



Get Out Spoke'n! Action Pack # 2

Make Schools Bicycle Friendly.
Encourage local schools to create policies that permit and encourage students to ride their bicycles to school.

An Earth Force campaign to make America more bike friendly

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Welcome!

Congratulations! You have now joined thousands of other kids across the country in *Get Out Spoke'n!* — a national campaign to make America's communities more bicycle friendly.

While you were completing your **Community Profile** in the Campaign Guide, you learned how bicycle-friendly your community is: whether people ride bicycles, and if not, what prevents them. The four activities in the Community Profile (Trip Diaries, Interviewing Experts, Mapping the Community, and Conducting Surveys) gave you a chance to do some research about your community. You probably developed some good contacts and sources of information, too. Use the information and contacts that you've already developed (hint: review your Telephone Log sheets in your *Get Out Spoke'n!* notebook) to help you complete your campaign goal.

Based on your answers to the Community Profile activities, you chose the following campaign goal: **to make schools bicycle friendly, and to encourage local schools to create policies that permit and encourage students to ride their bicycles to school.** You've made a commitment to improving your community, the environment, and the health and well-being of your friends and schoolmates. That's what this Action Pack is all about!

Your Goal

Your challenge in this Action Pack is to convince your school leadership to make your school bicycle-friendly. You can also use these ideas and activities to make other places more bicycle-friendly. Use the results of your **Where and Why Do You Ride Your Bicycle Survey** on page 23 of the Campaign Guide to decide on your goal.

A bicycle-friendly school:

- ☑ has a school policy encouraging students to ride bicycles to school;
- ☑ acts as an advocate for safe bicycle routes for students;
- ☑ provides safe, secure bicycle-parking stations at your school; and
- ☑ recognizes National Bike Month and Bike-to-School Day.

If you succeed in even one of these goals, you have made a great difference for the environment and for other young people. And by taking on this challenge, you're also eligible for prizes from Earth Force! When you send your story, including press clippings, copies of letters, and a report of what you did and what effect you had, you'll be entered in a drawing for great prizes. Check out the Earth Force web site for more details (www.earthforce.org).

Feel free to photocopy any pages for distribution. And visit the Earth Force web site for tips, ideas, or useful facts. Having problems? Send e-mail to getoutspoken@earthforce.org, or call 800-23-FORCE.



Why Make Your School Bicycle-Friendly?

Imagine this ...

Every day , you ride your bike to school with a group of friends who live nearby. All over town, other young people are doing the same thing. In fact, the only days most students arrive by bus or car are those when it snows or rains.

The students all arrive at school safely and have fun getting there. When they arrive, they lock their bikes to parking stations — there are plenty of them, just outside the school’s main entrance.

Although public transportation is still available, their principal has made a policy encouraging students to bike to school year round. Because many students bike regularly, they also have their own transportation to and from after school activities.

Tools to Help You Reach Your Goal

Interpreting the Icons

Here are some symbols to watch for in this Action Pack:



Notebook — Indicates an opportunity for individual or group reflection. Use the Journal section of your *Get Out Spoke’n!* notebook to record your thoughts.



Bicycle Pump — Indicates tips are available in the Tool-kit, which begins on page 11 of the Facilitator’s Guide.



Mouse — Indicates further information is available on the World Wide Web.

Big Sky High School Sets A Bicycle-Friendly Example

At Big Sky High School in Missoula, Montana, field-trip bound students ride “Smurf blue” bicycles.

That’s because two dedicated teachers and a group of students got together and assembled a recycled fleet of 30 bicycles. With funding from a bicycle/ pedestrian program grant, the team purchased new parts to refurbish the old bikes.

Student volunteers completely stripped the bikes down and turned them into one-speed cruiser bikes with foot coaster brakes. Then welding and me-

chanics students sanded them down and painted them “Smurf blue,” which is close to the school color.

Teachers take a bicycle-safety class before using the bicycles, and students are taught to ride the bicycles reasonably. (Those who act irresponsibly earn bicycle-maintenance time and a lower grade.)

For more details about this program, visit the Missoulian Online web site (www.montana.com/missoulian/twowheels.html).



Tool-kit

You may find the following sections of the Tool-kit helpful when completing the activities in this Action Pack:

Bicycle Safety

Assigning Tasks

Campaigners: Monitor Your Progress

Elements of an Action Plan

Letters to the Editor

Faxing and Calling Policy-Makers

Setting up Meetings with Elected Officials

Media Events

Media Advisories

Media Releases



The Tool-kit is also online. Visit the Earth Force website at www.earthforce.org

Expert List and Telephone Logs

The “Interviewing Experts” section beginning on page 11 of the Campaign Guide will be helpful as you make your school more bicycle-friendly. Remember to make copies of the Telephone Log (page 14 in the Campaign Guide) and use it to list the information and materials you need to find.

Increase Community Awareness

Many people in your community will probably support your goals if you tell them about the project. The local media can help increase community awareness. Ideas for contacting and talking with the media are included in the Tool-kit and are on the Earth Force web site (www.earthforce.org).



Build on Your Previous Research

Where do Community Members Want to Bike?

Review the results from your **Where and Why Do You Ride Your Bicycle Survey** on page 23 of the Campaign Guide. This will tell you where other community members ride, and where they would like to ride — make a list of all the places young people would go if bicycle parking were available.

Is your school on the list? If so, then that’s probably the best place to begin. The brainstorming activity on page 6 will help your group begin to consider all the benefits of encouraging young people to bicycle to school and installing safe, secure bicycle-parking stations.

What is “Safe” Bicycle Parking?

Safe bicycle parking isn’t just a matter of installing racks. The parking stations should be in an easily-accessible, well-lit area where students will feel comfortable locking their bicycles. This

area could even be monitored, either by videocamera or an attendant. Look at page 18 in the Campaign Guide for a description of recommended types of parking stations.

If your school already has plenty of safe, secure bicycle parking and a pro-bicycle policy, what potential destination in your community was listed most frequently by the young people you surveyed? Would it be possible to get bicycle parking installed at that location? If so, change the focus of the activities in this Action Pack to concentrate on making that location more bicycle-friendly.

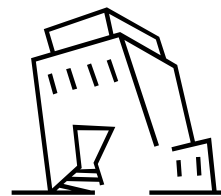


Brainstorming Activity — Benefits of Bicycle Friendly Schools

This activity is an important first step in your campaign. The ideas you come up with now will be helpful when you talk with the media, and in your letters and presentations to decisionmakers.

You may want to do this as a group activity. Use the Journal section of your *Get Out Spoke'n!* notebook to write down your thoughts about bicycle parking and biking to school.

- ⊗ How would installing bicycle parking affect students' biking habits?
- ⊗ How much bicycle parking is needed?
- ⊗ If there is currently bicycle parking available, is it being used? If not, why not?
- ⊗ How would bicycling to school regularly affect students' health?
- ⊗ How might bicycling regularly affect their bike safety skills?
- ⊗ Think about different ways of getting to school, and the fuel used by each.
- ⊗ How could your school leadership act as an advocate for safe bicycle routes for students?
- ⊗ How would more students biking affect traffic during peak morning and afternoon hours at your school?
- ⊗ How much does it cost to fuel a bike?
- ⊗ Would riding bikes to school encourage young people to ride other places? Give examples.
- ⊗ If your school recognized National Bike Month and Bike-to-School Day, how would students be affected?
- ⊗ Would bicycling have an effect on young people's future riding and driving habits as adults?
- ⊗ If more young people rode bicycles to school, how would noise pollution, air pollution and traffic problems be affected? (Look back at the results of your **Trip Diaries** from page 9 in the Campaign Guide for some ideas.)
- ⊗ What other reasons can you think for installing bike parking?
- ⊗ What other reasons can you think of for encouraging students to bicycle to school regularly?



Is Your School Bicycle-Friendly?

Making your school bicycle-friendly is a three-part process.

1. **Written Policy** — A written policy should allow and encourage students to ride bicycles to school. It should recognize May as National Bike Month and an annual Bike-to-School Day, and it should commit the school leadership to acting as advocates on behalf of students for safe bicycle routes.
2. **Bicycle routes** — Routes and paths should be available, safe, and well-lit.
3. **Parking** — Secure bicycle-parking stations should be installed in safe areas (see the description on pages 5-6).

Part One — Written Policy

Does Your School Have a Policy?

Look back at your answer to question 10 on page 19 in the Campaign Guide. Does your school have a policy encouraging students to ride bicycles? If not, does a policy discourage or forbid students from riding bicycles to school? The policy could be written or unwritten.

My School Doesn't Allow Students to Ride Bicycles.

If your school has a policy prohibiting bike riding, find out why. And find out what you can do to change that policy! Use your ideas from the Brainstorming Activity on page 6 as arguments for establishing a policy to encourage student biking.

The policy may apply only to your school, or to all schools in your area. If it applies only to your school, your principal or your parent/teacher group may be able to change it. If it applies to your entire community, the school board may have to vote on a change.

If the school board must vote to change it, find out who your school representative is. (Ask your principal or vice-principal.) Make an appointment to visit your school board representative, and do your best to convince him or her, and then the entire board, that:

- there should be a policy encouraging students to bike to school;
- the school leadership should act as advocates for safe student bicycle routes;
- the school should recognize National Bike Month and Bike-to-School Day; and
- the school will make it a priority to install safe, secure bicycle parking.

If the parent/teacher group has the authority to change the school policy, find out from your principal or vice principal the meeting schedule. Then ask for permission to make a presentation. A sample policy is on page 14. Look at the section titled **How to Get a Policy Enacted** beginning on page 8 for help developing your arguments and presentation.

My School Allows Students to Ride Bicycles.


If your school already allows students to bike to school, ask if a policy can be approved to **encourage** biking. Also include the other policy elements from the bulleted list above. That means the school would make it a priority to have bicycle parking, safety education, and possibly even competitions to get more students to bike to school. A sample policy is on page 14.

Part Two — Bicycle Routes

In Part One, you learned whether or not your school has a policy regarding bicycles. Even if your school policy encourages bicycle use, however, students can't ride to school if no bicycle routes or paths are available.

Look at your results from **Activity 3 — Mapping the Community**, on page 20 in the Campaign Guide. Were you able to plot bicycle routes to your school from a variety of locations? When you went for a ride, were bicycle lanes and paths maintained in safe condition?

Include a statement in your draft policy that the school leadership will advocate for safe bicycle routes each year, and that student representatives will also join in that effort.



Journal Reflection

What are some benefits of the school's decision-makers and students working together to advocate safe bicycle routes?

Part Three — Bicycle Parking

Suppose your school's decisionmakers agree to a policy encouraging students to ride bicycles, and they have also agreed to actively work toward getting improved bicycle lanes and paths. Does your school provide safe, secure bicycle-parking stations for every student who wants to bike to school? Make sure that in your draft policy, you state that the school will make it a priority to provide safe, secure bicycle parking.

If the school currently does not, why not? Find out what prevents your school from installing bicycle-parking stations. What if the answer is, "We'd love to do that, but we haven't got the money." The next section provides some ideas about funding.

Funding

Find out who holds the purse-strings. Do you have a school board? Find the name of a board member who represents your school's neighborhood. In order to appropriate money, your school board may require:

- ⊗ a representative to sponsor a motion;
- ⊗ a public meeting; and
- ⊗ a vote.



Funds also may be available from your state Department of Transportation or other sources — use the **Expert List** beginning on page 12 of the Campaign Guide to help find experts who could help you locate funding for school bicycle parking (remember your State Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinator). Don't forget about federal funding! Look at page 16 in your Campaign Guide for information about how TEA 21 provides funds for state and local bicycle improvements.

How to Get a Policy Enacted

In the previous sections, you discovered whether your school is bicycle-friendly. This section will help you work toward getting a policy enacted that will help your school address specific issues.



The **Calling and Faxing Elected Officials, Setting Up Meetings with Elected Officials, and Making Presentations**

sections of the Tool-kit might help you prepare for your meeting. This information is also online at the Earth Force web site (www.earthforce.org).

1. Make Allies

Allies are people who will help you persuade decisionmakers to adopt your proposed policy. Think about who would support your efforts and how they can help you.

- ☑ Ask the editor of your school newspaper to write an article.
- ☑ Talk to the school facilities manager about your campaign, and ask him or her to write a letter supporting the proposed policy and bicycle-parking stations.
- ☑ Ask your school board representative if you can make a presentation at the next board meeting
- ☑ Circulate a petition in the community calling for the local government to pass this policy or proclamation. People who respond to petitions and other publicity are natural allies. Look at the information under “Other Tools” beginning on page 12 for more information about petitions and publicity.



The **Petitions** section on page 21 of the Tool-kit will help you draft and circulate your petition. This information is also online at the Earth Force web site (www.earthforce.org).

Several people in your community may be helpful resources to help you get the policy enacted. Look at the Expert List beginning on page 12 in the Campaign Guide for ideas, and review your Telephone Log sheets for helpful contacts. Does your community have:

- ☑ a local Bicycle Coordinator?
- ☑ a bicycle-issues contact person?
- ☑ a Bicycle Advocacy Committee?

You can invite them to help support your cause by attending your meetings with decisionmakers.



Journal Reflection

Who else would support your goals? How could they help?

2. Identify Who You Need to Persuade

Set up a meeting with your principal to discuss the need for the school policy, bicycle routes, and bicycle-parking stations. She or he can explain the process for approving a new policy and for installing bicycle-parking stations. Your principal can also help you contact a school board member who represents your community. Find out who can make the decision to install bicycle parking. This is the person or group you need to convince.




Once you know who to persuade, contact that person (by phone, fax or e-mail) and set up a meeting.

3. Make Your Case

Research why this policy should be enacted. Figure out the benefits of the policy for your community.

- 📍 Use the information from your **Trip Diaries** on page 9 of the Campaign Guide. How much of each pollutant did your *Get Out Spoke'n!* team prevent from going into the atmosphere?
- 📍 As a team, make a pledge to prevent a certain amount of pollutants from being added to the atmosphere. Challenge the decisionmaker to make the same pledge for the school.
- 📍 Use your ideas from the **Brainstorming Activity** on page 6 and your Journal reflections.
- 📍 Look at your results for question 5 in the **Where and Why Do You Ride Your Bicycle Survey** on page 22 of the Campaign Guide. How many young people in your community bicycle to school? _____ How many said that bicycle parking is provided? _____ How many said that bicycle parking is not provided? _____
For question 6, how many young people would like bicycle to school but can't? _____
Use colorful charts and graphs of survey results for your presentation.
- 📍 Get letters from influential members of your community — use your list of allies!



Journal Reflection

What else might help convince the decision-maker to enact the policy?



Some helpful facts about biking and tips for making presentations are in the Tool-kit and on the Earth Force web site (www.earthforce.org).

4. Know Your Objectives

Have clear objectives for your meeting with the decisionmakers. Draft the policy your team would like to see passed. A sample policy is on page 13 of this Action Pack. You can use this as a model or template. Just fill in the blanks with the necessary information, and change or add any other words you'd like to include. Or ask your principal's office for a policy that you can use as a guide.

The policy should at least include the following four statements:

- ⓐ Students are encouraged to ride bicycles to school.
- ⓑ The school leadership, along with student representatives, will act as advocates for safe student bicycle routes.
- ⓒ The school will recognize National Bike Month and Bike-to-School Day; and
- ⓓ The school will make it a priority to install safe, secure bicycle parking.

Be prepared to describe the proposed bicycle-parking stations in detail. Here are some things to consider:

- ⓐ What type of parking stations would be best? How many parking spaces?
- ⓑ Do you want the stations to be inside a fenced area, that can be locked during school hours?
- ⓒ Find costs for your proposed parking solution. Local bike shops may be able to give you prices; you may be able to find bike parking stations on the Web.



Journal Reflection

What other information will decisionmakers need to reach a decision?



Check out the Earth Force web site (www.earthforce.org) for links to bicycle parking sites. Or search for “bicycle parking systems” on the Web.

5. Show Your Commitment

When your team meets with the decisionmakers, show them that you are committed to making the school more bicycle-friendly.

- ⓐ Offer to meet with the student body to explain their responsibilities — for example, bicycle safety, using locks, and keeping the area tidy.
- ⓑ How can you help to raise funds to help pay for bicycle racks? Could you hold a bake sale, a raffle, a car wash? What else?
- ⓒ If you raise funds, will the school board match or double your results to pay for bicycle-parking stations?



Journal Reflection

How else can you demonstrate your commitment?

6. Have the Meeting

- ⓐ Meet with the decisionmakers to explain the benefits of the policy.
- ⓑ Bring with you to the meeting:
 - ⓐ your allies;
 - ⓑ your research; and
 - ⓒ the draft policy.



Look over the information in the following sections of the Tool-kit before your meeting:

Setting up a Meeting with an Elected Official, page 22

Speaking in Public, page 30

Making Presentations, page 31

Other Tools

Circulate a Petition

Petitions generate interest in your campaign — both within the student body and among the school leadership. Design a petition requesting the installation of safe, secure bicycle parking on school grounds. Address the petition to the school board, or whatever individual or group will approve the funding. An example of a petition is on page 15. Feel free to use it or modify it to meet your goals.

Get the Signatures

Each person in your group should be responsible for getting a certain number of signatures — you may wish to divide it by grade or class. Get as many signatures as possible before your meeting with the board representative. Tally the results and bring that number (as well as copies of the signed petitions) with you to the meeting.

Let the Public Know About It!

Before beginning the petition drive, talk to the editor of your school newspaper. She or he might be interested in printing an article about your activities, explaining the benefits of biking and the need for bicycle parking. This publicity will help educate the others and cut down on the amount of time you spend explaining your group's activities.

Also write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to inform the general public. People like to read about kids getting involved in their communities; the more positive press attention you can get, the better.

Inform the Local Media

Before meeting with the decisionmaker, write letters to your school decisionmakers and newspaper describing the overall goals of the policy, what it means for a school to be bicycle-friendly, and why the community should support this effort. Also contact your local television news team and let them know about it.



The following Tool-kit sections contain useful information which may help you with these projects:

Writing Letters to the Editor, page 28

Writing Opinion Editorials, page 27

Business Letters, page 19

Media Events, page 24

Media Advisories, page 25

Media Releases, page 26

Why should you do all of this? Informing decisionmakers will give them a chance to work *with* your team to help get the policy passed faster. The media also will work with you, because you're giving them a great story. The positive attention they can give you will also help encourage your local decisionmakers to enact the policy quickly.

Getting Bicycle Parking at Other Destinations

Public Places

On your **Where and Why Do You Ride Your Bicycle Survey** from page 23 in the Campaign Guide, where did young people tell you they'd like to go, if there were enough bike parking? For parks, pools, and other recreation areas, contact the Department of Parks and Recreation. For libraries and other government-owned buildings, call the Department of Public Works. Find out what who you need to convince, then use the steps above to make your presentation.

Malls & Businesses

Malls and shopping centers are usually owned by large management companies. Call the Customer Service department and ask for the name of the mall manager, the management office address, and phone number. Contact the management office and explain who you are, what you'd like, and offer to meet with the manager. Make your presentation in person or mail it to the decisionmaker.

Be sure to share all of your activities with Earth Force!
Save copies of:

- 📄 letters to the editor;
- 📄 letters to decisionmakers;
- 📄 video & newspaper clips; and
- 📄 photos of newly installed bicycle racks.

Remember, when saving newspaper or magazine clippings, always include the name of the newspaper, the date, the page number(s) and the author's byline.



See the example in the **Media Clips** section (page 29) of the Tool-kit. Or find it on the Earth Force website (www.earthforce.org).

Send these, along with the names of your group members, to:



School Policy

_____ *name of school*

Because for more than a century, the bicycle has provided an independent form of transportation for many Americans; and

because approximately 100 million Americans engage in bicycling today for fun, fitness, sport, recreation and transportation; and

because the students of _____ *name of school* frequently ride bicycles to school and around the community; and

because bicycling provides benefits to student health and fitness; provides students with an independent means of transportation; reduces motor vehicle traffic around the school property; and reduces air and noise pollution:

_____ *name of school* officially encourages students to bicycle to school throughout the year.

To that end, it is a priority of _____ *name of school* to provide ample safe, secure bicycle parking, safety instruction, and other services and facilities necessary to a bicycle-riding student population; and

the _____ *school board or other decisionmaking body* of _____ *name of school*, along with student representatives, will act as **community advocates for safe student bicycle routes; and**

_____ *name of school* will annually recognize May as National Bike Month, and a specific day each May as Bike-to-School Day.



Principal

Vice Principal

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Get Out Spoke'n! Steering Committee Members:

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Congressman Earl Blumenauer, 3rd District, Oregon
Congressman Amo Houghton, 31st District, New York
David Burwell, President, Rails to Trails Conservancy
Charlie Hammond, Executive Director, Youth Bicycle Education Network
Kristin Johnstad, Director of National Resource Center, YMCA Earth Service Corps.
Wendy Lesko, Executive Director, Activism 2000
James Mackay, Bicycle and Pedestrian Planner, DPW, Denver
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Resources

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Web Sites

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Bicycle Federation of America: www.bikefed.org
BikeParking.Com: www.bikeparking.com
Bike Security Racks, Co.: www.bikeracks.com
Chainguard Online: www.serve.com/bikesrus/chainguard/mainnew.html
Creative Pipe: www.creativepipe.com
Exploratorium's Science of Cycling: www.exploratorium.edu/cycling/
League of American Bicyclists: www.bikeleague.org
Mad Rax: www.madrax.com
Oak Park Cycling Club: www.homepage.com/~opcc/bc/
Rails to Trails Conservancy: www.railtrails.org
Try Bike Commuting: www.nd.edu/~ktrembat/www-bike/BCY/TryBikeCommute.html