



Commute by bike

The Fear, the Gear and the Cheer

Presentation by Sheila Fay

Sponsored by the Watertown Bicycle-Pedestrian Committee

Overview of talk

- Bike commuting fears: traffic, bike skills, security & sweat: how to make the ride fun not frightening.
- Bike gear: why the spandex? What difference your bike & gear make.
- The Cheer: what you get out of bike commuting.

Who bike commutes?



Tia Tilson



Sasaki Commuters



Sheila & Pasha

Bike commuting: the Gear

Your most important piece of gear: your bicycle



So you need a bike? What kind?

- Do not shop for bicycles by price, shop by the type of riding you will be doing and who you are.
 - Types of terrain along route
 - Level of fitness, or physical issues
 - How you want to transport your gear
 - Where will you store your bike, and how will you feel if its stolen?
 - How much maintenance are you willing to do?
- Think simple: less to go wrong when you are on the road.

Some resources to look at before buying a bike

- Some questions to look are found at:
<http://commutebybike.com/2007/03/30/commuting-101-choosing-a-bike/>
- Some advice on which bikes to buy:
<http://www.nordicgroup.us/bikerec/>

Buying a bicycle: check your neighborhood bike shop

- Some local bicycle shops:

Farina Cycles

Centre Ski & Bike

Hinckley's Bicycle Shop

Seven Cycles, Inc

Belmont Wheelworks

International Bicycle West

- MassBike member get a 10% discount on parts & accessories at a large number of local bike shops. See:

<http://www.massbike.org/membership/shops.htm>

Bicycle Clothing

or: Doesn't that spandex make you look fat?

People bike in all different kinds of clothes. What you wear depends on length of ride, amount you sweat, and your comfort level.



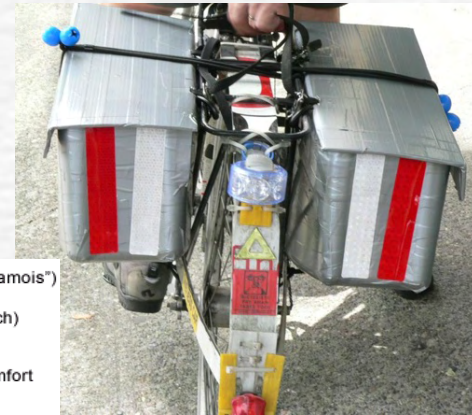
There's such thing as bad weather, just bad gear.



"Make your life easier" gear

Some possible items that make life easier:

- Bike rack
- Panniers or messenger bag
- Bike shoes
- Padded bike shorts
- Bicycle jerseys – long in the tail
- Reflector vest/jacket



Essential Gear: Your Helmet

- Why wear one?

“While helmets may not have an impact on the frequency of crashes, numerous studies have found that use of approved bicycle helmets significantly reduces the risk of fatal injury, serious head and brain injury, head injury, and middle and upper face injury among bicyclists of all ages involved in all types of crashes and crash severities. http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/bikesafe/crash_factors.cfm

Basic helmet adjustment



To be effective, the bicycle helmet must fit correctly and be worn properly. When in doubt, check with a bike shop for the proper adjustment of your approved cycling helmet.

You haven't got a helmet? That's no excuse

- Many of health plans offer helmet purchases at reduced rates.
- See handout for links to Blue Cross & Tufts purchase information.

BICYCLE HELMETS

Windrider
 Size: Small 20" - 21"SM
 Colors: Red, Purple
 • Lightweight ventilated design
 • Quick-release retention system



Ocean Friends
 Size: Toddler 19"SM - 20"SM
 Color: Multicolor



Stunt
 Size: Medium 22" - 23"SM
 Color: Black, White



Shockwave
 Size: Medium 22" - 23"SM
 Large 23"SM - 24"SM
 Colors: Yellow, Red, Black, Blue (Medium only)
 Black, Blue (Large only)
 • Gripper included



Correct fit is an important safety requirement.

FIT TIPS:

- Place the helmet on the rider's head until the front edge extends down to about an inch from the top of the eyebrows.
- Make sure the helmet fits the head snugly from side to side and front to back.
- In the event the helmet does not fit, use the sizing pads and adjust the straps to ensure a custom-fit feel.
- With the helmet properly adjusted, the strap tension should be firm and evenly distributed among all the straps.
- To tell if the proper pads are in place, put the helmet on and tip it from side to side and front to back.
- When properly placed, the helmet should not easily "roll" forward or backward. It should not be removable without unchecking the strap.

FOR A PROPER FIT, CAREFULLY MEASURE THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE HEAD ABOUT ONE INCH ABOVE THE EYEBROWS.



- Toddler 19"SM - 20"SM
- Small 20" - 21"SM
- Medium 22" - 23"SM
- Large 23"SM - 24"SM

Incorrect Fit



Correct Fit



HELMETS ARE PACKED IN POLYBAGS/SHIPPING CARTONS WITHOUT DISPLAY BIKES.



Essential Gear: Lights

- Massachusetts law requires lights if you are riding at night.
- You need a red rear light or reflector, and a white light. Both should be visible from 500-600 ft.
- Lights are a better option than reflectors.



Bicycles maintenance or Cleaning the Machine

- Keep your bike tuned up. You get a smoother, quieter ride, and less chance of something going wrong on the ride.
- Clean your bike regularly: especially after bad weather.
- Check your bike weekly:
 - Tire pressure & wear
 - Brakes for wear & stopping
 - Tightness of fasteners
 - Chain for rust or stiffness

Bike Commuting: The Fears

- Fear of Traffic and Drivers, or “Oh, my God, these drivers are crazy....”
- Fear of Theft or problems getting home
- Fear of Sweat: the social issues

Dealing with Boston Area Traffic

Some basic things to know about bikes on roads:

- Mass Law allows bicycles on any road except where specifically prohibited, ie interstates, major roads (see: MassBike.org: Bicycles & the Law)
- Except where prohibited, bicycles can use sidewalks, but have to follow pedestrian rules.

Your best defense: bicycle skills

- First off: know your bicycle & basic skills



Start simple – make sure you can ride in straight line, brake, stop in a hurry.

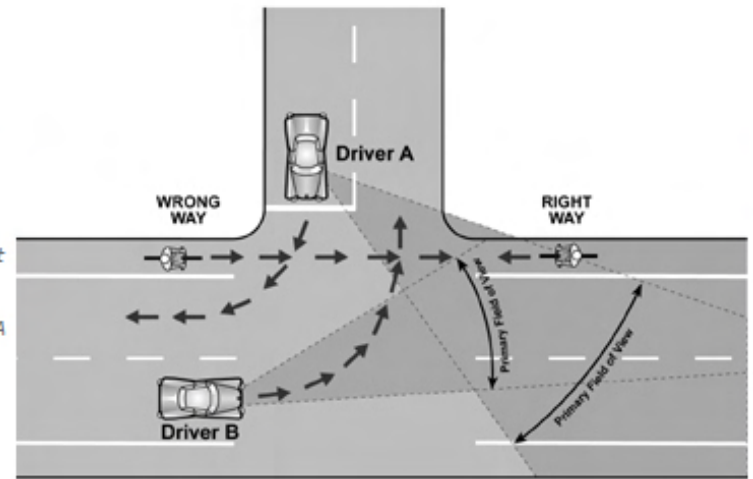
Make sure you can get out bike clips or rat-traps.

Start in a empty parking lot or some place open.

Bicycles ride with traffic



Figure 1: Wrong-way bicyclists get hit because they are not where drivers are looking, primarily at intersections. Note that the wrong way cyclist is outside of the field of view of both driver A and driver B.



Graphic: MassBike

Ride in a straight lane

Figure 3: Ride a safe distance away from hazards along the edge of the road such as drain grates and debris.

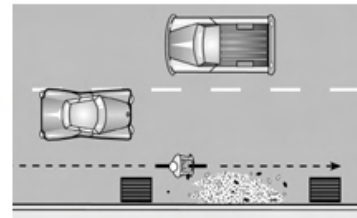


Figure 4: Ride a straight line. Don't weave around parked cars.

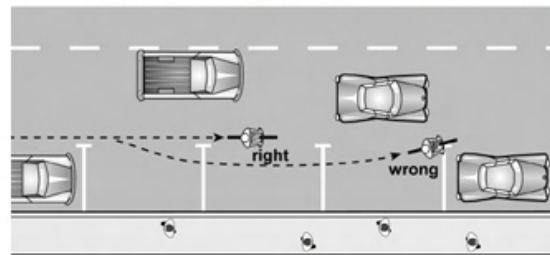
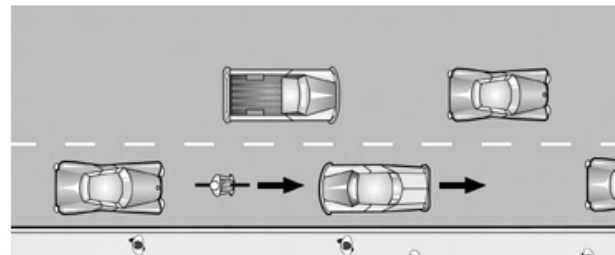


Figure 5: If the lane is too narrow to share with a car, ride in the middle of the lane.



Yield to traffic on larger streets/driveways



www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burton

Don't ride too close to parked cars: the "door zone"



www.pedbikeimages.org / Dan Burton



www.bicycledriving.com



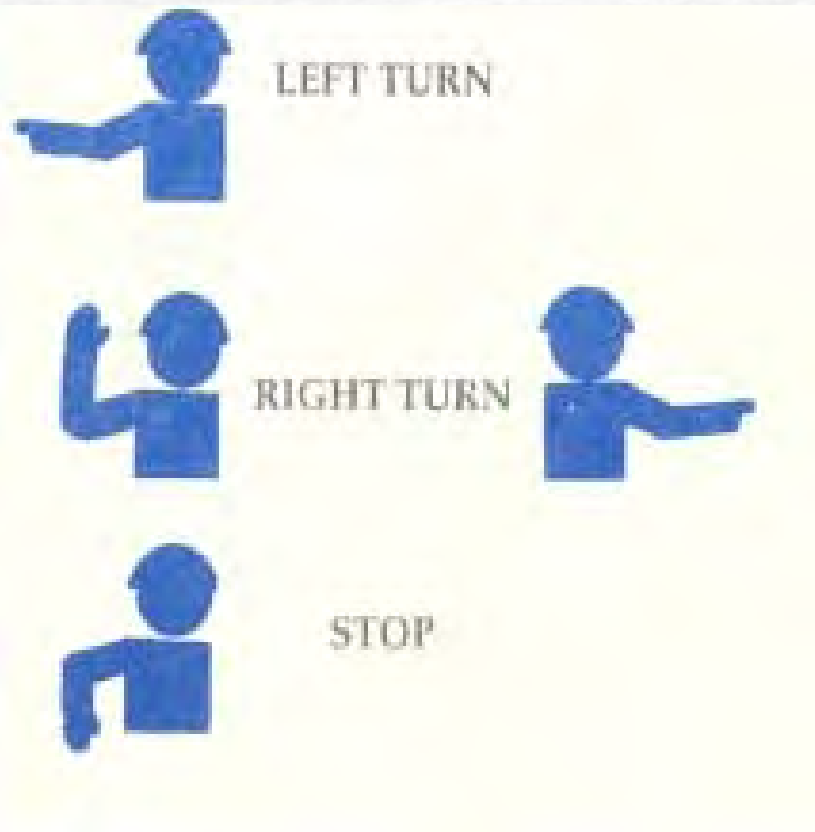
<http://rwinters.com/docs/DanaLaird.htm>

Pick your lane at intersections



- You have the right to take the lane to make a safe turn.
- Position yourself where drivers will see you.
- Use handsignals if the lane is not marked.


Use handsignals



Stop at red lights



- It's the law. You could get a ticket.
- You're much safer.
- You increase the esteem of bicyclists in the public eye.
- If someone hits you it will be completely their fault and you will have a much better chance at getting compensation for any medical expenses and bike repair.
- If you're waiting for a gap in traffic instead of watching the traffic light you may end up waiting longer! Light cycles are usually very short. Traffic engineers don't like to keep motorists waiting more than about a minute (but pedestrians often have to wait longer).

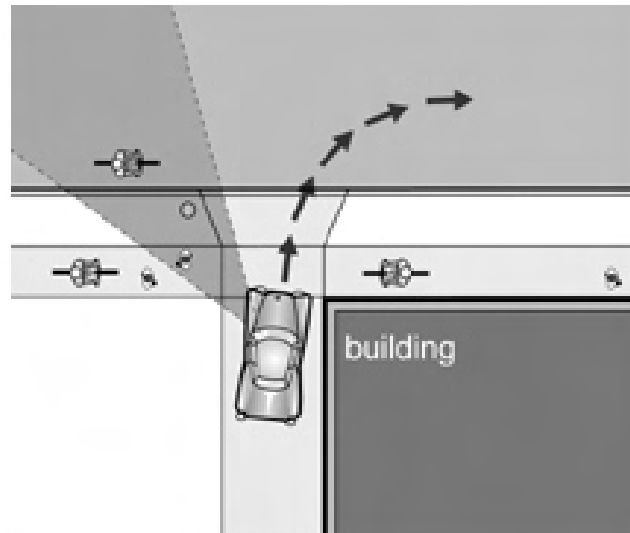


**If you can't see the
driver, assume they
can't see you.**

Rethinking “common sense”

- Sidewalks: Seem safer but they are NOT

Figure 2: Sidewalk cyclists get hit by cars emerging from driveways or alleys. Drivers don't look for anyone coming faster than a pedestrian on the sidewalk. Sidewalk bicyclists also get hit when riding across crosswalks.




Graphic: MassBike



And finally, the most important
bicycling skill:

Expect people: drivers,
bicyclist, pedestrians, to do
something unexpected, and
prepare yourself to deal with
it.



If the driver is really a jerk:

To complain about a driver who drove so as to endanger you, whether through extreme carelessness or malevolence, send a letter describing the incident with the license plate number to the Registry of Motor Vehicles "Office of Driver Control, PO Box 199150, Boston, MA 02119-9150", or use the Registry's [Driving Complaint Form](#).

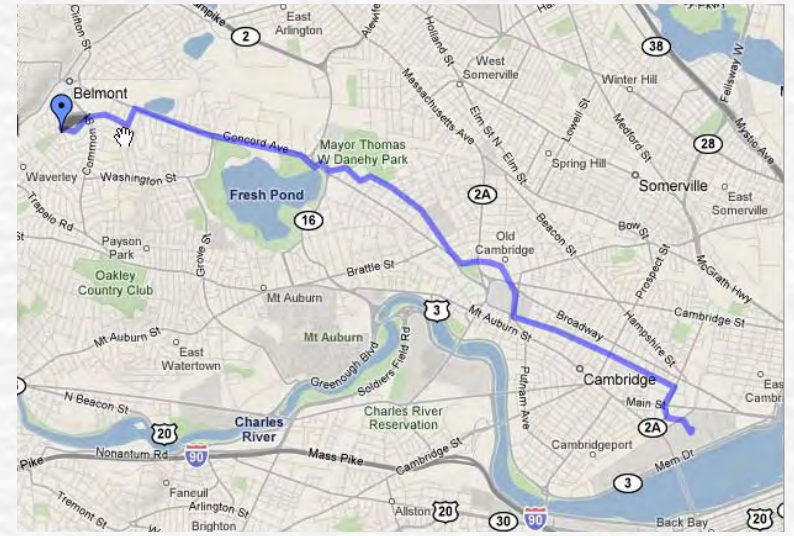
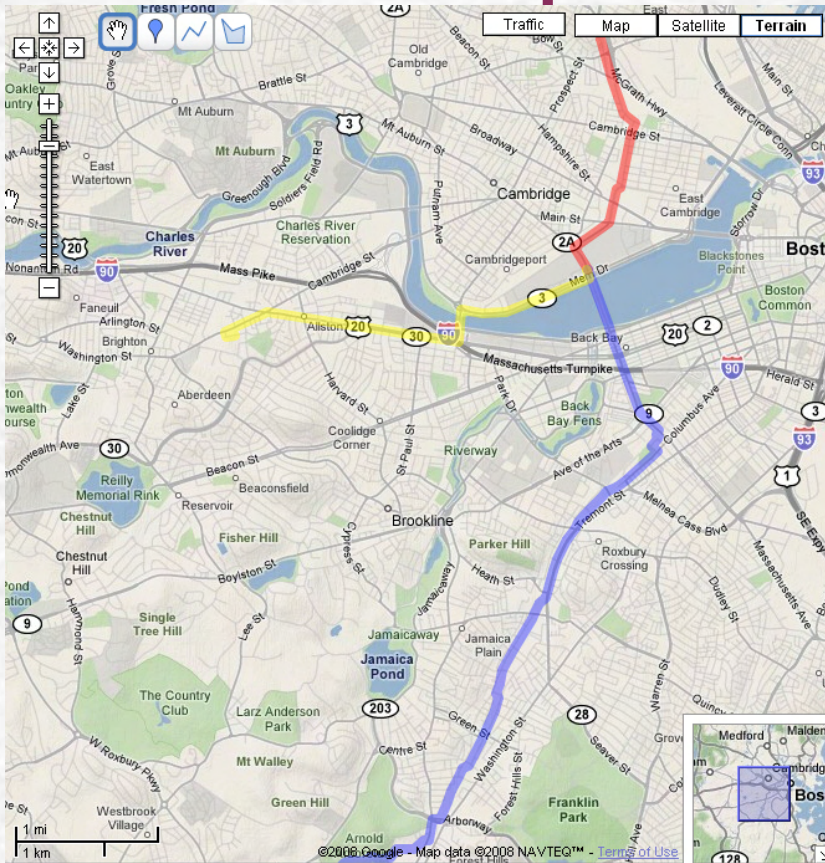
Some resources for gaining skills

- Bicycling Street Smarts, by John Allen
<http://www.bikexpert.com/streetsmarts/usa/index.htm>
- MassBike's Bicycle Skills classes
<http://www.massbike.org/skills/classes.htm>

Defeating traffic concerns: choosing your route

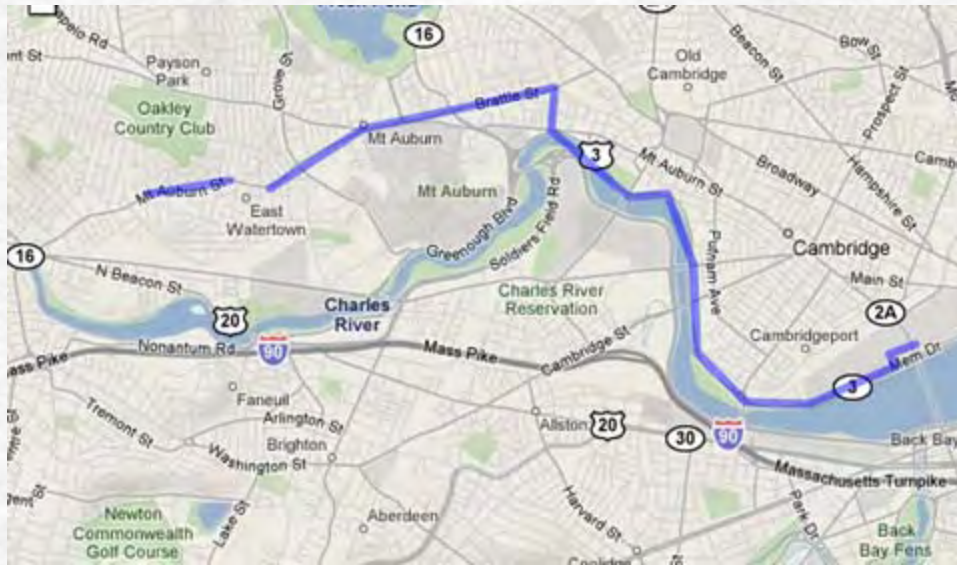
- Pick a route that works for your skill level and comfort. Some considerations:
 - Speed to get there vs. traffic speed
 - Numbers of intersections & left turns
 - Errands to run
 - Amount of exertion: hills & calories
- Test out the route on a day when you are not under pressure, so you know how long it takes, and areas of concern.

Oh the places you can go...



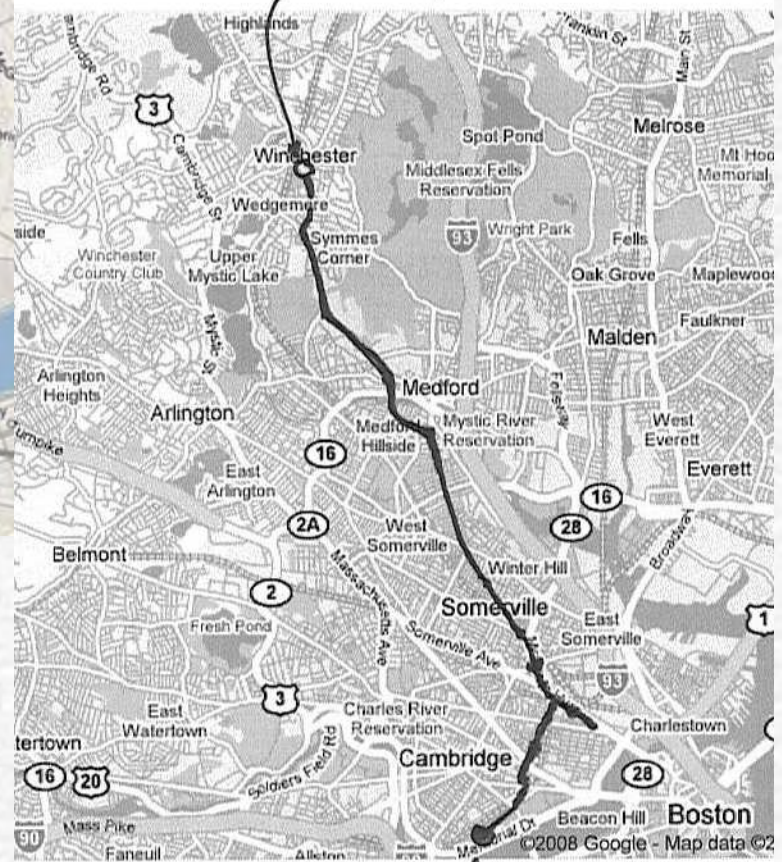
Anne Graham's route

Shawna MacDonald's routes



My route

Dave Wilson's bicycle commute
21 Winthrop Street



MIT building 3

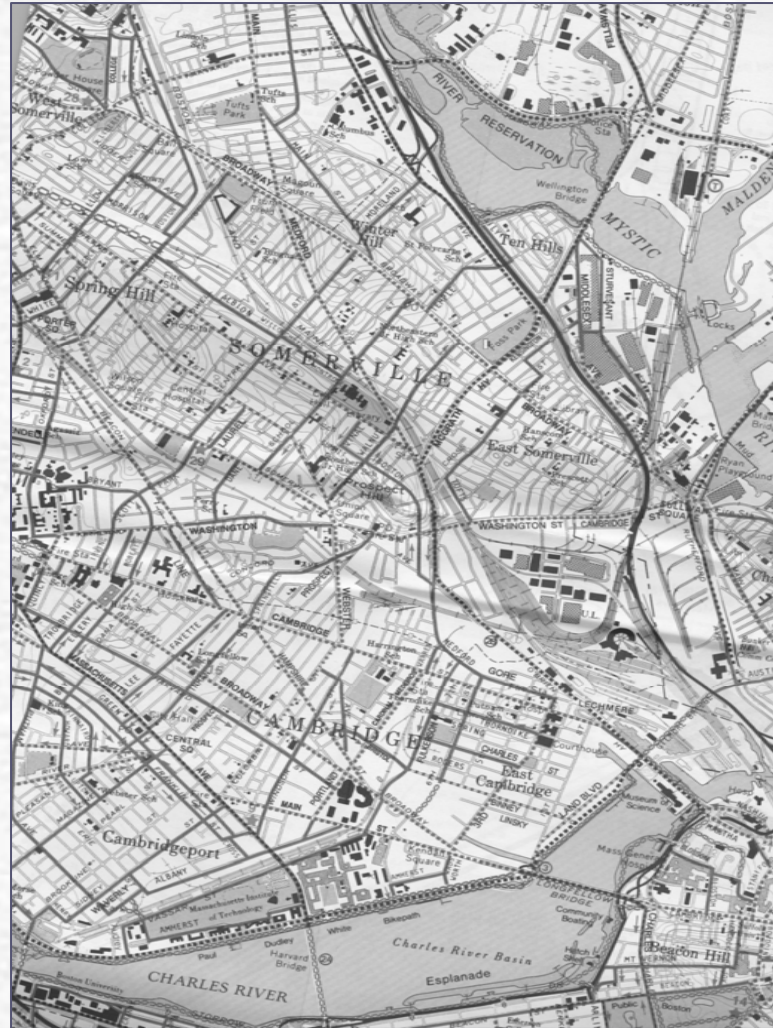
To

How to create a route

Boston Bike Maps
from
Rubel Bikes

Advantages:

- shows bike paths
- as well as roads with less traffic.



Other routing options

- Use Google Maps or other mapping program online
 - Problem: they are designed for road directions and don't show bike paths
 - They won't go wrong way down one way streets....
- Check out some routes other people have taken: www.bikely.com

Stretch what is possible: Bikes on the T

So, you live too far away to commute by bike....

- Bike to the T & lock it there
- Bikes on the bus
Some buses are equipped with bike racks.



More Bikes on the T

- Bikes are allowed on:
 - Commuter rails: outside of rush hour
 - Subways: outside of rush hours, only 2 to a car, only folding bikes on green & silver lines & Mattapan trolleys.
 - On all boats
- See http://www.mbta.com/riding_the_t/bikes/

Where to lock it?

- Secure bike storage

Check your office, some businesses or local garages have secure bike parking.

- Bicycle racks on the street

- Other options

- Your office

- A friendly colleague with space

Bicycle security: lock it or loose it

- Choose a good lock: tool hardened steel that can't easily be cut or snapped open

U locks



Chain lock




Cable locks



Get more info at: <http://www.bicyclesource.com/bike/theft/choosing-a-lock.shtml>



Fear of sweat or How to clean up at the office

- Amount of clean up depends on length of ride & exertion. You may not sweat much
 - Clean-up options:
 - Local area gyms/sport centers
 - Check your building, there may be a shower
 - Bathroom stalls:
- 

Keeping it clean – and dry

- Keep hygiene supplies at the office: towel, soap, deodorant, makeup

It cuts down on what you have to carry, and makes it easy to clean-up

- Keep some basic clothes at work, for those times you forget something.
- Find a way to dry your clothes, or risk chafing & damp on the ride home

Coat rack radiator back of the door

Bicycle Emergency Assistance



Bicycle Roadside Assistance



The nation's first and only bicycle roadside assistance service is now available exclusively through Better World Club.

Bicycle Membership Benefits:

Nationwide emergency roadside assistance. Service for you and your bicycle up to 30 miles annually with a maximum of two service calls per covered member, per year.

- ▶ Membership in the [League of American Bicyclists](#) (\$30 value). This includes the following benefits:
 - ▶ Subscription to *Bicycling* magazine
 - ▶ [Discounts and special offers](#): travel, cycling products, gear, tours
 - ▶ The League's Annual Almanac of Cycling, Tourfinder & Ride Guide
 - ▶ The League's magazine covering the world of cycling
 - ▶ [Tips for Shipping Bicycles](#)
 - ▶ Discount prices at League events, including our National Rally of Cyclists
 - ▶ E-newsletter for the latest cycling news
 - ▶ The good feeling of knowing that you're helping to create a bicycle-friendly America!

Bicycle Only membership does not include coverage for your vehicle. Bicycle coverage can be **added** to any of our Auto Programs for just \$15.00. Individuals that also have auto coverage do not receive these benefits, the above benefits only apply to individuals with a Bicycle Only membership.

Membership Program	Primary Member	Additional Cyclists (Max of 4 cyclists per household)	Coverage (number of miles included with membership)	Service Calls (per covered member, per year)
Bicycle Membership	\$39.95/year	\$15.00 (per person)	Up to 30 miles annually	2

Prices above do not include a one-time non refundable \$10 sign-up fee.

- CRTMA Emergency Ride Home program. Registered participants can get an emergency ride home in event of:
 - Personal Illness or Emergency
 - Family Illness or Emergency
 - Unscheduled/Unplanned Overtime
- Check to see if your business has something similar.

Making it all work for you

- Plan ahead. Get things ready the night before that you will need for your ride.
- Some things to think about:
 - What is the weather for tomorrow? Is it a good day to ride?
 - Set out riding clothes and pack work clothes.
 - What are your hygiene needs?
 - What's your breakfast and lunch plans? If you pack your lunch, do it the night before
 - What's your route and are there any errands? While your route to work may not change much on a daily basis, make sure you ask your significant other if there are any places you need to stop along the way
 - Set the alarm a little early. Allow time to get out the door and ride to work.

Commute by Bike: the Cheer



Bike Commuting Cheers

#1: Exercise

- Biking to work fulfills 2 needs: transportation & exercise.
- Unlike a gym, the scenery is ever changing
- Those calories you eat at lunch, you can work off going home.

Units <input checked="" type="radio"/> English <input type="radio"/> Metric		
Time Hours: <input type="text"/> Minutes: <input type="text" value="28"/> Seconds: <input type="text"/>	Riding Position <input type="radio"/> Aerodynamic <input checked="" type="radio"/> Non-Aerodynamic	Course Type <input type="radio"/> Loop <input checked="" type="radio"/> Point-to-Point
Distance: <input type="text" value="5.5"/> mi Weight: <input type="text" value="140"/> lb % Spent Drafting: <input type="text" value="0"/> % Spent Climbing: <input type="text" value="0"/> Net Elevation Change: <input type="text" value="20"/> ft	Wind <input checked="" type="radio"/> Headwind <input type="radio"/> Cross-Headwind <input type="radio"/> Cross-Tailwind <input type="radio"/> Tailwind Wind Speed: <input type="text"/> mi/hr	
Calculate		
Results		
Average Speed: <input type="text" value="11.785714"/>	Total Calories Burned: <input type="text" value="179.46497"/>	
Calories Burned Due Soley to Riding: <input type="text" value="140.26495"/>		

Cheer#2: Reducing your carbon footprint



- Burn carbs, not carbon
- 25 m of driving = 1lb pollution
- 10% of auto trips are under one-half mile, 22% are under 1 mile and 56% are under 3 miles -- distances readily served by bicycle.

Cheer #3: Lower transportation costs

- Once you've made the initial investment on a bike, maintenance is cheap
- Reducing miles on your car may mean lower insurance costs
- No parking fees – reduce your parking costs

Gas Savings Calculator

Daily Miles Commuted

Price of Gas Per Gallon

Your Car's MPG

Days You Ride Per Week

Daily Savings: \$1.15
Weekly Savings: \$4.60
Yearly Total: \$239.20



Why I am a bike commuter-

March 16th, 2006 by j j

From
www.commutebybike.com

October 2004, it was a Monday morning. Although I was obediently tucked into my cubicle and appeared to be working, it was just my body going through the motions. My mind was many miles away. I was shopping for my first bike in 15 years. I had gone to a local bike shop on Saturday and chatted with a salesman. He didn't know me, but I knew him. We had been friends in high school back in the 70's. He had no way to recognize me through the 350 pounds I was carrying. The last time he saw me, I was 170 pounds. He still weighs 160 pounds, commutes by bike every day, and has since 1978. He smiled politely when I told him my plan to lose weight and reward myself with a new bike once I reached my first goal of getting under 300 pounds.

I wanted to be able to be self sufficient in the simple task of getting to work and back. I wanted to feel the road and the earth as I traveled over it by my own power. It's akin to the same reasons people fly planes and gliders with no engine - it's a natural high. I wanted to feel the rush of the wind, experience the openness, and smell the air with the wonderful aromas morning breakfasts and morning glories. I wanted to workout, wring out my muscles and chase away the fat. I could feel myself getting lean just sitting on my 8-way adjustable chair in my cubicle. This went on for weeks. Then it happened. I stepped on the scale, and buck naked, (and after I spit) I weighed 299.98 pounds. Close enough.

Cheer #4: Its Fun!



Getting **AROUND** TRANSPORTATION TODAY

1849 Date of the first documented air attack, when an Austrian hot air balloon dropped a 50 pound bomb on the island of Murano, near Venice.

7000

Average number of bags lost daily by the airline industry. Of every 1000 bags handled, 5 are lost.

\$385 MILLION

Amount in airplane damages caused annually by bird strikes, according to the FAA

18,397

Number of buses in the world's largest fleet, owned by the Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation in India.

6.1 MILLION

Somalia's camel population, the world's largest.

7.7 MILLION

Somalia's human population.

WORLD'S FASTEST TRAINS



4000 MILES

Distance from Ethiopia to South Africa, walked by the nomadic Bantu people in pursuit of fresh cattle pastures in the 1700s. Along the way, the Bantu 'sowed their wild oats,' spawning the Masai of Kenya, the Zulu of South Africa, the Maukua of Tanzania, the Yau of Mozambique, the Tutsi/Hutu of Rwanda, and the Baganda of Uganda, to name a few.

8 YEARS

Length of the longest horse-drawn journey completed in 1998 by a British family who traveled 17,200 miles around the world in a trailer.

INA INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS ARCHIVE

The most popular vehicle in the world today is the bicycle.

There are over 1.4 billion bicycles in service today and only about 400 million cars. In China alone, there are over 500 million bicycles in use. Every year more than 35,000 Chinese cyclists die from bike accidents.

\$938,567

Amount that Panos Media, a research institute, estimates the 70 year lifespan of a Kenyan elephant is worth in tourist revenue.

80,832

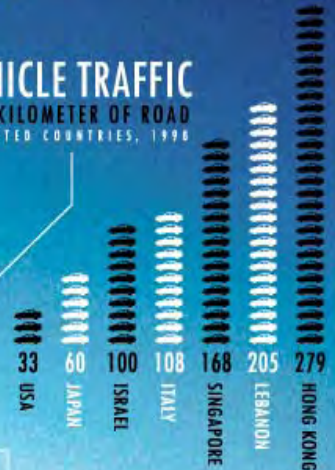
Number of licensed rickshaws in Delhi, India.

500,000

Estimated number of total rickshaws in Delhi.

12,053 Number of yellow taxis in New York City

VEHICLE TRAFFIC PER KILOMETER OF ROAD SELECTED COUNTRIES, 1998



347

Average number of people injured or killed in Armenia for every 1000 vehicles, making Armenians the world's worst drivers. In the USA, the number is 16.

CARS & TRUCKS PER 1000 PEOPLE



MOTORBIKES PER 1000 PEOPLE



214%

Growth in number of mega-yachts (80 feet or more) since 1996, from 2,800 to over 6000 today.

\$3,365

Cost of the average US honeymoon, which typically lasts 9 days and involves a trip to the Caribbean, the Bahamas, or to Europe.

Thanks for coming, now: Go Take a Ride

