

SHIFT

WINTER 2023

Dear BikeMN Readers,

As we pedal our way into winter, the crisp air and bright holiday decoration have provided a stunning backdrop for our biking adventures. It's with great pleasure that we present to you the end-of-year edition of BikeMN's newsletter, celebrating all things cycling in Minnesota.

In this issue, you'll discover an array of inspiring stories from our board members and other dedicated staff. We're excited to feature articles ranging from our organization's time of transition to the connections between land use and socioeconomic repercussions in our communities. This showcases the beautiful intersection of community, sustainability, and healthy living that biking offers.

As the days grow shorter, our commitment to safety remains unwavering. Our "Riding in Low Light" article will provide valuable insights on how to prepare for those twilight rides and emphasize the importance of visibility. After all, our collective goal is to ensure every bicycle ride is a safe ride.

For those who closely follow our Education Team's endeavors, our Walk! Bike! Fun! Recap info section is a must-read. We showcase a 10 year evaluation summary of how BikeMN has influenced bicycle safety throughout Minnesota.

Thank you for being a part of our thriving biking community. Whether you're a seasoned bicyclist, a weekend warrior, or someone just starting their biking journey, we appreciate your support. Together, we're making a difference, one pedal stroke at a time.

Happy bicycling, walk, and rolling throughout Minnesota!

Warm regards,

Mel Gonzalez Vazquez

Communications Director



MICHAEL WOJCIK: A SPECIAL WORD FROM OUR NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Serving as the second ever Executive Director of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota (BikeMN) is a great honor, and following my friend Dorian and his lifetime of accomplishments supporting safe biking, walking, and rolling is an equally daunting challenge. I am grateful that I don't have to take on this challenge alone. I am blessed to have a committed team, talented board members, and dedicated supporters around the State of Minnesota. As we embark on this period of growth and change, BikeMN is grateful to count on your continued support.

While I hold Master's Degrees in Engineering and Business, my best education has been as an advocate for people and communities. I served 12 years on the Rochester City Council where I was an advocate for building healthy, connected places. Kids don't hire lobbyists, but I still believe that they should have a safe walk to school, bike ride to a park, or trip to a good ice cream shop. Seniors deserve the opportunity to age in diverse, mixed-use neighborhoods without having their livelihood tied to an automobile. Everyone deserves to have access to safe transportation, to breathe clean air, and to pass along a stable climate to future generations.

As a statewide organization with an Executive Director living in Greater Minnesota, we will continue to build on our many successes while creating relationships in more places. BikeMN had a successful session at the Minnesota Legislature in 2023, and in 2024 and beyond, we will work with our local chapters and governments around the state to share success stories and encourage changes that place life and health above the speed of an automobile.



"I am blessed to have a committed team, talented board members, and dedicated supporters around the State of Minnesota."

I can assure you that it will take all of us to make 2024 a great year for biking in Minnesota. Please consider making a year-end contribution, becoming a sustaining member, volunteering on one of our boards or committees, or just going out and helping others enjoy the benefits of safe biking, walking, and rolling. We couldn't be more grateful to move forward with you!



2023: A YEAR OF TRANSITION

A MESSAGE FROM THE BIKEMN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BY: Andy Lambert | BikeMN Board Chair



After 15 years of dedicated leadership, our founding Executive Director, Dorian Grilley, passed the baton to a new leader who the board and staff are incredibly excited about! Michael Wojcik comes to us from Rochester, MN with many years of experience working with local government and community advocacy groups all over the state. His aptitude for financial management, connections to greater Minnesota and deep passion for creating safe places to bike, walk and roll make him the leader we need.

For the last few months, the board has been busy supporting Michael and the staff by activating all subcommittees (Advocacy, Education, Communications and Development) and recruiting new board and committee members from around the state.

Our Advocacy committee is fired up and ready to engage our full membership in the creation of our 2024 legislative agenda. We are also seeking more Advocacy committee members from greater Minnesota. If you are interested in joining this committee, please reach out to me at andy@bikemn.org for more information.

Andy Lambert, BikeMN Board Chair

Lastly, we are laser focused on building a healthy financial position for the coming year so that we can continue to bring our education and community engagement programming to every corner of the state. Our Development committee is excited to be working with Michael and the team on a concrete strategy that will help the organization manage the seasonality of our current funding sources.

As always, if you are not currently a member of BikeMN, please consider becoming a sustaining member at any dollar amount. We are proud to report that .86 cents of every dollar raised goes directly to education and on-the-ground community-based programs that make our communities better places for everyone to bike, walk and roll safely. If you are a member or donor of BikeMN, thank you so much for your contribution. We love welcoming new volunteers to our subcommittees, so if anything I've mentioned sparks your interest, please be in touch. Finally, I hope you'll consider volunteering at one of our local events. It's a great way to connect with your neighbors and the BikeMN community. Hope to see you biking, walking throughout Minnesota!



Dorian Grilley, founding Executive Director of BikeMN

LAND USE

BY: Cindy Winters | Advocacy Committee Chair

Land use policies and active transportation are intertwined.

It's a beautiful fall day in my southern Minnesota community, with the perfect weather to get out for a walk or a bicycle ride. I need a few things from the grocery store so I think I will ride my bike to the store. But wait, the grocery store is on the other side of town, across two 4-lane streets (known as "stroads" if you follow Strong Towns). I would have to ride past several large surface parking lots adjacent to the street, making for an unpleasant, potentially dangerous ride. Because of zoning and land use policies, the grocery store is quite a distance from my older centrally located neighborhood, and the reason for the large mostly empty surface parking lots. Guess I'll just find a nice local trail and go for a ride, then get in my car and go to the store later.

Does this scenario sound familiar? It doesn't have to be this way. Zoning and land use, while initially meant to preserve the health, welfare and safety of the public, have had unintended consequences. Recently, the effects of zoning and land use policies have received increased attention and recognition in the role they play in urban sprawl that promotes car dependency, parking minimums that consume vast amounts of valuable land, and the lack of "missing middle" affordable housing and successful public transit. The list is endless if you take a deep dive into community design. All of this determines where we live, where our work can be located, where we shop, go to school, worship, play, recreate and how we choose to travel through our community.

With this in mind, the Bike MN Advocacy Committee has decided to expand beyond our traditional focus of bicycle safety laws to include addressing zoning and land use policies that negatively impact the ability to walk, bike, or roll safely through both urban and rural communities throughout Minnesota.

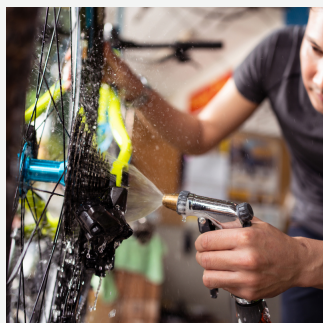
Equity is a key component of our mission, and many land use policies have caused socioeconomic disadvantages to our communities. Bike MN wants to be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. We ask that you support us in our efforts to turn the tide on past harms caused by zoning and land use policies which no longer serve their intended purpose.



GEAR GURU

MAINTAIN YOUR RIDE: 6 TIPS FOR PEAK BICYCLE CONDITION

Your bicycle is not just a means of transportation; it's a trusted companion on your journeys and adventures. To keep your two-wheeler in top-notch condition and ensure a smooth ride, regular maintenance is key. Here are six essential tips and tricks to help you maintain your trusty bike.



1 KEEP IT CLEAN AND LUBRICATED

Regular cleaning and lubrication are fundamental to your bike's well-being. After a dusty or rainy ride, a simple wash and thorough drying can prevent corrosion and preserve your bike's finish. Don't forget to lubricate the chain, gears, and other moving parts to reduce friction and wear.



2 CHECK TIRE PRESSURE

Maintaining proper tire pressure is not only crucial for a smooth ride, but also for your safety. Check your tire pressure regularly using a reliable gauge and keep it within the recommended range, which is typically imprinted on the sidewall of the tire. Over-inflated or under-inflated tires can affect handling and lead to premature tire wear.



3 INSPECT YOUR BRAKES

Brakes are a critical safety feature on your bike. Regularly check brake pads for wear and replace them if they are worn down. Ensure your brakes engage smoothly and effectively. If you notice any squeaking or reduced stopping power, it's time for an adjustment or replacement.



4 TIGHTEN BOLTS AND FASTENERS

Vibrations and regular use can cause bolts and fasteners to loosen over time. Periodically inspect and tighten bolts on your handlebars, stem, seat post, and other critical components. Using a torque wrench can help ensure you apply the correct amount of force without overtightening.



5 CHECK FOR CHAIN WEAR

A stretched or worn chain can lead to poor shifting and can even damage your drivetrain. Invest in a chain wear indicator tool to measure the wear on your chain. If it's stretched beyond the manufacturer's recommended limit, it's time for a replacement to prevent further damage to your bike's components.



6 REGULAR PROFESSIONAL TUNE-UPS

While many maintenance tasks can be handled at home, it's wise to schedule regular professional tune-ups. A professional bike mechanic can identify and address issues you might miss and perform more in-depth maintenance tasks. This can help extend the lifespan of your bike and ensure it's always in peak condition.

WALK! BIKE! FUN!

10 YEAR EVALUATION SUMMARY FROM BIKEMN

[WINTER '13-FALL '23]

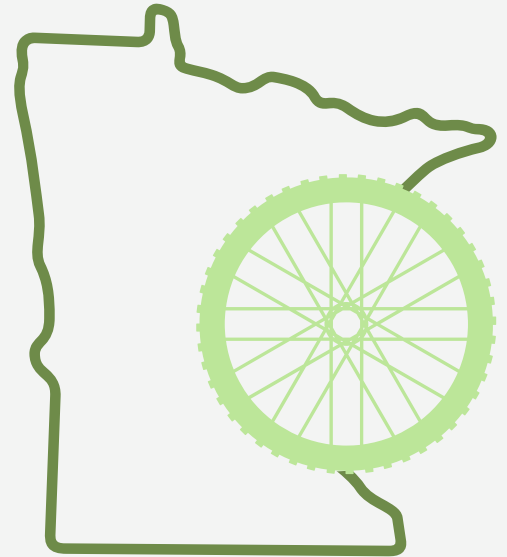
The Walk! Bike! Fun! (WBF) Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Curriculum was developed by BikeMN through a contract with the Minnesota Department of Transportation in collaboration with BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota. The curriculum addresses Minnesota Physical Education Standards and Benchmarks and is an important part of the Minnesota Department of Transportation's Safe Routes to School Program.

“

The training has strengthened and grown our community's capacity to provide in-school bike education programs which help instill knowledge and a love of active transportation which they will hopefully carry over their lifetimes.

-- MN Educator

”



9670

Students using the BikeMN Bicycle Fleet



5496

Students receiving educational materials (bookmarks, stickers, posters, etc.) as requested



308

Total Walk Bike Fun online curriculum downloads

2024 BIKE TOURS

BIG RIDES ARE BACK! WE HOPE YOU WILL BE TOO.

We're getting the bands, scrumptious baked goods and bicyclists back together for our two favorite fall rides. We will be ready to serve you a bite to eat with your favorite beverage or simply stick around to snack on fruit and enjoy the joyous tunes of the day. All are welcome!!

SAINT PAUL CLASSIC

The Classic celebrates the Saint Paul Grand Round -- scenic and historic parkway system that circles our capital city is coming back to you on September 8, 2024. Remember, the Classic generally takes place on the second Sunday of September every year! Choose one of two great routes, the all trail, 14-mile "Lollipop Loop" or the 30-mile Saint Paul Grand Round ~ 33 miles with an optional lap around Lake Phalen. As always, the Saint Paul Classic will feature plenty of tasty treats plus live music at Lake Como, and will be fully supported by sag wagons, bike mechanics plus strategically located wayfinders to direct bicyclists at key intersections.

Join us! Discover more and register at BikeClassic.org



Volunteers and Riders at Saint Paul Classic Bike Tour in 2023 at Como Pavilion.

MANKATO RIVER RAMBLE



Riders at Mankato River Ramble Bike Tour in 2023.

Mankato may be Minnesota's best-kept bicycling secret! Visit Mankato and North Mankato to discover great cities where bicycling is big! This breathtaking autumnal ride takes place on Sunday, October 6, 2024. The Mankato River Ramble features fall colors on three scenic routes; from a 12-mile, mostly trail tour to Minneopa Falls, to a 42-mile countryside ride out to Lake Crystal. Our most popular tour — the 26-mile Pie Run — takes cyclists to Rapidan Dam and a delectable spread of 150 home baked pies.

Join us! Discover more at bikemn.org/all-events/mankato-river-ramble/

CHECK OUT OUR 2023 BIKE TOUR PHOTO ALBUMS:





Advocacy & Active Transportation

BY: CJ Lindor – Education Coordinator

As the weather begins to change and a majority of MN riders put their bikes away until next spring, the staff at BikeMN and the passionate volunteers on the Advocacy Committee are ramping up our efforts to improve conditions for all Minnesotans who bike, walk or roll in daily life!

In 2022, this committee was chaired by longtime health and transportation lobbyist, the late Bill Dooley, for whose tireless efforts we will be forever grateful, and staffed by founding Executive Director Dorian Grilley.

Their efforts--along with the Advocacy Committee, House and Senate Transportation Committee chairs Hornstein and Dibble, professional lobbyists, and partner organizations--helped to pass into law the Bill Dooley Omnibus Transportation Act this past May. You can read about this bill on our blog.

*Our objective is to be **engaged**,
responsive, and **effective**, and we're
excited to continue this vital work.*



BikeMN will be carrying forward this important work with renewed enthusiasm and vigor, under the very capable direction of new committee chair, Cindy Winters. In addition to the statewide legislative policies and funding that are vital to realizing the vision of BikeMN, the Advocacy Committee is also interested in other paths toward creating changes and improvements related to active transportation (the umbrella term for human-powered modes of movement, including bicycling, walking, and rolling). While statewide policies can be critical for some issues (e.g. automated traffic enforcement, abolishing jaywalking laws, e-bike regulations, etc.), we're also focusing on other areas where advocates can engage to seek improvements. These include a) reviewing and updating the internal policies used in planning and engineering transportation systems, which historically prioritize private motor vehicles, and b) developing a "toolbox" that will support and empower advocates to advance changes at the local level, where planning and design "meets the road," so to speak. BikeMN already recognizes a dozen "chapter" groups across the state that are already positioned and, in many cases, actively doing this work, so the hope will be to boost those efforts and enable many others to follow the lead!

As always, it's important that BikeMN is effectively representing the diverse range of interests related to walking, biking, and rolling,

and in particular making sure that underrepresented and marginalized identities are deliberately included. The Advocacy Committee has made sure to prioritize diverse representation by identifying different constituencies and holding seats on the committee for persons who will represent those valuable perspectives. We're also inviting input from our members and supporters, specifically with our survey about advocacy priorities (scan bottom left QR code). Those interested can also sign up for individualized action alerts through the BikeMN website at bikemn.org/get-involved/take-action/ or by scanning the QR code below:



Take the advocacy survey:



Advocacy has always been at the core of BikeMN's work to make Minnesota a place where every person everywhere can easily walk, bike, and roll as ways to move in daily life. Beyond the work of this committee, the staff of BikeMN continue to advocate in the ways you've seen and come to expect: we'll lobby our legislators for support at the annual Minnesota Bike Summit at the Capitol; we'll continue community engagement via the Bikeable Community Workshop program; we'll provide support for recognition and improvements through the Bicycle Friendly America program; we'll serve on various steering and advisory committees, including the state's Advisory Council on Traffic Safety, the Active Transportation Advisory Committee, the Safe Routes To School Steering Committee, the MN Injury and Violence Prevention Action Coalition, and more. Our objective is to be engaged, responsive, and effective, and we're excited to continue this vital work.

RIDING IN LOW LIGHT AND DARK CONDITIONS

As the golden hues of autumn transform our landscapes, many bicyclists eagerly embrace the crisp air and striking scenery of fall rides. However, with days growing shorter, it's essential to prioritize safety, particularly during those twilight hours when visibility can be a challenge. In this article, we'll shed light on the importance of increasing visibility for a safer and more enjoyable low light bicycle ride.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT GEAR

LIGHT IT UP



Invest in quality bike lights, ensuring both your front and rear lights are in good working condition. Bright, rechargeable LED lights are highly recommended, as they provide excellent visibility.



REFLECTIVE ACCESSORIES

Don reflective clothing or accessories, such as vests, ankle bands, or even reflective tape on your bicycle frame. These reflective elements significantly enhance your visibility to motorists.

PLAN YOUR ROUTE WISELY

FAMILIAR TERRAIN



Opt for routes you know well. Riding in familiar areas reduces the chances of unexpected obstacles and keeps you confident in low-light conditions.



WELL-LIT PATHS

Choose paths with adequate street lighting whenever possible. Well-lit roads and trails make it easier for you to navigate and for others to see you.

GROUP RIDING

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS



Riding with a group can significantly enhance safety. A group of bicyclists is more visible than an individual rider.



COMMUNICATION

Keep lines of communication open within the group. Share information about hazards and changes in the route by calling them out verbally and/or pointing.

WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS

CHECK THE FORECAST

Fall weather can be unpredictable. Be prepared for rain or fog, and ensure your gear includes rainproof clothing and fog-resistant eyewear.



MIND THE LEAVES

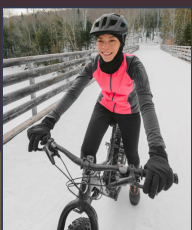
Fallen leaves can be slippery. Exercise caution, especially when taking turns or descending hills.



MORE SAFETY TIPS

STAY VISIBLE

Wear bright and contrasting colors to stand out. A neon or high-visibility jacket can be a game-changer during dusk and dawn rides.



BIKE MAINTENANCE

Ensure your bike is in top shape. Well-maintained brakes and tires are essential for moments when quick stops are necessary.



PREDICTABLE MOVEMENTS

Signal your turns and both hands on the handlebars when you're stopping. When riding in a group, signaling slowing down and stopping with hand signals and voice can be helpful.



ID AND EMERGENCY CONTACT

Have identification on you, a fully charged phone along with emergency contact information. This can be crucial in case of a crash.



By prioritizing visibility and adhering to these safety tips, you can enjoy your cycling journey while ensuring you're seen by fellow bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists.

Bicyclist and pedestrian safety must be considered by motorists during this time as well. Stopping AT stops signs, not just beyond them where the crosswalk or sidewalk lies.

THANK YOU

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

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 November 31, 2022 and October 31, 2023.

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Quality Bicycle Products
Park Tool
Indeed Brewing Company
Wild Mind Ales
City of La Crescent
Major Taylor Bicycling of MN

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