

Old Street Car Rights of Way in Cleveland, OH becoming Protected Bike Boulevards

Summary

Cleveland, Ohio has a network of overly-wide and under-utilized streets which in its current state discourages active transportation, but which offers an exciting opportunity to develop an innovative, two-directional, landscape-buffered center lane bike boulevard network. This system of linear park-like corridors would address the needs of the upwards of 30% of Cleveland households who lack access to a car. It would also offer a cost-effective, safe and stress-free transportation method and a population level physical activity intervention.

Challenge

Cleveland, Ohio, once a city of nearly one million, now boasts a population of under 400,000. The past 60 years of population loss and business out migration produced a network of overly-wide and under-utilized streets. Unfortunately, this combination encourages speeding and works to discourage rather than encourage active transportation. For Cleveland residents, 40% of whom live below the poverty line and 30% of whom lack access to a private automobile, safe active transportation opportunities--walking, bicycling and transit ridership--is a critical necessity both from an economic point of view and also from a preventive health perspective.

Both Cleveland children and adults have higher rates of over-weight and obesity and are at greater risk for chronic disease than are their state and national peers. A key reason: not meeting risk recommended levels of physical activity.

"Creating a separated bike boulevard, or Midway, network will help the city achieve numerous goals, including improving public health, and economic and social equity..and individuals who are not avid bicyclists will feel more comfortable riding bikes."

- Freddy Collier, Cleveland City Planning Director

Solution

The Midway Protected Bike Boulevard Network concept in Cleveland, Ohio is addressing the preference for protected or separated bike facilities among the 60% of the population who claim to be "Interested (in bicycling) but Concerned." (Source: Portland Bureau of Transportation, Roger Geller, Bicycle Coordinator, 2014) 40% of Clevelanders lack access to a private automobile, making reliance on bicycling, walking and public transportation necessary to conducting daily affairs. (American Community Survey, 2005-2009) A planning study was completed in 2016 and advocates are now determining how to pay for Cleveland's next generation, people-powered infrastructure.



Success Stories

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

Results

Using a small amount of funding from a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant to the Cleveland City Planning Commission as local match to secure a larger planning grant, a comprehensive study of all major streets in the city of Cleveland has been completed and a series of recommended "Midway" corridors defined. The planning process included both a series of public meetings as well as an extensive, on-line survey wherein survey respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they are interested in riding a bicycle and, if they are already riding, where they ride most frequently. This input helped the city of Cleveland define and prioritize potential Midway corridors. Efforts are now shifting to determining how both to build a two-segment pilot and fund the entire network.

Sustainable Success

To succeed, the Midway protected bike boulevard network must achieve multiple "wins" ranging from increased safety, improved health, place-making, increased economic competitiveness and establishment of ultra high speed internet corridors. Efforts are underway to leverage investments from the various sectors whose interests intersect with those of the Midway. An initial modest, two-segment pilot is planned for 2017 to illustrate the larger Midway vision. In total, the preliminary estimate for this transformational 21st Century multi-modal vision is upwards of \$ 150 million. Multi-year investment is anticipated from the federal government, city of Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, the Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and local foundations.

Your Involvement is Key

The Midway aligns well with a several related active transportation initiatives including the Cleveland Metropolitan School District's Safe Routes to School program, the CiCLEvia open streets program, the Ohio City Lorain Avenue cycle track and the city of Cleveland's bike master plan. To ensure that a multi-modal, stress-free mobility vision is achieved, visit Bike Cleveland (www.bikecleveland.org) and learn how and where you can add your voice to the growing chorus of Midway champions.



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