great prizes from Cycle Works, Bike Rack, Quality Bicycle Products, Joy Ride, Screen Ink and the Great Plains Bicycle Club.

BicycLincoln would like to congratulate and thank everyone who was a part of this years challenge, and we hope to see you each an everyone of you back on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 to take back our first place victory.



Mary and Bob Torell helping to crank out the over 800 fruit smoothies GPTN served at the 2014 Streets Alive festival.

## NEW CROSSING DEVICE AT MOPAC & N. 33RD STREET

An effective new pedestrian warning device, called the Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon, has become quite popular nationally. Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) have been proven to be a good candidate measure to improve the safety of pedestrian and bicyclist crossing locations. Their ease of use and safety characteristics have resulted in widespread deployment by cities across the U.S.

RRFBs are user-actuated amber LEDs that supplement the crosswalk markings and applicable warning signs. They use an irregular, strobe, flash pattern (similar to those found on emergency vehicles) and have been found to greatly increase vehicle yield rates at uncontrolled crossings. These bright LED flashers can be activated by a pushbutton at the trail or sidewalk. The warning signs and flasher indications are installed on each side of the roadway for approaching traffic, providing optimal visible warning.

Vehicles are required to yield to pedestrians within the crosswalk. The way the beacon system works is that when a pedestrian pushes the button, the warning lights are activated, notifying motorists of activity in the crosswalk. The pedestrian proceeds carefully into the crosswalk as vehicles yield to the crossing.

After prompting and prodding by GPTN, the City of Lincoln recently installed this type of crosswalk warning device at the MoPac Trail crossing at N. 33rd Street and has plans to install more depending on how well this device functions.



## MOPAC EAST— MAKING PROGRESS

Much like a zombie on Halloween night, the trail connection projection between the MoPac East and Lied Plate River Trail Bridge continues to arise from the dead. The Lower Platte South NRD has an on-going memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Cass County Commissioners to cooperate on investigating and evaluating potential corridors for the connection project. The NRD is working on the technical aspects and the County will lead any public involvement. This MOU lead to the formation of an ad hoc group of County Commissioners and NRD Directors. This group has met several times discussing possible corridors and their potential for connecting communities, economic development, tourism, trail safety, right-of-way requirements, impacts to adjoining property and trail functionality.

The NRD recently entered into an agreement with the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) detailing the requirements necessary to obtain a license from NDOR if the trail alignment would need to occupy a right-of-way (ROW) along a state road. The NDOR originally was unwilling to consider a trail in the ROW but may now considered it if their concerns can be addressed. Trails are common in state ROWs in other states and NDOR has allow trails before in a state ROW, so a precedent has been established.

The NRD is hoping to use funding from the new Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to implement the trail connection. Once the TAP program begins accepting new applications for trails projects, the NRD anticipates submitting an application. The Nebraska NDOR indicated February 2015 as a possible date to request new applications. As part of the TAP process, a corridor would be identified for the connection project. If the NRD is successful in obtaining a TAP Grant, another source of funding could be the Recreational Trails Program administered by the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission.

In regards to another NRD activity on the MoPac East, the NRD recently installed a restroom at the Walton trailhead. Thanks NRD for all your efforts!

