



Bicycle Commuting is on the Rise

Investments Make a Difference

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Your hunch is correct. Your eyes do not deceive you. There are more cyclists on their way to work than ever before — during rush hour, rolling bikes into office buildings, and riding with work uniforms and dress clothes folded or stuffed into shoulder bags and panniers. The U.S. Census Bureau has confirmed what we already knew: the number of bicycle commuters has steadily increased in recent years. According to the Bureau's 2008 American Community Survey (ACS), released in September, 0.55 percent of Americans use a bicycle as their primary means of getting to work. The share of bicycle commuters increased 43 percent since 2000 and jumped 14 percent between 2007 and 2008.

The Advocacy Advance team took the ACS data and looked at bike commuting trends for the 70 largest U.S. cities and the 50 states. A clear pattern emerged — pro-bicycling policies make a difference. In 2008, the average bicycle

commuter share for the 70 largest U.S. cities was 0.93 percent, having grown by nearly 50 percent since 2000. Of this group, 27 cities have been designated by the League of American Bicyclists as Bicycle Friendly Communities (BFCs) for their pro-bicycling policies. The BFCs on the list saw even higher levels of bicycle commuting over the past eight years. In 2008, the large BFCs had an average of 1.5 percent bicycle commuters — nearly three times the national average. Not only are bicycle commuter levels higher in BFCs, growth was faster. Since 2000, BFCs bicycle commuter levels grew 60 percent more than the national average and 40 percent more than the 70 largest cities' average.

The largest Bicycle Friendly Communities far outpaced the largest non-BFCs, whose average bicycle commuter share is growing slower than even the national average. Between 2000 and 2008, the bicycle commuter share in the 27 largest BFCs increased by nearly 70 percent. In contrast, the share in the non-BFC cities increased only

23 percent. This strongly suggests that the efforts of the BFCs to improve bicycling conditions by investing in engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and evaluation and planning are paying off with larger increases in bicycle commuters. Additionally, investments matter on the state level as well. On average, states that made larger spending increases saw larger increases in bicycle commuting.

Some of the fastest growing communities were those that started with relatively low bicycle commuter shares in 2000. Nashville and Cleveland tripled their share, and Cincinnati doubled its, but all three still have not reached three-quarters of a percent. On the other hand, some of the cities with the highest bicycle commuter levels in 2000 also saw the largest increases. Platinum BFC Portland, Ore. saw the largest growth among all 70 large cities, more than tripling their bike share to nearly 6 percent.

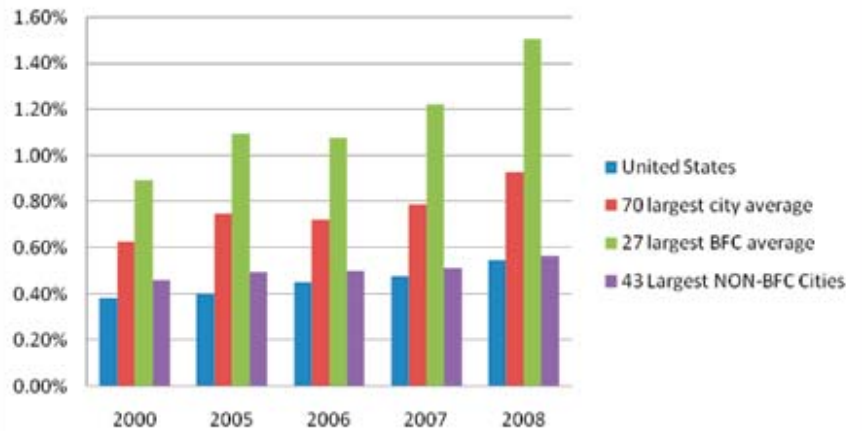
Despite the increases, the overall number of bicycle commuters is still low, but keep this in mind — the American Community



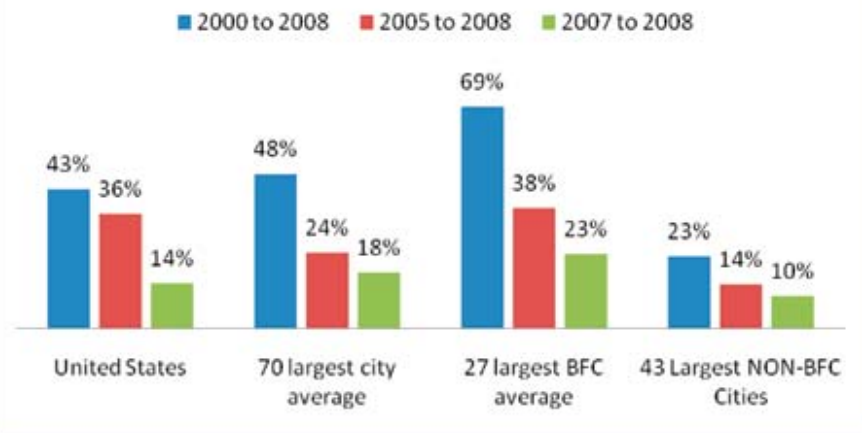
Survey (ACS) is not a record of how many people have ever or sometimes biked to work. The phrasing of the question means that only the consistent bike commuters get counted. First, it asks for the means of travel used most frequently the week before the survey — so people who biked once or twice that week were not counted as bicycle commuters. Second, if two modes are used, the ACS asks for the means of travel used for the longest distance — this means that cyclists who bike to transit are not counted (unless their bike trip is longer than their transit trip).

If you are already a bicycle commuter, you probably have noticed that you have more company on the road on your way to work. If you are thinking about bike commuting, you can become part of this growing trend. See how your city and state compare to others. Find the bicycle commuter share for the 70 largest sites and 50 states, as well as walking, public transportation and (single occupancy) driving rates, on our website: <http://www.bikeleague.org/resources/reports/>. ●

Bicycle Commuting in the US



Percent Change in Bicycle Commuting



Percentage of Bike Commuters in 27 Largest BFCs, 2008

