

31st Annual Thurston County Bicycle Commuter Challenge Final Report: A Rebound, and Great Community Spirit!



Intercity Transit's **Thurston County Bicycle Commuter Challenge** and its related events again saw great levels of participation in 2018. The BCC rebounded from a slight dip in participation last year, due to a very rainy spring. 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.

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 February, followed by the **Earth Day Market Ride** in April, **Bike To Work Day "Bike Stations"**, **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 Thurston County practical cycling community engaged and communicating for nearly half of each year.

Notable for 2018:

- First year of all-online participation. Paper forms are still available, but only a handful of participants used them.
- First year offering a Grand Prize bike vacation with Adventure Cycling Association.
- First year of video ad on major cable outlets and Pandora music streaming service.
- Sponsored bike parking rack at new YMCA location on Plum St. in Olympia.
- Winter BCC snapshot: 214 riders logged 15,396 miles on 1,767 total days in spite of monthly average temps 5 degrees below normal, and several days of snow.

- Over 100 riders turned out for the Earth Day Market Ride.
- A record 546 BCC participants logged rides on Bike to Work Day, with a total of 7 “bike commute stations” in 3 cities, including a new station in Northeast Lacey.

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.
- Adding more schools to the School Bike Challenge.
- Adding features to the Winter BCC, such as teams and prizes based on level of participation.
- Adding more Bike to Work Day Bike Stations

2018 May BCC by the Numbers:



- 1,139 riders logged trips- a level reached only 2 other times in 30 years. Over 200 won prizes.
- Total miles ridden: 99,901.
- Average miles ridden over the month per rider: 87.
- Total days on which participants rode their bikes: 12,225.
- Average number of days commuting by bike: 11.
- Nearly 50 tons CO2 prevented from entering the atmosphere.
- 74 teams recorded trips in the BCC this year. 15 teams won prizes.
- 48 Sponsors and Supporters contributed discount coupons and free passes, event venues and support, and over 200 prize items.
- Over 100 participants at the Earth Day Market Ride. 546 participated in Bike to Work Day activities. Around 120 attended the Prize Hoopla.
- 214 people also participated in the "Winter BCC" in February, which included International "Winter Bike to Work Day" on February 10.



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 celebrate 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 participant feedback to local jurisdictions about bicycling infrastructure needs.
- To engage local employers and 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 while offering incentives to participants through partnerships with our sponsors.

Impact: In the thirteen years that Intercity Transit has hosted the BCC, and now including the Winter BCC, over 13,000 participants have logged more than 1.3 million miles on 160,000 practical trips, preventing the release of over 650 tons of CO₂, not to mention other pollutants. In its 31 year history, the BCC has recruited an estimated 24,000 community members 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, and the BCC and its proponents have been a part of that evolution.

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, event venues, 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, not to mention hundreds of individual, in-person contacts every year.

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.**

2018 BCC Participant Testimonials:

“I have participated for several years now. It always gets me going, gets me to get the bike out, do a tune-up and gets me out on the pavement! Thanks.”

“Love it! It's makes me ride more every time I join.”

“It feels good to be a part of the big effort by organizers and participants, even though my commute is short (home office :-). Good incentive for erranding by bike and for enjoying the coupon rewards.”

“I love this annual event and have been participating for 9 years now. My whole family does it and it got my wife commuting to work via bike regularly. Keep up good work.”

“I will always participate because bicycling is an important means of transportation and exercise - I try to support efforts to encourage others to explore bicycle transportation.”

“I like the new website for entering data. I recently bought my first new bike so I'm excited to rack up the miles getting around in Thurston County.”

Conclusion: 2018 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.

Road Feedback Comments:

A note: Due to changes in the way we collect Rider Feedback comments about bicycle infrastructure conditions, there are fewer this year. We hope to better integrate the comment collecting function of our website next year, to get back to the level of engagement we had with paper mileage logs in the past. We have also been directing users to the OlyConnects app, for reporting problems to the City of Olympia, and to the public works “[Contacts](#)” page on the TRPC website. Hopefully this is resulting in direct feedback to local jurisdictions about cycling conditions.

1. Location of the problem: Tye Drive, Tumwater

Road has been punched through and opened up to unimpeded traffic flow between Israel Rd to the south and Trosper Rd to the north. Posted speed is 25 m.p.h. along the entire length of the city street, but very few are abiding by the posted speed. Since being opened up, I've had two close calls and both times the drivers were speeding, and one individual was clearly 'on the phone': In the past ten years of travelling this route I've had only one close call.

2. Location of the problem: Deshutes Parkway, and Columbia Street

The railroad crossings on Deschutes Parkway, and Columbia St. are really rough!!

3. Location of the problem: Capitol Blvd between O'Farrell Ave SE and Carlyon Ave SE Olympia, on the SW side of the street.

The "bike lane" slash shoulder has some deep and large pot holes in this section.

4. Location of the problem: Martin Way, Olympia-Lacey

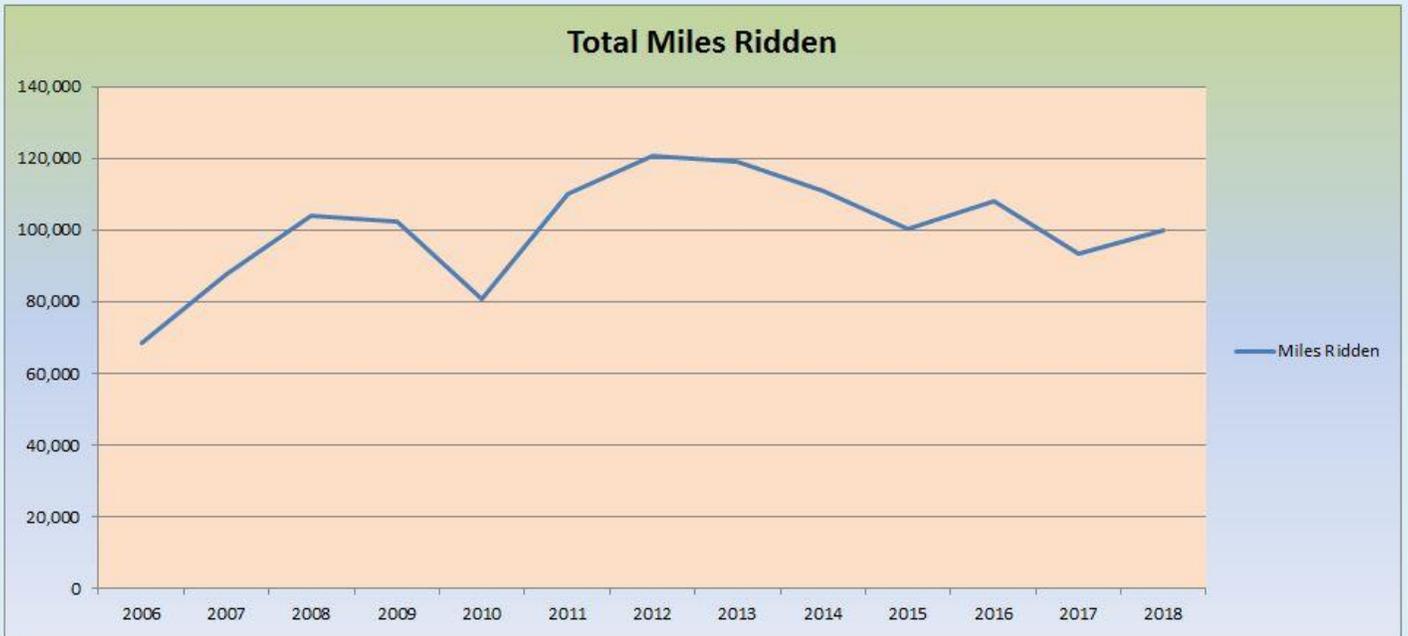
Martin Way bike lines throughout Olympia and Lacey are full of rocks & pebbles. Would be great if the cities would sweep the lanes.

Bicycle Commuter Challenge historical stats:

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
533	713	916	901	932	1114	1058	1182	1018	1013	1175	1068	1139



2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
68,634	87,500	104,000	102,379	80,736	110,184	120,653	119,129	110,859	100,445	108,017	93,537	99,901



2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
6000	10,100	11,700	11,703	11,746	13,856	13,947	14,954	13,093	13,392	14,485	11,206	12,225

