

- 2013 Chicagoland Bike Map (*Paul Lippens, Marissa Dolin, Paul Halupka – Active Transportation Alliance*)

Bicycle travel is a significant and fast growing component of today's complete travel network. Understanding how to create a functional bicycle map that provides quantitative wayfinding but also qualitative route analysis is an important tool to produce more useful bicycling plans and facilities. It was Active Transportation Alliance's goal to provide this missing qualitative analysis for the greater Chicagoland area.

Using the insights of experienced volunteers, primary data was gathered across the ten counties in the greater metro area. Eight structured training sessions were conducted instructing volunteers how to classify roadways for bicycle travel. Classifications were established reflecting the level of comfort a cyclist would experience traversing the roadway. Volunteers considered roads from the point of view of three types of rider: novice, intermediate, and experienced. Roads were marked for quality spanning the gamut of ability, from where less experienced cyclists would feel comfortable to where only very experienced cyclists would be comfortable. Volunteers were trained to understand the needs of all types of cyclists and how to apply them to given roadways.

Gathering these qualitative judgments added unique value not found in conventional bicycle maps. Indicating higher quality cycling routes has improved the safety while increasing the enjoyment of bicycle travel in the Chicagoland area. Beyond these benefits, this process of evaluation gathers important data regarding preferred routes within a city and what about these routes make them more valuable to cyclists. This qualitative information improves the value and applicability of bicycle plans and facilities to actual users.

