

## The Bicycle Movement

While citizen activists battled against freeway development and parking lots, a quiet revolution that did not garner much attention was brewing at Portland State University. Today, Portland is known as one of the most bike-friendly cities in the country, and accommodating the bicycle commuter is a critical component of the region's multi-modal transportation policy. In the late 1960s and early 1970s this would have seemed to be a remote and fanciful idea.

The effort to establish a place for the bicycle in Portland's transportation system can be traced back to 1970, and the creation of the Portland State University Bicycle Lobby. The lobby was founded by Sam Oakland, an unorthodox professor of creative writing who refused to be called professor and who brought attention to bicycling as a legitimate transportation alternative with great enthusiasm and, in some cases, contentious certainty (Frazier, 1971).

In November 1970, Oakland organized one of the first of many bike rallies. 400 bicycle enthusiasts gathered on Swan Island in North Portland to draw attention to a four-point petition that Oakland had written. The petition called upon the city to create bike lanes on major thoroughfares and bridges; bike parking facilities near schools, department stores, supermarkets, restaurants and in city garages; bike racks on city busses; and the consideration of bike lanes and parking facilities in plans for future developments within the city (Bike rally, 1970). Today, facilities have been built and Oakland's four points are integrated into Portland's planning process. However, he probably had no idea it would take 25 years. In March 1971, the Bike Lobby, as it

became known, sponsored another bike rally. Over 1,200 bicyclists participated, led by Portland City Commissioner Neal Goldschmidt (1,262 Make bicycle ride, 1971). Later to become mayor, Goldschmidt was just the first of several mayors and city commissioners who were avid bike riders, a notable political trend that certainly helped move the bicycle agenda along over time.

There were other cities around the country building extensive bikeways, including Chicago, Milwaukee, and college towns such as Eugene, Oregon, and Davis, California, where bikes outnumbered cars. In the Portland of 1970, the Police Bureau estimated there to be about 180,000 bicycles, or about one for every two persons. Sam Oakland estimated there to be about 400 people riding bicycles into downtown Portland on a daily basis (Frazier, 1971).

The Bike Lobby, along with the Oregon Environmental Council, worked at a state level during 1970 and 1971 to secure funding for bicycle facilities. The groups lobbied to have a two-cent increase in the cigarette tax to be distributed for bikeways, a bill they referred to as “pennies for parks.” The groups also helped draft a bill that would set aside money from the state’s highway fund for bicycle path development. The Bike Lobby organized rallies in Salem during 1971, including one where 200 bicyclists traveled the 50-mile distance between Portland and Salem to advocate for the bills. While the “pennies for parks” proposal never made it to committee in the legislature, the bill to set aside funds from the state highway fund did (Frazier, 1971).

Representative Don Stathos, a Republican from Jacksonville in southern Oregon, sponsored House Bill 1700, which became known as the Bicycle Bill. Stathos presented the bill as both an anti-pollution measure and a way to curb congestion in cities. He, like

others, also advocated that the bicycle should be considered a legitimate commuting vehicle. He cited examples in Chicago and Washington, DC of bicycle commuters being able to arrive at their destinations faster than did commuters in automobiles (Seymour, 1971).

The Bike Bill, the first designated state funding for bicycles in the country, passed in the 1971 legislative session (Portland Office of Transportation, 1996). It only passed by one vote and that one vote came from a representative who had promised Stathos his vote but was hiding in the men's room to avoid casting his vote. Don found him and "dragged" him to the House floor (Rex Berkholder, personal communication 11/26/2006).

The bill called upon cities and counties receiving state highway funds to expend a minimum of 1% of the revenues on construction of new bike and pedestrian pathways, to retrofit existing roadways to accommodate bicycles and foot traffic, and to accommodate bicycle and foot traffic in new construction. An important element of the law that would prove to be contentious later stated that cities and counties were not required to expend the 1% each year. They could instead set aside monies in a reserve fund for up to ten years. By the fall of 1971, the first new bikeways were proposed in the Portland area and Eugene. The first one proposed in the Portland metropolitan area was along an abandoned railroad right-of-way that connected the suburban towns of Milwaukie and Oregon City. The project proved difficult to materialize because of property ownership disputes and the desire of the Oregon Department of Transportation to reserve the railroad right-of-way for possible future expansion of state highway 99E. In fact, it took until 2000 for the authorization to be finally granted to build the proposed trail (Keller, 1971).

The City of Portland's response to the passage of the new Bike Bill was to conduct a study of the state of bicycling and develop a preliminary plan for future facilities construction through the Bureau of Street and Structural Engineering. The plan called for the construction of 75 miles of recreational trails and the dedication of 105 miles of city streets as recommended bike routes for commuters. This latter part of the plan has proven to be the most contentious throughout the development of bike policy in Portland. As noted by the City Engineer at the time, any proposal for setting aside space on busy streets for bicycles would mean eliminating parking, which would raise opposition from local residents (Hansen 1971).

In November 1971, the City of Portland created the first citizen committee to examine bicycle programs in the city, the Bicycle Path Task Force. Sam Oakland was appointed as its Chair and Ray Polani, Assistant to the Vice President of Pacific First Federal Savings and Loan, its Vice Chair. The other members were Elizabeth Barker, representing Sensible Transportation Options for People (STOP), the region's first alternative transportation advocacy organization; Clyde Blake, Jr., a Portland State University student; David Hyard, senior planner with the Port of Portland; Glenn Gregg, Vice President of Lewis and Clark College; Tomas Kerrigan, a lawyer; Karen Kruzich, a high school student; Linda Spence, a housewife; Larry Winter, Associate Superintendent of Portland Public Schools; and Marlene Stahi, representing the Downtown Planning Committee. The charge of the committee was to develop a short-range plan for more immediate expenditure of state highway funds to be implemented in 60 days, to propose a test program to use to measure the impact of bicycle plans, and to develop a comprehensive bicycle plan for Portland, all by the end of 1972 (Committee to formulate

bicycle path, 1971).

The Bicycle Path Task Force presented its draft plan in February 1972 to the city's Department of Transportation engineering staff for comment and revisions. When the revised plan came back to the task force in March, there were several revisions that were met with strong disagreement. Two of the disagreements were about specific bike path options, but the most divisive issue was about the placement of bicycles in the city's transportation policy. It was, as Oakland noted, a deeper philosophical issue. The feasibility of the bicycle as a legitimate vehicle for commuting was in doubt by the city's engineers. Oakland, commenting on the revisions, summed it up by saying that, "as long as the bicycle continues to be considered a toy for recreational use only, we're not going to get anywhere with paths in the city." The committee members were responding to a specific memo written by Don Bergstrom, a city traffic engineer, in which he stated that he did not feel Portland should advocate the use of the bicycle as a commuting device, but instead should emphasize its use for recreational purposes (Bike lobby yells foul, 1972). The difference in practical terms was not insignificant. A focus on recreational uses would direct the plan to devising separate paths leading to recreational points of interest. A focus on bicycle commuting, on the other hand, would direct funding from the state to making changes in existing roadways and thereby secure efficient bike routes to downtown and other employment centers, as well as to shopping, the same destination points as autos or mass transit.

One of the most contentious aspects of securing bike routes on existing roads, then and now, is the removal of parking areas to accommodate bike lanes. The state Bicycle Bill was not clear on the issue. Securing funding through highway funds, rather

than, say, from the budget for parks, did orient bikeway development as a transportation option. Nonetheless, the prevailing attitude was that bicycling was a recreational activity, not an alternative mode of transportation competitive with the automobile. Some cities and counties tied use of their bike funds to other recreational and park acquisitions, such as funds from the Willamette River Greenway Program, that could be used to acquire trail property along the Willamette River. By so doing, bike funds could be used for building the pathways themselves (Green 1971a). This central disagreement over the place of bicycles in transportation policy was in part the result of lack of expertise about bicycle transportation policy and bike path construction. State Highway Department staff was assigned the task of developing the state's bicycle plan, yet lacked this specialized expertise. As one engineer said at the time, "it is like the blind leading the blind" (Green, 1971b).

Soon after the presentation of the Bicycle Path Task Force report, Oakland resigned from the group, attributing the decision to his desire to work at a national level on securing highway funds for mass transit. Setting aside the philosophical differences about the role of bicycles in Portland's transportation future, the task force forwarded the bicycle facilities plan to the traffic engineer's office (Sam Oakland quits, 1972). It passed through the city bureaucracy again and on to the city council, where it was finally adopted as the *Bicycle Facilities for Portland: A Comprehensive Plan*, in April 1973 (Bicycle Path Task Force, 1973).

There were several specific bicycle projects undertaken during 1972 and 1973, including four new bike routes and several curb ramp projects. Out of a budget of \$40,661, only \$22,964 was spent in the first two years on actual projects, and over half of

that on one bike path in northeast Portland. The remainder was spent on administration, including \$5,000 on the bike plan itself (Bicycle Path Task Force, 1973). The inability of the city to make effective use of its bike funds would become, over time, a contentious issue. In 1973, in order to continue the work of the Bike Path Task Force, the city council created a permanent seven member Citizen's Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The energy crisis of the early 1970s, and specifically the oil embargo in 1974, had a significant and lasting impact on bicycling policy, especially the on-going debate about the bike as a "toy" versus serious alternative mode of transportation. By 1974, there were 60 miles of bikeways constructed statewide, with another 48 miles under construction and 70 miles in the planning stage. However, as important as the completed bike projects was the change in attitude at both the state and regional levels. James McClure, the State Transportation Commission's bicycle route engineer, accepted the public's demand for commuter routes and school routes for bicycles in metropolitan areas, and referred to them as "utility" routes as opposed to recreational. With this change at the commission level, and because of rising fuel costs, recreational bike routes such as one proposed for the Oregon Coast were dropped in favor of a more intense focus on improving bicycle transportation in metropolitan areas (Harvey, 1974).

As bike programs were initiated around the state, it also became clear in areas like Portland that there needed to be a coordinated effort to create a network of bike paths that linked different cities and counties. In 1974, the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG) produced a bike plan for the Portland metropolitan region (Columbia Region Association of Government 1974). The development of the CRAG plan depended on citizen input throughout the process. CRAG helped create bicycle

citizen advisory groups throughout the region to help design the plan, including: Bicycle Advocates of Clark County, City of Gresham Park Board Advisory Committee, Clackamas County Citizens' Advisory Committee for Bikeway Planning, East Multnomah County Citizen's Advisory Committee, the Forest Grove Bikeway Group, Greenway Path Committee of Beaverton, Lake Oswego Bicycle Group, Tigard Area Pedestrian Pathway Committee, and the Washington County Bikeway Task Force. In effect, through this planning process, CRAG helped create a civic infrastructure for bicycling advocates that would remain in place long after this initial planning phase as cities and counties implemented bicycling programs.

Also indicative of the changes precipitated by the combination of persistent lobbying on the part of bicycle advocacy groups and the energy crisis, CRAG's bikeway planning assumptions no longer followed the recreational trail model (Columbia Regional Association of Governments, 1974). In their guidelines the change in perception is notable, including the understanding that "a regional bicycle pathway system will provide the facilities for an alternative transportation mode, thus furthering the opportunity for a balanced transportation system (p. 6)."

While some progress was being made in changing public and professional attitudes toward bicycling and building bicycle infrastructure, not everything about Portland's program was progressing smoothly. As part of its expanded bike program, by 1974 the City of Portland had a person assigned the task of overseeing the bicycle program. But, the program was nomadic, as it never had a neat fit within any bureau. It started first under the Department of Public Works, then moved to the Bureau of Planning, and then back to the Department of Public Works under the Bureau of Street

and Structural Engineering. Additionally, it was not clear what role the citizen advisory committee played, nor how it fit within the government structure. Richard Hofland, the first manager of the program, interpreted his job as serving as staff for the Bicycle Advisory Committee, thereby with more of an allegiance to the committee than to bureau management.

In a memo written to the director of the Bureau of Street and Structural Engineering, he assessed some of the problems he faced in overseeing the bike program. He noted that in the three years, , since the Bicycle Bill had passed, the City of Portland had received \$137,000. In that same period, less than \$41,000 had been spent, and only \$14,000 of that amount on the actual construction of bike facilities. Administration, planning and engineering had consumed 66% of the funds. Hofland suggested a revised arrangement that would place the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) in a more authoritative decision-making role. Hofland's suggestions did not sit well with the bureau, and tensions increased between Hofland, the BAC, and Hofland's boss, John Lang. Lang felt the role of the BAC was to be advisory only and the Bike Program manager worked under his direction, not that of the BAC (Richert-Bob, 1978).

Hofland quit his position as Bike Coordinator in the beginning of 1977 and, by mid-1977, it was evident the city was dramatically reconfiguring the Bike Program. Feeling as though they had little purpose or power, BAC members quit one by one until no one showed up at meetings and the BAC was formally disbanded. Several factors contributed to this disintegration, including bureaucratic haggling, but a primary reason for the demise of the program stemmed from the philosophical differences between bicycle activists and the city engineering staff, as well as some of the political leaders.

The bike program had been placed under the domain of the engineering bureau of the city because it was considered an issue of transportation infrastructure. From the onset, the bike community had advocated for more than structural solutions. The BAC, and the bike community in general, wanted to see more emphasis on education and safety issues, as well as retrofitting existing roadways to accommodate the “utility” bicyclist. The city argued the designated state highway funds were restricted by law and could not be used for the kinds of things for which Hofland and the BAC advocated. The BAC countered that the state itself had been using highway funds for bicycle education programs, but were unable to persuade the City (Richert-Bob, 1978).

In January 1978, City Commissioner Connie McCready proposed a new bicycling advisory structure. As evidenced by its name, the Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee’s charge would include pedestrian as well as bicycle considerations. This did not sit well with the bicycle community. Once again, activists felt this was yet another way to treat the bicycle as a toy and keep bicyclists off of roadways. John Kirkpatrick, an employee with Portland Public Schools, speaking at a public hearing, pointed out that “bicycles and cars got along better together than do pedestrians and bikes, and that combining the latter two groups was not a sound practice.” He added that “a bicycle lane on the street is cheaper to build than a bike path, and that pot of gold the city receives from 1 percent gasoline tax revenues would be better spent on educational and instructional activities for bicyclists than on bike pathways” (Henninger, 1978).

Despite opposition from some activists about combining pedestrian and bicycling concerns, the Citizens’ Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (CBPAC) was established in spring 1978. However, the CBPAC, or CAC, as it became known, was

given a different charge, one that reflected the wider view of activists about bicycling as a serious alternative mode of transportation. In addition to reviewing and prioritizing physical improvement plans for the bicycle and pedestrian network, the CAC (Portland Bicycle Program 1981) was:

To establish the bicycle as a legitimate form of transportation by:

Improving the safety and suitability of city streets for bicycling

Providing increased opportunities for secure bicycle parking

Expanding programs for bicycle safety education

Increasing public awareness of the bicycle as a means of transportation as well as recreation

A new full-time Bicycle Program Manager was hired and by the fall of 1978, the CAC had drafted a new bike plan. While the committee was to provide guidance on both pedestrian and bicycle matters, the emphasis of the \$250,000 plan was on bicycle projects, not pedestrian pathways. The plan was accepted by the city council, and in 1979 the bike program was taken over by the Office of Transportation (Portland Bureau of Transportation, 1979).

During this time, bicycle advocates also influenced the City of Portland's three year long Comprehensive Plan process. The original Comprehensive Plan, approved in 1981, at least made mention of bicycles under "Alternative Urban Travel" in the transportation section (Goal Six). It stated: "Provide support for alternative forms of urban travel, such as bicycling and walking." Additionally, the Public Rights-of-Way section spoke more directly to bike pathways, retrofitting bikeways on streets, and new

construction: “Include physical construction standards necessary to assure access and safe passage for bicyclists in design and construction of all new or reconstructed streets, especially on those streets designated as bicycle pathways in the Arterial Streets Classification Policy as private or federal funds become available Portland (Portland Planning Bureau, 1980).”

Likewise, the City of Portland had adopted two other policies that incorporated bicycle elements. The Arterial Streets Classification System, adopted in 1977, designated a network of bicycle pathways, “intended to establish and encourage safe, convenient and pleasant routes for bicycling within neighborhoods and districts, longer distance commuting, recreational trips and for access to public transit (Portland Transportation Bureau ,1977).” The Energy Conservation Policy, adopted in 1979, drew attention to the bicycle as a way to meet energy conservation goals: “the consumption of non-renewable fuels for transportation shall be reduced through actions which increase the efficiency of the transportation system operating within the city. These actions will encourage individuals to choose the method of travel which is the most fuel-efficient for the purpose of the trip; promote the energy efficient movement of goods; and provide incentives for the use of fuel-efficient vehicles (Portland Planning Bureau, 1980).”

At the regional level, the Metropolitan Services District (MSD) assumed its predecessor’s (CRAG) role in pushing for increased use of the bicycle as an alternative mode of transportation. Using a \$174,000 grant from the federal government, it conducted a campaign to increase people’s awareness of bicycling as a safe and efficient mode of transportation (Hayes, 1982). During the 1980s, the Citizens’ Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee had focused on developing bicycle corridors. This was a

labor-intensive effort, with each corridor guided by a separate citizen-led task force, along with the involvement of neighborhood associations in the designated areas. Now that the notion of separate recreational bike pathways had dissipated, the brunt of the planning effort was on modifying existing roadways to accommodate a bike lane. The bicycle was now in direct competition with the automobile, taking up road and parking space.

The process for selecting, designing, and implementing corridors was a straightforward, rational process. The CAC established criteria for the potential corridors. Staff then sought volunteer activists in the neighborhoods to serve on task forces. The citizen task force identified alternative routes. Staff then analyzed the alternatives and reported back to the task force. Then the task force submitted their report to the CAC for review. In the meantime, the task force also organized public forums in the affected neighborhood to gather additional comments. In this way, the task force in each planning area chose a recommended route and presented it to the CAC. The task force, together with the CAC, produced an analysis of the chosen route, listing advantages and disadvantages. The analysis was discussed at additional public forums, and the CAC would then approve the final recommendation and forward it to city council (Portland Bureau of Transportation, 1983). Not all residents in the city were enamored with having precious road space taken up by what they viewed as under-utilized bike lanes. One resident living along a proposed route in Northeast Portland responded, "If my house is robbed, and it proves to be a bicyclist who cased the neighborhood, I shall sue the bicycle committee, the people involved, the City of Portland, the State of Oregon, and the federal agency involved for 3 1/2 million" (Clark, 1987). Other residents along the proposed

Knott Street corridor raised stiff opposition as well, creating lengthy delays.

By 1987, out of the 22 proposed bike corridors, only nine had been completed. Once again the bicycle community, and specifically the CAC, was feeling frustrated. That year the CAC proposed a re-orientation of the committee's goals. In a letter to incoming Commissioner Earl Blumenauer, Marc Labadie, the new Chair of the CAC, said the committee needed to redefine its goals. He told the Commissioner, "We feel that the focus of our efforts has become narrowed over the past few years, limited to the implementation of a bicycle corridor system." He went on to say that the CAC was developing a new mission statement to reflect a return to the wider scope of activities, which had been pursued in the past (Blumenauer, 1987). The new commissioner was an avid bicyclist himself, so the CAC got his attention. In 1989, the Office of Transportation published the Alternative Transportation Program Guide (Portland Transportation Bureau, 1989) as a way of refocusing the program to embrace a broader scope for the transportation system of Portland. The plan was still about building bike corridors, but it also included educational or "encouragement activities." Unfortunately, due to budget and time constraints, these activities were postponed. And because of the adamant resistance by some residents to adding striped bike lanes at the expense of on-street parking, the plan focused more on techniques to make major traffic routes safer through the use of signage, spot hazard improvement (including modifying inlet grates), and connecting existing bikeways.

Under Commissioner Blumenauer, the Bicycle Program was renamed Portland's Alternative Transportation Program and administered by the Department of Transportation's Engineering Division. The seven member Citizens' Bicycle and

Pedestrian Advisory Committee still provided oversight to the program, and the primary funding source continued to be from state gas tax revenues, plus some additional grant revenues. By 1990, the program consisted of one full-time and one part-time staff position and an annual budget of \$161,416 (Coalition pushes pedal power 1991). While the name was mostly a slight of hand trick, the program did eventually expand, and the notion of alternative modes of transportation took on new meaning. A new advocacy organization, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA), was created in 1990 that was to have as much influence on biking as the original bike lobby did in the early 1970s. Oakland had dissolved the Bike Lobby in 1975, and there had been no strong outside advocacy group since then. Much of the energy of activists had been spent on the Community Advisory Committee. The Bicycle Transportation Alliance quickly grew into a strong advocacy organization. BTA initially focused on a goal that had been around for some time, namely to persuade Tri-Met, the regional transportation authority, to facilitate bike travel by installing bike racks on busses. To this end, BTA gathered 5000 signatures on a petition and by 1992 had convinced Tri-Met to begin installing the bike racks on all buses. With that success in hand, BTA initiated its Bicycle Friendly Portland campaign. Its first goal was to make bridges safer for bike commuters. This resulted in a Bridges Access Study which at first opposed by the BTA board, viewing it as a action to deflect their more comprehensive concerns and plans. BTA eventually embraced the plan as it led to important improvements to bridges for bicycle traffic, a key to increasing ridership. Although the exclusive bicycle bridge fantasy of the original Bike Lobby did not come to pass, vast improvements occurred when the Hawthorne Bridge was being repaired and modified in 1998 (Bicycle Transportation Alliance, 1992).

BTA provided a new, independent organizing structure outside of the long-standing, quasi-public Citizens' Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and the Office of Transportation's Bike Program. BTA's goals were also broader than creating bike corridors. In an interview in 1995, Rex Burkholder, one of BTA's founders, said, "this whole effort is about our lifestyle. It's about kids riding to school. It's about riding to the store. It's not about building bicycle lanes. It's about building a better way of life (Burgess, 1993)." There were also increasing disagreements between motorists and bicyclists, and bicycle advocates and neighborhood residents and associations. The bicyclists were viewed by some as idealists who didn't live in the real world. At one contentious meeting about the Lower Northeast Corridor Bike Route, Commissioner Bogle called the bicyclist advocates "elitists" and the request for a bike route in northeast as "a draconian attack on the rights of "normal" citizens." He went on to implicate the bike advocates as people "who must not have to take children to daycare...or attend meetings before or after work." He also hit a nerve when he accused the BTA of thinking they could solve the world's problems by getting people out of their cars and onto bicycles (Lindberg, 1990).

In 1993, BTA, tiring of the slowness of bureaucratic implementation of bike plans, decided to take its case to court. As early as 1991, BTA had hinted at this possibility. In a letter to Commissioner Blumenauer, Burkholder indicated that "the city is also in violation of state law in that it is not spending the required 1% of its Highway Trust Fund receipts." Burkholder went on to quote Kris Ochia, the Alternative Transportation Coordinator, as saying that only 60% of the minimum funds are spent each year. "This has been going on for years," he continued, "and may become the basis

for legal action against the city (Rex Burkholder, personal communication, March 26, 1991).” The final straw, from BTA’s point of view, was the lack of accommodation for alternative transportation facilities at a new sports arena being built on the eastside of the river — the Rose Quarter. They took the case to court where it dragged on for two years. The BTA finally won the case at the Oregon Appeals Court, a ruling upheld by the Oregon Supreme Court. This case was important because it clarified the intent of the legislature so that local governments could not find ways around spending money for bike improvements.

The court system wasn’t BTA’s only venue for civic action. BTA, working with the city, organized a Bike Fest in 1994, closing the Burnside Bridge to host an event attended by 15,000 people. Also in 1994, the city sponsored the first Bike to Work Day to draw attention to the practicality of bike commuting. Finally, the city was host to Pro Bike\*Pro Walk ‘94: an International Symposium on Bicycling and Walking. Attended by 400 transportation planners, engineers, citizen activists, and government officials from North America and around the world, the event drew attention to Portland as a bike friendly community (Marsh, 1994).

Bicyclists had other conditions working in their favor as well. The neighborhood association activists were clamoring for traffic calming in the neighborhoods and for solutions to congestion. While neighborhood associations sometimes opposed bicycle advocates when it came to removing on-street parking to add bike lanes, there were also points of agreement. This neighborhood movement for more livable streets and neighborhoods was one, culminating in November 1991 at a Neighborhood Congress on traffic issues, attended by 300 people. Several task forces were established, and two years

after the congress, they presented a planning document, “Reclaiming Our Streets.” The plan contained many ideas of how to improve traffic problems in neighborhoods and included many bicycle transportation improvement elements (Reclaim City’s Streets, 1993).

In addition, shifts in state and federal programs, along with new regulations, aided the bicycle movement. In 1991, the Oregon State Land Conservation and Development Commission’s Transportation Planning Rule (Goal 12) required all jurisdictions in the Portland metropolitan area to prepare a plan to reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita by 20 percent over the next 30 years. That same year, Congress passed the Inter-Modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) which called for increased spending on bicycle travel and allowed cities more flexibility in spending highway funds on alternative modes such as bicycling, walking, and transit. ISTEA provided an additional \$7 million annually to Oregon during the 1990s for bike and pedestrian trail development (Richards, 1992).

In 1994, the Bicycle Program staff embarked on yet another planning process, this one more comprehensive and well funded. The program received funding from the Transportation and Growth Management Program, a joint program of the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, which, in turn, received its funding from ISTEA and Oregon Lottery Funds. The Bicycle Master Plan, overseen by a 13 member Bicycle Master Plan Steering Committee, took 2 1/2 years to complete and involved over 2,000 citizens in an intensive, citizen-based planning process (Portland Office of Transportation, 1996).

The process commenced with 12 two-hour public forums. Additionally,

presentations were made for 25 other nonprofit organizations and neighborhood associations. Input was gathered at other large events such as the Regional Rail Summit and Portland Bike Show. While the Master Plan was being written, an additional nine meetings were held, attended by 500 citizens. The completed comprehensive plan, adopted in 1996, includes bikeway network elements as well as plans for end-of-trip facilities, bikeway design and engineering guidelines, and educational programs to promote the use of bicycles.

In 1995, *Bicycling Magazine* honored Portland as the most bicycle friendly community in America. In a column acknowledging the award, local columnist Jonathan Nicholas, an avid bicyclist and organizer of the state's largest annual bicycle event, Cycle Oregon, acknowledged BTA as the driving force behind the award. While BTA can undoubtedly lay claim to helping create a bicycle friendly community, BTA's work was only possible, as this long and tangled story reveals, because of the foundation laid by previous citizen activists (Nicholas, 1995).

In 1975, only 200 cyclists per day were using the Hawthorne Bridge. By 1995, this number had increased to nearly 2,000. A survey conducted in 1997 estimated there were 12,447 daily bicycle trips on all the bridges from downtown Portland. By 1998, Portland had completed over 150 miles of bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards, and off-street paths. Tri-Met's entire bus fleet was equipped with bicycle racks. There were 1,400 publicly installed bicycle racks and 190 bicycle lockers (Portland Office of Transportation. (1996).

In addition to the detailed Bicycle Master Plan, the city's Comprehensive Plan had been amended so that the 1999 version had its own detailed bicycle goal (Portland

Planning Bureau, 1999), whose goal was to "Make the bicycle an integral part of daily life in Portland, particularly for trips of less than five miles, by implementing a bikeway network, providing end-of-trip facilities, improving bicycle/transit integration, encouraging bicycle use, and making bicycling safer."

To many cyclists, by the time the Bicycle Master Plan was completed, the goals of establishing the bicycle as a serious alternative to the automobile had been accomplished. While much work was left to be done, the bicycle was no longer treated as a recreational toy, but rather was now regarded as an alternative mode of transportation. However, not all cyclists felt things were moving fast enough or had gone far enough. While the Bicycle Program had been incorporated into the governmental structure of the city, and BTA had become an established political player, some bicyclists were on the outside, ready to fight for a larger cause.

In 1993, a new bicycle group, Critical Mass, came to the foreground. *Willamette Week* compared them to Earth First: "The scrappy ranks of Critical Mass are to the mainstream BTA members what Earth First is to the Sierra Club (Veerman, 1994), p. 25)." The local Critical Mass group was inspired by a San Francisco group of the same name, founded in 1992, which began to stage events on a monthly basis. They would hijack lanes of traffic at the peak of rush hour, just to give motorists a taste of their own medicine. The first San Francisco "bike-ins" attracted hundreds of bicyclists and grew to upwards of a thousand. The organizers hosted large picnics in parks that had the appearance of sixties "be-ins." After the be-ins, the cyclists would spread out throughout the city, immobilizing traffic and creating gridlock (San Francisco Cyclists get Word, 1997) .

The Critical Mass viewpoint is pro-bicycle and anti-automobile, a vision shared by BTA. It is the methods used to reach these goals that separate the two groups.

The first Critical Mass events held in Portland were in cooperation with BTA and other bike groups. However, BTA began to distance itself from the group as some Critical Mass members became more belligerent and used tactics that BPA could not wholeheartedly support. In June 1993, a Critical Mass rally on the Broadway Bridge turned ugly as some of the members blocked traffic, including an off-ramp for the Interstate Freeway. Several Critical Mass members were arrested. One member, Sara Stout, described their organizing events as “planned coincidences” and “free-form” (Veerman, 1994, p. 25).

Critical Mass views the BTA as conservative. By being obedient to the letter of the law, they feel BTA allows the status quo of auto-rule to prevail on our roads. Other members dismiss the idea that they even *are* an organization. Participants, some of whom call themselves “massers,” are quick to explain that Critical Mass isn’t an official association. In fact, they participate in what they call a “xerocracy,” which means anyone can print suggestions for routes and then encourage the masses to follow (Veerman, 1994, p. 25).

Critical Mass has continued its controversial protest rides and bike-ins, one Friday a month, plus special events like an annual Halloween ride in which members dress in costumes and take over lanes of traffic. In November 1998, 18 Critical Mass members were arrested while blocking traffic in downtown Portland. In reaction to an Oregonian article taking aim at the tactics of Critical Mass, several “non-members” of the group responded in ways that reflected their adamant and anarchistic stand. Caffeine Jones, a

Critical Mass “non-member,” put it this way:

To any citizen who felt the Critical Mass was rude to them: That's the point! The Mass is angry at air pollution. It is asking you to stop driving your cars before emphysema and El Nino kill us all. There is an internal debate within the Critical Mass. Do we anger drivers and risk confrontation? Do we be polite and forget the First Amendment and be ignored by stinking auto drivers, just like every other day? About children in the Mass — most parents who take their kids keep it safe and don't try to direct traffic. However, parents take risks with their children all the time. Enviro-clown band Pepto Dizmal puts it like this: 'Do you think your kids are safe in that SUV?/You're just poisoning their breathing air -- that's what I see/when I pass you in one less car (B4).' (Critical Mass Bike Riders Speak, 1999)