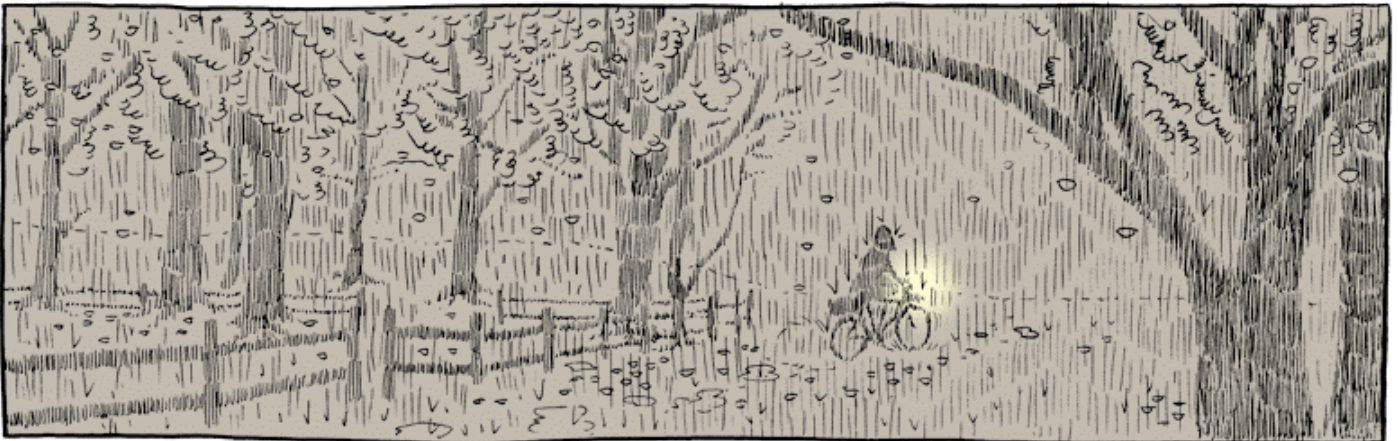


## Autumn Rain, Leaves, and Opportunities

The rain has come, the leaves are falling and it's *still* a great time to walk or bike to school! With the right gear, a bit of preparation, and some northwest spirit kids can still explore their neighborhoods, discover independence, and maybe even splash in a puddle or two on the way home.

In this month's SRTS E-News we look at a GEARs grant opportunity, a report on pedestrian safety, the Gold award for Eugene, information on the leaf program, some webinars open to the public, and the possibility of Safe Routes in High Schools. Read on to learn more and even take some action to have an effect on making our community safer.



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## GEARs Mini-Grant Program

This year, GEARs will award a total of up to \$1000 to support local projects that promote bicycle riding for transportation and recreation, the essence of the mission of the club.

The application should consist of an approximately 2 page (3 page limit) letter stating:

- a) Descriptive title of application (e.g. "Bike light program" or "Ridding Eugene of street hazards")
- b) Name of applicant(s)
- c) Amount of support requested (e.g. \$250)
- d) Known or likely additional funds available (because GEARs funds are limited, leveraging is encouraged)
- e) Background (typically one paragraph describing the problem to be addressed).
- f) Plan of action
- g) Appendices (e.g. supporting letters)

Application deadline: November 30, 2009.

Send application, preferably as PDF, to the GEARs Board of Directors-  
gearsdirectors@googlegroups.com

GEARs expects to announce award(s) before on or before Dec. 8, 2009 and funds will be available shortly thereafter.

Not necessary to be GEARs member to apply but members are particularly encouraged.

## Dangerous by Design

A new report shows Portland is among the safest communities in the nation for pedestrians, ranking 9th out of the 52 largest metro areas. The report also shows that within Oregon Eugene ranks *above* Portland in pedestrian safety but below Bend and Corvallis.

The report, *Dangerous by Design: Solving the Epidemic of Preventable Pedestrian Deaths (and Making Great Neighborhoods)*, ranks America's major metropolitan areas and states according to a Pedestrian Danger Index that assesses how safe they are for walking. An update of the 2004 Mean Streets report, *Dangerous by Design* was released by Transportation for America (T4America.org), the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, and the Safe Routes to School National Partnership.

The report authors note that most pedestrian deaths are preventable, because they occur on streets that are designed to encourage speeding traffic and lack safe sidewalks, crosswalks, pedestrian signals and other protections. Fixing these problems is a matter of will on the part of state departments of transportation and local communities, and of shifting spending priorities, the report concludes.

Eugene is where we are in the rankings because we've made some improvements for pedestrians, but we still have some ground to cover to make it a fully safe and preferred way of getting around.

A local example is the award winning design of the Bailey Hill project that turned a dangerous four lane road into a new streetscape that encourages safe behavior by motorists and creates a more inviting environment for pedestrians and businesses. "This is the kind of investment needed to make Eugene a truly great city to walk in" states Tom Schneider of Eugene's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee and coordinator for Eugene's "Safe Passage" project which is working on a memorial to the student, [Vaclav Hajek](#), who was killed while crossing Bailey Hill.

"Here in Eugene, we are working to create safer streets and are encouraging more residents to engage in healthy levels of activity by investing in sidewalks, pedestrian crossing islands, traffic calming devices, and other safety measures," said Rob Inerfeld, City of Eugene's Transportation Planning Manager "However, in many cases we are limited by state and federal resources for making these investments in complete streets."

James Corless, director of Transportation for America says that "as Congress prepares to rewrite the nation's transportation law, this report is yet another wake-up call showing why it is so urgent to update our policies and spending priorities."

### **More Funding Could Create Safer Streets**

Under the current federal transportation bill, less than 1.5 percent of available funds nationally are directed toward pedestrian safety, although pedestrians account for nearly 12 percent of all traffic deaths and 9 percent of total trips. Between 2007 and 2008, more than 700 children under the age of 15 were killed walking.

If we want to truly create a safe and inviting environment for people to walk in our

community we need to do routine enforcement and put the funds into infrastructure that is inviting and makes people feel safe.

### **Save the Date!**

One upcoming project that will look at ways to make our community safer for families who want to walk and bike more is the City of Eugene's Walk + Bike Summit where the focus this year will be on a new Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. We'll have more information in the next newsletter on the event but for now mark your calendars for this **January 23<sup>rd</sup>** event (apx. 9am-1pm). We're looking into special family focused events (including child care and kids activities).

### **Webinars on SRTS- Online Conferences & Trainings**

**Building Political Will for Strong Bike/Walk Programs:** Effective Use of the "Three-Legged Stool" model.

Wednesday, Nov. 18th Noon-1pm Wells Fargo Building (99 E. Broadway), Garden Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.

This webinar will describe how elected officials, local government staff and independent advocates can work together to change the culture of a community. Each partner in this powerful and stable "three-legged stool" has its natural areas of strength, and these can be effectively leveraged by coordinating activities such as community outreach, media advocacy, government services, public funding, political support, legislation and others.

### **School Siting Webinar**

Tuesday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 11am-Noon, 4J School District Ed Center, 200 North Monroe Street, Tower Room

Presenters: Matthew Dalbey, U.S. EPA & Renee Kuhlman, National Trust for Historic Preservation

At last count, 35% of K-8 students lived within 2 miles of their school. Because eligible Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects are limited to a 2 miles radius of participating elementary and middle schools, nearly two-thirds of America's children are only able to access their schools by automobile or bus.

Today bike and walk advocates are examining the reasons behind where a community chooses to locate its schools. They are supported in this work by the American Academy of Pediatrics who stated "Factors such as school location have played a significant role in the decreased rates of walking to school, and changes in policy may help to increase the number of children who are able to walk to school."

Learn about the policy and practices that affect decisions on where schools are located. This webinar is part of the Safe Routes to School Coaching Action Network Webinar Series, developed by America Walks and the National Center for Safe Routes to School.

### **Eugene Goes Gold**

Eugene has moved into the prestigious Gold circle as a bicycle friendly community. The League of American Bicyclists this month announced that Eugene has become one of only 10 cities in the nation to be designated at the Gold level, which is presented only to communities with "remarkable commitments to bicycling."

"The League is proud to award Eugene for its work to promote bicycle safety and

education while encouraging bicycling in the community,” said League President Andy Clarke.

Eugene was designated at the Silver Level in 2004. In reapplying for designation in 2009, Eugene cited a number of factors that make it a bicycle friendly community: Eugene has 80 miles of on-street bike lanes and 41 miles of off-street paths connected to a regional network of cycling routes; Eugene has a strong bicycle education program, including the Eye-to-Eye traffic safety campaign and a well-organized Safe Routes to Schools program; and Eugene’s cyclists are well represented in policy and legislative issues and have strong connections through groups such as Greater Eugene Area Riders (GEARS), the BikeLane Coalition, the Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA), Disciples of Dirt and the League of American Bicyclists.

Six other communities in Oregon have been designated bicycle friendly communities by the League of American Bicyclists. Portland is designated at the Platinum level and Corvallis is a Gold-level community, Bend is at the Silver level and Ashland, Beaverton and Salem are at the Bronze level.

### **Leaf Program Improvements**

Are you encountering piles of leaves in the bike lane or sidewalk on your way to school or work? Working with the local cycling community and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) the City of Eugene has developed a new leaf-program web site and hot line number that will make it easier for cyclists to report problems with leaves obstructing cyclists and pedestrians and also to know which bike routes recently have been swept.

To use the new online service, go to <http://www.eugene-or.gov/leaf>. To report problems with leaves in bike lanes, go to the tab or button marked “bike lane service request” and fill out the easy-to-use, map-based form. The information is fed into the Public Works maintenance management system so crews can quickly evaluate and respond to problems.

The tab marked “priority bike lane cleaning history” shows where priority bike lanes have been cleaned in the past several days. The City has worked with local cyclists to identify approximately 25 miles of priority on-street bike lanes in Eugene.

The phone number to report problems is at 541-682-5383.

Finally, two Flickr groups have been created; one to highlight problem areas for cyclists (including leaves piled in bike lanes)- <http://www.flickr.com/groups/eugbikelanes/> and one to highlight the positive and creative things that make Eugene a great cycling city- <http://www.flickr.com/groups/euglovesbikes/>. Join the groups and post your photos.

### **Kidical Mass**

We’ve moved from Fridays to the Saturdays for the fall and winter. Join us on Saturday Nov. 21 3:00 PM at Monroe Park. Trailers, trail-a-bikes, Xtracycles, tandems, and other family vehicles make up this legal, safe, and fun ride- come join us! Helmets are heavily

encouraged (and legally required for the tikes) Fun ending still TBD! More info:  
<http://www.Kidicalmass.org>

### **New Blumenauer Bill Would Expand Safe Routes to School to High Schools**

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) has just introduced H.R. 4021, the Safe Routes to High Schools Act, to make high schools eligible for federal Safe Routes to School funding. The current federal Safe Routes to School program created in 2005 through SAFETEA-LU is making it safer for more children to walk and bicycle to school all across the country. But, the current program is limited to elementary and middle schools (grades K-8).

Also, Chairman Oberstar (D-MN) has proposed changes to the Safe Routes to School program in the draft Surface Transportation Authorization Act (STAA). Chairman Oberstar's provisions would reduce the regulatory burden of implementing Safe Routes to School grants; strengthen data collection and evaluation; move Safe Routes to School under the authority of the new Office of Livability; and make some technical changes to strengthen the program. Neither the Surface Transportation Authorization Act nor the Blumenauer bill discuss funding levels, only policy and program eligibility.

Congressman Peter DeFazio has shown support for Safe Routes to School in the past. Community members can contact the Congressman (541-465-6732 or <http://www.house.gov/formdefazio/contact.html>) to ask him to support Chairman Oberstar's provisions in the Surface Transportation Authorization Act that will strengthen Safe Routes to School and to consider cosponsoring Rep. Blumenauer's H.R. 4021 to allow high schools to apply for Safe Routes to School funding.

### **Safety Tip of the Month**

Street crossings are safer for pedestrians when there is a fewer number of lanes to cross. Multiple lane threat is a problem that arises when pedestrians have to cross more than one lane in each direction. A multiple-threat pedestrian crash is a crash type that occurs when a motor vehicle in one lane stops and provides a visual screen to the driver in the adjacent lane. The driver in the adjacent lane continues to move and hits the pedestrian. This type of collision, where the pedestrian is hit in the second, third or fourth lane is common on multilane roads and typically results in a more serious collision due to a higher impact speed. This problem can be fixed through better design (like the Baily Hill project). Providing yield lines and set-back stop lines can reduce the risk of a multiple threat crash, as well as putting the street on a "road-diet" that will reduce the number of through lanes (but often keep the same traffic capacity).

If you need to cross a street with the multiple-threat issue make sure that you make eye contact or can see that motorists in each lane are stopped before crossing. Teach your kids about this issue and what to watch out for.

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