

January 2009

Bicycle Guide

Promoting the Bicycle for
Everyday Transportation



Bicycle Statistics

- **Bicycling is the most energy-efficient mode of transportation.**
- **Did you know?—bicycle transportation in the U.S. saves an estimated 700 million gallons of gas annually.**
- **If you bike one day a week, you can reduce your commuting costs up to 20%.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 763-862-4260

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Park & Bike Trail Map & Commuting Guide

The Anoka County TMO in partnership with the Anoka County Parks and Recreation Department published a 2009 Park & Bike Trail Commuting Map.

To view a PDF file of the map visit www.anokacountyTMO.com or call 763-862-4260 to request your copy.



For more biking information visit our Web site at www.anokacountyTMO.com

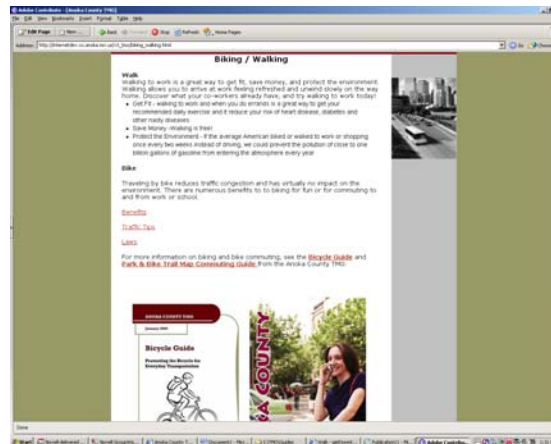


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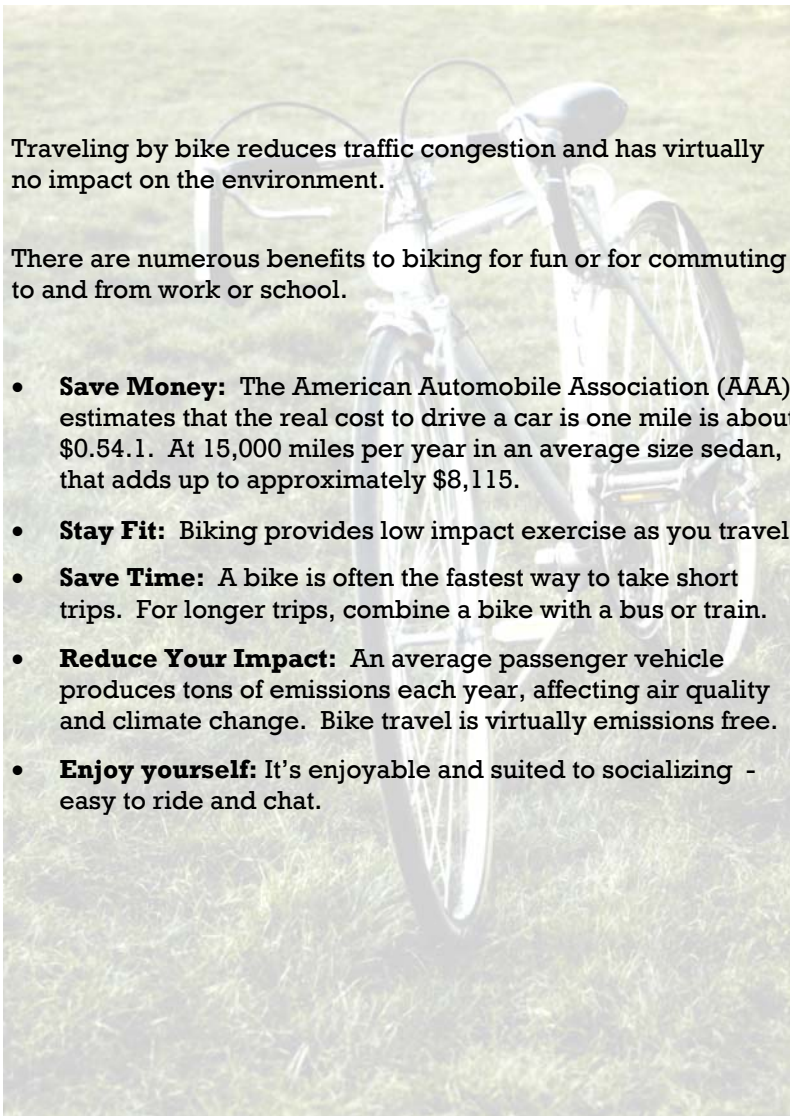
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Benefits of Biking



Traveling by bike reduces traffic congestion and has virtually no impact on the environment.

There are numerous benefits to biking for fun or for commuting to and from work or school.

- **Save Money:** The American Automobile Association (AAA) estimates that the real cost to drive a car is one mile is about \$0.54.1. At 15,000 miles per year in an average size sedan, that adds up to approximately \$8,115.
- **Stay Fit:** Biking provides low impact exercise as you travel.
- **Save Time:** A bike is often the fastest way to take short trips. For longer trips, combine a bike with a bus or train.
- **Reduce Your Impact:** An average passenger vehicle produces tons of emissions each year, affecting air quality and climate change. Bike travel is virtually emissions free.
- **Enjoy yourself:** It's enjoyable and suited to socializing - easy to ride and chat.

Getting Started

Getting Started

Here are some beginning pointers.

How far and how long?

Base the decision of how far to bike on experience, confidence, and ability.

Typically, three to five miles is an ideal distance.

Riding 10 miles per hour, it will take less than 20 minutes to cover three miles. This is a good comfortable pace.

What to Wear While Biking



Helmet. The most important piece of biking equipment is a properly fitting helmet. Helmets prevent head injuries. A local bike shop can help find a properly fitting helmet.

Eyewear. Protective eyewear provides shield from bright sunlight, road debris, wind, and insects.

Clothing. Clothing should be comfortable and should not get caught in the bike. For shorter rides, regular clothing is adequate. For longer trips, clothing specifically designed for biking, such as shorts, tights, and jerseys, are preferred. Special clothing will be needed for cold weather or rain. Gloves can protect hands and make the ride more comfortable.

Bike Laws

The Law

The Minnesota Department of Transportation's Share the Road campaign distills much of Minnesota bicycle law and guidelines into eight simple points:



- 1** Bicyclists may ride on all Minnesota roads, except where restricted.
- 2** Bicyclists should ride on the road, and must ride in the same direction as traffic.
- 3** Motorists must at all times maintain a three-foot clearance when passing a bicyclist.
- 4** Bicyclists must obey all traffic control signs and signals, just as motorists.
- 5** Motorists and bicyclists must yield the right-of-way to each other.
- 6** Bicyclists should signal their turns and should ride in a predictable manner.
- 7** Lights and reflectors are required at night.
- 8** Bicyclists should always wear helmets.

Traffic Safety Tips

Riding lawfully, predictably, and confidently while indicating your intentions to other vehicles is essential for safety.

In general, ride in a straight line as far to the right as possible. When riding alongside parked cars, signal and move into the traffic lane far enough to avoid an opening door. Do the same when passing alleys or driveways to make yourself more visible to motorists entering the roadway.

Some other pointers for a safe ride are:

- Look out for people getting out of their parked cars—if riding in the right lane.
- Watch for vehicles turning right. Leave space for cars to turn right by moving to the LEFT part of the right lane as a courtesy at signalized intersections.
- If a bus is at a bus stop, avoid passing the bus on the right to avoid colliding with passengers getting on and off the bus.
- Always carry identification.
- Carry a cell phone or change to make any necessary phone calls for help.

Basic Biking Information

Bike Accessories

To make the ride easier and more comfortable, consider the following accessories:

- **Baskets/racks/bags:** Think of items such as briefcase, books, or clothes and select the storage device best suited for those needs.
- **Water bottle/cage:** Staying hydrated is important.
- **Bells & horns:** Any kind of sounding device to alert others, especially when passing, is an important safety measure.
- **Rear-view mirror:** Although always look over the shoulder to check for traffic when changing lanes, a rear-view mirror is a good supplement. Different styles allow mirrors to attach to the bike, sunglasses, or a helmet.
- **Fenders:** Stay clean and dry in wet weather by attaching fenders to the bike.

Inspecting the Bike

- **Brakes:** Check to make sure they are capable of locking up the wheel, inspect pads for wear; replace if there is less than 1/4" of pad left. Check brake lever travel; there should be at least 1" between bar and lever when applied.
- **Wheels:** Wheel nuts and quick release levers need to be tight, and the wheel should not wobble. Check for loose or broken spokes. Spin the wheels to ensure the brakes do not rub the tires or dive into the spokes.

- **Tires:** Check the tires for the manufacturer's recommendations on air pressure. Use a pressure gauge to ensure proper pressure, and a hand pump to avoid over inflation. Check for damage to tire tread and sidewall; replace if damaged.
- **Seat:** The seat should be positioned so the knee is slightly bent when the pedal is at the bottom of a pedal stroke.
- **Handlebars:** Make sure handle-bars can't move side-to-side when the front tire is still.
- **Pedals and cranks:** Pedals should be securely attached to the crank arms. Check for loose bearings by trying to wobble a crank arm side-to-side.
- **Gears:** Gear cables should slide easily and should not be frayed or rusty.
- **Chain:** Be sure to lubricate the chain regularly. Check the chain for wear; 12 links should measure no more than 12 1/8". If the chain skips on the cassette, it may need to be adjusted or replaced.
- **Lights and reflectors:** A white headlamp to illuminate the road and a rear reflector is required while riding at night. Ensure that all reflectors are clean and properly aligned.
- **Before a long ride** take a quick ride to check if derailleurs and brakes are working properly; inspect the bike for loose or broken parts, and tighten, replace or fix them; pay extra attention during the first few miles of the ride.
- **Be sure** to take the bike to a shop once a year for routine maintenance.
- **Lighting:** Lights are a necessity if riding in the dark. Check local bike shops for options.

Carrying a Tool Kit

Be prepared for minor repairs and adjustments on the road by carrying a few key tools and knowing how to use them:

- Tire pump and levers for removing the tire easily off the rim
- Spare inner-tube to fit the tire or tube patch kit
- Multi-tool with Allen wrenches, screwdriver, and chain tool
- Small adjustable wrench or spoke wrench
- Cell phone

Bike Lockers

Bike lockers are safe, weatherproof storage for bikes and equipment. Rental during the biking season from April—November costs \$40 plus a refundable \$25 damage deposit. Other terms are available.



Bike lockers are available at the Riverdale Park and Ride Lot in Coon Rapids. Contact the Anoka County Transit Office at 763-422-7141.

For information on other bike locker locations visit www.metrotransit.org/serviceInfo/bikeLockers.asp

Biking for the Commute

Ideal Bikes for Commuting

Just about any bike in good condition will be suitable for bicycle commuting.

- **Commuter Bikes:** are an emerging category. While riding a commuter bike, the rider sits in an upright position that is suitable for commuting. These bikes can be equipped with fenders to keep road debris and water away from the rider.
- **Mountain Bikes:** are designed for off-road riding. They have fat, low pressure, knobby tires designed to grip rocks, dirt, roots, etc. and have upright handlebars with easy maneuverability for good performance on tricky terrain. They are heavier and don't provide for the fastest commute.
- **Road Bikes:** are built for speed and have narrow, smooth, high pressure tires designed for fast aerodynamic performance. The handlebars are dropped and rider sits hunched over.

Looking Good for Work

It is possible to ride a bike to work and still look professional. All it takes is a little planning:

- Consider taking a week's worth of clothes to work and store them in a locker or another secure place.
- Carry clothes on the bike by using a garment-bag type pannier. Experiment with packing clothes, including rolling or folding garments in tissue paper to prevent wrinkles.
- If an employer does not have shower facilities, talk to the employer—showers can help employees who exercise during lunch or after work as well as bike commuters.
- Be sure to have a fresh towel, washcloth, and other stuff for quick clean-ups.



Getting There

Map out the commute and see what options are available:

- Streets with low traffic volumes and lower speeds are ideal for novice riders.
- Look for roads with wide shoulders, wide curb lanes, and bike lanes that provide enough room for cars and bikes.
- Check for good pavement conditions. Avoid potholes and uneven pavement.
- Ride the route on a non-work day prior to the initial commute to see how long it takes and make any necessary modifications to the route.
- Be careful of drainage gates that can trap wheels.
- Try different routes, one might work well in the morning but not as well in the afternoon.

Guaranteed Ride Home (GRH)

Commuters who ride the bus or train, carpool, vanpool, bike or walk at least three days a week to work or school are eligible. Simply fill out a Guaranteed Ride Home registration form.

Registered commuters then receive two \$25 coupons every six months. The coupons are valid on any regular workday for a bus, train, or cab ride in the event of an emergency or schedule conflict.

Visit the TMO website at www.anokacountyTMO.com to register.



Transportation Alternatives

Combine biking with other transportation alternatives. Bike to a co-worker's house and share a ride to work. Otherwise, bike part way and take the bus or train the rest of the way.

Bike racks are available on all Metro area buses and public Hiawatha Line trains. There is no additional charge for using the bike racks. Easy-to-follow instructions are printed directly on the racks. Racks on buses accommodate up to two bikes at a time. Each train can hold four bikes. Tracks will hold most wheel and frame sizes, including children's bikes.

Bike—n—Ride by Bus



1. Have the bike ready to load—always approach the bus from the curbside. Remove water bottles or other loose items.
2. If the rack is empty, lift the metal handle and pull the folded bike rack down flat.
3. Load the bike in the space nearest the bus. If another bike is on the rack, load your bike in the open position. You are responsible for loading and securing your bike on the rack. Drivers are not allowed to load or unload bikes.
4. Lift the support arm and hook it over the front tire. Make sure the support arm is resting on top of the tire and not on the fender or frame. Your bike now is securely fastened in the rack.
5. Hop on and pay your fare.
6. When you reach your stop, tell the driver before you exit the bus that you will be removing your bike. Raise the support arm, lower it into place and lift your bike off the rack. Fold up the rack if it's empty, step onto the sidewalk with your bike. NEVER cross in front of the bus—wait until the bus has left the stop.

Bike—n—Ride by Train

1. Walk—do NOT ride—bikes at stations, on platforms, or on trains. Bikers are required to use elevators (where available) to access station platforms.
2. Pay your fare on the platform. After paying, walk your bike to the boarding area and wait behind the yellow stripe.
3. Secure your bike in the upright racks located near the front and rear doors. Each train car has four doors; the middle two doors are closest to the onboard bike racks. Place the rear wheel in the lower part of the rack then hook the front wheel at the top. Each train has space for four bikes. Only two-wheeled, non-motorized bikes are allowed. Be sure to hold your bike and stay clear of the doors at all times.
4. As you approach your stop, prepare to remove your bike from the rack as soon as the train stops moving.
5. Allow other passengers to exit before you unload your bike.



Please note: To ensure safety, Metro Transit reserves the right to restrict bikes from being brought on board during special events or when trains are crowded. If the train is full or all bike racks are in use, wait for the next train.

Employer Program

To launch a successful bicycle commute program that's tailored to your organization may seem daunting at first, but it's really as easy as 1, 2, 3...

Part 1: Getting Started

Appoint an on-site Bicycle Commuting Coordinator

This is the individual responsible for planning and carrying out project goals and acting as a liaison between participants and company administration. Choose a person whose other job responsibilities provide a logical tie-in to employee bicycle commuting promotions, such as your organization's human resource services, community relations, wellness, or employee transportation coordinator.

Assess current commuter habits and bicycle commuting potential at your organization

Begin by taking inventory of facilities and programs that already exist at or near your business related to bicycle commuting. Are showers, lockers, changing facilities, and/or bicycle parking already provided on site?

Conduct an Employee Transportation Survey

This will help you learn about your employee's demographics (how far away do they live?) transportation habits and preferences (who bicycle commutes or would like to try?) and determine what facilities, incentives, or types of education would encourage more employees at your business to bicycle.

Establish a Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)

The BAC's purpose is to assist the Bicycle Commuting Coordinator in developing ideas, implementing and evaluating strategies, maximizing participation and sustaining interest in the program.

Part 2: Education

Employees may be hesitant to try bicycle commuting because they feel they don't know enough about how to do it. Here are some ways to provide information about bicycle commuting:

Schedule a brown bag workshop series

A seasoned bicycle commuter at your workplace or an employee from a local bike shop might be willing to provide information for these sessions. Provide door prizes and encourage a sense of camaraderie among regular attendees.

Sponsor an "Effective Cycling" Course

"Effective Cycling" is a national curriculum that teaches bicyclists how to be safe, predictable and effective roadway users. The core course consists of nine hours of classroom and on-bike instruction, taught by nationally certified instructors.

Assist new bicycle commuters with route finding

The first thing new bicycle commuters tend to ask for is a map. Have maps and recommended bike routes available.

Coordinate a Bike Buddy Program

First, identify a handful of experienced bicycle commuters who would be willing to spend a little time mentoring a novice. Then advertise that hands-on help is available. Try to match Bike Buddies with new commuters who live in the same part of town. Their job is to provide new commuters with information, advice and moral support.

Provide new bicycle commuters with a handbook

It may provide the answers to many questions. Contact the Anoka County TMO for additional copies of this Bike Guide.

Part 3: Facilities

Some of your employees biggest concerns can be addressed by providing a few simple amenities and services. Here are a few potential solutions for common concerns.

Parking

Invest in bike lockers. These provide complete security as well as protection from the elements.

Install high-quality bike racks. The sight of a bike rack outside the building instantly promotes a community friendly image.

Be willing to allow employees to bring their bikes into the building. This is the ultimate in security and convenience.

Arriving at Work / Employee Dress Code

Install shower and changing facilities, make arrangements with a local health club or neighboring business to allow your employees to use their showers, or allow the use of rest rooms for freshening up.

Provide a place for commuters to keep a week's worth of clothes. Or relax the company dress code one day per week.

Flat Tires, Foul Weather, Family Emergencies

Maintain a "tube library" stocked with replacement tubes for bike tires, patch kits, tire irons, and a pump.

Offer a Guaranteed Ride Home program (see page 11).

But I haven't got a bike!

Purchase some loaner bikes for employees to borrow or arrange with a local bike shop for long term rentals. That way employees can get a feel for bicycle commuting before making a financial commitment. If employees commit to bicycle commuting on a regular basis, they may buy their "loaner" from the company at a discount.

Part 4: Incentives

A successful program has the commitment of the top management and is promoted on a regular basis. There are many ways to promote bike commuting. Consider the following list:

- **Giveways**—free starter kits, monthly prize drawings, t-shirts, free or subsidized tune-ups at a local bike shop.
- **Special Events**—participate in city wide events such as Bike to Work Week, implement a commuter challenge contest, sponsor races, subsidize an Effective Cycling Class.
- **Acknowledgements**—recognize the bike commuters in your newsletter or bulletin board and give awards.
- **Other Programs and Incentives**—provide discounts or subsidies on the purchase of bikes, helmets, and other equipment, provide travel reimbursement, offer flextime or grace period for commuters.

Part 5: Sustaining Your Program

Here are a few final suggestions to help maintain your program:

- Publish program updates on a regular basis in company publications.
- Continue to meet with your Bicycle Action Committee on a regular basis.
- Stay in contact with new commuters. A published interview or commuter profile could be an interesting way to draw attention to the program.
- Conduct a follow-up survey at the conclusion of the bike season (fall) to measure the success of the program and obtain feedback for improvement.

Resources

Anoka County TMO
www.anokacountytmo.com

Bicycle Information Center
www.bicyclinginfo.org

Metro Transit
www.MetroTransit.org

Minnesota Department of Transportation
www.dot.state.mn.us/bike

Minnesota State Bicycle Advisory Committee
www.mnsbac.org

Share the Road
www.sharetheroadmn.org

Transit for Livable Communities
www.tlcmnnesota.org



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Sources: Metro Transit, Minnesota
Department of Transportation, Sacramento
511, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition