



Feedback on **Tucson/ Pima Eastern Region's** application to be designated a Bicycle Friendly Community – May 2008

Once again, Tucson and Pima Eastern Region have done an excellent job of implementing a bicycle-friendly vision for the community and region. We commend the Platinum Challenge task force for their extraordinary commitment to improving conditions for bicyclists in the Tucson/Pima Eastern Region. The application itself was an outstanding piece of work – beautifully produced and by far the most thorough analysis of any community that has applied to date. More than just the presentation was impressive. Shining through from every page was a level of dedication and commitment that touched each of the reviewers. The volume of activity across each of the five categories demonstrated leadership, innovation, creativity, involvement, and sheer hard work that would grace any city or region in the United States. You can justifiably be proud of your Gold status; it is richly deserved.

The extraordinary efforts to attain the Platinum BFC designation have made a real impact and quickly. Just four short years ago, the City of Tucson entered the program at the Silver level. Two years of hard work and the addition of the regional partners helped boost the award level to Gold in 2006. This alone is a considerable accomplishment as very few communities have moved up even one award level in the five years of the program. The next step up to platinum is and should remain, we believe, a real challenge and a large step that will realistically take some more time to accomplish.

Below we have compiled feedback presented by reviewers this round. As you know Portland, Oregon made the move from the Gold to a Platinum designation in this round of awards. Portland entered the program in 2003 at Gold and has worked similarly to the Tucson/ Pima Eastern Region to achieve Platinum. Bicycle use in Portland has increased by 144% since 2000, and they are experiencing double digit percentage growth annually in their levels of cycling. We strongly encourage Tucson/Pima Eastern Region to read Portland's application (see it online at <http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=194342>). This could be a useful tool for the community as it continues its exemplary and inexorable progress towards platinum – and we can assure the community that the League will continue to point other communities to Tucson and the East Pima region to inform them, and to inspire them to greatness.

Here are some measures which the reviewers recommend should be taken to improve cycling in the community:

- Continue to implement the comprehensive bike plan and continue to close gaps in the cycling network. The overall connectivity of the network especially outside of

the City of Tucson is essential. Continue to expand the encouragement, education, and enforcement programs to increase bicycling use. Because this is a regional application, implementing measures that will take the community to Platinum will be a big challenge. Look at each jurisdiction and make the best policies, programs, and projects the standard across the entire region.

- Perhaps the biggest single thing to focus on is to increase levels of bicycle use in the region. This is obviously a difficult challenge, and a longer term goal – and yet communities such as Portland, Ore., and San Francisco can document the significant increases in bicycle use that they've facilitated in recent years. The BFC program would like to see such documented increases in bicycle usage in the Tucson/Pima Eastern Region. The City or County may want to consider implementing a TravelSmart marketing program to achieve significant mode shifts in favor of bicycling, walking and transit.
- Set an ambitious, attainable target to increase the percentage of trips made by bike in the community. Currently that number is 1.6% of trips to work are done by bike. This number should be increased significantly.
- Continue efforts to expand motorist education and enforcement in an effort to reduce the number of bicycle/motor vehicle crashes in the region. Continue and improve upon the good efforts to coordinate with law enforcement. Ensure that the rights and responsibilities of all users are promoted and maintained as a high priority. Implement the planned upgrades to incident reporting and investigation system.
- Continue to expand public education campaigns to promote the share the road message and the rights and responsibilities of all users. It is vital to make motorists and cyclists aware of their rights and responsibilities on the road. Also, use the valuable information from the League's Ride Better Tips in your outreach education and encouragement efforts. See the Ride Better Tips pages at <http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/better/index.php>.
- Continue to expand bicycling education efforts to reach more children and adults. The educational offerings in the region are exceptional. The large cadre of certified League Cycling Instructors in the region should continue to be called upon to deliver quality education programs to cyclists, potential cyclists, and motorists of all ages. See some new tools such as a new motorist education video at <http://bikelib.org/video/index.htm> and the League's new Confident Cycling presentations for recreational riders and commuters.
- Expand the successful Safe Routes to School Program to reach every school in the region.

- Tackle bicycle access, safety and convenience on some of the toughest major arterials, such as Speedway, to ensure that bicyclists can safely travel along and across those corridors.
- Expand the availability of bicycle parking throughout the region.
- Continue to include single-track mountain biking in regional planning and expand the network of singletrack.
- Consider opening a recreational bicycling facility such as a velodrome, jump park, and or BMX park. This will set the Tucson/ Pima Eastern Region apart in the move up to Platinum.
- Set up community celebrations and/or rides each time the community completes a new bicycling related project. This is a great way to show off the city's good efforts and introduces new users to the improvement.
- Adopt a regional Complete Streets policy. Every street should accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, motorists and transit users of all abilities and ages. <http://www.completestreets.org/>
- Continue to improve bicycle access, safety and convenience at intersections, including more signage where motor vehicle and bicycle users merge.
- Foster a more active advocacy organization with broad membership and deep roots that will act as hub for all cycling advocacy in the region. Current groups and efforts are very good but can be enhanced and expanded with a centralized organization such as this.
- To improve short trips within centers, consider launching a bike-sharing program to encourage more trips by bicycle in the city. Start in Tucson city center and the University areas first. See what has been done in Washington, DC http://smartbikedc.com/smartbike_locations.asp and the Freewheeling program in Louisville, KY. <http://www.reuters.com/article/pressRelease/idUS183012+15-May-2008+BW20080515>
- Continue to increase the amount of way-finding signage around the community and think of special routes to popular destinations such as parks, shopping centers, events and places that people want to go.