



**WABA**  
WASHINGTON AREA  
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION

**2019**  
Annual Report



**WASHINGTON AREA  
BICYCLIST ASSOCIATION**

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APRIL 2020

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IN 2019

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# Letter from the Executive Director

May, 2020



2019 was a year of growth, focus, and sharpening at WABA. In my ten years at WABA, I've never been prouder of where we ended the year. We made incredible progress on some important campaigns for better biking, we connected in person with more people than ever before, and we empowered thousands of people to engage with their streets, their trails, and their communities.

At the same time, there is increasing urgency in WABA's work. Last year we lost some beloved voices and far too many people were victims of traffic violence. We're on the cusp of climate catastrophe and need more resilient cities now. We need change on our region's streets, and WABA is out of patience for empty promises.

Together, we will keep fighting for that change. Together, we will build a region where everyone can safely and joyfully travel by bike. Thank you for coming along for the ride.

Greg Billing, Executive Director

# CONNECTION



Building together at the 2019 Sweet Ride & Shindig

A connected region doesn't just mean that you can get where you're going safely — it means that traveling by bike between home, work, and the people you love is a joy.

In a region of rivers, great bridges are essential. But crossing those bridges by bike is far from great and a lot more...sidewalky. A couple are okay, most are too narrow, and at least one is terrifying. Fortunately, our work in 2019 set us up to improve — and even build — better, bikeable bridges.

Thousands of you spoke up to support The Long Bridge. You showed up when it mattered, and now we're on track to build a brand new, car-free bridge

between DC and Arlington.

The Arboretum Bridge will connect two of the region's most beloved greenspaces: the Kenilworth Aquatic Gardens and the National Arboretum. The Anacostia River Trail opened the Aquatic Gardens to car-free visits, and this bridge will do the same for the Arboretum.

The Frederick Douglass Bridge is mostly a highway project (boo), but includes two great bike paths over the river. The bridge fills a gap in the Anacostia River Trail and provides a much needed bike connection between Ward 8 and downtown. Paired with the Long Bridge and recently installed protected bike lanes through Southwest DC, it also

means you'll be able to ride from the Custis, W&OD, and Mount Vernon Trails in Virginia to Anacostia Tributary Trail network in Maryland, almost entirely separated from cars.

The WB&A Bridge over the Patuxent river brings us one important step closer to a continuous trail between DC and Baltimore. WABA and other advocates have been pushing for this bridge for decades, and construction starts in April 2020.

The bridges we're building aren't just literal. WABA's advocates are balanced

## BY THE NUMBERS:

**6,416** new Bike to Work Day riders

**9,693** emails and phone calls to elected officials

**1,566** trailside conversations

**111** miles of continuous trail network, once the Long Bridge and Frederick Douglass Bridges are complete

**267** regional decisionmakers got together to end traffic violence at the 2019 Vision Zero Summit

## It takes more than concrete and green paint to make everyone feel safe—it means feeling “I belong here.”

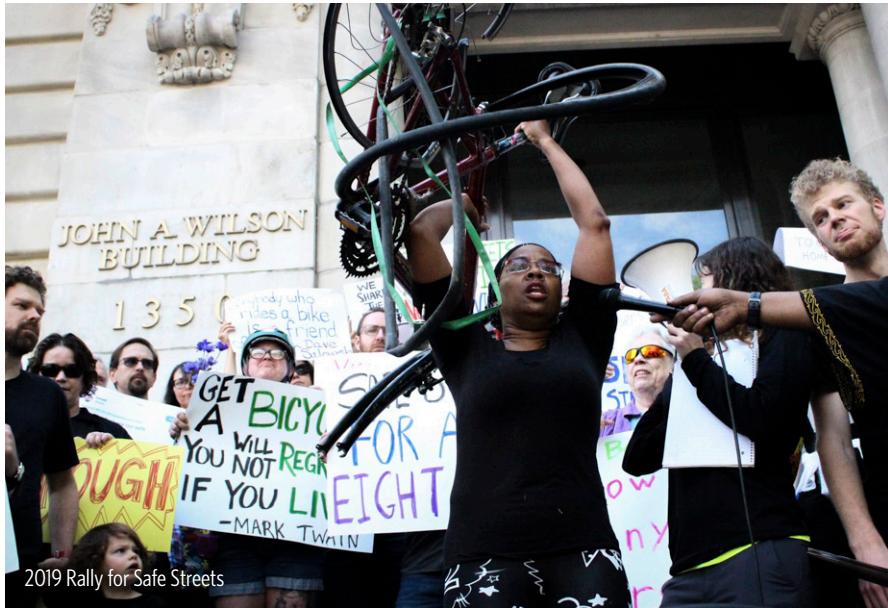
by our outreach team, who show up, in person, with bells on (literally, in the case of our Trail Rangers). And, they're eager to connect with people who bike every day, or maybe not at all. They're ready to talk to everyone about whatever is on your mind: how to tackle your first commute by bike; where, exactly, one accesses that tricky trail entrance; helmet hair strategies; and so much more.

Because at WABA, we talk a lot about safe places to bike. We're making sure that our cities build more trails and protected bike lanes where people can ride without having to worry about cars.

But the reality is, it takes more than concrete and green paint to make everyone feel safe—it means feeling “I belong here.” In a city like DC, whose social, economic and physical geographies are so deeply etched by centuries of segregation, creating spaces that feel welcoming and safe to everyone is not easy work.

And, that's what our outreach team helped do in 2019. Trail Rangers cared for the District's trails, cleaning up broken glass, trimming back overgrown brush, and keeping city repair crews in the loop on where they needed to be. And more than that, they're building relationships in the communities our trails call home.

# POWER



You know that biking is the future. We know it. A region built for biking is stronger, happier, and more resilient. But knowledge is only one part of power.

It's not enough to be right—we have to win. We win with people.

So we're putting your investment in WABA to work by expanding our ground game. Our growing team of organizers is out in neighborhoods across the region—leading pizza-fueled strategy sessions in library basements, talking through community concerns at public meetings, firing up volunteers to knock on doors and collect

signatures. This team doesn't spend much time at their desks. They're out meeting people where they are, and building power: growing and strengthening the connected networks of neighbors who show up to demand safer streets and better places to bike.

In July, we launched our 20x20 campaign. It's an ambitious idea: 20 miles of new protected bike lanes in DC by the end of 2020. We know it's possible—the plans are there, the projects are ready to go. But we also know that a good idea isn't enough to turn these plans into real bike lanes. So we've recruited action groups in every DC Ward to get neighbors talking to neighbors and build centers of power around each project on the map.

**It's not enough to be right—we have to win, too.  
We win with people.**



The 20x20 Campaign is built on three guiding principles: **connected, protected, and equitable.**

## **Connected**

Bike lanes are great, but only if they connect you to where you need to go. That's why our vision for DC's on-street bike network is fully connected, with each protected bike lane linking up with another safe place to ride. Whether it's one of the trails that WABA is working on tirelessly with the Capital Trails Coalition, or another part of the protected bike lane network, we won't settle for anything less than fully connected.

## **Protected**

Paint doesn't keep us safe enough. We demand bike lanes that create a physical barrier to separate people riding bikes from people driving cars. We know that protected bike lanes not only are safer, they feel safer, which encourages more people to ride.

## **Equitable**

The District, the region, and the country are shaped by long-standing and current societal inequities that have their roots in unjust structural barriers, policies, practices, attitudes, language, and cultural messages that have disproportionately impacted many minority groups. WABA has a responsibility to increase our awareness and understanding to better advocate for the full spectrum of needs present in our communities. As we stand up with our neighbors who were and remain underserved, we are listening first and taking action on what we learn second. No matter where people live or how they get around, everyone deserves to be safe on the street.



## RIDES

WABA's signature rides are our favorite place to bring the bicycling community together. We doubled down on our classics like the **50 States Ride** (and added a shorter, less grueling Route 66 route) and the **Cider Ride** (so many donuts), and we celebrated the launch of two new rides:

**The Sprouts Ride** celebrates that perfect time of year when it's light out on our commutes home and it feels great to shake off winter. With two shorter, low-stress routes, our inaugural Sprouts Ride proved to be a great fit for people new to bicycling, to the WABA community, or ready to push themselves in a new (mostly flat) direction.

**The Sweet Ride & Shindig** is the perfect next step. The second week in June, we rolled into summer with four accessible rides of varying lengths followed by a celebratory block party complete with ice cream and beer.

## MEMBERS & DONORS

We thank the almost 6,000 people who made a financial contribution to WABA in 2019. We can't list them all here, but are endlessly grateful for the investments that make our work possible.

In a survey to our 5,000+ members (we hit 5,400 in May 2019) we learned that climate change is the single greatest concern of WABA members, followed by traffic safety. As we fight for safer places to ride and get more people using our protected bike lanes and trails, we'll simultaneously decrease carbon emissions and support our region's climate goals.



# RETHINKING RESILIENCE

Back in January we wrote an upbeat paragraph about the thousands of young people WABA connected with in 2019, and about the strength and environmental resilience of a generation whose mobility isn't dependent on the automobile.

As our current crisis unfolds, we see the urgency of our work in a new light. We laid important groundwork for regional resiliency last year, and connected with almost 3,500 children in schools, community centers, and Bike Camp! Not only did many kids learn to ride for the first time, they learned mechanical skills, how to navigate city streets, and tried out biking for transportation to school, the park, or the library — and we can thank many of them for getting their parents back on their bikes at an adult education class.

To help support the families we can't connect with in person, we cut the ribbon on the Alexandria Bike Campus in December. In partnership with hundreds of patient donors, the George Washington Memorial Parkway, the City of Alexandria, and the Alexandria Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, our region has a dedicated, safe space for people of all ages to learn how to ride a bicycle safely, comfortably, and confidently. Just off the Mount Vernon Trail in Jones Point Park, the campus is a mini-streetscape that mimics real-life conditions, without the cars.

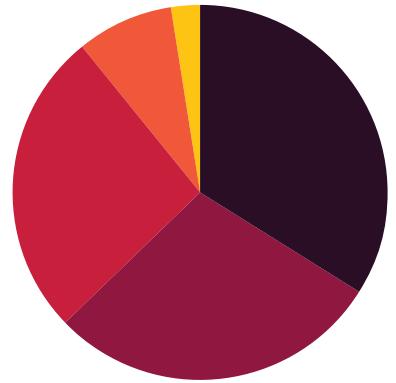
As we navigate the pandemic, face mounting climate catastrophe, and grapple with what being an antiracist organization means, we're redefining what a resilient region means at WABA.

# FINANCIALS

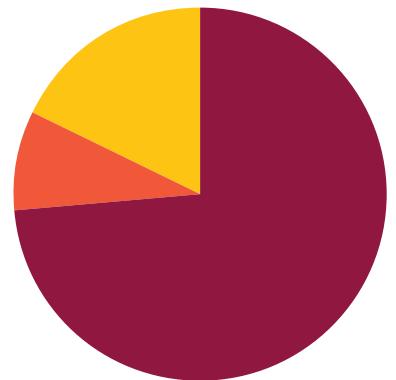
In 2019 (our fiscal year is January 1 - December 31), WABA raised \$1,633,323 and spent \$1,715,323. We dipped a bit into our healthy reserve to weather an unexpected change to a major contract, and ended the year with a reserve that can sustain the organization for about six months.

To see our complete 990, visit [waba.org/financials](http://waba.org/financials) or email [development@waba.org](mailto:development@waba.org) for a copy of our audited financial statements.

Income	
Government Grants	\$556,017
Individual Giving	\$472,489
Corporate and Foundation Giving	\$430,878
Events	\$133,722
Misc	\$40,689



Expenses	
Programs	\$1,263,444
Development	\$147,183
G&A*	\$304,696
Total	\$1,715,323



\*G&A includes WABA's office rent



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Contact [development@waba.org](mailto:development@waba.org) to learn more about anything covered here, to hear more about our work, or to make an investment in WABA.

[waba.org/give](https://waba.org/give)