

# SWEET SUMMER RIDES



## INSIDE

- > Fiscal Year 2025
- > Honoring a Fallen Hero
- > World's Biggest Bike Sale

# Hope Springs Anew



Lately, every dog walk and bicycle ride has me noticing the new leaves budding on trees here in Rochester.

Minnesotans know seasonal change, and we know that renewal doesn't wait. It simply begins again.

After a long, difficult winter that left many neighbors shaken by violence and uncertainty, this spring air feels like both relief and invitation.

Alongside the hardship, I've seen hope in action. Neighbors checking in, rides offered, meals and packs of diapers dropped at front doors, quiet words on cold sidewalks reminding each of us that you are not alone. Across differences of politics, faith and background, people stepped up in ways that didn't make headlines but made a real difference.

As a dad, I notice what kids absorb. They see fear, but they also see courage and kindness. The toddlers watch the older kids wobbling on their first pedal bikes; children see neighbors lending tools and helping families who might otherwise be left out. These are the lessons they carry forward.



Michael Wojcik, executive director

At BikeMN, we say "community," but it's more than a word. It's a verb. We build it, practice it, live it every time we check in, lend a hand or open our streets to one another. Streets and sidewalks are about more than pavement. They're about safety, trust and freedom to move. And above all else, they are about connection.

As the weather warms, I encourage you to keep your sense of community active and your hope alive.



- Host a block party or potluck.
- Set up pickup basketball for your kids and the kids next door.
- Invite someone new along on a ride.

Every small act strengthens the fabric of our neighborhoods. That fabric envelops us and keeps us strong.

Spring is doing what spring always does — bringing new life out of what seemed dormant. We've already seen evidence in the care people showed this winter. Let's keep choosing one another.

With gratitude and hope,

Michael Wojcik  
Executive Director, BikeMN

## Highlights | Spring-Summer 2026

Thousands of bicyclists peacefully turned out after ICE agents killed two Twin Citians.

By Erik Noonan



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BikeMN sponsors seven major rides from May through October. Sign up soon!

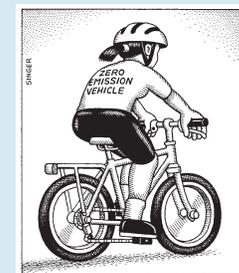
By Amy Gage

How Duluth is remaking First Street to encourage active transportation.

By Val Langer



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CARTOON: ANDY SINGER

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Yes, it is possible to live without a car; your mental health will thank you for it.

By Ilse Griffin

# Annual Bike Sale Promotes Community, Caring

By Amy Gage

Longtime BikeMN member Randy Bailey swears that the Apple Valley bike sale he helps run every year in May is the “biggest bike sale in the world — at least for one day.”

Call it hyperbole or well-earned enthusiasm. The numbers certainly are impressive:

- Rick Anderson’s 18th Annual Sale — on Saturday, May 2, 2026 — will feature more than 500 refurbished bikes “for all ages and skill levels,” Bailey says.
- Over 17 years, the group has donated more than \$627,500 to nonprofits, including Kids ’n Kinship, a youth mentoring organization in Apple Valley, and DARTS, which serves seniors and caregivers in the southeast metro area.



Founder Rick Anderson originally hosted the annual Apple Valley bike sale in his garage. PHOTO: KERRY STOK

- Expenses run only 6% of sales. “Nobody else out there can touch us when it comes to expenses,” he declares. “We have very few, just the website and a few bike parts.”

The sale originated in founder Rick Anderson’s garage after he started refurbishing old bikes with his mentees at Kids ’n Kinship. Once Bailey had retired from teaching high school math and statistics, he joined up to build a website, network with parents and past students, and develop collaborations with area businesses, including Dick’s Valley Service, an auto and truck repair and towing operation that hosts the sale and provides space year-round for bike mechanics.

Jeff Tuthill (right) and his son, Andrew Tuthill, at Dick’s Valley Service, a 61-year-old family business that provides space for the annual bike sale in Apple Valley. PHOTO: KERRY STOK



The annual fundraising sale would not exist without donations — and the volunteerism of amateur mechanics with handles like John “Ace Crank” Van Dyke, Harry “Hit Man” Baumert and Dave “Shanky Whip” Anderson.

Bicycles range in price from \$20 to \$500, including mountain bikes and hybrids but also children’s bikes and some adult trikes. Increasingly, riders are donating “nicer quality bike-shop bikes,” says Bailey, from the likes of Cannondale, Specialized and Trek.

## DONATE A BIKE!

Organizers accept bicycles of all types and sizes, except for first-generation e-bikes with outdated electronics “But we’d welcome e-bikes in good condition,” Bailey says.

Text or email a photo and description of any bike you’d like to donate to event founder Rick Anderson at 952-240-3820 or andersonrick52@gmail.com.

## Annual Bike Sale

**WHAT:** Rick Anderson’s 18th Annual Sale, [ricksbikesale.com](http://ricksbikesale.com)

**WHEN:** Saturday, May 2 (indoors), rain or shine, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**WHERE:** Dick’s Valley Service, 5905 Upper 147th St. W., Apple Valley

**CONTRIBUTE:** Bring non-perishable food items for 360 Communities.

## Our Statewide Reach

The Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota has 11 geographically based chapters across the state, including the new West Metro Active Transportation Alliance, which the board of directors approved in February. Our members can opt to share their contributions with the chapter(s) of their choice.

BikeMN also is affiliated with Bicycling Around Minnesota (BAM), which hosts an annual bike ride promoting state tourism.



[bikemn.org/submit-event](http://bikemn.org/submit-event)

# Donations Can Seed Your Hopes and Dreams

By Dan Nemes

BikeMN’s work makes the world better for families — healthier, more connected and freer to explore. BikeMN’s Adult Learn to Ride educators regularly ask participants what motivates them to learn to ride a bike, and I’m struck by how often people say they take a BikeMN class for their kids.

“I am embarrassed to tell people I didn’t know how to ride a bike,” said one participant, “and now I have a 3-year-old who’s got a balance bike trying to learn. I thought it would be important that he sees both his parents can ride, not just Dad, and be able to go with him.”

This resonates with me as a parent. Our kids watch us to learn how to navigate the world. When we — their parents — try something new and hard and a little scary, our children



Education and safety programs for children and adults are a key part of BikeMN’s mission.

understand the world to be a place of possibility and freedom.

Recently, like many BikeMN families, my wife and I have been delivering groceries, making sure our children’s classmates get home to their parents and collecting money for neighbors’ rents. This is also new and hard and a little scary. And our kids are watching.

We’re teaching them how to navigate a world that, despite senseless cruelty and real heartbreak, remains a place of possibility and freedom for everyone.

Spring is a season to ask whether our financial legacy matches our hopes for the future.

- If you have a donor-advised fund (DAF), recommending a grant to BikeMN is a simple, tax-smart way to put those dollars to work now.
- If you’re 70 or older, a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA can support BikeMN directly while potentially reducing your taxable income.
- And if you don’t use either option, a direct or monthly gift still makes an immediate difference. We recognize that many of you are donating to many good causes, so please know that any amount you can contribute to BikeMN stays in your neighborhood to make streets safe for all.



Board Chair Reyna Lopez (left) and BikeMN Education & Policy Manager CJ Lindor at the 2025 Twin Cities Bike Tour.

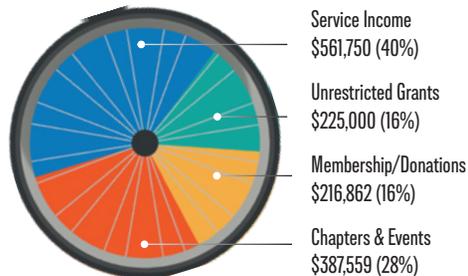
As the weather turns, I’ve got two bikes ready for my kids’ classmates, a kindergartner and a second grader. Along with their parents, they’ve been cooped up this long winter. When it’s safe, we’re all going to go for a bike ride together.

Thank you for believing in safer streets, stronger communities and a brighter future for the next generation. Please consider supporting BikeMN this spring in the way that works best for you.

*BikeMN Development Manager Dan Nemes lives in Rochester. Email: dan@bikemn.org.*

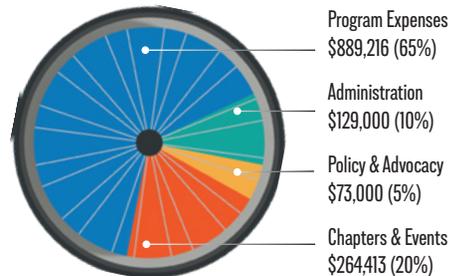
## BikeMN’s Financial Picture 2025

### WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM



TOTAL INCOME.....\$1,391,171.00

### WHERE OUR MONEY GOES



TOTAL EXPENSES.....\$1,355,629.00



Thank you!

We welcome your donation at [bikemn.org/donate](https://bikemn.org/donate) or use the QR code.



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# A Ride to Remember

By Erik Noonan



PHOTO BY BRIAN MITCHELL

History doesn't always announce itself. Sometimes it arrives quietly, bundled up in down jackets and bar mitts, gathering at neighborhood corners before rolling toward a common point.

That's what it felt like in Minneapolis at the Alex Pretti Memorial Ride seven days after ICE agents gunned him down in south Minneapolis — not just a bike ride, but history happening in real time, on frozen streets.

On January 31, 2026, a sunny, 16-degree day, I joined the ride organized by Angry Catfish bike shop, Melanin in Motion, Genosack,

**“What I witnessed was joy, solidarity and passionate people who know this has to end.”**

— Sarah Johnson, St. Paul-based activist and year-round cyclist

Bone Saw Cycling and other partners who pulled together something massive for Alex, their cycling comrade, in less than a week. Memorial rides are heartbreakingly familiar in bike communities. But this one felt different. The scale and

the knowledge that thousands of bicyclists in communities around the world were riding at the same time made it feel unprecedented.

During a month when the federal government killed two citizens in broad daylight on neighborhood streets, and one week after 50,000-plus protesters took to the streets of downtown Minneapolis, the memorial ride was a particular response from bicyclists, for one of their own. Thousands of us, braving the cold. There's something about cold-hardy riders in the Twin Cities, combined with a deep connective tissue of community, that made this gathering possible. People showed up in numbers that defied the temperature: fat bikes, cargo bikes, fixies, studded tires humming over snow and ice.



St. Paul community organizer Sarah Johnson met up with 10 other people to join the Alex Pretti Memorial Ride in Minneapolis.

Alongside friends from the Twin Cities-based Joyful Riders Club, I helped organize a 4-mile “ride-to-the-ride,”

## WE RIDE IN UNITY

SAT  
1/31  
2026

1:00  
meet  
1:30  
ROLL



WASHBURN FAIR OAKS PARK

## RIDE TOGETHER STAND TOGETHER

expecting a couple dozen people. About 50 rolled out with us. As we moved south, clusters appeared at intersections — 40 here, 60 there — each group flowing seamlessly into the growing mass. No fanfare, no central command. Just nods, waves, the quiet choreography of cyclists absorbing one another.

By the time we reached Washburn Fair Oaks Park, the view was staggering: a sea of hi-vis in every direction. The sound was quiet and powerful — a low murmur of conversation, clicking freehubs, boots crunching in snow. Nearly an hour in, ride marshals reported that people were still flowing out from the start of the ride:

- South past the Alex Pretti memorial at 26th Street and Nicollet Avenue.

*continued, next page*



BikeMN Executive Director Michael Wojcik at the Rochester ride, which was organized in less than 24 hours.

- Past 34th Street and Portland Avenue, where ICE agents killed mother and poet Renée Nicole Good in her vehicle on January 7.
- South to Minnehaha Creek, a favorite of Alex's, and
- On to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, where Alex worked as an ICU nurse.

Along the route, families stepped onto porches and sidewalks, waving Guatemalan and Ecuadorian flags alongside USA and Minnesota flags. Kids held handmade signs. Adults stood with gloved hands over hearts. At the medical center, hospital workers in scrubs stepped outside to thank riders as they passed. There was grief, yes — but also solidarity that transcended geography.

It wasn't just Minneapolis. In Rochester, Duluth, Mankato, Minnetonka, Hopkins, Crosby, Ironton and Thief River Falls — as well as in 200 cities in over a dozen countries — riders gathered, some with less than 24 hours' notice. Streets became corridors of remembrance.

What stays with me is how quickly a caring spirit can move when people are connected. We often think of infrastructure as physical lanes and barriers. But social infrastructure works organically: group texts, shop bulletin boards, friendships built on long rides and shared knowledge. These rides revealed how strong that infrastructure is here.

Many of us had never met Alex: a 37-year-old ICU nurse, an outdoorsman, a devoted bicyclist; a son, a brother, a friend. Yet the brutal loss of his life at the hands of ICE agents felt communal. Anyone who moves through our streets by bike or on foot understands a certain vulnerability — and a certain freedom. When harm happens to one of us, it reverberates. Riding together becomes both mourning and declaration.

If you did ride on January 31, I hope that sense of solidarity inspires you to keep showing up for neighbors and community. That feels like what Alex would have wanted.

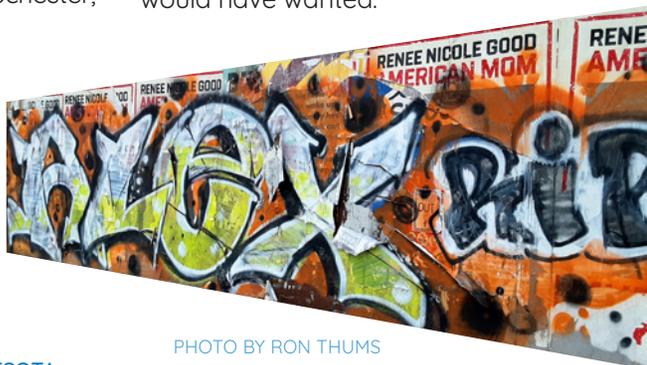


PHOTO BY RON THUMS

## Let's Roll! BIEMN KICKS OFF NATIONAL BIKE MONTH WITH THE FIRST OF SEVEN RIDE EVENTS.

By Amy Gage



**NOTE:**  
All BikeMN rides require helmets.  
Be safe and have fun!

Our overview of the 2026 Bicycle Alliance rides features our biggest fundraiser — the third annual Twin Cities Bike Tour in October. We also update you on an additional, more challenging route for our first ride of the season; a new scenic trail route for our oldest ride; and how a customer survey influenced our only multi-day ride.

If you rode the longest route on each of BikeMN's seven ride events from May-October, you'd cover 535 miles.





## Med City Meander

ROCHESTER

Saturday, May 23, 2026

15 or 25 miles and (new!) 50-mile Rotary Ramble Ride



In just two years, this Rochester-based ride has established itself as a scenic, friendly, worth-the-drive outing for families and casual cyclists seeking a spring challenge. This year, organizers aim to do even more — attracting distance cyclists alongside the multi-generational visitors and locals who have supported the Meander since its founding in 2024.

Route consultant Marty Cormack — a daily year-round rider who logged 9,000 miles in 2025 (“I’m retired”) — collaborated with the Rotary Club of Rochester on a new 50-mile route that includes the Great River Ridge State Trail. “It follows the route of an old milk train that went from Eyota to Plainview,” he explains, and includes bridges over the Whitewater River.

Ride Director Johannes Lorenz, a former professional skateboarder and native of Germany, “where biking is in everybody’s DNA,” says the additional route means the Meander is “catering

to everyone” — including “enthusiastic bike riders who go a lot of miles.”

The 15- and 25-mile routes showcase the trail network of Minnesota’s third largest city, winding through parks, past rivers and into neighborhoods. The Meander welcomes children on their first “big ride” and encourages inclusive and accessible bikes, including e-bikes, adaptive cycles and recumbents. “If you can pedal it or push it,” says Lorenz, “we want you there.”

Lorenz serves as a liaison among riders, volunteers, sponsors and organizations such as Little Thistle Brewing (which will host the after-party, featuring music by the Lonely Knees) and the local bike shops that provide mechanical support.

With more than 800 riders in each of its first two years, the Meander is poised to “own” Memorial Day weekend, says Lorenz, and enhance Rochester’s identity as a cycling destination: “We aren’t just showing off scenery. The Meander is an open house for the best of Rochester’s trails and local businesses.”

- Register and learn more: [bikemn.org/mcm](http://bikemn.org/mcm)



## Tour of Saints

SAINT JOSEPH

Sunday, July 19, 2026

18, 35 or 50 miles

New! Paved trail route: 50 miles



Locals may refer to it as “God’s country,” but Tour of Saints — whose tagline is “A Heavenly Little Ride” — has no religious affiliation.

The first organizers of BikeMN’s longest-running ride named it Tour of Saints “as a playful reference to all the towns in the area named after saints,” explains Ride Director Michael Doyle, who’s been affiliated with the 45-year-old tour since 1991.

While many cyclists relish the scenic, rolling landscape of the traditional course on quiet byways, Doyle is making plans to create an additional option: a level course traversing 50 miles on the Lake Wobegon Trail, from St. Joseph to Holdingford and back. Art in Motion — a community-focused gallery and gathering space — will be the halfway point and an attraction all its own.

Those who prefer a road ride can opt for 35 or 50 miles and decide at the 31-mile

mark how much distance they’re up for that day. “You have the choice to go 5 more miles to the finish or do an extra 15-mile loop,” Doyle explains.

Whichever route you choose, Doyle cites three reasons for doing Tour of Saints: scenery (“first timers are surprised”); camaraderie (“there’s a great relationship between the riders and volunteers”); and convenience. “It’s an hour out of the Twin Cities and drivable from Wisconsin and Alexandria,” he says.

Lodging is available on the western edge of St. Cloud, about a 10-minute drive from the ride’s launch in Saint Joseph, or at St. John’s University.

- Learn more: [bikemn.org/tos](http://bikemn.org/tos)





## Bicycling Around Minnesota

DETROIT LAKES-FERGUS FALLS-PERHAM

Thursday, August 13 to Sunday, August 16, 2026

60, 58, 64 and 41 miles (total: 223)

BAM has been showcasing the beauty of Minnesota's varied landscapes on four-day supported rides since 2006 and has been officially affiliated with BikeMN for several years. Averaging about 300 cyclists each year, the ride attracts people from around the country.

This year's adventure explores the scenic lake country of Otter Tail County in west-central Minnesota. The tour begins and ends in Detroit Lakes, with two nights there and additional overnights in Fergus Falls and Perham.

Along the way, riders will experience "pure lake-country charm," organizers say — from Detroit Lakes' monthly DL Cruise Night, when classic cars fill the streets the evening before BAM begins, to lively lake towns, thriving small-town arts scenes, historic downtowns, community events, and quiet roads winding past sparkling lakes and through prairies and hardwood forests.

After surveying participants last fall,

BAM organizers added luggage delivery to nearby hotels for cyclists who prefer indoor accommodations. "We're now tailoring our overnight locations so that the campsites are proximate to a hotel," says Lisa Rippe, a longtime member of the

BAM planning committee. Pork Belly Ventures, the Iowa-based RAGBRAI charter service, also offers housing in semi-trailers converted into bunkhouses, "so you never have to pack or unpack," Rippe explains.

E-bikes joined the BAM tour in 2025; a slightly higher registration fee covers the cost of bike charging. As in past years, the campsites will be the center of activity, with meals, a cash bar, yoga and entertainment.

- Learn more: [bambiketour.org](http://bambiketour.org)





# Twin Cities Bike Tour

MINNEAPOLIS | ST. LOUIS PARK | HOPKINS  
MINNETONKA | ST. PAUL

Saturday, October 10, 2026

24, 38 or 50 miles

As the Twin Cities Bike Tour (TCBT) enters its third season this fall, ride organizers are excited to announce some changes.

The Metro-Wide Metro Ride will again begin at Wabun Park in Minneapolis, with ready access to the Blue Line light-rail. But the timing of the TCBT will be different this year — moving from September to October and from a Sunday to a Saturday, “so riders can watch Sunday football games the day after the tour,” BikeMN Operations Director Ted Duepner explains.

Other details from Duepner and co-organizer Kerri Kolstad:

- **Fall weather:** A later start time for all three routes — 8:30 a.m. for 24 and 38 miles, 8 to 8:30 a.m. for 50 miles — “will allow things to warm up a little bit,” Duepner says. Temperatures in Minneapolis on October 10 average a low of 43.3 and a high of 61.3 degrees, and that’s “ideal bicycling weather,” he notes.



- **Rest stops:** Due to their popularity last year, the rest stops will remain the same in 2026, including Lyndale Farmstead Park, the Depot Coffee House in Hopkins, Venture Bikes Midtown on the Greenway and Dual Citizen Brewing Company in St. Paul, the final stop before returning to Wabun Park.
- **The route:** The longest route now extends to 50 miles, up 8 miles from last year, and includes part of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail. Thanks to the reopening of the Number 9 bridge near the University of Minnesota, “riders will get to skip the biggest climb they previously encountered on Franklin Avenue,” on the way to Dual Citizen, Duepner says, “and instead add a few miles on a bike/ped-only bridge and part of the Dinkytown Greenway.”
- **Loons Loop:** This free kid-friendly ride will happen on Saturday, October 3 (a week before the big ride and the day before the Twin Cities Marathon). The 4.5-mile course, capped at 150 riders, includes a new 2-mile Strider option for younger riders or even a run for their parents. Both rides are “99% trails,” Duepner says.



- **Bike Buddies program:** If you’ve never biked as part of a tour before, or you’re riding alone and looking for camaraderie, the Bike Buddies program is for you. Ten to 12 cyclists will join a group leader on the 24-mile route at a comfortable 10 mph pace, taking a break at all rest stops.



TCBT organizers are aiming for 2,000 riders on October 10. They hope to see more families participate, given that the school year will be well underway.

- Cosponsored by Access Hopkins: [facebook.com/AccessHopkins](https://www.facebook.com/AccessHopkins)
- For more information: [bikemn.org/tcibt](https://www.bikemn.org/tcibt)



# LATER-SEASON RIDES

We wait for warm weather in Minnesota and tend to fill our calendars with activities. So, find these rides online and sign up soon!

## Rock 'n' Roll the Lakes

ALBERT LEA

Saturday, August 15, 2026

10, 30 or 50 miles



- Co-sponsored by Albert Lea Area Cyclists: [bikemn.org/rock-n-roll](https://www.bikemn.org/rock-n-roll)

## Rosewood Gramble

THIEF RIVER FALLS

Saturday, September 19, 2026

5 routes: 29 or 64 miles (gravel), 7, 19 or 30 miles (paved)



- Co-sponsored by Bike Thief River Falls: [biketrf.org](https://www.biketrf.org)

## Kato Bike Fall Fest

MANKATO  
Saturday and Sunday, September 26-27, 2026

5 routes: 12, 25 or 50 miles (paved), 12 or 43 miles (gravel)



- Co-sponsored by Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates: [katobikewalk.com](https://www.katobikewalk.com)

# Bike and Pedestrian Accessibility Is Flowing Through Duluth

By  
Val Langer



Riders head down First Street from City Hall in Duluth during a Flow Street demonstration ride on October 3, 2025. PHOTO: VAL LANGER

Active transportation in Duluth had a pivotal year in 2025. The resurfacing of Sixth Avenue East in the Hillside neighborhood made the corridor more pedestrian-friendly. Duluth also welcomed a new BikeMN chapter, Vibrant Streets Duluth, and city councilors voted unanimously to establish the city's first transportation commission.



In early December, members of Vibrant Streets Duluth introduced a motion to redesign First Street downtown as a "Flow Street," a project championed by former City Councilor Azrin Awd.

The new transportation commission will study the concept and bring back recommendations within nine months.

## WHAT IS A FLOW STREET?

Flow Streets build on the Slow Streets movement, which began in Europe and Canada and expanded across the United States during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since 2020, versions of Slow Streets have appeared in San Francisco, Portland and Seattle.

Slow Streets typically include speed limits below 20 mph; signage that discourages cut-through traffic; and protective elements such as bollards near crosswalks, sidewalks or bike lanes.

Flow Streets expand on that approach. Rather than eliminating cars, Flow Streets aim to rebalance spaces so that walking, rolling, biking and driving can co-exist more safely and comfortably — all while allowing slow-moving cars and delivery vehicles to maintain access to properties and parking.

## WHY FIRST STREET?

Sitting one block uphill from Duluth's main downtown corridor, First Street was recently converted to two-way traffic. About 25 blocks — from Sixth Avenue West to 21st Avenue East — are being considered for the Flow Street concept.

Libby Bent, a bike commuter and founding member of Vibrant Streets Duluth, says First Street is a practical route through downtown because of its relatively low traffic volumes, flat terrain and proximity to amenities such as City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, the YMCA and Essentia Health.

It is also home to historic landmarks such as the Building for Women and the Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial, which honors the lives of Elias Clayton, Elmer Jackson and Isaac McGhie — three Black men whom a white mob lynched in Duluth on June 15, 1920.

Parts of the corridor show visible disinvestment, including fire-damaged buildings, vacant lots and underused properties. "Our First Street neighborhood has so much potential and is ready for revitalization efforts," says Mary Faulkner, executive director of the Program for Aid to Victims of Sexual Assault.

## CITYWIDE COLLABORATION

The newly formed Urban Excellence Institute, an initiative that connects residents, business owners and nonprofits, aims to improve safety, grow local businesses and promote connection among neighborhoods — all of which a Flow Street could help achieve.

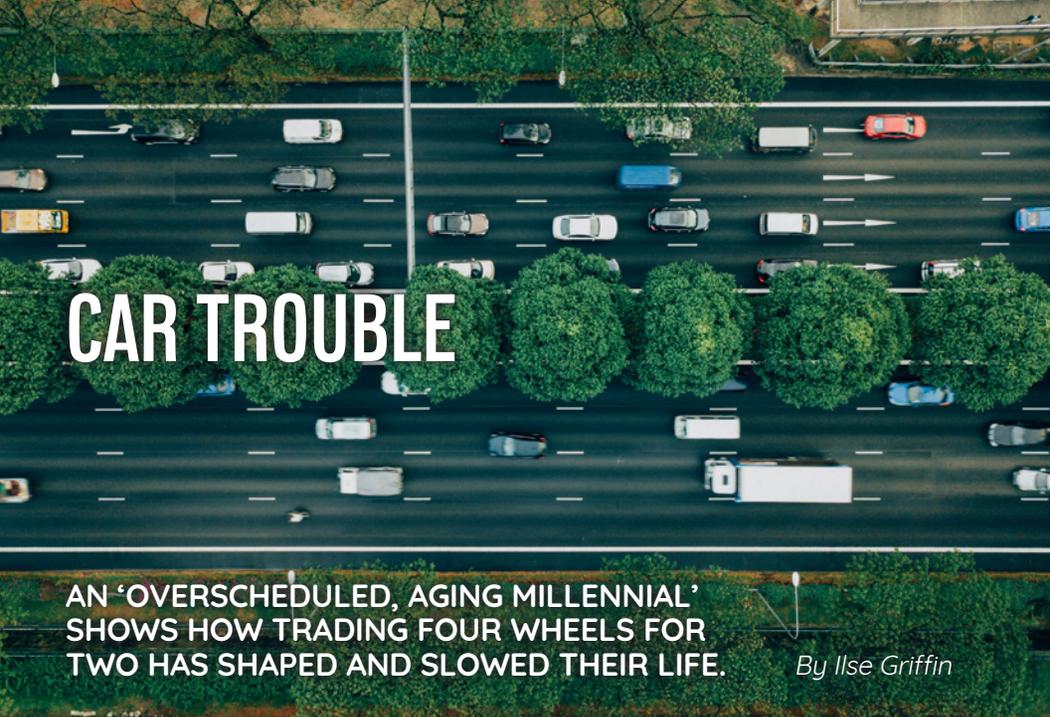
The University of Minnesota-Duluth (UMD) is engaged, too. Associate Professor of Art History Jennifer Webb and Duluth Senior Transportation Planner James Gittemeier, who teaches "Introduction to Urban Planning" at UMD, are incorporating the Flow Street concept into their college courses.

"We want to find ways to build capacity and include student engagement," says Webb, particularly on collaborations with the Twin Ports of Duluth and Superior, Wisconsin.

*Val Langer is BikeMN's northeast regional coordinator, based in Duluth.*

Map layout of the proposed Flow Street project area. IMAGE: VAL LANGER





# CAR TROUBLE

AN 'OVERSCHEDULED, AGING MILLENNIAL' SHOWS HOW TRADING FOUR WHEELS FOR TWO HAS SHAPED AND SLOWED THEIR LIFE.

By Ilse Griffin

We all know that it's better for the earth to forego driving, or at least to drive less. But most of us need a stake to make significant changes.

Here are two selfish reasons to rely less on a car: quality of time and cost of living. Step off the capitalist escalator and break the habit of unsustainable, breakneck busyness.

Even though most Americans swear by their convenience, cars create stress. The faster you can get around, *the more you need to get around*. You keep adding things to your life that don't fit. Plus, cars break, cost a ton of money, kill people, pollute, make noise, require storage, get stolen and leave you fuming in heavy traffic.

Relying on other modes of transport — biking, transit and walking — will force you to be less busy. Cars make us zoom around too fast and disconnect us from our bodies and communities. I have chosen a different, more meandering path.

## MAGICAL THINKING

I came of age as a young adult both in the United States and abroad (in Italy, Uganda, Laos and China) without a car, relying on public transit, bicycling, carpooling and walking to where I needed to go. As a result, I accepted transportation as something that usually involves time, patience and my own body to accomplish.

I have arranged my current lifestyle accordingly:

- I live in a central urban neighborhood on major bus lines and bike routes, within 4 miles of my job.



- My closest friends are all within 5 miles.
- I make frequent use of my Metro Go-To Card and three bikes (a daily bike, a winter bike and a crusty single speed that I'm less worried about locking up outside).

You may not need to go to a gym if you are cycling, walking or using transit.

My friends and family know by now that I'm unlikely to get to events in the suburbs, where there are fewer bus or bike routes, and that doesn't feel like a sacrifice to me. I prefer a small orbit of about a 5-mile radius, a distance that I can easily bike, bus or walk.

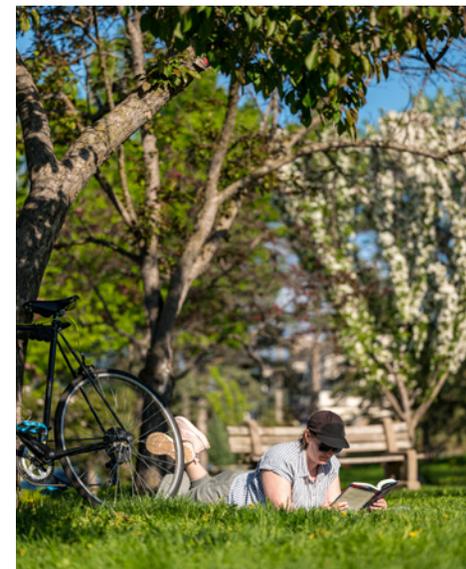
Sure, I have to factor in missed or late buses, biking into headwinds or walking to where I want to go. I don't schedule back-to-back engagements, and I automatically add a 30- to

60-minute cushion on either end of any obligation, depending on where it is. That means I often arrive early and get some relaxing time to sit down, walk around or read.

Multimodal transportation helps me honor my capacity and physical limits. I can get to only so many places every day. That leaves more free time to make art or rest. I do less because transport isn't this magical act where I sit in a box, push on a gas lever and then zoom away.

Actually, making use of your wits and legs, your ability to plan and your bus card to get around involves *more* magic and aliveness:

- The magic of unexpected encounters.
- The serenity of thinking or reading time as a bus driver takes care of the rest.



*continued, next page*

- The wind in your hair as you fly down a hill on your favorite bike.
- The rambling, reflective nature of walking or rolling long distances.



By refusing the car life, I embrace my humanness. I'm just one li'l guy who bumbles around town among a bunch of other little guys, many of whom don't have the privilege of even considering vehicle ownership.

Buying and maintaining a car costs upwards of \$13,000 per year.

— Source: American Automobile Association (AAA)

You get more familiar with neighborhoods, murals and what street life we have here in Minnesota, and you get a pulse on how people are doing. *Are encampments getting razed? Are more people houseless? Are police on every street corner in this neighborhood? Sitting behind a windshield in a metal box can make people less empathetic toward drivers, pedestrians, animals and cyclists.*

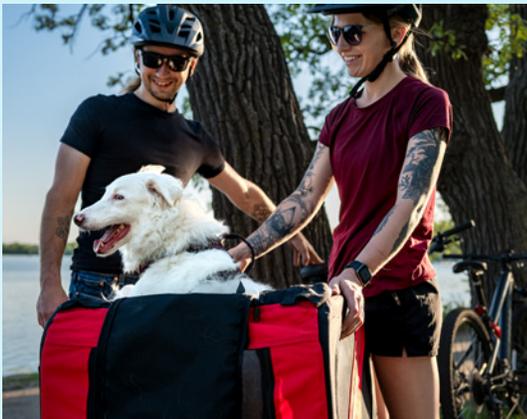
We are all out here together, getting around creatively — none of us more special or important than anyone else.

*Ilse Griffin (they/them) is education coordinator at BikeMN. A longer version of this essay appeared in Streets.mn on July 29, 2025.*

## CLEAN AIR ACT

“Every mile that you bike instead of drive keeps nearly a pound of carbon dioxide out of the air.”

— Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates



## IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR

There's Chicago Family Biking, Denver Family Biking, Ducks in a Row Bike Club of Fargo and Piecycle right here in Minneapolis. Child-oriented bicycling groups are becoming a trend both for community building among families and developing the next generation of cyclists.

Perennial Cycle in Minneapolis hosted a webinar in February 2026 for folks interested in starting a family-friendly bike club. Among the tips, courtesy of Piecycle founders Terri Lindenbaum and Levi Mills:

- Appoint a designated ride leader who starts the ride with a welcome talk.
- Publish the distance and ride speed ahead of time, so people know what to expect.
- Post the meet-up time; then allow 30 minutes for the actual rollout.
- Insurance waivers are recommended, either distributed online in advance or via a signup form at the ride meetup. Note: BikeMN chapters have access to Bicycle Alliance insurance coverage for social rides. Email Operations Director Ted Duepner: [ted@bikemn.org](mailto:ted@bikemn.org).



Learn more about Piecycle outings at [pie.bike](http://pie.bike) or [instagram.com/piecycleclub](https://www.instagram.com/piecycleclub).



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## River Valley 100 | Mankato | Sunday, August 30, 2026

100k gravel (62 miles, with a race option)

60k gravel (37 miles) and 100k paved

The popular 100-kilometer Courtland Gravel Loop (62.14 miles) takes cyclists along the river valley to Courtland, before heading back to Mankato. All routes begin and end at LocAle Brewing Company downtown. The 100k gravel race is part of the new Gravel 'Sota cycling series ([gravelsota.com](http://gravelsota.com)), a statewide effort to connect independent events. Note: These are unsupported rides.

• Co-sponsored by [katobikewalk.com](http://katobikewalk.com)

