

The Town of Simsbury named a Silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists

Today, the League of American Bicyclists honored the efforts of Simsbury to build better places for people to bike with a silver-level Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) award. Simsbury joins 506 communities across the country in the movement for safer streets and better bicycling for everyone. The award recognizes Simsbury for its commitment to creating transportation and recreational resources that benefit its residents of all ages and abilities while encouraging healthier and more sustainable transportation choices.

“When we build an America where bicycling is truly safer and easier for everyone, we are strengthening our nation’s economic vibrance, environmental welfare, and mental and physical well-being. That’s why we’re proud to celebrate all of the new and renewing Bicycle Friendly Communities in our movement to build a Bicycle Friendly America for everyone” said Bill Nesper, executive director of the League of American Bicyclists. “This round of awards is a testament to the community leaders and local bike advocates who are joining the League in raising the standard of what it means to be a Bicycle Friendly Community.”

The League of American Bicyclists’ Bicycle Friendly America program sets the standard for how communities build and benchmark progress toward making biking better. Earlier this year, the League made major updates to add and integrate equity and accessibility into the program’s application and emphasize the importance of building and connecting low-speed and low-stress bike networks.

This round of awards includes 45 new and renewing awardees, joining a total of 506 current Bicycle Friendly Communities in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Silver BFC award recognizes Simsbury’s commitment to improving conditions for all people who bike through investments in bike education programs, regular bike events that promote and encourage people to choose biking, pro-bike policies, and bike infrastructure.

In 2010, Simsbury was awarded the first Bike Friendly Community award in Connecticut at the Bronze level. In 2014, Simsbury was a forerunner again, receiving the first Silver Bike Friendly Community award in Connecticut. “In Simsbury, we have always been committed to making our town a welcoming place for people on bikes of all shapes and sizes. We also know that safe biking and walking options attract people to communities, while helping to reduce traffic congestions that will improve air quality. It’s a win for everyone,” said Wendy Mackstutis, First Selectman. “Now we will work on stepping up our efforts, not only to maintain our Silver status, but to go for the Gold!”

More than 860 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. While the award process considers very visible elements such as bike infrastructure, other essential elements include efforts around adult and youth bike education, encouragement through events like Bike to Work Day, evaluation mechanisms, and enforcement all through the lens of equity. The rigorous application process is an educational tool in itself, and includes an opportunity for local bicyclists and active transportation advocates to provide input on their experiences and perceptions of bicycling in their community.

The five levels of the BFC award – diamond, platinum, gold, silver and bronze, plus an honorable mention category – provide a clear incentive for communities to continuously improve. Awarded communities must renew their status every four years to ensure that they not

only maintain existing efforts, but also keep up with changing technology, national safety standards, and community-driven best practices.

To learn more about the BFC program, visit bikeleague.org/community.

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.