

2008 Minnesota Bike Summit
Quality Bike Parts, Bloomington MN
April 26, 2008
10am – 3:15pm

Meeting Proceedings

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Welcome and Introduction - *Lisa Austin (SBAC, Co-chair) and Nick Mason (SBAC, Industry Representative)*

Austin opened with an overview of the event's history in Minnesota. Prior events have included a Minnesota Bike Conference, a Minnesota Bike Expo, and a Minnesota Bike Leadership Conference. These have culminated in today's Minnesota Bike Summit.

The Bike Summit was planned and organized by a committee of volunteers from MnDOT's State Bicycle Advisory Committee with help from The Parks and Trails Council of Minnesota and Quality Bicycle Products.

Mason outlined goals of the Bike Summit:

- Attendees are active participants in the proceedings
- Facilities and Policies track will provide a toolbox for navigating bureaucracy, agencies, and funding sources
- Promotion track will discuss methods to educate the public and advertise bicycling events and facilities
- Organizing track will provide a framework for bicycling's future and identify creative solutions to move forward

Keynote Remarks – *Tom Huber (Wis/DOT) and Dave Schlabowske (formerly from The Bike Federation of Wisconsin)*

Huber and Schlabowske highlighted successes of the partnership between the Wisconsin DOT and the Bike Federation of Wisconsin (BFW).

Schlabowske

Schlabowske currently acts as the bike/ped coordinator for the city of Milwaukee. The Federation started in 1992 in Madison WI and Dane County; in 3 years it grew to incorporate 5 paid employees and eventually opened a satellite office in Milwaukee. The Federation has a working board of directors and relies heavily on its members for organizational support.

The Federation received a major boost in stability when it started working with WisDOT to produce a state bike map. This gave the organization focus, a product to distribute, and income. As the Federation navigated the relationship with WisDOT it looked to the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation and its relationship to CDOT as an example and model.

Chicagoland receives government contracts for projects; a result of a relationship based on trust, cooperation and codependence. These contracts give stability and legitimacy to the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation. In the early days of BFW the relationship between advocates and state agencies was adversarial; now it is more balanced and much more productive.

Huber

The DOT bike program became active after the passage of ISTEA. WisDOT has both a bike/pedestrian coordinator position and a bike/pedestrian safety coordinator. As the state bike/pedestrian coordinator, Huber also works with regional bike/pedestrian coordinators on projects throughout the state.

Schlabowske

Ingredients for a successful working relationship between advocates and government:

- Advocates should balance communication: they are both demanding change and offering their service as local experts
- Expectations should be grounded in the reality of bureaucracy. Advocates need to educate themselves regarding the process and timelines for planning and funding facilities
- Stick it out. Advocates should be there over time, maintain relationships, and be dependable

Huber

There are two types of road projects:

- 1) New projects that have the opportunity to incorporate bike accommodations (Cheaper)
- 2) Retrofitting old roads for bike accommodations

The time to begin advocacy for bicycle accommodations is during project development. Be there early and familiarize yourself with the 6-Year Highway Improvement Program. Advocates need to prepare 4-5 years in advance and communicate with variety of project planners, eg public works, bike/ped coordinators, or DOT project managers.

Schlabowske

During the project development process, advocates have to put projects on the public's radar. Need to work with members at the local level to make sure they are present at DOT and other public meetings to advocate bike lanes.

The best model for advocacy is having a solid foundation with four corner stones that work together:

1. Agency Professionals – who plan and do the work and have access to resources
2. Politicians – who drive policy and funding
3. Industry – who represent business, jobs taxes and the economic impact of bicycle
4. Citizen Advocates – who represent constituents that participate in bicycling activities and use the facilities

A lot can be accomplished when all four of these cornerstones work together and support each other. Wisconsin several bicycle industries that have a large economic impact in the state and help support the BFW. Minnesota also has a strong bicycle industry presence that should be incorporated as partners.

Huber

Identifies examples of successful WisDOT/Federation partnerships through providing services, sharing resources and through consulting contracts to perform training or plan events:

- Printing bike maps, gives Federation a product to sell
- Bike to Work Week- promotes bicycling and provides publicity
- Education efforts- trainers from Federation teach bike safety classes
- WisDOT hired the Federation to do Bike Impact Reports
- Context Sensitive Design review and training
- Federation can organize members to attend public involvement meetings and advocate for bicyclists

Shlabowske

Stated importance of looking for best practices and adapting them to local conditions

Q and A

What about off-road trails as commuting routes?

These often have special funding sources, eg Safe Routes to School and CMAQ.
Good places to build off-street trails are easier to find than for lanes.

When you discuss industry support, are you including tourist services like bed and breakfasts?

We need to look at allies everywhere in each neighborhood. We don't use the economic development angle enough.

What do you think about lanes less than 11 feet across?

There's a textbook answer versus a reality answer. The decision to narrow a lane is site-specific, depending on traffic volume, the percent bus and truck traffic, and whether the site is commercial or residential. Risk is lower on residential roads, where people aren't entering parked cars as often as on commercial streets.

Organizing Track Highlights

Presenters: Dominic Liberatore, Lisa Austin, Nick Mason

Dominic Liberatore from the Thunderhead Alliance explained the work of his organization and how it supports the development of new advocacy groups.

Minnesota currently has no statewide bicycle advocacy organization. However, many strong regional or special interest bicycle groups accomplish similar tasks. The question

was posed “Would Minnesota benefit from a statewide organization or alliance?” To answer this question the group made two lists: one of needs that are currently being met in Minnesota and another of areas that could be improved by a statewide group. Some of the items include:

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	NEEDS THAT ARE BEING MET
React to crisis or issues	State bicycle plan
Education	Supportive DOT
Connectivity in suburbs and greater MN	Racks on busses
Support Complete Streets	Many strong Bicycle Non-profits
Duplication of efforts	Share the Road
Economic Impact Study	Large numbers of bicyclists
Civic Engagement	Many miles of paved trails and bike lanes
Communication	Large number of bicycle commuters
Change State aid guidelines	Strong local bicycle industry
Way finding signs	Support from Congressman Oberstar

The group also discussed the need and viability of a focused bicycle advocacy organization.

Concerns:

- Already have a diversity of organizations
- Could such an organization exist on membership only?
- Need a strategic plan to guide efforts
- Need an executive director who can raise money to be used toward advocacy

A state group would need:

- Cause
- Connectivity
- Education
- Presence
- Media
- Signs
- Coordination

Comment: I am not sure what this list of bullet points is referring to.

Should we have a bike group? Generally, yes. There was some difference in the group’s opinion whether it should be independent or an umbrella agency. Goals for new group:

<u>SHORT 0-2 YEARS</u>	<u>MED 2-5 YEARS</u>	<u>LONG 5 +</u>
<u>From a state wide group</u>	<u>Advocate to change the state aid standards</u>	
<u>Plan 2009 Bike Summit</u>	<u>Improve connectivity in suburbs and Greater MN</u>	<u>Improve connectivity in suburbs and Greater MN</u>
<u>Support and monitor the Complete Streets feasibility legislation</u>	<u>Build on Complete Streets campaign</u>	
<u>Education and Promotion</u>	<u>Education and Promotion</u>	<u>Education and Promotion</u>

<u>Reduce duplication of efforts</u>	<u>Improve wayfinding signs and markings</u>	
<u>Improve communication</u>		
<u>Economic Impact Study*</u>		
<u>Increase Civic Engagement</u>		
<u>Fund more Share the Road</u>		

(*follow-on to 2004 academic study completed by Gary Barnes)

Facilities and Policies Break Out Group

Presenters: Liz Walton, Dan Brevia, Andrew Korsberg, Joan Pasiuk, Paul Labovitz, Judy Erickson, Dorian Grilley, Peggy Prowe, Noreen Farrell, and David Gepner

Walton and Brevia: Stressed importance of including bicycles in comprehensive planning documents. Bike advocates must plan early and often. City, County, Mn/DOT planners and engineers use the comprehensive plans when planning a construction projects to determine the scope of the project. This is best time to get bicycle facilities included in the project because it is cheapest if bicycle accommodations are included from the beginning. SBAC and the DNR Manual can be resources in this process.

Dan Brevia, Andrew Korsberg, Joan Pasiuk, Paul Labovitz, Judy Erickson, and Dorian Grilley: Panel discussion on funding and policy. There is no “one stop shop” for bicycle funding. Examples of funding sources include the Local Trail Connections program, the regional trail program, and the Federal Recreational Trail Program. It’s a good idea to diversify the group of people supporting a project; local and national foundations are often overlooked. Mn/DOT Office of Transit has assembled a list of government funding sources that can be applied to bicycle facilities.

Dorian Grilley, Peggy Prowe, Noreen Farrell, and David Gepner: Panel presentation on MN bike organizations and advisory groups. Stressed importance of coordinating community efforts, prioritizing connectivity, and persistence. The Gateway Trail took 13 years to open; efforts included door-knocking to educate people about biking. Adopt-a-Trail program helps provide maintenance and mowing. SMART’s success at obtaining funds from the state legislature is a direct result of the coordinated efforts throughout the region. SMART went to the legislature with a unified message and that represented the voice of a diverse group. In Southeast Minnesota, bicycling and bicycle facilities are not considered to be primarily for recreational, health, or commuting purposes. Instead bicycling is considered primarily as an economic development tool.

Promotion and Education Break Out Track

Presenters: McKenzie Turner, Shaun Murphy, Jamie MacDonald, Pat Sorensen, Dan Brevia, Nick Mason, Brady Clark, David LaPorte

McKenzie Turner and Shaun Murphy discussed planning efforts for the 2008 Bike Walk Week. Susan Koschak shared her experience organizing Bike to Work Day in Duluth.

Turner Turner emphasized the importance of partnering with other organizations in planning Bike Walk Week. This year, 38-40 local sponsors (retailers and bike organizations) have contributed cash and in-kind donations. This is good collaboration and good marketing. Businesses want to be more green- changing transportation mode is the best way to do this!

Murphy Murphy discussed the planning process for Bike Walk Week and its website, available www.bikewalkweek.org. The goals are to expand the event from a one day event to a week-long event reaching 10,000 participants. The event includes Commuter Convoys (groups of first-time riders guided by veterans), Downtown celebrations in Minneapolis and St. Paul, and the Commuter Challenge (three local celebrities race, one biking, one on transit, one driving). Also kick off for Bike 2 Benefits program (individuals commute by bike for 8 week period)

Bike/Walk Ambassador program is an education and outreach program that will continue all year. Written guides from bike/walk enthusiasts help people overcome issues of changing clothes, finding showers, etc.

Koschak Organizing lessons learned from Bike to Work Day in Duluth. Stay focused on task at hand, engage lots of people and businesses, simplify ideas to ones that will be most successful, start small but have a quality event.

Dan Breva, Pat Sorensen, and Jamie McDonald share their experiences in bike industry.

Breva The Midtown Bike Center has the mission to get more people to use bikes for more trips. Includes a bike shop, bike services, and bike accessories. The focus is on commuter bikes and services. These include bike rentals, short-term indoor parking, public shop space, a coffee shop and a commuter club (members pay \$110 annually for secure storage, shower and lockers facilities, and same day bike repairs on site).

Sorensen Penn Cycle is family focused. Outreach activities include organizing all-ages mountain bike racing at Buck Hill, donations to Trips for Kids (global bike tours for underprivileged youth), South High Bike to School program (provided free helmets and locks for kids who bike), rental/loaner bikes for events, sponsorship of local race teams (Nature Valley Grand Prix and the MN Triathlon Club).

McDonald Sunrise Cyclery sells used, serviceable bikes to people who need them. Outreach at the Wellstone School teaches kids to repair bikes in winter and then learn to ride them in the summer. Many are immigrant children who don't already own a bike. Two people from this program have been hired to work at the shop. Bolder Options is a bike mentor program that helps inner-city kids ride and complete a bike race.

Nick Mason, Brady Clark and Dave LaPorte share experiences from national bike events.

Mason Mason shared updates from the National Bike Summit in Washington DC, hosted by the League of American Bicyclists. The event had 500 attendees, including advocacy groups, industry, employers, health industries. Key issues that the event focused on were: passing a congressional resolution in support of bicycling, Complete Streets, and obtaining support to allow continuance of mountain biking in national parks.

Clark Clark shared updates from the 2006 Pro Bike-Walk Conference, hosted in Minneapolis. The event involves planners, industry, health professionals, and educators. Clark encouraged Minnesotans to advertise and share our bike advocacy efforts! Audience brainstormed what we can share: biking in winter, the Midtown Greenway, the Midtown Greenway Bridge, the connectivity of our trail system, intermodal options (racks on buses, racks at park and ride stations).

LaPorte The Great River Energy Bicycle Festival is a fundraiser for Children's Hospital and an opportunity to advocate cycling. It's meant capture attention toward bicycling by being a flamboyant spectacle to watch professional cyclists. Marketing is directed toward recreational cyclists. They create fan-friendly events, eg criterium races so spectators can watch the majority from one location, local amateurs wear identifying tshirts that say "ask me about bicycling" so that spectators can learn more about cycling rules, promotional events for kids, women's collegiate all-star team (draws national attention).

Closing

Lisa Austin and Nick Mason

Austin Austin noted the impressive attendance at the event, including a balance of bicycle non-profits, citizens, agency professionals, politicians, and representatives from state-wide bicycle industries. She shared the excitement, energy and commitment to starting a state-wide bicycle group that resulted from the Bike Summit. Some of the short term goals of a group could be to support the Complete Streets feasibility legislation, plan the 2009 Bike Summit, improve civic participation in public meetings, fund more share the road programs, and conduct an economic impact study.

Liberatore Liberatore announced that industry representatives in attendance have committed to raising start-up funding start a state-wide bicycle organization in Minnesota that will be used to hire an executive director.