

Welcome Community Spokes!



Thank you for joining us today.

Agenda

1. Review of Covid-19 Pandemic responses:
 - Bicycle Coalition of Maine actions
2. BCM Update: Advocacy, Education
 - Recent Community Spokes' Work
3. Statewide Campaign Planning

During this challenging time, it is important for us to look at positive things that are also happening right now: to review responses to the pandemic, and the Bicycle Coalition of Maine's advocacy efforts.



For bicycle and pedestrian advocates, the Covid-19 pandemic has confirmed what many of us have been saying for years: that walking and bicycling are modes of transportation that deserve more attention and funding.



The coronavirus pandemic has closed schools, shut down businesses, and public transportation ridership has gone way down, yet a positive result is that it has shined a spotlight on the importance of walking and bicycling in communities across the country. This photo is in New York City where they took out automobile travel lanes to make room to expand bike lanes because of the increase in the number of cyclists. So in response to this pandemic, many actions have been taken that are supportive of bicycling and walking. And with the increase in the number of pedestrians and cyclists on the roads, Bicycle Pedestrian Advocacy and Education are greatly needed during this time.

Covid-19 Responses and Recommendations

- BCM Office Closed and Events Postponed
- Bike Shops: Essential Businesses
- Education Resources: bikemaine.org/education/resources
- Safety Guidelines: bikemaine.org/news and BCM Facebook

In response to Covid-19, the Bicycle Coalition closed its office, and staff is working from home. Many events have been canceled – one of our biggest, the Bike Swap, and since concerts and other public gatherings have been canceled, we won't be doing our bike valet parking services for those events. We are still planning BikeMaine, and hoping that by September that will be able to take place. With the increase in bike riding for transportation and exercise, many states have designated bike shops as essential businesses, allowing them to stay open. BCM wrote to Governor Mills urging the state to include bike shops as essential businesses and the governor agreed, and bike shops are allowed to be open and provide services in Maine. On education, we are working on getting more educational resources for people – adults and children – on our website, and putting bike/ped safety materials and presentations on-line since all our scheduled classroom presentations have been canceled due to the school closures. And for safety guidelines, on a daily basis BCM staff has been reviewing updated information on public health recommendations and other science about Covid-19. Many guidelines have been evolving, and specific recommendations have changed as we learn more about the virus. You can go to the BCM webpage Newsroom or Facebook page to see the most recent information we've found on recommendations and guidelines to be safe during this time.

Distance Recommendations



One of those changing recommendations has been the distance to keep when we are around others – varying from 6' to 25'. The distance recommendations for when we are exercising outdoors has increased considerably. This illustration shows just how much of a footprint we leave in the air every time we expel air from our lungs through our nose and mouth. This image shows the cloud of droplets from exhaling during exercise which varies depending on the intensity of a person's workout.

Covid-19 Byproduct: Fewer cars, Cleaner air



New York City



110 Freeway, Los Angeles

Another byproduct of the current crisis is that cities and towns all over the world have much less traffic, like these photos of streets in NYC and highways in Los Angeles show. A new forecast produced by climate experts of the Global Carbon Project, which is an international science community, predicts that carbon emissions could fall by the longest amount since World War II. If we could hold onto some of the good that is coming out of this crisis like less driving and more biking and walking, we'd be helping the other global crisis of climate change.

Local Actions to Support Walking and Bicycling During Social Distancing



Walking and biking are good for us, now probably more than ever. Not just for our physical health, but for our mental health as well. Maine Public Health put out a newsletter last week and one of the top things mentioned for mental health support is physical activity. This photo is of a street in Portland, Oregon that is closed to car traffic so people have more space to social distance when outside.



This is 34th Street in Queens, one of several NYC streets that is for car-free recreation right now. Closing streets is a local decision. It can be more complicated than it appears. The idea is to make more space for people to social distance, but the question and another consideration is: "Will this new space attract people to congregate?" If so, then it's defeating the purpose, so that is why it is something municipalities need to decipher, and figure out if it will be beneficial or not.



Another type of street closing is to close the roads that go into parks. Parks and Recreation Bureaus in Portland, Oregon where this photo is from, and in Duluth, Minnesota, closed parks to automobiles because they decided that it was the driving in and using parking lots that led to congestion at the parks. But people using bicycles, other micro-mobility devices (wheelchairs, scooters, skateboards), and their own feet, are still welcome to enter the park, accessing it more slowly, more spread out, and keeping the required social distance.

“The way we live is shaped by our infrastructure”.
– Devon Zuegel



As you know, much of the work of the Bicycle Coalition has to do with getting more public space for pedestrians and cyclists, and better infrastructure to make walking and biking safer.



Imagine People Here

Imagine People Here are the temporary demonstration projects we work with municipalities on to show that infrastructure changes can improve bike/ped safety. It is a low cost way to change the built environment by using temporary materials. The goal is that the short term action will bring about long term change. That once the municipality sees the benefits, it will become permanent infrastructure. Let us know if you have ideas for demonstrations. You can email me, angela@bikemaine.org, and hopefully we can do some this year.



This demonstration was done in Bath by their Bike/ped Committee, using materials that BCM loaned them to make bike parking in a parking spot on Front Street in downtown Bath.



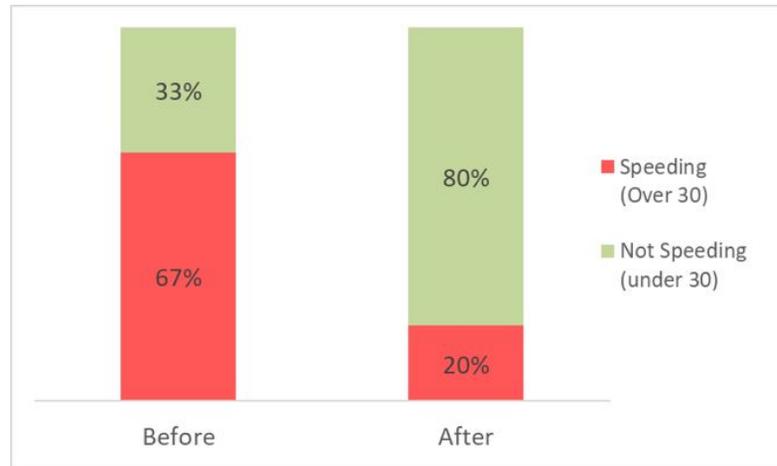
Traffic calming is one of the most requested measures that communities are looking for, wanting to slow down speeding traffic. This project in North Yarmouth was called “Kite in Sight” – done by the Living Well Committee. This was a type of gateway treatment where eye catching signage, or art in this case, is placed on every road that enters the center of town. The slogan was: “Kite in Sight Please Slow Down.”

North Yarmouth Traffic Calming Demonstrations



That campaign in North Yarmouth was followed up with traffic calming demonstration projects – setting up crosswalks, using planters to narrow the travel lanes and enhance crosswalk visibility.

Speed Studies: 8/12-8/20/19 and 9/26-10/3/19



Improved Compliance with the Speed Limit

The data collected before the demonstrations were in place showed that only 33% of the drivers obeyed the speed limit. After the demonstrations were set up, 80% of drivers adhered to the speed limit. This shows how simple traffic calming measures can make a big difference in how fast people drive.

LD 2124

An Act To Create the Rail Corridor Use Advisory Council Process

- Upon petition by one or more governmental entities that represent communities along a state-owned rail corridor requesting the Department of Transportation to review a nonrail use of that rail corridor
- The Commissioner of Transportation for each petition received may establish a rail corridor use advisory council
- The council will have at least 9 people, no more than 15, representing different groups, and 1 member from a bike/ped advocacy organization.

BCM is also involved in legislative work, and this year we supported a bill that the Merrymeeting Trailblazers proposed. This group has been advocating for the Merrymeeting Trail, the 25 miles of unused rail corridor owned by MaineDOT, to be a trail that would complete the Capital-to-Coast vision of an off-road route along the Kennebec River from Augusta to Brunswick. This 25 mile section of the corridor would connect The Kennebec River Trail in Augusta that runs to Gardiner, to the Androscoggin River Bike/Ped Path in Topsham and Brunswick. The original bill was specific to the Merrymeeting Trail, and that bill was converted into LD 2124 which sets up a process for converting rails to trails that all trail groups can use. The bill passed in the Transportation Committee and will be voted on in the next session by the full legislature. These three bullet points are highlights of the bill. You can go to the State of Maine website to read the entire text of the bill, and please contact your legislators to express support for LD 2124. We believe this bill is a good mechanism to determine whether rail corridors should be used as trails. Trails until rails is the goal.

LD 470

An Act to Provide Traffic Safety Education in Schools

- Pedestrian instruction
- Bicycle Instruction
- Motorist Instruction

[State of Maine Legislature Bill Status Advanced Search](#)

Another bill BCM has been advocating for is LD 470, to make traffic safety education part of school curriculum, focusing on pedestrian, bicyclist, and motorist rules of the road and sharing the road. Because of the fiscal note attached to this bill, it is not likely to pass, so we are already thinking about other strategies to make bike/ped safety education part of public school education. Again if you want to look at this bill text and status, you can go to the state website or google the phrase: [State of Maine Legislature Bill Status Advanced Search](#)

Key People for Community Change:

- Residents
- Elected Officials
- Town or City Government Staff

Key Actions for Community Change:

- Raise the issue profile
- Engage the public
- Shape an *initial* plan – open to input

Whenever we begin new advocacy efforts, we need to remember who the key people are and what the key actions are. This past year, 2 new Community Spokes mobilized residents in their communities to form official Bike/Ped Committees – one new bike/ped committee in Augusta and one in Saco, and they are already working on ideas for Imagine People Here demonstrations. And in Rockland, a Community Spoke from the Rockland Rolls bike/ped advocacy group ran for city council last fall and won, so can now work on bike/ped improvements in Rockland from that position. And at times like this, when officials are overwhelmed by Covid-19, connect your advocacy ideas as possible solutions or ways to help with the crisis. At this time, with more people walking and biking, towns should be doing what they can to make the roads safer.

Campaigns

Working in an organized and active way toward a
particular goal

Now in regard to the email question I asked you, what your thoughts are on speeding, BCM is currently planning a statewide campaign.

In response to concerns from people across the state,
Slow ME Down campaign

Problem: High number of crash fatalities in Maine *

2019 National Safety Council report: Nationally car crash fatalities down 2%

Maine crash fatalities went up 35% * – the highest fatality *increase* in the country.

Purpose: To change the norms/ acceptable driving behavior in Maine

From what we've been hearing from people all over the state, speeding is an issue of high priority for many communities in Maine. For 2019, the National Safety Council reported that nationally car crash fatalities went down 2% to approximately 38,000. However, Maine had the highest increase in crash fatalities in the country, up 35% from last year. And while that alone is a reason for this campaign, another major impact of speeding cars and trucks is that it discourages people from walking and biking on the roads – from parents not allowing their kids to walk to school, to people making a lot more trips by car, driving very short distances because they don't feel safe walking or biking on the roads. Many communities are already trying to address speeding through Imagine People Here projects and other programs. A Community Spoke in York started a program for pedestrian safety called "York Waves," teaching kids to STOP, LOOK, and WAVE to a motorist to be sure they see you before crossing a street.

Community Spoke Input on Speeding Campaign

- **Raising Awareness:** speeding is not a victimless crime; not only fatalities, but injuries are life changing; tragic stories need to be told so that speeding isn't acceptable when connected to death, and permanent damage to people's health.
- **Road Design/Infrastructure:** people are driving for the way roads are built; wide travel lanes vs. complete streets.
- **Quality of Life:** fear of speeding vehicles reduces the number people walking and biking; negatively impacts the vibrancy of a neighborhood.

Thank you for your responses to what you think about speeding in Maine: Raising Awareness, Road Design and Infrastructure, and Quality of Life were the issues brought up in the responses regarding speeding. Our campaign will show concern for all road users. Obviously, vehicle speed has a huge impact on bike/ped. The higher the speed the greater chance of being killed. And motorists are also more likely to be killed or seriously injured the faster they are going.



If we can reduce speeding, it should result in reduced crashes, fatalities, and injuries. Also, there's more reaction time and greater peripheral vision the slower you drive.



Another outcome and goal of the campaign is that the number of people walking and biking will increase, leading to better public health from more physical activity, and better environmental health from less pollution because of fewer car trips. Once people are more comfortable on the roads they will rethink ways to get around, and ask themselves the question, Could I have walked or biked instead of driving?, to wherever I need to go. This sign is in the parking lot at the Atlantic Federal Credit Union in Cumberland. Most trips in rural places like Maine are made with a combination of walking, cycling, carpooling, sometimes bus transportation. How much of the trip can be made as a pedestrian or cyclist depends not only on the traveler's ability to walk or roll, but the safety and accessibility of the environment.

Joy of Riding a Bike – for All Ages!



If we could make the positive activity of riding a bike, a safer and more accessible mode of transportation, a regular way of getting around, and a daily activity for people of all ages, there would be more joy in our lives. This is truly a quality of life issue.



THE **bicycle**
is a simple
SOLUTION
to some of the
world's MOST
COMPLICATED
problems.

Angela King
Advocacy Manager



**BICYCLE
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So let's see this time as an opportunity to propose bike/ped improvements as solutions to problems. If you have any questions, thoughts or ideas you'd like to discuss, please feel free to email me at angela@bikemaine.org. Thank you for taking the time to join us today. Be safe and well!