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For immediate release
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League of American Bicyclists reaffirms PAG region as a gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community while Walk Score says we are in the Top 10 most bikeable U.S. cities

The Tucson-Eastern Pima County Region reigns as a gold-level Bicycle Friendly Community, one of 16 gold communities in the country.

The League of American Bicyclists (LAB) announced today that the Tucson-Eastern Pima County Region has been redesignated gold. In a related announcement released today, Walk Score, which quantitatively measures walkability and now bikeability, credits Tucson as being a top 10 most Bikeable City.

The LAB’s Bicycle Friendly Community Program recognizes municipalities and regions that actively support bicycling through designating awards of bronze, silver, gold and platinum. Since its inception in 2003, 539 communities have applied and only 214 communities have received a designation. Only three communities are platinum, a status that local planners and elected officials had hoped to achieve with the most recent application.

Pima Association of Governments (PAG) coordinates the Bike Friendly application on behalf of its nine member jurisdictions. The Tucson-Eastern Pima County Region remains the only region in the nation to have reached gold-level with the League.

PAG Senior Transportation Planner Ann Chanecka coordinated the Platinum application. “Before and during the application process, our region made many improvements for the bicycling community,” she said. “The gold
designation is a true testament to the commitment and dedication of many regional leaders to help us retain our status as a top-rated bicycle friendly community.

“While the news from the LAB keeps us at the same level for now, it is important we celebrate our improvements and how highly ranked we are both as a gold-level community and as a Top 10 Most Bikeable City in the United States.”

Chanecka said the LAB Bike Friendly Community Program is highly competitive. The LAB, she said, is impressed by all the achievements the Tucson region has made, yet ultimately concluded a couple areas need to be addressed in order to reach platinum designation.

“They cite relatively high crash rates and low ridership rates in the Tucson region compared with the three platinum communities as the primary reasons for the gold designation,” she said. “We have more work to do in those areas to improve conditions for bicyclists and we hope to address those areas.”

The Tucson-Eastern Pima County Region was first designated gold in 2006 and was re-designated gold in 2008. The PAG Regional Council developed a resolution in support of bicycle friendly efforts. Most communities submit applications on behalf of only one jurisdiction.

The PAG Platinum Task Force, consisting of jurisdictional staff, local law enforcement officials, members from the Tucson-Pima County Bicycle Advisory Committee and local advocate organizations and volunteers from the community, develops the application. Tucson Mayor Jonathan Rothschild submitted a letter of support for this year’s regional application to seek platinum.

Chanecka said the LAB considers the region a model for improving conditions for cyclists in a community that covers a large geographic area with low population density. “They are interested in collaborating to help other communities across the nation with similar land use patterns become more bicycle friendly,” she said.

The LAB announcement comes at the same time Walk Score, a Seattle-based public access information index, released its Bike Score program. Tucson is listed in the top 10 on its Most Bikeable Cities list with a score of 64 (out of 100). The score is a quantitative measure, based on the availability of bike infrastructure (lanes and trails), the hilliness of the area, amenities and road connectivity, the number of bike commuters, and population density. Walk Score works directly with real estate agencies to make it easy for apartment renters and home buyers to find neighborhoods where they can drive less.

For more information on the Tucson-Eastern Pima County Region application or the Bicycle Friendly Community program, contact Ann Chanecka at (520) 792-1093 or achanecka@pagnet.org or visit www.pagregion.com