

Pittsburgh receives national award as bike-friendly community

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By Anthony Fenech, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

In 1990, Pittsburgh was ranked by the League of American Bicyclists as one of the 10 worst bicycling cities in the country.

On Wednesday, Mayor Luke Ravenstahl accepted a bronze bike-friendly community award from the same organization, an accomplishment that marks the region's commitment to cyclists for more than a decade.

"This is a very exciting day, and a time for us to be very proud of our work," Mr. Ravenstahl said.

Since 2000, the city has purchased 200 bike racks, constructed 15 miles of on-street facilities, and today has an even bigger goal in mind.

"This is just the beginning," Mr. Ravenstahl said. "We received a very worthy bronze status, but we have much more work to do if we want to reach gold or even potentially, platinum."

Cities are ranked in descending order by platinum, gold, silver, bronze and honorable mention.

The mayor mentioned plans to add 25 more miles of bike lanes and shared lane markings over the next two years, while connecting those with the 21-mile riverfront trail system.

Other ideas Mr. Ravenstahl mentioned is the development of a strategic bicycle route, with a network of signed routes and pavement markings.

Scott Bricker, who founded Bike Pittsburgh, an organization spearheading bicycle advocacy and safety in the community, spoke to a crowd of cyclists outside of the City-County Building around noon and said the biggest hurdle was convincing city officials that Pittsburgh could be a biking city.

"Now, we have new bike lanes, new bike racks and the first bike map of Pittsburgh in 15 years," Mr. Bricker said. "We have seen amazing changes."

Unveiled at Wednesday's ceremony was a purple street sign commemorating the award. The sign stands at the corner of First Avenue and Grant Street.

Read more: <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/10168/1066217-53.stm#ixzz1S7YyNyem>