



## Table of Contents

- Why Biking to Work is Good for your Employees ..... 2
- Why You Should Encourage Your Employees to Bike to Work. .... 3
- How to Support Bicycling to Work ..... 4
- Providing Bicycle Facilities ..... 5
- Baltimore Area Bicycle Facts. .... 6
- Bicycle Commuter Act ..... 7
- Employee Guide ..... Flip Over

# About This Employer Guide to Bicycle Commuting

Cycling is a healthy, clean, economical and fun way for your employees to get to work. Hundreds of employees in the Baltimore region bike to work every day. You may have received this guide from an employee or just because you want to encourage and support employees bicycling to work and become a bicycle friendly employer. You may share this guide with business partnerships, developers and universities as well. This guide is designed to raise awareness and encourage bike commuting for Baltimore region employees and employers. This section is geared toward employers; the opposite side of this guide is geared toward employees.

### **“Commuting by bike has been a great experience in a lot of ways.**

First of all, it provides me with more flexibility for when I arrive at and leave work than on the days that I commute by bus, especially when I work late in the evening. It also gives me 20 minutes of exercise each way that I can fit in my schedule without any extra effort. Finally, it gives me a chance to see the city in a whole new light. On the bus you’re in close contact with your fellow commuters but you don’t get to be fully engaged in the neighborhoods through which you pass. Most mornings I ride by the new Montessori Charter School and get to wave to the volunteers and staff as they help kids into the school. With some luck, I’ll be able to take my daughter to school by bike trailer or trail-a-bike next year on my way into the office.”



# Why Biking to Work is Good for Your Employees

## 1. Provides Fitness

Biking to work is one of the best all-round exercises and it doesn't put as much strain on the knees and ankles as running.

## 2. Strengthens Lower Back

Lower back pain is a common cause of visits to physicians, second only to the common cold. Bicycling exercises the small muscles that surround the spine which are important in keeping the back strong and preventing injuries.

## 3. Keeps Minds Young

A report from the Baltimore Longitudinal Study of Aging has shown that exercise helps maintain mental agility.

## 4. Creates Free Time

Employees can save time by combining exercise and commuting.

## 5. Bicycling can help employees bond and function as a team during their daily commute or an event.



# Why You Should Encourage Employees to Bike To Work?

## Reduced Health Care Costs

- Moderate physical activity (such as bicycling to work) saves five to twelve percent in annual medical costs. Cycling is a great low impact exercise. Regular exercise reduces the risk of coronary heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes. Bicycling can also help to reduce stress, anxiety and depression and lead to increased muscle strength and mobility.

## Increased Productivity and Punctuality

- Bicyclists and walkers may arrive at work more invigorated than those who commute by automobile. Cyclists are more likely to arrive at work on time as they are less likely to be held up in automobile traffic.

## Decreased Absenteeism & Turnover

- Physical activity is one of the few factors that have a statistically significant effect on absenteeism. Physically fit employees are absent an average of two fewer days per year, and maintain jobs where they can remain physically active.

## Reduced Parking Costs and Increased Accessibility

- It is not unusual for employers to spend over \$60 per employee per month for a parking spot. At over \$720 per year per employee, considerable savings can be achieved when employees use alternative means of getting to work. Encouraging staff to swap the car for the bicycle means you can reduce your parking needs and free up a space for customers. See the Table below.

### Auto Parking vs. Bicycle Parking Average Cost Comparison

Auto Parking for 12 Employees		Bike Parking for 12 Employees	
Initial cost of 12 parking spaces:	\$40,000 - 100,000	Cost of 12 bike rack spaces (\$1,300) and one auto space (\$3,300 - \$8,300)	\$4,600 - \$9,600
Initial Savings for Bicycle Lockers: \$37,000 - \$90,000			
Average yearly cost for maintenance and taxes for 12 parking spaces:	\$9,000	Marketing, incentives and bike commuter program costs per year: \$2,000 Maintenance and taxes for 12 bike rack parking spaces: \$1,000	\$3,000
Average Yearly Savings for Bicycle Lockers: \$6,000			

By placing bicycle lockers in areas not usable for parking or office space, the savings can be increased.

# How to Support Bicycling to Work

## Appoint a Bicycle Coordinator

A fitness/wellness coordinator, employee transportation coordinator, or someone who currently bikes to work are the logical people to head a bicycle commuter program.

The most important attributes are enthusiasm and an interest in cycling. With assistance from the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, the coordinator can evaluate facilities and identify routes to your work place. This employee can conduct an employee survey and devote a few hours a month to launch and monitor a bike-to-work program.

Assisting the employee by allowing for information about bicycling to be posted on the company web site will enhance office communications.

Share the resources in the Employee Section of this guide (flip guide over, see pages 15-20) with your employees.



### **Do it for the environment!**

Survey your employees to reduce the office's carbon footprint. Go to [www.ghgprotocol.org/calculation-tools](http://www.ghgprotocol.org/calculation-tools) to get started.

## Organize a Bike-to-Work Day

- **Appoint a Bike-to-Work Day coordinator.**
- **Provide funds for food (juice & a snack) for Bike-to-Work commuters.**
- **Hold drawings for prizes. Raffle off a bike as a grand prize.**
- **Give special recognition for longest distance biked, oldest/most interesting bicycle, bicyclist who came from transit station farthest from work.**
- **Make information available about company provisions for bicycle parking, changing and shower facilities for employees.**
- **Provide copies of this guide. Call (410) 732-0500 ext.1055 for free copies.**
- **Issue a bike-to-work day challenge to a neighboring employer or among departments.**

# Providing Bicycle Facilities

## Bicycle Parking

Employees need to know their bicycles are safe while they work. Many may spend over \$1,000 on a bike and equipment. Bicycle parking needs to be available and:

- Well lit and clearly labeled.
- Accessible by a ramp.
- Located as close to the building entrance and shower facilities as possible.
- Sheltered from the elements.
- Located where there are people or security personnel or in a locked room.
- Sufficiently separated or protected from automobile parking to prevent damage to parked bicycles by cars.

Surveying your employees, formally or informally, will help determine the amount of parking you will need. Some communities have ordinances governing the number of bicycle parking spaces employers must provide. Check with your local planning office for guidelines.

## Negotiate Bicycle Facilities In Your Lease

When you renew your lease, ask building owners to install bicycle facilities. They can then market these amenities to prospective tenants and save on parking spaces. If it is impractical to provide good bike racks or lockers, employees should be permitted to keep their bicycles in their offices or in a locked storage room.

### Racks

- No bicycle rack alone provides the security and protection from the elements as well as a bicycle locker. However, locating a rack in a covered, locked compound or storage room can provide excellent security.
- Racks should allow a U-Lock to be used to secure the bicycle frame and wheel to the rack. Racks cost between \$50 and \$200 per bike. In a staffed parking garage, racks alone often provide sufficient security.
- Some racks allow you to store bikes vertically to save space. Racks in an unsecured area should be highly visible.
- Even if you provide long-term bicycle parking such as bike lockers or cages, racks should be provided near the entrance for visitors, couriers, and employees who wish to bicycle to the worksite occasionally.

### Bicycle Lockers

Lockers are generally the most secure and weatherproof bicycle storage devices. Prices range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per bike, including installation. Materials range from molded plastic to metal to particle board. In areas of high humidity and where the lockers are exposed to rain and moisture, low priced particle board lockers will not last.

- Lockers have significant disadvantages. Conventionally assigned bike lockers are not an efficient use of space compared to bike racks and cages. Since not every bicycle commuter will ride every day, assigned lockers are usually under-utilized on any given day. Lockers are not usually recommended for indoor or garage use.

## Baltimore Area Bicycle Facts:

According to the BMC's 2001 Household Travel Survey:

- There are 1.2 bicycles for every three persons age 12 and older in the Baltimore region.
- Twenty percent of bicycling trips in the region are to and from work.
- Bicycling accounts for 0.4% of all commutes.
- The average bicycle commute is 3.1 miles each way.
- Forty percent of all commuters live 8 miles or less from work.

For an electronic version of this free guide or for more copies and for information on all types of alternative commuting throughout the Baltimore region, contact BMC at (410) 732-0500 ext. 1055 or [www.baltometro.org](http://www.baltometro.org).

### Notes:

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# Bicycle Commuter Act

Congress passed a law supporting employers and employees across the country who appreciate the positive effect commuting by bike can have on the health, morale and economic well-being of their workplaces. The Bicycle Commuter Tax, which went into effect on January 1, 2009, and was passed as part of an economic package to allow employers to provide up to \$20 a month in incentives for those commuters who choose to bike to work.

The benefit is intended to cover fixed costs associated with commuting by bike, such as maintenance and repairs, the cost of a commuter bike, locks, helmets, parking fees and shower facility expenses and may take the form of a cash reimbursement from employer to employee, or an employer-paid pre-tax benefit. Employers and employees both save all income and payroll taxes on the amount of money provided as part of this benefit; up to \$240 per year, per employee.

For more information on this easy-to-provide benefit, please visit the League of American Bicyclists at [www.bikeleague.org/news/100708faq.php](http://www.bikeleague.org/news/100708faq.php).

## Solution #10

**Employers and employees need to take the time to talk about bicycling to work to make it work!**





Below is a sample of a letter that your Human Resources Department may send to your employees who may be interested in receiving the benefit:

Memorandum

To: Employees

From: HR

Subject: Bicycle Commuter Fringe Benefit Program Now Available

[Authorizing official] has authorized the Human Resources Guideline [#], effective [date], a program that extends a transportation fringe benefit to eligible employees who commute to work using a bicycle.

The objective of the Bicycle Commuter Fringe Benefit Program is to encourage employees to use bicycles when commuting between their residence and place of employment in order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce traffic congestion, reduce the nation's reliance on fossil fuels, and promote employee health and well-being.

The Bicycle Commuter Fringe Benefit Program provides a tax-free voucher, (a Commuter Check for Bicycling) that can be used for the reasonable cost of purchasing a bicycle, bicycle improvements, repairs, or storage costs. As provided by law, participating employees can receive vouchers valued at \$20 per month (\$240 per year). The vouchers are meant to provide an incentive for riding a bike to work.

Any [company name] employee who regularly uses a bicycle for a substantial portion of the travel between the employee's residence and place of employment is eligible to sign up for this program. The [company name] defines "regular use" as at least 20% or greater of the trips to and from work using a bicycle. This means that, on average, a [company name] employee must bike a substantial portion of the travel between residence and work at least four days per month for each month the employee is enrolled in the program.

If you qualify for the benefit you may need to show that you:

- Ride your bike for a substantial portion of your commute.
- Accept only the \$20 benefit for biking. Unfortunately, the law prohibits people from accepting both the transit benefit and biking in the same month.
- Use the money for a bicycle and bicycle improvements, repair or storage at your local shop.

Thank you. Please contact the [authorizing official] listed below.

[Company Name: authorizing official]

## THANK YOU!

This is the end of the Employer Section. Please flip this guide over and share it with your employees.