



COUNTY of ROCKINGHAM

Department of Community Development

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May 16, 2019

PRESS RELEASE

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Rockingham County Named a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists

County Emphasizes the Importance of Safe and Connected Bicycling Facilities to Economic Development and Quality of Life through Coveted Designation

Yesterday, the League of American Bicyclists recognized Rockingham County with a Bronze Level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) award, joining 475 communities across the country in building better places for people to bike. With yesterday's announcement of 39 new and renewing BFCs, Rockingham County joins a team of communities that are transforming the American landscape and leading on quality of life measurements important to community members.

"We applaud communities like Rockingham County for making bicycling a safe, comfortable, and convenient option for transportation and recreation," said Bill Nesper, Executive Director of the League of American Bicyclists. "We are inspired by leaders who see bicycling as a way to build more vibrant, healthy, sustainable, and connected communities and be a part of the solution to many complex public health and safety challenges faced at both the community and national levels."

The Bronze BFC award recognizes Rockingham County's commitment to improving conditions for bicycling through investments in bike infrastructure, education programs, and promoting and encouraging bicycling through events and policies. In 2011, the County Board of Supervisors appointed a committed and diverse group of citizens to the Rockingham County Bicycle Advisory Committee to advise the Board on the promotion, planning and implementation of pedestrian, bicycle and other non-motorized transportation and, in October 2016, the Board adopted the County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which provides a framework for enhancing the safety and attractiveness of biking and walking throughout the community with recommendations for targeted projects.

"Dedicated bicycle lanes and shared use paths provide safer roads not only for cyclists, but for motorized vehicles and pedestrians. In 2014, the County established development standards requiring bicycle accommodations in areas experiencing the most commercial and residential growth," said Rhonda Cooper, Director of Community Development. She noted, "Residents and business owners are increasingly expecting safe and efficient cycling and walking connections among home, work, and leisure activities."

More than 800 communities have applied for recognition by the Bicycle Friendly Community program, which provides a roadmap to making biking better for communities of all shapes and sizes. The rigorous application process is an educational tool in itself, and includes an opportunity for local bicyclists to provide input on their experiences and perceptions of bicycling in their community. The bicycle tourism industry in the Central Shenandoah Valley, which includes Rockingham County, had a total economic

impact of \$13.6 million and supported 184 jobs in 2015, according to *The Economic Impact of Bicycling in the Central Shenandoah Valley* report of 2016 prepared by the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission.

“The designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community solidifies the region as a premier destination for outdoor recreation with ample amounts of rural roads and trails through the valley and mountains of Rockingham County,” said Joshua Gooden, Rockingham County Economic Development and Tourism Coordinator. He added that “the designation will draw awareness to the importance of cyclists to the local and regional tourism economy, business retention, and to attracting new business owners who desire a well-rounded quality of life for employees.”

For information on the Rockingham County Bicycle Advisory Committee, visit RockinghamCountyVA.gov/150/Bicycle-Advisory-Committee.

About the League of American Bicyclists

The League of American Bicyclists leads the national movement to create a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone. With a history dating to 1880, the League is committed to engaging diverse communities and building a powerful, unified voice for change around protecting and promoting bicyclists’ rights. Learn more at www.bikeleague.org.


