BIKE ADVOCACY DURING COVID-19

Ken McLeod
Policy Director
202.621.5447 | @KENMCLD
ken@bikeleague.org

1612 K STREET, NW, SUITE 1102
WASHINGTON, DC 20006
202.822.1333 | @BIKELEAGUE
WWW.BIKELEAGUE.ORG
Advocating for Good Roads since 1880

Dedicated to Building a Bicycle Friendly America for Everyone

| B | Cycling – spread the joy of bicycling |
| A | Advocacy – organize people on behalf of bicycling |
| S | Safety – make safety a political imperative |
| E | Education – help more people bike |
» 13 BFCs, 7 BFUs, 36 BFBs

» #5 Ranked State
  » Consistently in Top 10 since 2011

» Self-guided applications
  » Best with local advocate support
Goal: More people have mobility options and access to community resources

Why now? Many state and communities have made significant bicycling investments, but networks remain elusive for many

How? Increase funding for biking, require safety funding to be spent on biking and walking safety, complete streets at all levels

HR 5231 – The Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Act
HR 3040 – The SAFE Streets Act
S 2077 - The Complete Streets Act
» **Goal:** Connect America with high-quality interstate bicycle networks that will also significantly expand biking in suburbs

» **Why now?** Great American Rail Trail, US Bike Route System, East Coast Greenway, and other large bike projects are well planned and ready for investment

» **How?** Dedicated funding with Congressional mandate for cross-agency collaboration

» **Connecting America’s Active Transportation System Act** ([H.R.5696/S-3391](https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/5696))
  » $500 million annually for active transportation networks
» **Goal**: Promote active transportation and improve benefits for people with lower-incomes

» **Why now?** Tax Cuts and Jobs Act suspended Bicycle Commuter Benefit and changed other benefits, which still primarily benefit people with higher-incomes who drive

» **How?** Work with TDM groups, cities, and others to find solutions, advocate for bike incentives

» Mobility Options, Resiliency, and Efficiency (MORE) Through TDM (HR 6770)
» HR 1507 – Bicycle Commuter Act of 2019
» E-bike and bike purchase incentives
» **Goal:** US reclaims leadership on road and vehicle safety

» **Why now?** NHTSA New Car Assessment program is broken and a decade behind peers. US lags in Vision Zero progress and per capita traffic deaths.

» **How?**
  » Short-term = require US agencies to make changes through Congressional action.
  » Long-term = reform US agencies to have stronger focus on engineering approaches to safety.

» [S xxxx - The Cycling Safety Act](#)

» [Automated Vehicle Vision Test Fact Sheet](#)
» **Goal:** Every person in the US can safely ride a bike and make informed transportation choice decisions

» **Why now?** To make driving optional, people need to be educated for all modes and as transportation consumers

» **How?** Work with network of League Cycling Instructors, schools, driver education groups, and others to find solutions, advocate for bike education

» [https://bikeleague.org/content/federal-bicycle-safety-funding](https://bikeleague.org/content/federal-bicycle-safety-funding)

» [https://bikeleague.org/ridesmart](https://bikeleague.org/ridesmart)
HOW DOES COVID-19 CHANGE THINGS?

» **Urgency:** If no steps toward better commuter incentives or better networks then massive increase in driving, pollution, and potentially deaths

» **Fiscal Policy:** More likely to see large federal investments now than at other times

» **Help Transit and Cities:** Existing efforts in many places to encourage more biking need federal funding and support
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ADVOCACY IMPACTS

» Emergency Relief – we are here

» Stimulus – over course of next year (+)

» Re-Authorization – over course of next year or later

RESOURCES

https://bikeleague.org/content/congress-must-fast-track-transit-and-active-transportation-investments-pandemic-response

https://bikeleague.org/content/lobbying-time-covid-19
ADAPTING STREETS TO COVID-19

HOW ARE STREETS CHANGING?

Slow Streets
» Healthy – Safe – Open - Play

Pop-up Bike/Walk Lanes
» Repurpose parking or travel lanes

Signals
» Lower traffic, no pedestrian buttons

WHERE TO FIND CHANGES

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center Local Action Dataset

Mike Lydon’s google sheet

National Complete Street Coalition Map

RESOURCES

https://www.calbike.org/how-to-create-temporary-open-streets/

RE-AUTHORIZATION AND STIMULUS

» Will stimulus provide flexibility for street adaptation?

» Will there be significant policy changes?

» Will re-authorization happen?

» How much vehicle regulation, education, or commuter policy is advanced as stimulus?
RTC is dedicated to creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people.
RTC’s Three-Legged Stool

Trail Projects
We help communities meet the dynamic challenges of trail development for the creation of successful multi-use pathways.

Policy Work
We steadfastly advocate for state and federal policies and funding programs that make trail development and walking/biking infrastructure possible.

Trail Promotion
Recognizing and highlighting excellent trails—and the people who make them possible—is part of our daily work.
New England Rail-Trail Spine Network

The New England Rail-Trail Spine Network initiative was launched in March 2019 during a two-day regional meeting on multiuse trail development and policy in New Hampshire.

Held at the Appalachian Mountain Club’s Cardigan Mountain Lodge in Alexandria, the regional meeting included 12 New England experts on bicycle/pedestrian issues and multipurpose trails, and six staff members of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC).

Vision and Goals

The goal of this spine network is to unite the New England region’s six states—Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut—by multipurpose trail. Borne on a mega vision of creating a simple, bold, memorable network with a minimum of on-road miles, the purpose of the network is not to serve as a comprehensive list of all open trails or trail projects—nor to have redundant segments or spurs—but to include only those corridors with the most likelihood of first success in uniting the states.

Only major “spine” trails have been included; however, other connectors can be added over time (and GIS sub layers will contain many other trails). These criteria will keep the focus squarely on completion of the priority corridors, with support being provided to adjoining systems and trails, since these corridors will be connecting to the larger interstate system. Over time, additional connecting trails will be strategically added to the project, with further work potentially including linkages to trail networks in New York and Canada.

Advancing the Network

Fortunately, 50% of the network is already open. The completed trails within the system have made the case for even more investment in trails via the many benefits that have been generated in the region, including job creation, community development and alternative transportation that has helped to decrease carbon emissions and address climate change.

The region has many positive attributes toward making this vision a reality, including: some 560+ miles of open trails (and growing), a variety of relevant, planned trail projects, supportive and well-staffed regional planning agencies, and—as with most successful trails—dedicated and knowledgeable volunteers.

New England is described as the only multistate region with clear, consistent boundaries,” and therefore, it makes sense that it should be the first distinct region in America to articulate a multipurpose trail vision.

Progress and Next Step

Since the March 2019 meeting, RTC has convened three additional working-group meetings (and more than a dozen individual meetings) to assess corridor potential and define the vision. The next step to move the concept forward is securing funding for RTC to guide the implementation of the agreed upon workplan.

For more information, contact:
Tom Sexton, Northeast Regional Director
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
tom@railstotrails.org
Economic Benefits & Recovery

- Trail use up 200%, bike demand up dramatically during shutdown
- Trails & active transportation networks are critical for essential workers who can’t use public transit right now
- Socially-distant recreation and exercise
- Create 17 jobs per $1 million spent
- Identified by 60% of homebuyers as most desirable community feature influencing home purchase

Source: Flickr user clio1789
#StreetsForSocialDistancing

Source: https://www.railstotrails.org/take-action/createsafeplaces/#examples
#StreetsForSocialDistancing: Brookline

Longwood Ave (west of Kent St)

Source: Town of Brookline, via Streetsblog Mass, 4/8/2020
COVID-19 and #StreetsForSocialDistancing resources:
Petition, map/city list, advocacy toolkit, distancing tips
https://www.railstotrails.org/take-action/createsafeplaces/

Active Transportation Policy Hub
Searchable database of trail-funding legislation
https://rtc.li/policyhub

Andrew N. Dupuy
Director of State-level Policy
drew@railstotrails.org

Tom Sexton
Northeast Regional Director
tom@railstotrails.org
East Coast Greenway

Connecting people to place, Maine to Florida
The East Coast Greenway is a walking and biking route stretching 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida.
We connect urban and rural, north and south, along the most populated corridor of the United States.
In 2019, we reached 1,000 miles traffic-protected trail, 34% complete.
The East Coast Greenway is more than a trail.
It’s transportation.
It’s a gym, free and open to all.
It’s a community center.
It’s a tourism attraction, good for local business.
It’s a park, encouraging environmental stewardship.
East Coast Greenway by the numbers:

3,000 miles

15 states + Washington, DC

450 communities

25M people within 5 miles of route
We focus on policy changes needed to accelerate greenways.
East Coast Greenway in Massachusetts

Spine Route: 41% Complete

Comp. Route: 55% Complete

Check out: map.greenway.org
Mattapoisett Rail Trail - Shining Tides section
Trail use has increased significantly during COVID-19

Portland, Maine
Back Cove Trail
3X

Philadelphia
Delaware River Trail
107%

Richmond
Virginia Capital Trail
65%

Bolton, Connecticut
Hop River Trail
217%

Reported increase in trail use March 2019 to March 2020

East Coast Greenway Alliance | greenway.org
East Coast Greenway Alliance

GREENWAY STIMULUS

There has never been a more critical moment for our nation to invest in regional trails and greenways.

$400 MILLION in construction-ready projects are poised to drive economic growth & public health improvement.

15 STATES 210 miles of protected greenways & trails are ready to be built across 15 East Coast states.

60 PROJECTS with lengths of up to 40 miles will connect our 450 communities throughout 15 East Coast states.

6,000 JOBS 17 jobs are created for every $1 million invested in trail development - 50 percent more than highways.

Let’s build the most popular park in the country | greenway.org/stimulus
$25 billion for greenways and trails that connect all 50 states across America

- Does your organization support the #GreenwayStimulus?
- Go to greenway.org/stimulus to learn more & sign-on to show your support via a letter that will be shared with congressional leaders