

Bikenomics

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We all know that travelling by bicycle instead of by car is good exercise and better for the environment, since we're travelling under our own power and not burning fossil fuels. But, there are a myriad of other reasons to consider the bicycle as a beneficial and sustainable form of transportation when wondering how to get from point A to point Z.

- **Your pocketbook:** From a purely personal economics standpoint, biking makes a lot of sense. According to a study by AAA in 2012, the average cost of owning and driving a car ranged from over \$6,500 to more than \$11,000 a year. This cost includes gas, maintenance, insurance, and taxes. When compared to even a top of the line bicycle and safety gear, that's still a lot of money that you could save annually.

- **Your community's pocketbook:** A common argument against bikes is the cost of redesigning roads and bike lanes for safe commutes, but when weighed over time, this argument holds very little water. Bikes cause less wear and tear than cars, so more bikes on the roads means less maintenance needs over time. This is only the start of economic benefits for the community. The results from the first of a three year impact study of the Swamp Rabbit Trail found that businesses along the trail saw an increase in revenue from 30% to as high

as 85%. Bicycle tourism can bring even more money into communities, as cyclists from out of town stop to eat, drink, relax, and buy.

- **Community safety and attractiveness:** More people on bikes means less people in cars, which leads to less congestion and traffic, less noise, less air pollution, and a more enjoyable commute. People on bikes are also another level of "eyes on the street," watching out for the safety of the neighborhood.
- **Business benefits:** Multiple studies have shown that employees who regularly bike to work have reduced levels of absenteeism and increased physical health. Increased physical health leads to fewer doctor's office visits, and less cost in health care and health insurance.
- **Health:** Cycling is a great low impact exercise that has been shown to have multiple health benefits, from weight loss and increased cardiovascular and muscular health to reduced risk of stroke, diabetes, and overall mortality.

Bicycles offer a range of benefits to the environment, the individual, and the community. As our City continues to change and grow, bike share systems, bike paths and trails, bike incentives, bike tourism, and more will all be options that we may wish to explore.

