Using ACS Data in Promoting and Advocating for Bicycling

04/21/13
The League of American Bicyclists

• Member organization
• First founded in 1880
• Current Major Programs:
  • National Bike Summit
  • Bicycle Friendly America
  • Advocacy Advance
  • Womenbike
  • Equity
Why Do Bicycle Advocates Care about the ACS?

We have limited data on rates of bicycling

- We want to know if we’re “winning”
- Some programs rely upon measurements (BFA)
Using the ACS to Promote Bicycling
## Promoting Bicycling by Recognizing Success

### Top Cities by % of Total Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>City, State</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1,000,000+</td>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200,000-499,999</td>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65,000-299,999</td>
<td>Madison, WI</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84,000-199,999</td>
<td>Davis, CA</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Top 50 Cities Where Bike Commuting is Growing the Fastest

Bike commuting is often associated exclusively with places like Portland, Ore., and Boulder, Colo. The reality is that bicycle commuting is on the rise in communities across the country - and over the last two decades, Detroit tops the list of cities with the biggest increase. There are some other surprises in this Top 50 list.
Promoting Bicycling by Making Data Accessible

**TOP 20 BIKE CITIES BY REGION**

In this section, we look at the cities with the highest bike commuting modeshare, segmented by region. As we do every year for our Bicycle Friendly State℠ ranking, we’ve categorized cities into four regions: East, Midwest, South and West.

**TOP COMMUTE SHARE BY CITY SIZE**

**SIZE MATTERS.** Cities compare themselves to peers of a similar size. In the tables that follow we break down the list of cities into those with more than a million population, those between 300,000 and 1,000,000, and on down to small cities between 65,000 and 100,000. While these population breaks are somewhat arbitrary, they do make for some interesting comparisons.²
Working With the ACS as an Advocacy Organization
Advocacy Means Promoting Growth

For bicyclists of all stripes, there’s nothing like Bike to Work Day — our annual celebration of active transportation. Thanks, in part, to encouragement efforts like BTWD, the number of bike commuters is on the rise — especially in Bicycle Friendly Communities. Since 2000, bicycle commuting rates in large RFCs increased 85 percent — far above the national average of 64 percent and more than double the rate in non-RFCs (47 percent). Here are just a few key cities where bike commuting is growing by leaps and bounds.

THE GROWTH OF BIKE COMMUTING

Key: Data from the American Community Survey
- 1990 bicycle commuter share
- 2000 bicycle commuter share
- 2012 bicycle commuter share
- Total percentage increase from 1990-2012

BFC and non-BFC numbers based on average of 19 largest cities.

Learn more about the Bicycle Friendly American program at www.bikeleague.org/bfa
# Advocacy Means Promoting Competition

## Rivalries by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>621,383</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>128.3%</td>
<td>113.3%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>8,184,899</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>220.4%</td>
<td>102.7%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>610,710</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>170.3%</td>
<td>77.6%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>585,429</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>430.3%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City, MO</td>
<td>460,665</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>285.5%</td>
<td>1761.4%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis, MO</td>
<td>319,156</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>332.8%</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>260.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh, PA</td>
<td>305,759</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>231.0%</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>-1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland, OH</td>
<td>396,240</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>385.0%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>-0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulsa, OK</td>
<td>393,577</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>-27.6%</td>
<td>-43.0%</td>
<td>-65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oklahoma City, OK</td>
<td>582,278</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Advocacy Means Providing Hooks for Stories

TOP CITIES FOR WOMEN BICYCLISTS

THE POPULARITY OF BICYCLING is skyrocketing nationwide and interest among women is rising, too. Still, women are underrepresented as riders and leaders in many aspects of the bicycle movement. The League’s Women Bike program works to get more women on bikes. Here are eight cities that have higher than average overall bike commute rates — and more than 50% of the riders are women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>% OF WOMEN BIKE COMMUTERS</th>
<th>TOTAL % OF BIKE COMMUTERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPOKANE VALLEY, WA</td>
<td>90,638</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROVIDENCE, RI</td>
<td>178,438</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAN LEANDRO, CA</td>
<td>86,884</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>1.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUBBOCK, TX</td>
<td>236,060</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>.76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOTTSDALE, AZ</td>
<td>223,517</td>
<td>55.5%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHICO, CA</td>
<td>87,712</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YUMA, AZ</td>
<td>95,424</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RICHMOND, CA</td>
<td>106,526</td>
<td>50.1%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With women making up 67.5 percent of its bicycle commuters, the city of Spokane Valley is ranked first of eight communities identified as "Top Cities for Women Bicyclists" by The League of American Bicyclists. The ranking is also based on Spokane Valley's higher than average bicycle commuter rate of 1.1 percent, which is almost twice the national average of .6 percent.

"This recognition is valuable to our city," said Mayor Tom Dowey, "especially as more and more of our population are interested in bicycling not just for commuting but for its health and economic benefits, too."

Dowey is himself a bicyclist who enjoys riding around Spokane Valley.

Spokane Valley's top ranking was cited in TLAB's report "Where We Ride: An Analysis of Bicycling in American Cities."

Data for the report was gleaned from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey for 2012, which includes statistics on commuting habits.
Advocacy Means Providing Products for Diverse Constituents
Advocacy Means Using Data to Frame Issues

**TOP 30 CITIES IN WHICH BIKING KNOWS NO AGE BOUNDARIES**

**THE JOYS OF BICYCLING** don’t change, no matter your age. From your first time pedaling without training wheels to a lazy afternoon ride far into retirement, bicycling is suitable for any age group. That is even more evident in the commuter data, which shows rates of bicycling remaining relatively steady across age groups. In this data set, we segment American cities into three age groups, from the average youngest to average oldest population.

**TOP 10 CITIES THAT BRAVE THE ELEMENTS**

**BIKING** in the rain, snow and cold isn’t always fun, but it’s not stopping American bike commuters from braving the elements. Even in the rainiest, coldest and snowiest climates across the country, people are still getting on their bikes to ride to work. Here, we look at the cities with the highest rates of bicycling in the rainiest, snowiest and coldest pockets of the country.

**TOP 10 CITIES WITH HIGHEST BIKE/WALK/TRANSIT SHARE**

**MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION** is on the rise. Fewer and fewer Americans are taking to cars to get to and from work. More and more commuters are turning to their bicycles, their subway systems and their own two feet to get around. Here we break down the top 10 cities, in three population segments, with the highest share of non-drivers by looking at the rates biking, walking and transit all together.
Advocacy Means Using Data to Support Programs
Media

Very positive media reception

• 2700 page views

Stories in many publications, including:

• Streetsblog
• Houston Chronicle
• Oregon Public Broadcasting
• Salt Lake City Tribune
• Associated Press
• Utah Public Radio
Conclusion

The ACS is extremely helpful
• It gives critical data
• It can be a base for other analysis

We look forward to new data mashups
• New Census Report – Modes Less Traveled is a great step in the direction of more detailed analysis
Thank you!

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