



STATE BICYCLE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Annual Newsletter
2005



August 2005

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Sometimes an idea requires a long incubation period before becoming reality. The first issue of the State Bicycle Advisory Committee's Annual Letter is a case in point because Kristine Poelzer, a committee member from 1998 to 2002, introduced the idea several years ago. Her stated purpose for the annual letter mirrors our purpose today which is to document the accomplishments and activities of SBAC for the year and to raise awareness of and interest in the SBAC within Minnesota. We're proud to send you our first issue. Please read it and share it with other bicyclists.

Sincerely,
Mary Nelsestuen
State Bicycle Advisory Committee Chair

Share the Road kicks off

-Mary Nelsestuen, Metro Rep

On Bike Safely to Work Day, May 19, 2005, Minnesota Lt. Gov/Transportation Commissioner Carol Molnau kicked off 'Share the Road,' the state's new bicycle safety education program promoting bicycle safety on and along Minnesota's roads. The goal of "Share the Road" is to educate bicyclists as well as motorists about how they can share the road safely and reduce their chances of being involved in a crash that results in injury or death.

Lt. Gov. Molnau welcomed riders and read a proclamation from Governor Tim Pawlenty proclaiming May 15-19 as Bike Safely to Work Week in Minnesota. Other speakers included St. Paul Mayor, Randy Kelly and the Department of Public Safety Commissioner, Michael Campion.

"We want to encourage people to ride their bikes to work, school and other activities," Molnau said. It's a healthy, environmentally sound and fun way to travel, but it should also be a safe way to travel."

The "Share the Road" program is a partnership between Mn/DOT and the State Bicycle Advisory Committee. Bicycle safety education has been a top priority for the SBAC since 2002. An SBAC sub-committee, together with Mn/DOT's bicycle and pedestrian section, Office of Communications and Public Relations, Pepin Hugunin - a consulting firm and the design company of Hall/Kelley developed the "Share the Road" program with input from the entire SBAC committee. This process included researching other bicycle safety education programs and defining the program's mission, goals, audiences, and key messages. The Twin Cities Bicycling Club played a major role by planning the bicycle routes for Bike Safely to Work Day and providing ride leaders for those rides. *Continued pg. 2*



Mary Nelsestuen and Congressman Oberstar at the 8th Annual Ride with Congressman Oberstar in June.

Share the Road continued from pg. 1

The "Share the Road" message began with our website www.sharetheroadmn.org. The website includes information on the rules of the road, crash facts, bicycle education, helmets, children's bicycle safety, news and events, and resources. It was followed by the Bike Safely to Work event on May 19th. Since then our large "Share the Road" banner and printed materials have been available at many prominent state bicycle events, the Steele County Fair and the Minnesota State Fair. Thanks to James Connolly - Department of Public Safety, brochures and posters have also been placed in some of the Driver's exam stations around the state. Our large posters are also illuminated in the City Lights display cases in some of the skyways in Minneapolis, St. Paul and Duluth.

Bicycle safety education was one of my goals when I interviewed for a position on the State Bicycle Advisory Committee five years ago, so it was personally very rewarding to be involved in developing the process and attending the launch of the "Share the Road" program in Minnesota. Our hope is that the "Share the Road" safety messages usher in additional public education campaigns that promote the wide range of benefits that come from bicycle transportation.

University of Minnesota begins Low Cost Helmet/Light Program

-Steve Sanders, Metro Rep

In an effort to improve cyclist safety on campus, the University of Minnesota has begun a low-cost bicycle helmet and lights program. Patterned after a similar program at the University of Washington, the University provides bicycle helmets, and front and rear bicycle lights for \$20 a set. The program was launched in late April of 2005, and to date has sold nearly 1,000 helmet and light sets. By removing the cost hurdle, it seems apparent that more students, as well as staff and faculty, will wear helmets and use lights. Unlike one-time promotions, the University program is ongoing, with an initial partnership of departments that included Parking and Transportation, Housing and Residential Life, Wellness, and Boynton Health Service. Please contact Steve Sanders at Parking and Transportation at sande017@umn.edu for more information.

District 6 Representative says good-bye

-Charlie Quigg, Former District 6 Rep

When asked to contribute for the SBAC annual letter, I reflected on my recently concluded six year tenure on the committee. I am hopeful that in some ways my participation helped fulfill the SBAC motto, "Promote bicycling and its acceptance in Minnesota." Some of the goals set and accomplishments achieved include:

- ~Aided the establishment of the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) in Minnesota
- ~Reviewed and revised the State Bicycle Plan
- ~Commented on and assisted to shape goals and objectives for the ongoing Share the Road campaign

On a personal level, I have learned a lot through:

- ~Participating in two Pro Walk/Pro Bike conferences (St. Paul and Victoria, BC)
- ~Attending numerous James Oberstar forums (hosted by U of M Center for Transportation Studies)
- ~Attending Mississippi River Trail meetings
- ~Contributing toward formation of and participation in Southeastern Minnesota Association of Regional Trails (SMART)

All of which have helped to prepare me to serve as a proponent for citizen participation in transportation planning in Rochester/Olmsted county. I hope other participants in the SBAC and friends of the SBAC gain experiences as I have.



Charlie Quigg, Former District 6 Representative and Chair

League of American Bicyclists National Bike Summit 2005

-Lisa Austin, Metro Rep

Over three hundred people from 47 states attended the Fifth Annual National Bike Summit sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists in Washington D.C. March 16-18, 2005. The purpose of the National Bike Summit is to make the interests of bicyclists more visible to representatives of the House and Senate. I was honored to represent both the State Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Twin Cities Bicycle Club.

Widespread Support

It is an exciting time to be advocating for bicycling issues. We are no longer a small special interest group. There is bipartisan support from many agencies including public health and transportation. A relatively small investment in bicycling facilities can potentially save a lot of money in the long run on health, environment and developing transportation infrastructure.

The Universe of Bicyclists

Even though we have a lot of support it is still difficult to express how many people we represent because it is hard to define the universe of bicyclists. Bicyclists are a very large and diverse population, but many people who ride bikes don't call themselves bicyclists. From BMX-ers, to commuters, mountain bikers, touring bikers, road racers, trail riders on hybrid bikes, and families with bikes who ride around the campground or to the Dairy Queen – we are all riding bikes!

Transportation Funding

Federal Highway Transportation Bills are introduced every 5-6 years. The last bill, TEA-21, officially expired in September of 2003. While at the Bike Summit, we lobbied on Capitol Hill for bicycle funding to be increased in the new bill. Our efforts seemed to help, the new Federal Highway Transportation Bill, SAFETEA-LU, passed in late July with many of the "asks" we requested, For a summary of the bicycling related items that made it into SAFETEA-LU visit www.bikeleague.org.

League of American Cyclists

The League was founded as the League of American Wheelmen in 1880. Bicyclists, known then as "wheelmen", were challenged by rutted roads of gravel and dirt and faced antagonism from horsemen, wagon drivers, and pedestrians. In an effort to improve riding conditions so they might better enjoy their newly discovered sport, over 100,000 cyclists from across the United States joined the League to advocate for paved roads. The success of the League in its first advocacy efforts ultimately led to our national highway system. Please consider joining the League of American Cyclists. For only \$30 a year you can support this very important organization. Membership includes a subscription to Bicycling Magazine. For more on the League visit the www.bikeleague.org.



Lisa Austin and Nick Mason present the Mn/DOT bicycle modal plan to Congressman Oberstar.

Pro Walk/Pro Bike 2004: A Fertile Field for Advocacy Strategies

-Michael R. Huber, Metro Rep

The September 2004 edition of *Pro Walk/Pro Bike* was a seminal event for advocates of non-motorized transportation alternatives. This most recent staging of the biennial conference was held in Victoria, British Columbia – allowing experts in traffic engineering, community planning, public safety, and public health to present the latest findings, standards,

and design innovations. No other single event equals *Pro Walk/Pro Bike* in its breadth and scale, affording a unique opportunity for advocates, professionals, and regular walkers and bicyclists to compare notes and consider steps to take in promoting better accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians.

The National Center for Bicycling and Walking (www.bikewalk.org) staged the first of these meetings in 1980. At that time, the focus was on bicycling, and 200 people participated. In 1994, the conference program expanded to address pedestrian facility design and related issues. My first exposure to the conference was in 2002, when it was staged in St.

Paul, Minnesota. It was a revelation! I can't imagine a better way to quickly sample the range of design and advocacy strategies being brought to bear across the United States and Canada, enriched further by presenters from Australia, Europe, and other parts of the world.
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Pro Bike/Pro Walk

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The 2004 event was a superb successor to the St. Paul experience. The organizing theme in Victoria was "Creating Active Communities." The 600+ participants were offered a number of sessions exploring the evidence that the way in which we design our communities affects how active we are, which in turn affects how healthy

we are. It now appears that efforts to make communities safer and more attractive for walking and bicycling can contribute to physical activity levels and the health of those communities. Barbara McCann was one of the presenters summarizing this information. Her presentation can be downloaded at: www.mnsbac.org. Other presentations can be found at www.bikewalk.net

Lawrence Frank from the University of British Columbia (recently relocated from Georgia Tech) provided an overview of some recent research showing how residents of more sprawling, less-walkable environments in the U.S. are putting on weight. This accumulating evidence helps provide even more justification for making sure we can get around on foot and by bike.

Check out the full spectrum of presenters and topics from Victoria on the conference website (www.bikewalk.org/PWPB2004/presenter_schedule.htm), and start making plans to attend the September 2006 meeting, being planned for Madison, Wisconsin.

Meeting Congressman Oberstar: National Champion of Bicycling and the Only Congressman to Cast a Congressional Vote in Spandex Bike Shorts! - Lisa Austin, Metro Rep

A highlight of the SBAC Annual meeting in August 2004 was a visit from a friend-to-bikers, Congressman James Oberstar. He shared the story of how he became such an avid cyclist. After his wife's long fight with cancer he turned to bicycling for healing, a sport he and his wife enjoyed together. One of her wishes was that something good would come from her death.

Over the course of time and as Oberstar's interest in cycling grew, he realized he could make a real difference in the environment, health and quality of life for Americans by creating legislation to promote bicycling. Gradually he included biking issues in various transportation bills and other legislation. He recounted numerous stories of successful bike projects throughout the

country helping more and more people get interested in the sport. Congressman Oberstar sees his influence on biking legislation as a way to as a way to honor his wife's memory.



Above left to right: Darryl Anderson –State Bicycle Coordinator, Congressman Oberstar, Mary Nelsestuen-SBAC Chair, Larry Ollila-Dept. of Public Safety, and Carol Zoff-Dept. of Transportation

Mid America Trails and Greenways / Trail Link 2005

-Kurt Franke, District 3 Rep

The Rails to Trail Conservancy held its international conference, Trail Link 2005, in Minneapolis last month and I was fortunate to be able to attend. Minnesota and the Twin Cities trails were really on display as people from around the country and the world enjoyed a great conference and some great field trips.

The Mid America Trails and Greenways (MATAG) conference was held in conjunction with the Trail Link 2005 Conference. On Tuesday, July 26th, mobile workshops were held in which I partook in the National Park Service's canoe trip down the Mississippi River. The next morning I attended the "Blueways" session, dealing with water trails and "Sustainable Design" session, a trail construction/mountain bike discussion.

At lunch, Chuck Wocken, Stearns County Park Director, was recognized with a MATAG award for MN due to his efforts on behalf of the Wobegon Trail. The city of Minneapolis was also recognized for its efforts on the Midtown Greenway.

I also attended an interesting 3-hour workshop on "Green Infrastructure" and it was very hands-on. The idea of green infrastructure planning was somewhat new to me, at least in this context. It started with the idea we need to plan the continuity of our green spaces, green corridors, much as we do any other land use, roads, water, utilities, etc. This can and should be done on every scale, from city to county to statewide and even wider green infrastructure planning. *Continued on pg. 5*

Trail Link 2005 continued from pg. 4

Trail Link 2005, the international trails and greenways conference sponsored by the Rails to Trails Conservancy ran from Thursday through Saturday morning, July 28th – 30th. The first morning was set aside for “Ride, Stride, and Glide”, your choice of biking, hiking or skating as the participants got on the trails. The Ride tour took participants through downtown Minneapolis, along the Hiawatha Light Rail line, on the Midtown Greenway, the Kenilworth Trail, back through downtown and over the Stone Arch Bridge. The sessions I attended as part of the Trail Link 2005 conference included “Making the Case for Parks and Trails,” and “Creative Corridors” Saturday morning began with a roundtable discussion on “Urban Trail Issues”. Afterwards, Congressman Oberstar addressed the participants and without a doubt, it was the highlight of the morning. I would like to thank the Mn/DOT Office of Transit and the SBAC for sponsoring me so I could attend these conferences. I was exposed to people and ideas that will serve me well in the years to come.



Participants in the Rails to Trails Trail Link Conference prepare to embark on a tour of Minneapolis' trails and greenways.

Mississippi River Trail

When asked a couple years ago about participating in the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) "ground truthing" activities, I thought it was a great idea. Ground truthing means bicycling the designated route, with an eye toward what would be of interest to future riders. Participation in ground truthing was a tangible means to demonstrate the contribution of the SBAC to a worthwhile cause. It provided a nice incentive to bicycle along scenic routes adjacent to the Mississippi River and discover why the MRT is a viable bicycle route worthy of marketing to cyclists nationally and internationally. Our analysis identified that many sections of the MRT are already ride-worthy, while other sections need improvements to make the MRT the best bicycling experience possible. The rides provided a social opportunity to swap stories with like-minded cyclists, and it was just plain fun!

As mentioned, ground truthing was a tangible activity with which to respond to the oft asked question, "So, what does the SBAC do, anyway?" Though the committee is involved in many activities, assisting with development of the Mississippi River Trail is something upon which the SBAC may hang our helmets on for posterity. When asked, I often compare the MRT to the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail is well recognized by outdoor enthusiasts throughout the United States and indeed the world. Some hikers make it a life-long goal to trek the Trail.

-Charlie Quigg, Former District 6 Rep

It is my hope and expectation that the Mississippi River Trail will be similarly recognized as a vital part of our country's heritage and future.

The MRT project afforded the opportunity to get to know MN/DOT employees who were integral to its success: The project was championed by Carol Zoff, overall project coordinator. The success of the endeavor is largely due to her boundless energy and dedication. In addition, Mark Fiers, long-time liaison to SBAC, too proved critical to logistics of the ground truthing rides. I'd like to express my hearty thanks to these two individuals who helped take a vision and turn it into the reality of the Mississippi River Trail.



Charlie Quigg, Daryl Arzdorf, and Mary Nelsestuen participated in ground truthing the MRT route along Hwy 61 near Wabasha.

Impressions from the Annual Planning Meeting

~Mark Consugar, District 6 Rep

The State Bicycle Advisory Committee held its annual planning meeting in Rochester on August 18th and 19th. The purpose of the meeting is to reflect on the past year's activities and to prioritize next year's activities.

The words that best describe my first impression of the MN-SBAC as the new District 6 Representative were "structured" and "global". I say this because, unlike other cycling organizations I've been involved with in both Rochester and the Twin Cities, the committee has a multifaceted and far-reaching agenda that they are continually working towards. The composition of the committee itself reflects that when you consider there is at least one representative from key state agencies, a representative from law enforcement, a bicycle club, a trail organization, the bicycle industry, and all of the Mn/DOT districts. It became evident that the potential for getting things accomplished was EXTREMELY HIGH when you consider that all the major players had a place at the table. You wouldn't have to go very far in order to talk to the person or persons in the know.

I think it's safe to say that my appointment to the SBAC means that I'm no longer a big fish in Rochester's little pond, at least when it comes to cycling advocacy. Although my background is diverse, I consider myself more of a competitive cyclist, and my previous endeavors in and around Olmsted County reflect that. I've found that the goals of the SBAC are much more encompassing, taking into consideration the needs and wants of cyclists of all shapes, sizes and abilities. For example, the committee helped to launch the "Share the Road" program, which I feel will result in a HUGE boost in cycling / cyclist awareness for motorists; however, the program will not only assist cyclists like myself that put in miles throughout the year, but will also help those recreational and club cyclists that enjoy getting off the bike paths to put in miles on scenic roads and byways. Additionally, we're involved in promoting trail and shoulder planning / construction, as well as educating cyclists and motorists how to be safe and coexist.

By the end of the two days of meetings, I found myself becoming more comfortable with the committee and as a member; however, at the same time, I came to realize there was much I needed to learn. At the top of that list is becoming familiar with all the federal and state programs- I haven't seen this much alphabet soup since studying Pres. Roosevelt's "New Deal" in college, but like anything else, with more exposure I hope to be able to drop acronyms with the best of them. Additionally, although I had the opportunity to meet a number of my MN-DOT and MN-DNR district 6 representatives, coming up with the ways and means to interact with them on a regular basis to contribute my and the SBAC's ideas has yet to present itself. And although it seems like SBAC has its hand on the pulse of cycling in MN, I am hoping that we can find a way to better increase input from



Left to Right: New Representatives Karen Lyons, Mark Consugar, and Kim Lockwood

non-committee cyclists in our districts to better reflect their wants and needs prior to passing on our impressions to the powers-that-be. All-in-all, I think the next three years is going to be a great ride, and I'm happy I have the opportunity to be a member of the SBAC!

For 2005-2006, the committee will be focusing on the continuation of the Share the Road campaign, the Minnesota Scenic Bikeways, Safe Routes to School, and Bicycle Commuting: Leveraging Fuel Costs. In addition to these priorities, subcommittees are also focusing on the driver's manual, statutes, bicycle registration, promoting helmet use, district opportunities, website updates, and the Bicycle Expo to be held in Minneapolis next March.



Meeting Schedule

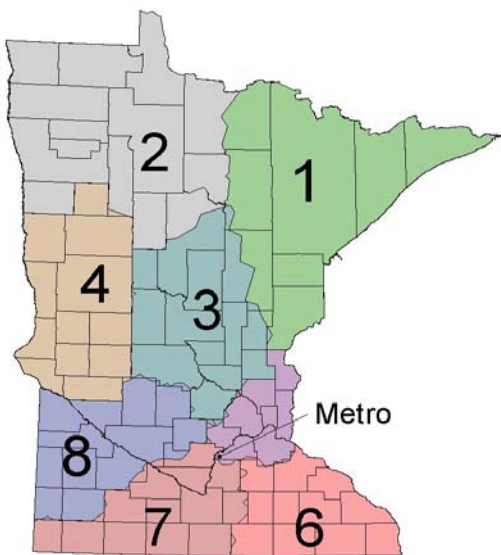
- **8/18-8/19/05** Annual Business Planning Meeting—Rochester
- **10/13/05** Bi-monthly meeting—St. Paul
- **12/8/05** Bi-monthly meeting—St. Paul
- **2/9/06** Bi-monthly meeting—St. Paul
- **4/13/06** Bi-monthly meeting—St. Paul
- **6/8/06** Bi-monthly meeting—St. Paul
- **8/17-8/18/06** Annual Business Planning Meeting—TBD

The SBAC says Goodbye and Welcome to Members

This year the committee said good-bye to Dan Collins from the Department of Natural Resources. Dan has been a part of the committee for almost 20 years. His position has been filled by Kim Lockwood. This past month the Metropolitan Council's representative, Don Koski, moved to Texas and his position on the committee is now occupied by Karen Lyons. Charlie Quigg, the district 6 representative, whose 6 year term has been completed, was replaced by Mark Consugar. Explore Minnesota Tourism also sent a new representative to the committee this year. Gayle Junnila replaces Judy Duclos.

The committee will miss all of our members as they move onto new things.

We look forward to all of the opportunities our new members will bring to the committee.



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MINNESOTA STATE BICYCLE
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*Promoting bicycling and its acceptance in
Minnesota*



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Appropriation law instituted the State Bicycle Advisory Committee in the mid 1980's to advise the Commissioner of Transportation and other state officials on issues pertaining to bicycle transportation in Minnesota. Over the ensuing years, it has operated under its own bylaws and with registration by the Secretary of State. The committee currently has 15 citizen members and 10 agency members and conducts 6 meetings per year. The executive committee and various short-term issue committees work on specific priority projects. The SBAC and Mn/DOT bike staff work to coordinate work plans and objectives.