Join Us on the Hill

On Thursday, February 26, bicycle advocates and enthusiasts from throughout the state will gather in Saint Paul for the fifth annual Bike Summit on Capitol Hill.

Transportation funding is one of the big issues at the Capitol this year. Your presence is necessary, especially those of you from Greater Minnesota, to educate your elected leaders (many of whom are new) that bicycling should be part of any transportation funding package. Our leaders need to know that their constituents want them to make bicycling a safer and more convenient choice.

Visit bikemn.org/summit to view the schedule and register. Your participation will help to ensure that Minnesota continues to set the pace for the rest of the nation.

The Summit’s morning sessions at Christ Lutheran Church will include training and coaching on talking with legislators. BikeMN will schedule appointments for attendees to meet with their legislators in the afternoon, so please plan to attend a meeting even if you are not able to attend the full Summit!

Advocating for bicyclists is one of BikeMN’s most important goals. We’ll be working in four major areas and tackling some smaller issues too during the 2015 Legislative session.

BikeMN’s 2015 Legislative Agenda Summary

1. Vulnerable User/Increased Penalties for Careless and Reckless Driving: BikeMN continues to place priority on this issue and distracted driving issues that seek greater penalties for causing a fatality or serious injury while committing other driving offenses. Our goal is greater awareness of the consequences of driving irresponsibly.

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Minneapolis Bicycling Awards

Join us for our May 3 Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration

We plan on making our annual meeting a time to celebrate bicycling in Minnesota and highlight some of what BikeMN has accomplished in 2014 with the help of advocates, educators and supporters across the state. You’re invited to join us to talk business, but also to have some fun! Our meeting and awards celebration is scheduled the evening before

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www.bikemn.org
The Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) is a statewide bicycle organization with a vision that “bicycling in the state should be a safe, easy, fun and cool choice for everyone.” BikeMN’s mission is to provide leadership and a unified voice for bicycle education, advocacy and efforts to make Minnesota more bicycle friendly so that more people will ride bicycles more often.

To serve this mission, BikeMN has identified four program areas: education programs tied to the League of American Bicyclists and Walk! Bike! Fun! curricula; advocacy and partnerships with other organizations for bicycle friendly laws, policies, programs and funding; events and promotions to encourage more biking; and assisting businesses and communities in being more bicycle friendly. BikeMN is the producer of Minnesota’s biggest one-day bicycle event and several smaller bicycling events.

2. Policy changes to Operation of a Bicycle M.S. 169.222:
This statute includes the rule “Every person operating a bicycle upon a roadway shall ride as close as practicable to the right-hand curb or edge of the roadway.” BikeMN, and bicycle organizations nationwide, think that this language is confusing and implies that bicyclists do not have the right to use the whole lane if needed to ride safely. BikeMN will pursue legislation to clarify this but will need solid support from Greater Minnesota legislators. We’d also like to make it legal to go straight through a right turn lane if the shoulder you were riding on becomes one and you weren’t planning to turn right.

3. MnDOT State Aid Standards Revisions: MnDOT has rules for local units of government that use state highway trust fund money. BikeMN and other Complete Streets advocates are currently advocating for legislation that would give local units of government the option to use the more flexible national standards that are already used in most other states.

4. Move Minnesota Transportation Funding Proposal: BikeMN resolved to support the Move Minnesota funding package last year and BikeMN supports it again in 2015. The Senate’s bill closely reflects the MoveMN proposal. The Governor’s recommendation in January did not include increased funding for bicycling in Greater Minnesota or as much in the Metro as the Senate bill does. The leadership in the House lumps bicycling and walking with transit and light rail and does not support increased funding at this time.

We’ll see you at the Hill!

More Online
Visit bikemn.org/summit for the schedule and registration.
Early registration closes at midnight on MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23.
Day-of registration will be available, but we cannot guarantee you’ll be able to meet face-to-face with your legislators if you register at the MN Bike Summit.
View a more detailed legislative agenda at bikemn.org/2015agenda.

Bike Summit
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Visit bikemn.org/2015agenda.
The Metropolitan Council’s Twin Cities Regional Bicycle System Study (AKA: the “Study”) was designed to deepen understanding of the bicycle component of the regional transportation system and improve the knowledge base of the role of bicycling for the region’s 2040 Transportation Policy Plan update. This includes a better understanding of how on-street bikeways and off-road trails interact to serve regional transportation trips.

With the study’s results, the Met Council set some ambitious goals for the coming decades. Learn more about the study at metrocouncil.org.

### Lobbyists

Joseph E. Olson is a retired Professor of Law. He taught at Hamline University for more than 40 years and has been lobbying at Capitol Hill since 1985.

One of Joe’s goals is to eliminate some of the restrictive provisions on bicycles and determine if there are any provisions that should be added to protect the safety of cyclists. “Minnesota has good laws affecting bicyclists, but they were written 20-25 years ago when bicycling was less popular,” said Joe.

Joe has a passion for cycling and has ridden about 17,000 miles in the past five years. He also enjoys sport shooting and is a voracious reader.

Vic Moore has nearly 40 years of experience in the legislative and executive branches of government. His mission is to educate legislators on our needs, and to make sure we are heard in the process and incorporated into bills.

“Our presence at the Capitol is going to be significant, not because BikeMN has lobbyists, but because this organization has so many members that are willing to work for issues—the Bicycle Summit on Capitol Hill is case in point,” said Vic.

Vic lives in Woodbury with his significant other, Martha. They enjoy Minnesota sports, the outdoors and spending time at their cabin.

Douglas J. Franzen has more than 30 years of experience representing clients before the State Legislature. Doug’s goal is to increase BikeMN’s visibility and be the go-to for legislators who have questions about biking. He also wants to focus on advocacy and grow what’s happening on streets, trails and paths through legislation.

“We need to channel the sense of joy that people get when biking into the legislature,” said Doug.

Doug grew up in the Twin Cities and biked often in his youth. After a 20-year hiatus, he and his wife participated in an AIDS awareness ride to Chicago and have been riding ever since.

### Met Council Bikeways Plan

The Metropolitan Council’s Twin Cities Regional Bicycle System Study (AKA: the “Study”) was designed to deepen understanding of the bicycle component of the regional transportation system and improve the knowledge base.

Learn more about the study at metrocouncil.org.

Correction

The November ‘15 edition of Shift incorrectly stated that the City of Edina completed work on the Nine Mile Regional Trail. Edina recently finished planning construction of the trail, and construction is slated to begin next year. We apologize for our mistake.
Awards

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the PedalMN conference, also in Minneapolis, so friends from Greater Minnesota will have an easier time joining us.

More than 25 years ago the Minnesota Coalition of Bicyclists was given the North Star Bicycling Award. This year BikeMN will be reviving that tradition and giving five awards in the categories listed to the right. We want to recognize the significant accomplishments that bicycling advocates and educators are making throughout the state to implement the BikeMN vision that bicycling should be a safe, easy, fun and cool choice.

We will be taking nominations for award recipients via a form on our website.

More for Moorhead

Kids and teachers in northwestern Minnesota are really excited about bicycle education.

“Kids get a kick out of using a bike during the school day,” said physical education teacher Joe Wateland of Moorhead’s Ellen Hopkins Elementary School. Joe is one of 14 educators who last October attended training on Walk! Bike! Fun!, the pedestrian and bicycle safety curriculum developed by BikeMN in partnership with MnDOT.

Nine of those 14 teachers hail from Moorhead Area Public Schools, a district that encourages using bicycles to show students how to live healthier, safer and more active lives.

“The convenience of the world is making it harder on kids to be active,” said Wateland, who’s as excited to have bikes in his classes as his students. Or, rather, almost as excited as the kids.

“There are always a couple of kids in physical education class that don’t know how to ride a bike,” said Kathe Eldred, a teacher at Moorhead’s Robert Asp Elementary. But she notes that when she teaches the Walk! Bike! Fun! curriculum, every student could ride safely by the end of the unit. Also, she finds students that didn’t have a bike at home were hoping to get one very soon.

It’s fantastic news that both kids and teachers are loving Walk! Bike! Fun!, because a new study has been published by the Journal of the American Planning Association that demonstrates Safe Routes to School programs (including bicycle safety education) are truly effective at increasing rates of walking and bicycling to and from school. Per the study’s results, districts that implement those programs increase ridership by five percent every year. And in the case of Moorhead, all of those newly educated young walkers and cyclists will be arriving safely in time for class.
Minnesota’s Newest Bicycle Friendly Communities

The League of American Bicyclists regularly recognizes towns and cities for their commitment to outstanding bike friendliness. We’re excited to announce eight communities from across Minnesota were recently honored!

They join 11 other Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFCs) already scattered across the state. There are now more than one million Minnesotans who live in such forward-thinking communities!

One of the new Bronze-level awardees is central Minnesota’s Hutchinson. It’s had some projects in the works for a long time, including the construction of a network of more than 25 miles of trails. Work continues on newer initiatives, such as the adoption of Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School policies.

In north central Minnesota, Frazee garnered a Bronze award. Education has been a key part of Frazee’s programming. The town recently hosted its first Traffic Skills 101 seminar and provided bike skills training to its police force.

Two metro regions also received designations, but Minnesota can’t claim all the credit. Both the Fargo-Moorhead and Greater Grand Forks areas were recognized for their efforts, and both straddle the border of Minnesota and North Dakota.

Additionally, Rochester renewed its Bronze status and Hopkins, Lake City and Northfield claimed honorable mentions.

Meet Jo!

Jo Olson is our Communications Manager, an exciting new position at the organization. Read on to learn a little more about Jo and what she’ll be doing for biking in Minnesota.

You’re BikeMN’s very first Communications Manager. What are some of the things you’ll be doing in that role?

The pressure is on! I’m looking forward to being directly involved in organizational strategy and integrating communications into project planning, implementation and follow up. I’ll be writing a communications plan, managing social media, writing and designing print and e-newsletters, integrating the BikeMN brand into all of our materials and providing our programs with additional promotion.

What’s the most impressive thing about bicycling in Minnesota? And where do you see a big opportunity?

I find the community to be so welcoming and very helpful. Our state offers something for every type of cyclist! I think that there is still room for growth in driver education, especially around what is legal conduct for cyclists and how cars and bicycles can better share the road in the Twin Cities metro and in greater Minnesota.

For you, the most fun a person can have on two wheels is...

...getting from point A to point B! I like to bike to social engagements or while running errands. Not only do I feel like my time is used more productively, but I love that biking is often faster than driving a car during rush hour. Plus there’s usually primo parking when you get to your destination, which is an added bonus in my book.

Read more about all of Minnesota’s BFCs online at bikemn.org/bfc.
We extend our deep gratitude to all the members, donors, volunteers and supporters who make BikeMN a great and effective organization. The list below represents contributors between mid-October and mid-January.

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Steve Jennen
Twin Cities Bicycling Club

Aluminum Level $500 - $999
Diane Pittman
Hiawatha Bicycling Club
Nancy Roehr & Steve Euller
Richard Keir
Steve Flagg

Steel Level $250 - $499
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Century Level $100 - $249
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Imagine a system of bike routes connecting communities that have their own internal systems of on-road routes, off-road trails and protected bikeways. What if school children could safely walk or bike to school and were taught bike safety, riding skills and the rules of the road as part of their school curriculum? Wouldn’t it be cool if cycling was a middle and high school sport? Think of a culture where bicycle commuting is welcomed by businesses.

Our dream is for every Minnesotan to see these great things happening in their own community.