

SHIFT



making ♥
memories



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And Miles to Go . . .

STATEWIDE STRATEGIES, LOCAL COMMITMENT FUEL BIEMN

Three years ago, I told someone it was going to be “incredibly difficult” to follow Dorian Grilley as executive director of the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota. I was right. I was also right that it would be worth every mile — and I have logged a lot of miles.

I’ve now visited and biked in 86 of Minnesota’s 87 counties (can’t wait to greet you, Lake of the Woods!). And I have driven more as the executive director of a bicycle organization than at any other point in my life. But covering an area roughly the size of the United Kingdom requires some serious road time.

In Minnesota, ‘Love Your Neighbor’ isn’t a bumper sticker. It’s who we are.

Rural and urban Minnesota have far more in common than politicians want us to believe:

- The same rules that prevent a small town from slowing traffic through its downtown also prevent safe bikeway crossings in the suburbs.
- The neglect that leaves rural communities without transit options is the same neglect that tells urban communities to keep waiting.



BikeMN Executive Director Michael Wojcik discusses e-moto legislation at the 2026 California Bicycle Summit.

- When you show up and listen, people remember — and that’s as true in Richfield as it is in Roseau.

Our strategic legislative package will serve as a foundation for 2027. Our e-moto bill didn’t cross the finish line this year, but it earned unanimous support from every committee it reached. Democrats and Republicans alike knew we had a good bill, which meant others tried to attach unrelated and sometimes controversial legislation to it.

Communities and law enforcement across the state are already learning about the misidentification of e-motos as trail-ready e-bikes. We’ll be back

next year determined to expand that education and, hopefully, with fewer barnacles on our bill.

Looking ahead, we have real work to do:

- End the criminalization of people who jaywalk.
- Confront the engineering culture at the Minnesota Department of Transportation’s Office of State Aid that treats speed as sacrosanct.
- Help the state address the perpetual debt we have created by building more roads than we can afford to maintain.

This year also brought pain none of us anticipated. Operation Metro Surge changed the lives of our team and our community in ways I am still processing. I am grateful to work alongside smart, passionate people — and members like you — who understand that loving your neighbor isn’t a bumper sticker. In Minnesota, it’s a demonstration of who we are.

Thank you for being part of this team. Now let’s go finish what we’ve started.

Michael Wojcik
Executive Director, BikeMN

Cover photos: Anthony V. Hall, Jerome Hass, Marco Mejia, Benjamin Zastrow

Highlights | Summer-Fall 2026

Gravel riding is a growing trend — including on three BikeMN rides this season.

By Amy Gage



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Twin Cities Bike Tour switches to October and offers longer routes in year 3.

By Amy Gage



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After 45 years, Tour of Saints added a new scenic route this past July.

Photos by
Anthony V. Hall

If your community lacks adequate bike parking, advocate and organize!

By Erik Noonan



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Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates is preparing for its largest event of the year: the second annual Kato Bike Fall Fest the weekend of September 26 and 27.

Organizers have two goals for the 500 participants they hope to attract: to get them rolling and to keep them still. No, those are not contradictory objectives.

- **Get rolling:** In addition to the 12- and 25-mile paved routes, a 50-mile paved route has been added for riders who want to challenge themselves in the scenic Minnesota River Valley. Also back this year are two gravel routes: 11.5 miles and a 43-mile route that adds 5 miles onto last year's longer gravel ride. All five of those rides will take place on Sunday, September 27.

- **Stay still:** "We're trying to give people a reason to stick around," says Kato Bike-Walk President Ben Scheidel. Centering the weekend's festivities at Mount Kato — with food trucks, adult beverages, cyclocross racing and a Saturday mountain biking event — is intended to encourage participants to arrive on Saturday and then hang around after their Sunday ride.

The experience is not for out-of-towners only. Locals may be familiar with Mankato's scenery and impressive cycling infrastructure, but the weekend will allow them to engage in a different way.



Mount Kato, a year-round sports facility, is hosting Kato Bike Fall Fest again in 2026.

"People who live in Greater Mankato may not have had an opportunity to celebrate community on our trails," says Kato Bike-Walk board member Chris Corley. "This is a celebration of community, including the



Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates encourages children and families to take part in Kato Bike Fall Fest, too.

Kato Bike Fall Fest rides again!

BikeMN board member Cindy Winters enjoys a slice of Dam Store pie, a highlight of Kato Bike Fall Fest in Mankato.



businesses and local governments that support cycling and walking as a healthy lifestyle."

WORTH THE STOPS

The favorite rest stop last year was at Javens Family Vineyard & Winery, in a valley near the Le Sueur River outside of town. "The riders enjoyed tasting wines," says Corley, whose wife, Jolly, organizes the Javens rest stop. The winery is opening on Sunday especially to accommodate Kato Bike Fall Fest, whose riders can order wine to be delivered to them at Mount Kato.

The 12-mile paved route will be the only one to stop at historic Minneopa State Park. Developed in 1905, the park features a double waterfall (the park's name means "water falling twice" in the Dakota language) and seven outbuildings constructed by the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s.

Family and Consumer Science students from Minnesota State University-Mankato are overseeing refreshments at the Minneopa rest stop, focusing on healthy snacks, energy balls and — as riders requested last year — just "more food," says Chris Corley with a laugh.

The area's popular Dam Store pie will be available at Mount Kato once cyclists complete

"All these communities within the Mankato biking community gave us ideas for this event."

— Kato Bike-Walk Board Secretary Becky Brooks

their ride. "We're trying to have more of a festive atmosphere," Scheidel says, with music and activities. "And the pie's at the end."

LEARN MORE: bikemn.org/kbff

Au Naturel

GRAVEL RIDING HAS GOT
A GRIP ON MINNESOTA.

With its rural landscapes and hilly, twisty back roads, Minnesota is becoming a go-to place for gravel bicycling and racing. In fact, La Crescent, in the scenic southeast corner of the state, hosted the USA Cycling Gravel National Championships in September 2025, where hundreds of competitors took on a 100-mile race.

Gravel cycling has quieter components, too — picturesque landscapes, largely car-free roads — as well as a sense of community that the new initiative Gravel 'Sota aims to capture and build upon. The brainchild of endurance athletes and marriage partners Mark and Kris Jessee of Level Be Adventures, Gravel 'Sota has created an inaugural series of 13 established gravel rides throughout the state that let cyclists earn points for participation.

Three of those are Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota rides that take place in August and September. The smallest,

Rosewood Gramble in Thief River Falls, hopes to double its attendance based on Gravel 'Sota's promotion.

"Every event has its own brand and group of followers," says Mark Jessee, who helped create the Gray Duck Grit ride in Cannon Valley the first weekend of September. "Kris and I would go to gravel events and love all the people and organizers."

Gravel 'Sota helps those organizers collaborate rather than compete by attracting a consistent community of gravel cyclists and building upon Minnesota's reputation as a place to meet the challenges and natural wonders of unpaved roads.

WHY RIDE GRAVEL?

Some athletes and everyday riders say gravel riding gives them a break from more traditional cycling:

- "For me, it's about being on roads where you don't have to worry so

much about traffic and you have a lot more variety in the terrain," says Chris Corley, an organizer of the Kato Bike Fall Fest in September, which features two gravel routes.

- "When I hit the road and the sun hits farms, it's so beautiful," says Gravel 'Sota co-founder Kris Jessee, a longtime marathon runner. "It brings you to a place of such peace, especially after being in a busy city and with a busy job."
- "Riding gravel in new areas adds some adventure," says Glen Kajewski, organizer of the Rosewood Gramble in September, which has two gravel routes. "I see a road that says, 'Dead End' or 'Minimum Maintenance,' and I wonder where it leads."
- "Gravel riding is a form of meditation for me, and therapy," says Mark Jessee. "The farther I go, the more relaxed I get. You get into a flow state."

The deadline to register for the 13-event series of Gravel 'Sota rides was June 1, but bicyclists can still sign up for individual gravel rides. See the full lineup at gravelsota.com and mark your calendar to register for the 2027 series next spring.

GO GRAVEL WITH BIKEMN

Among the 13 events that Gravel 'Sota is "amplifying" this year are three sponsored by the Bicycle Alliance of Minnesota. Learn more and register at bikemn.org/events.

River Valley 100 MANKATO



Sunday, August 30, 2026

Gravel: 37 and 62 miles
(the 100k has a race option).
Paved: 62 miles (100k).

- Co-sponsored by Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates:
katobikewalk.com

Rosewood Gramble THIEF RIVER FALLS



Saturday, September 19, 2026

Gravel: 29 and 64 miles.
Paved: 19 and 30 miles.

- Co-sponsored by Bike Thief River Falls: biketrf.org

Kato Bike Fall Fest MANKATO



Saturday and Sunday,
September 26–27, 2026

Gravel: 11 and 43 miles.
Paved: 12, 25 and 50 miles.

- Co-sponsored by Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates:
katobikewalk.com



SEEING DOUBLE \$\$

EMPLOYER MATCHES AND RIDE SPONSORSHIPS ARE TWO POWERFUL DONATION TOOLS.

By Dan Nemes, Development Manager

We're proud of the fact that BikeMN is a grassroots organization. No matter the amount, one-time donations and sustaining monthly memberships keep our education, community and advocacy programs rolling along. Thank you!

Your generous monetary contributions make Minnesota a great place to walk, bike and roll. I know that many of you also contribute your time and skills as volunteers at BikeMN events throughout the year.

Here are two more ways you can support our mission:

- First, if you've donated to BikeMN, **does your employer match employee charitable giving?** About 65% of larger corporations and some mid-sized companies will double your donation to BikeMN.

Each year between \$6 billion and \$10 billion potential matches go unclaimed in the United States, according to 4aGoodCause, which provides fundraising software for grassroots nonprofits.

If you're unsure whether your company offers a match, please email me: dan@bikemn.org. BikeMN will investigate whether you qualify for an employer match; if so, we'll fill out much of the paperwork for you.

- Second, you can help by **sponsoring one of our rides**. We are grateful, of course, for the large organizations that support BikeMN's rides, such as AARP, but any sponsorship amount helps keep our community rides accessible.

Would your neighborhood organization host an aid station on the next BikeMN ride? Does your employer or your own business want to connect with value-conscious customers by becoming a ride sponsor?

Contact Operations Director Ted Duepner, ted@bikemn.org, to learn about our reasonably priced sponsorship levels. There's still time to get your brand or business on all materials for the Twin Cities Bike Tour in October!

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We welcome your donation at bikemn.org/donate or use the QR code.



SPONSORS IN ACTION

Susan and David Sperstad of Tourright Bicycle Shop in Little Falls have served as volunteer mechanics and ride sponsors for Tour of Saints every July for five years. "It's fun to be with other people who like to ride bicycles and hear their stories," says David, who can fix a tire (no pun intended) in two minutes flat. "Bikes themselves can't talk, so we like to talk to those who ride them."



Board of Directors 2025-26

BOARD OFFICERS

Chair Reyna Lopez, Minneapolis
Vice Chair Wayne Hurley, Fergus Falls
Secretary Kim Struk, Roseville
Treasurer Tim Power, Afton

BOARD MEMBERS

Luke Ewald, Jackson
Andy Lambert, Minneapolis
Jan Matheus, Richfield
Anne Walli, St. Paul
Martha Wavrin, Belle Plaine
Cindy Winters, Mankato

Secretary Kim Struk, an engineer, joined the board in 2020. "BikeMN was more chaotic, more cowboy back then," she says with a laugh. "Now it's more stable, and we have a greater presence outstate. It's nice that our executive director does not live in the Twin Cities." Photo: Wolfie Browender



Former board member Don Checots tabled with current board Chair Reyna Lopez at the Eco-Fair on Summit in St. Paul on May 16, 2026, an initiative sponsored by local faith communities and climate-friendly organizations.

LEARN MORE about applying to become a Bicycle Alliance board member: bikemn.org/board



Third Time's the Charm

Interviews by Amy Gage

TWIN CITIES BIKE TOUR MOVES TO OCTOBER, WITH HOPES OF COOL-WEATHER RIDING.

Board Chair Reyna Lopez at the Dual Citizen rest stop.

The largest BikeMN event of the year — building community among 1,500 riders throughout the state (and beyond) and raising more money for our nonprofit advocacy group than any of our other organized rides — is moving from September to October in 2026.

Wabun Park in Minneapolis, the ride's headquarters.



This year's routes on Saturday, October 10, are 23.5, 38 and 50 miles, along with a family-friendly Loons Loop ride a week before, on Saturday, October 3.

Longtime BikeMN Operations Manager Ted Duepner, co-organizer of the third annual Twin Cities Bike Tour (TCBT) in Minneapolis, explains what will be new and what will feel familiar to the ride's regulars.

How will the October timeframe benefit the ride?

Last year October 10 was low of 50, high of 69. In 2024 it was low of 50, high of 79. We're hoping this will reduce concerns about high heat and wildfire smoke. The last few years

the fair-weather riding season has extended way into November for most riders.

We also moved from Sunday to Saturday this year, at the urging of our ride director, Kerri Kolstad. She is a big Vikings fan, so she wanted riders to be able to watch the football game the next day or attend Sunday religious services.

What's new with the routes this year?

After some great feedback, we've decided to offer a longer route and refine our main routes by getting rid of the steep climb up Franklin Avenue on the way to the Dual Citizen rest stop.

The new 50-mile route lets riders experience some of the most beautiful sections of the Nine Mile Creek Regional Trail. Other new sections include the number 9 bridge connecting to the Dinkytown Greenway, the University of Minnesota Transitway and more.

What is fun and familiar?

A single rate for all routes so you can even decide the day of the ride if you want to go for a longer or shorter distance than you originally planned. We're also happy to continue offering the family-friendly Loons Loop on Saturday, October 3. Riders can choose from a 4.5-mile loop or have your kiddo on their strider while you jog a 2-mile out-and-back.

Who are your main sponsors? Any new sponsors you're excited about?

AARP continues to offer support for all our events. We're also happy to highlight the huge support we receive from our bike shop partners — Velofix, Tangletown Bike and Gateway Cycle — to keep participants rolling. Rest stop partners like Venture Bikes, Depot Coffee House and Dual Citizen Brewing are super gracious hosts for TCBT as well.



Erin Simon-Skoglund, state & community engagement analyst, AARP.





And hey, what about the food?

We always make sure everyone is fueled up at the start, as well as during and after the ride. We're working to get additional food trucks at several rest stops and the finish this year for those who want something more substantial and to support these local businesses. Dual Citizen will continue to offer discounted beverages for riders, too!

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER:
bikemn.org/tcbt



TCBT ride director Kerri Kolstad and BikeMN's Ted Duepner.

EDUCATION AND OPTIMISM

Ellen Cart was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes when she was 13 years old. She's now 30. "I've been managing and living with it for years," says Cart, an effervescent woman who relishes her role organizing walks and rides for Breakthrough T1D, a diabetes research and advocacy foundation.

As she did last year, Cart will oversee the Lyndale Farmstead rest stop at mile 7.3 on the Twin Cities Bike Tour (TCBT). "I'm the runner and conversationalist," she explains. "I kind of do it all," including assisting staff members in handing out sunglasses, ChapStick, sunscreen and snacks and refilling Gatorade jugs.

"Peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches are a big thing at our rest stops," Cart laughs. "We ran out of everything last year."

Pickle shot challenges are popular, too. "Folks who take a video of themselves doing a shot and tag it in social media get entered in a drawing," says Cart. And pickle juice has electrolytes, which sweating cyclists need.

The more serious goal is to demystify diabetes in talks with



Allison Courtney (left), a ride coach for Breakthrough T1D, and Development Manager Ellen Cart.

of bicyclists for organized rides — including its own events. The Minnesota and Dakotas chapter takes part in five destination rides around the country, as well as casual local rides where diabetic participants can support one another if their blood sugar is low or they're having "an off day," Cart explains.

"We welcome everybody. Whether you have a connection to T1D or not, we want people to know that we're here."

LEARN MORE:
ride.breakthrough1d.org

hundreds of bicyclists. "We really like to spark up conversations," says Cart. People often misunderstand the difference between Type 1 diabetes, which requires daily insulin therapy, and Type 2, which can be managed through diet and exercise.

"It's finding the right activities that work for you and your body," Cart explains. "No one is diagnosed the same: your symptoms, how you develop it. You don't know what causes your pancreas to just fail."

What a cure may eventually look like will also differ among diabetics, she says.

Breakthrough T1D supports the Twin Cities Bike Tour, in part, because it wants to grow a younger generation



Snacks are essential at the Twin Cities Bike Tour's first rest stop, but for sponsor Breakthrough T1D, education is important, too.

double duty at the depot coffee house

Roxanne Wolfe doesn't own a bicycle, let alone ride one, and yet she was overjoyed when "so many bicyclists" stopped by the Depot Coffee House in Hopkins for the second annual Twin Cities Bike Tour in September 2025.

The coffee house, which Wolfe manages along with the Hopkins Center for the Arts, was the second rest stop on the 34- and 41-mile routes last year. It drew about 300 riders exploring the west metro on TCBT, the Bike Alliance's largest fundraising ride.

Many of them wanted "double shots of espresso to go" that Wolfe and her team members were selling inside, along with the granola bars and fresh fruit that volunteers were handing out.

"That was an exciting time for the Depot staff to experience last year, me included," she recalls. Wolfe "jumped in" to assist the two staff members on duty and can even laugh — now — when she describes how the



More than 300 bicyclists descended last year on the Depot Coffee House in Hopkins, which sits at mile 16.5 of the Twin Cities Bike Tour's two longer routes.

espresso machine quit working amid the joyful chaos.

"It was only for about five minutes," she says. "It needed a moment to rest."

The Depot Coffee House is the second rest stop for this year's TCBT on the 38- and 50-mile routes. Sitting at the 16.5-mile point, it will again keep staff members and volunteers hopping. Wolfe plans to add a third employee to the mix that day.

She invites TCBT riders to use the restroom facilities inside the Depot Coffee House, even if they aren't purchasing a coffee drink or a signature goodie — Masala chai

scones, chocolate chip sea-salt cookies — from Dessert Diaries, which partners with the Hopkins coffee shop.

"Let people know they are welcome and that we're open year-round," says Wolfe, who has overseen the Depot Coffee House since November 2024. Given her location on a Three Rivers Park District trailhead, she expects to be serving bicyclists for many years to come.

LEARN MORE: facebook.com/thedepotcoffeehouse



Sustain Saint Paul board member Melissa Wenzel has managed the Dual Citizen Brewing rest stop since 2024. "It's just so much fun," she exclaims. "We get to see a lot of people, and they're all grateful for all the host sites and volunteers."

LEARN MORE: sustainstpaul.org

YES, in My Backyard

If you live in Minneapolis, Richfield or St. Paul, you don't have to go far to reach the Twin Cities Bike Tour at Wabun Park in southeast Minneapolis.

So, why join an organized ride that you could easily access and ride for free?

Here's what some of our hometown riders told us from last year:

CAMARADERIE: "Most important is the social side of the ride. It's a very large group of people who share my love of biking."

CAUSE: "I ride to support BikeMN. Being able to ride in community with a purpose is one of my highlights for the year."

CURIOSITY: "I love being a tourist in my own city. At events like the Twin Cities Bike Tour, I always learn something new or see something familiar from a new perspective, which makes me feel more rooted in my community."

CONVENIENCE: "Since I don't own a car, I was looking for a fun, supported ride that I didn't have to rent a car to get to, like I do on out-of-town rides."

CHALLENGE: "Last year I chose to do the long route as a distance goal for myself on a fitness journey. Signing up for the 40-plus-mile route was a way to have an achievable, fun goal with a set route to follow."

LEARN MORE AND REGISTER: bikemn.org/tcbt



Roxanne Wolfe has worked for the City of Hopkins since 2015. Among the Depot Coffee House's funders is Hopkins Public Schools, which anchors its Hopkins/Minnetonka Youth Advisory Board there.

Discover the 'MINNESOTA' in BikeMN

OUR CHAPTERS ENSURE THAT WALKING, BIKING AND ROLLING REMAIN PRIORITIES STATEWIDE.



Rolling in Rochester

Lucy Kruesel is the fourth person BikeMN has hired for a part-time position in Greater Minnesota. She carries the title of southeast regional coordinator, but her focus is Rochester, where she is a sixth-generation resident.

Kruesel's history with the community and her own diverse interests means she brings experience in a multitude of roles: "business owner, citizen, bike rider, rural person, car driver. It's messy," Kruesel explains. "And people don't like that. They can't square me into a certain thing."

Her father owns John Kruesel's General Merchandise, an antiques and restoration store on Historic Third Street SW in downtown Rochester. "I know many of the city people, and my dad knows everyone," says Lucy, whose own business, Diatom Books (diatombooks.com), is also in the Downtown Historic District.

Tensions are rising as Rochester tries to "hybridize" its streets for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and motorists.

"Parking has always been a hot topic," she says. "Small businesses need to know that they can receive deliveries and get takeout to their customers as



Lucy Kruesel and a graduate of the Safe Riders Club at Kellogg Middle School who got a "new" used bike through We Bike Rochester.

well as adjacent parking for all kinds of bodies. We have to work together to figure this out."

Bikers, walkers and rollers want safe, separated infrastructure, too. "We're growing faster in Rochester than we can really keep up with," explains Kruesel, who began her BikeMN job last April. "My main charge is culture building. I need to talk with a lot of

people: What are the main concerns and misunderstandings?"

An educator who has worked on bicycling initiatives for middle-school students, people in recovery, adult learners and more, Kruesel wants to soften the sharp-edged stereotypes that bicyclists hold for drivers and vice-versa. And to broaden the definition of who a "bicyclist" really is.

"The work might not look like, 'Let's get everyone on a bicycle seven days a week,'" she explained before leading a talk about Bike to Work Day in May. "You don't need fancy gear. You don't need to do it every day. It's about reminding people that it's pretty fun to ride your bike!"



PHOTO BY EMMA SIMPSON ON UNSPLASH (UNSPLASH.COM)



Feet First in Mankato

Greater Mankato Bike and Walk Advocates takes the "walk" in its name seriously. Its plans for Walktober include an Awareness Walk for elected officials — co-hosted with the SMILES Center for Independent Living — to investigate walking infrastructure in Mankato.

Kato Bike-Walk also is promoting Mankato's year-round CityArt Walking Sculpture Tour and the 5K that will be part of Kato Bike Fall Fest in September.

LEARN MORE:

katobikewalk.com/events/walktober

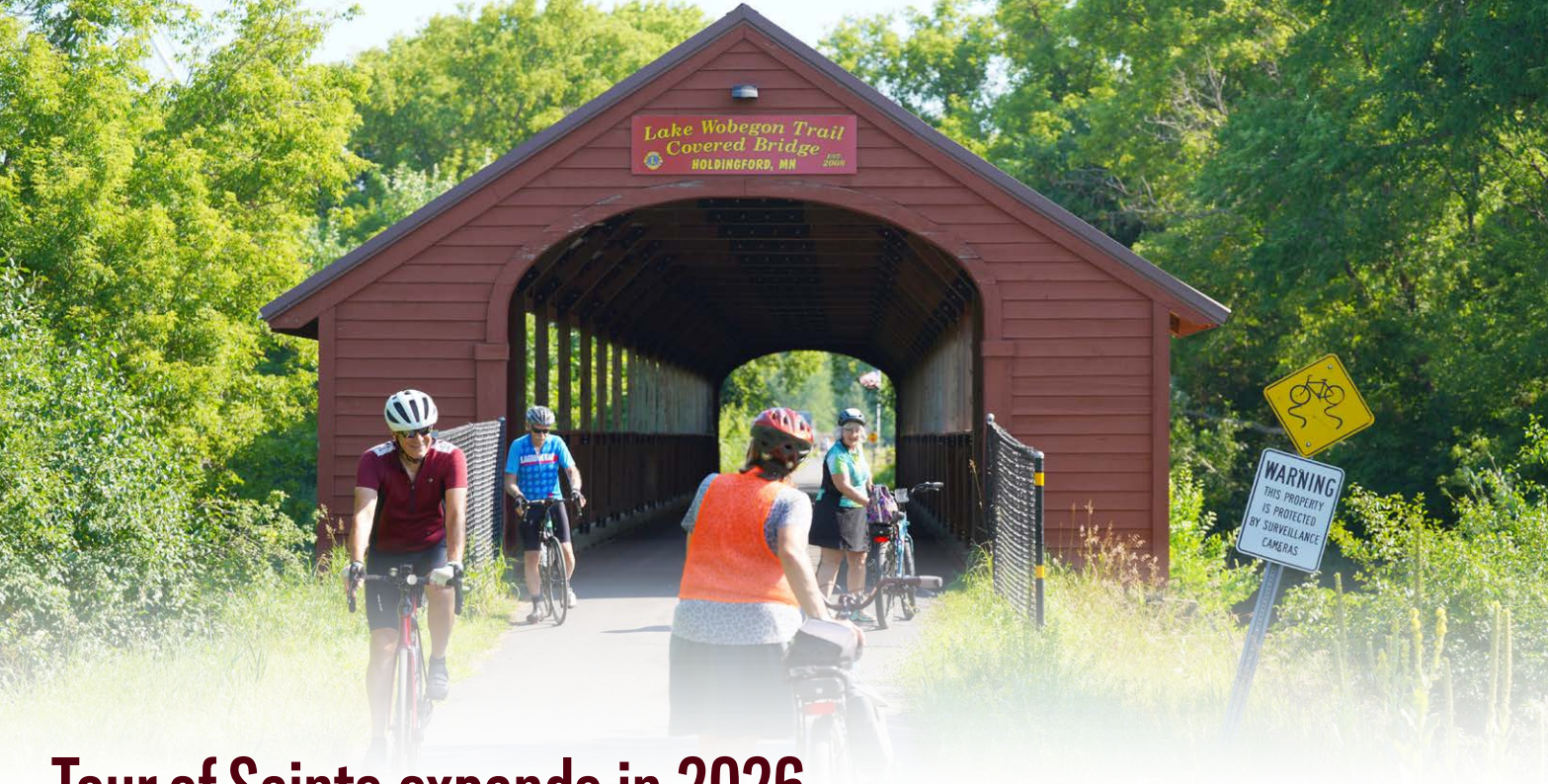


Vibrant Streets in Duluth

Northeast Regional Coordinator Val Langer (right) tables with Kristin Zarr, a member of the BikeMN chapter Vibrant Streets Duluth, at Duluth's inaugural First Street Friday event in June. The event featured live music, free food, dancing, outdoor yard games and guided tours of the nearby Clayton Jackson McGhie Memorial.

"These block party-style events aim to bring interest and energy back to downtown despite years of neglect," Langer explains. Duluth hosted a second First Street Friday on July 31.





Tour of Saints expands in 2026

Adding a new route or lengthening existing routes is a theme on Bicycle Alliance rides this year. Tour of Saints is no exception

For the 45th annual ride in St. Joseph, ride director Michael Doyle debuted a 50-mile out-and-back ride on the Lake

Wobegon Trail in addition to the two paved road routes of 35 or 50 miles.

The 75 adventurers who tried the largely flat rails-to-trails route hit their halfway mark at Art in Motion in Holdingford — after a jaunt through a covered bridge — on a hot, sunny

Sunday in July. Gatorade and ice cream rewarded their efforts.

Below from left: Husband-and-wife teams Ron and Mary Ann Rennie and Bill and Karen Bandar provided cool drinks, cut fruit and an assortment of candy bars at a rest stop in Avon for the Lake Wobegon Trail riders.



PHOTOS BY ANTHONY V. HALL:
ANTHONYVHALLPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

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.



SAINT PAUL
BICYCLE COALITION



bikemn.org/submit-event



The OK Corral

By Erik Noonan

PERSISTENCE AND CREATIVITY CONVINC ST. PAUL TO UPDATE ITS BIKE-PARKING POLICY.

Bicyclists and multimodal activists celebrate the new bike corral outside Dunn Bros Coffee on Grand Avenue in St. Paul.

Sarah Johnson moved to St. Paul from Nebraska in 2023 knowing exactly what bad bike infrastructure policy looks like — she’d watched a city tear out the corral she had spent years getting installed in front of her bike and coffee shop in Omaha.

So, Johnson knew what to look for when she landed in Macalester-Groveland and joined the neighborhood’s community council. Two years after she and her husband settled in, she discovered that a streetscape redesign on a prime stretch of Grand Avenue had eliminated 20-some bike racks on sidewalks between Snelling and Fairview avenues without considering how on-street bike parking could be employed.

(For the record, the city later replaced many of the sidewalk hoop racks.)

“I was shocked that on-street bike parking wasn’t discussed during the Grand Avenue streetscape redesign.”

— Sarah Johnson, community advocate

Johnson went to work with the Macalester-Groveland Community Council (MGCC), where she now serves as a board member. “If you don’t see infrastructure where you want it, start having conversations,” says Johnson, a BikeMN member and board member of the Saint Paul Bicycle Coalition, one of 11 BikeMN chapters.

ALL-WEATHER PARKING

Even though the City of Saint Paul has had a bike-parking policy since 2019, it placed every burden for corrals on the adjacent business: purchase, installation, seasonal removal, winter storage, spring reinstallation, sweeping, permitting fees. That explains why city transportation planner Jimmy Shoemaker previously knew of only one bike corral in the entire city, at Bang Brewing.

Last spring, Johnson and other bicycling enthusiasts stood outside Dunn Bros Coffee at 1569 Grand Ave. and cut the ribbon on St. Paul’s newest on-street bike corral. It is one of four corrals on Grand Avenue for which MGCC secured \$11,000 in funding through the Commercial Corridor Program, a \$1.4 million economic development fund that the City Council created in 2025.

“When someone shows up not in a car and they see that there is dedicated bike parking, they get to have the reaction of, ‘Oh, this is for me? I belong here,’” says Johnson, a year-round bicyclist. “It is intentional.”

Knowing that community council funding would cover the purchase and ongoing maintenance of the Grand Avenue corrals, Johnson and Hugo Bruggeman — who chairs the MGCC Transportation Committee — were free to research peer cities, get vendor quotes, propose specific locations and stay engaged with the city.

After examining several vendor options, MGCC went with Parkitect in Isanti, Minnesota, which promotes green infrastructure and active transportation (and offered a 15 percent discount and free delivery and installation). “I thought it was cool that Macalester-Groveland challenged us to leave these out year-round,” says Shoemaker.



Community organizer Sarah Johnson has launched a consulting business, *SJ Starts It*, to empower creativity and local change (sjstartsit.com).

Given its departure from the old policy, that decision required clearance from the Department of Public Works and coordination with snowplow drivers. Snow clearing inside the corrals will be handled by participants in the Work Now! program at The Listening House, a daytime shelter for people experiencing poverty and homelessness.

Seven other St. Paul neighborhoods improved bike parking as part of

the Commercial Corridor program, buying custom racks from Parkitect. “We were the only neighborhood that went with corrals,” says Johnson, noting that the Macalester-Groveland Community Council wanted to demonstrate more equitable street design for all modes of travel.

Each corral can comfortably hold 10 bikes:

- The corral in front of Dunn Bros occupies a single on-street parking space, as does the newest corral two blocks west near the St. Paul Meat Shop.



Top photo: The bike corral outside Kowalski’s Market in St. Paul sits in a former “no parking” zone. Lower photo: The corral outside Dunn Bros comfortably holds 10 bikes.

- The one at Kowalski’s Market a few blocks east is in a no-parking zone.
- The fourth corral is behind Catzen Coffee’s patio at 1416 Grand Ave.

Shoemaker expects to see more year-round bike corrals in St. Paul, provided funding can be found.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

It helped that Macalester-Groveland is one of St. Paul’s most resourced district councils, with two paid staff members in a high-income neighborhood that named sustainability a top value at its 2025 Mac-Grove Fest.

Johnson shrugs off any implication that the corrals are her victory alone. “I had a lot of time on my hands,” she says. “I’m a privileged white woman, and I know that I need to use that privilege for good.”

She urges other neighborhood organizers to “aim high” in pursuit of their own bike corrals. Her pro-tips include:

- Find the right team to work with.
- Ask for more than you think you’ll need.
- Bolster your argument with data points.
- Use your connections.

In short: “Persist,” Johnson says. “And then take a pause.”

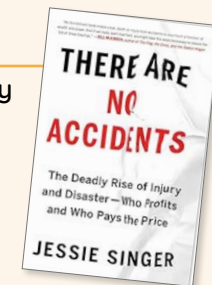
Erik Noonan is communications manager at BikeMN and co-chair of the board at Streets.mn

Consuming Content

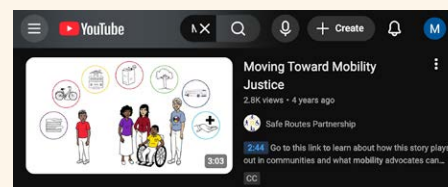
Here’s what a few members of our BikeMN team are reading and watching.

Ted Duepner / Operations Director

The book “**There Are No Accidents: The Deadly Rise of Injury and Disaster**” (Simon and Schuster), by journalist Jessie Singer, changed the way I feel about the built environment vs. personal responsibility. As one writeup says: ‘Singer uncovers how the term *accident* protects those in power and leaves the most vulnerable in harm’s way.’”



CJ Lindor / Education & Policy Manager

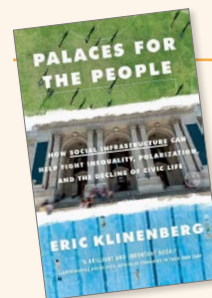
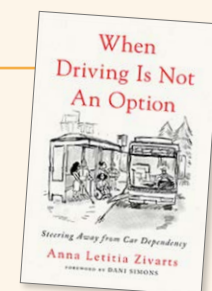


In 3 minutes, the Safe Routes Partnership video on mobility justice (YouTube) provides an overview of the historic, racial and economic inequalities in transportation systems. “Black, brown and Indigenous people have less access to safe and convenient transportation

and public spaces,” the opening says. Search (Google) “**Moving Toward Mobility Justice YouTube**” and learn how we can make things better.

Val Langer / Northeast Regional Coordinator

Reading Anna Zivarts’ book, “**When Driving Is Not an Option: Steering Away from Car Dependency**” (Island Press), helped me shift from being car-reliant to feeling confident in navigating my life around Duluth without a car, across different modes. I now think more often about how our transportation systems could be more accessible.



Erik Noonan / Communications Manager

“**Palaces for the People**” (Penguin Random House), by Eric Klinenberg, is both the book I have loaned out most often and the one that has most personally informed me. It looks at how the ways we build and program our public spaces determines how well our communities can face challenging times and natural disasters.

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Above: An e-moto on the Martin Olav Sabo Bridge over Hiawatha Avenue in Minneapolis.

E-bike or e-moto?

[Northfield.org](https://www.northfield.org) editor Griff Wigley recently wrote about “The E-Moto Problem,” explaining that the high-powered machines — often without functioning pedals — are treated legally in Minnesota “like electric motorcycles and mopeds.”

In short, they aren’t e-bikes (limited to 28 mph) and can’t be ridden on sidewalks or trails.

LEARN MORE: bikemn.org/ebike