

- Brandon: [00:13](#) Welcome to N+1, the show that explores all things bicycle, and separating the nonsense from the real deal. Brought to you by the Cycle Craft Cycling Center located in Parsippany, New Jersey. This week, we present the second half of our interview with Cindy Steiner, the executive director of the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition. Last time, Cindy gave us some insight on what the problems are out in the world for cyclists and pedestrians. This week, you'll learn more about how the NJ BWC is working for change. As always, I'm joined here in our secret podcasting layer by Kevin Nang, keeper of the truth at N+1.
- Kevin Nang: [00:44](#) And this week we'd like to welcome a new sponsor to our podcast. This episode is brought to you by BJL coaching, USA cycling certified coach, Brian Lariviere brings decades of experience and knowledge to help you reach your cycling goals. He can create personalized training plans and skills clinics for athletes of all levels. Brian has been my cycling coach going out about five years now and he's been a huge part of my success, so I can personally attest to his abilities. Check out his website at bjlcoaching.com or send him an email at bjlcoaching@gmail.com.
- Brandon: [01:19](#) Brian's also my coach and I will absolutely say this one thing, if you follow his plan, you will get results. Okay. So let's get right into part two of our interview with Cindy Steiner. So I know one of the recent accomplishments of the Bike & Walk Coalition was getting the Driver Ed curriculum in schools to require the cycling portion.
- Cindy Steiner: [01:43](#) Yeah. So this was a bill that we worked on for about a year and a half, and we had already introduced this to BPAC, which is the state's Bicycle, Pedestrian Advisory Committee. We had introduced this because we had somebody on BPAC from the Motor Vehicle Commission, and so we worked with them in that capacity to get questions added to the license exam and included in the manual. And then we decided that this needed to be law. So we worked with Senator Nia Gill in Montclair to draft a bill. And it took about a year and a half of some back and forth, and we got it through both the assembly and the Senate, and it needed a couple of revisions along the way. And then on January 18th of 2018, we got Governor Christie to sign it.
- Brandon: [02:32](#) So that happened in about a year and a half?
- Cindy Steiner: [02:34](#) It took about a year and a half.

Brandon: [02:35](#) That's like legislative lightning.

Cindy Steiner: [02:37](#) It is. It is. But you know, the reality was this one passed unanimously every place it was up for a vote, and it's not just the full assembly and the full Senate votes, there are committee votes long before a bill makes it to the floor. And this bill had four committees across the two chambers that we had to get it through, and everywhere it was up for a vote, it was a unanimous vote. I mean, this is low hanging fruit. This is something that I think when most legislators looked at it, they said, What, this is not included now? So we really cast a light on it, and so we got it included in the manual, in the course and on the license exam. And so now we're working to actually draft the curriculum.

We have funding now from the division of highway traffic safety, and in very few weeks we're going to have the first draft of a curriculum for Drivers Ed instructors.

Brandon: [03:29](#) That's terrific.

Cindy Steiner: [03:30](#) Yeah, it's a great, great win.

Brandon: [03:32](#) So one of the things that I had seen in the past, it was actually at the National Bike Summit that Illinois had actually passed a law that included the bicycle, pedestrian safety training into the police academy and it became part of the curriculum. Is that something you have envisioned for New Jersey?

Cindy Steiner: [03:53](#) Well, we're sort of past envisioning it. We do run a program for law enforcement officers. We call it, Title 39, Bike's Eye View, and we just completed our fourth year of running it. This year we trained 37 officers, last year we trained 150, and it's funded by division of highway traffic safety, a grant to us, and our instructor is Les Leathem, who is elite coach for the League of American Bicyclists. And He created the program, and it's a program where we put cop, we tell them they have to be in plain clothes and no belt clips, no guns, nothing. You need to look like an ordinary person. And we put them through the classroom training, the parking lot drills, and then we take them out on a group ride in roads that you and I ride on to get them to see what it's like to be a bike rider in the state of New Jersey on our roads.

And then we test them after they take the course to see what the delta is in their knowledge. And for the most part, there is an increase in knowledge. But then we go back a year later and

we ask them, how has this changed your approach to dealing with drivers and bike riders. And most of them will tell you that they're not increasing their ticketing, but 100% will tell you that it has changed their perspective on what it is to be a bike rider and that they ticket differently, that they've given out warnings to drivers when they've seen bad behavior.

Brandon: [05:28](#) That's a thing that I've seen, and particularly at crash sites where the officer, he just doesn't know what the statutes are that apply to the particular incident or how to write up the report. There's a lot of things that are missing. And again, every human being has limited time and there's only so much knowledge you can cram into somebody's head.

Cindy Steiner: [05:50](#) Right. Or even an understanding of why a bike rider did what they did. For example, we don't have a safe passing law in New Jersey.

Brandon: [06:00](#) Oh, you anticipated my question.

Cindy Steiner: [06:02](#) Let's get there next. But the fact that we don't have a safe passing law, a driver is required ... we can't even say they're required to pass safely, but if they do, they do come too close. They could be ticketed for careless driving, which is two points. But often you'll hear that someone was killed and the driver says, well, they were wobbling. They were going back and forth on the road. Well, if we had a safe passing law and that driver had to pass at three feet or four feet, maybe that little wobble wouldn't have resulted in a crash, that if the driver had given that bike rider plenty of room, because bikes naturally have somewhat of a weaving back and forth. That's just how your body moves on a bike.

Brandon: [06:43](#) That's the physics.

Cindy Steiner: [06:44](#) That's the physics. So here's a police officer. The bike rider, if they're no longer living, right, they can't tell their side of the story, so the driver's saying, well, he veered right out in front of me. Well, did he really veer or was it just the physics of him riding a bike and you pass too closely. So the police officer, his knee jerk reaction is just to assume that the bike rider was at fault and no charges are placed.

Brandon: [07:07](#) Yes. The old victim blaming.

Cindy Steiner: [07:08](#) Right.

Brandon: [07:09](#) Or they weren't wearing a helmet.

Cindy Steiner: [07:10](#) They weren't wearing a helmet so-

Brandon: [07:11](#) It's like, well, you run them over and killed them. Yeah. But they weren't wearing a helmet, so it's their fault.

Cindy Steiner: [07:15](#) ... therefore it's their fault, or it's a mitigating circumstance. Right.

Brandon: [07:20](#) So we talked about the safe passing law. So that's one that was not legislative lightening. We've been working on that for a pretty long time.

Cindy Steiner: [07:28](#) Since 2009 when you were involved. So what's happened here in the legislature is that from 2009 until the current session, the hold up was the Senate Transportation Committee, and it was the chair of that committee, and that person is no longer chair of that committee. And when that person was removed as chair, one of the things we were happy to tweet out and others did too is that this person never should have been chairing a transportation committee, because this wasn't the only thing that they refused to move on. So now in this current session, we have a much bigger hope of getting this bill through. So it's something that we're going to be focusing on in the next six months because we do have another year in the session.

Brandon: [08:17](#) That would be good. And we have a new governor who tends to run a little bit more liberal than the previous governor. Is there any sort of, how do I say it, a thawing of relations with the state government at large, with the new administration?

Cindy Steiner: [08:36](#) Well, the New Jersey DoT has always been supportive of a safe passing law and they've always been supportive of investment in bike and pedestrian infrastructure. However, we don't see that they're taking a leadership role in it. And that's why if you've heard of what we're calling the tap laps, it's coming up the end of this month, where the state is going to lose \$12 million in federal transportation alternatives program money. This is federal dollars that the state receives to spend on bike and pedestrian projects. And this is our second lapse inside of a year. Last year we lost 6 million and were scheduled to lose 12, and at this point, in 2020, we'll have lost a total of 42 and a half million dollars.

Brandon: [09:24](#) And this is money that's made available through the Federal Transportation funding.

- Cindy Steiner: [09:28](#) The Federal Transportation Act. It's called the FAST Act.
- Brandon: [09:31](#) And that has to get ... I mean it's been called a number of things. I mean this is since, gosh, going back to 1995. I remember getting the alert, hey, send your support to make sure that we get this bill passed.
- Cindy Steiner: [09:48](#) Yeah. So our US senators have done a great job in getting this funding allocated to the state. It's just that the state's policies and how that money's spent are holdovers from the Christie administration and they are highly restrictive in how those dollars are spent, and because of those restrictions, the money ends up not being spent and goes right back to the federal government. I mean, it's the kind of thing that we as advocates lose sleep over because if you could think about the things that could be done. I mean we're talking millions of dollars. And we know of projects all around the state, whether it's road diets, bike lanes, shared use paths, there are fantastic projects that are just waiting for funding. And this stuff is just going to go up in smoke. These dollars are just going to go up in smoke.
- Brandon: [10:37](#) And those dollars aren't available because the state doesn't have a plan in place. In other words, the state would have to have a plan in place and their portion of the funding would have to be secured in order for the federal money to also be implemented, is that-
- Cindy Steiner: [10:48](#) No. It has to do with ... those funds are eligible for all phases of a project from property acquisition, planning, feasibility, design, development, and the state limits it to just development. They're waiting for the counties and the municipalities to get projects through those early stages and queue up a pipeline ready for construction dollars, and then they'll spend the federal money. And our position is that the state needs to be taking a leadership role in creating these projects from beginning to end. We want beginning to end funding, and set an example, show some leadership so the counties and municipalities will see how it's done and say, gosh, we should be attaching ourselves to this project. This is a great regional-
- Brandon: [11:34](#) I would think as a politician though. I mean it's a no lose proposition, right? If you're a municipal guy, like there's a town committee man out in Lebanon township, and they got a grant to put this really cool pedestrian cycling path between a couple of parks and things. And it's not a partisan thing. I think it's in the public [inaudible 00:11:59], but it's like [inaudible 00:11:59]. It's bipartisan. It's like, you're doing great stuff for your

community. Why the heck wouldn't you ask for the money? It doesn't make any sense to me. Reminiscent of right after hurricane Sandy when route 35, a lot of that got washed away. My understanding was, and correct me if I'm wrong, because I do like to tell the truth, that there was already a complete streets plan in place for route 35 and it was just waiting for the start of the project, and the funding was there and everything was there. And then when the storm came, they were going to scrap the complete streets plan because they had to do the emergency repairs and that took precedence.

Cindy Steiner: [12:34](#) Well, it's a little different from that. Route 35 is a state road and the state has a complete streets policy. Because it's a state road and it was getting federal funding, this policy should have kicked in. And when Governor Christie announced the plans for the rebuild of route 35 using federal money, there were no complete streets features in the design. And so he basically ignored the state's policy, and we got involved, we called them on, it took a year and a half.

Brandon: [13:05](#) But that eventually got settled out. They wound up putting the [crosstalk 00:13:08] features that they [crosstalk 00:13:08].

Cindy Steiner: [13:08](#) They got bike lanes. They got bike lanes. That's a whole other story because for the most part, the bike lanes followed guidelines from 1999, so we cried foul in that regard. We gave them a D+, but it was a step in the right direction. I hate to say it, but sometimes I say that New Jersey just can't get out of its own way. A lot of this stuff seems simple and obvious to us, but the root cause is really political will more than anything else.

Brandon: [13:41](#) Sounds frustrating.

Cindy Steiner: [13:41](#) Yeah. And so an organization like ours, state advocacy, we're the only state advocacy organization working for bike riders and pedestrians. That's why we need you as riders and as pedestrians, everybody's a pedestrian, whether you can actually walk or you're in a wheelchair, you're still a pedestrian. And many of you are riders, we need you to participate in the process, whether it's signing up for our newsletter and being there for action alerts, helping fund our organization by becoming a member, participating in local advocacy efforts in your town, all of these matters.

And I'll give you an example. When we did the Drivers Ed bill, we got over 750 action alerts into the governor's office. That's huge. They were blown away. And that's just the emails coming

in. We had half as many phone calls going into the governor's office, because I called to get a tally and they knew right away what bill I was talking about. And they say, yeah, yeah. There's a lot of calls coming over. Wow. Yeah. We're keeping track of that. I mean, that's big. If you flex your muscles like that, you can show that you've got a pretty substantial constituency out there. The next bill that comes along should be that much easier to get done.

Brandon: [14:55](#) They want the stuff.

Cindy Steiner: [14:56](#) Right. They want the stuff.

Brandon: [14:57](#) They do want the stuff. So the action alerts. So I'm just to reiterate njbwc.org is where you can go, you can sign up, you can contribute some money because clearly none of this work happens for free. It requires money from wherever we can lay our hands on it, and that has always been a struggle for the organization. And it can seem maddeningly slow. The example was, one of the reasons why the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition exists is because Jim Nicholson and I had a conversation at the National Summit, and this is going back to, I want to say it was-

Cindy Steiner: [15:36](#) 2006. Wow.

Brandon: [15:37](#) Well, we talked about it in 2007. So 2006 was when the guy in the Audi tried to push me off the road on [inaudible 00:15:46] Av. And Kat, my wife, she wasn't my wife at the time, she said, we have to do something about this. And I said, well, you understand that if you're committing to do something about this, it doesn't happen in a week or a month or in a year. Boulder, Colorado became Boulder, Colorado, it took more than 25 years, right? So we're 11 years into it now. We've still got a long way to go.

Cindy Steiner: [16:08](#) We've got a long way to go, right, but we're in a position where we've just started to show that we're a big constituency out there. And really this Driver Ed bill put us on the map. It was low hanging fruit. It was an easy bill to get through in convincing your legislators to support it. And it was a perfect opportunity for us to show how big we are.

Brandon: [16:31](#) So what other sort of hot issues are you guys working on right now?

Cindy Steiner: [16:35](#) We want the state to declare a vision zero policy for the state and come up with a plan to get there. So vision zero means zero traffic deaths, whether it's drivers, bike riders or pedestrians, zero deaths. And we'd like to see that by 2030. Right now the state has a towards zero deaths policy, which if you look at the language gets you to a 30% reduction in deaths by the year 2030. And in our mind-

Brandon: [17:07](#) Political waffling is really what that is.

Cindy Steiner: [17:09](#) It is. It is. Our mantra is, the only acceptable number of road deaths is zero.

Brandon: [17:16](#) So if I wanted to encourage people, to encourage the state to adopt this vision zero, what's our path to do that? Should we send a letter to the governor, do we flood the Department of Transportation with phone calls, what should we do?

Cindy Steiner: [17:33](#) The first thing to do is, again, sign up for our newsletter. We work together with several other organizations who are jointly calling upon this, and launching a campaign like what you're talking about is something that we strategize with them and we find the right moment to do it. So we don't want to waste your effort. If you send a letter now, it might not matter, but send it when we're ready to pull the trigger and that way you can be part of thousands of voices calling for it, and it's a better use of your time and your energy and ours also.

Right now, the legislature in the governor's office is highly focused on New Jersey transit and you could see the reasons why.

Brandon: [18:12](#) Because that's a mess also.

Cindy Steiner: [18:13](#) That's a huge mess. And it serves a lot of people. And so what we need to do is get ourselves in the list of priorities, and it's really hard to prioritize over New Jersey transit. So the governor is still kind of being given a bit of a pass right now, but that's not going to last much longer. This tap lapse is a perfect example of how bike and ped is not a priority in this state, and we are certainly daylighting that, that the state just let \$12 million go and you're on track for a total of 42 and a half million, and you have the highest pedestrian and bike rider fatality percentage in the country.

We also have another pot of money. It's Highway Safety Improvement Program, HSIP, another federal pot. We get the

largest increase of any state under the federal MAP-21 guidelines in 2012 to 2014. Those monies are also lapsing as well because we didn't rank bike and pedestrian safety high enough in our criteria to actually use any of those dollars. Those monies are going back also.

Brandon: [19:17](#) Okay people, here's your job. So get onto the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition website, njbwc.org, throw some money their way. I won't make Cindy beg for money, I'm going to do it for you.

Cindy Steiner: [19:17](#) Thank you.

Brandon: [19:31](#) Send money. \$5, \$10, \$1,000. If you are a wealthy benefactor, you have extra cash and you care about cycling and cycling and pedestrian safety in the state of New Jersey, consider making a large donation as much as you can afford. So get on the website and do that. We'll really appreciate that. And other ways that people could get involved in the coalition from a volunteer standpoint, are there things that the coalition needs?

Cindy Steiner: [20:01](#) We are at this point organizing the 10th annual Bike and Walk Summit. Brandon, you organized the very first one in 2009 in Danville. And so this is our 10th, which is really exciting. It has grown every year, and it will be Saturday, February 23rd, 2019. We could always use volunteers to help us organize that. We just kicked off the registration today as a matter of fact.

Brandon: [20:32](#) How many seats are available to [inaudible 00:20:34] that?

Cindy Steiner: [20:34](#) There's 275 seats. It's an all day event. We pick a winter in Saturday. Sorry, a Saturday in winter because you can't ... it's usually too cold.

Brandon: [20:34](#) You didn't want to take up a riding day.

Cindy Steiner: [20:46](#) Right. Right. It's perfect excuse to miss that 20 degree morning and come down to west Windsor where we hold it at Mercer County Community College and meet like minded people like yourselves working to make the roads safer. Our keynote speaker, one of them we just are about to announce is Ginny Sullivan who is Director of Travel Initiatives at Adventure Cycling Association. So she's coming in from Missoula, Montana. Ginny is a fantastic national advocate for bike traveling and bike safety. She works with National Park Service. He works with Amtrak. She is well rooted in agencies outside the bicycling

world, and just a fantastic advocate. So we can always use help organizing that.

And also sessions are open. The call for sessions is open now. If you've got some interesting story that you've done in your community where you got a safe passing law passed in your town, you can get it as an ordinance, or you got a bike lane, or you even got bike racks installed in your town, come talk to us and think about presenting that, because how we get this done is by towns learning, people in one town learning how another town did it. How did you convince your council people to just buy some bike racks and install them. These are the little wins that build up into larger wins.

Brandon: [22:08](#) It's a simple thing. I live in Mount Tabor, but we spend most of our time ... it's part of Parsippany but Denville is kind of our town. And it astounds me how many people on a beautiful summer day will drive their car a mile into town and then complain that there's not a parking spot.

Cindy Steiner: [22:28](#) Right. Right. So what's going on there is that they, number one, don't feel it's safe to ride. I mean I go all over the state no matter where I am ... and this state, we've got beautiful places in this state. It's 565 municipalities. Every single one of them to me is a very interesting place to go to. I love going and discovering a new town, and I'm usually there because we're there to talk to some council people or local advocates about doing this kind of work. And everywhere I go, most people will say to me, you can't ride around here, it's too dangerous. Now, that's mostly coming from people who don't ride. So I often thought, well, if you don't ride, how do you know that? And the answer is it's the perception.

It's like you said before, it's just the perception. Doing simple things like bike lanes or sharrows or share the road signs or bike may use full lane or even bike racks or organizing rides, these are the things that knock those barriers down, that get people thinking, gee, maybe I could give that a shot, and they start to try it. And then you build this groundswell of support just within your community.

Brandon: [23:39](#) Well, there you have it. People you heard it, that's what you've got to do. And now we're expecting you to mobilize, and hopefully this cast will go out to tens of thousands of people at some point and they will get on board with the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition. Anything else you'd like to add?

- Cindy Steiner: [23:57](#) Yeah. I mean, it's very simple to get started. I always tell people just put a Facebook page up in your town, call it Parsippany Walks and Bikes, Parsippany Rides, Denville Bike and Walk. There is one. Yeah. I thought there was.
- Brandon: [24:13](#) There is one. And it was Dean, just both of us. He had a kid and I got a business journal.
- Cindy Steiner: [24:18](#) And that's what happens. But often in a town, it's just one or two of you. I mean Asbury Park, we spent about two years down in Asbury Park. We finished up down there about a year ago. If you go down to Asbury Park now, it's very different than what it was five years ago, and that's all the work of local bike and ped advocates, a small group, the Asbury Park Complete Streets Coalition. And we went down there and really kind of coached them, but they had just had tremendous energy and they have transformed that town, and all it was was a handful of people. They now have a full time transportation manager on the staff of the city because of those people. Yeah.
- Brandon: [24:58](#) Montclair is probably the first town in New Jersey that I can think of that did anything even remotely like that.
- Cindy Steiner: [25:06](#) It's the first town to have a complete streets policy in the town, and that was 2009.
- Brandon: [25:08](#) And an active organization-
- Cindy Steiner: [25:09](#) Right, Bike Walk Montclair.
- Brandon: [25:11](#) They do their ride and they're out there.
- Cindy Steiner: [25:13](#) Yeah. The Tour de Montclair. Yeah. They're a great organization. But others are out there too, Bike JC in Jersey City is having tremendous impact. Newark now has Brick City Bike Collectors. It's been around a while, but they're getting some things done. The Tour de Newark. Morris town has Bike Walk Morris town. They've got ... look at South Street in Morris town. That's a fantastic place to be on your bike on a Saturday morning simply because they put up those bike may use full lane sign. That takes away all the ambiguity if there's ever conflict between you and a driver, just point to the sign.
- Brandon: [25:46](#) When they go like, hey, you ... oh never mind.
- Cindy Steiner: [25:47](#) Nevermind. Right. Right.

Brandon: [25:48](#) Yeah. I know I can be here. So terrific.

Cindy Steiner: [25:51](#) It doesn't take much.

Brandon: [25:53](#) Okay. Well, you've got it people. It doesn't take that much to get out there and get some stuff done. And stop complaining about cycling not being what you want it to be. It is up to each of us to make all of that stuff happen. I want to thank Cindy Steiner for coming in and talking with us.

Cindy Steiner: [26:08](#) Thanks for having me.

Brandon: [26:09](#) Brandon tells the truth about cycling. I hope I told the truth the whole time. Kevin, did I tell the truth? He's waving his head and he's like, yeah. He's saying, maybe you told the truth. I don't know. I do throw a lot of opinions in there. Excellent. Well, Cindy, again, thanks for coming in and-

Cindy Steiner: [26:22](#) Thanks for having me.

Brandon: [26:23](#) ... we will see you at the bike summit.

Cindy Steiner: [26:24](#) Right. Thank you.

Brandon: [26:25](#) One more time, the njbwc.org is the place where you go to get all of this stuff onboarded into your brain and we hope that you will take it seriously and get it done. And the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition, which is now 11 years old, and we are coming up on our 10th anniversary for the New Jersey Bike and Walk Summit that's going to be on February 23rd. If you go to the njbwc.org, you can sign up for that and follow up on all that information. It's important people get involved. I know a lot of people who are bike enthusiasts don't think about these things necessarily until they realize that having a safe place to ride their bike, and as we were discussing before, not getting run over by a distracted driver, if there's anything that we can do to increase the safety for everybody, I think it's a worthwhile endeavor.

Kevin Nang: [27:18](#) Absolutely. And I don't think that ... as Cindy had mentioned, it's not something that's just going to happen on its own. That's something that we have to go out there and we have to demand it and we have to make sure that we hold our legislators accountable for keeping us safe, and that's on us to do that. And we're again very glad to have people like Cindy to help facilitate that conversation.

- Brandon: [27:41](#) Indeed, we are. Well, that concludes our interview with Cindy Steiner of the New Jersey Bike and Walk Coalition. We hope that you learned some things that you didn't know. Here's my personal ask for you, even if you never considered yourself an advocate, go to the NJ BWC website to learn more about how you can support the course as a volunteer with money or just to get connected to the coalition's action alert system. Your voice matters.
- Kevin Nang: [28:02](#) You can get involved with the NJ BWC again at njbwc.org or send them an email at info@njbwc.org.
- Brandon: [28:12](#) Thanks again for listening and thanks to BJL Coaching for sponsoring our show. Join us next time when we really dig into the whole N+1 concept. How many bikes do you really need to own? Find N+1 on iTunes, Stitcher, or any place you get your podcasts.
- Kevin Nang: [28:26](#) If you have any questions you'd like us to explore, if you'd like to sponsor an episode or if you just want to say hello, connect with us on Facebook at N+another, on Twitter at N-P-L-U-S-O-N-E and the 1 or send us an email at nplusone@cyclecraft.com. That's N-P-L-U-S-O-N-E@cyclecraft.com. And don't forget, if you'd like to get in touch with BJL Coaching, you can check out his website, Brian's website, at bjlcoaching.com, or send him an email at bjlcoaching@gmail.com.
- Brandon: [29:02](#) Thanks for listening everyone. And don't be shy. Get in touch with us or visit us at the Cycle Craft Cycling Center on route 46 in Parsippany. You can find us on the web at cyclecraft.com.
- Kevin Nang: [29:11](#) All right. We'll see you next time on N+1, the truth about bicycles.