

# 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**