Why Walkability?:
Maine's Steps in the Right Direction

September 19, 2017 | GrowSmart Walkability Forum, Bangor

Overview

Why Walkability?
Maine Steps in the Right Direction

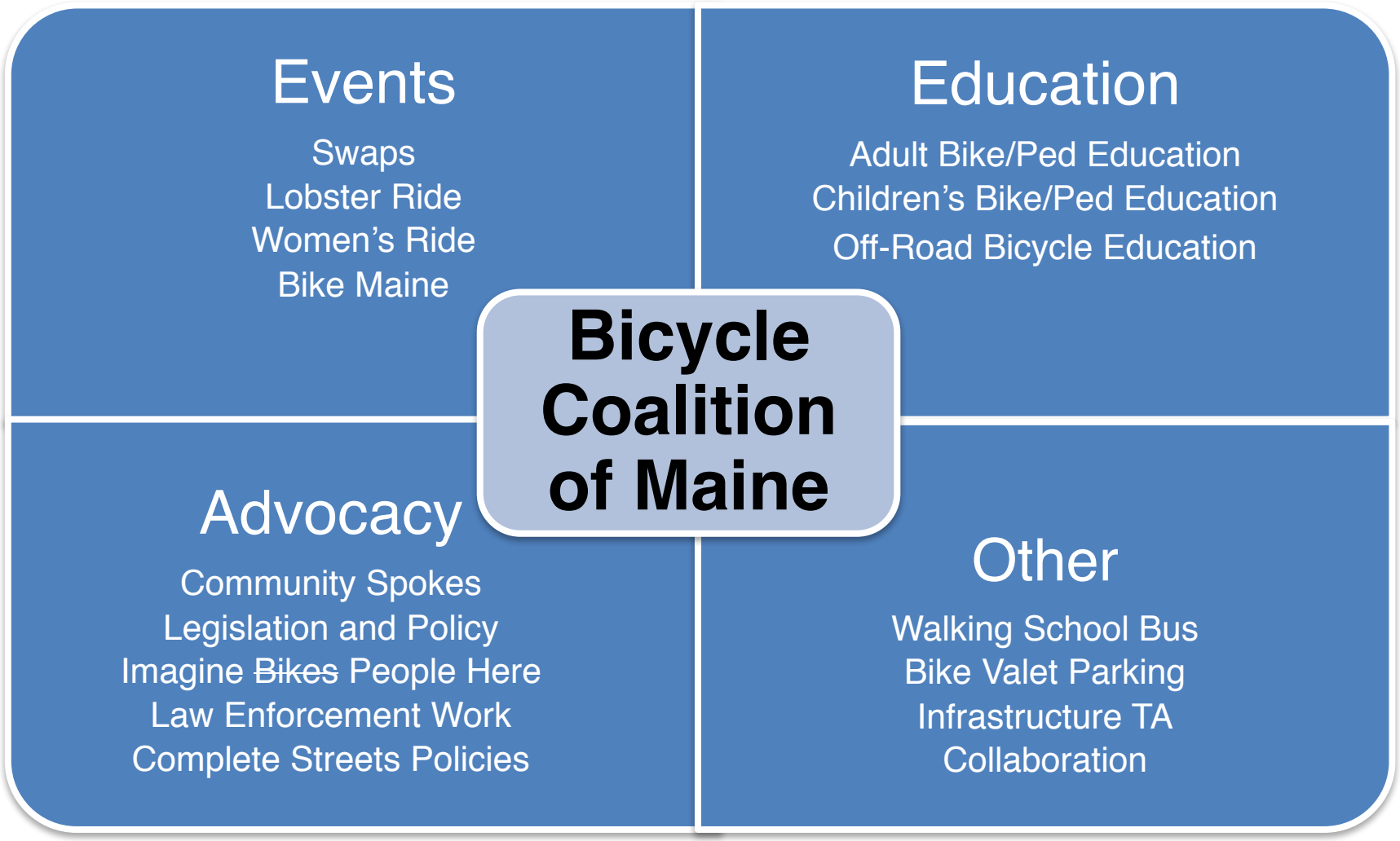
1. Intros
2. About the Bicycle Coalition of Maine
3. A Hot Topic! Safety, Health, Economics, Live-ability
4. Steps towards Walkability
   - Policy Initiatives
   - Program Initiatives
5. What's Needed

Bicycle Coalition of Maine

Making Maine Better for Bicycling and Walking

- Making Maine better for biking since 1992 and walking since 2015.
- Member organization with over 5000 members
- Statewide clearinghouse for information and resources about biking and walking in Maine
- Funded by members, event revenue, contracts, grants and sponsorships.
- Events, Education, Advocacy, and Other Stuff

Bicycle Coalition of Maine



A Hot Topic

Walkability is Something
A Lot of People are Talking About!

What the heck does “walkability” mean?

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Walkability refers to the degree with which a place provides safe, convenient and functional pedestrian access.

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What the heck does “pedestrian” mean?

A Hot Topic

Walkability is Something
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What the heck does “pedestrian” mean in Maine?

"Pedestrian" means a person on foot or an operator of a wheelchair or a 4-wheeled or 3-wheeled motorized wheelchair.

Maine Revised Statutes, Title 29-A, Chapter 19, § 101 “Definitions”

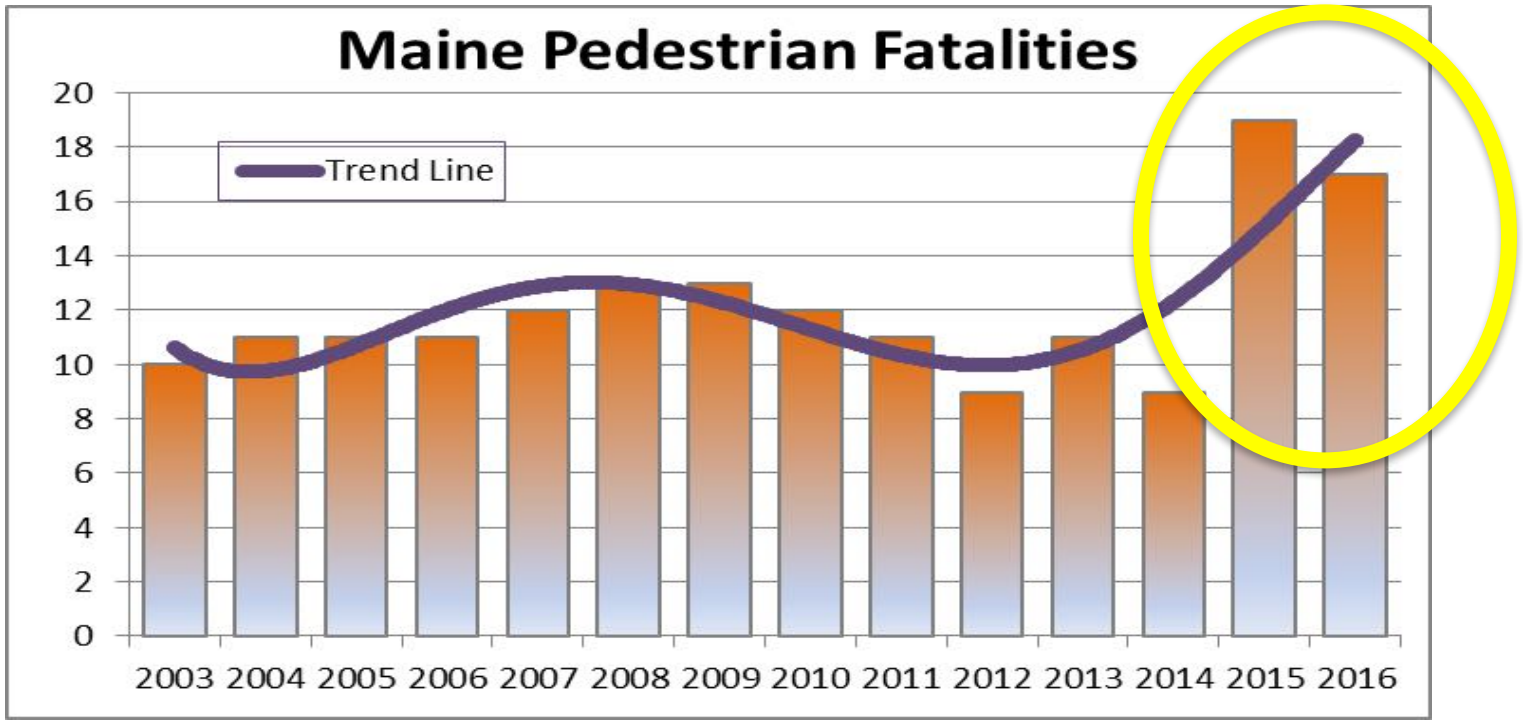
A Hot Topic

Walkability is Something
A Lot of People are Talking About!

- Safety
- Health
- Economics
- “Live-ability”--Quality of Place

A Hot Topic: Safety

Pedestrian Fatalities: Currently a big driver for MaineDOT



A Hot Topic: Health

Incorporating more physical activity like walking into daily live helps prevent chronic disease.

See Becca's talk!

A Hot Topic: Economics

Walkable places tend to have stronger economies than places that are purely automobile centric.

" . . .streetscape enhancements that improve walking and cycling conditions tend to increase property values and rents, attract new businesses, and increase local economic activity."

from: "Economic Value of Walkability" 20 April 2017 by Todd Alexander Litman, Victoria Transport Policy Institute.

A Hot Topic: Economics

- Expanding walking facilities in Union Square North (Manhattan) reduced commercial vacancies 49%, compared to a 5% increase borough-wide.

NYC DOT 2013

A Hot Topic: Liveability

- Converting an underused parking lot into a public park on Pearl Street (Brooklyn) increased nearby retail sales volumes by 172%, compared to 18% borough-wide.

- Converting a curb lane into a public seating area on Pearl Street (Manhattan) increased sales volumes at adjacent businesses by 14%.

NYC DOT 2013

Steps towards Walkability

Policy Initiatives:

Complete Streets

- **MaineDOT Policy (Adopted 2014 after BCM legislative campaign in 2013)**
- **MaineDOT LCP Policy creates more shoulders**
- **Local Policies--12 Towns So Far**

  Lewiston, Auburn, Presque Isle, Fort Kent, Portland, Brunswick, Scarborough, Windham, Gorham, Cape Elizabeth, Yarmouth, Bath (Falmouth and Westbrook have “equivalent” policies)

Steps towards Walkability

Policy Initiatives:

Legislation

- BCM legislation changed pedestrian crosswalk law in 2013.
- BCM legislation added "vulnerable users" to Maine traffic law
- BCM legislation currently seeking to mandate traffic safety education in Grades 4,6,8,10. LD 1130

Steps towards Walkability

Programmatic Steps

BCM/MaineDOT Partnership

- **Head's Up Campaign**

  Focusing on 21 High Density communities, ped forums and mitigation recommendations

Steps towards Walkability

Programmatic Steps

BCM/MaineDOT Partnership

- Free Traffic Safety Education Statewide—All Ages

- Safe Routes to School

Steps towards Walkability

Programmatic Steps

BCM/MaineCDC Partnership

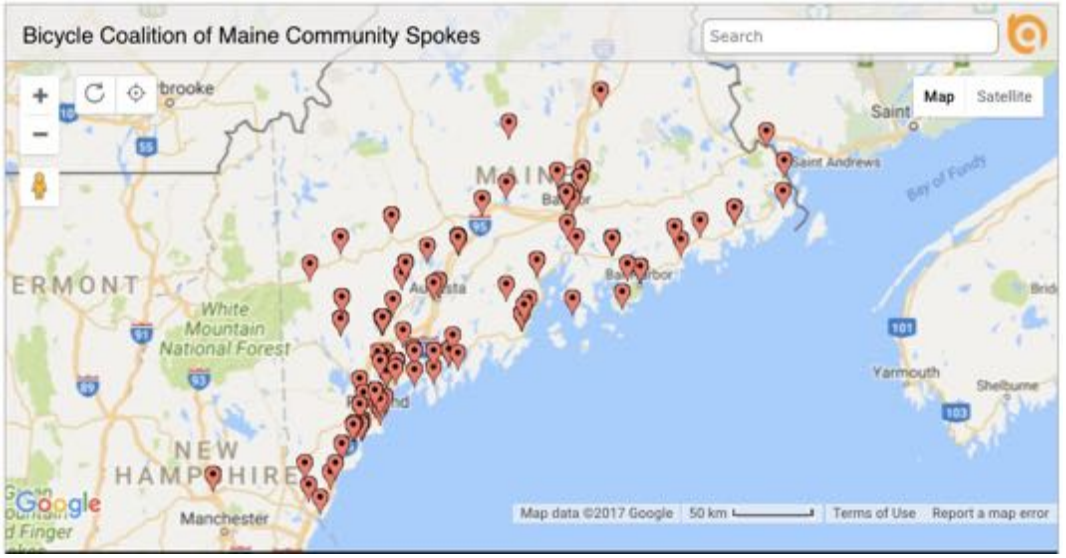
- Walking School Bus
- On-Bike Training for Municipal Officials

Steps towards Walkability

Programmatic Steps

BCM Alone

- **Community Spokes Program**, a grassroots leadership and advocacy program for walkability and bikeability.
- Currently 134 Spokes, 74 towns, all 16 counties
- Next Training is Nov. 9



Steps towards Walkability

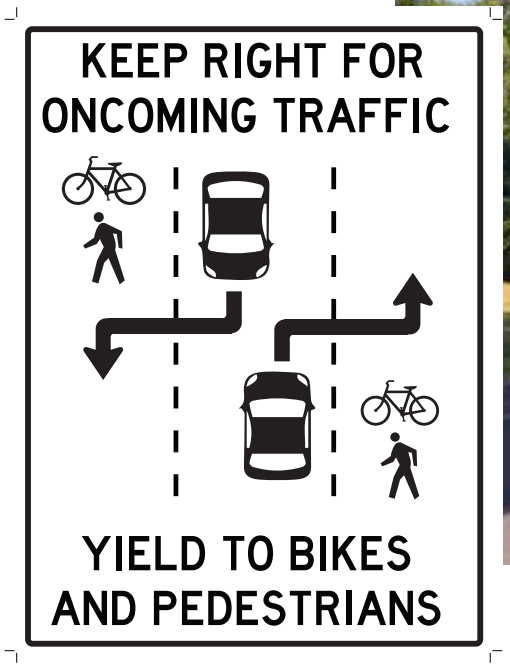
Programmatic Steps

BCM Alone

- "**Imagine People Here**" TU Demonstration Project Campaign
- Toolkit in development

Imagine People Here

Scarborough, Multi-Use Advisory Lane



What's Needed

MONEY. Changes to the built environment will not happen without significant investment. We don't spend enough on ensuring that walkability happens!

FOLLOW THROUGH ON POLICY EFFORTS. Not just getting them passed, but getting them enforced!

CULTURE CHANGE. Sorry, but it's true. Until Mainers prioritize non-motorized transportation more, changes will continue to move slowly. . . how can you help?

For More Info

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