

Cycling in Chicago

by Chris McAuliffe

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Chicago was the center of bicycle manufacturing in the United States. As an early industrial and transportation center, two-thirds of all bicycles manufactured in the United States were from Chicago—it was the Detroit of bike manufacturing. For decades, Chicago was also a center for cycling track and road racing. Six-day races drew capacity crowds at the Chicago Stadium, Chicago Coliseum and International Amphitheatre. Road and track competitions were also held at Sherman Park, the Humboldt Park Velodrome, and on Chicago's famed Magnificent Mile. Today, Chicago is a hub for recreational cyclists. Hundreds of miles of bike lanes, rail to trails, and bike paths, such as the Illinois Prairie Path, the Bloomingdale Trail, Lakefront Path, and the Big Marsh, provide cyclists with numerous recreational and commuting options in a crowded urban environment. In 2016, Chicago was awarded *Bicycling Magazine's* Best Bike City of 2016.

Chris McAuliffe is a longtime Chicago-area cyclist who competes in road and cyclocross racing. Chris holds a USA Cycling racing license and races for the XXX Racing-Athletico cycling team. He also enjoys recreational cycling and exploring the many bike trails and forest preserves around Chicagoland.

The Images of America series celebrates the history of neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the country. Using archival photographs, each title presents the distinctive stories from the past that shape the character of the community today. Arcadia is proud to play a part in the preservation of local heritage, making history available to all.



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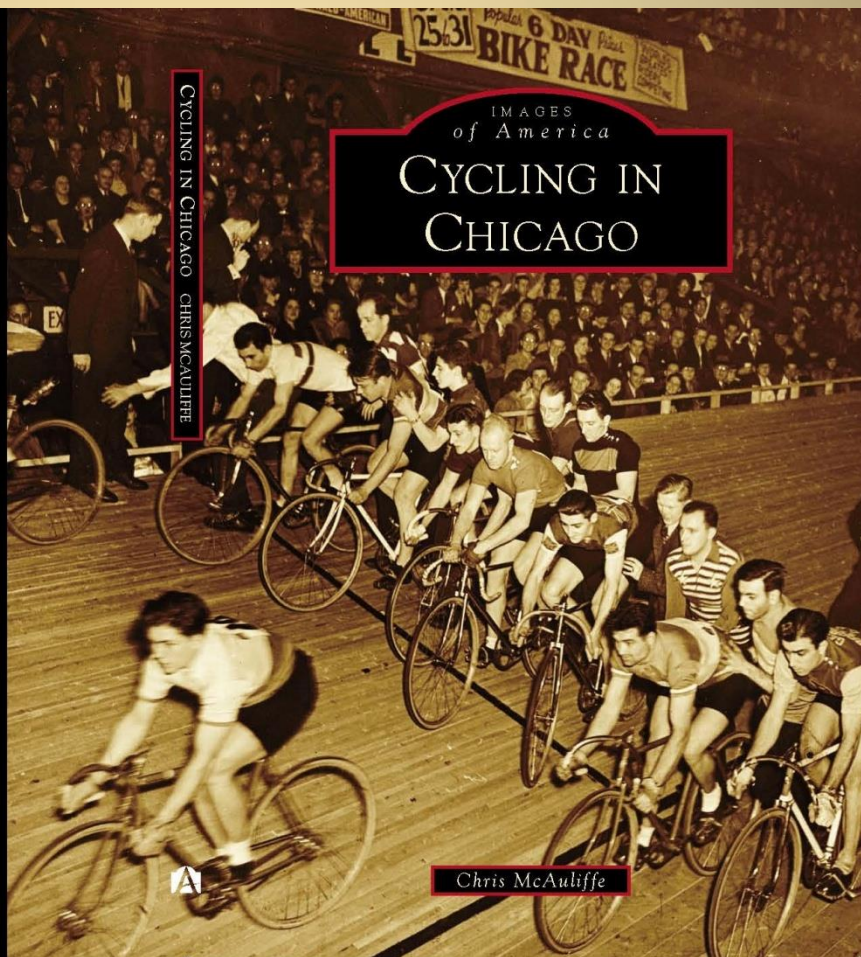


CYCLING IN CHICAGO CHRIS MCAULIFFE

IMAGES
of America

CYCLING IN CHICAGO

Chris McAuliffe



Early Days 1890-1910

- 1890's: 50+ Cycling Clubs in Chicago/10,000 members
- \$75 bike in 1890's or \$2,000 in today's dollars
- Mass production meant lower prices
- Chicago was the “Detroit of bike manufacturing”
- Chicago had infrastructure, capital and entrepreneurial spirit (post - Chicago Fire)

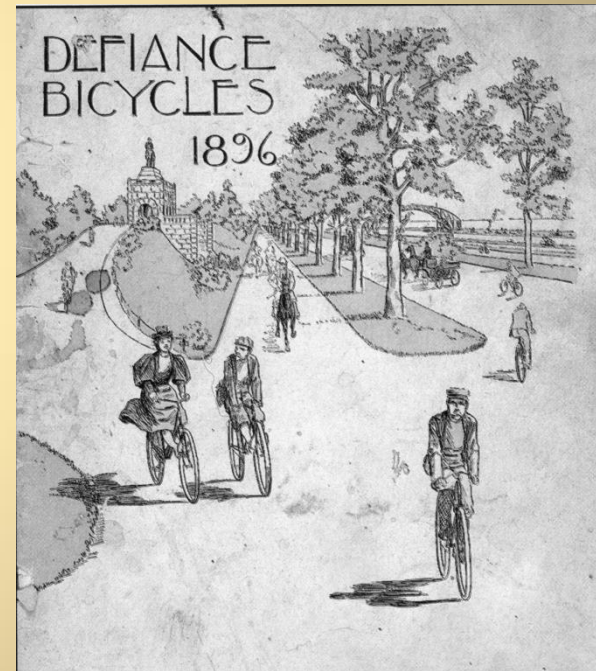


Early Days -1890-1910

Mead Bicycle Company (across from Chicago and Northwestern Station)



“Upper Class” cyclists riding in Lincoln Park

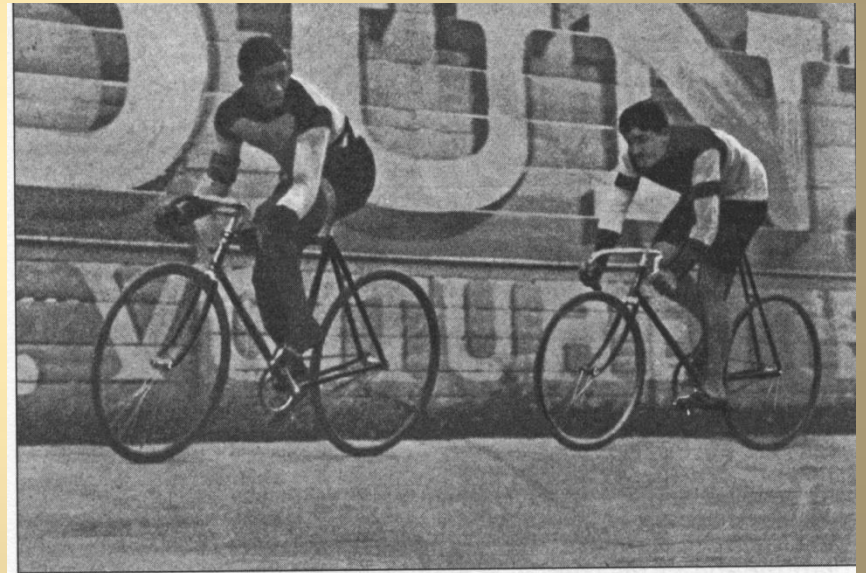


Early Days – 1890-1910

**A.A. Zimmerman – 1893
Columbian Exposition**



**Marshall Walter “Major” Taylor – 1st
African-American World Champion**



Taylor and Jacquelin racing in Paris at the Parc des Princes velodrome. *Source: La Vie Au Grand Air*

Glory Days 1920's - 1940's

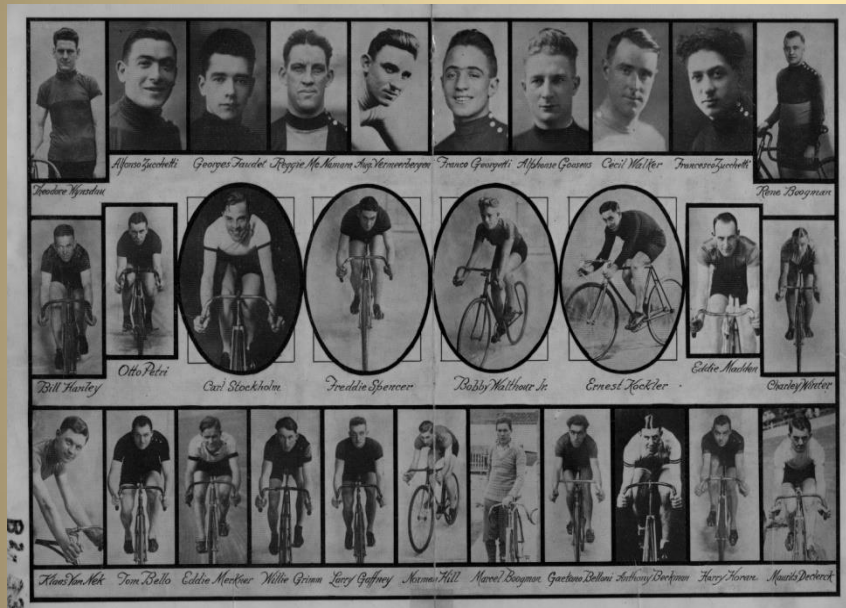
- Six-Day Races - top racers made as much as baseball players
- Sell out crowds at Chicago Stadium and Coliseum
- Century of Progress/World's Fair in 1933 and 1934 showcased Chicago's manufacturing strength and energy.
- Chicago was the transportation hub of the United States



Glory Days 1920's-1940's

Superstars of Six-Day Racing -
Chicago was a center of the sport

Cycle Trains – Popular during the
Depression and World War II due to
lack of fuel



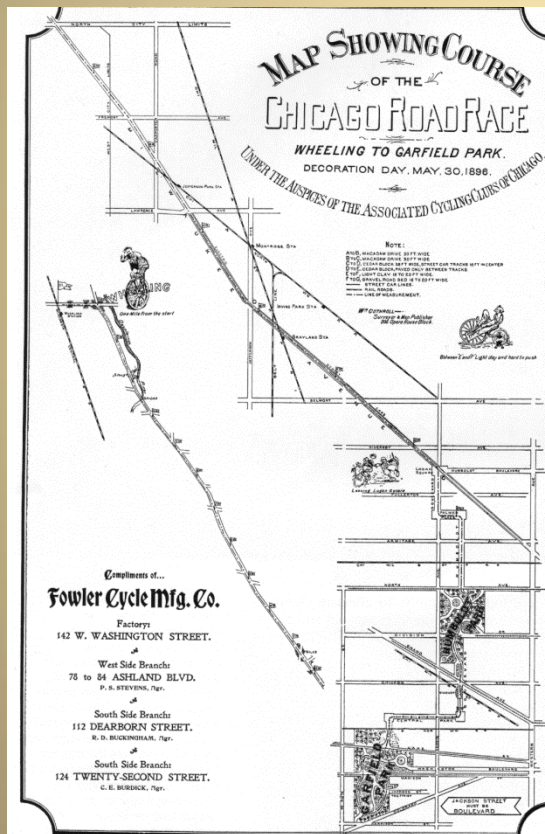
Historic Races and Rides

- **Humboldt Park Velodrome. Built in 1932. Home to Wednesday night racing. CCC Project.**
- **Torn down in 1962**
- **1897 Chicago Road Race. (Michigan Avenue to Pullman neighborhood). Race held every Memorial Day weekend.**

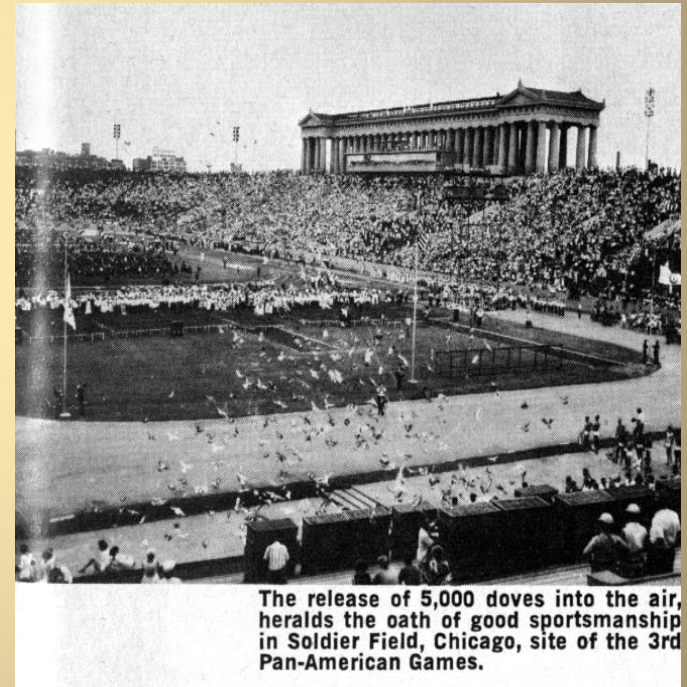


Historic Races and Rides

1896 Chicago Road Race (Wheeling to Chicago)

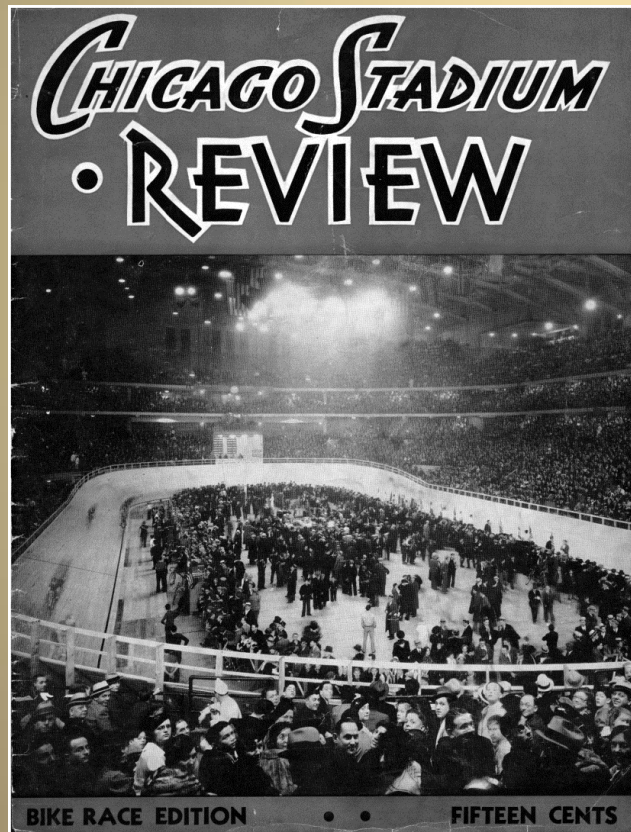


III Pan American Games - 1959

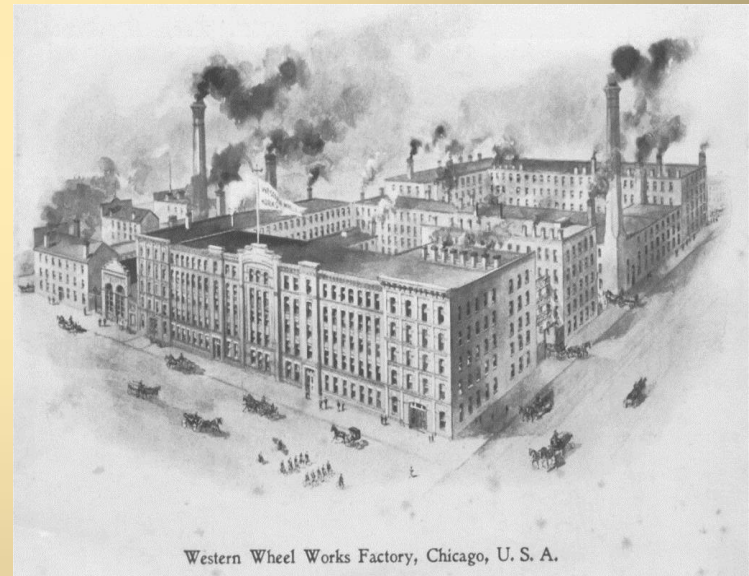


Historic Venues

Chicago Stadium - Six Day Races



Western Wheel Works located at Wells and Schiller (across from Village Cycle)

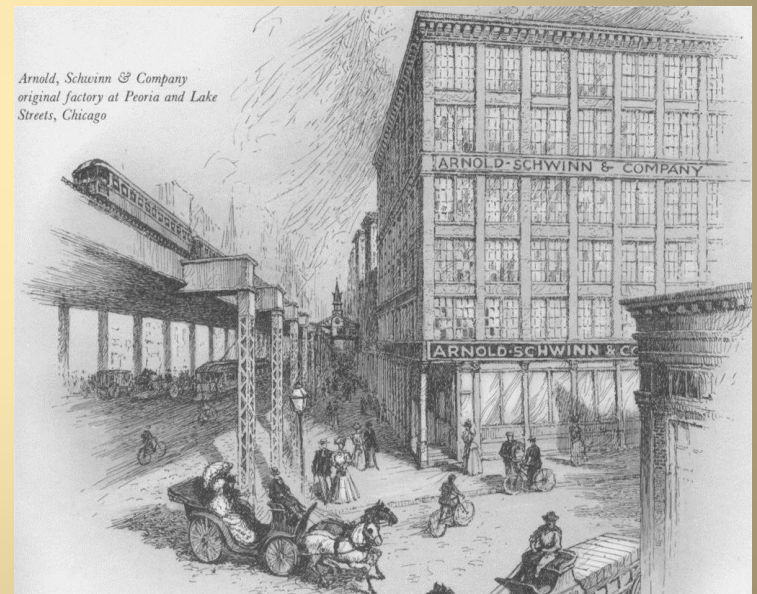


Historic Venues

**Gately Park Velodrome
(103rd Street - Chicago)**

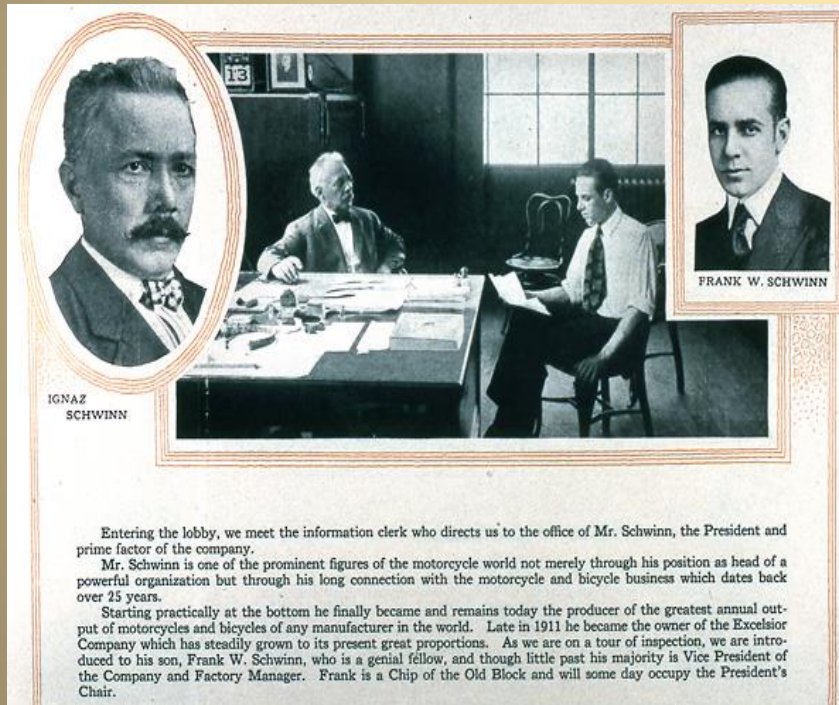


**Original Schwinn Factory-Peoria
and Lake Streets (Fulton Market)**



Chicago Cycling Personalities

Ignaz Schwinn and Frank V. Schwinn

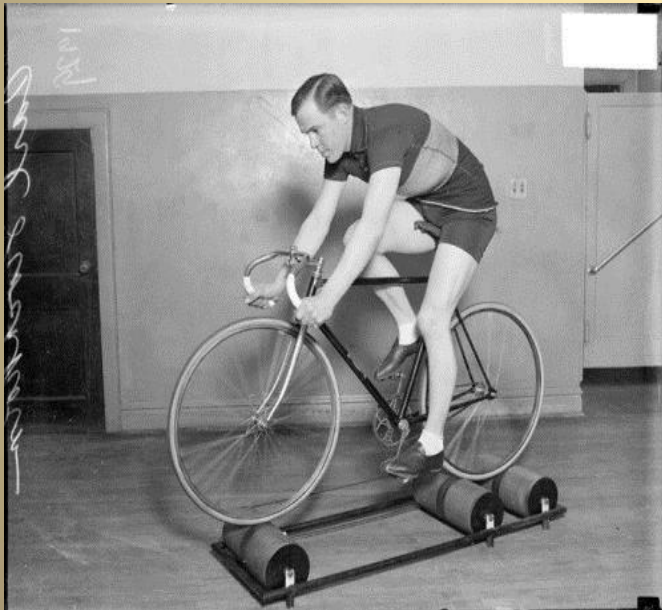


Oscar Wastyn and the Wastyn Family



Chicago Cycling Personalities

**Carl Stockholm – Olympian,
businessman, community leader,
U-505 Chairman, Pan-American
Games Chairman**



**May Thielgard Watts – Founder of
the Illinois Prairie Path**



Chicago Cycling Personalities

George Garner Sr. – #1 Schwinn Dealer

Phyllis Harmon - League of American Wheelmen

In Memoriam George Garner Sr. 1922-2016



Rails to Trails

Illinois Prairie Path- 1st Rails to Trails project in North America



Chicago, Aurora and Elgin Railroad – Villa Park Station



Rails to Trails

**IPP - Volunteer Bridge
Installation**



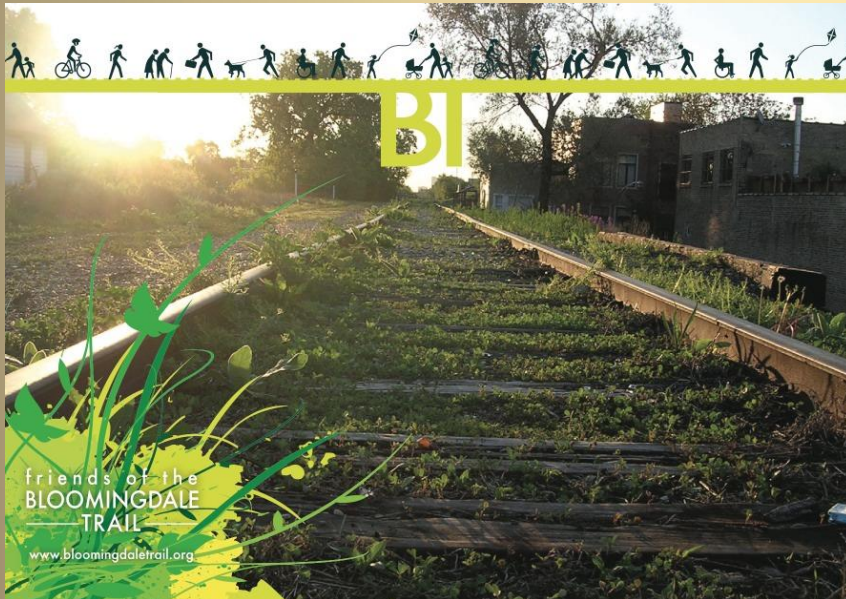
**IPP - Volunteer driven
development**



Rails to Trails

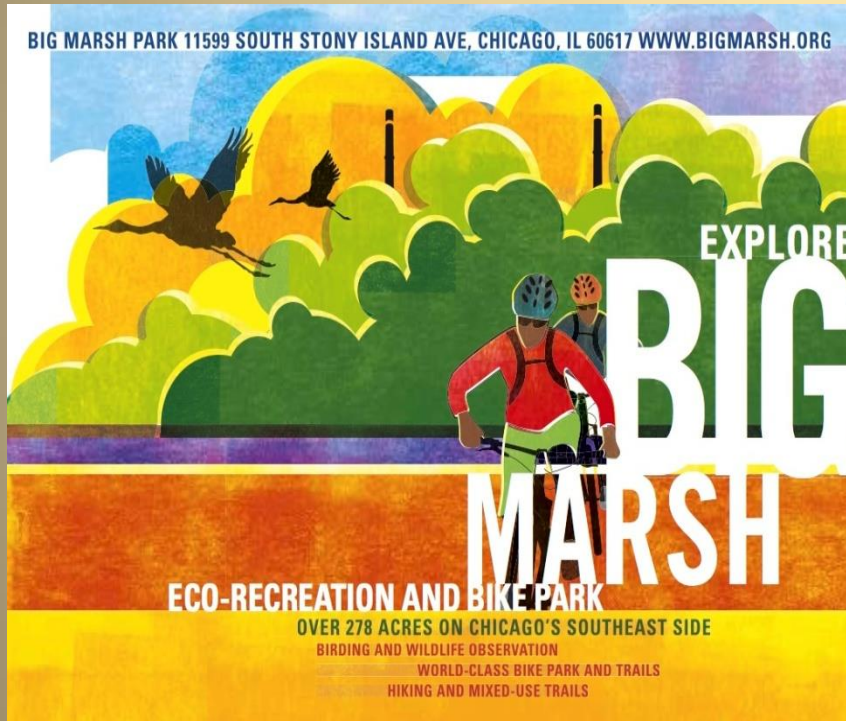
**Before – The Bloomingdale Trail
(606 Trail) – Former Soo Line**

After – 2.75 mile greenway



Today and Beyond

The Big Marsh



Chicago's 6th Largest Park



Today and Beyond

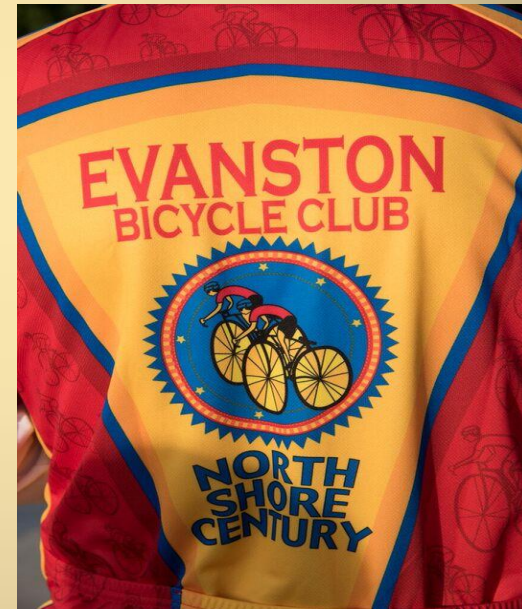
Navy Pier Flyover

Growth of Local Bicycling Clubs



RICHARD M DALEY, MAYOR
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Lakefront Trail Flyover
At Grand Ave.
Lakefront Trail Improvement



Today and Beyond

Century Rides – North Shore Century



New Bridges - Lincoln Village Pedestrian Bicycle Bridge



Today and Beyond

Divvy, LimeBike, Ojo Scooters

**Cycling Tours/Fundraisers i.e.
Bike The Drive, MS 100**



Today and Beyond

New trail construction –
Cal Sag Trail

Chicago awarded 2016 Best Bike
City by Bicycling Magazine



Today and Beyond

Bikes and Coffee - Heritage Coffee



Existing Trail Expansion i.e. filling in the gaps



Conclusion

- *Cycling in Chicago* is available on Amazon and Arcadia Publishing, Barnes and Noble and many independent bookstores, bike shops and from the author. Today's special = \$20/book.
- CBS 2 Chicago
- Active Transportation Alliance Newsletter
- Thanks to the Ride Illinois and the Illinois Bike Summit!
- Questions/Comments?