

Dear Halifax Cycling Coalition,

I'm a relatively new resident in Halifax. I've been living here for four years but I've spent almost every summer on the Eastern Shore over the past 15 years, where I have a little off-grid cabin (as one does). As a child of Saskatchewan and a resident of India for 10 years, I couldn't be more grateful for Halifax's community spirit, collective sense of civic duty, clean air, and beautiful landscapes. I love it here.

I've been riding bikes my entire life, but my full obsession with bicycles began back in 2011 when I moved to India for the second time and began acquiring "doodhvalla (milkman) bicycles" to share with my friends. They were cheap, practical, ubiquitous, and easy to repair. After 5 years of riding in Bangalore, I published a how-to article that encouraged quite a few folks in the city to start riding:

<https://www.deobald.ca/essays/2016-02-01-how-to-bicycle-commute-in-bangalore/>

Bicycles are naturally infectious. I love being involved in a local scene, whether that's racing, commuting, group rides, or Halifax's lovely *Coffee Outside*. I'm also quite a fan of experimentation. My partner and I lived in our off-grid cabin for 4 months one year. There's no road, so it's a 15-minute trek down the beach with your (foam-tire, naturally) bikes to reach a road and a 15 kilometre ride into Sheet Harbour. It's doable! Even rural riding in Nova Scotia is a delight.

Watching the metro system go up in Bangalore was another infrastructure thrill, while I lived there. However, bicycles weren't allowed on the train and there were seemingly no real avenues I could take to convince the local government otherwise. I love that this kind of influence is possible in Canada.

I recently left my job as Executive Director of the GNOME Foundation Inc (an open source software 501(c)(3) nonprofit in California). My favourite component of that role was project management of fundraising, advocacy, and outreach. I've been managing nonprofit projects (such as projects for Pariyatti, another 501(c)(3) nonprofit in Washington) and for-profit projects for 20 years. I love building a team and solving systemic problems. While open source software is its own form of civil infrastructure, and you'll hear a lot of European nations talking about "Digital Sovereignty" these days, I'm fascinated by the idea of working on actual infrastructure and solving real-world problems.

I look forward to hearing from you and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have!

All the best,



Steven

PS: I have a crushed optic nerve and a scleral buckle, so I have a strange accommodation requirement of only using computers in dark mode, as these related disabilities causes me severe light sensitivity under specific contrast conditions.