Bicycle Commuting

TWENTY QUESTIONS
AND
TWENTY ANSWERS

DEVELOPED BY BOWMAN-MELTON ASSOCIATES, INC.
FOR THE NORTH TEXAS CLEAN AIR COALITION
Why Bicycle to Work?

• Saves Time
  – combine exercise time with commute time

• Improves Health and Fitness
  – get ready for big rides like Hotter'n Hell or
    » Waco Wild West

• Saves Taxes
  – bicycle facilities cost a fraction of automobile facilities

• Improves Air Quality
  – a 10 mile round trip every other day bike commute saves 117 pounds of auto pollution a year
Why Bicycle to Work?

• Saves Money
  
  − variable costs (fuel, insurance, upkeep, wear and tear) of driving a car totaled 33¢ per mile in 1991 (FHWA)
  
  − cycling combined with transit or carpooling can eliminate need for second car in a family
  
  − not driving to work can reduce auto insurance costs

  − cycling to work costs an average of $250 per year and driving alone costs $3,696 (Washington State Energy Office - 1995)
How Can I Tell If Bike Commuting Is Right for Me?

• Proximity of work from home is a comfortable distance
• Low stress routes lead to my work place
• Potential for secure bicycle parking available at work
• Showers and lockers available - or gym nearby
• Interested in health, fitness or the environment
What Is a Reasonable Distance to Bike Commute?

• 66% of bike commuters in North Orange County, California live less than 5 miles from work.
What Routes Should I Take to Bicycle to Work?

- Identify connecting secondary streets
- Use bike routes where available
- Avoid crossing major streets at uncontrolled intersections
- Practice your route first on a weekend during lighter traffic
Where Will I Park My Bike While I'm at Work?

- Locked in a visible high-traffic area
- In a company provided bike shelter or room
- At your workstation
Can I Take My Bike With Me on the Bus?

- **DART**
  - during off peak hours and weekends, and bicycle must be secured to vertical pole in rear section of bus

- **The T**
  - any time if space is available, subject to driver discretion, and bicycles must be taken to rear section of bus
What Kind of Bike Do I Need for Commuting?

- If distance is short - almost any bike will do
- If you buy a new bike - test ride several bikes
- Cost can vary between $200 and $2000
- Hybrids or All Terrain Bicycles make good city bikes
How Can I Make My Bike More Comfortable to Ride?

- Ride a bike that fits
  - adjust seat height for near full leg extension
  - tilt seat up in front no more than 5 degrees
  - check fore-aft seat adjustment
  - seek a comfortable handlebar adjustment
  - buy a high quality gender-specific seat
  - have your bike fitted to you at a bike shop
How Can I Make My Bike More Comfortable to Ride?

- Ride with proper technique
  - 60 to 90 rpm pedaling cadence is ideal
  - use "ankling" motion and pedal constantly
  - breathe deeply and drink plenty of water during ride
What Accessories Do I Need for Bike Commuting?

- Essentials
  - helmet
  - bike lock
  - racks, bags or baskets
  - water bottle and cage
  - warning device
  - sunglasses, eye protection
What Accessories Do I Need for Bike Commuting?

• Optional
  
  – rear-view mirror
  – lighting/other nighttime visibility
  – fenders
  – pepper spray
  – trouser band - if needed
What Should I Wear for Bicycling?

- Regular comfortable workout clothes
- Cycling shorts or tights and cycling jersey
- Cycling gloves with padded palms
- Cycling shoes with stiff soles
- Inclement weather clothing — cold, hot, wet weather
How Can I Bike Commute and Dress Professionally at Work?

- Take clothing to work in advance of your bike commute
- Include a face cloth and towel along with basic toiletries
- Arrive early and take time to stretch and cool down before changing clothes
How Can I Learn To Be A More Effective Bicyclist?

• Ride 5000 miles - using self study

• Ride with a bike club for several years

• Complete a 9-hour LAB Effective Cycling® course (Call metro 817-695-9226 for more information)

• Check out the Effective Cycling® Video FREE at Blockbuster Video.
What Are The Basic Rules For Cycling In Traffic?

• Cyclists fare best if they act like, and are treated as drivers of vehicles, with the same rights and responsibilities that motorists have.

• Operate as a slow moving automobile
  – plan your line of travel through intersections
  – use hand signals to communicate
  – don't get to the right of right-turning motorists
  – be courteous, predictable, and visible
What Are The Basic Rules For Cycling In Traffic?

• Avoid the main types of collisions caused by bicyclists
  – Riding on the wrong side of the street
  – Not stopping for traffic signs and signals
  – Making improper left turns or lane changes
  – Darting out of driveways or alleys
  – Riding without lights at night.

• Avoid the main types of collisions caused by motorists
  – Turning left without yielding to an oncoming bicyclist
  – Opening a car door in front of a cyclist.
How Should I Interface With Bus Traffic?

• Show courtesy - stay in mirror view

• Avoid leapfrogging with buses - consider a momentary pause to allow spacing

• Pass on the left responsibly and with care

• Never pass between the curb and the bus
What's The Best Way To Stop My Bike In An Emergency?

- Slide back in the seat by lowering torso and extending arms while applying both brakes

- To avoid pitchover - ease up on the front brake until the rear wheel stops skidding

Practice in an empty parking lot - watch out for gravel
What Should I Do To Protect Myself If I'm In A Crash?

• Wear a helmet and cycling gloves

• Carry identification and an emergency phone contact

• Police must be notified in the event of injury or major property damage

• Check your insurance
What Should I Look for When Inspecting My Bicycle?

- Brakes adjusted?
- Wheels true?
- Tires inflated & OK?
- Seat adjusted & tight?
- Handlebars tight?
- Steering bearing adjusted?
- Cranks and pedals tight?
- Gears work properly?
- Chain lubricated?
- Reflectors and lights if needed?
What Tools Should I Carry With Me?

- Spare inner-tube
- Patch kit
- A quarter for an emergency call
- Tire levers for removing the tire from the rim easily
- Tire pump (for your type of valve)
- Small adjustable wrench
- Small/short screwdrivers - phillips & flat
- Small metric allen wrenches
- Spoke wrench