



Minneapolis, Minn.

PROFILE:

POPULATION: 381,401
MEDIAN INCOME: \$46,232
MEDIAN HOME VALUE: \$226,500
% W/ BACHELORS DEGREE: 27.4%
WALK SCORE: 69/100

STATISTICS:

- Bicycling and walking counts showed 52.8 percent and 15.6 percent increases, respectively, between 2007 and 2011. ([NTPP 2012 Update](#))
- Bicycling increased and additional 51% at 30 specific count locations 2007–2012 ([BWTC 2012 Count Report](#))
- Bicycle crash rates decreased from a high of 12% in 1997 to 3% in 2009 ([Crash Report 2011](#))
- Moving a house 400m closer to an off-road cycle facility like the Midtown Greenway increase property values \$507 within the city of Minneapolis. ([Krizek, 2006](#))
- Nice Ride Minneapolis bike sharing program generates an additional \$150,000 a season in spending in the local economy, primarily to food establishments. ([Lindsey, 2012](#))



Photo: [Scott Schumacher](#)



Photo: [Teresa Boardman](#)

Minneapolis: Warming Up to Cycling

Regardless of its frigid, northern climate, Minneapolis has become a destination for everything related to bicycles. But in a city that averages 50.8" of snow annually and has seen temperatures as low as -48°F, how has an outdoor activity gained such traction? For residents of the Twin Cities, cycling has surpassed the status of a 'culture' and developed into a full-grown 'scene'. Trails are commonly plowed before streets, and there are bike races on frozen lakes held during the winter.

The 92 miles of on-street bikeways and 85 miles of off-street bikeways (with another 183 miles of bikeways [planned](#) over the next 20 years) certainly don't hurt, but can't fully explain what makes this area so bike-minded. In the cold winters, members of the biking population need a place where they can gather and grow as a community. This need is met by the more than 40 bike shops and bike-friendly businesses in the Twin Cities area. From cafes and art during the day to parties at night, the shops provide a space for the culture to propagate. And bikes aren't just for hipsters in Minneapolis—shops and programs like [SPOKES](#), [Cycles for Change](#), and [Venture North](#) are reaching traditionally underserved populations of all kinds through bike lending, adult cycling classes, and maintenance classes.

Another resource for bicyclists is [Nice Ride](#), the bike share program being implemented around Minneapolis. With 170 stations and over 1,500 bikes available to residents and tourists, the program provides an easy entry to the bike scene. The placement of bike racks on all buses and even some trains helps to integrate biking into a truly multi-modal system.

When building a bicycle culture, it always helps when public policy makers are on your side. The City of Minneapolis has done much to promote bicycling at all levels. At the

QUOTES:

"We see bicycling as one important tool to improve the health of our residents. It's an affordable, accessible, and healthy mode of transportation that people in Minneapolis are increasingly using to get around. As more people bike for recreation and transportation, we'll see improvements in community health, both because our residents will be more physically active and because our air quality will improve."

—Gretchen Musicant, Commissioner, Minneapolis Health Department

"Cycling...has been a catalyst for conversation and interaction between communities that might not otherwise have looked each other in the eye. Our club's work is primarily in the African American community. Minneapolis is a community that is committed to a particular quality of life and the challenge is making this "promise" accessible to all people via public facilities and infrastructure, the critical measure of a great community."

—Anthony Taylor, Major Taylor Bicycling Club of Minnesota

MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
National Office
Tracy@railstotrails.org
202.974.5110



agenda-setting level, bicycling is a part of the city's sustainability plan, and [measurable indicators](#) related to cycling are included in the city's progress evaluation towards 10-year targets set by the city council. Bicycling is also front and center in the city's [Climate Action Plan](#), helping the city reduce greenhouse gas emissions to target levels. At the policy level, the city council has passed legislation to support bicycling, including [bike parking requirements](#). New schools must have 3 bike parking spaces per classroom, new community centers must include at least 6 spaces, and even post offices must have 3 spaces. Requirements are also in place for restaurants, retail locations, and office buildings. At the street level, the city government runs a program to help businesses cover the costs of these installations.

If you get bored with the more conventional aspects of biking, Minneapolis is also home to some more unique organizations that really round off the active transportation scene. Thanks to [Open Streets](#), four major streets are closed to auto and bus traffic for one day each year, so that residents can experience the road dominated by active modes. Neighbors are invited to join "a community of joyful cyclists" and challenged to bike somewhere every day for [30 Days of Biking](#). Every weekend brings new formal and informal events, ranging from bike-polo to racing to art festivals that invite participation and celebrate cycling. The amazing work of the [Minneapolis Bicycle Coalition](#) supports many of these programs and events, in addition to their work advocating for infrastructure and policies that support cycling.

Despite the climate, Minneapolis has succeeded brilliantly in developing a [diverse bicycling scene](#). It's no wonder [Bicycling](#) magazine proclaimed Minneapolis the number one city for cycling in the United States in 2010. If they can do it, what's your city's excuse?