

Employer Guide

BICYCLING TO WORK

in the Washington Metropolitan Region



 **COMMUTER CONNECTIONS.**
— A SMARTER WAY TO WORK

COMMUTERCONNECTIONS.ORG



About This Guide

Cycling is a clean, fun, inexpensive, and healthy way for your employees to get to work. Thousands of DC area employees commute by bicycle each day. This guide is designed to ease the transition to bicycle commuting for Washington area employees. The flip side of this guide is geared toward employees.

Why Your Employees Should Bike To Work?

Reduced Health Care Costs

According to the Centers for Disease Control, moderate physical activity (such as bicycling to work) saves 5 to 12 percent in annual medical costs, compared with a 6.5 percent savings from employees who don't smoke. The fitness program at General Electric's Aircraft Engine unit saves an estimated \$540,000 annually, including 760 fewer hospital days per year.

Decreased Absenteeism & Turnover

A study by the National Center for Health Statistics found that 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.

Increased Productivity

Bicyclists and walkers arrive at work with less stress than those who commute by automobile. The Berkeley Wellness Letter reports that chronic exposure to traffic congestion produces an increase in baseline blood pressure, lowering of frustration tolerance, increases in negative mood, and aggressive driving habits. In contrast, bicyclists and walkers often report feeling relaxed and more alert after arriving at work, ready for a more productive day.

Reduced Parking Costs

Between 6 and 20 bicycles can be parked in the space a motor vehicle requires. It is not unusual for employers to spend over \$60 per employee per month for a parking spot. At over \$800 per year per employee, considerable savings can be achieved when employees use alternative means of getting to work.

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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 - \$180,000	Cost of 12 bike rack parking spaces (\$1,300) and one auto space (\$3,300-\$15,000): \$4,600-\$16,300
Initial Savings for Bicycle Parking: \$35,400-\$163,700	
Average yearly cost for maintenance and taxes for 12 parking spaces: \$9,000	Marketing, incentives and bike commuter program costs per year: \$3,900 Maintenance and taxes for 12 bike rack parking spaces: \$1,000 Total Costs: \$4,900
Average Yearly Savings for Maintenance/Taxes: \$4,100	

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

How to Support Bicycling to Work

1. Appoint a Bicycle Coordinator

A fitness/wellness coordinator, employee transportation coordinator (ETC), 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 Washington Area Bicyclist Association, the coordinator can evaluate facilities and identify safe routes to your work place. This employee can devote a few hours a month to launch and monitor a bike to work program.

The Calvert Group, an investment company located in Bethesda, believes that investing in their employees is just as important as investing in socially responsible mutual funds. Employees who bike to work are provided with a one time \$500 reimbursement toward the cost of a bicycle purchase.

“As socially responsible investors, we ask companies to regularly look at their sustainability footprint, and feel we must do the same. Our innovative transportation benefits including our bike reimbursement are consistent with our commitment to walk our talk.”

—Kathy Torrence
VP of Corporate Social Responsibility and Community Partnership Calvert Group

2. Provide Bicycle Parking

Employees need to know their bicycles are safe while they work. Good bike parking is:

- Clearly labeled
- Accessible and well lit
- 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
- If it is impractical to provide good bike racks or lockers, consider allowing employees to keep bicycles in their offices or in a locked storage room.

While planning the relocation of its headquarters office, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency made sure to ask for bike facilities. EPA bike commuters worked with the architects and GSA to design a state of the art bike room with space for 100 bikes as well as locker rooms with showers.

Bicycle Lockers

Lockers are generally the most secure and weatherproof means of bicycle storage. Prices range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per bike, including installation. Materials range from plastic to metal to particle board. Bike lockers are not efficient users 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.



Racks

Installing a rack in a covered, locked compound or storage room can provide excellent 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 bike to the worksite occasionally.

Bike Rooms and Cages

Usually located in the basement or on the ground floor, a bike cage is a fenced off secure area for bike storage. By installing a key or combination lock to access the cage or room, only those who bike to work will have access. Gym lockers can be included to store helmets and other cycling gear. Rooms and cages provide more security than racks alone and usually cost less than bike lockers. Since parking spaces inside the cage are typically not reserved, far more people can be served.



Vertical racks can save space.



Shelter

Most bicyclists are not willing to leave a good bicycle exposed to the elements. Covering outdoor racks with a simple shelter or locating them under an existing covered area can increase the number of days employees will bike to work.

Guidelines For The Correct Number of Parking Facilities

Surveying your employees will help determine the amount of parking your company will need. Some communities have ordinances governing the number of bicycle parking spaces employers must provide. In the District of Columbia, 5% of all off-street office and commercial parking spaces must be for bicycles.

3. Provide On-Site Amenities

Sponsor Capital Bikeshare

In addition to making it easier for employees to use their own bicycles, employers can sponsor Capital Bikeshare to give employees access to thousands of bicycles at hundreds of stations in DC; the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church; and Arlington, Fairfax, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. www.capitalbikeshare.com

Employers can choose to:

- Become a corporate member, allowing discounts to employees.
- Sponsor an existing station
- Sponsor a new station
- Sponsor the entire service

Arlington Guidelines

- One employee space for every 7500 square feet.
- One visitor space for 20,000 square feet.
- Two customer spaces for every 10,000 square feet of retail.
- One shower per gender for every 50,000 square feet.

Winrock International is a Crystal City based nonprofit with approximately 90 employees. This bicycle friendly business understands the health benefits of biking, both physical and mental, and places great value on being able to offer great benefits to its employees, including a pre-tax bike benefit, bike storage within the office suite, showers and lockers, and a range of educational materials. Winrock also offers employees a Capital Bikeshare corporate membership. www.winrock.org

Showers

Some employees will not consider biking to work without the assurance that they can shower when they arrive. Showers also allow employees to exercise at lunch. In buildings with 50-100 employees, one shower should be sufficient. In buildings with 100-250 employees, one shower for each gender should be provided. Buildings housing over 250 employees should provide at least four showers with two of them being accessible to the disabled. The accompanying table shows typical shower installation costs.



Shower Costs	One stall one room	Two stalls one room
Tie into vent & exhaust	\$ 4,300	\$ 4,400
Waterproof wall	\$ 3,200	\$ 5,300
Tiling	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,700
Plumbing	\$4,000	\$ 4,800
Total	\$14,500	\$20,300
	Two rooms, One stall each	Two rooms, Two stalls each
Tie-in to vent & exhaust	\$ 4,400	\$ 4,600
Waterproof wall	\$ 5,300	\$ 10,100
Tiling	\$ 5,700	\$ 11,100
Plumbing	\$ 4,800	\$ 7,600
Total	\$20,200	\$ 33,400

Based on 2015 figures, not including any framing or demolition.

Lockers

Ideally, there should be one secure gym locker available to store work clothes for every long-term bicycle parking space provided. In addition to providing a locker to each regular bicycle commuter, other lockers should be available to encourage potential new bike commuters. These facilities will also encourage lunch-time fitness activities which benefit both the employee and the employer.

4. Provide Incentives

The primary incentives to encourage bicycling and walking to work are showers, lockers, and secure bicycle parking. Here are some others:

- Offer flex-time schedules. Make it possible for bicycle commuters to arrange their work schedules to avoid peak-hour traffic congestion and darkness.
- Permit a more relaxed dress code on specified days.
- Provide a company-owned pool of bicycles or access to Capital Bikeshare's fleet of bicycles for short business trips, errands, and recreation.
- Offer financial help to purchase a bicycle or accessories.
- Give cash to bicyclists for part or all of the parking spaces they do not use if your business subsidizes parking. (See Parking Cashout, page Employer-9)
- Allow bicycle commuters time to shower or freshen-up.
- Tell employees about the Commuter Connections *Guaranteed Ride Home* program. It provides free emergency rides home to those who bicycle or take other alternative transportation to work. To sign up, visit www.commuterconnections.org or for questions call 1-800-745-RIDE.
- Recognize bicyclists at company-wide functions with certificates or T-shirts emphasizing bicyclists' environmental or health awareness.
- Award points to employees for bicycling to work. These points can accumulate and be redeemed for cash or prizes.
- Provide free or subsidized membership to a gym within walking distance. Employees who bike to work can use those facilities to shower and change clothes.

Opower, a software company based in Arlington, has employees who bike to work year round. The company is flexible about when bicyclists may arrive at the office. Opower provides bike racks on all floors, as well as lockers and showers in the building. They even bring in bike mechanics to help employees keep their bicycles in shape. www.opower.com

5. Promote Your Program

- Promote the bicycle program and facilities at your workplace. Reserve a bulletin board and newsletter space for bicycle related information. Often employees are unaware of the programs and facilities available to them. Once they know about them, they are more likely to use them.
- Publicize the bicycle commuter program outside the workplace to enhance your company's profile in the community, and to use it as a recruitment tool. Use press releases, interviews, and social media to make the local news outlets aware of your organization's program. Become involved locally in bicycle issues and events.
- Hold workshops on bicycle commuting, maintenance, safety and other biking and walking topics during lunch hour. Call WABA to schedule a workshop (202) 518-0524.
- Designate a person to coordinate bicycle commuter concerns and organize an employee biking club. Members can coordinate routes and help new bicyclists and walkers. Provide participating employees with club T-shirts displaying the company logo.
- Organize a company-wide "Alternative Transportation Day" to encourage commuters to try bicycling, walking, carpooling, vanpooling, or transit. Commuter Connections can help, 800-745-7433 or www.commuterconnections.org.

How to Organize a Bike to Work Day



1. Appoint a Bike to Work Day coordinator.
2. Provide funds for food and prizes.
3. Publicize your Bike to Work Day through a company intranet, newsletter, email, fliers, etc.
4. Hold a morning event with breakfast for Bike to Work commuters.
5. Hold drawings for prizes.
6. Give special recognition for longest distance biked, oldest/most interesting bicycle, bicyclist who came from transit station farthest from work.
7. Make information available about company provisions for bicycle parking, changing and shower facilities for employees.
8. Provide copies of this guide; call (800) 745-RIDE for free copies.
9. Issue a Bike to Work Day challenge to a neighboring employer or among departments.

6. Find Out About Cycling Conditions Near Your Work Site

- Contact your local city or county planning agency and ask if the streets surrounding your site are bike compatible (wide curb lanes, bike lanes, trails or low traffic/low speed streets). See list of area bicycle planners on the center resources page.
- Contact WABA to help identify good routes to and from your site. Also use the bicycling routing websites listed on the center resource page.

Funding for Bicycle Programs

The District Department of Transportation (DDOT) Bicycle Program offers free help and bicycle racks by request. DDOT will help you select, locate, and install racks in your garage or on your surface lot. In fact, DDOT will even pay for the racks if you agree to pay for the installation! DDOT will also supply a free bicycle parking sign for your facility. For more information contact the Bicycle Program Manager at 202-741-8520 or karen.mcalister@dc.gov, or go to www.ddot.dc.gov/service/bicycle-parking.



"Two years ago, I reacquainted myself with bike commuting and rode to my Alexandria office. I loved every second of it, and wondered why I ever stopped? Bicycling is faster than transit, cheaper, and I don't need to spend time and money at a health club. Plus it helps me clear my head. With Capital Bikeshare, bikes capable of any weather condition are available year-round."

—Richard Williams, Alexandria

LEED Certification

The U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design or LEED rating system provides certification for green buildings. Employees that bike can help contribute to LEED certification points for the building. Points can also be gained by providing shower facilities, lockers, or racks for bicyclists.

Parking Cash Out: A Tax Free Benefit For Bicycle Commuters

Employees who bike, walk, or take transit often have a parking spot they don't use. A 1998 change in the federal tax law allows employers to pay employees the cost of that space and avoid paying a tax on this benefit. For example: Employees at Company X receive parking benefits worth \$100 a month. Employees can either keep the parking spot, receive a tax free transit benefit, or receive \$100 a month extra of taxable income in his or her paycheck. For more information call (800) 745-RIDE, or visit www.commuterconnections.org. Click on Employers; Overview of Services; Parking Management.

"Bike commuting helps address both traffic congestion and the parking shortage in downtown D.C. Our new bike room at Metro Square provides employees with secure, convenient bike parking and eliminates the need to bring bikes into the building's lobby and elevators."

**—Jeff Nokes,
Senior Property Manager,
Boston Properties.**

Negotiate Bicycle Facilities In Your Lease

When you renew your lease, ask building owners to install bicycle facilities, including a new Capital Bikeshare station. They can then market these amenities to prospective tenants and save on parking spaces. If there's a gym within walking distance of your office, it may be cheaper and/or more practical to pay the gym to allow your employees to use their facilities.



Federal Employees

The federal government is the largest employer in the Washington area with over 364,000 employees. In 1993, Congress passed the Federal Employees Clean Air Incentives Act which encourages alternative commuting at federal worksites. According to the Act, Public Law 103-172, "The head of each agency may establish a program to encourage employees of

such agency to use means other than single-occupancy vehicles to commute to or from work [including] furnishing space, facilities or services to bicyclists." Each agency must report on the progress of their program (number of racks, lockers, etc.) every two years.

Why Bicycling 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. Increased Longevity.** Health benefits from bicycling to work outweigh the traffic safety risk by a factor of 20 to 1.





Washington Area Bicycling Facts:

According to the Commuter Connections 2019 State of the Commute Survey:

- 16% of all commuters live less than five miles from work.
- The average bike commute is 4.2 miles each way, and 24 minutes.
- The average number of days per week for bicycle commuting is 3.3.
- Rates of men and women who walk/bike as their primary commute mode are female: 3% and male: 4%.
- Bike/walk as primary commute mode based on State of Residence: District of Columbia 17%, Maryland 1%, and Virginia 2%.
- 22% of respondents said their employers offered support services for bicyclists and walkers.
- 66% of bicyclists and walkers are satisfied with their commute, compared to 22% who drive alone.

According to the 2018 US Census American Community Survey:

- Bike commuting in the urban core is growing fast, tripling since the 2000 Census.
- 0.9% of work trips in the greater Washington region are by bicycle, up from 0.3% in 2000.
- The District has the highest bike commute mode share at 4.2%, followed by Arlington at 1.5%, and Alexandria at 1.0%.

Bike to Work Day May 2019 Washington Region Event Survey

- The Bike to Work Day event increases bicycle commuting- 13% of survey respondents said they never commuted by bicycle before participating in the annual event.
- The Bike to Work Day event expands the frequency of bicycle commuting- 23% of survey respondents said they started or increased bicycling after participating in the event.

Bicycle Counts

Bicycle Counts from automated counters on major trails and some streets in Arlington, Alexandria, the District of Columbia, and Montgomery County can be found at www.bikearlington.com/counter-data. Using the Counter Dashboard, counts may be found by date, time period, and more.



For additional copies of this guide call Commuter Connections at (800) 745-RIDE, or see the online version at www.commuterconnections.org.

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Resources for Employers and Employees

Active Prince William

www.activepw.org

Bike Arlington

www.bikearlington.com

Bike Loudoun

www.bikeloudoun.org

Bike Maryland

www.bikemaryland.org

Bike Washington

www.bikewashington.org

Capital Trails Coalition

www.capitaltrailscoalition.org

Fairfax Advocates for Better Bicycling

www.fabb-bikes.org

Frederick Bicycle Coalition

www.bikefrederick.org

Frederick Pedalers

www.frederickpedalers.org

League of American Bicyclists

www.bikeleague.org

Metro

www.wmata.com/bike

Nat'l Hwy Traffic Safety Administration

www.nhtsa.gov/bicycle-safety

Northern Virginia Regional Commission

www.sharevaroads.com

Potomac Pedalers

www.potomacpedalers.org

Virginia Bicycling Federation

www.vabike.org

Washcycle

www.thewashcycle.com

Washington Area Bicyclist Association

www.waba.org

Washington Area Bike Forum

www.washingtonareabikeforum.com

Bicycle Planners

Alexandria, VA..... (703) 746-4160

Arlington County, VA..... (703) 228-3709

City of Fairfax, VA..... (703) 385-7589

City of Falls Church, VA..... (703) 248-5041

Council of Governments (202) 962-3760

College Park, MD (240) 487-3541

District of Columbia..... (202) 741-8520

Fairfax County, VA (703) 877-5625

Frederick City, MD..... (301) 600-1884

Frederick County, MD (301) 600-7402

Gaithersburg, MD (301) 258-6313

Loudoun County, VA..... (571) 258-3526

Maryland Department of Transportation..... (410) 545-5656

Montgomery County, MD (301) 495-2191

National Park Service..... (202) 619-6347

Prince George's County, MD (301) 883-5687

Prince William County, VA (703) 792-8041

Rockville, MD (240) 314-8527

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority..... (202) 962-1027

Virginia Department of Transportation..... (703) 259-2753

Area Bicycle Maps

Alexandria Bikeways Map

www.alexandriava.gov/goalex

Arlington County Bicycle Map

www.BikeArlington.com/maps-and-routes

Capital Crescent Trail Map

www.cctrail.org

District of Columbia Map

www.goDCgo.com/bike

Fairfax County Bicycle Map

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/transportation/bike/map

Maryland State Bicycle Map (410) 545-5656

Montgomery County Bicycle Map (240) 777-7223

TrailLink

www.trailink.com

Virginia State Bicycle Map

www.virginiadot.org/bikemap

W&OD Trail Map (703) 729-0596

Washington DC Regional Bike Map

www.commuterconnections.org/commuters then select "Bicycling"

List of Bicycle Parking Equipment Dealers & Manufacturers

American Bicycle Security Co.

www.ameribike.com

BikeLid Systems LLC

www.bikelid.com

Bike Security Racks Co.

www.bikeracks.com

Cora Bike Rack Inc.

www.cora.com

Cycle Safe Inc.

www.cycle-safe.com

Dero Bike Rack Co.

www.dero.com

eLock Technologies

www.bikelink.org

Madrax Inc.

www.madrax.com

Peak Racks

www.peakracks.com

Saris

www.sarisparking.com

Sunshine U-Lok Corporation

www.sunshineu-lok.com

Urban Accessories, Inc.

www.urbanaccessories.com

Bike Sharing

Capital Bikeshare

www.capitalbikeshare.com

Veo

www.veoride.com/umid

Bike Stations

Metro

www.wmata.com/bike

Bikestation DC

ddot@dc.gov Use subject line "Bike Center"

Bike Rental

Bike and Roll

www.bikeandrolldc.com

Bicycle Routing Sites

Car Free A to Z

www.carfreeatoz.com/planner

Commuter Connections

www.commuterconnections.org

Google

www.google.com/maps

Map My Ride

www.mapmyride.com/routes

Ride the City

www.ridethecity.com

Acknowledgments

Martin Gутtenplan, "Developing Successful Bicycle Pedestrian Commuter Programs: A Handbook for Employers."

Energy Outreach Center and the Capital Bicycling Club, of Olympia, Washington, "Bicycle Commute Guide."

COG/TPB Bicycle and Pedestrian Subcommittee.



For electronic version of this guide and for information on all types of alternative commuting throughout the Washington region, contact COG's Commuter Connections program at (800) 745-RIDE, www.commuterconnections.org