

105. Local Motion

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Lena Samford: Hello neighbors. I've got a few questions for you. Have you put much thought into how you get around your town? I know most of us do this automatically, do you bike carpool walk or ride the bus?

How intentional is your transportation every day and have you ever thought about how your mode of transportation may affect your life and others' lives differently? In today's episode, we're gonna dive deeper into just that how transportation systems can affect citizens from all walks of life differently and how we can work to make cities better for all. With Lawrence Simonson, from local motion, Lauren Simonson is a self-proclaimed wingtip wearing cargo bike, riding rad dad from Columbia, Missouri. He grew up as a military brat in small [00:01:00] towns all over, but dreamed of one day, living in a big city and riding his back to work.

Lawrence tells his story about how his first job out of college required a 40 minute drive. That was a drain on his finances and his quality of life. So we quit this experience, focused his attention on how transportation options affect our communities

and how many people are ignored and held back when having to own and drive a car is the only option he shares, how this led down a path towards becoming CEO of local motion, a grassroots advocacy organization based in Columbia, Missouri, that's focused on transportation equity. The vision of local motion is towns built for people where it's easy to walk, bike, and ride transit, and everyone can get where [00:02:00] they want to go.

Lawrence believes that when a transportation system serves the needs of the most vulnerable people in a community, it works best for everyone. While you're listening to this episode, I want you to think back on the conversations we've had about community empathy and privilege, all play a part in making a change for safer livable communities. So let's get into it with Lawrence, from local motion.

Lawrence. Thank you so much for joining us on hometown earth today. Tell us a little bit more about yourself and how you got involved with local motion.

Lawrence Simonson: Yeah, so, um, I've lived in Columbia for 13 years now. Um, I, when I moved here, I didn't, um, own a car. I've never really owned a car technically. And I've I've had availability of cars.

Well, I got a job down in Jeff city and. I was commuting to that job back and forth. And I was really [00:03:00] disappointed because I had moved to Columbia specifically cause I liked the town and I was realizing I wasn't actually getting to live or be in the town I wanted to be in because I had to add a, you know, hundred 20 minute commute round trip.

And so I kind of got fed up with, it felt like the vehicle was a big burden. And so I decided to, to quit that job. and I didn't really have anything to do. And I'd always been into biking and mostly from a very, um, privileged perspective of, of biking and how I thought people, everybody should be doing this.

It's such a cool thing. But yeah, I knew of at the time we were called pet net. and so I just reached out to them and thankfully they had a job opening and now granted that job opening was part-time was only guaranteed for two months and was like making less than I made in college. But I figured it was better than staying at home.

Yeah. And so I took that position and. I think just, um, [00:04:00] stuck around. And so that's why I ended up in my position now, as CEO is just, I'm the one that stuck around the longest. Um and so, and I really love it. I feel, do feel like I'm, I'm working my dream job. I've I've learned a lot in the times time I've been here.

Um, I still don't own a car. And so I have two kids and we spend our time biking to school, biking, to soccer. And, and so we just love living this

Lena Samford: lifestyle

. Local motion is, um, a little bit descriptive of what, what y'all are and what you're about. Um, you know, what I see from it is your mission is try to, to not only get people, to be able to bike around town, to, like you're saying anywhere you need to your jobs or to school.

But also to walk and, you know, to be able to ride transit like buses and stuff like that. Mm-hmm so what, can you get a little bit deeper into that and what that means for y'all in action?

Lawrence Simonson: Yeah. We, as I mentioned a second ago, we did change our name to local motion [00:05:00] and, and that took some time for us to figure out which name we wanted.

and you know, the motion piece really has to do with the moving. So moving around your town, but then what we, one of the, the, the core values we have or core principles we have is this idea of local. And what we've determined is when you tend to focus more locally, uh, whether that be the, the street that your house is on, or even your neighborhood or your community, if you continuously just focus locally, you should make changes.

That are beneficial to that local environment. And if you do that, all those small changes in that kind of local environment, if you do them all over a community, they, they add up to be greater than, than what we currently have now. And so we, we're very local focused and motion being what we focus on as well as movement and transportation.

And we do have a vision of towns that are built for people where it's easy for people to walk, bike, use public transit, and get wherever they want to go. [00:06:00] And so what we do is we spend our time advocating for change. Um, we do that through both education events. And, and also working to do policy change. We advocate for those changes and we do it through offering biking, walking, and, and public transit solutions.

And what I mean by that is, is my goal is never to say, take any individual off the street and say, take away their car or, or, or try to convince them to start writing a bike and be their only mode of transportation. That's not the case. What we are really doing is we're using biking, walking in public transit.

As a lens, because what we've learned through all of our work, through all of our case studies and studying and research is when you focus on those three modes of transportation in the transportation system, if you prioritize them, make it very easy, safe, and convenient to where those are the default modes of transportation that everything else in the community starts to. [00:07:00]

Including for those people that will either, either never walk, bike or use poke, they'll always drive whether that be out of choice or necessity, it improves their lives as well. And so I like to say that all that, because most people think, oh, I'm just here to get so, and so person to ride a bike or to get you to ride a bike or to take away your car.

And that's not the case. I'm here to make your life better or hope to make your life better by all what we have found in our research. And we have found that if we use this lens, The thing about that is transportation touches everything in our community. Most people don't think about transportation, right?

Um, they wake up, they get in their car, they go to work. They don't think about the transportation system, but it touches every aspect of our life. And so what that means is we have to think about biking, walking in public transit, that lens. In every aspect of a person's life that could be just simply getting to the grocery store, but it also could mean parking.

You know, how does [00:08:00] parking play a role? How does housing play a role? How does affordable housing play a role? So there's a, a bazillion things in there that we have to look at and determine what would be best for biking, walking in public transit on any particular issue. And then we advocate for that in on that particular issue, knowing that we may not solve the problem.

but by adding in our part of our solution will help be a part of the more major solution. One

Lena Samford: of the things I've seen y'all say is that transportation is really affecting everyone kind of what you just said. Um, but it doesn't affect everyone equally. Right. So you kind of nodded to that a little bit. Um, you know, if you could talk about why equity is so important when we're talking about accessibility and transportation and livable streets, because I think, you know, like you said, a lot of people don't.

See that these things need to be addressed. So, um, they first need to see it and then they need to see maybe the equity standpoint in trying [00:09:00] to make it accessible for everybody. So can you D dive into a little bit more about that?

Lawrence Simonson: Yeah. I think at the base, what people need to realize when you talk about equity, and a lot of times when you talk about equity, there there's a lot of things, but one of the things you often talk about is, is accessibility.

How accessible are jobs or healthcare or education or whatever it is. When you boil it down to it, transportation is accessibility. So yeah, depending on how we design our transportation system, we'll determine how accessible things are for people. Again, I mentioned nobody really thinks about it. You know, oftentimes people don't think about breathing, you know, you just do it.

They don't think about their transportation system. And is there a better way to do it? Sometimes people don't think about eating, they just eat. Whatever's put in front of them. And we know that they're in autopilot autopilot. Do you know that there is a, we all know that there is a better way to eat. Um, and there is a better way to do our transportation system because the current system.

Depending on how you look at it. And [00:10:00] depending on how long you want this podcast to go, we could argue that, um, or I could argue that even the people who live in some of the more privileged areas of our town are being oppressed in a way because of our transportation system. So, but they may not be, they may not know it.

They may not be thinking about. So if an individual that is living a very privileged lifestyle is unknowingly not living the best life that they could possibly live. Imagine what that's doing for some of the people in our community who have been historically marginalized and continue to be marginalized through all sorts of systems in our society.

But that includes heavily our transportation. and, you know, we can boil it back down to now to those people that are being more systemically, oppressed, you know, people of color, poor neighborhoods are often built by high speed roads, high [00:11:00] speed, heavily traveled roads tend to have higher particulate matter.

So they have higher chronic disease from particulate matter. They are also now in a more dangerous environment and more dangerous transportation environment. So they tend to be killed or more seriously injured through, uh, traffic violence, uh, because they're just in this area, they also tend to be the populations that have the highest rates of walking and biking in need for public transit.

Yet those areas. Have the least resources for those modes of transportation. Um, they also tend to be in the places that are furthest away from any resources. And so we are more significantly oppressing them. Yeah. And so what's happening is essentially we've put them in an area that you are absolutely mandated that if you wanna be a participant in our society, I hope you can afford a car.

And we're doing that to people that are struggling to go paycheck to paycheck. And what we're [00:12:00] telling them is you have to go paycheck to paycheck, but the majority of that paycheck is gonna go towards an automobile to get you to and from work. Right. And so it's really putting a burden on them

because we have designed our transportation system to only prioritize people that can drive.

Yeah. Now let's bring it back over to some of the more privileged people. Now they can afford their car. or so they think most people are doing it on credit because right now the car industry actually makes more money off of loans than they do off of their cars. Oh, wow. And so didn't know that and right now in the United States on average, and so you may be different, I'm different, but on average it costs \$10,000 a year to own and operate a car that's roughly 800, a little over \$800 a month goes to owning and operating your car.

and that is a significant chunk of change. It is. That's a significant chunk of change for anybody. And that's why I bring it [00:13:00] back over to this privilege side of things is you're missing out on that chunk of change that you could be utilizing for something else in your, your life mm-hmm . But yet we've designed our transportation system that it makes it very difficult for you to, to remove.

Tool essentially from your life. And now all of a sudden you have a spouse or a significant other, they need their car. So now we're up to 10, th \$20,000. You may have a child who turns the age of 16, who may then eventually need to require a car. So they're adding another probably average \$10,000 a year.

So it starts to be very expensive because we have requiring people to utilize this, this tool to participate in. And so what that does is it locks people in, you think about our younger populations, our, our kids, kids can no longer walk to a corner store. One. We haven't built a corner store near their house anymore.

Cause of our zoning codes. It requires a car to go to the corner store now mm-hmm yeah. So kids aren't getting to, to be more as independent [00:14:00] and thriving in the world is we like them to do, but the one place people often forget. As we are only young for so long, and we are only able bodied for so long. At some point in our life, we're gonna reach a stage where we have to think about retiring our license when it's more longer safe for us to drive when we're older.

And now that puts a huge burden on our elderly population, because it will then require their, their kids to take care of them. So you're losing some dignity there. You're losing some independence there. So, like I said, I can go and go and go on this topic of equity and how it affects every single person, but especially those who are the, the, the most oppressed and historically marginalized.

But I can go any direction on that. So, no,

Lena Samford: I, I think that's really interesting too. How you, you know, it's not just for the, now it is across. Time and across, you know, different classes of people and it really does touch everybody. So, um, I, I kind of see that, [00:15:00] you know, my hometown is in the, the boot hill, Missouri and, oh, it's very rural.

And so steel, Missouri. I know still. Yeah.

Lawrence Simonson: Do you okay? Yeah, I we've, I've gone down to Ken quite a bit. And, uh, scooter and some of those places, so near there. Yeah. You

Lena Samford: get it. Yeah. So that's the issue is that, you know, a lot of people, you know, have, are, are in poverty. I mean, truthfully and. Um, a lot of that is just lack of access to getting jobs or getting two jobs.

You know, there's not the jobs there, so they have to go out of town and a lot of people don't have that. We don't have public transportation really, or anything like that. So I see Columbia as a place that does have. Opportunities. Um, and that's why I live up here, but even, you know, I was trying to ride my bike around town the other day and was having trouble, you know, I'm on Google maps and it's like, well, if you go this way, then you're gonna have to be on these major roads or you're gonna have to get off and walk for a little bit. [00:16:00]

And I think that that is part of the conversation too. What is an ideal, uh, public transportation system or transportation system that would work better for everyone. And if you can talk about livable streets and what that, what that is. Cause I think that's what you're talking about, but, um, I just wanna kind of put those two things together and name it.

Lawrence Simonson: So I see, I see on our, when we, we talk about the transportation system as a whole, there there's, there's three things that really need to. One of them is, is zoning codes. Zoning codes are what help us create place a place people want to be, or a place people can go to. Cuz we can make a town as walkable the, the, the streets as walkable as, as you can imagine.

But if they have no place to go, they're still not gonna use them. There's a couple areas in Columbia. I think about all the time that the neighborhood itself is actually very walkable. You can't go anywhere outside the neighborhood

because there's no [00:17:00] resources or, or grocery or that corner store. So zoning code is one of 'em.

Um, the actual way the infrastructure we build the way the street scape looks, the way any cross section of a street looks is number two, things that we need to focus on. And number three is that public transportation piece, the, the buses. Okay. So those are the three most important things I think, need to be tackled in order to move us forward.

They're all pretty large things to deal with. The one I'm focusing on currently. And that's not to say I don't focus on the other two from time to time. Yeah. The one I'm focusing on currently is the street scape. The way the streets are designed right now. And we are working on a policy called a livable streets policy.

And the idea behind this livable streets policy is, is we kind of flip the paradigm a little bit on the streets. Currently streets are designed. To be absolutely the safest and most convenient [00:18:00] and most forgiving to, to a car that's currently the way that's, it's designed, unfortunately that has some negative consequences for everybody outside the car.

And, and to be quite Frank again, I can go on and on. It has negative consequences for the people in the car. We know how much it's congest. We have huge death and serious injury rates. Um, and so there's, there's, it's not necessarily good for them either. Right? So it flips the paradigm on that. So it goes from prioritizing this car.

Uh, it also goes from prioritizing, what's known as through traffic. I think everybody can appreciate what through traffic is. So trying to get from point A to point B, um, you know, cutting through neighborhoods, cutting through business districts. It currently, we prioritize that through traffic at the expense of neighborhoods at the expense of, of school zones at the expense of businesses.

And it flips that as well. And it says, okay, no longer are we gonna prioritize this through traffic? What [00:19:00] we're gonna do is prioritize the neighborhood. We're gonna prioritize the business district. We're gonna pretty much take the land use context what's going on along that street. And what would benefit.

Properties or those people or those houses or families that live along the street, what's the best street design that benefits them. And then the other thing it does is it takes a look at like, what, how are we currently funding the building of our streets? And currently the way we fund the building or how we, how we spend

that funding current spending is we tend to look at large projects and, and build these big, large, expensive projects to accommodate SP.

So people that are gonna continue to live further and further out. So we're continuing to, to, to build new without necessarily bringing in enough, extra money to maintain what we currently have. Yep. And so what we wanna do is now focus more on, you know, I go back to that local what's here, what's [00:20:00] now, you know, expansion is not local.

That is, that is building for the future or, or, or some sort of thing that may happen later on. We wanna change that spending from building those big new projects to spending on maintenance and improving the road scape or road design for the people that are currently here now. So when we look at a road, if your road needs redesigned, if it needs repaving, if it needs re striping and we're in this neighborhood, we go to that neighborhood and we say, Hey, how can this be better for you?

That live here in this neighborhood, because we're gonna spend that money now here on you instead of building some project over there. Yeah. And there's one other piece that slides into that. This isn't necessarily a fourth piece, but it's as, as part of that is historically all of that maintenance retrofitting, you know, whatever you wanna call it has been spent primarily in places of privilege.

And so what we would like to see is a funding [00:21:00] matrix that not only prioritizes retrofitting, uh, upgrading maintenance, um, making the streets calmer, making it better for pedestrians, but also looks at where is this project happening? Is it pro work? Is this project happening in a place of privilege or is it happening a place where near a place that's been predominantly underserved?

And if it's being, if it's in an underserved, great. If it's being and done in a privileged area town, we need to take a hard look at that and determine, wait a minute. Right. Are we doing at least two other projects somewhere else? That's right. Needs it more

Lena Samford: vulnerable areas for sure.

Lawrence Simonson: More vulnerable areas.

And so just to kind of more clearly answer your question. It's really hard for me to do it without pictures. And I know where you're on a podcast, so really hard for me to do it without pictures. So I, I always tell people to like close your eyes and imagine the most Idy. Street to live on. What does that look like to you?

Are there kids walking? Are there kids kicking balls and them [00:22:00] accidentally rolling into the, the, the street with no fear? Are cars driving very calmly, looking out for people, uh, are neighbors sitting on their front porches are retired folks out walking their dogs. And where are they going? Are they going nearby to the local coffee shop or the corner grocery?

What does that look like? And, and, and the same with business districts, what's the most idyllic business district. No one fantasizes about going and parking in a Walmart parking lot, walking through a Walmart parking lot and going into a Walmart as a way to spend their Friday evening out shopping or eating, they tend to think of a, a, a place that's a little bit older.

The streets are narrower. You don't think about the parking, but you do think about the time you spend out of the. Walking around how safe do you feel? How comfortable you feel, how pleasant it feels are there shops, are there restaurants? And so what we're trying to do is we're trying to narrow the street scape.

We're [00:23:00] trying to widen the sidewalks. We're trying to provide extra protection for people biking, including, um, putting in trees. And so trying to paint that picture in reality, what you have in your head of what's most. Oftentimes, we hear of people that go to Europe and they come back and they say, oh, it was so great.

I got, I, we didn't even, we rented a car, but we barely used it. We spent our time walking and biking and we walk to the grocery store. We walk to the restaurants, we watch to hang walk to hang out and they think we can't do that here. And we can't, it's simply a policy change. That's all it is. We've made.

Intentional decisions to design this, our towns and our cities, the way we currently have them, we can make intentional decisions to design them differently. And that's what we're trying to do. Yeah.

Lena Samford: So a lot of that, you know, it is public policy, but you have to get the people behind that. Right. So, uh, what do you see as like the biggest [00:24:00] issue or barrier to getting people engaged in your message and how do you

Lawrence Simonson: overcome.

you know, there, there, there's always the folks that you could never quite win over. There's the two types you never win over. There's the one you temporarily

can't win over, but then the one you never will. And then one, you never will. There's not a whole lot we can do with that. Um, unfortunately the one we can temper temporarily can't overcome.

We, there's not a lot we can do with that either. Um, so what we try to do is try to be as compassionate, empathetic to their side, hear them out, let them know like, you know, it's as best as we can. It's not gonna be as bad as you think it's actually gonna be really great for you. Right. Those ones, those that we can temporarily not overcome.

And the reason I say temporarily is because we see this all the time in our trail building work, that they hate the trail. They have all these reasons why they, they don't want it. And usually their, their reasons are I can understand why they feel to have those reasons, but I can show them in proof that those don't [00:25:00] don't come to fruition.

Yeah. But then we come back to them five, 10 years later after the trail's built. And they're like, I love this trail. I don't know why I fought it so much, you know? Yeah. Um, people don't like to

Lena Samford: change. I think

Lawrence Simonson: that might be it. It really is. There's a lot of it's the change. You don't know what you don't know and you know, you don't want things to change.

Um, because people are stressed, people's lives are difficult. Um, and so to be able to really think about that change, they don't have the, the bandwidth to think about how it could be better. They're just trying to get through their day to. But for other people, we just spend time talking to them, showing them pictures, explaining, answering questions.

So rallying those types of things. Yeah. I

Lena Samford: love that. And y'all do some, you know, community engagement as far as education y'all do seminars and mm-hmm you also try to help other communities. Can you talk a little bit more about, you know, how you span across different communities and maybe what you've learned from [00:26:00] other, other communities in talking with.

Lawrence Simonson: Yeah. So we, the way we span across other communities is, um, and this, this is fairly new. We started this several years ago. It's still

somewhat new is we started an organization called Missourians for responsible transportation and I, we call them our statewide arm. Um, and we share it's a partnership with, uh, us here at, in, in Columbia with local motion bike walk KC in Kansas city trail net in St.

Louis and Ozark Greenways down in Springfield. Because what we started to notice was, uh, one, we were all each spending a lot of time going down to Jeff city, working on state issues that would affect us here in Columbia, which took us away, took time away from our focus in Columbia. So that was difficult.

Right? Sometimes we found out we were all working on the same issue at the same time. So kind of repeating efforts where we could kind of make it more efficient if we were all just working on it together. Right. But then the other thing we [00:27:00] discovered was. In our work, we were going around to towns and there was a lot of, um, demand for the work we were doing.

There was a lot of people in small town. I mean, that's, I mentioned Kenneth. That's why I was in Ken talking to them. What we found was they, those places want more, bikeable more walkable. Maybe not, it's not to the extent of needing a lot of public transit. A lot of times they need more regional public transit, right?

Yeah. But they didn't have one, the, the, the technical knowledge or the technical knowhow, or even the, the capacity to, to make change. And so they really needed their own kind of local motion in those smaller communities, but there's really, you know, there's just not the population. Like I said, the resources to have their own, they may have a group of people like a runner's club that, you know, they're all friends, but they also talk about how they want safer streets.

Yeah. And have a better, more populous. Town square. [00:28:00] And it was really hard for us to work with them because we just didn't have the resources. You know, my resources are given to us by donors to work here in Columbia, and it wouldn't be a good use of my donors money to go out and work in other places. But we also recognize that if those places are doing well, then the legislators in those areas are gonna hear about it.

And eventually that's gonna help the statewide work as well. And so we created MRT. To take care of all of that stuff. It does our legislative work down in the, it helps coordinate all of us and they go into different towns and help them design build, change their communities to be more walkable. And bikeable because

really what should be the most walkable communities in our town or our rural Missouri towns.

Right. And we have rural Missouri towns that are splitting into. Because Modi has come through and, and built a highway between 'em you have a school on one side, you have houses on the other, but the kids can't cross, or you have a dairy queen on one side and the kids on the other and [00:29:00] the kids can't cross.

And so they need almost more help than we do, because it's like they're small communities. These communities are like a mile wide. You should be able to walk all around town. But you can't, so that's kind of what we've done statewide.

Lena Samford: I, I really, I appreciate that work because it does affect, you know, the entire state, which is where I, I, you know, travel over, have family and friends, so you can see that it does touch everyone's lives, you know, locally and, and locally, as far as Missouri, even.

Um, so one of the things, you know, I think is interesting is that you wanna get put out of business, you know, you don't wanna. Continue to do this forever. Can you talk a little bit about, you know, why do you wanna get put out of business? Yeah. And how long do you think that, that it will take to get to these, um, idyllic or even, you know, to where you feel comfortable kind of stepping

Lawrence Simonson: back.

That's funny, you mentioned that. So it must mean you've read our core values or somewhere you've heard us say that, so yeah. Yes. Yeah. [00:30:00] I've often had this, um, kind of philosophical thing where, what I always say is every non-for-profit. Should be working to put themselves out of business. And that doesn't mean you're a bad steward of the resources that are given to you.

It means that you do your job so well that you have realized the change that you've wanted to see in the world. So you can now move on to the next issue. Um, and so, yeah, that's something we strive to do. And I, I often ask other non-for-profit leaders, they say, so what's, and I don't say what's the. That's gonna put you outta business.

I often ask what's the one thing that can help move that needle that you can now say we're done with that that's taken care of. We're closer to being out of business. We still have these other 10 things we have to deal with. And I usually

get a little disappointed if, if a non-for-profit leader can't answer that because to me, what that sounds like is you're just gonna continue to put a bandaid on a.

For the [00:31:00] rest of your life, you're just that scabs just, or that wound is never gonna heal. What are you doing? That's gonna heal that wound. Yeah. And right now for us livable streets is, is one of those things we think if we can do that, that'll move the needle significantly. To us improving our system or our society.

Um, the next one for me is I'm really focused on the public transit system. I really believe our public transit system. This is probably gonna be even tougher than the street scape because in America we don't have a true understanding of what a wonderful public transit system feels like or looks like most people have maybe experienced Washington DC or they've experienced New York mm-hmm and.

even then those aren't good, but those are the best we have. So if you go there and you think that's great, I gotta tell you, go to go over to Europe and see what they're doing there. Right? Um, they're fantastic. What it does. It [00:32:00] totally eliminates what the need for a, a, a motor vehicle. Most of the time, not to say again, not harping on the motor vehicle.

They it's done some great things for our culture. What I always say, let me back up and talk about the motor vehicle a little bit, because people all say you're just attacking the. No, I'm not, I'm not anti-car, I'm just pro people. Right. Also I view the car the way, same way I view wine. One glass of wine is fine, but if you drink the whole bottle, that's not great.

Right now we're a bit drunk on cars and it's time for us to go home, you know, to take the bus home really. Oh, my favorite. I love that now. So we're, we're just a little overdone on it. And so, yep. I think the public transit system is our, is our next big focus is improving that. To help move that needle in the correct direction.

Yeah.

Lena Samford: Uh, for some reason that just brought to my, I don't know if you know the old, uh, the Pixar movie, Wally. I do. I love Wally where they're in space so long. And it's like, once you do stuff for so [00:33:00] long that you don't even realize that there's another, another option, there is not an option. And so that's, for some reason that just popped into my head.

And I think that we are kind of just like in our own little bubbles and yeah. You know what y'all do. Kind of opens people's minds to, you know, how things can be better for everybody. And I love that. And so how can people help put you outta business? What, what's the best way that they can get involved with local motion and, um, help y'all out?

Lawrence Simonson: Yeah, there's a lot of things. Um, one of the things I always tell people to do is, is just to start educating yourself a little bit, cuz you're right. There's most people. Know, any other way in fact anymore, if, if the first thing that happens as a baby, when you're taken from the hospital is you have to be put in a car.

Um, so the first experience you have outside of a hospital in a car. um, and the last experience you have is generally in a car too, as you're being driven to the, to the cemetery. So, wow. Um, it spans the entire life, but educating that about the [00:34:00] different ways. So I think you're right that we're, and, and we're happy to help with that, and it doesn't have to be all at once.

It doesn't have to be, get rid of all your cars and just start biking and walking everywhere because we recognize. It's not the individual's fault that they can't do. It's the way we've designed the city. You're being forced into this. Right. Right. And we want people to have choices. the other way is, is you, obviously we have a, we have a newsletter.

That's the very basic, you know, um, if you go to Lomo commo.org, we have a newsletter that gets you involved. We have lots of events that can be attended and, and not all the events are just like discussion. Some of them are fun events like bike rides and, and, and walks and different things, awareness events.

And then a lot of our advocacy work is where, where the rubber really hits the road. Um, and right now we're trying to push this livable streets policy. And so we need people to come and get yard signs, to put their yards soon. We're gonna need people to email their [00:35:00] council folks, and then eventually showing up to a city council meeting, which is, is really where the work is at.

We show up to the city council meeting and help show the city council that there's a massive amount of support for this vision. Right. I love

Lena Samford: that. Well, that sounds great to me. I hope people, um, get connected with y'all. Is there anything else you wanna make sure that listeners know about local motion before we hop

Lawrence Simonson: off?

Uh, you know, I, I think the one thing I, I, I, I would say is to kind of, if, if people are new to us or local motion, one of the things we've been most proud of since we just recently changed our name and, and we looked back at the history. Of our organization, you know, it's, we, we talked to people that were around at the beginning and they had said, wow, we never really knew what we were doing back then and what the change would be and what we continuously have heard in this kind of homecoming or whatever you want to call it.

Reminiscing. Local motion or, or previously Petnet [00:36:00] has significantly changed the way Columbia works and it's all been for the better. Um, and so a lot of people love Columbia because it's active, vibrant community and local motion has been a big part of that. And we're very proud to have been a big part of that.

And we're very excited where the next 20 years will be. And so I hope people that have not heard of us before join in on the.

Lena Samford: Well, my sister is, um, just had her first, you know, kid almost two now. And, um, they're Columbia gonna be in Columbia for a while. So I'm just really excited for the potential for my niece to even be able to grow up in, in a town where she can get around safely and.

Um, and enjoy life a little bit better. So great. I'm excited for that. And I really do appreciate you coming on and sharing all of this with us, and hopefully you have a good

Lawrence Simonson: rest of your day. Thank you so much. You too.