

Bike Michiana Planning Summit

January 17, 2009

The first Bike Michiana Coalition (BMC) Planning Summit was held on January 17, 2009 in the board room of Barnes and Thornburg. It was facilitated by Jeff Miller, president/CEO of Thunderhead Alliance for Biking and Walking in Washington, DC and Steve Buchtel, Southland coordinator for Active Transportation Alliance in Chicago, IL. It was attended by 21 BMC members from various local organizations, plus the Indiana Bicycle Coalition.

Attendees:

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|
| Adam Bee | Eric Saner | Karen Haun | Pete Colan |
| Alan Loyd | Henry Scott | Kathy Serrat | Scott Kelsey |
| Barb Fredman | Jeff Nixa | Michael Palmer | Tim Mayer |
| Bill Lee | John Yoder | Michelle Moore | |
| Danny Graber | Judy Lee | Nancy Tibbett | |
| Diana Snyder | JV Peacock | Paul Taylor | |

BMC president Jeff Nixa opened the meeting at 8 am with introductions of Jeff and Steve. Attendees gave self-introductions and verbalized personal goals for the meeting. Those goals included:

- Establish a consensus of priorities and time lines
- Develop a comprehensive list of all current bicycle-friendly activities in the area
- Amplify and focus the group's energy
- Share news and information among the various organizations
- Establish how each organization fits into the coalition
- Determine how all the organizations can work together toward common goals
- Prioritize the next steps for the coalition
- Get to know the other representatives, and more about their organizations
- Find out how being part of the coalition can benefit each organization
- Gather fund raising ideas
- Increase public awareness and understanding of the needs of the bicycling community
- Establish the roles and responsibilities of each organization in achieving the goals of the coalition
- Define the over-all vision of the group
- Coalesce the efforts of the various organizations
- Get ideas on how to reach government partners
- Take back ideas and energy to their own groups
- Establish a forward direction for the coalition

The attendees were then divided into three small groups. Each group was to decide on a leader and a scribe and given their first assignment. In order to embrace where Bike

Michiana is today as a stepping stone to building for the future, each person was to share their favorite accomplishment for 2008. The scribes reported back to the main group the following list of 2008 accomplishments:

- Forming the coalition
- A successful Bike to Work week
- The city of South Bend painted 10 additional miles of bike lanes
- The BMC web site is up: BikeMichiana.org
- Having a planning summit with 15 groups in attendance
- Meetings with St Joseph county executives
- Two memorial rides
- Completing the Potato Creek trail
- Beginning the application process for a Bicycle Friendly Community
- Starting a legislative task force
- Achieving a better awareness of bicycling in the community
- Creating a buzz in the bicycling world at the state level
- Establishing business buy-ins to bicycling needs through sponsorships

The small groups were then asked to identify challenges facing BMC and list steps to address these challenges so that the organization can best prepare for the future.

Challenges facing bicyclists in our region, along with ideas to address those issues are:

- Bikes are not recognized as a mode of transportation
 - Educations programs for city executives, employers, schools
 - More bike racks through-out the area
 - Incentives for employers to encourage bicycle commuting
- Changing the “Car is King” culture
 - Increase community awareness
 - Letters to the Editor
 - Using the organization database to communicate
- Better motorist awareness of bicyclists and walkers
 - Improve language in the driver’s manual
 - Train law enforcement personnel
 - Encourage stricter enforcement of driving laws
- Lack of bicyclists’ education
 - Offer safety courses
 - Bicycling safety programs in schools
 - Encourage stricter enforcement of driving laws
 - Safety talks before group rides
 - Public Service Announcements
- Urban sprawl and disconnected neighborhoods
 - Participate in local planning
 - Involvement in state legislation
- Safety
 - Promote safe routes to schools
 - Safety product give-aways

- Encourage more members to participate in League Certified Instructor training
- Offer more safety programs
- INDOT participation and support
 - Letter writing campaigns
 - Attend public meetings
 - Circulate petitions
 - Establish working relationships with state legislators
- Getting more people on bicycles
 - Higher gas taxes
 - Employer incentive programs for bicycle commuters
 - Increase ridership in clubs

Additional challenges that face BMC as an organization were listed next.

- Lack of public funds
 - Advocacy
 - Plug into the Power Grid
- Citizen apathy
 - Public awareness campaign
 - Develop additional biking facilities
- Understanding each organization's role and responsibilities
 - Summit meeting is a start
 - Revise goals annually
 - Establish communication links between member organizations
- Communication with local governments
 - Jeff Nixa for Mayor
 - Encourage bicycle-friendly people to run for political office
 - Embrace bicycle-friendly champions in local communities
- Define BMC Board roles
 - Participate in Board training/development sessions
 - Investigate opportunities listed with the Indiana Association for Non-profits
- Fundraising
 - Take advantage of non-profit status
 - Increase membership
 - Organize events – be creative
 - Establish an Employer Out-reach program to encourage sponsorships and partnerships
- Utilizing volunteers
 - Have a visible BMC presence at all events
 - Encourage member organizations' presence at BMC events
 - Recognize volunteers – the more public, the better
 - Inspire
 - Respect time
 - Organize short, simple events, i.e. Maintain a trail, collect litter along a bike path

- Be recognized as the solution, so other come to you for help, and in turn volunteer
- Maintaining energy
 - Ride your bikes
 - Look out for each other
 - Meet and communicate
 - Have fun together. Party. Meetings should be engaging
 - Celebrate your accomplishments

The entire group next turned their attention toward listing all of the activities, projects, plans and needs the organization is working toward now. (* denotes MBC project)

1. Activities and Events for 2009

- Annual Bike to Work Week *
- Annual MBA Four-day Ride
- Annual Amish Land & Lakes weekend
- Annual Swap Meet
- MTB Time Trial Series
- Annual Granger Paths 5k Run
- Annual Pumpkinvine Ride
- Goshen Bicycle Parade
- Collegiate Race Weekend
- Amish Memorial ride
- Weekly MBA rides
- Weekly bike shop rides

2. Programs (on going)

- Courteous Mass Rides
- MTB trail maintenance

3. Campaigns (fixed time range)

- St Joseph County Bike Route Network *
- Fifty miles of South Bend bike route by 2010 *
- Bike Station in South Bend by 2010 *
- Bicycle Friendly Application *
- Indiana Bicycle Safety Act *
- Bike Friendly Business Development *
- Michiana Bike Map using Google Maps
- Extend Pumpkinvine 3.4 mi in 2009
- Resolve Pumpkinvine legal issues
- Preliminary Engineering of new 7 miles for Pumpkinvine
- LaSalle Trail
- Transportation Enhancement Federal Grant Application in March 2009
- Connect South Bend's East Race with Mishawaka trails

4. New Ideas or Goals

- Fundraising Team: grants and sponsors *

- Bike Rack Program *
- Connect Bikeway Network *
- Cyclists education campaign *
- Elementary School Education Program *
- MTB Skills Park and/or Pump Track at Potato Creek SP
- Explore non-traditional path standards
- Pumpkinvine tunnel under US20

5. Organizational Needs (mission, membership, strategic plan)

- Mission statement *
- Strategic Plan *
- Job Descriptions for board & committees *
- Processing new 'bright ideas' *
- Sponsorships & Funding *
- 501(c)(3) *
- Board development/education *
- Increased membership
- Coordinate member organizations' efforts
- Regular communication
- Branding
- Volunteer programs
- Event participation

6. Partners and Other Players

- Notre Dame, IUSB
- South Bend Government
- Mishawaka Government
- St Joseph County Government
- MACOG
- Established annual rides: Pumpkinvine, Lori's, Blueberry, RJR, Lion's Club, Etc.
- Potato Creek State Park
- Downtown South Bend
- Elkhart County Park Department
- St Joseph County Parks & Recreation
- South Bend Transpo
- Indiana Bicycle Coalition
- South Bend Schools
- Penn Harris Madison School District
- Chamber of Commerce
- Michiana Watershed Association
- Memorial Hospital
- Triple Threat
- Morris Theatre
- YMCA
- AARP

- Sierra Club
- Green Party
- Indiana Blood Center
- Michiana Runners Association
- Barnes & Thornburg

The last task for the small groups was to focus on the actions BMC should perform that will yield the best results to make the region a better place to bike while growing and uniting the organization. Each group was assigned a specific topic: Encouragement & Education, Infrastructure and facilities, or Organization. Their objective was to prioritize projects for a) the next three months, b) 2009, and c) the next 5 years. In reviewing the projects, Jeff and Steve suggested an evaluation process. Look at how the project would effect the Mission, Members, Media and Money. It needs to hit on Mission, plus any two of the other three. If it doesn't, put it on ice for now. After small group deliberation and whole group discussion, the members unanimously approved the following plans. Members then volunteered to take the lead on various projects. The results are as follows:

BMC 3 Month Work Plan

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Communication Plan | Henry Scott |
| Bike Friendly Application | Pete Colan |
| Infrastructure Plan | Bill Lee, Barbara Fredman |
| Mission, Vision, Values Statement | Jeff Nixa |
| Inventory Research Facilities | Bill Lee, Barbara Fredman, Mike Palmer |
| Legislation | Paul Taylor |
| Fundraising | Michelle Moore |

BMC 2009 Work Plan

| | |
|---|--|
| Job Descriptions for Board & Volunteers | Judy Lee |
| Bike to Work Week – 125 Teams | JV Peacock |
| Infrastructure Needs & Plan | Bill Lee, Barbara Fredman, Mike Palmer |
| Implement Membership Program | JV Peacock |
| Bicycle Friendly Business Committee | Mike Palmer, Alan Loyd |
| Ten miles of Bike Lanes in SB | Bill Lee, Judy Lee |
| Branding | Henry Scott, JV Peacock |
| Education Plan/ Schools & Cyclists | Judy Lee, Kathy Serrat |
| Create Bike Parking Demand | Jeff Nixa, Alan Loyd |
| Publish existing facilities on web | Henry Scott |

BMC Long Range Work Plan

- Grant funding for bike lockers & parking
- Bike to Work Week – 500 Teams
- Bike Station built
- New Ideas process in place
- Bicycle Friendly Community status established – Bronze for SB and Goshen
- Connect networks across region
- Coordinate member organizations efforts

5 League Certified Instructors
Elementary Education Program
Cyclist Education Program
10 information hubs in the network
More government buy-in

Jeff and Steve will provide MBC with a written summary of the Summit Meeting. As a final wrap-up, each facilitator presented some ideas and suggestions.

Steve:

An infrastructure plan works best if the governing agency asks for one. If they participate in its creation, or pay for it, they are more likely to incorporate it. Extend the plan beyond routes. Add parking, stations, information hubs, etc. Emphasize appealing destinations, such as schools, parks, libraries, points of interest. Identify a person in each city who loves biking. Aim for buy-in from the mayor, public works department or planning department.

One way to find champions is to start regular meeting with city officials, maybe with a Bicycle Advisory Committee that needs city representation from government and law enforcement. If people volunteer to be assigned, they become your champions.

To encourage more police involvement, help secure funds for special projects. Investigate Traffic Safety funding. Be creative in program ideas: having the police give out tickets for free ice cream cones to kids who bike safely. There are some good police training programs available – MassachusettsBike.org has one.

Jeff:

Increasing membership is the solution to several of the challenges listed. More members means more volunteers and more funds. More people on bikes means more public awareness. More people involved means more legislative pressure. Be creative in promoting dual memberships in both BMC and member organization. Share member lists between organizations. Keep in mind that on the average, only about 10% of an organization's members actively participate. The others donate.

The easiest and quickest way to achieve very visible success is through education. Infrastructure takes years to build up, but education goals can be reached within the current infrastructure. Elementary schools are the places to start, building a contingent of future bicyclist. Include parents, teachers, and police. While teaching others how to teach the children, you are actually reinforcing bicycling laws with the adults. Concentrate on making it fun.

Good ideas for motorist out-reach programs: Share the Road campaign, community service ads, look at Illinois "Please Don't Squeeze" radio campaign.

Make use of Indiana Bicycle Coalition resources. Don't reinvent the wheel. Thunderhead Alliance also has resources to share. We are now a member of Thunderhead as a result of this Summit Training registration.

Look on the League of American Bicyclist web site for information on the employee incentive program. Employers can reimburse workers \$20 a month if they bike commute to work.

Jeff left examples of the Mission, Vision and Values statements from the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and the Active Transportation Alliance of Chicago. Steve left a Summary Checklist for Determining the Viability of New Projects.

Jeff's parting words: This is one of the most organized local groups he has seen. You have a great start. Keep going. This planning is an on-going project. The coalition needs to re-visit its strategic plan every year to keep it viable.

Some dates to keep in mind:

Feb 27 to Mar. 1 – Indianapolis. The IBC is sponsoring a two and a half day training seminar, facilitated by Thunderbird Alliance, titled "Winning Campaigns". Cost is \$50.

March 10 to March 12 – Washington, DC – National Bike Summit.

Respectfully submitted,
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