

WHY A BIKE TAX? WHAT DOES IT DO?

Colorado Springs is a great city for people who like to bicycle.

Currently more than 50 miles of on-street bicycle lanes are available with about seven miles of additional bike lanes planned this year. Combine that with more than 100 miles of urban bicycle trails and about 65 miles of un-paved mountain bike trails and it's clear why Colorado Springs is consistently ranked one of the fittest cities in the nation by Men's Fitness Magazine.

In 1988, Colorado Springs voters approved a \$4 bicycle excise tax on every new bicycle sold in Colorado Springs. Last year, Colorado Springs riders purchased almost 28,000 bicycles and generated \$111,464 in Bicycle Tax to fund projects included in the City's Bicycle Plan.

Because the funds generated by the tax are earmarked by City ordinance, they can't be used for non-bicycling projects. So no matter how tight the City budget gets, some funding for bicycling improvements is still available as long as people are still buying bicycles. However, being sales tax dependent does leave the funding, and improvements, susceptible to decreases in times of economic downturns.

The funds generated by the Bicycle Tax also help the City apply for grants that require matching contributions. For example, the City received \$26,000 in federal grant funding to develop a bicycle map with a matching contribution of \$15,000 in Bike Tax funds. An earmark of \$20,000 in Bike Tax and other City funds has ensured the City will secure \$155,000 in federal funding for bicycle lanes and new sidewalks along Airport Road. Bicycle Tax funding is also paying for more downtown bicycle parking that will be installed with labor provided by the Downtown Business Improvement District and Parking Enterprise.

Finally, the tax is perceived as a fair way for those who bicycle to contribute toward improvements for bicycling in Colorado Springs.

To help the funding go further, bicycle lanes are often added after a road is resurfaced and needs repainting anyway. Inclusion of bicycling facilities in the design of capital improvements and development projects has also become a City standard as has combining funding when the economies of scale for dual projects make sense. And, as mentioned above, City staff pursue grants designed to advance the benefits of bicycling such as better public health, cleaner air, and reduced vehicle congestion.

With Bicycle Tax assistance, residents can expect Colorado Springs to continue as a great city for people who like to bicycle. Questions? Contact Transportation Planning at 719-385-5477, or transplanning@springsgov.com.



Bicyclists benefit the community by contributing toward better public health, cleaner air, using fewer parking spaces, and reduced vehicle congestion.



City Traffic Engineering crews mark a bike lane on a newly resurfaced City road.