

The voice of bicyclists and pedestrians in Maine

THE MAINE CYCLIST

BIKES ARE FOR EVERYONE!

Look inside to find new ways to ride

The 2020
Annual Report



**BICYCLE
COALITION
OF MAINE**



5 | Even *more*
BikeMaine



7 | Bike Riding: Every-Body
is Doing It

Movers, Shakers,
Lawmakers, and
Barrier-Breakers

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COVER: Riders with Maine Adaptive cycle past Pineland Farms in New Gloucester. See the article on page 7 for more info about Maine Adaptive and their programs. (Photo: Brandon Merry, Maine Adaptive.)

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Change is Good

BY TINA WEST, PRESIDENT



HAPPY SPRING! Don't you just love it when the crocuses, daffodils, and tulips begin to sprout and show their true colors? Makes me smile ear to ear, and reminds me that we, like they, have survived yet another Maine winter. Congrats!

I'm happy to report that the Bicycle Coalition of Maine has not only survived the challenges presented in 2020, but has thrived and is eager to share this good news with you. Throughout this issue of *The Maine Cyclist*, you'll see that our advocacy, education, and events teams have redesigned many of their mission-critical programs to make them more accessible to the people and communities across Maine, from Fort Kent to Kittery, Kingfield to Boothbay, and everywhere in between. For example, the Women's Ride is back (yeah!), touting the same goal as in the past: to provide an opportunity for women—ALL women—to gather, celebrate, learn, ride, and support each other regardless of where they live or how they ride. So, I encourage all you women out there to grab a friend (or two), check out the ride options, and join us on June 5.

Have you tried the new Wednesday Webinars hosted by BCM Safety Education Manager Erik daSilva? Designed for both beginners and seasoned cyclists, the webinars all feature special guests and topics that range from how

TOP Tina West with Lindy Strudwick, a friend from the United Kingdom, during a 2019 cycling trip to Amsterdam.

You can help move the needle on making Maine better for biking and walking.

to find a ride that best suits you, to safe-riding tips for various occasions, to basic “on the road” bike maintenance. If you have ideas for future webinars, let us know...we aim to please!

Another new series of virtual discussions, the BCM legislative forums, were held on February 26 and March 26 and entitled “Community Connectivity, Livability, and Economic Vitality” and “A Review of Bills Relevant to the Bike/Ped/Trail Caucus,” respectively. These forums were designed to keep policymakers and our supporters informed and engaged with bills that impact walkability, bike-ability, and access for vulnerable users. Please visit the BCM YouTube page to watch these conversations with bike/ped/trail advocates across the state, and learn how you can help move the needle on making Maine better for biking and walking.

As you read about the League of American Bicyclists’ 2021 National Bike Summit later in this edition of *The Maine Cyclist*, you will likely discover that diversity, accessibility, and inclusion are common threads that have been intentionally incorporated into the work of bicycle and pedestrian organizations across the country. While this topic may be raw for some, the Coalition’s board and staff have committed to unpack this complex topic by including it in our conversations and applying it, as appropriate, in all of our work. So, as you contemplate joining any of the Coalition’s 2021 offerings, we hope that you find them inclusive, accessible, and welcoming to you, your family, and your friends. Enjoy the warmth and newfound energy that spring and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine have to offer! ☺

Tina West

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Picture a Cyclist...

BY JEAN SIDERIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

WHAT DO YOU PICTURE when you think of a cyclist? I know for a long time I mostly pictured lycra-clad road cyclists with all the gear and gadgets. Then I started bike commuting and my picture changed to someone with panniers on their bike making their way to work or school. Over the years, my picture has expanded, and it continues to expand to include a plethora of people, terrain, types of bikes, body shapes and sizes, and abilities.

I think of my neighbors riding together with their kids on balance bikes. Trikes and hand-cycles for adaptive riders. New winter riders hopping on a fat tire bike. Community leaders like Black Girls Do Bike, Outdoor Afro, and Radical Adventure Riders. Stories of historical figures like Kittie Knox, Tillie Anderson, and Major Taylor.

Every new person I meet and every story I read reminds me that bikes truly are for everyone and anyone who wants to give them a try. But all too many of those stories also reveal that the cycling community as a whole isn't always a place where everyone feels welcome. Personally, not all my experiences on a bike have been positive. I often felt out of place and unwelcome when I tried a new group ride. I didn't know the lingo, wasn't very fast or skilled, didn't have cycling gear or gadgets, and didn't really 'look the part.'

Every new person I meet and every story I read reminds me that bikes truly are for everyone and anyone who wants to give them a try.



When you find people who are simply excited to have you along for the ride no matter what, it's wonderful. And it can determine whether or not you get back on that bike the next time or move on to something else. It's those moments and people who have kept me riding and advocating for people on bikes.

At the BCM, one outcome of the COVID pandemic has been the ability to ask ourselves, “How can we be more welcoming and inclusive to more kinds of riders?” We have spent the last year reimagining our rides and exploring ways to connect with and purposefully welcome more types of riders, and the result is shown in the following pages—with even more to come in 2021. I hope you will join us in our journey to make Maine's cycling community more welcoming and inclusive! ☺

Jean Sideris

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NEW FACES

FROM DIFFERENT PLACES

BY ELIZA CRESS

WE WELCOMED TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS in 2020 who will help the BCM expand our reach across the state.

Crystal Hitchings of Cherryfield works in community infrastructure and promotion for the Sunrise County Economic Council, and manages DownEast Acadia Regional Tourism’s programming. Crystal helped establish the Bold Coast Scenic Bikeway after BikeMaine 2016, and was involved in developing the “Bike Bus” in Washington County, which aims to engage more youth and families in biking and provide services to traveling cyclists.

Jason Neal of Enfield owns Slipping Gears Cycling bike shop in Bangor. A true lover of cycling, Jason enjoys sharing the sport with others and encouraging newbies to give it a try for the first time. Jason values community, and during non-COVID times, Slipping Gears offers group rides for every type of rider.



Crystal Hitchings



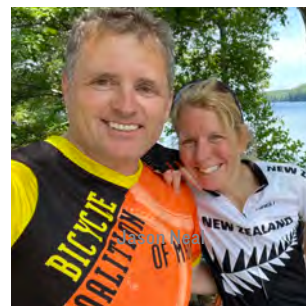
Jason Neal



Pamela Fischer



Tyler Kidder (LEFT)



Fritz Onion (LEFT)



Jeff White

We’d also like to extend warm and sincere thanks to our outgoing board members in 2020:

Pamela Fischer of New Gloucester has been a supporter of the BCM for more than 10 years, first joining the board in 2011, and serving as board president from 2018 to 2020. She played an integral role in the success of BikeMaine, volunteering her time for the full week each fall. Past riders will remember her running the recycling/refuse stations in the BikeMaine dining tents and rest stops—how many board presidents are willing to do that?!

Tyler Kidder of Winthrop has been a supporter of the BCM for nearly 10 years, first serving on the board in 2014. Tyler’s contributions to the Great Maine Bike Swap were critical to its successful planning and execution, and she quickly became a leader at the event. Her contagious energy and passionate participation were the forces behind many efforts to make riding and walking better for all Mainers.

Fritz Onion of Wayne has been a supporter of the BCM for nearly 15 years, first serving on the board in 2017. Fritz has participated in many of the BCM’s iconic rides and has been an ardent supporter of bicycle safety education, encouragement, and improvements to Maine’s roadways for vulnerable users. His dedicated desire to improve Maine any way he can is undeniable, admirable, and inspiring.

Jeff White of Cape Elizabeth has been a supporter of the BCM for nearly 15 years, first serving on the board in 2017. Jeff was an active member of the BikeMaine ride committee and cared deeply about the establishment and success of the event.

It is with great sincerity that we thank these board members for their time, wisdom, and hard work!

After adding **Jean Sideris** as executive director in early 2020, we were fortunate to add another new staff member, **Chloe Hoffman**, in December, as our development assistant and office manager. Chloe is from upstate New York by way of Florida, and has a background in non-profit organizing, advocacy, and fundraising.

Our new board and staff members look forward to meeting the BCM membership as soon as it’s safe to do so! ☺



Jean Sideris



Chloe Hoffman



BY WILL ELTING AND EMILY LOZEAU

BIKES ARE FOR EVERYONE. That’s the theme of this issue of *The Maine Cyclist*, and it’s something that we’ve been thinking a lot about over the past year as it relates to our approach to running bike rides.

To say the pandemic threw a wrench into our event planning cycle would be an understatement. BikeMaine takes around 14 months to plan, so with the unprecedented amount of uncertainty surrounding large gatherings, we spent a good long while weighing our options, and ultimately decided to use the uncertainty to our advantage.

Rather than continuing to plan for a large event that may not be possible in 2021, we are planning three smaller rides under the BikeMaine brand that appeal to a wider audience, prioritize safety, and continue the adventurous, community-focused spirit that makes BikeMaine great. Bikes truly are for everyone, and we want to make sure that we are hosting events where anyone can feel like they belong. Up first is a familiar ride from the BCM’s past.

The Women’s Ride—June 5, 2021

The Women’s Ride is back in a new format that we’re very excited about: multiple small, socially distanced rides of different styles (road, gravel, mountain, urban/casual, etc.) hosted by locals, and led by women in different parts of the state, all on the same day! This new design will not only provide an opportunity for all self-identifying women and girls—including trans, femme/feminine-identifying genderqueer, and non-binary individuals—to gather, celebrate, and support each other while riding, but the smaller format also allows us to cater to various rider preferences and spend more time discussing safe-riding practices.

We hope this ride will appeal to women of all skill levels, particularly those who may be new to riding or just haven’t felt comfortable in group settings before. Registration is open, and we are offering “pay-what-you-can” pricing, with a suggested donation amount of \$35.

Continued >

Bikes truly are for everyone, and we want to make sure that we are hosting events where anyone can feel like they belong.



Ride with Us

UN Global Road Safety Week
May 17-23, 2021
Portland, Bangor, Orono, and Worldwide

19th Annual Ride of Silence
May 19, 2021
Augusta, Rockland, Saco, Portland, and Worldwide

Community Spokes Training
May 19-20, 2021
Virtual

The Women’s Ride
June 5, 2021
Statewide

Community Spokes Training
August 19-20, 2021
Virtual

The BikeMaine Weekend
September 11-12, 2021
Machias

The Maine Woods Rambler
September 26, 2021
Millinocket

Community Spokes Training
November 17-18, 2021
Virtual

Weekly Webinars
The BCM has introduced bi-weekly Wednesday Webinars!

Please check our event calendar at bikemaine.org/events for details on all of the above events.

The BikeMaine Weekend—September 11-12, 2021
Join us for one day, or the whole weekend, to explore the Bold Coast Scenic Byway during the first-ever BikeMaine Weekend, in Machias. In addition to several road routes of different lengths and difficulties—including a donation-based short route for families and those new to biking—we’ll have two days of workshops and activities.
Have you always wanted to be more self-sufficient in the bike saddle? Take part in our bike mechanic workshop. Want to improve your child’s confidence and learn about bike safety? We’ll have a bike rodeo and skills course! Seasoned riders and those looking for a challenge can take on two different longer routes, on Saturday and Sunday, while still making it back in time for some socially distanced fun showcasing local organizations. Registration is now open, with links to suggested local lodging options.

The Maine Woods Rambler—September 26, 2021
Our partnership with Katahdin Area Trails and the New England Outdoor Center has yielded this newly formatted event featuring unique gravel logging roads not normally open to the public, and miles of newly constructed mountain bike trails! Whether you are a gravel biking enthusiast or have never tried it before, there is a route for everyone here. This event will have several route options and lengths, with shorter rides and skills clinics for kids and adults alike. After a day riding in the North Woods, the New England Outdoor Center has even more to explore—from kayaking on Millinocket Lake to hiking into the Woods and Waters National Monument. Registration is open with suggestions for nearby camping and lodging.
We can’t wait to share more details about these rides, and to grow the BikeMaine community in a meaningful way this year through a commitment to diversity and inclusion at our events. For those that may be wondering, we are still waiting to see what 2022 holds before making a final decision, but we hope to bring back the full-week BikeMaine ride better than ever next year, so keep an eye out for that once summer comes around. ☺



BIKE RIDING: EVERY-BODY IS DOING IT

BY JEAN SIDERIS



WITH TRIKES, HAND-CYCLES, AND NUMEROUS OTHER ADAPTIVE BICYCLES, the joy of riding can be experienced by people of all abilities.
I had the opportunity to attend a Back Cove bike ride last fall with Maine Adaptive, an organization dedicated to providing sports and recreation programs for people with disabilities. I biked the trail on a trike foot-cycle and had a chance to try out a handcycle. The bikes are comfortable, fun, and quick to learn how to maneuver. Participants who joined the event used tandem trikes, handcycles, and trikes that would be perfect for an off-road bike path, gravel, or dirt ride. Maine Adaptive makes a wide range of adaptive equipment available to their participants. Last summer, they launched a loan program for people to borrow a bike for a few weeks at a time.
Founded in 1982, Maine Adaptive’s hundreds of volunteers provide year-round adaptive recreation programs throughout the state from cycling to skiing to paddling to pickleball. (Check out Maine Adaptive’s Instagram page for some amazing action shots!) They aim to build confidence and equip people with the gear and know-how to enjoy the many outdoor adventures Maine has to offer. Their programs help develop skills, enhance independence, and enjoy active recreation. Like many organizations, Maine Adaptive moved to a mix of online and in-person events in 2020. Their regular “Campfire Conversations” last summer were virtual events covering a wide variety of topics, including one with BCM Safety Education Manager Erik daSilva on bike safety and basic skills.
Over the course of the pandemic, it has become unequivocally clear that spending time outdoors is critical for our mental and physical health. That means we need our

outdoor spaces to be safe and welcoming to people of all abilities. As we think about what is needed to improve biking and walking in Maine, we need to engage with all users—and potential users—about what makes a road, trail, or public way welcoming, accessible, and safe. Multi-use trails like the Back Cove in Portland, Narrow Gauge Pathway in Carrabassett, and the Kennebec River Trail in Augusta are invaluable places to enjoy a bike ride away from cars, streets, and crowds. Investing in trails and open spaces that are accessible to all improves the quality of life, health, and happiness of all users.
I look forward to attending or volunteering at future Maine Adaptive events, partnering on joint efforts, and learning more about how the BCM’s work can be more inclusive and welcoming to people with disabilities. If you’re interested in doing the same, please visit MaineAdaptive.org! ☺

We need our outdoor spaces to be safe and welcoming to people of all abilities.

THE MOVERS, SHAKERS, LAWMAKERS, AND BARRIER-BREAKERS of the 2021 National Bike Summit

BY ELIZA CRESS



Ayanna Pressley
pressley.house.gov

AYANNA PRESSLEY

U.S. Representative for Massachusetts' 7th congressional district since 2019, co-chair of the Congressional Bike Caucus since 2019, and co-founder of the Future of Transportation Caucus in 2019

In her two years in office, Rep. Ayanna Pressley has sponsored or co-sponsored 800 bills. She was led to this work by the people in her district, and has made it her mission to be the voice of the unheard. Through this work, she has come to realize that bicycling is at the intersection of social, climate, healthcare, and economic justice issues.

Pressley spoke about mobility and investment in multi-modal infrastructure as being imperative for healthy and peaceful communities. Having learned to ride a bike later in life, she reminisced about the feeling of freedom, agency, and self-determination she experienced when riding a bike for the first time and how she ultimately came to see the bicycle as a tool for racial justice.

"Policy is my love language," says Pressley. "We can legislate equity, justice, and healing ... because when communities have better and more transportation options to get to and from work, they are able to save money and live healthier lives."

Pressley will continue to support transportation planning that recognizes the vital role it plays in the prosperous communities of tomorrow because she believes that bicycles and e-bikes are the future of transportation.

Interested in learning more about the legislation Pressley is working on? Check out the Freedom to Move Act, Bicycle Commuters Act, and the Bikeshare Transit Act. You can learn more and follow Ayanna Pressley at: @AyannaPressley (Twitter & Instagram) and Facebook.com/ayannapressley2



Renee Moore

RENEE MOORE

Transit Specialist for the City of Alexandria, Virginia

Moore's first introduction to bicycling was as an adult with Black Women Bike DC. It wasn't until that very moment that she realized bicycling could be used for transportation rather than exclusively for recreation. It didn't take long before she was completely hooked and started her very own bike group, Bicycling and the City.

The establishment of this bicycling group was her attempt to connect with all types of potential bicycle enthusiasts, and it worked. Small slow rides with fun destinations around the city soon grew into a group of people that quickly fell in love with the joy and utility of riding a bicycle. Before Moore knew it, this group was featured in all types of publications and praised for its "inclusivity."

At this point, Moore became acutely aware of the need to distinguish the difference between diversity, equity, and inclusion in the cycling community. In her presentation, Moore used the analogy of planning a dance to describe these important differences:

- **Diversity** - "Inviting people to the dance," or having people of different races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, genders, and sexual identities in a space.
- **Inclusivity** - "Asking people to dance," or making the diverse people feel welcome and part of the group.
- **Equity** - "Asking people to help plan the dance," or inviting the diverse group of people to positions of leadership and having them make decisions.

As a transit specialist for the city of Alexandria, part of Moore's role is to identify how to improve mobility within a wide range of communities. Throughout her presentation, Moore emphasized the importance of meeting people where they are and arriving there with no agenda other than to listen.

Moore consistently demonstrates in her work that listening is the only way to identify the right solutions for the problems specific communities are facing. She also emphasizes the power of stories and the importance of education to effectively connect with people and convey the nature of a given problem. Her presentation featured what she calls the five "ates" of equitable transportation programs and planning: investigate, locate, accommodate, illustrate, and educate. She calls for all mobility advocates and professionals to implement these strategies from the ground up when working towards a more equitable active transportation future.

You can learn more and follow Renee Moore on LinkedIn (Renee Y. Moore) and @gironbluebike (Twitter + Instagram).

An interconnected theme became obvious: diversity, equity, and inclusion were present in many of the sessions we each attended.



Toks Omishakin
@ToksOmishakin



TOKS OMISHAKIN

Director of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and former chair of the Council on Active Transportation at AASHTO (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials)

In his presentation entitled “AASHTO Council on Active Transportation: Communicating the Benefits of Active Transportation,” Toks Omishakin covered a variety of topics from the shortcomings of Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) rules and regulations, to the adoption of Caltrans’s new action plan and updates to its strategic plan. Omishakin offered an in-depth discussion of climate action and equity issues at the heart of the significant changes Caltrans has undergone during his tenure. The implementation of the four P’s—people, projects/procedures, partners, and planning—in all of their work has provided Caltrans with a framework and lens to assess and ultimately make significant shifts in the organization’s priorities.

Applying this framework to transportation planning for climate action and equity across the state of California led Caltrans to completely redistribute their budget, moving money away from highways and toward bike/ped projects. It also led to the inclusion of bike/ped advocacy groups in every step of the process. As the director of Caltrans, Omishakin sees active transportation as the solution to so many of the problems we face as a society, many of which have been exacerbated by COVID-19. By shifting priorities, Omishakin plans for Caltrans to have a positive impact on the vitality of the entire state while improving public health, access to safe transportation, and, ultimately, more equitable and livable communities for everyone.

You can learn more and follow Toks Omishakin on LinkedIn and @ToksOmishakin (Twitter).



Charles T. Brown

CHARLES T. BROWN

Senior research specialist at the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center, adjunct professor at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, fellow of the Public Voices Fellowship on the Climate Crises at Yale University, and LCI instructor

The focus of Charles T. Brown’s presentation was the concept of “arrested mobility” and the impact of over-policing mobility in BIPOC communities throughout the U.S. Brown unpacked the complexities of social identity and the challenges and opportunities we face as a society striving for equitable transportation. Here are some of the many painful realities of driving, walking, biking, and ridesharing as a BIPOC individual in the U.S. that Brown called out in his presentation:

- Despite making up 13% of the population, Black people are issued 55% of all tickets associated with mobility infractions.
- 89% of all arrests on public transit are Black or Hispanic people.
- Black drivers are less likely to be pulled over after dusk, when a driver’s race is less obvious to police.
- On average, Black travelers using rideshare applications wait 20% longer than White travelers.
- Black bike riders receive more than twice as many tickets as their White counterparts.

With these undeniable inequities present in all aspects of our national mobility structure, Brown asks and answers the question, “How can we create a safe, equitable, and inclusive system for all?”

His solution is the commitment to a strong justice framework briefly outlined below:

- **Distributive Justice** Who has physical access to streets, parks, and trails?
- **Procedural Justice** Who has influence over the design, operations, and programming?
- **International Justice** What makes people feel welcome or unwanted in the space?
- **Representational Justice** Do people feel their experience and history is represented in the space?
- **Care** How do people demonstrate their care for the space and other people in it?

Brown also emphasizes strategies and recommendations that should be employed when tackling the shortcomings of equity in transportation work, which include:

- Anti-racist value/culture
- Racial equity action plans
- Equity trainings
- Equity performance measures
- Internal equity groups
- External equity advisory groups

Centering equity was at the heart of Brown’s presentation, and his message was clear: It is time to challenge what it means to be a “bicycle-friendly community,” a “strong town,” or “America’s best bike city,” when in reality so many of these places are inequitable and exclusive.

Brown ended his presentation by stating, “We are not in the same boat. We are in the same storm. There is a huge difference.” This analogy frames the reality of the current mobility and transportation inequity in the U.S., as well as the call from Brown and other transportation professionals for those involved in transportation programs and planning to acknowledge the undeniable difference between the BIPOC and White experience with regard to the freedom of mobility.

You can learn more and follow Charles T. Brown via @ctbrown1911 (Twitter).

LEGISLATION IN ACTION

During the LAB summit, BCM Executive Director Jean Sideris led a group of volunteers lobbying Maine’s representatives in both the House and Senate, calling for their support of pro-bike/ped legislation. The group spoke with members of Sen. Susan Collins’ and Sen. Angus King’s administrations about supporting the Transportation Alternative Enhancement Act and the Complete Streets Bill, as well as members of Rep. Chellie Pingree’s and Rep. Jared Golden’s administrations about supporting the Transportation Alternative Enhancement Act and the SAFE Streets Act in the House.

For more information about these legislative efforts, visit bikeleague.org.

U.S. Sec. of Transportation Pete Buttigieg gave the keynote address at the National Bike Summit.



Brown unpacked the complexities of social identity and the challenges and opportunities we face as a society striving for equitable transportation.



30 YEARS LATER: IT'S LIKE RIDING A BIKE

BY BETH COMEAU, RICHMOND, ME

EVER SINCE ITS FIRST YEAR, I have photographed the Dempsey Challenge in Lewiston, capturing images of hundreds of cyclists pedaling over the finish line, looking euphoric at their accomplishment of riding 10, 25, or even 100 miles.

I never thought that could be me. I am almost 50, haven't ridden a bike in more than 30 years, and chronic knee, hip, and back issues make many physical activities like hiking and walking difficult and painful.

But in April 2020, I made a rash purchase. One that I prayed I would not regret. The pandemic had just begun, and we had no idea how long it would last. I knew that being stuck at home would heighten my anxiety and worsen my depression. So, I went to see my friends at Busytown Bikes in Lewiston, and I bought a bicycle.

On April 11, 2020, my husband Chris and I (he had bought a bike at Christmastime with the goal of riding in the Dempsey Challenge) loaded up our bikes and headed to Brunswick Landing for my first ride.

I remember that ride so clearly. I straddled the bike and burst into tears. I was so afraid (and so convinced) that I was going to fall off. I stood clutching the handlebars trying to remind myself what was involved in riding a bike. How do I do this again? I wanted to put the bike back in the truck and head home...

But, after I stopped crying and realized that I couldn't quit before I even started, I sat on the bike, grabbed the handlebars, and started pedaling. And then I kept pedaling. It wasn't graceful like those people gliding across the finish line, but I was doing it! I was elated!

I checked my Strava profile to remind myself of that ride: 3.2 miles in 24 minutes. I was slow and stopped a lot. I was out of breath. But I did it.

The next ride was with my 75-year-old mother. She has been an avid cyclist since I was a kid, mostly hiking alone, but now she had me to be her biking buddy! Trying to look for the positives in this pandemic has been important for my mental health. Biking with my mom has been one of those positives. Since biking outside is one of the activities considered amongst the safest, it is something we could do to visit and stay connected during this time of social distancing. We started riding around Brunswick Landing, with miles of roads and trails that had very little traffic. Our favorite ride is from Brunswick Landing to Simpson's Point, with its beautiful views of Middle Bay. Altogether, we biked almost 200 miles together last year. That's 200 miles, dozens of hours, and lots of memories made. Memories that wouldn't have happened without my new bike.

I remember saying after that first three-mile ride, "I would like to be able to ride five miles at a time. That's probably all I will ever want to do." My second ride was three-and-a-half miles; the next was four. I was getting closer to that five-mile goal. Then, three weeks into my cycling adventures, Chris and I met up with a friend so he could share his cycling tips. He had already ridden once with Chris and now was going to help me. He asked, "How far do you want to ride today?" I said that I thought I might be ready to try to ride 10 miles. He said OK, and we were off. When we finished, I had ridden 14 miles! I was exhausted but exhilarated! I never imagined that my body could do something like that.

I started setting goals. I wanted to ride 30 miles each week. That was my first goal, and I met it nearly every week, unless it rained. I wanted to ride 100 miles a month. I did that every month except one. And, at the end of six months, I had cycled 700 miles. My last two rides were 25 miles each! When I started, that was not even something I considered possible.

I never thought I could be someone who rides bikes. But I am. It hasn't hurt my joints like I assumed it would. Actually, my joints feel better after I ride. I have been drinking more water now that I ride. I am happier and healthier than I have been in my adult life now that I ride.

What I have learned is that a middle-aged, out-of-shape, anxiety-filled person—someone who had told herself for years that she couldn't—not only "could," but she did!

Cycling has given me so much, and this is just the beginning. ☺

I was exhausted but exhilarated! I never imagined that my body could do something like that.

PROGRESS IN THE TIME OF THE PANDEMIC

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



As we reflect on all the challenges and ups and downs of 2020, we're overwhelmed with gratitude for YOU. As a BCM member, you were truly the star of the show in 2020 as you continued to support the BCM despite the uncertainty and hardships. Thanks to you, the BCM kept rolling, pivoting, and making Maine a better place to walk and roll.



2020 was truly a unique year. Like everyone else, we had to say a temporary goodbye to some of our favorite events, activities, and gatherings. However, new opportunities arose for unexpected ways to make Maine better for biking and walking, and YOU made them possible!

BIKE SHOPS DECLARED

ESSENTIAL BUSINESSES

The BCM appealed to Gov. Janet Mills at the beginning of the pandemic, advocating for bike shops to be declared essential businesses. Gov. Mills granted the declaration on March 30, and bike shops were able to continue operating in what would turn out to be a very busy year!

SAFE GET-TOGETHERS

When Jean Sideris began her work as executive director in February of 2020, she planned to start out by meeting as many BCM members and stakeholders as possible to get an idea of what your priorities are. Although the pandemic forced her to drastically change her plans, by the time summer rolled around, it was clear that meeting in person was possible if masks were worn and social distancing was adhered to. She met with members in Portland, Brunswick, Bangor, Mount Desert Island, and more! She looks forward to more visits this year—if you'd like to meet up with Jean (safely) this year, write to jean@bikemaine.org.

THE BIKE BOOM!

The BCM was thrilled to see an unprecedented demand for bicycles in 2020. Around the world, bicycling became a bigger part of the transportation conversation, and many cities made infrastructure improvements to allow for easier bike commuting. In Maine, we saw a notable increase in the number of people out biking and walking. We're lucky to have access to nature and open spaces here, and it was refreshing to see so many people take advantage. We also noticed Maine drivers speeding up on the emptier roads, so we launched our Slow ME Down anti-speeding campaign to protect Mainers out walking and biking. More details about the Slow ME Down campaign can be found on page 16.



PORTLAND STREETS FOR PEOPLE

The BCM partnered with Portland Trails, Portland Buy Local, and the Portland Society for Architecture to close certain streets in Portland to cars during the warmer months to allow more space for social distancing. The efforts resulted in vibrant pockets throughout the city where people could walk and bike safely and support local businesses by shopping and eating outdoors in the expanded spaces. These weren't "closed streets," they were OPEN streets!



BIKING SAFELY DURING COVID

Throughout the pandemic, we've all had a lot of questions about what is and isn't safe to do. Especially in the early days when we didn't know as much about COVID-19 and how it spreads, there were a lot of questions about whether or not it was safe to go for a bike ride outside.

In response to these questions, the BCM put together a set of resources with tips for how to stay safe while riding during the pandemic, including a video by our friends at Frame Media Strategies. The video was filmed in the safest way possible, with each participant (star!) recording their own footage. Many thanks to Frame and to all our video participants who helped spread the word about how to stay safe while enjoying our favorite outdoor activity!

EDUCATION

Before the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in Maine, our statewide education program was off to a roaring start with our team visiting Calais, Belfast, and many other communities across the state to offer education presentations and workshops. Once in-person education was no longer possible, we pivoted to virtual programming, creating online learning modules and ramping up our online train-the-trainer program to facilitate safe, small-group education throughout the state.



BIKES FOR ALL MAINERS

91 STUDENTS COMPLETED THE BIKES FOR ALL MAINERS PROGRAM IN 2020—MORE THAN EVER BEFORE!

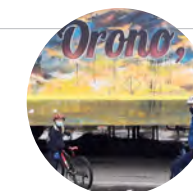
Our partners at the Portland Gear Hub reimaged the Bikes for All Mainers program for COVID times in a number of creative ways. They adapted the program to a virtual format for the first half of the season, then found ways to safely meet in person for the second half of the summer. They also combined the Bikes for All Mainers program with their Youth Earn-a-Bike program so they could work with entire families at one time, teaching both parents and children alike about bike safety and mechanic skills. In the end, more students completed the Bikes for All Mainers program in 2020 than any other year.



The BCM worked with the Patten Planning Board and the Northern Katahdin Trails Group to plan and build a new pump track in Patten.



During Bike Month (May), the BCM released "Fix-it Friday" instructional videos weekly, covering topics such as cleaning and lubing your bike's chain and fixing a flat tire while out on a ride.



Small, safe Off-Road Bicycle Education sessions continued with Dedham Middle School and Orono Parks and Rec, and included both off-road bike skill-building and trail-building.

BY THE NUMBERS

81

EDUCATIONAL EVENTS, IN-PERSON AND REMOTE

25

COMMUNITIES PARTICIPATED IN THE 2020 BIKE BRIGHTLY CAMPAIGN AND RECEIVED BIKE LIGHTS AND REFLECTIVE SLAP BRACELETS

5,182

CHILDREN REACHED BY IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

2

BICYCLE SAFETY RODEOS AND 2 HEADS UP! SAFER WALKING FORUMS HELD IN CAMDEN AND SANFORD



ADVOCACY

The “Bike Boom” kept our advocacy team busy in 2020. With so many people out biking and walking in their neighborhoods, and drivers speeding up on the emptier-than-usual roads, the time was right for traffic-calming projects and the launch of our Slow ME Down anti-speeding campaign.

BY THE NUMBERS



395

PEOPLE FROM NEARLY 100 DIFFERENT TOWNS SIGNED THE SLOW ME DOWN PETITION

200

SLOW ME DOWN ACTION PACKETS MAILED OUT

7

NEW COMMUNITY SPOKES TRAINED

10

COMMUNITIES RECEIVED TECHNICAL BIKE/PED INFRASTRUCTURE ASSISTANCE/INPUT

THE BCM SERVED ON

SLOW ME DOWN

We launched the Slow ME Down anti-speeding campaign in June in response to the most common feedback we hear from all across the state: people are driving too fast! Speeding drivers are a major deterrent to biking and walking in Maine. The campaign works to normalize driving at or below the speed limit where you're likely to find people walking and biking, and works to improve road design, increase off-road routes for pedestrians and people on bikes, and reduce speed limits. Sign the petition at bikemaine.org/slow-maine-down-petition and receive a free bumper sticker to remind everyone to slow down and look out.

IMAGINE PEOPLE HERE



The BCM completed three Imagine People Here demonstrations in 2020. Several other projects were delayed due to the pandemic but we hope to complete them in 2021. The completed projects calmed traffic in village centers and made pedestrians more visible by adding paint and delineators to make numerous crosswalks stand out.



In Bangor, speed studies conducted before and during the installation showed an 11% decrease in average speeds and a 17% decrease in maximum speeds of drivers traveling between the enhanced crosswalks.



In Westbrook, the BCM conducted yield studies before and during the installation to record what percentage of cars yielded to pedestrians in the crosswalks. After the crosswalk treatments were installed, the average number of cars yielding to pedestrians increased from 25% to 51%.

The Transportation Working Group of the Maine Climate Council, advocating for more prioritization of bike/ped and active transportation solutions; the Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Transportation Funding; and the Governor's Age-Friendly State Advisory Committee. The BCM also provided input on revisions to the Traffic Movement Permit process, ensuring that development that increases traffic considers the needs of people biking and walking.

BIKEMAINE

Like all events in 2020, BikeMaine was dramatically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. When it became clear that BikeMaine 2020 needed to be cancelled, it wasn't an easy decision, but one we knew we had to make for the health and safety of our community.



What we could still focus on, however, was ensuring that the Community Grants Program continued uninterrupted. Since 2016, BikeMaine has awarded more than \$55,000 in Community Grants to communities in Maine that have hosted BikeMaine for either an overnight or lunch stop. These grants fund projects focused on bicycle or pedestrian infrastructure, access, and education. Despite not having a ride to fund the grant program in 2020, we made a commitment to award them nonetheless, and raised funds from our riders, supporters, and sponsors.

A SAMPLING OF COMMUNITY SPOKES PROJECTS IN 2020

A new Safe Roads Committee in Islesboro

Multi-use paths and bike lanes included in designs for bridge reconstruction projects in Freeport

Bike/ped infrastructure improvements in Orland's comprehensive town plan

Improvements for bicyclists on the Down East Sunrise Trail

A mountain bike skills park in Belfast

A Sabattus River trail

COMMUNITY GRANT WINNERS 2020

\$3,500

to Rockland for the installation of bike racks and safety signage calling attention to bike lanes and shared-lane markings throughout their downtown.

\$3,000

to Madawaska for the construction of a mountain bike pump track.

Thank you to the many individual donors who supported the Community Grant fund in 2020, as well as our generous sponsor, Northern Light Health!

7 YEARS OF BIKEMAINE



Last September, when BikeMaine would have taken place, we celebrated seven years of BikeMaine by inviting past riders to share photos, videos, and other memories. The response was huge, and we had a blast reminiscing with all of you about favorite rides, communities, and meals from the past.

To cap off the celebration, we unveiled *The BikeMaine Cookbook*, a collection of our favorite recipes from the ride, scaled down to feed a family of four and not 450. The cookbook was a fun collaboration with the Maine Farm and Sea Cooperative, who have been developing, sourcing, and preparing our local-food-focused menus since 2016.

THE BIG PICTURE



BOARD AND STAFF UPDATES

We welcomed two new board members in 2020 who will both help the BCM expand our reach across the state. Crystal Hitchings of Cherryfield works for Sunrise County Economic Council in Community Infrastructure & Promotion and Jason Neal of Enfield owns Slipping Gears Cycling in Bangor. To learn more about Crystal and Jason, head back to page 4! We'd also like to extend warm and sincere thanks to our outgoing board members in 2020: Pamela Fischer, Tyler Kidder, Fritz Onion, and Jeff White. Thank you for the time, wisdom, and hard work you generously provided for so many years!

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

A number of factors led the BCM to embark upon a long-overdue examination of our work through the lens of equity and diversity in 2020. With new BCM leadership, the unavoidable cancellation of events, and the presence of national social justice protests, we took the opportunity to take a step back and think about the accessibility and equity of our events and programs.

This journey has just begun for the BCM, and we look forward to sharing our progress in the future as we work toward being true advocates for all Maine pedestrians and people on bikes.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN CYCLING AND WALKING IN MAINE!

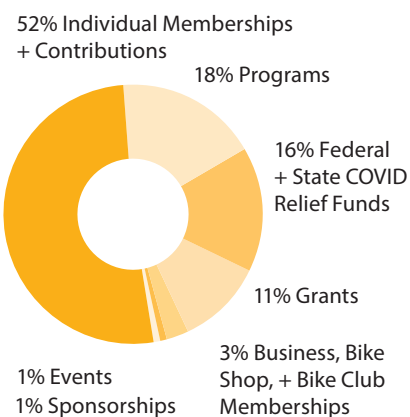
150 MEMBERS

JOINED THE BCM IN 2020

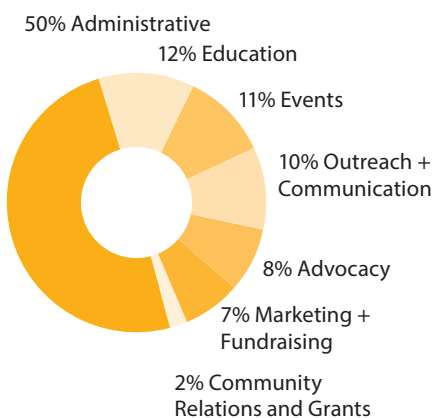
Thank you for joining the effort to make Maine better for pedestrians and people on bikes! Together we can keep the momentum of the Bike Boom going.

FINANCIALS 2020

REVENUE SOURCES



EXPENSES



TANDEM COFFEE ROASTERS

A Yellow Jersey Club Business

BY CHLOE HOFFMAN



What inspired you to open a roastery?

WILL PRATT, CO-OWNER: Kathleen and I always knew we wanted to open some sort of coffee place together at some point. After all, we'd met working in a coffee shop in college. We started thinking about getting into the roasting business after working together at Blue Bottle in NYC. I was roasting and she was the operations manager. I realized that our brand would be much stronger if we sourced and roasted our own coffee. I also really liked the potential to create new relationships through selling our coffee wholesale to cafes and restaurants. Overall, I just really enjoyed the art, the act, and the challenge of roasting coffee.

After working in coffee roasting all across the country, what separates Portland from other cities?

What I've come to realize that I love most about Portland is the roots people are ready to put down when they get here. Maybe it's just my age, but everywhere else I've lived people always talked about what city they were going to move to next. People seem to move here ready to settle down, stay a while, and get invested in the community.

Why is the tandem bike your logo? What does it mean to you?

I bought Kathleen an old Shwinn Twinn tandem for her birthday when we were living in San Francisco. She was VERY hesitant at first. She thought it was downright ridiculous, in fact. I had a habit of buying her birthday presents that were

really for me, and this one was looking like no exception. Luckily, she was proven wrong, and it quickly became our favorite mode of transportation. We would take it for rides in Golden Gate Park after work just to catch up. It is much easier to hear each other when riding on a tandem as opposed to separate bikes, so it's well suited for conversation. We left that tandem in SF when we moved to New York. Life in NYC didn't feel right without a tandem, so we ended up buying an old Motobecane tandem from a bike shop upstate. We were officially tandem people. When we decided that we were going to open a cafe, we made a list of potential names, with Tandem being somewhere in the middle. Everyone who saw the list pointed and said, "Tandem. You gotta call it Tandem." We met Christopher David Ryan of More & Co when we moved to Portland, and he came up with the iconic logo with no further instructions than: "We need to be able to draw it." He nailed it.

Why is it important for you and Tandem Coffee to support the BCM? Why is community philanthropy important to you?

Kathleen and I were both avid cyclists before starting Tandem and having kids. We've both ridden bikes across the country (me in 2003 and she in 2007). While we don't get to ride as much as we used to, we are still cyclists at heart. We still love the sport and the culture and feel compelled to support it. Supporting the BCM is the perfect way for us to do that.

Where are your favorite places to ride?

Wherever I live, I always find a nice 30-mile loop that I keep returning to. Some of my favorite places to ride over the years have been the Marin Headlands just north of San Francisco; North Road in Chilmark, Massachusetts, was my favorite place to ride when we lived on Martha's Vineyard; and now that we are in Maine, I love getting lost in the hills of New Gloucester. 📍



TANDEM COFFEE ROASTERS

Yellow Jersey Club, Business, and New Members

The following individuals and businesses support the work of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine with annual memberships. ***Bike shops listed in bold are Yellow Jersey Club members.***

YJC CHAMPIONS \$5,000+ Thomas + Evon Cooper, Seal Cove Fritz + Susan Onion, Wayne	Nancy Innes, Gorham Ann Irving, Biddeford Pool Mark + Ginger Ishkanian, Moultonborough NH Herbert + Kathleen Janick, Cape Elizabeth Eileen + Gordon Johnson, Bowdoin Michael Johnson, Columbus OH Janika Eckert + Rob Johnston, Albion Jamie + Elizabeth Kilbreth, Portland Hal + Brigitte Kingsbury, Cape Elizabeth Dan Kovarik, Portland Catherine L’Heureux, Kennebunk Charley LaFlamme + Nina Forsdick, Moody Laura + David Lipman, Bonita Springs FL Bob Lodato, Charleston Bruce + Teresa Malmer, Bangor Michael + Laura Rifkin, Greene James + Michelle Rines, Woolwich Cathy + Fred Robie, Freeport Larry + Robin Rubinstein, Scarborough Jeff Saffer, Cape Elizabeth Joan Sarles + Robert Herold, Boston MA Jane Self + Ken Pote, Camden Cynthia Sortwell, South Portland Peggy Stewart, South Portland Diane Stoller, Portland Wendy + Eric Suehrstedt, Durham Barbara + Dick Trafton, Brunswick Barbara Trentacosta, Falmouth Steven Urkowitz, Portland Paul Vinsel, West Bath Austin Watts, Bowdoin Mark + Kitty Wheeler, Bath Jeff + Nancy White, Cape Elizabeth Darcy + Henry Whittemore, Readfield Kathryn Yates, Portland
YJC LEADERS \$2,500+ David + Susan Beattie, Eliot Ethan + Lauri Boxer-Macomber, Portland Dan Emery, North Yarmouth Stephen, Maureen, Mary, Meg, + Rose Kirsch, Scarborough Bill + Beth Muldoon, Harpswell Old Bug Light Foundation, Portland Tina + Brent West, Yarmouth	
YJC TEAM \$1,000+ Joseph + Susan Alexander, Falmouth Karen Benbrook, Enterprise OR Paula + Stephen Birmingham, South Portland Moe + Loraine Bisson, Brunswick Bill + Marcy Black, Yarmouth Keith + Maria Canning, Portland Anne Carney + David Wennberg, Cape Elizabeth Alan Chebuske + Melissa Hewey, Portland James + Susan Chlebowski, New Berlin PA David Clement + Elizabeth Weiss, Winthrop WA Phil Coffin + Susan Peck, Portland Tom Cromwell, Wiscasset Max Davis, Oakland CA Robert Dawson + Evelyn Landry, Cape Elizabeth Paul Driscoll, Falmouth Elizabeth Ehrenfeld, Falmouth Karen Elting, Cape Elizabeth Donald Endrizzi + Peggy Pennoyer, Scarborough Tony Farmer, Knoxville TN Lisa Gorman, Yarmouth Ellen Grant + Kevin Carley, Portland Nancy Grant + Mike Boyson, Portland Irwin Gross + Martha Fogler, Brunswick Barbara + Peter Guffin, Freeport Nathan + Tobin Hagelin, Portland Bill + Nancy Hall, Peaks Island Austin + Renee Hardy, Wells Karen Herold + Mark Isaacson, Cumberland Henry + Alicia Heyburn, Brunswick Kevin Hunt, Blue Hill	

YJC BUSINESS TEAM \$1,000+ Ciclismo Classico, Arlington MA Kelly, Rimmel, & Zimmerman, Portland Martin’s Point Healthcare, Inc., Portland	
BUSINESS MEMBERS \$500+ Maine Public Health Association, Augusta Summer Feet Maine Coast Cycling Adventures, Portland	
BUSINESS MEMBERS \$250+ Berman & Simmons, Portland John Dargis Associates, Inc., Bar Harbor Katahdin Property Management, Brunswick Maine Bay Canvas, Portland Naomi Mermin Consulting, Portland New England Parkinson’s Ride, Merrimack NH New Height Group, Portland Portland EnCYCLEpedia, Portland Rand Dentistry, Brewer Relay Power, Hudson MA Rose Foods, Portland Springtide Studio, Portland	
BUSINESS MEMBERS Carpe Diem Tech Support, Brunswick Forest City LLC, Portland Galyn’s Galley, Bar Harbor	
MEMBER BIKE SHOPS Allspeed Cyclery and Snow Portland (207) 878-8741	
Bike Board and Ski Presque Isle (207) 769-2453	
Brad & Wyatt’s Island Bike Rental, Inc. Peaks Island (207) 766-5631	
Busytown Bikes Lewiston (207) 241-3233	
CG Bikes Belfast (207) 218-1206	
CYCLEMANIA Portland (207) 774-2933	
Fast & Happy Bicycles Springvale (207) 502-2280	
Foreside Bicycle Shop Kittery (207) 752-7280	
Frame and Wheel Cape Elizabeth (207) 221-5151	
Goodrich’s Cycle Shop Sanford (207) 324-1381	

GORHAM BIKE & SKI Saco (207) 283-2453 Portland (207) 773-1700 Brunswick (207) 725-1100 Kennebunk (207) 604-1136 Waterville (207) 660-6761	mainecoastcycling.com
Kingdom Bikes Blue Hill (207) 374-3230	Maine Cycling Club, Lewiston mainecyclingclub.com
L.L.BEAN BIKE, BOAT & SKI STORE Freeport (877) 755-2326	Portland Velo Club, Portland portlandvelo.com
Pat’s Bike Shop Brewer (207) 989-2900	PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS Adventure Cycling Association Alliance for Biking and Walking Anytime Fitness Appalachian Mountain Club Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals Bicycle Tour Network Brain Injury Association of America—Maine The Dempsey Challenge Dero Bike Racks East Coast Greenway Eastern Trail Alliance Edison Press Friends of Acadia League of American Bicyclists MaineShare Maine Adaptive Maine Association of Nonprofits Maine Better Transportation Association Maine Department of Transportation Maine Farm and Sea Cooperative Maine Office of Tourism Maine Outdoor Brands Maine Public Health Association Maine Tourism Association New England Mountain Bike Association New England Parkinson’s Ride People for Bikes Penobscot Bay YMCA The Portland Gear Hub The Portland Wheelers Portland Trails Pride Portland! Rails to Trails Conservancy Seacoast Area Bicycle Riders Trek Across Maine Youth Cycle Project
Port City Bikes Portland (207) 775-6125	
Rainbow Bicycle & Fitness Lewiston (207) 784-7576	
Rose Bike Orono (207) 866-3525	
Roy’s Bicycle Shop Lewiston (207) 783-9090	
Seacoast E-Bikes Newington, NH (603) 294-0370	
Sidecountry Sports Camden (207) 706-4994 Rockland (207) 701-5100	
Ski Rack Sports Bangor (207) 945-6474	
Southwest Cycle Southwest Harbor (207) 244-5856	
The Local Gear Cornish (207) 625-9400	
The Rusty Crank Brunswick (207) 844-8392	
Wildfire Human Powered Vehicles Arundel (207) 423-7360	
MEMBER CLUBS	
Bike MDI, Bar Harbor facebook.com/groups/BikeMDI/	
Casco Bay Cycle Club, Falmouth, Gorham, Portland, Westbrook, Yarmouth cascobaycycleclub.org	
Community Cycling Club of Portland BikeCCCP.org	
Kennebec Valley Bicycle Club Mt. Vernon facebook.com/ KennebecValleyBicycleClub	
Maine Coast Cycling Club, Kennebunkport	

Peter Chace, Kennebunk
Stephen Champagne, Portland
Beth Comeau, Richmond
Tim Connery, Portland
James Cook, Darien CT
James Cook, Waterville
Jacob Crothers, Portland
Claire Danby, Portland
Max Davis, Oakland CA
Larry Delaney, Brunswick
William Entwisle, Sedgwick
Lynn Farnham, Scarborough
Geoff Gordon, Orono
Nathan Greene, South Portland
Craig Guillereault, Biddeford
Austin + Renee Hardy, Wells
Lisa Harkin, South Berwick
Tammy Harvison, Biddeford
Nicole Hewes, North Yarmouth
Woody + Susan Higgins, Portland
Rob Hill, Orlando FL
Robert “John” J Holden, Cataumet MA
Chloe Hoffman, Portland
Ginger Hwalek, Bangor
Robert Jones, Portland
Katahdin Property Management,
Brunswick
Patricia Kelly, Medford MA
Catherine L’Heureux, Kennebunk
Denise LaRue + Robert Furman,
South Portland
Amanda Lauritzen, Portland
Leslie Lopardo, Hampden MA
Lyn + Paul Mayewski, Brooklin
Robert McCarty, Kennebunk
Robyn McCutcheon, Burlington
Joseph McDonnell, Falmouth
Lana McPherson, Presque Isle
Madeleine Montejo, Bowdoinham
Lisa More, Wilmington DE
Amanda Murray, Falmouth
Jonathan Poole, Augusta
Neil Potter, Salt Lake City UT
Relay Power, Hudson MA
Vicki Richardson, Patten
Mark Rohrbaugh, Raymond
James Sattler, Toledo OH
Denise Sawatzky, North Tonawanda NY
Geoffrey Scott, Camden
Seacoast E-Bikes, Newington NH
Jeffrey Sirocki, Scarborough
Amanda St Hilaire, Cape Elizabeth
Russell Stogsdill, Scarborough
Sarah Titus, Portland
Ramona Whitaker, Nobleboro
Gary + Nancy Zane, Unity
Elizabeth Zeeuw, Portland

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bikemaine.org

BY ANGELA KING

ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES

Improvements to the conditions of—and accessibility to—walking, biking, and trails makes for a healthier, happier community as a whole.

THE ADVOCACY TEAM OF THE BICYCLE COALITION OF MAINE is hearing from more people throughout the state in both rural and urban areas who want better road conditions for walking, rolling, and biking. With more people working from home these days, there is more walking and biking on local roads. This has raised awareness of the deficiencies of the roads for anyone outside of an automobile.

In response, Mainers have come together and formed local groups to work on advancing the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. Many of the people in these groups are Community Spokes—the BCM’s statewide network of bike/ped advocates. The Spokes program begins with a training on effective ways to advocate, organize, and collaborate within your community. The Coalition then supports the Community Spokes with resources, participation at meetings, and consultation on ideas for bike/ped improvements.

Collaboration is key to the efforts and results. In many cities and towns, there are numerous community groups that have some common goals. For example, a bike/ped committee, an age-friendly group, and a Safe Routes to School team may all be interested in improving sidewalks. Working together on common goals helps show this improvement is important to many people in the community, and not just one group or demographic. And sharing the tasks and action steps helps keep people engaged without being overwhelmed. Collaboration also brings diversity of perspectives and ideas, which is beneficial when coming up with any project proposal.

The Town of Freeport has a recent successful example of community collaboration. Their Complete Streets Committee and Active Living Committee worked together to propose a design for a bridge reconstruction project that would encourage walking and bicycling by adding multi-use paths to the two bridges over I-295. Their collaborative efforts expanded to include the Freeport Town Council and Greater Portland Council of Government (GPCOG), two groups that helped communicate the benefits of connecting Freeport. The MaineDOT also worked with these groups to develop a bridge design that includes bike/ped infrastructure.

The highway physically divides the Freeport community, but the community united to use this MaineDOT bridge reconstruction project to better connect the town for people not traveling by automobile. Freeport residents voted to approve the additional construction costs for a 12-foot multi-use path as well as 5-foot shoulders on the bridges. By making it a referendum, the town government enabled the residents of Freeport to make this decision, which passed by a very wide margin of 801-215. Doug Leland, who leads the Complete Streets Committee, also credited the get-out-the-vote volunteers, who Leland says “were particularly helpful during this final push.” The collaboration of many people and entities made this a successful bike/ped improvement project.

While this has been a year of challenges on so many levels, Community Spokes have continued to accomplish many things—from getting Complete Streets policies adopted locally to holding COVID-safe bike rodeos. There are Community Spokes who plan to have the BCM’s Imagine People Here temporary demonstration projects installed to test their ideas on bike/ped improvements. Chris Nucci of Saco has proposed a protected bike lane, and Kalie Hess of Augusta has proposed enhancing several crosswalks. Besides adding safety to people walking and bicycling, this type of infrastructure has a traffic-calming effect that increases motorist safety as well. As AARP pointed out in one of their newsletters: “Bicycle-friendly streets are good for people who don’t ride bikes.”

With an unprecedented number of requests this year for Imagine People Here demos, the Coalition is currently planning and designing projects in cities and towns around the state. BCM Outreach and Design Manager Eliza Cress, who has a background in planning, is now working with the advocacy team to create design plans, which will increase the organization’s capacity to do more demonstration projects.

The first virtual Community Spokes training was held in November 2020. Islesboro resident Dave Petzel became a Community Spoke at that training and established the Islesboro Safe Roads Committee just weeks after his training. This group—which includes the local police chief and other town staff, along with residents—meets regularly to discuss what roadway improvements would be beneficial for Islesboro. In a recent survey created by the Islesboro Safe Roads Committee, residents expressed the need for more safety and rules-of-the-road education. In

Collaboration is key to the efforts and results.

BCM’s Community Spokes are working hard all across the state, whether they are lobbying in Augusta, encouraging others to commute by bike, building trails, or making streets more welcoming to pedestrians and people on bikes.

response, Dave and an elementary school teacher took an online bike/ped safety education class with Erik DaSilva, the BCM’s safety education manager, and plan to have educational materials at the ferry terminal and town office to communicate that roads are for everyone, and we need to share them safely and respectfully.

Another issue raised in the Islesboro survey (which the BCM’s Slow ME Down campaign has brought to light) is a concern about speeding. Dave has volunteered to monitor the speed on Islesboro roads by setting up and moving a trailer with a radar gun and speed sign to different locations around the island. Those signs, like the Slow ME Down campaign, raise awareness. Since our campaign started, I frequently hear people say they were unaware how often they were exceeding the speed limit, and the campaign has made them more conscientious about monitoring their speed when driving. Slowing down benefits everyone!

Many active Community Spokes are working on trail projects. They are in leadership roles advocating for trails, creating and maintaining trails, working on access to existing trails, and communicating that trails can be used for both recreation and as green transportation corridors for commuters. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of the outdoors for the physical and mental health of everyone, and for that reason, many trail advocates are also involved with legislative efforts to support trail growth.

Likewise, the Coalition’s advocacy team submits testimony on bills that have an impact on or are related to bike/ped/trail issues. In February 2021, BCM Assistant Director Jim Tassé led a legislative public forum that brought together state senators and representatives who expressed interest in being part of a bike/ped/trail caucus. AARP Maine Director Lori Parham, Maine Public Health Director Rebecca Boulos, and Town of Gray Manager Nate Rudy all spoke at the forum to explain how bike/ped/trail issues are connected to their work—once again showing how collaboration is often an essential part of change.

Improvements to the conditions of—and accessibility to—walking, biking, and trails makes for a healthier, happier community as a whole. With this in mind, the BCM also supports bills that increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in the state. These are values of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, and Executive Director Jean Sideris wants to ensure the BCM helps support Maine’s progress in this area for decades to come.

“Unity is strength... When there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved.” – Mattie Stepanek, American poet and peace advocate. ☺





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