

# AABTS Strategy

## March 2019

Where are we?  
Where do we want to go?  
How do we get there?

## Where are we?

Ann Arbor Bicycle Touring Society is a cycling/social club active in Ann Arbor and surrounding communities.

AABTS mission:

- The 1977 AABTS articles of incorporation describe the club purpose as “To promote recreational bicycling on a non-profit basis. To plan and stage organized rides for riders of all ages and degrees of experience which will provide an opportunity for bicyclists to ride together and enjoy a wide range of cycling experiences.”
- In May 2009, the board stated the purpose of the club: “to promote riding in a group, to mentor new riders, social interaction, and to promote bicycle safety.”

Membership

- There are approximately 400-500 members. We estimate 300 paid memberships for 2019 fiscal year. Membership is essentially the same as in 2018 and 2017, but lower than peak years in the past.
- Membership has been gradually declining over the longer term. This seems to be consistent with other organized clubs.
- Club member demographic is trending to older riders and former riders.
- Fewer members are willing to volunteer for club functions or administration positions.

One Helluva Ride (OHR)

- The signature event and primary funding source is the annual One Helluva Ride. An overwhelming majority of members view this event as very important.
- Attendance numbers have declined slightly in recent years, similar to many other “event” rides.
- Profitability, linked to attendance numbers, is becoming a concern going forward.
- OHR has better name recognition than the AABTS.

Charitable Donations

- Significant financial support for numerous Ann Arbor area non-profits aligned with our mission is ongoing. Major recipients in 2018 were PEAC and AAPS/Safety Town. Numerous smaller donations went to area churches, libraries or other non-profits that provide parking/facilities that support AABTS.
- OHR profits are the primary source for funding charitable donations
- Annual donations from the AABTS endowment (Chaney fund) are distributed

Bike Rides

- Weekly and daily club rides are published on an online calendar.
- Mileage is recorded, and cumulative annual mileage charts are produced and published
- Rides are mostly casual “ride-eat-ride” format
- 231 cyclists signed in for at least one ride in 2018 (about 50% of the membership), down from 246 in 2017, and 269 in 2016.
- The total number of individual rides reported declined from 7,546 in 2016, to 5,914 in 2018, a 22% decline.
- In 2018, 96 different ride leaders submitted ride sheets totaling 1,076 rides
- Participation in these rides has been steadily declining for several years.

## Where do we want to go?

Based on the member survey conducted in 2017 and numerous conversations, the following goals were identified as important.

### OHR:

- Continue to stage this event in the same spirit of accommodating riders of all abilities.
- Stabilize or increase the number of participants.
- Adjust expenditures as required to generate profit.

### Membership:

- Attract new and retain exiting members.
- Increase the number of members willing to volunteer for club administrative or event roles.

### Rides:

- Continue to conduct organized group rides:
- Improve ride calendar functionality and flexibility.
- Devise a way to allow for more spontaneous rides in conjunction with the traditional calendar.
- Increase ride diversity, e.g. gravel, mountain bike, E-Bike.

## How do we get there?

Here are some of the ideas gathered during meetings, conversations and gleaned from the survey, along with actions already underway.

### OHR:

- Numerous changes and improvements are being introduced for the 2019 version that will help freshen the appeal and reduce expenses.

### Membership:

- Recruit a membership chair (Ann Hunt is currently filling in on an interim basis)
- Improve ease of use and/or develop tutorials for web-based membership management
- Develop a better value statement for becoming a member
- Call attention to the philanthropic and bicycle community support from AABTS
- Conduct a membership drive
- Reduce the need for members to volunteer for various functions
- Change the name of the club
- Promote group riding as a safer way to ride on the road

### Rides:

- Develop a forum, or other site to allow riders to schedule spontaneous or make last minute changes to scheduled rides
- Conduct special “no drop” introduction rides.
- Develop a “Say what you do, then Do what you say” protocol for club ride listings.

### Club Management System:

- The Board of Directors believe the macro trends of declining membership, volunteers and ride participants are likely to continue.
- The most efficient and effective method of promoting the club and managing its business functions is by website/mobile platforms, online billing and membership services and integration with other social media platforms.
- Our existing system is not intuitive, can be difficult to use, at times buggy and cannot be changed without fee-based help from the provider.
- The BoD recognizes its responsibility to ensure continuity of club management functions. Implementing admin friendly systems that can be managed by people with average technical skills and limited free time is essential in an all-volunteer organization.
- The Board of Directors believes replacing the current management system is the best way to facilitate achieving our goals.

#### ClubExpress:

- The Board of Directors agree that changing our existing member management, website hosting, and event management systems to ClubExpress is the best way to ensure AABTS continuity and fiscal stability. We reached this conclusion after examining several systems and looking at and discussing websites with other bicycle clubs.
- Improving our website to be more easily updated so it is more appealing to both existing and potential members.
- Minimize the work load on existing volunteers by minimizing manual data entry should help attract additional volunteers.
- Using a system designed for and used by numerous cycling clubs helps keep it in sync with current trends
- A 5-minute video explaining the key features is located here:  
<https://youtu.be/-qJZ16zylc4>
- Or, go to [www.clubexpress.com](http://www.clubexpress.com) for a robust collection of overviews, webinars, tutorials, and user manuals.