

## 33rd Annual Thurston County Bicycle Commuter Challenge Final Report: A year of challenge and adaptation for the BCC!

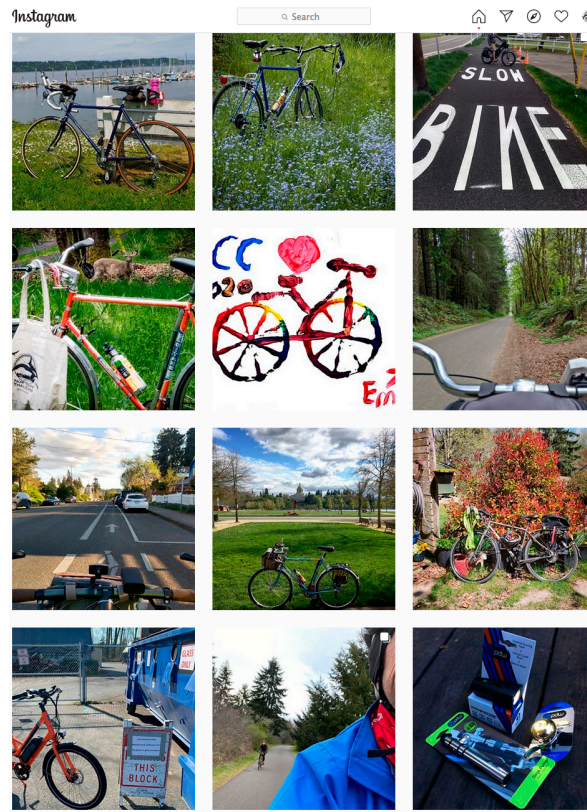


Figure 1: #ThurstonBCC on Instagram, April, May, 2020

Intercity Transit's **Thurston County Bicycle Commuter Challenge** faced its own challenges along with the rest of the world in 2020, but participation in the BCC was surprisingly strong. With the BCC in the midst of its normal preparations as the Covid-19 pandemic began to spread, "enormous changes at the last minute" were required. With meetings and local events being cancelled, agencies and other workplaces shifting to work-at-home, and businesses closing for an indefinite period, there were many uncertainties. To address the situation, we cancelled all of our in-person events and launched new online events in their place, put the sponsor discount coupons on hold for the year, and opened the BCC to all kinds of bike rides, instead of limiting it to rides for transportation. Recognizing the benefits of bicycling to public health in the context of a pandemic was the basis for this last change. Biking and walking outdoors (locally) were recognized as beneficial in the Governor's proclamations, and we adapted to promote these activities.

The **Winter BCC** in February was unaffected by the pandemic, instead breaking all previous records for participation by a wide margin. To replace the **Earth Day Market Ride** in April, we launched two online events: the **Bike Art Challenge** and the **Bike Social Media Challenge**, both of which were well received. To replace the **School Bike Challenge**, we launched the **Bike, Walk'n'Roll Scavenger Hunts**, with new things to hunt for each week in May. The May **Bicycle Commuter**

**Challenge** went ahead, with the aforementioned changes. Since it was impossible to hold the **Prize Hoopla** in June, we instead used the postal service to mail all team and individual prizes to the participants, plus a thank you letter and reflective BCC sticker to everyone who didn't win a prize.



### **Notable for 2020 (aside from the pandemic):**

- Third year of the Grand Prize bike vacation with Adventure Cycling Association.
- Second year of presenting a hand-made quilt as a prize, made by longtime BCC participant Pam Leonard.
- Second year of offering Bike Commuter Basics class, for beginning and “interested but concerned” riders.
- Winter BCC snapshot: 290 riders logged 19,541 miles on 2,356 total days and broke all previous records.
- 10 youth and adult artists submitted bike-related artworks in the Bike Art Challenge.
- Over 40 riders participated in the Bike Social Media Challenge, posting or sending in selfies and snapshots.
- 80 youth and adult participants sent in completed Scavenger Hunt cards in the Bike, Walk’n’Roll Scavenger Hunt.

### **2020 Bicycle Commuter Challenge by the Numbers:**

- 832 riders logged trips.
- 264 new riders recruited (32% of all riders).
- Total miles ridden: 84,415.
- Average miles ridden over the month per rider: 101.
- Total days on which participants rode their bikes: 8,363.
- Average number of days commuting by bike: 10.1.
- 71 teams recorded trips in the BCC this year.

### **What’s Next for the BCC:**

- Possible socially distanced events, following state and local guidelines, depending on conditions in 2021.
- Monitor Covid-19 situation, resume/adapt sponsor coupon program for 2021.
- Continuing cooperation with Intercity Transit’s Youth Education Program, to engage younger generations.
- Expand and adapt outreach efforts to the evolving circumstances.

## **Situation:**

Using a bicycle as a means of transportation has many community benefits including reducing pollution, traffic and parking congestion, and improving individual and public health. In a public health emergency, the benefits are especially highlighted. Bicycling benefits both physical and mental health and wellbeing, and allows social distancing while traveling for work, errands, or recreation.

**Objectives:** In keeping with Intercity Transit's mission to support a sustainable, livable, healthy community, the Bicycle Commuter Challenge'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 fifteen years that Intercity Transit has hosted the BCC, and now including the Winter BCC, about 15,000 participants have logged approximately 1.5 million miles on 120,000 practical trips, preventing the release of nearly 750 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>, not to mention other pollutants. Over the course of its 33-year history, the BCC has recruited an estimated 25,000 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 big part of that evolution. This year, under challenging circumstances, the BCC adapted and provided the community with encouragement to stay active and healthy.

**Budget:** The BCC runs on a very small budget, which is enhanced by sponsorship contributions. This year the sponsorship program was largely cancelled due to Covid-19, but 8 sponsors had already donated prizes by February so we had enough prizes to offer.

**Community Involvement:** The BCC normally engages volunteers from the community to help with its events, but sadly we missed them this year due to cancellations.

## 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.** Proclamations were all done remotely in 2020.

## 2020 BCC Participant Testimonials:

*“THANK YOU for keeping the BCC going so strongly this year! ... [We] have been enjoying the contest as a family, particularly the counting of recreational miles - it has encouraged us to be out getting more activity (safely), particularly when our commute has been reduced to the distance from the bedroom to the shower and back to the living room.”*

**Chris Hawkins**, Thurston County Health Dept.

*“We’ve been riding our bikes a lot lately, sometimes for errands but mostly for fun, and it’s been cool to log all the miles during our special circumstances.*

*Thanks,”*

**Chris Schad**

*“Hi Duncan,*

*Hope this finds you well. Thanks again for your work on this...it’s been fun.”*

**Wade Alonzo**

Program Director

Washington Traffic Safety Commission

*“Please find attached our family’s scavenger hunt results. Thanks for running the BCC - even in these crazy times!”*

**Scott**

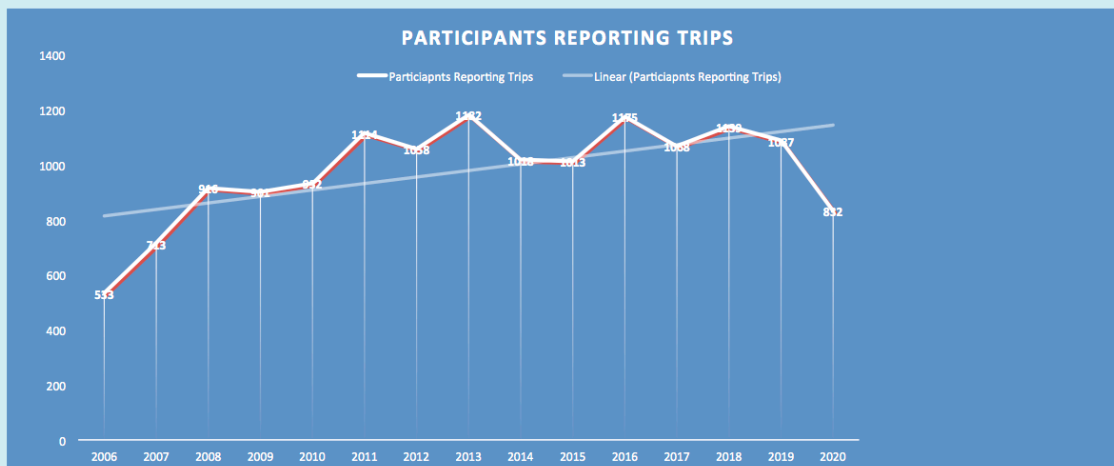
**Conclusion:** 2020 has been a strange but successful year for the Bicycle Commuter Challenge. Participants reduced pollution and traffic congestion, eased parking problems, saved money, raised awareness about transportation choices and benefited the health of individuals, our community and our planet.



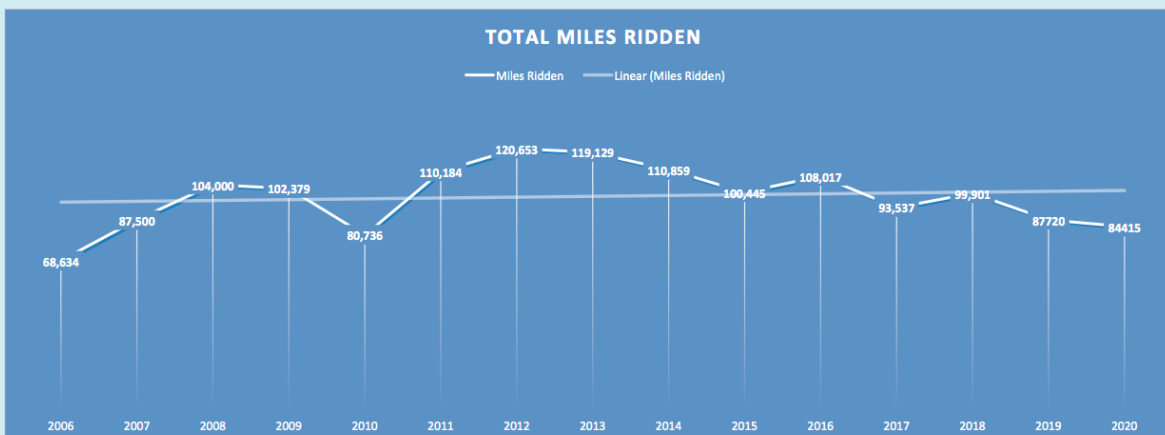


## Bicycle Commuter Challenge historical stats, 2006-2020:

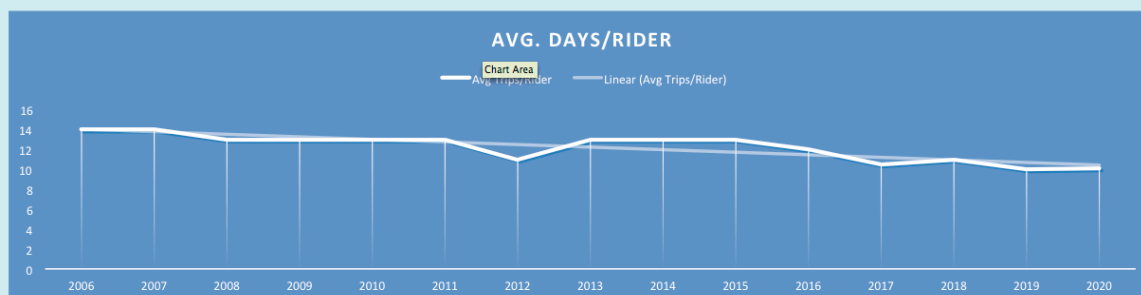
Year:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Participants Report	533	713	916	901	932	1114	1058	1182	1018	1013	1175	1068	1139	1087	832



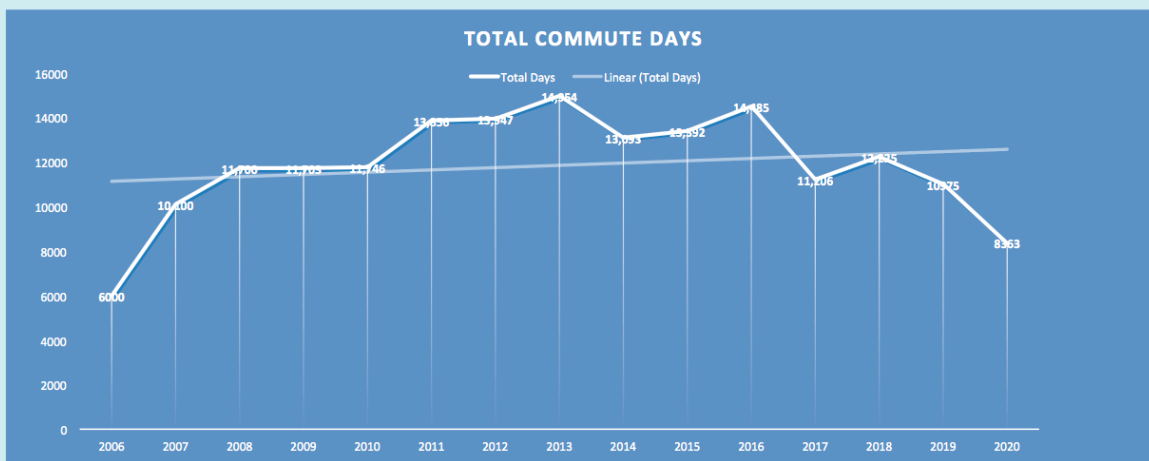
Year:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Miles Ridden	68,634	87,500	104,000	102,379	80,736	110,184	120,653	119,129	110,859	100,445	108,017	93,537	99,901	87,720	84,415



Year:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Avg Trips/Rider	14	14	13	13	13	13	11	13	13	13	12	10.5	11	10	10.1



Year:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Total Days	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	10975	8363



Year:	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Avg. Miles/Rider	119	123	113	114	90	104	114	102	111	99	92	88	87	81	101

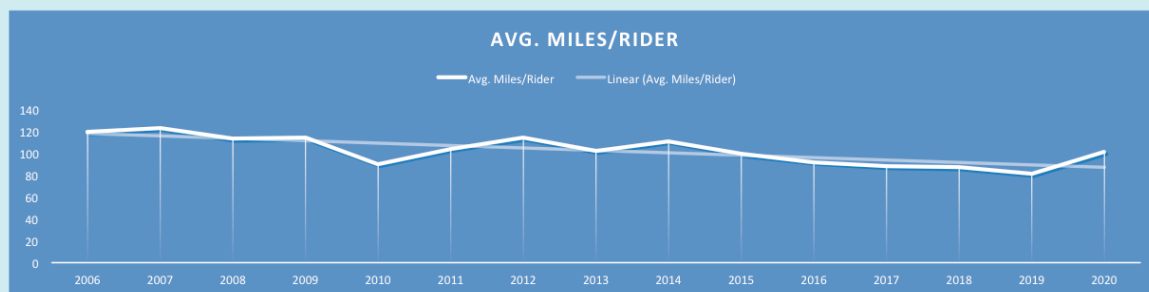


Figure 2: Would-have-been 2020 Earth Day Market Ride