

'Embracing a mission that's bigger than the bike'

Bicycle Transportation Alliance expands focus to include walking, transit

BY ROB SADOWSKY
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

Bicycle Transportation Alliance, a Portland based nonprofit organization, works to improve biking conditions throughout the metropolitan region. For the past 25 years, we have worked in partnership with citizens, businesses, community groups, government agencies and elected officials to create communities where people can meet their daily transportation needs on a bike. We're excited to announce that we're expanding our mission to include walking and transit and will continue to be a strong voice for bicycling. Our new mission to advocate for bicycling, walking and public transit will strengthen our work to create safe, healthy and thriving communities for all.

We're especially energized by restructuring our organization as part of this transition. Currently, the BTA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit, but we will be adding a 501(c)4 and/or political action committee to allow us to be more engaged in issues and candidate elections and more directly influence the political process.

How will our new mission and structure improve our ability to advocate for safe and healthy communities?

Our advocacy staff breaks down how this reformation will enhance their ability to advocate for their communities, provide more traction for their campaigns, and ultimately create safe streets for all.

Our deputy director, Stephanie Noll, said: "Embracing a mission that's bigger than the bike aligns with our evolution to work as part of broad coalitions to achieve funding and policy wins that are good for people walking, biking and accessing transit. Working in coalition with powerful community advocates like Oregon Walks, Community Cycling Center, Community Alliance of Tenants, and OPAL-Environmental Justice keeps us accountable to a broader base of community members



Rob Sadowsky is the executive director of the Bicycle Transportation Alliance.

and builds power in the movement for streets that are built around the mobility, health and safety of people, not just throughput of cars. I truly believe this coalition-based, people-centered approach is the way forward to building the kind of streets in all of our neighborhoods that are a joy to bike on, are safe for my kids to cross, and provide efficient transit service to cross the region."

Through conversations we've heard concerns that, with this broader focus, bike issues will take a back seat to other matters. Our advocacy director, Gerik Kransky, addresses this concern and explains that by becoming a multi-modal organization, our campaigns will be more successful.

"Bicycle advocacy will always be our core work, and in that work we've found endless opportunities to win more victories by being more inclusive," said Kransky. "Combining safe bicycle facilities with frequent and reliable transit service and complete networks of sidewalks and crosswalks is the only way we are going to provide people with real choices for how they get around. Our expansion will help make all types of transportation safe, affordable and accessible for everyone."

The BTA's equity manager and advocate

BTA'S RECENT CAMPAIGNS

The BTA worked in coalition with 89 organizations to run a Safe Routes to School #ForEveryKid campaign and won \$3.5 million to create safe streets near schools and a regional Safe Routes to School program.

BTA successfully advocated for safe space to ride bikes over the Newbury and Vermont Bridges of Southwest Barbur Boulevard. While we have more work to do to raise the millions of dollars required to build the project, pushing our state Department of Transportation to agree to the change took years of effort, and we

are proud of how far we've led the charge.

There were 11,741 people who biked in the BTA's May Bike More Challenge, and 1,959 were new to biking, making it the biggest encouragement challenge they've ever held!

The BTA has worked hard to advocate for safe streets and affordable and accessible active transportation in Washington County. We're thrilled to see Washington County and Hillsboro launch Transportation Safety Action Plans and move toward Vision Zero.

focused on East Portland, Elizabeth Quiroz, is excited to better represent her community through this expansion: "I believe that expanding our mission to include walking and transit will help broaden and strengthen our existing partnerships in underserved areas like East Portland, where lack of infrastructure is a major challenge to walking, biking and taking transit."

In recent years, the BTA has advocated for complete streets that include safe space for all road users. Many of our advocates believe that this mission expansion is more aligned with the work they have already been doing. LeeAnne Ferguson, our Safe Routes to School director, explained: "My personal goal is to create a world where kids can be safe and healthy. Kids and families use all modes to get to school safely, walking one day, biking the next, and public bus for older students. There is a great need to make these options safe so that everyone can gain the health benefits of walking, biking and accessing transit. Expanding the BTA's mission to include other modes will

align our organizational vision with my personal vision and with our charge to create safe routes to school for every kid!"

Our advocate focused on Washington County, Lisa Frank, has also been working to make streets safe for everyone and sees this mission expansion as a natural progression for the BTA: "I'm excited for this opportunity to strengthen our work in Washington County, such as our Campaign for a Safer Tualatin Valley Highway. From day one this campaign has been about making TV Highway safer for everyone through improvements like protected bike lanes and safe crossings. Our new mission aligns with those goals and will get more people on board with the changes we seek."

The BTA's priorities will continue to be fighting for Vision Zero policies, growing Safe Routes to School, and building healthy streets for people who bike, walk and take transit throughout the region. We plan to spend the summer and fall on a strategic plan to implement the expanded mission.

Morning poem

by Avendor

Ring the blue bells of morning
two frogs are walking home to sleep
the lion's dreaming he will not wake
the sun is rising to his feet

The city begins to quietly stir
as the fruit outside the market opens an eye
wisps of smoke seep from the factory's roof
as the girl with rosy cheeks passes by

And the teacher's lesson plan is sound
as the fishermen cast off to sea
and the world to me is in my kitchen
as the spider climbs down the tapestry



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Subsidized Housing Waiting Lists to Open for Studio, 1, 2, 3, and 4-Bedroom Apartments Wednesday, June 8 through Saturday, June 11, 2016

Home Forward is excited to announce that twelve communities with subsidized housing assistance will be opening the waiting lists for studio, one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom units from June 8 - June 11, 2016. Applicants must meet income and eligibility guidelines. Please call 503-280-3750 or visit www.homeforward.org for more information.

Applications will be accepted online from any internet connected computer at www.homeforward.org beginning June 8 at 8:30 am. Computers and assistance will be available at our Property Management office at 1605 NE 45th Ave, Portland, OR 97213 or you can visit 4610 N Trenton St. Portland, OR 97203. Help will be available at both locations from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm Wednesday, June 8 - Friday, June 10.

Assistance will not be available on Saturday, June 11, 2016.

