

Final Report

EVALUATION OF
THE STATEWIDE
BICYCLE REGISTRATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION
Office of the Legislative Auditor
State of Minnesota

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OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
STATE OF MINNESOTA

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PREFACE

In authorizing studies for 1980, the Legislative Audit Commission directed the Program Evaluation Division to evaluate the Statewide Bicycle Registration Program on a "time available" basis. Thus, our study of the program has been carried out amid the competing demands of other evaluation projects. Nevertheless, we have given the bicycle registration program a thorough review and made recommendations that we believe will improve its operation. Jo Vos of the Program Evaluation Division conducted the evaluation and is the author of this report.

During our study we received the full cooperation of Carl Peaslee and Vickie Anderson, personnel in the Department of Public Safety responsible for the Statewide Bicycle Registration Program. We thank them for their assistance.

James R. Nobles
Deputy Legislative Auditor
for Program Evaluation

November 3, 1980

PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

The Program Evaluation Division was established in 1975 to conduct studies at the direction of the Legislative Audit Commission (LAC). The division's general responsibility, as set forth in statute, is to determine the degree to which activities and programs entered into or funded by the state are accomplishing their goals and objectives and utilizing resources efficiently. A list of the division's studies appears at the end of this report.

Since 1979, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations in Program Evaluation Division final reports and staff papers are solely the product of the division's staff and not necessarily the position of the LAC. Upon completion, reports and staff papers are sent to the LAC for review and are distributed to other interested legislators and legislative staff.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The statewide bicycle registration program was created by the Legislature in 1976 to ". . . more effectively deal with the problems of [bicycle] theft and to aid in the recovery of stolen bicycles."¹ The statewide bicycle registration program is a voluntary registration program in that statutes do not require that bicycles be registered. Statutes, however, permit individual cities to adopt local ordinances to require that all city bicycles be registered. In such instances, cities must use the registration system established by the state. Persons who live in cities which do not require bicycles to be registered may also register their bicycles with the state.

The statewide bicycle registration program is administered through the Department of Public Safety. Bicycle licenses can be purchased in approximately 150 cities throughout the state. All motor vehicle registrars sell bicycle licenses.² In addition, individual bicycle dealers who choose to participate in the program sell licenses. The licenses cost \$3.00 (plus a \$.50 service charge retained by the registrar) and are valid for three calendar years.

This report presents our evaluation of the statewide bicycle registration program. Below we summarize our major findings and recommendations in the following areas:³

- Program Effectiveness: Are more bicycles being recovered and returned to their owners under the statewide program than under previously existing city programs?⁴
- Program Efficiency: Are bicycle registrations issued and processed in a timely and efficient manner?

A. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

1. FINDINGS

Few data are available to measure the overall effectiveness

¹Minn. Stat. §168C.01.

²Throughout this report, we use the words "licensing" and "registration" to refer to the same process.

³Additional recommendations may be found in the body of the report.

⁴Recovery rates refer to the number of bicycles that have been picked up by a police department; they may or may not have been stolen or reported stolen. Return rates refer to the number of recovered bicycles that have been returned to their legal owners by a police department.

of the statewide bicycle registration program. There are no data available to indicate whether the statewide program has affected bicycle theft and recovery rates. While the overall number of reported bicycle thefts across the state decreased from 1976 to 1978, reported bicycle thefts increased in 1979. Finally, most police officers who we talked with in cities which require bicycle registration report seeing no overall change in their city theft rates as a result of adopting the statewide program.

There is evidence that the statewide bicycle registration program has had a positive effect on bicycle return rates in cities which require registration and have an adequate number of bicycles registered. In this regard, the statewide program is more effective than local programs. Data from the City of Minneapolis show that the return rate for state-licensed bicycles, once recovered, is much higher than the return rates for city-licensed or unlicensed bicycles.

Yet, the overall impact of the statewide bicycle registration program is limited for the following reasons:

- Few cities require bicycles to be registered. In 1976, approximately 52 cities operated their own city registration programs. In 1980, only 21 cities still require bicycles to be registered and have subsequently adopted the statewide program.
- Few bicycles are registered with the state. As of January 1980, approximately 6 percent of the state's estimated 2.2 million bicycles were registered under the statewide program. Significantly more bicycles were registered with individual cities in 1976 than are currently registered with the state.
- Local enforcement of city registration requirements varies considerably; thus, compliance also varies accordingly.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To a great extent, the success of the statewide bicycle registration program is determined by the number of bicycles registered: the more bicycles registered, the better local law enforcement agencies can return stolen or abandoned bicycles. To increase the number of bicycles currently in the system, three alternatives could be explored. First, the Department of Public Safety may wish to consider embarking on a more vigorous public information campaign regarding the statewide bicycle registration program. Currently, the state does not vigorously advertise the availability and potential benefits of the bicycle registration program. Individual bicyclists cannot take advantage of the program if they are not aware of its existence or of its potential benefits.

Second, the Legislature may wish to consider providing more financial incentives for cities to adopt the statewide program. For example, the Legislature could increase the service charge retained by local registrars for selling licenses without increasing the overall cost of a bicycle license. This could also be an incentive for registrars to sell more bicycle licenses, regardless of whether registration is required.

Finally, the Legislature may wish to consider making bicycle registration mandatory throughout the state. While the alternatives previously discussed could lead to improved program effectiveness, the latter alternative, if enforced and complied with, allows for maximum program effectiveness.

In 1976, the Legislature discussed and rejected a mandatory statewide bicycle registration program. It was felt that the decision to require bicycles to be registered should be a local one and that the state's role should be limited to providing a registration system for those choosing to participate. Because the program is currently self-sufficient (as we discuss in Section B), we believe that the state should explore ways to increase the number of bicyclists and cities that voluntarily participate in the program. Thus, we recommend that the Bicycle Registration Section of the Department of Public Safety:

- Embark on a vigorous public information program to inform the public of the availability of the statewide bicycle registration program and its potential benefits.

B. PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

1. FINDINGS

The statewide bicycle registration program is administered in a generally efficient manner. Although it does not operate on a revolving fund, it has become self sufficient: total program revenues have surpassed total program costs.

Yet, overall program efficiency can be improved. It has been impaired for these reasons:

- There is a generally high level of discontent among bicycle dealers who sell bicycle licenses. They report major problems with the amount of paperwork and time required to be a bicycle registrar in relation to the benefits.
- Bicycle licensing information does not always become readily available to law enforcement agencies in a timely fashion because (a) bicycle dealers do not always report to the Department of Public Safety in a timely manner, (b) registrations received by the department are often incomplete, and (c) the department has established stringent data entry requirements.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

To increase the overall efficiency of the statewide bicycle registration program, the Bicycle Registration Section of the Department of Public Safety should:

- Reduce the amount of paperwork involved in issuing bicycle registrations by¹ eliminating the separate Certification of Ownership form. In addition, the department should take whatever steps are needed to ensure that it collects only necessary and useful information from registrars. In this regard, the department should review its proof of purchase requirements and its Daily Report form.
- Develop written procedures to monitor, on a monthly basis, compliance with reporting requirements. In this way, the department can contact all bicycle dealers not complying with reporting requirements before too much time has elapsed.
- Process registration forms with minor omissions and include them immediately in the statewide register. For example, since bicycle owners' middle names and birthdates are not necessary for data entry or bicycle identification, applications missing these data should be entered into the system as they are received. This information can be added as it is obtained.

To ensure the most efficient use of the statewide registration files and minimize any detrimental effects due to the time required to enter registration information into the statewide files, the Legislature should:

- Enact legislation requiring local law enforcement agencies to enter all recovered bicycle reports into the Minnesota Crime Information System (MINCIS) stolen article file until such time as the bicycles are returned or sold at public auction.

¹The department already has plans to incorporate this form into the application form when the present supply of applications is depleted.

INTRODUCTION

Created by the Legislature in 1976, the statewide bicycle registration program was designed to ". . . more effectively deal with the problems of [bicycle] theft and to aid in the recovery of stolen bicycles."¹ The statewide bicycle registration program is a voluntary registration program in that statutes do not require that bicycles be registered. Statutes, however, permit individual cities to adopt local ordinances to require that all city bicycles be registered. In such instances, cities must use the registration system established by the state. Persons who live in cities which do not require bicycles to be registered may also register their bicycles with the state.

The statewide bicycle registration program is administered through the Bicycle Registration Section of the Department of Public Safety. Statutes require that the Commissioner of Public Safety maintain automated records of all state registered bicycles and that these records be available to all law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

Bicycle licenses can be purchased in approximately 150 cities throughout the state.² All motor vehicle registrars sell bicycle licenses. In addition, individual bicycle dealers who choose to participate in the program sell licenses. The licenses cost \$3.00 (plus a \$.50 service charge retained by the registrar) and are valid for three calendar years.

This report presents our findings, conclusions, and recommendations regarding the operation of the statewide bicycle registration program. Because the statewide program replaced city licensing programs, a major portion of our evaluation focuses on the effect of the statewide program on local registration efforts.

This report is divided into two chapters. The first chapter presents data on the effectiveness of the statewide bicycle registration program. The second chapter discusses program efficiency.

¹Minn. Stat. §168C.01.

²Throughout this report, we use the words "licensing" and "registration" to refer to the same process.

I. PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

The statewide bicycle registration program was designed to offer a uniform, centralized licensing system to all cities and bicyclists choosing to participate. Before the statewide program was created, there were at least 52 different registration programs operating throughout the state. Although each could presumably function adequately within its own city limits, there was no efficient way for law enforcement agencies to check the licensing status of bicycles outside the city. The statewide bicycle registration program was designed to provide that link.

A. PROGRAM ADOPTION

Although the state does not require that bicycles be registered, it does require that all cities with bicycle licensing ordinances use the statewide bicycle registration system rather than their own city programs. This section examines the extent to which cities have adopted the statewide program.

1. CITIES WHICH REQUIRE REGISTRATION

The Department of Public Safety does not routinely monitor the adoption of the statewide bicycle registration program. At the time we began this evaluation, the department listed 15 cities as having adopted the statewide program. To be sure that we had as complete a list of cities requiring bicycle registration as possible, we contacted officials in (a) cities with populations over 10,000 and (b) cities operating local licensing programs in 1976.¹ We identified 6 additional cities with licensing requirements. Thus, at least 21 cities have formally adopted the statewide bicycle registration program. These cities are listed in Table 1.

Of the 21 participating cities, approximately one-half are located in the seven county metropolitan area of the Twin Cities. Most of these are in two counties: Hennepin and Anoka.

Of the state's five largest cities, four have adopted the statewide program. The Cities of Bloomington, Duluth, Minneapolis, and Rochester require that all bicycles be registered with the state. The City of St. Paul, which operated a city licensing program in 1976, no longer requires bicycles to be registered.

¹To make the task of identifying cities with bicycle registration ordinances as manageable as possible, we did not contact cities with populations of less than 10,000 if they did not have a city licensing program in 1976.

TABLE 1

CITIES WHICH HAVE ADOPTED
THE STATEWIDE BICYCLE REGISTRATION PROGRAM

<u>City</u>	<u>1970 Population</u>	<u>County</u>
Albert Lea	19,400	Freeborn
Anoka	13,500	Anoka
Bemidji	11,500	Beltrami
Bloomington	82,000	Hennepin
Brooklyn Park	26,200	Hennepin
Columbia Heights	24,000	Anoka
Coon Rapids	30,500	Anoka
Crystal	30,900	Hennepin
Duluth	100,600	St. Louis
Fridley	29,200	Anoka
Glencoe	4,200	McLeod
Hopkins	13,400	Hennepin
Minneapolis	434,400	Hennepin
New Hope	23,300	Hennepin
Northfield	10,300	Rice
Richfield	47,200	Hennepin
Rochester	54,000	Olmsted
St. Cloud	42,000	Stearns
South St. Paul	25,000	Dakota
Thief River Falls	8,600	Pennington
Winona	26,400	Winona

Data Sources: Bicycle Registration Section, Department of Public Safety;
Telephone Survey of Cities with Populations of 10,000 or more.

2. REPEAL OF LOCAL PROGRAMS

With the creation of the statewide registration program came the mandatory repeal of local licensing programs. As of March 1977, cities with local programs had to either adopt the statewide program or drop all licensing requirements.

Many cities repealed their licensing requirements rather than adopt the statewide program. Less than one-half of the 52 cities with local programs subsequently adopted the statewide program. As noted above, at least 21 cities require bicycles to be registered with the state.

In developing our list of cities which have adopted the statewide bicycle registration program, we found two cities still offering city bicycle licenses for sale. Both were referred to the Bicycle Registration Section of the Department of Public Safety.

B. BICYCLE REGISTRATIONS

This section examines whether adequate numbers of bicycles are being registered under the statewide program. First, we examine the number and distribution of bicycle registrations throughout the state. Second, we discuss bicycle registrations in cities requiring it. Third, we briefly look at the present rate of registration renewals.

1. STATEWIDE DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTRATIONS

Only a small fraction of the state's bicycles have been registered with the state since the program became operational in March 1977. The Department of Natural Resources estimates that there are 2.2 million bicycles in the state.¹ As of January 1980, approximately 122,000 bicycles--6 percent of the estimated total--were registered with the state.

The data in Table 2 compare the number of bicycles registered in each economic development region of the state with that region's bicycle population as estimated by the Department of Natural Resources. Only slightly higher registration rates are found in areas where one or more cities require registration.

As the data in Table 2 show, most of the state's bicycles which are registered are located in the seven county metropolitan area (Region 11) and southeastern Minnesota (Region 10). Yet, if one compares the number of bicycles registered in these regions to its bicycle population, the proportions registered in these two regions are not substantially greater than the proportions registered in other regions of the state.

¹"Minnesota Bikeways: Statewide Bicycle Survey," Trails Section, Department of Natural Resources, January 1977.

TABLE 2

PERCENT OF BICYCLES
REGISTERED IN EACH REGION OF THE STATE

<u>Region</u>	<u>Estimated Bicycle Population</u>	<u>Number of Bicycles Registered</u>	<u>Percent of Bicycles Registered</u>
Region 1	57,989	927	2%
Region 2	33,169	560	2
Region 3	130,938	5,739	4
Region 4	96,465	1,811	2
Region 5	67,050	2,641	4
Region 6W	31,851	458	1
Region 6E	65,796	1,517	2
Region 7W	103,590	4,409	4
Region 7E	45,110	104	0
Region 8	94,477	1,747	2
Region 9	117,975	2,803	2
Region 10	214,711	16,108	8
Region 11	<u>1,130,779</u>	<u>82,988</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	2,189,901	121,182	6

Data Sources: Bicycle Geographical Statistics Report, January 31, 1980;
"Statewide Bicycle Survey," Trails Section, Department
of Natural Resources, January 1977.

2. CITY DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTRATIONS

Approximately two-thirds of all bicycles registered with the state are found in cities which require bicycle registration. Cities of comparable size and location which do not require registration have substantially fewer bicycles registered with the state.

Significantly more bicycles were registered with individual cities in 1976 than are currently registered with the state. According to a 1976 survey of the Department of Public Safety, over 475,000 bicycles were registered under city programs prior to the creation of the statewide program. In comparison, 122,000 bicycles were registered under the statewide program as of January 1980.

Most cities requiring registration experienced a decrease in the number of bicycles registered after adopting the statewide program. The data in Table 3 show the number of bicycles registered with each city in 1976 and the number registered with the state in January 1980. As these data indicate, only Richfield and New Hope show an increase in the number of bicycles registered.

The overall low registration rates in most cities listed in Table 3 may be attributed to a variety of factors including: (a) non-enforcement of licensing requirements, (b) dual licensing systems, and (c) little program publicity.

Local enforcement of bicycle registration ordinances varies considerably. We talked with police officers in 12 of the 21 cities which require registration. Officers in 6 of these cities sampled report no enforcement of registration ordinances. In most of these cities there is little incentive to purchase a license and, thus, little compliance. Officers in the 6 remaining cities sampled report using civilian bicycle patrols during the summer months. While the major focus of these patrols is juvenile bicycle safety, tickets may be given to unlicensed bicyclists. Most of these cities show somewhat higher registration rates.

Also contributing to the small number of bicycles registered in some cities is the existence of dual licensing systems. A few cities, such as Winona, still recognize the validity of their city licenses although they are no longer issuing them. Their ordinances require that bicycles be licensed either by the city prior to March 1977 or by the State of Minnesota thereafter.

Finally, while most city-issued licenses have expired, a few cities have not adequately informed residents of this fact. For example, upon adoption of the statewide program in 1977, the City of Minneapolis announced that its 163,000 city licenses would expire in January 1980. Yet, the city has issued few, if any, notices, press releases, or public service announcements this year to remind residents that city licenses are no longer valid.

TABLE 3

BICYCLE REGISTRATIONS IN CITIES WHICH HAVE
ADOPTED THE STATEWIDE BICYCLE REGISTRATION PROGRAM

<u>City</u>	<u>1976 City Registrations</u>	<u>1980 State Registrations</u>	<u>State Registrations as a Percentage of City Registrations</u>
Albert Lea	3,000	1,329	44%
Anoka	N/A	736	—
Bemidji	N/A	462	—
Bloomington	26,050	7,396	28 ¹
Brooklyn Park	4,650	2,167	47
Columbia Heights	N/A	1,235	—
Coon Rapids	1,400	445	32
Crystal	3,000	1,667	56
Duluth	N/A	4,301	—
Fridley	4,446	1,503	34
Glencoe	N/A	247	—
Hopkins	N/A	998	—
Minneapolis	162,834	31,757	20 ²
New Hope	1,200	1,536	128
Northfield	1,200	1,044	87
Richfield	2,468	7,387	229
Rochester	13,600	8,148	60 ¹
St. Cloud	21,791	3,454	16 ¹
South St. Paul	1,971	613	31
Thief River Falls	2,058	590	29
Winona	7,883	1,957	25

Data Sources: Survey of City Licensing Programs, Department of Public Safety, 1976;
Bicycle Geographical Statistical Report, Department of of Public Safety, January 31, 1980.

¹City licenses issued by Bloomington and St. Cloud expired January 1, 1980.

²City licenses issued by Minneapolis expired March 1, 1980.

3. REGISTRATION RENEWALS

It is too early to assess whether an adequate number of bicycle registrations are being renewed. Bicycle licenses are valid for three calendar years. In January 1980, approximately 43,000 licenses expired. Thus far, less than one-fourth of these licenses have been renewed.

C. BICYCLE RECOVERIES AND RETURNS

This section examines the extent to which the statewide bicycle registration program has contributed to increased bicycle recovery and return rates.¹ First, we discuss the overall impact of the statewide program in those cities requiring bicycle registration. Second, we present data on bicycles recovered through the registration process. Third, we examine specific factors reducing program effectiveness.

Very few data are available on which to assess program effectiveness. As we have already discussed, very few bicycles are registered with the state; many more are either unlicensed or city-licensed. In addition, local law enforcement agencies do not keep the statistics that are necessary to adequately measure program effectiveness. Finally, statutes do not require the Department of Public Safety to evaluate or monitor program effectiveness. Thus, it collects only limited data on the subject.

1. IMPACT IN CITIES REQUIRING REGISTRATION

To assess the impact of the statewide bicycle registration program and to compare it to previous city programs, we talked with police officers supervising bicycle programs in 12 of the 21 cities requiring registration. Although these officers report a few problems with the program, they generally agree that the statewide bicycle registration program is effective in their cities.

Most police departments favor the statewide program over their city programs. Of the twelve officers interviewed, nine report that the statewide program is much more efficient than their previous city programs. They give two major reasons. First, computerizing licensing records makes it easier and faster to trace owners. Second, having access to statewide files rather than just citywide files makes it possible to check the licensing status of bicycles outside the city.

¹ Recovery rates refer to the number of bicycles that have been picked up by a police department; they may or may not have been stolen or reported stolen. Return rates refer to the number of recovered bicycles that have been returned to their legal owners by a police department.

Only three officers say that the statewide program is not an improvement over their former city programs. One officer, however, rarely used the statewide program while another used it incorrectly. In the first instance, city licensing records were still used extensively to identify recovered bicycles because of the very small number of city bicycles licensed by the state. In the second instance, the officer supervising the city's bicycle program was not aware that the statewide licensing files were available through the department's computer system. Consequently, this officer was routinely going through the licensing records of the local registrar whenever bicycles were recovered.

There are no data available to indicate whether the statewide bicycle registration program has affected bicycle theft rates. While the total number of reported bicycle thefts across the state decreased from 14,251 in 1976 to 11,811 in 1978, reported bicycle thefts increased to 13,262 in 1979. Finally, most police officers who we talked with in cities which require registration report seeing no overall change in their city theft rates as a result of adopting the statewide program.

The statewide bicycle registration program has, however, had a positive effect on return rates. We asked police officers whether their bicycle return rates had increased, decreased, or stayed the same since adopting the statewide program. In general, officers in those cities that enforce registration requirements and have high compliance rates report increased bicycle return rates under the statewide program.

Of the 12 police officers interviewed, 6 report an increase in their return rates while 6 report no change. Officers reporting no overall change in return rates say that too few city bicycles are licensed by the state. Rather, almost all bicycles recovered are either unlicensed or still show city licenses.

To adequately assess the impact of the statewide registration program, bicycle recovery and return rates must be examined separately for state-licensed, city-licensed, and unlicensed bicycles. Although these data are not collected on a statewide basis, the City of Minneapolis has collected and compiled this information for 1978. These data are shown in Table 4.

During 1978, the Bicycle Recovery Center of the Minneapolis Police Department recovered 1,849 bicycles. Of these, 59 percent were unlicensed, 23 percent were licensed by the City of Minneapolis, 12 percent by the State of Minnesota, and 6 percent by other cities.

As the data in Table 4 indicate, the return rate is much higher for state-licensed bicycles than for bicycles licensed under city programs. The Minneapolis Bicycle Recovery Center recovered and returned 913 bicycles during 1978. Almost all of the recovered bicycles licensed by the state were returned to their owners. In comparison, 73 percent of the bicycles licensed by Minneapolis and 50 percent of those licensed by other cities were returned to their owners. Only 29 percent of the unlicensed recovered bicycles were returned.

TABLE 4

BICYCLE RETURN RATES FOR THE CITY OF MINNEAPOLIS, 1978

<u>Type of License</u>	<u>Bicycles Recovered</u>	<u>Bicycles Returned</u>	<u>Percent Returned</u>
State of Minnesota	220	218	99%
City of Minneapolis	428	314	73
Other city	115	63	55
No visible license	<u>1,086</u>	<u>318</u>	<u>29</u>
Total	1,849	913	44

Data Source: Bicycle Recovery Center, Minneapolis Police Department, 1978.

2. BICYCLE RECOVERIES VIA APPLICATION PROCESSING

A very small number of stolen bicycles have been recovered and returned to their owners through the application process. Every application to license a bicycle is automatically checked against the Minnesota Crime Information System (MINCIS) stolen article file by the Department of Public Safety. Thus, license applications for bicycles reported stolen are automatically rejected. Also rejected are all applications that show bicycle serial numbers identical to serial numbers of bicycles currently registered.

From March 1977 to May 1980, approximately 122,000 applications were processed by the Department of Public Safety. During this period, 87 applications were rejected when applicants tried to register bicycles reported stolen. Subsequently, the Department of Public Safety contacted local law enforcement agencies. In 45 of these cases, police officers were able to recover and return the stolen bicycles to their rightful owners. The remaining 32 license applications are still pending investigation by local law enforcement agencies.

3. SYSTEM UTILIZATION

While the overall success of the statewide bicycle registration program in recovering and returning bicycles is severely limited by the small number of bicycles registered, its effectiveness within cities is further limited by the following: (a) improper reporting of stolen bicycles, (b) inadequate reporting of recovered bicycles, and (c) poor familiarity with program mechanics. While we did not detect widespread problems in these areas, they merit brief discussion.

Although statutes require police departments to enter all stolen bicycles in MINCIS, not all departments routinely do so. For example, one city simply maintains a card file on all bicycles reported stolen which is checked whenever bicycles are recovered. While this may be useful for bicycles stolen and recovered within the particular city, it has no effect outside the city's limits.

In addition, Minnesota statutes do not specifically require that police departments enter all recovered bicycles into MINCIS. Not all departments routinely enter recovered bicycles into MINCIS. The Department of Public Safety has discovered a small number of cases where police departments have auctioned off recovered bicycles that were currently licensed or recently reported stolen.

Finally, we found some police departments not fully aware of how the statewide licensing system works. This ranged from not knowing that the statewide files can be accessed via a bicycle's serial number to not knowing that the files are available through the police department's computer system. In addition, some police officers have unanswered questions as to how expired and renewed licenses are being handled by the Department of Public Safety.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

To increase the overall effectiveness of the statewide bicycle registration program, as presently designed, the Bicycle Registration Section of the Department of Public Safety should:

- Embark on a vigorous public information program to inform the public of the availability of the statewide bicycle registration program and its potential benefits.
- Develop a list of cities that have adopted the statewide bicycle registration program. This information should be routinely updated and conveyed to bicycle registrars throughout the state.
- Improve coordination between the department and local law enforcement agencies in cities which require registration. To the extent possible, the department should identify police officers responsible for bicycle programs in cities which require registration so that it can keep local officials informed of the number of bicycles registered and renewed in their cities.
- Develop current, written procedures for the proper use of the statewide bicycle registration files and distribute them to all police departments throughout the state. Questions regarding license renewals and expirations should be addressed.

II. PROGRAM EFFICIENCY

The statewide bicycle registration program is administered through the Bicycle Registration Section of the Department of Public Safety. Three staff persons are responsible for (a) regulating bicycle deputy registrars, (b) maintaining a statewide record-keeping and identification system, and (c) aiding in the recovery of stolen bicycles.

Although the bicycle registration program does not operate on a revolving fund, it has recently become self-sufficient in that program revenues have surpassed program costs. The data in Table 5 show program costs and revenues for the first four years of operation. As these data indicate, the program has thus far cost the state \$372,000 while it has generated \$468,000 in revenue.

A. BICYCLE REGISTRATION SITES

Bicycle owners can register their bicycles with the state for three calendar years for \$3.00 plus an additional \$.50 fee charged by the registrar. Licenses can be purchased from two main sources: motor vehicle registrars and bicycle dealers. All motor vehicle registrars are required by statute to sell bicycle licenses, and statutes authorize the Commissioner of Public Safety to contract with individual bicycle dealers who choose to participate in the program.

This section examines the overall accessibility of bicycle registration sites. First, we look at the number and distribution of bicycle registrars during the first three years of the statewide program.² Because there was some concern that licenses were easier to obtain under former city programs than under the current program, we also examine the accessibility of registrars in cities requiring registration.

1. STATEWIDE DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTRARS

During the first three years of operation, bicycle owners could purchase licenses from 325 different registrars. Approximately 174 bicycle dealers and 151 motor vehicle deputy registrars sold licenses. These registrars were located in 193 cities throughout the state.

¹In addition to these two sources, individual police departments may be authorized by the commissioner to sell bicycle licenses.

²We use the title "registrar" to refer to any bicycle dealer, police department, or motor vehicle registrar who sells bicycle licenses.

TABLE 5

COSTS AND REVENUES OF THE
STATEWIDE BICYCLE REGISTRATION PROGRAM

	<u>FY77</u>	<u>FY78</u>	<u>FY79</u>	<u>FY80</u>
Program Costs	\$117,500	\$ 74,800	\$ 94,000	\$ 85,900
Program Revenues	86,400	115,800	112,600	152,700
Licenses Processed	28,600	36,000	37,500	50,900 ¹
Total Licenses	28,600	64,500	92,100	142,900 ¹

Data Source: Bicycle Registration Section, Department of Public Safety.

¹A portion of these registrations represent license renewals and not new registrations.

In general, the more populated areas of the state, both in terms of bicycles and people, had more registration sites than did the less populated areas. There was a high concentration of registration sites in the seven county metropolitan area of the Twin Cities where most of the state's bicycles are located. Likewise, southeastern Minnesota also had a large number of registration sites.

The overall number and type of registration sites per county varied during the first three years of the statewide program. Because all motor vehicle registrars sold licenses, each county had at least one registrar located in the county seat. Many counties, however, had few, if any, bicycle dealers selling licenses. Thirty-five counties had no bicycle dealers acting as registrars while twenty counties had one bicycle dealer selling licenses.

Although bicycle registrars were generally well distributed throughout the state, registrar accessibility did not appear to have had a major impact on license sales. Many registrars sold very few licenses during the first three years of the program's operation.

The data in Table 6 show the total number of licenses sold by individual bicycle dealers and motor vehicle registrars during the first three years of the program's operation. As these data indicate, approximately one-half of the registrars sold fewer than 50 licenses in three years; nearly one-fourth did not sell any licenses.

The Department of Public Safety recently contacted all bicycle dealers who sold few licenses during their first three years as bicycle registrars to see whether they wished to continue to be bicycle registrars. As a result of this communication, the department cancelled, or is in the process of cancelling, its contracts to sell licenses with 77 bicycle dealers. The data in Table 7 show the overall distribution of bicycle dealers currently acting as registrars. As these data indicate, most bicycle dealers located outside the seven county metropolitan area or in cities that do not require registration have dropped from the program due to poor sales. In contrast, most bicycle dealers now selling licenses are concentrated in areas of higher registration, that is, in the seven county metropolitan area or in cities requiring registration.

2. CITY DISTRIBUTION OF REGISTRARS

Most cities that require bicycle registration with the state operated their own licensing programs before the statewide program was created. Under most city programs, bicycle licenses were sold by either the police department or the city's licensing office. To ascertain the effect of the statewide program on local registration efforts, we asked police officers in 12 of the 21 cities requiring bicycle registration whether registration sites are more accessible or less accessible under the statewide program than under their former city programs. Their responses are generally favorable: most agree that it is easier to obtain bicycle licenses under the statewide program. They give two reasons. First, the actual number of registrars increased considerably under the statewide program, especially

TABLE 6

NUMBER OF REGISTRATIONS SOLD BY
BICYCLE DEALERS AND MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRARS

<u>Number of Licenses Sold</u>	<u>Bicycle Dealers (N=173)</u>	<u>Motor Vehicle Registrars (N=151)</u>	<u>Total (N=324)</u>
0	29%	17%	23%
1- 50	18	44	30
51- 100	10	8	9
101- 250	15	9	12
251- 500	8	5	7
501- 750	8	5	6
751-1000	3	3	3
1000+	9	9	9

Data Source: Sticker Inventory Report, Department of Public Safety,
March 1, 1977 through October 31, 1979.

Percents may not total 100 due to rounding.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF BICYCLE DEALERS PARTICIPATING
IN THE STATEWIDE BICYCLE REGISTRATION PROGRAM

<u>Location of Bicycle Dealers</u>	<u>1976-1979</u>		<u>1980</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
In cities which require registration	51	30%	43	45%
In cities which do not require registration	<u>119</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>55</u>
Total	170	100	96 ¹	100

<u>Location of Bicycle Dealers</u>	<u>1976-1979</u>		<u>1980</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
In the seven county metropolitan area	71	42%	62	64%
Outside the seven county metropolitan area	<u>99</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>36</u>
Total	170	100	96 ¹	100

Data Source: Bicycle Deputy Registrars Alphabetically by Cities,
Department of Public Safety, September 1979.

¹Although the Department of Public Safety no longer recruits registrars, nine bicycle dealers have recently contacted the department to become registrars. Thus, there are currently 96 bicycle dealers selling bicycle licenses. Most of these dealers are in the seven county metropolitan area.

in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Second, having bicycle dealers sell licenses extended licensing hours to include evenings and weekends.

Data in Table 8 show the current number of licensing sites in cities which require bicycles to be registered. As these data indicate, most of these cities have at least two registration sites: one motor vehicle registrar and one bicycle dealer. Seven cities, however, do not have any bicycle dealers selling licenses; two cities do not have any bicycle registration sites.

B. REGISTRATION PROCESSING

Upon application, proof of ownership, and payment of the required fee, applicants are immediately issued registration stickers for their bicycles. The applications and fees are then sent to the Department of Public Safety for processing. Department rules require that all motor vehicle registrars submit data on license sales on a daily basis. In contrast, bicycle dealers are required to submit license sales information whenever (a) the total license fees collected reach \$50 or (b) on the first and third Wednesday of each month, whichever comes first. Upon receipt of these data, Bicycle Registration Section staff check applications for completeness and accuracy. Data are then entered into the statewide bicycle registration files via two office computer terminals. At this point, bicycle registration information becomes readily available to all law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

This section looks at the problems involved in issuing and processing bicycle registrations. First, we present data obtained from those involved in selling licenses. Second, we look at the problems involved in processing licenses once sold.

1. ISSUING REGISTRATIONS

Data for this section come from interviews with approximately one-third of the bicycle dealers currently involved in the statewide program. We focused on bicycle dealers rather than motor vehicle registrars for two reasons. First, there is some concern among legislators that bicycle dealers are having problems with the bicycle registration program. Bicycle dealers are not required to sell licenses; they do it largely as a service for their customers. Second, unlike motor vehicle registrars, bicycle dealers are not required to report bicycle registrations to the Department of Public Safety at the end of each workday.

a. Paperwork

We asked 27 bicycle dealers what problems, if any, they

TABLE 8

NUMBER OF REGISTRARS IN CITIES
WHICH HAVE ADOPTED THE
STATEWIDE BICYCLE REGISTRATION PROGRAM

<u>City</u>	<u>Number of Bicycle Dealers</u>	<u>Number of Motor Vehicle Registrars</u>
Albert Lea	2	1
Anoka	1	1
Bemidji	0	1
Bloomington	3	1
Brooklyn Park	1	1
Columbia Heights	1	1
Coon Rapids	0	0
Crystal	0	0
Duluth	3	1
Fridley	2	0
Glencoe	0	1
Hopkins	2	0
Minneapolis	21	3
New Hope	1	0
Northfield	0	1
Richfield	1	1
Rochester	1	1
St. Cloud	3	1
South St. Paul	0	1
Thief River Falls	0	1
Winona	1	1
Total	43	18

Data Source: Bicycle Deputy Registrars Alphabetically by Cities, Department of Public Safety, September 1979;
Deputy Registrars Alphabetically by Cities, Department of Public Safety, June 1979.

have with the bicycle registration program. Their responses are shown in Table 9. As these data indicate, bicycle dealers are very critical of the paperwork and time required to issue licenses.

Approximately two-thirds of the dealers interviewed cite the excessive paperwork involved in selling licenses as a major problem. While they are not critical of the information requested in the application itself, they are critical of (a) the additional documents verifying proof of purchase which must be attached to each application and (b) the Daily Report form.

Minnesota statutes require that applicants produce proof of purchase when registering their bicycles. When sales receipts are used as proof of purchase, Department of Public Safety procedures require registrars to attach a photocopy to the applications. Applicants without sales receipts must fill out separate Certificate of Ownership forms which registrars must attach to each application. This form is essentially an affidavit whereby an applicant claims legal ownership to the bicycle being registered. In these instances, statutes require registration records to indicate that no proof of purchase was provided at the time of licensing.

Also criticized by some bicycle dealers are the Daily Reports that must be completed whenever dealers submit license applications to the department. This report lists the following information on each registration issued: registration number, serial number, applicant's name, type of transaction, state fees, and deputy fees. Some dealers feel that much of this information simply duplicates what is contained in the application itself.

Excessive paperwork contributes to the second most frequently mentioned problem of bicycle dealers: the time it takes to issue licenses. Approximately one-half of the dealers interviewed say that it takes too long to issue licenses, especially when applicants do not have proof of purchase. Although most dealers report that it takes five to ten minutes to issue and record the sale of one license, many say that this time is better spent waiting on other shop customers.

These problems, excessive paperwork and too much time, have caused many of the dealers we interviewed to reassess their involvement in the program. Of the 27 dealers interviewed, 6 say that they have recently either (a) stopped selling licenses to applicants purchasing their bicycles elsewhere, (b) stopped selling licenses on Saturdays, or (c) stopped selling licenses altogether. In addition to these 6 dealers, 5 others say that they are seriously thinking of quitting the program.

¹Although these reports are called Daily Reports, bicycle dealers are not required to submit them to the department on a daily basis. Rather, a Daily Report, which summarizes all license transactions conducted by a bicycle dealer, is simultaneously sent to the Department of Public Safety whenever a dealer submits information concerning license sales.

TABLE 9

REGISTRATION PROBLEMS OF BICYCLE DEALERS

<u>Problems</u>	<u>Number</u> (N=27)	<u>Percent</u>
Excessive paperwork	15	56%
Too much time required	10	37
Not enough compensation	5	18
Registration not enforced	2	7
People do not buy licenses	9	33
Licenses too expensive	3	11
Other	2	7
No problems	2	7

Data Source: Interviews with Bicycle Dealers, 1980.

Percents do not total 100 due to multiple responses.

Excessive paperwork and the time required to issue licenses have partially contributed to a low level of program publicity within some bicycle shops. Less than one-half of the dealers interviewed have signs in their shops indicating that they sell bicycle licenses (although all dealers report informing customers of the availability of licenses when selling them bicycles). Some dealers say that they do not publicize this service specifically because of the extra time and paperwork involved in selling licenses to applicants not purchasing bicycles from them.

Finally, we asked bicycle dealers what changes, if any, should be made in the bicycle registration program. Their responses are shown in Table 10. As these data indicate, their major suggestion--to reduce the paperwork--corresponds to what they regard as their major problem.

b. Registrar Fees

The Department of Public Safety furnishes only the necessary forms, license stickers, and carbon paper to bicycle registrars. All other expenses, including postage and envelopes, must be paid by the registrar. To cover these costs, registrars are allowed to retain \$.50 for each license issued.

We asked bicycle dealers whether this fee is sufficient to cover their costs. Most dealers say that their fees are inadequate, when considering the paperwork and time involved. Approximately three-fourths of those interviewed report that their fees fall short of covering their costs.

2. DATA ENTRY

Licensing information does not become readily available to law enforcement agencies until application information has been entered into the statewide registration files. Timely and accurate entry of data into the system, however, is hindered by noncompliance with reporting requirements and incomplete application information.

a. Compliance With Reporting Requirements

As indicated earlier, Department of Public Safety rules require bicycle dealers to submit license applications and fees to the department whenever (a) the total license fees collected reach \$50 or (b) on the first and third Wednesday of each month, whichever comes first. Many bicycle dealers, however, do not comply with these requirements. Of the 23 bicycle dealers that we interviewed and for which data were available consistently, 15 failed to report to the Department of Public Safety when their sales reached \$50. In addition, 11 consistently failed to report to the department at least twice a month.

TABLE 10

PROGRAM CHANGES SUGGESTED BY BICYCLE DEALERS

<u>Changes</u>	<u>Number</u> (N=27)	<u>Percent</u>
Eliminate some of the paperwork	12	44%
Make registration mandatory and/or enforce it	5	18
Increase the registrar's fee	4	15
Other	11	41
No response	8	30

Data Source: Interviews with Bicycle Dealers, 1980.

Percents do not total 100 due to multiple responses.

To determine how much time elapsed between the purchase of a license and the receipt of that information by the Department of Public Safety, we examined all licenses sold from April to September 1979 by the 27 dealers in our original sample. Approximately one-fourth of the 7,000 applications examined were received by the department more than one month after they were sold. Approximately 250 licenses were sold during the summer of 1979, but were not received by the department until the spring of 1980.

b. Incomplete Applications

Incomplete applications are a second¹ major problem affecting the efficiency of the registration process. Slightly more than one-third of the applications examined were missing information needed for processing when submitted to the Department of Public Safety. Items most frequently absent were applicants' middle names and birthdates.²

When an application is incomplete, department staff try to obtain the missing information by contacting either the applicant or the registrar.³ The department, however, is often unable to immediately obtain missing personal information on applicants (e.g., middle names or birthdates). This was true for approximately one-tenth of the applications that we examined.

As of January 1978, Department of Public Safety policy is to not enter applications missing applicants' middle names or birthdates into the statewide system until (a) the information is obtained or (b) the following January, whichever comes first. Thus, registration information for approximately one-tenth of the registrations examined did not become readily available to law enforcement agencies until three to nine months after the licenses were originally purchased.

¹We define applications as incomplete whenever information requested on the application itself is absent. This does not include the absence of attachments which may be required.

²The Department of Public Safety reports that absent data are also a problem with applications submitted by motor vehicle registrars.

³When applicants are licensed automobile drivers, missing personal information is often obtained from the state's drivers' license files.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve the overall efficiency of the statewide bicycle registration program, the Bicycle Registration Section of the Department of Public Safety should:

- Concentrate on developing more registration sites within cities which require bicycle registration. Attention should be focused on cities where there are no bicycle dealers currently selling licenses.
- Reduce the amount of paperwork involved in issuing bicycle registrations by¹ eliminating the separate Certification of Ownership form. In addition, the department should take whatever steps are needed to ensure that it collects only necessary and useful information from registrars. In this regard, the department should review the usefulness of its proof of purchase requirements and its Daily Report form.

To reduce the amount of time elapsing between the purchase of a bicycle license and the entering of that information into the statewide registration files, the department should:

- Develop written procedures to monitor, on a monthly basis, compliance with reporting requirements. In this way, the department can contact bicycle dealers not complying with reporting requirements before too much time has elapsed.
- Process registration forms with minor omissions and include them immediately in the statewide register. For example, since bicycle owners' middle names and birthdates are not necessary for data entry or bicycle identification, applications missing these data should be entered into the system as they are received. This information can be added as it is obtained.

To ensure the most efficient use of the statewide registration files and minimize any detrimental effects due to the time required to enter registration information into the statewide files, the Legislature should:

- Enact legislation requiring local law enforcement agencies to enter all recovered bicycle reports into the Minnesota Crime Information System (MINCIS) stolen article file until such time as the bicycles are returned or sold at public auction.

¹The department already has plans to incorporate this form into the application form when the present supply of applications is depleted.

STUDIES OF THE PROGRAM EVALUATION DIVISION

Final reports and staff papers from the following studies can be obtained from the Program Evaluation Division, 122 Veterans Service Building, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155, 612/296-8315.

1977

1. Regulation and Control of Human Service Facilities
2. Minnesota Housing Finance Agency
3. Federal Aids Coordination

1978

4. Unemployment Compensation
5. State Board of Investment: Investment Performance
6. Department of Revenue: Assessment/Sales Ratio Studies
7. Department of Personnel

1979

8. State Sponsored Chemical Dependency Programs
9. Minnesota's Agricultural Commodities Promotion Councils
10. Liquor Control
11. Department of Public Service
12. Department of Economic Security, Preliminary Report
13. Nursing Home Rates
14. Department of Personnel, Follow-up Study

1980

15. Board of Electricity
16. Twin Cities Metropolitan Transit Commission
17. Information Services Bureau
18. Department of Economic Security
19. Statewide Bicycle Registration Program
20. State Arts Board: Individual Artists Grants Program

In Progress

21. State Income Tax Return Processing
22. State Architect's Office
23. Hospital Regulation
24. State Regulation of Residential Treatment Facilities for the Mentally Ill
25. Department of Human Rights
26. State Sponsored Chemical Dependency Programs, Follow-up Study

