

Why advocate for cycling?
By Marjorie Holderer 2004

Why bother advocating for cycling in this state at this time. The unspoken sentiment is so many other places are so much better and this place is so hard to change. Well, I think of it as that old Michael Douglas movie 'I'm not going to TAKE IT anymore'. Or I'm tired of complaining, I want positive things to say and do. A sentiment said in the old T-shirt 'If you don't like what you see, volunteer.'

The most personal good reason to advocate for cycling is that talking about the things you love is personally energizing. People respond. They get a sparkling hope in their eyes for something they wish to do themselves. The experience of speaking with others connects us together. It's something pleasant to share. You walk away feeling better. You get to have a better day or at the least, an instructive one.

Opening our mouths and speaking about things important to us improves our ability to distinguish the elements of what we want to say. Even the conversations in which we are unprepared to effectively counter hard points are meaningful. They teach us what we must learn in order to be enrolling to others in our futures.

When we are silent nothing happens and we get no money to fund our desires. In 2004, there were 600+ political action committees divided into 34 categories of transportation interests. None of these to date are cycling interests. We can bet money that those organized interests get many things they ask for. They not only get their share of the pie but due to our own silence get ours too. That gets my juices going right there.

Cycling is primarily funded by our government; federal, state, county, and cities. We must be politically active before our agendas can be served. We don't fit into the usual social service structures (medical, religious, arts, etc). We have to go to our political leaders and get into their heads. Groups get a better shot at being heard.

Cyclists have a heritage of being radicals for something 'new and different'. At the turn of the last century, hundreds of thousands of cyclists spearheaded the 'better roads' movement. Once we built paved roads we got pushed off in favor of the ease of motor transportation. We truly have the RIGHT to be on the roads. Bikes belong!

Our leaders, our professionals, and our citizen advisory committees are shot down as individuals when there is no public organization to add the political weight to their efforts. Since all other transportation groups have political voices our own silence is deafening.

While political things don't change overnight, they flat out won't change at all if we remain unheard. That's the big reason for why here now. This decade has more

'listening' for healthy, safe, skilled cycling than we've seen in our lifetimes. It's not a matter of if but when and whether we, as individuals choose to play and how much we do so.