



PEDALING TO PROSPERITY

BICYCLING WILL SAVE AMERICANS \$4.6 BILLION IN 2012

More Americans are choosing to bicycle for transportation, but government funding of safe bicycling projects is not keeping up. Though biking and walking account for 12 percent of all trips in the U.S., these transportation modes receive only 1.6 percent of federal transportation spending—far less than their fair share.¹ Federal transportation policy should support the development of biking, transit, and pedestrian infrastructure to ensure our roads are safe, convenient, and accessible for all.

COST SAVINGS

Bicycling keeps money in the pockets of American families.

The average annual operating cost of a bicycle is \$308—versus \$8,220 for the average car.²

New analysis by the League of American Bicyclists shows that bicyclists in the United States save at least \$4.6 billion each year by not driving.

Forty percent of all trips are made within two miles of home. Analysis by the Sierra Club shows that if American drivers were to make just one four-mile round trip each week with a bicycle instead of a car, they would save nearly 2 billion gallons of gas. At \$4 per gallon, total savings would be \$7.3 billion a year.

Investing in bicycle infrastructure is cost-effective. For \$60 million—the cost of a single mile of urban highway—the new city-wide bicycle network earned Portland, OR, the highest possible platinum rating as a Bicycle Friendly Community.

TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

All Americans deserve access to safe and convenient transportation choices like biking, walking, and transit.

More Americans are choosing to bicycle for everyday transportation. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of bicycle commuters grew 40 percent nationwide. That growth was even greater—77 percent—in the largest Bicycle Friendly Communities, as identified by the League of American Bicyclists³

More than 80 percent of Americans support maintaining or increasing federal funding for biking and walking, including 85 percent of Hispanics.⁴

BICYCLISTS IN THE U.S. SAVE \$4.6 BILLION A YEAR BY NOT DRIVING	
HOUSEHOLD COST SAVINGS FROM ANNUAL BICYCLE TRAVEL	
Annual bike trips	4,082,000,000
Average bike trip distance (miles)	2.26
Annual miles bicycled	8,956,000,000
Estimated annual cost savings from bicycling travel	\$4,661,598,000
Cost of fuel saved by bicycle travel	\$1,610,574,790

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Not everyone drives a car: 33 percent of Americans do not drive at all⁵ — they should not be marginalized as we build transportation infrastructure and plan communities.

The average American household spends more — 16 percent of their budget — on transportation than on food or healthcare.⁶ Low-income families spend as much as 55 percent of their household budgets on transportation.⁷ Transportation options such as bicycling reduce those costs.

For Latinos, walking and biking are essential for getting to work and other destinations, such as grocery stores.⁸ Minority and low-income children are more likely than their affluent or white peers to walk or bike to school.⁹



Photo by Nona Varnado

From 2001 to 2009, Hispanics, African Americans, and Asian Americans took up bicycling at a faster rate than other Americans, representing 21 percent of all bike trips in the U.S. in 2009.¹⁰



HOUSEHOLD COST SAVINGS FROM ANNUAL BICYCLE TRAVEL

		NOTES:	SOURCE:
AUTO: Average cost per mile	\$0.62	Value used is the average of small-, medium-, large-sedan, SUV and Van estimated annual costs.	http://newsroom.aaa.com/2011/04/cost-of-owning-and-operating-vehicle-in-u-s-increased-3-4-percent-according-to-aaas-2011-your-driving-costs-study/
BICYCLE: estimated cost per mile	\$0.10	Value used is mid-point of \$0.05-\$0.15 per mile estimate	Litman, Todd, Transportation Cost and Benefit Analysis II - Vehicle Costs, www.vtpi.org/tca/tca0501.pdf
Net savings from switch to bike	\$0.52	Difference in estimated average costs	
Annual bike trips	4,082,000,000		National Household Travel Survey, http://nhts.ornl.gov/index.shtml
Average bike trip distance (miles)	2.26		National Household Travel Survey, http://nhts.ornl.gov/index.shtml
Total miles bicycled	8,956,000,000		National Household Travel Survey, http://nhts.ornl.gov/index.shtml
Estimated annual cost savings from bicycling travel	\$4,661,598,000	Annual bicycle miles traveled times annual cost savings	
Average fuel efficiency (MPG)	23.8	Average estimate for "Light duty vehicle, short wheel base"	Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA), US DOT, http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/html/table_04_23.html
Gallons of gas saved by bicycle travel	376,302,521	Mile biked divided by MPG	
Price of gallon of gas	\$4.28	As of 4/9/2012	http://energyalmanac.ca.gov/gasoline/margins/index.php
Cost of fuel saved by bicycle travel	\$1,610,574,790	Gallons saved times price per gallon	EPA, http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/refs.html
Metric ton of carbon burned by gallon of gas	0.00892	8.92×10^{-3}	http://www.epa.gov/cleanenergy/energy-resources/refs.html
Metric tons of carbon saved by bicycle travel	3,356,618	Carbon burned per gallon times gallons of gas saved	

ENDNOTES

- Bicycling and Walking in the United States: 2012 Benchmarking Report*, Alliance for Biking & Walking, 2012.
- Pocket Guide to Transportation 2009*, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, 2009.
- American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010.
- America Bikes, "National Poll: Americans Support Funding for Sidewalks and Bikeways," Princeton Survey Research Associates International, March 2012.
- 2009 *National Household Travel Survey*, cited in "Dangerous by Design 2011: Solving the Epidemic of Preventable Pedestrian Deaths," (Transportation for America: Washington, DC, 2011).
- Consumer Expenditures in 2010, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010.
- Center for Neighborhood Technology and Virginia Tech University, "Housing & Transportation Cost Trade-offs and Burdens of Working Households in 28 Metro Areas," Center for Housing Policy, Washington D.C., 2006.
- Eno Transportation Foundation, Inc., "Socioeconomics of Urban Travel: Evidence from the 2001 NHTS," *Transportation Quarterly*, Vol. 57, No. 3, Summer 2003 (49-77).
- McDonald, Noreen C., "Critical Factors for Active Transportation to School Among Low-Income and Minority Students: Evidence from the 2001 National Household Travel Survey"
- Pucher, John, Buehler, Ralph, and Seinen, Mark, "Bicycling renaissance in North America? An update and re-appraisal of cycling trends and policies," *Transportation Research Part A*, 45, 2011.

Sierra Club National
85 Second Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 977-5500

Sierra Club Legislative
50 F Street, NW, Eighth Floor
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 547-1141

www.sierraclub.org
www.beyondoil.org
facebook.com/SierraClub
twitter.com/sierra_club

