

Before Applying

What You Need to Know

This document is meant to help those considering applying for the role of Bicycle Mayor to get a better sense of the qualities, skills, and experiences that help make a Bicycle Mayor successful, what is involved in the role, how BYCS supports Bicycle Mayors, and some helpful hints when completing the application. For more general information about the Bicycle Mayor Network and the role, please consult the [website](#) and the [FAQ](#).

Questions about this document? Email bicyclemayor@bycs.org.

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What do we look for in a Bicycle Mayor?

The below list is not exhaustive and this is not to suggest that a single person could embody all of these. This is merely a collection of qualities, skills, and experiences that we have found helps make a Bicycle Mayor successful in their work and within the network.

Qualities, Characteristics, Skills

- Strong written and oral communication
- Passion for making change
- Both a leader and a supporter - can step into the spotlight but does not need the spotlight. Isn't shy about being the face/voice of cycling in their city.
- Strategic - acknowledges limited time and resources and thus focuses on attainable accomplishments
- Collaborator - works with others to strategically complement skills, experience, resources, connections
- Focuses at different scales - connected to work occurring on the ground in own city as well as those working in other cities (the network)
- Adaptable - willing to adjust way of working based on needs of situation
- Forever learner - constantly seeking new knowledge and best practices in order to improve their work, doesn't shut out new ideas simply because they are new
- Socially-minded - passionate about developing inclusive programs and initiatives
- Attune to intersectional issues - sees the bicycle as a piece of the puzzle (alongside public space, transit, housing etc.)

Experience, Background

- Connected to, and respected within, the general community as well as the cycling community
- Experience in some or preferably multiple of the following:
 - Stakeholder organizing / engagement
 - Working with government officials (policy, planning, public works, etc.)
 - Communication over multiple platforms
 - Event organization and management

What is involved in being a Bicycle Mayor?

Our collective mission is 50x30, which means getting A LOT more people cycling, not just for fun, but for many different types of trips.

To this end, it is important for Bicycle Mayors to:

- Do your research - What is the core problem preventing most people from cycling in your city as well as the causes and effects of the core problem?
- Define success - What would addressing this problem actually look like? How will you know you have been successful? How will you measure success along the way? Be realistic given your capacity.
- Be strategic and realistic - What general strategy will have the greatest impact on addressing this problem? Is it realistic to pursue this strategy during your term?
- Plan your actions - Based on this strategy, and the desired end result, determine the activities and resources necessary to reach the desired result. In other words, what will you actually do and what will you need to do it (time, funding, space, materials, etc.)?
- Collaborate - Identify and coordinate with the appropriate stakeholders (activists, government, business, residents, etc.)
- Evaluate and pivot - Determine if your work is having the desired effects based on the measurements you have set up. If not, alter your strategy and/or activities as needed.
- Promote your work - This is an integral part of generating interest in, and support for, your work. Celebrate your successes but don't forget to recognize the effort along the way.

Within the network, it is important for Bicycle Mayors to:

- Share best practices, lessons learned and project updates
- Actively participate in the network by joining a working group, leading a workshop, and communicating on network channels
- Assist with the identification and appointment of the successor mayor and the associated transfer of mediums (files, contacts, media channels, knowledge)

How does BYCS support Bicycle Mayors?

Promote the work of Bicycle Mayors

- Monthly newsletter - feature Bicycle Mayor work along with interviews - often with Bicycle Mayors - on a range of topics not regularly discussed in cycling circles to our organization audience
- Social media - amplify the voice of Bicycle Mayors on a variety of channels
- Events - provide opportunities for Bicycle Mayors to speak at conferences and webinars

Facilitate Collaboration

- Communication platforms - share experiences and resources, ask questions, and generate support
- Network-wide calls - small-group discussions around shared topics, introduce new Bicycle Mayors to the network, make announcements, and give updates on collaborative efforts
- Network newsletter - monthly updates on projects and initiatives, links to important helpful resources and events, announcements about new mayors, and a special feature about 1-2 existing Bicycle Mayors and their work
- Working Groups - share ideas and resources and collaborate on project or funding proposals. These working groups are led by Bicycle Mayors, supported by BYCS, and meet monthly or quarterly.

Provide Resources

- Resource hub - access, share, and co-develop helpful guides and tools
- Workshops and Trainings - presentations from Bicycle Mayors, BYCS staff, and outside experts and follow-up discussions
- Events - share important conferences, workshops, webinars, and trainings

Direct Support

BYCS schedules check-ins after one month, one year, and near the end of the term. Bicycle Mayors can also contact BYCS directly for support.

Tips for Completing the Application

- Be specific in your answers - General language makes it seem like you are unsure or don't know the answer. The more specific you are, the more we get the sense that you have done your research, know your city and the people in it, know the challenges to increasing cycling, and have a well-thought out plan to address these challenges. Where we ask about key stakeholders, groups, or team members, provide names and affiliations.
- Be realistic - Ambition is important but recognize that you are one person who has limited time and resources. Shifting behavior patterns, building new infrastructure, and changing policies take time. What can you do to move the needle of progress, even slightly?
- Connect your answers logically - There should be a logical progression and connection from one answer to the next. These questions are sequential and are meant to be answered that way. Plan out your answers ahead of time and make sure that they connect to each other and create a continuous narrative.