

## **Liza Burkin: Time to R.I. to ride the winds of change**

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H.G. Wells said, “Every time I see an adult on a bicycle I no longer despair for the future of the human race.”

Wells was lucky to experience the golden era of bicycling in the late 19th century. But with the advent of the automobile, America handed the keys to our transportation system over to motorized vehicles. However, if you’ve visited New York, Boston, or San Francisco recently, you’ll know that a bicycling renaissance is booming in most major cities, and even many suburbs.

It’s time for Rhode Island to ride the winds of change.

Why do bikes matter? Because our society is facing three giant crises – in public health, the environment and the economy – all of which can be aided by the simple act of riding a bike.

Bicycling for everyday transportation is a panacea to the ills that plague Rhode Island and the nation. An often-cited national poll tells us 50 percent of trips in the United States are three miles or shorter. Yet as many as 69 percent of those short trips are taken in cars.

In Rhode Island, we are blessed with short distances. Admittedly, we are not blessed with a transportation system that allocates resources to maintaining the roads we have, let alone dedicated biking and walking infrastructure.

Luckily, there are many organizations and individuals throughout the state working toward change. Join us this May – National Bike Month – in dusting off the bike in the garage and taking it for a spin. It just might just save the world.

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