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Memorandum

To: Conference of Mayors Executive Committee  
From: Ron Burke, Executive Director, Active Transportation Alliance  
Re: Family Friendly Bikeways Project

Attached is a flyer about Active Trans' new project to help suburbs develop next-generation, low-stress bikeways that are comfortable and safe places for people of all ages and abilities to ride. We call these facilities "Family-Friendly Bikeways," which include:

- Trails that serve trips to school, work, and other destinations, as well as recreation.
- On-street protected bike lanes that use parked cars, posts, curbs, planter boxes, etc., to separate bikes and cars
- "Bike Boulevards" on quiet residential streets that use a variety of designs to limit motor vehicle through traffic and travel speeds and enhance safety at intersections.

Surveys show that the number one reason people do not ride bicycles is because they are afraid. What they mostly fear, for themselves and their families, is being hit by a car. Despite the considerable advances made in the Chicago region to advance bicycling, including hundreds of miles of bike infrastructure, concerns about safety still loom large.

In fact, studies find that less than 10 percent of the population feels comfortable biking in traffic on a typical street or bike lane. Family-Friendly Bikeways are low-stress facilities for the other 90 percent. Our goal is bike routes where you'd feel comfortable biking with a young child, for example.

In the Chicago region, most of the on-street facilities are traditional three foot striped bike lanes and "share the road" markings. These facilities work fine for the strong and confident 10%, but they don't sufficiently remove the element of fear for others to ride more than occasionally. In addition, trails are often difficult to access by bike and primarily serve recreational trips, and that means they are underutilized from a transportation perspective.

The need for next-generation bike facilities that minimize interactions with car traffic is heightened by a significant increase in the number of cars on our streets. Between 1982 and 2012, the number of motor vehicles registered in

Illinois increased by 3 million (42 percent increase) and VMT increased 65 billion miles per year, a 63 percent increase.

Active Trans is offering to partner with suburbs and provide assistance with public outreach and planning to develop networks of Family Friendly Bikeways. We will also advocate for state and federal funding so suburbs can better pay for the new facilities.

For more information or to get started, please contact:

- North and West Suburbs: Nancy Wagner,  
[Nancy@activetrans.org](mailto:Nancy@activetrans.org). Ph# 312-505-4251
- South, Southwest and NW IN: Leslie Phemister,  
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# Communities for FAMILY-FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS: Information for Local Governments



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## EXAMPLES OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS



Protected Bike Lanes



Trails



Bike Boulevards

### WHAT ARE FAMILY-FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS?

- Designed to be **safe and comfortable for everyone** to bike on, from children to grandparents
- **Car-free biking** that is physically separated from cars, OR biking options on side-streets with designs that limit the number of cars and keep speeds low
- **Provide safe passage** through intersections and across busy streets
- Connect to schools, parks, transit, shopping — all around your town!

### WHY FAMILY-FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS?

Most everyone would like to bicycle more because it's a fun, healthy way to get around. But for many of us, biking in traffic on a typical street or bike lane is scary. However, we know from experiences in other cities that communities can create **bikeways that provide comfortable, low stress spaces to bike** for people of all ages.

### ABOUT COMMUNITIES FOR FAMILY-FRIENDLY BIKEWAYS

The project's goals are to:

1. Help Chicago suburban communities plan for and build networks of bikeways that are comfortable places for people of all ages and abilities — everyone — to ride a bike!
2. Help suburban communities secure additional state and federal funding for improving biking and walking.

The Active Transportation Alliance will provide assistance to participating communities.

For more information, local government staff and officials can contact Nancy Wagner, [nancy@activetrans.org](mailto:nancy@activetrans.org), for the North and West Chicagoland areas. For the South and Southwest Chicagoland areas, please contact Leslie Phemister, [leslie@activetrans.org](mailto:leslie@activetrans.org).