



Partnering with Law Enforcement: Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program

Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Program (NTPP) Pilot Communities:

Columbia, MO

Sheboygan County, WI

Partnering with law enforcement is an essential component of bicycle and pedestrian programs that seek to enable all users to share roadways safely. These partnerships help to provide information about and ensure consistent enforcement of pedestrian and bicycle safety laws. They also address motorist as well as pedestrian and cyclist behavior. Two NTPP communities – Columbia and Sheboygan County – have developed formal partnerships with local law enforcement departments.

Program Components

- Development of courses for law enforcement officers about pedestrian and bicycle safety and laws, and *Safe Routes to School*
- Development of Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Enforcement Plans
- Development of easy reference materials for officers, such as brochures and laminated cards
- Development of pedestrian/bicycle safety videos and other media
- Joint education and enforcement activities conducted by law enforcement officers and volunteers



Highlights

- The “Bike Bright/Use a Light” campaign was a partnership of the Columbia Police Department and a local non-profit group, the PedNet Coalition. Volunteers rode with Columbia Police officers in patrol cars for several evenings; the officers pulled over bicyclists riding at night without lights. The PedNet volunteers then mounted a free headlight and taillight on the bicycle in lieu of a ticket. Volunteers distributed 100 lights in just a few hours on one evening.
- A two-day Pedestrian and Bicycle Law Enforcement Training course in Sheboygan, modeled on training developed by the Wisconsin DOT (WisDOT) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), is creating opportunities for partnerships that would have otherwise been unavailable.
- Officers participating in the Sheboygan Safe Routes to School pilot course have remained involved with the NTPP program, assisting in bicycle light giveaways and bicycle rodeos*.
- Officers participating in courses in Columbia and Sheboygan were able to earn professional development credits.

* Bicycle rodeos are safety clinics designed to educate parents and children about safely riding a bicycle on streets and roads. These events usually include bike safety inspections, a safety lecture about the rules of the road, and an opportunity to ride on a miniature “chalk street” course where cyclists are shown where and how to apply the rules



Initial Outcomes

- All officers in the Columbia Police Department received training on bicycling law; this training has started to breakdown stereotypes of bicyclists as impediments to traffic and helped increased willingness among officers to assist cyclists.
- During “Operation Share the Road” month, Columbia police stopped over 100 bicyclists to issue warnings or tickets.
- Law enforcement officers participated in the development of a bicycle safety Youtube video in Columbia: <http://www.youtube.com/user/GetAboutColumbia>.
- Improved understanding by officers that bicycle/pedestrian/motor vehicle crashes are predictable and preventable.
- Improved understanding of how to enhance safety of all road users through consistent law enforcement.
- Bicycle shops in Columbia saw increased sales of bicycle light sets and owners heard stories of many people being pulled over for the first time.

Lessons Learned

- The programs need a champion within the law enforcement community who is respected and part of the law enforcement culture.
- The programs and training courses should be jointly developed with representatives from the law enforcement community.
- Although bicycle and pedestrian laws may not be a specific priority for law enforcement, overall community safety is; safety efforts should be framed in this context.
- Trained officers will effectively enforce bicycle and pedestrian regulations and speak with citizens about their rights and responsibilities as motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.



GetAbout Columbia law enforcement training

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