

This is a newsletter prepared by lawyers to advise bicyclists about the joys of riding, bicycle safety, active transportation, and cyclists' rights. Bicycle Law is owned and operated by Coopers LLP, which has lawyers licensed in California, Oregon, and Washington state. Coopers LLP is regularly consulted by attorneys and cyclists nationwide on strategy related to bicycle crashes.



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BICYCLE LAW



ROLLING RESISTANCE

ISSUE #EL* | FALL 2025 | TRANSFORMATIVE TRANSPORT

RACING AFTER CRASHING, RWANDA BY BIKE, THE SWEEP RETURNS, AND MORE ►

Have you or someone you know been involved in a bicycle crash? Want to know about your rights?

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Bicycle Law's lawyers practice law through Coopers LLP, which has lawyers licensed in California, Oregon, and Washington state, and can affiliate with local counsel on bicycle cases across the country to make sure cyclists benefit from cycling-focused lawyers.

*Bike racers can be a superstitious bunch. If one is assigned the number 13 in a race, there is a long tradition of turning it upside down to ward off its bad luck.

Front and back cover photos: Doug Higley for Race Around Rwanda / @hugdigley @theracearoundrwanda

We've always believed that a bicycle is more than a means of getting from point A to point B. It's a vehicle for personal growth, a catalyst for adventure, and a powerful form of transformative transport. Each pedal stroke can take us beyond our perceived limits, connect us with incredible landscapes, and even redefine our sense of self.

This issue of our newsletter embodies that spirit of transformation, featuring stories of resilience, community, and the far-reaching impact of life on two wheels.

You'll read an inspiring account of Skyler Bishop, a top-tier cyclist whose world was momentarily upended by a devastating collision. His journey of recovery was arduous, pushing him through multiple surgeries and intense rehabilitation. But with the unwavering support of his team here at Bicycle Law, Skyler was able to focus on what mattered most: his healing and triumphant return to the saddle. His story is a powerful testament to perseverance and the profound role cycling plays in a rider's life, even in the face of adversity.

And speaking of Skyler, we're thrilled to share highlights from a recent community event we hosted. We gathered at Portland's beloved Cycle-path Northwest bike shop for a special screening of Skyler's immersive film, documenting his experience at the 2025 Race Around Rwanda. From the pre-screening group ride to the captivating visuals of Rwanda's challenging terrain and vibrant culture, the evening celebrated global adventure and how the bicycle can open up new worlds.

We invite you to dive into these stories, reflect on your own transformative moments on the bike, and continue to champion the power of cycling in all its forms.

*Hoping you keep the rubber side down,
Miles B. Cooper, Maryanne B. Cooper, Bob Mionske,
and everyone at Bicycle Law*



Photo: Doug Higley for Race Around Rwanda / @hugdigley @theracearoundrwanda

UNBROKEN: THE LONG ROAD BACK TO RACING

Skyler, a dedicated cyclist with his sights set on two of the most prestigious gravel races in Africa—the Migration Gravel Race in Kenya and Evolution Gravel Ultra Race in Tanzania—was out on a routine training ride in Portland when his world changed. A driver, without any warning or turn signal, whipped a left turn directly in front of Skyler while he was descending a residential road. The maneuver sent Skyler crashing to the asphalt, with catastrophic results. He was packaged by paramedics and taken to the hospital for emergency treatment. The impact shattered Skyler's collarbone, ankle, rib, and sacrum at the base of his spine, as well as separating the acromioclavicular joint in his shoulder. In an instant Skyler went from skilled competitor to someone who may never be able to ride the same way again.

The road back was complex and filled with obstacles. He endured multiple surgeries, including a second procedure to remove hardware

Skyler Bishop, ultra-endurance cyclist. Photo: James Busby for Race Around Rwanda / @jamesbusbyimages @theracearoundrwanda



The aftermath of the crash.

from his shoulder. The days in the hospital were followed by a physically and mentally demanding recovery process that tested his resolve at every turn. Skyler and his wife faced not only the challenge of his rehabilitation but also the overwhelming task of navigating a labyrinth of insurance policies: the driver's policy as well as two personal policies that kicked in when the driver's policy proved to be insufficient for the significant injuries Skyler suffered.

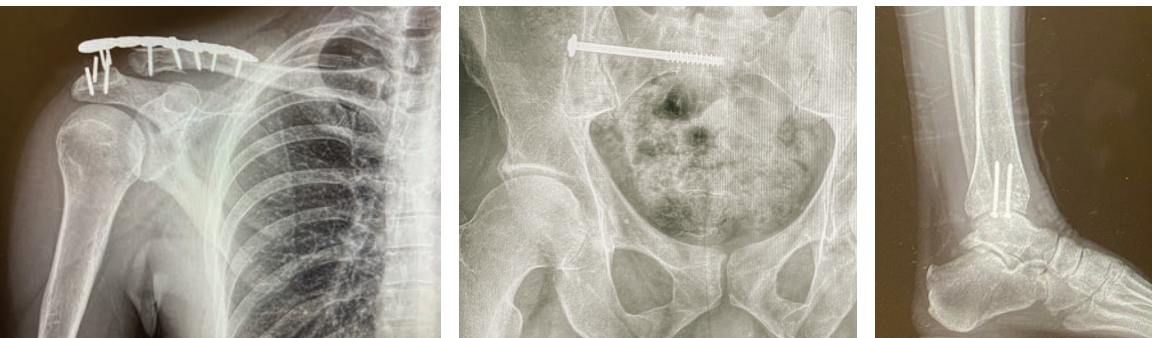
The personal policies were, ironically, auto insurance policies. Auto policies contain provisions known as Underinsured/Uninsured Motorist coverage, known in the industry as UIM coverage. The UIM portion of an auto policy typically covers one in any vehicle strike. This means the best insurance a cyclist can have is an auto insurance policy with large UIM limits. Even those living car-free can take advantage of this by obtaining a non-owner auto policy, which is surprisingly affordable. Strangely, auto policies protect cyclists from catastrophic losses in an uncertain world where drivers can go cheap on insurance. (For more on insurance issues every cyclist should know about see *Cover Yourself! Liability Insurance for the Cyclist* from the Fall 2020 issue of *Rolling Resistance*.)

Back to navigating the policies and claims handling. The myriad policies, along with insurance companies' knee-jerk efforts to minimize injuries, meant a level of complexity and fighting most folks are not accustomed to. This is particularly true when one has to focus on surgeries, healing, pain, and physical therapy. This is where Bicycle Law stepped in, becoming a crucial partner in Skyler's journey. While he focused all his energy on the difficult path to recovery, our team took on the burden of dealing with the insurance companies. We managed the multi-layered claims, even when a major insurance company initially undervalued the case. The team meticulously detailed the significant injuries and Skyler's arduous journey to recovery, ultimately obtaining policy limits on all three policies.

We also faced a particularly thorny issue with a self-funded ERISA health insurance lien. Health insurance companies build into their contract provisions to get money from any settlement funds. But while they claim a total right, these demands, known as liens, can sometimes be negotiated. The worst type of liens are self-funded ERISA liens. Here, the health insurance company was initially unwilling to negotiate at all, resting on federal law entitling it to reimbursement. Through creative arguments, Bicycle Law successfully negotiated a significant reduction on the lien—a rare win in that arena.

As the legal wrangling was going on, Skyler worked on himself. Despite sustaining injuries that for many could have been permanently limiting, he refused to accept this possibility. He pushed himself at physical therapy after each surgery. Strengthening, stretching, working on surgically-induced adhesions between fascia, Skyler took steps forward, with occasional setbacks. Those who have been through this process know the struggle. Building the body back, only to have another surgery

The result of multiple surgeries.



Skyler returns to racing. Photo: Craig Schommer / @zippy_sch

to remove hardware and have to restart the physicality, can be demoralizing. Through it all, and with the support of his family and friends, Skyler remained determined. While he missed the races he was training for the year he was struck, he used the following year's events as his goal, keeping him focused on rebuilding.

Skyler's return to riding was initially humbling. Once a commanding presence in Portland's spandex scene, he had to start from the beginning. Tapping into his competitor mindset, he successfully returned to the bike, pushing past his physical and mental limits to once again compete at an elite level. Skyler manifested his goal: He made it to East Africa 18 months after the crash, finishing the daunting back-to-back of the Migration Gravel Race in Kenya followed by the Evolution Gravel Ultra in Tanzania. Readers can learn about Skyler's latest African adventure, the Race Around Rwanda, in this issue's Adventure column.



REDEMPTION AND RACING AROUND RWANDA

By Craig Schommer

It's 4:45am in Kigali. Skyler and I roll up to the start line of the Race Around Rwanda, an ultra-endurance cycling event. There are individual and two rider team categories. We are signed up as the latter. Ahead of us lay 1,000km (45% dirt) and 55k feet of climbing along beautiful dirt roads, through hilltop villages, past cheering children and curious villagers. And unexpectedly for me, sections of the most sublime pavement I've ever experienced. Mixed in with that are wooden plank bridges with gaps wide enough to eat your front wheel; like riding in a real life Zwift world.

In the dark lined up next to us are two top East African ultra endurance cyclists. One of them, Vincent, is last year's winner. On his left is Kenneth, who led last year until sleep deprivation forced him to stop long enough for Vincent to pass him. We know both having raced with them in the Kenyan Migration Gravel Race and joke about which one might win this year. Behind them a few ex Pro Tour riders (Ted King, Laurens ten Dam) make last-minute equipment checks. Our Plan A: stay with the leaders over the first city climb and benefit from drafting along five miles of smooth pavement until hitting the first dirt section.



The start at Kigali. Photo: Yuhi The Great for Race Around Rwanda / @yuhi_the_great @theracearoundrwanda

The pack makes a sharp right hand turn on a cobblestone climb. We're able to keep pace without digging deep. We glide from the top downhill to the dirt and it starts uphill. We back off the pace and watch the former pros and top East Africans drift away. We'll see them again at checkpoint 2 in 22 hours. They will have showered, eaten, cleaned their bikes, and rested by the time we arrive.

With a tailwind pushing us we watch the kilometers fly by. Rwanda is the Land of a Thousand Hills, but as one racer commented, it should be called the Land of a Million Hills. However, this eastern part of Rwanda is flat. There are rice fields and other crops being tended. Everywhere in this densely populated country we encounter people walking along the road. Personal cars are virtually non-existent outside of the larger cities.

Being on bikes allows us to mingle with locals pursuing everyday tasks; fetching water, picking up laundry, bringing home groceries, milking cows, tending crops, herding goats, transporting cargo by bike, even a wedding procession. You feel the pulse of life and intertwine with the flow of humanity. It's energizing and a stark contrast with tourists packed into safari Land Rovers staring at their phones, windows rolled up. We watch them drive past and pity their disconnected (and expensive) experience.

Any stop to refill in a village, no matter how small and distant, brings an instant crowd of curious and helpful bystanders. Outside the larger towns fewer Rwandans speak English. Those over sixty I greet in French (a colonial legacy). When leaving a resupply stop we loudly announce "Tegunde!" (let's go) in Kinyarwanda and the crowd laughs with surprise and joy hearing foreigners speak their language.

On descents Skyler and I are unintentionally playing a game of cat and mouse. We catch and fly past the better climbers. Later on, I'll discover that Skyler and I set Strava KOM downhill records during the race. Ted King may have beat us by four hours to checkpoint 2, but I gained 30 seconds on that downhill! Our mountain goat compatriots roll back up to us on the next climb. Alex is from Italy and we match pace for a few flat miles and chat. His first ultra was the Atlas Mountain race. He signed up as a distraction from a relationship that ended. It was brutal, he said, and this RaR seemed like a more enjoyable challenge. This time he's not looking for an escape from heartache. For a twenty-minute period the clouds disappear, and we feel the full force of the African sun. I know

Being on bikes allows us to mingle with locals. Craig Schommer / @zippy_sch



from experience it will turn your lower lip into fried bacon. My Wahoo displays 100 degrees.

At around 100 miles we reach check point 1. Surprisingly, we are one of the top teams and somewhere in the top 10 overall. We sit and scarf down the buffet provided by the race. I'm excited about our placing, but unsure how the rest of the day will unfold. It will be my longest ride in distance, elevation, and moving time. I know Skyler will be fine, he's finished two ultras. One of them being last year's RaR.

Eleven hours in we reach the first major climb of almost 3,000 ft elevation gain. At the top rain is threatening and the sun is setting. We are at 7,400 ft and stop at a town to buy pineapple Fanta (the ubiquitous soda in Rwanda), water, bananas, snacks, and pray the rain holds off. Ahead is a

four mile long, rocky, rutted, dirt descent. Skyler knows it from racing this last year and suggests we reach it before dark. We're racing the daylight. By the time we reached the bottom it was dark and rain had started. We take a short stop to rest our hands—they took a beating on the descent—and slip on raincoats. The temperature is dipping below 60. A contrast with the afternoon, now I'm shivering. Eight more hours to Musanze and check point 2.

At mile 200 and 17 hours since starting we are looking forward to a smooth, wide, fast dirt road recently improved as part of China's Belt and Road Initiative. Unlike the previous week when we pre-rode this section, the rain has created wheel-stopping, chain-sucking, peanut butter mud. We dismount to walk on the far edge foot paths. They end and force us back into the mud. We hunt for sticks to dig the mud out of the space



between our frames, tires, and derailleurs. It takes thirty minutes to travel two miles.

Finally, at 2am we arrive in Musanze. Later than expected, relieved to shower and get off the saddle. Totals for this first day: 18.5 hours ride time, 230 miles and 16.4k ft of elevation.

Somewhere between checking into our room and eating late dinner (or early breakfast?) there is a commotion at the motel. Laurens ten Dam couldn't fall asleep and decided to head out at 3:45am. Ted King heard this and quickly changed plans, packed up and rode off to keep the gap between them from getting too large.

Back in our room I dump the contents of my bag onto the bed. Packing for an ultra-endurance event is a learned skill of which I have none. I dreaded another long day of climbing while hauling a heavy, swaying seat bag. Extra food, spare shoes, and protein powder are jettisoned. Later I discovered that Ted King carried no extra clothes. I then realize I am an ultra-noob.

The route from Musanze to Kibuye (check point 3) was rerouted to avoid the military conflict across the border in Goma, DRC. For us that meant a few thousand more feet of climbing. Gishwati Heights*, which we called Little Switzerland, was the primary mountain. It confronted us with gradients of 16%, rain, thunder, and topped out at 9,367 feet. Cresting the top led to one of the most scenic roads we've ever experienced. We rolled for miles high above Rwanda along a skyline ridge with views on both sides of forest, terraced tea fields, banana trees, and quaint villages.

The extremes of Rwanda are difficult to comprehend. That rugged, steep climb was followed by a wonderful, smooth, flowing descent that made me smile and forget what came before and what was to come.

At the bottom we refueled in cozy Rugendabari. Water topped off, the world's tastiest bananas stuffed in pockets and frame bags, we climbed slowly out of town. It's evening and traffic is sparse. Rwanda is shutting down for the day. Two young men riding "taxi bikes" are off duty and can't resist the urge to keep pace. Miles later they are still with us. Cranking out low cadence, high wattage on the hills. Tucking on the downhills. Their single speed bikes can't keep pace with our 46x11 gearing. We share the universal thumbs up gesture. Bikes in motion bond four strangers from opposite sides of the globe. Our small peloton glides through a lush countryside, lit from the side by the orange glow of an African sunset.

We share a few words in Kinyarwandan.

"Amakuru?" (how are you?)

"Ni meza!" (I'm good!)

Riding with them reminds me how Rwandan bikes are customized for utility. Rebar strengthens frames that carry any type of cargo you can imagine: two or more passengers, irrigation pipes, furniture, coffins, bananas, water, car tires. Reflectors, colorful leather flaps, and stretched out springs are added for personal flair and style. The most skilled cargo riders become potato cyclists. Earning around \$1 per trip, these



The extremes of Rwanda are difficult to comprehend.
Photo: Manu Cattrysse for Race Around Rwanda /
@manucattrysse @theracearoundrwanda

abadahambana (the ones who don't stop) descend the volcanic slopes above Musanze overloaded with cargo weighing more than 200lbs. Unable to rely on their brakes to slow down they adapt by dragging a foot along the pavement. Auto tire tread is glued onto their footwear, which is often a simple sandal. The friction can build up and ignite the tread, leaving the rider in a precarious scenario.

Racing through Rwanda also evokes memories of road usage in other countries. In America roads are designed for and dominated by cars. This isn't universal. Roads serve multiple roles around the world. While riding through South Korean farmland I dodged 20 meter sections of red chili peppers and rice drying on hot asphalt. In Rwanda an ancient chrysanthemum is grown and processed into a natural pesticide. And like in the countryside of Seoul, here too crops are laid on the road to dry.

These spaces remind us the world is connected not only by roads but by agriculture. Chilis from Central America are grown in South Korea to create a national dish (Kimchee). A simple flower, originally from the Balkans, is productive in the moist, high altitude of a Rwandan volcano. After processing it continues its journey to America.

On the second evening after an 11 mile climb, 36 hours since the start and 29 hours in the saddle, we came upon an open shop at the edge of a parking lot filled with moto taxis. Every other village has been shut down for the past few hours, so we can't take a chance and pass up this opportunity. Slowly crouching down to sit on the tall curb, I move like my joints are those of an arthritic 90-year-old man. Skyler buys two large bottles of amazi (water). After topping off I stand and my legs tell me they are going on strike. Don't worry, I tell them, there's only one more 12 mile climb ahead of us. The good news is it's asphalt, lined with bright streetlights.

Pavement is a respite not just for the body, but for the mind. Pedaling is the only thing you must apply your dwindling attention span to. I can stare at Skyler's rear tire and shut out the world. I don't want to know what time it is or the number of miles ahead, the elevation to be gained. I haven't looked at my Wahoo for hours. Skyler turns on music for the first time to help keep us awake.

Rain hits us hard on the sweeping, fast descent. Streetlights flicker as if possessed. This strangeness is welcome entertainment for a worn-down mind. All my layers are on and I'm shaking from the combination of water,



*Pavement is a respite not just for the body, but for the mind.
Photos: (top) Manu Cattrysse and (bottom) Doug Higley for Race
Around Rwanda / @manucattrysse @hugdigley @theracearoundrwanda*



Done and dusted. Skyler and Craig after the race. Photo: Yuhi The Great for Race Around Rwanda / @yuhi_the_great @theracearoundrwanda

sleep deprivation, and physical exhaustion. I focus on keeping the bike going straight. It's mostly downhill from here to the checkpoint and I'm not sure which is preferable, more climbing or wet road spray and shivering. We're hitting 40 mph and still the passenger minibuses blast past us around blind corners. I expect to see them tilt onto two wheels or slide out through the corner. Maybe they hire demons to drive these at night?

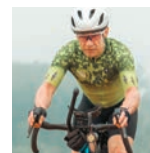
Few cars travel after sundown. We encounter only minibuses and cargo trucks. One truck rolls by with "Jesus is Great" custom painted in Kinyarwandan on the rear flap. Each hosts a guard camped on top,

protecting the cargo. We wonder aloud what would happen if the truck came to a quick stop. Was he restrained up there? Twenty minutes later that same truck was slumped halfway into a ditch. In an instant our hearts sink—the guard is nowhere in sight.

Kibuye comes into view after 14.5 hours and 14k ft of climbing. Lifting my bike up the stairs to the hotel room is laborious. After showering I notice my urine is pink, the same color as my hibiscus energy drink. My fatigued brain thinks it simply passed through. Skyler reminds me that isn't how the kidneys work. I force myself to eat a little, but it feels nauseating. My skin is tight, sensitive, prickly, and hot. I wonder if this is what it feels like being poisoned.

Morning comes and my instinct for self-preservation kicks in. I'm concerned that this fatigue might hit me again, this time late at night deep in the Nyungwe rain forest hours from any shelter or resupply. Our friend Faziri arranges a ride back to Kigali for me. Skyler continues on, reaching the top of the forest around midnight. He finds a shut hotel and wakes the manager, a Frenchman who proceeds to cook him a basic spaghetti dinner since the chef is home sleeping. A friendly German Shepherd lays nearby while Skyler eats this fortuitous meal.

The following day I check on Skyler's dot watcher. He's making good progress and will finish that evening around midnight. I order two dinners for him and stash them in the refrigerator. At the finish line he's beyond exhausted and relieved. Even talking is an effort. He has dug deep, finishing a full day faster than last year and in 20th place (unofficially since we were registered as a team). With his finishing prize in hand (a small hand-woven bowl) we roll back to our Kigali apartment. Shockingly, I have recovered quickly, my legs feel better than when we started. However, now isn't the time to suggest we try again next year.



Craig Schommer is a former Olympian who, along with Bicycle Law founder Bob Mionske, competed at the 1988 Olympics in the road race.

*Gishwati Heights is dense with evergreen trees and lies within a National Park. During the 1994 genocide the area was a sanctuary for refugees who survived by subsistence farming. Thankfully, there are efforts to restore the area and prevent further bio-diversity loss.

COMMUNITY

The Supermarket Street Sweep returns

Saddle up and let's ride for a cause that matters! The 18th annual Supermarket Street Sweep is your chance to turn two wheels (and your energy) into thousands of meals for our neighbors in need.

The Supermarket Street Sweep (aka "SMSW" or "The Sweep") is an annual bike race that benefits the SF-Marin Food Bank (SFMFB). Since 2005, hundreds of participants have zipped around the city to local supermarkets and brought back thousands of pounds of food to donate to this wonderful charity. To date, Sweepers have helped provide over 425,000 meals to neighbors in need.

Help us make the 2025 edition of the Sweep even bigger by participating, volunteering, or donating. Sign up (it's free to enter) and learn more at supermarketstreetsweep.com.

Want more updates? [@bicycle.law](#) and [@sfstreetsweep](#) on Instagram.



Photo: Erik Mathy / @erikmathy



SMSW 2025 Details

When: Saturday, November 8th

Where: Cupid's Span,
The Embarcadero @ Folsom St.

Rider Check-in starts: 11:00am

Race begins: 12:00pm

Film screening at Cyclepath Northwest. Photo: Diane Sillan.



Film and friends: An evening with Skyler Bishop and Race Around Rwanda

We believe in supporting the cycling community in tangible ways. That's why we were excited to host a special evening for Portland's cyclists, featuring a film by our client, Skyler Bishop, at Cyclepath Northwest bike shop. The event centered on Skyler's incredible documentary of the 2025 Race Around Rwanda.

To start the evening, we organized a community ride, bringing local riders together to enjoy a spin around Portland's streets before the main event.

Skyler's film about the Race Around Rwanda transported us all. It beautifully captured the raw beauty and challenging terrain of the country, showcasing the grit and resilience required for this ultra-endurance event. Viewers enjoyed stunning visuals of endless dirt roads, grueling climbs, and the vibrant local culture that defines the RaR experience. Skyler's unique perspective, as both a rider and filmmaker, shined throughout.

After the film, Skyler shared insights and answered questions for the curious. It was clear the event struck a chord: reinforcing the shared passion and camaraderie that unites the cycling world, from inside a local bike shop to the other side of the globe.



Ready for your own trip to Rwanda?
You can watch the film on YouTube.

EVENTS, RIDES, AND GOINGS-ON

Clip in to some fun with friends. We've included a list of cycling events that we enjoy (and happen to support). Flavors include group and recreational rides, road races, mixed terrain adventures, and more. For more details, check out the organizers' websites or social media channels.

- Alto Velo Racing (altovelo.org)
- Fat Cake Club (fatcake.cc)
- Grasshopper Adventure Series (grasshopperadventureseries.com)
- Velo Promo (velopromo.com)



Photo courtesy Fat Cake Club, Pamela Ocampo / @pamo.gif



NOVEMBER

Nov 1: Alto Velo Saturday rides p/b Bicycle Law | *Palo Alto, CA*

Nov 3: Fat Cake Club WTFNB + Allies ride ☕🥐 | *San Francisco, CA*

Nov 8: Supermarket Street Sweep p/b Bicycle Law | *San Francisco, CA*

DECEMBER

Dec 1: Fat Cake Club WTFNB + Allies ride ☕🥐 | *San Francisco, CA*

Dec 6: Alto Velo Saturday rides p/b Bicycle Law | *Palo Alto, CA*

JANUARY (2026)

Jan 3: Alto Velo Saturday rides p/b Bicycle Law | *Palo Alto, CA*

Jan 5: Fat Cake Club WTFNB + Allies ride ☕🥐 | *San Francisco, CA*

Jan 25: Grasshopper Adventure Series #1: Low Gap | *Ukiah, CA*

Jan 29: Fat Cake Club city loop ending at Breadbelly ☕🥐 | *San Francisco, CA*

☕🥐 = Coffee and pastries on us!

EXCEPT BICYCLES

By Miles Cooper

While on a recent trip to Portland I was riding along a street that turned into a dead end. Under that Dead End sign? Another marvelous sign: Except Bicycles. When one rides in well-designed urban areas one starts to notice these Except Bicycles signs. They let cyclists know that traffic engineers have taken their unique needs into account and altered the built environment for riders.

Now I recognize that I am, for the most part, preaching to the choir here. If you've gotten this far there's a strong chance you're Bikes First adjacent, even if you're not personally spiking car tires (a little Edward Abbey dark humor here—go with me on this). The sign inspired me. How do we motivate change in a car-entrenched world? Two words: tax incentives. Blisteringly exciting? Read on.

Before we get to taxes, why consider change in the first place? Think about a recent car-based errand. It may have gone something like this: You backed the car out. While doing so you nearly got hit by someone

driving too fast on your street. You swore. You turned onto an arterial. Multi-laned, yet not moving despite it being early on a weekend. Road construction, a crash, who knows. But you budgeted 10 minutes for this errand and it will take far longer. More swearing. Eventually you reached the shopping center and started looking for parking. So was everyone else. Someone cut you off. More swearing. Finally, a parking space. A walk across blacktop acreage (because that parking space was really far away) into the store. Out of the store. Rinse and repeat for the drive home. Thirty minutes gone, sitting instead of moving, with elevated stress, blood pressure, and cortisol, and accompanying carbon emissions to boot.

Contrast that with biking. Bikes get us outdoors. Time outdoors tends to be restorative. That restorative time combats the global happiness crisis. Same with the light exercise induced by pedaling: more happiness. Traveling at bike speed usually results in interactions with others—neighbors, cyclists, pedestrians. Stopping to say hello is much easier and more common. These interactions with friends and strangers build community and also increase happiness. Making an additional unexpected stop to run into an additional store is simple; parking isn't an issue. The locally spent dollars help merchants and further promote the community. That light pedaling also improves one's health, combating our sedentary lifestyle-induced health issues and reducing the impact on our health care system. And the carbon emission? Minimal, even if one has a bean-heavy diet or rides an e-bike. The reduced car traffic means that those few who truly must drive now aren't stuck in traffic since there are fewer cars.

Now some doubters might chime in to say this may all be true until, "Smush," there goes the cyclist under a big rig. Ignoring for a moment the environmental design failures leading to such a smush, the premise itself is wrong. Studies looking at car commuters versus bicycle commuters concluded that bicycle commuters were 41% less likely to die than those who drove and that the associated health benefits exceeded the risks to bike commuters¹.

None of the above bicycle benefits are news. We know them like we know reading is better for us than scrolling social media. Yet most folks use cars because it's what they've always known and it is easier in the moment. Meanwhile, the present traffic engineering approach appears to be Orwellian and *Animal Farm*-inspired. To paraphrase, "All vehicles are equal, and some vehicles are more equal than others." One only



needs to consider the Except Bicycles signs. Traffic engineers aren't supposed to favor one mode over another. Yet there it is: Except Bicycles. Those who ride know the life hack riding creates: predictable arrival times, usually with a smile on one's face. But these few acknowledgements aren't sufficient to get people out of cars.

Back to tax incentives. When the government wants to change how money moves through the system, tax incentives become a primary tool. Need more electric vehicles on the road? Tax incentives. Want people to prepare for retirement or their kids' college costs? Tax incentives. And there's a road equivalent. If we want people to change we need to make it worth their while, and not just with an occasional Except Bicycles sign. We need bolder action for folks to move from Except Bicycles to Accept Bicycles.

Want folks to give up that rolling Lay-Z-Boy with mega-iPad sized screen? It will take a big step: with apologies to Orwell, we have to own it and go full bikes first. Two wheels good, four wheels bad. And here we'll reference the A-word: Amsterdam. The Netherlands suffered from crippling car traffic into the early 1970s. They made a conscious decision: In order to avoid the auto-induced tragedy of the commons they made a nationwide change. The change was framed around promoting bicycling as the default traffic mode. We can do the same for our urban and suburban environments. Any road project must be initially evaluated by how it promotes cycling ease and cycling safety. Any conflicts must be resolved in favor of the bike. Using California's housing mandate as a template, cities must create complete and connected networks. This includes putting to rest forever the current block-by-block parking place versus bike lane fight. In any bicycle-car collision, it will be presumed the car was at fault unless the driver can prove the collision was unavoidable. And yes, there must be tax incentives. Deductions for bicycle and e-bike purchases. And significant increases in vehicle registration costs for any vehicle in urban environments with geometric registration fee increases for each additional vehicle.

Small inroads are presently being made. One example? E-bike incentives. Various agencies are providing rebates for e-bike purchases. The ability to be reimbursed for a purchase that also saves one time and money can help get butts on bikes. One should not underestimate small steps. These small steps get attention, gather interest, and can lead to greater demand. At a certain point we reach (ahem, if you'll pardon me) critical mass. Those fed up with leaving a half hour early to drive their kids two

miles to school will take that e-bike incentive and purchase a cargo bike. And we as commuters or those aching to safely commute can manifest this with our voices and our votes.

People will only change when the financial and time incentives make it worth their while. The path forward for health, wealth, happiness, and joy is simple: we must move from an environment where we Except Bicycles to one where we Accept Bicycles. We're glad you're doing your part and we'll keep doing ours to make it so!



Miles driving the family minivan.

¹ Carlos A Celis-Morales, BMJ 2017; 357 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.j1456> (Published 19 April 2017 and "Do the Health Benefits of Cycling Outweigh the Risks?", Jeroen Johan de Hartog, Hanna Boogaard, Hans Nijland, and Gerard Hoek, Environ Health Perspect. 2010 Aug; 118(8): 1109–1116.)