



# Portland Green Streets:

a grassroots effort to encourage the use of alternate transportation in Greater Portland



# Green Streets Day - the Last Friday of Every Month!

People are encouraged to leave their cars at home that day and:

- **Wear Green** (shirt, pants, socks, whatever!)
- **Get Around Green** (walk, bike, bus, carpool, telecommute, etc.!) )
- **Then Celebrate!** (with freebies, discounts, and raffle items from participating businesses around town)

# September 2007



- First Green Streets Day in Portland!
- 4 documented participants
- John Brooking, a year-round bike commuter from Westbrook to S. Portland writes:

“...for some reason, there was hardly any traffic this morning in the construction zone at Spring Street (Westbrook) and Country Road, where usually there has been at least a 1/2 mile backup for the last 2 months. There were about 4 cars waiting at the intersection.

So it put me in a frame of mind to write this little ditty, to the tune of “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?”:

***Where has all the traffic gone? No one's passing.***

***Where has all the traffic gone? I just don't know.***

***Where has all the traffic gone?***

***Maybe to Green Streets, every one!***

***So little gas'line is burned, maybe we're star - ting to learn!”***

# October 2007

- Website up thanks to Amos Wright of Bath!
- 23 documented participants
- Photos from Woodard & Curran – and from John Brooking (about to bike his son to school)



# November 2007

- 25 documented participants
- 1<sup>st</sup> round of Green Streets t-shirts – made with 2<sup>nd</sup> hand green shirts from area thrift stores.

# December 2007

- 17 documented participants on Dec. 26!
- Volunteer designs Green Streets stickers



# January 2008

- 61 documented participants – and 15 degrees in downtown Portland that morning!
- 1<sup>st</sup> Green Streets volunteer potluck
- **Mark Sauerwald of Cumberland writes:** “I commute on a bike most of the time, and on Friday morning as the temp was -5 while I was riding in, I was wondering how many others would be doing the Green Streets thing. I did stop in at Panera - but not for the free coffee that they were offering - It was my turn to bring bagels in to work for the office (a Friday morning tradition)...know that there are many of us who are heartened by your e-mails since it helps us to realize that we are not alone.”



**Walking  
school bus  
to East End  
Community  
School**

# February 2008

- 77 documented participants
- **Barbie Potter of Falmouth writes:** “Took my first bus ride today. Piece of cake, of course, though I made a big deal of it to myself. The really fun part is I was up front - very few on the bus - and I got talking to Brian the driver...and we had a great conversation... I plan to ride once a week - important to Oceanview, too, as we need more riders to keep the bus going in Falmouth.

Thanks for getting me started!...

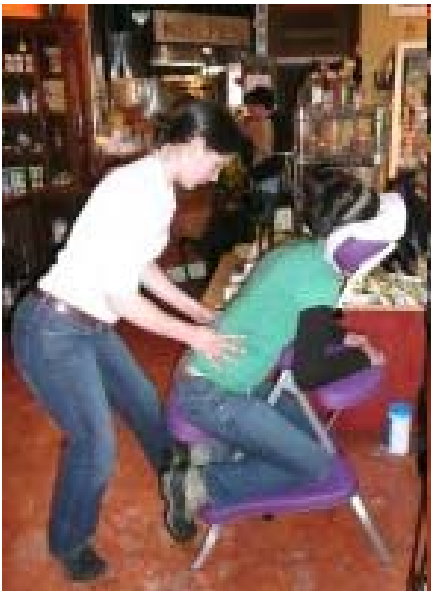
...Just got back from my next bus ride - spent two delicious hours in the Portland library - the folks on the bus help me enter a different world than my everyday...I am 80 years old this month. Hurrah!

- Original Boston-area GS takes “green vacation” via train & ferry to meet up with us on Peaks Island - where we hold a joint potluck with the Portland Bike Commuter Meetup ([www.PortlandBikeCommuting.org](http://www.PortlandBikeCommuting.org))



# March 2008

- 114 documented participants
- 196 participants at Harrison Middle School in Yarmouth (despite a snowstorm that morning)



# April 2008

- 113 documented participants
- 200 participants at Harrison Middle School
- Great Earth Day Bike Parade!
- Portland Friends youth paint 40 signs to advertise the Parade along the route – then help put them up



# September 2008

- **Collectively, over the first 12 Green Streets Days, we saved 5,723 single-occupancy vehicle miles, 231 gallons of gas, \$883 in cash, and 4,600 pounds of CO2 emissions**
- **With many Green Streeters commuting green more throughout the month, too.**
- **Hosted a Celebration of Portland Green Streets' First Year at sponsor Slainte in downtown Portland.**



- Despite torrential rain, over 50 Green Streeters show up to enjoy the night
- The Mayor bestows PGS with a Green Streets Day proclamation



# More Recently

- Taken Time to Assess what's working and what's not
- Convened an Advisory Board to discern the future structure & goals of Green Streets
- Convened a Working Group to build volunteer capacity (numbers & abilities)
- While Continuing to Grow the Effort (1700 people now receiving the monthly newsletter with a 6-10% return in documented participation each month)

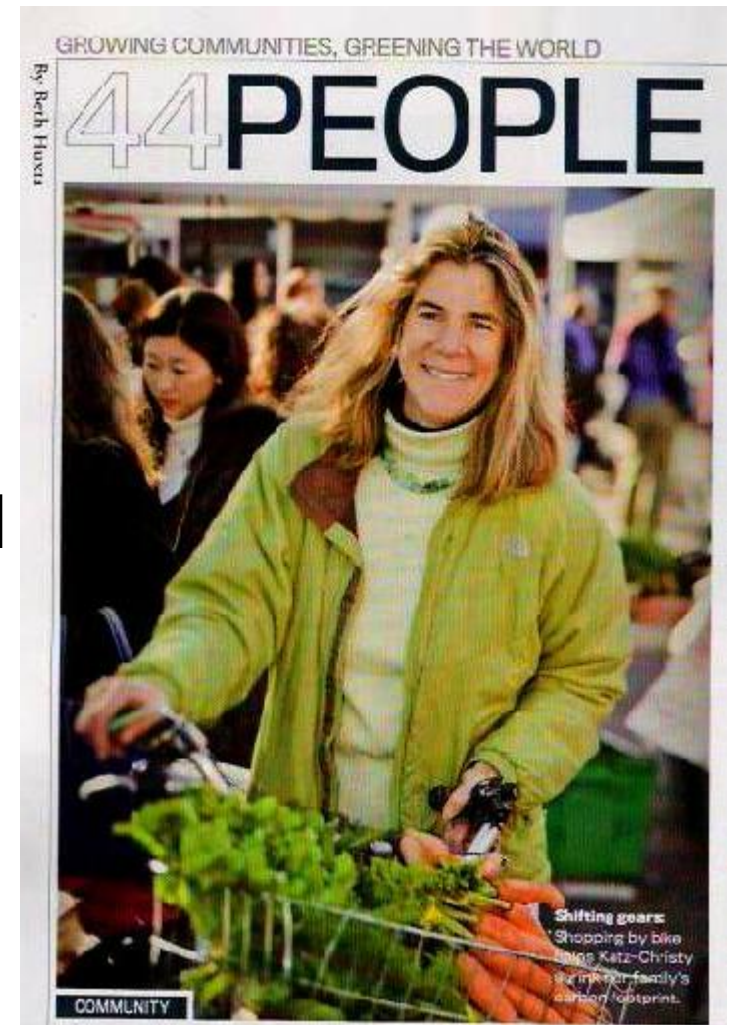
# Most Recently

- Portland Green Streets and the Portland Bicycle Commuting Meetup are promoting a spiritual component to Commute Another Way Week (May 11-15th):
- May 15-17 - *Get to Worship a Greener Way Weekend* - an invitation to people of all faiths to travel to worship that Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on foot, by bike, public transit, or carpool
- May 17 - *The Blessing of the Bicycles* - bring your bike to an ecumenical service at St. Luke's Cathedral, 12:30pm



# How it Works

- Need 1-2 committed local champions to gather and lead the effort (good communicators, passionate, with attention to detail)
- Be in touch with other Green Streets initiatives for ideas and support: Portland ([PortlandGreenStreets.org](http://PortlandGreenStreets.org)), and the original Green Streets in Cambridge, MA ([GoGreenStreets.org](http://GoGreenStreets.org))



- **Get The Word Out** - start gathering e-mail subscribers for a monthly newsletter (free & critical for communication)

- Talk about it with everyone you know
- Host a table (or just walk around with a clipboard) at local events
- Trust word of mouth
- Contact your local press!
- Contact large employers to inform their employees
- Print up a publicity card to hand out (VistaPrint.com great for no-budget operations)
- **Collaborate, collaborate!**



# •Put Together a Website

- Ask for help – there are lots of great techy-interested folks out there willing to be webmasters, etc.
- Take ideas from other sites
- Critical to keep it low-cost and dynamic – recommend WordPress as a great, free option



# Get Local Sponsors (Incentives)



- Ask local businesses to offer an incentive (give them examples of what might work for them from other programs)
- Ask a business whenever you buy something from them (makes it much easier if you have already spent some money somewhere! :)
- Offer them links to their site from yours



# Document, Document!

- A picture really does inspire (& get other people to take them)
- Share stories! Often one person's success with spur someone else to see what's possible in terms of getting around without a car.



# •Run With It

- You'll learn the ins-and-out by doing it!
- You'll discover the bonuses and challenges of doing this work in your local community (e.g., local partners are often unique to an area)
- You'll be endlessly surprised (and thrilled) by who joins you in the work.
- Just imagine what's possible in your community!

