

## 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Thurston County Bicycle Commuter Challenge Final Report: Good Showing in Spite of the Weather!



Intercity Transit's *Thurston County Bicycle Commuter Challenge* and its related events again saw great levels of participation in 2017. We continued innovating and evolving the BCC to make it easier to get involved, and more fun to participate. As always, more plans are afoot for continuing the growth and evolution of the BCC in the years ahead, while preserving the grass-roots legacy and local flavor of the program.

### Notable for 2017:

- Updated the name of the event to the **Bicycle Commuter Challenge**.
- Launched a new website dedicated to the BCC, with online registration, mileage tracking, and team totals.
- Grew the February Winter BCC for year-round bikers to 225 riders in spite of wettest rainy season on record.
- Over 70 riders turned out for the Earth Day Market Ride, in spite of soaking rain.
- Great participation in National Bike to Work Day, with a total of 6 "bike commute stations" in 3 cities.

### What's Next for the BCC:

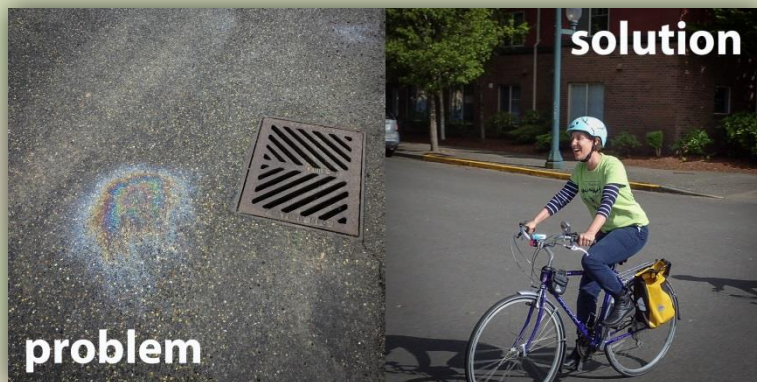
- Perfecting our new website and adding new features to better engage participants, Team Captains and ETC's.
- Continuing cooperation with Intercity Transit's Youth Education Program, to better engage younger generations.
- Increasing the number of kid-friendly coupons and prizes.

The BCC has evolved into a series of six community-wide events, spanning the first half of each year, beginning with the early-season **Winter BCC** in January/February, followed by the **Earth Day Market Ride** in April, **Bike To Work Day "Bike Stations"**, the **Bicycle Commuter Challenge** and **School Mini-BCC** in May, and the **Prize Hoopla** in June. All are well-attended and happily anticipated events each year. Using a combination of these

events, communication tools, incentives and rewards, the BCC gets new practical cyclists involved and keeps the bicycling community engaged and communicating for nearly half of each year.

### 2017 BCC by the Numbers:

- 1600 registrations- a level reached only 4 other times in 30 years.
- 67% of participants recorded trips.
- Total miles ridden: 93,537.
- Average miles ridden over the month per rider: 88.
- Total days on which participants rode their bikes: 11,206.
- Average number of days commuting by bike: 10.5.
- Nearly 45 tons CO2 prevented from entering the atmosphere.
- 85 teams recorded trips in the BCC this year.
- 48 Sponsors and Supporters contributed coupons and free passes, event support, and over 200 prize items.
- Over 70 participants at the Earth Day Market Ride. Estimated 200 participated in National Bike to Work Day Bike Stations. Around 100 attended the Prize Hoopla.
- 225 people also participated in the "Winter BCC" in February, which included International "Winter Bike to Work Day" on February 11.



**Situation:** Single Occupancy Vehicle travel takes a heavy toll on our environment and infrastructure, and lack of physical activity is a leading cause of many of the health problems common today. Using a bicycle as transportation is a great way to address these issues. Most trips made by car in our area are 5 miles or less. In many cases it can actually be faster to travel those 5 miles by bicycle than by car, with no emissions, plus healthy exercise and fun in the bargain!

**Objectives:** In keeping with Intercity Transit’s mission to support a sustainable, livable, healthy community, the Bicycle Commuter Contest’s goals are:

- To encourage people of all ages and abilities to try bicycling for transportation.
- To reward those who make that choice- whether it is every day, or for one day.
- To connect new practical cyclists to available education, resources and support.
- To convey rider feedback to local jurisdictions about bicycling infrastructure needs (this feature is on hiatus for 2017 only, due to temporary website limitations).
- To engage employers and local jurisdictions and encourage them to support active transportation choices.
- To connect our local practical cycling community with others around the country, to learn from them, and to set an example for communities that are not as far along as we are.
- To stimulate and support our local economy through partnerships with our sponsors.

**Impact:** In the twelve years that Intercity Transit has hosted the BCC, its participants have logged over 1.2 million miles on 146,200 practical trips, preventing the release of over 550 tons of CO2 and other pollutants. In its 30 year history, the BCC has recruited approximately 24,000 citizens and engaged them to try a new transportation mode. As participant testimonials show, many of these peoples’ lives have been changed for the better as a result. Our community is also much more “bike friendly” than it was when the BCC started in 1988!

**Budget:** The BCC runs on a very small budget, which is enhanced by sponsorship contributions. This year the BCC had 48 sponsors and supporters, mostly local businesses who contributed over \$25,000 in cash, services, coupons, gift cards and merchandise for prizes.

**Community Involvement:** The BCC engages volunteers from the community to help with its events, and this year had over 25 volunteers who put up posters, led neighborhood rides on Earth Day, initiated and staffed Bike To Work Day Bike Stations, and helped out at the Prize Hoopla. The BCC coordinator also attends and supports Bike and Transit Fairs and other events in the community, and at State Agencies and public venues.

**2017 Community Events Attended:**

Washington Bike Summit, Thurston County Green Business Luncheon, REI Bike Commuting Basics Class, Evergreen State College Bike Fest, Capitol Campus Bike Expo, ELG Campus Bike Expo, Public Service Appreciation Day, Interagency Bike Ride, DES Sustainability Fair.

**Local Bike Month Proclamations:**

The BCC works with local jurisdictions to proclaim May as “Bike Commuter Month” in the following jurisdictions: **City of Lacey, City of Olympia, City of Tenino, City of Tumwater, City of Yelm, Thurston County.**

## 2017 BCC Participant Testimonials:

Hooray! We love the BCC so much, and I'm thrilled that a prize is heading our way. ~ Mari N.

I had an absolutely great time trying the BCC for the first time, after moving here in December. Thanks so much to you and your colleagues for making Olympia more livable. ~ Trish

Thanks for organizing this awesome challenge!! ~Jen T.

Thanks for all the work you put into making this a great event! ~Kristy J.

Excellent! Thank you for organizing the BCC and arranging for all the nice prizes and coupons! Much appreciated. ~Rachel

Thank you for your enthusiasm and Intercity Transit for their support in encouraging people in Thurston county to see bicycling as an awesome mode of transportation - not just a sport! ~Deric

I haven't ridden since about 1995, and am "starting over". This is one of my goals is to ride again. I've taught myself to crawl, walk (I'm wasn't supposed to do either one again) and graduated from a walker to canes and now trying without either. I love to ride and might be a bit wobbly, but refuse to give up. The commute month just inspires me even more. Thank you for sponsoring it. ~Rene C.

Thanks for all your continued efforts in making this a great part of living in Thurston County. You have encouraged this old and mostly inactive lady to love commuting by bike. Reading through others [Rider Profiles] was helpful when I was trying to figure out how to be a biker on both ends of a work day that requires professional dress attire. ~Leslie H.



**Conclusion:** In spite of a cool, wet spring, 2017 has been another successful year for the Bicycle Commuter Challenge. Participants reduced pollution and traffic congestion, eased parking problems, saved money, helped the local economy, raised awareness about transportation choices and benefited the health of individuals, our community and our planet.