



# SEATTLE BY BIKE

**your easy-start guide to  
bicycling around Seattle**

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# WHY BIKE?

Of all the rites of childhood, riding a bicycle is among the few that can endure long into our adult lives. And continuing to bike—or discovering the joys of riding for the first time—can be the perfect way to see more of our city.

Whether your aim is to be more active, find an inexpensive way to get around, or just spend less time behind the wheel, bicycling can be a great option.

Sure, learning to get around on two wheels can seem a little intimidating at first, but like most things, it gets a lot easier with practice.

We hope you'll no longer be asking, 'Why bike?' Instead, we hope to hear you say, 'Where will I be going today?'

# FIND YOUR PERFECT RIDE

Remember, there's not one best bike for everyone. Find a bike that suits your needs, comfort level, and budget. Consider trying out a friend's or stopping by a nearby store to take one for a ride around the block. Or check out Pronto Cycle Share for a day or a year! [prontocycleshare.com](https://prontocycleshare.com)

**PRONTO!**

CYCLE SHARE

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# TYPES OF BIKES

**ROAD** For people who ride on paved roads. They are usually faster, lighter, and have narrower tires, with lower handle bars.

**MOUNTAIN** Typically have wider tires and a heavier frame, with a more upright seating position.

**HYBRID/COMFORT** Provide the comforts of a mountain bike, with the narrower tires and lighter frames of road bikes.

**CARGO** Usually have sturdy frames and can be easily outfitted with baskets and carriers to allow you to transport whatever you need.

**CRUISERS** Not that great for big hills, cruisers are good starter bikes for day-to-day riding, leisure, and errands. No gears to mess with, comfortable, and easy on the wallet.

**ELECTRIC** So what about those hills? Electric bikes make climbing them a lot easier. With the push of a button, a small motor engages for uphill riding. Then, you can resume normal pedaling for the rest of the trip.





## WHAT ABOUT HILLS?

The prospect of climbing Seattle's hills by bike may seem impossible, particularly for those of us who are just easing into bicycling. Rest assured that it gets easier with time, and that it's acceptable to walk your bike uphill if you need to. No judgment!

### TIPS TO CLIMBING HILLS:

- If you have a multi-speed bike, begin shifting in anticipation of the hill
- You'll want to switch to a low gear for the uphill climb
- The goal is to keep the momentum going without destroying your legs

Experienced riders know how to avoid the toughest hills. Ask a friend! Also consider whether an electric bicycle might work for you.

# COME AS YOU ARE!



Riding a bike doesn't mean needing to spend a small fortune on gear. Essentials include:

- A well-fitting helmet
- Front and rear lights
- Bright clothing and reflectors if you're riding at night

No matter your preferred cycling attire—be it spandex, jeans, or even a suit—comfort should come first.



# HELMETS

Protect yourself while riding—it's the law in King County.

## STEPS TO ENSURING A PROPER FIT

1. Choose a helmet that **fits snugly** and won't shift around as you move. You should be able to fit two fingers underneath the chin strap. Any looser and it's not going to stay in place.
2. Check the **straps** in the front and back and make sure they come together right below your ears.
3. Ensure that the helmet sits **level** on your head, not tilted back.



# BIKE LOCKS

The most common types of bike locks are cable and u-locks. Either can work, but for added security you can use both.

- If you have quick-release wheels, make sure you get a lock that's large enough to secure them to the bike.
- Always make sure you've looped the lock through the frame, the wheel and the bike rack.
- Consider purchasing a supplemental lock to secure the seat.



# OTHER GEAR

## LIGHTS

If you're riding in the dark, Washington State law requires a white front light (visible for 500 feet) and a red rear reflector. A rear red light is recommended.

## FENDERS

Fenders keep wheel spray from covering you and your bike.

## BRIGHT OR REFLECTIVE CLOTHING

When the sun sets, wear bright and reflective clothing so that drivers can see you.

## WATERPROOF BAGS

Waterproof backpacks, as well as waterproof bags that attach to your bike, come in handy often in rainy Seattle.

## SEAT

Bike seats come in a lot of different shapes and sizes. If your bike seat isn't working for you, check out your options.

## BELL

A definite throwback to your earlier bicycling days, bells come in handy when passing other bicyclists or pedestrians.





## WHAT ABOUT BIKING TO WORK?

Riding your bike to work and back is a great way to incorporate exercise into your daily routine. Luckily, more businesses and buildings offer bike rooms for storage and locker rooms for showers. Check with your employer or building to see what they offer. Don't see bike storage and showers? Let them know you're interested.



## WHAT ABOUT A FLAT TIRE?

First consider puncture-proof tires. But it's better to be safe than sorry, so to avoid a long walk home, always carry:

- A spare tube
- Bike tools (tire lever, patch kit, tire pump, Allen wrench)

Don't know what to do with these tools? Look for a "Bike Repair 101" session to learn the basics. Classes are offered by the following groups:

Bike Works [bikeworks.org](http://bikeworks.org) 3715 S Hudson Street  
Cascade Bicycle Club [cascade.org](http://cascade.org) 7400 Sand Point Way NE  
Recycled Cycles [recycledcycles.com](http://recycledcycles.com) 1007 NE Boat Street  
REI [rei.com/outdoorschool](http://rei.com/outdoorschool) 222 Yale Ave N

But if you ever find yourself stranded without the tools or the know-how, AAA and the Better World Club both offer bicycle roadside assistance that can get you and your bike home safely. You can also put your bike on the bus or train if there is transit nearby and your bike has a flat tire, or other mechanical problem.

# HITTING THE ROAD

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You've got yourself a bicycle, a trusty helmet, and bright accessories. Now all that's left is to hit the open road.

## MINDING THE LAW

If you're riding a bike on the street, you're required to follow the same rules of the road as when you're driving a car:

- Stop at red lights and stop signs
- Signal when you're turning
- Stop for pedestrians in crosswalks
- If riding on sidewalks, ride slowly and yield to pedestrians



# TURN SIGNALING

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Without a turn indicator, you'll need to use your arms to tell other road users when you're turning, slowing, or changing lanes.

**TURNING LEFT:** extend your left arm out to the side, keeping it straight.

**TURNING RIGHT:** extend your right arm out to the side, keeping it straight **OR** extend your left arm out to the side, bend your arm at a 90-degree angle, and point your arm up.

**SLOWING DOWN:** extend your left arm out to the side, bend your arm a 90-degree angle, and point your arm down.

For a complete list of bike laws in Washington, check out the Washington Bike's website: [wabikes.org/growing-bicycling/washington-bike-laws/](http://wabikes.org/growing-bicycling/washington-bike-laws/)

TURNING LEFT



TURNING RIGHT



SLOWING/STOPPING



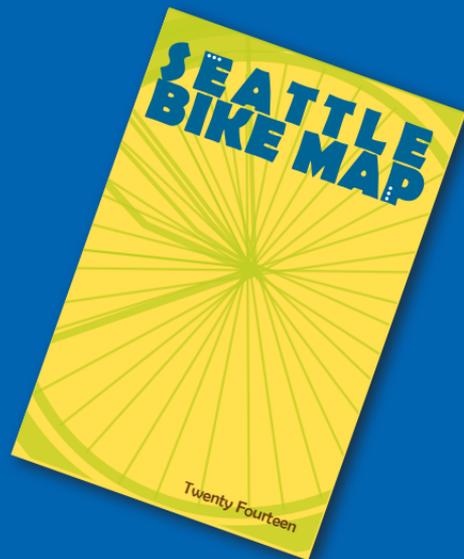
# PLANNING YOUR ROUTE

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There are a couple of great tools out there to help you navigate Seattle's streets.

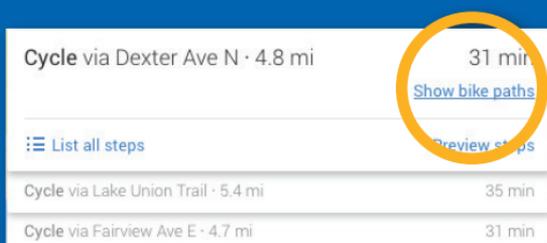
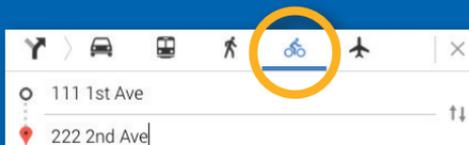
SDOT offers an online bike map available at [web6.seattle.gov/SDOT/BikeMap](http://web6.seattle.gov/SDOT/BikeMap)

You can get a print copy by calling (206) 224-9252, or visiting [seattle.gov/transportation/bikemapform.htm](http://seattle.gov/transportation/bikemapform.htm) to order one.



## ONLINE

Another way to plan your next bike ride is Google Maps. When looking for directions on [google.com/maps](http://google.com/maps), select the bike icon to find the most bike-friendly route to your destination. Plus, you can turn on a map layer that reveals the city's bikeways.



# A GUIDE TO SEATTLE'S BIKE FACILITIES

Want to know more about the different types of bikeways coming to Seattle? We've got you covered.



## WHAT IS A PROTECTED BIKE LANE?

Otherwise known as a cycle track, a protected bike lane is physically separated from traffic and the sidewalk. Similar to a trail, protected bike lanes are often more comfortable for people who prefer not to ride with traffic.

### HOW DO I USE IT?

Yield to pedestrians crossing to access a bus stop or parked cars. Watch for turning vehicles at driveways and intersections.



# WHAT DOES THE GREEN MEAN?

Green pavement highlights areas where bicycles and cars cross paths. The green pavement alerts both drivers and bicyclists to pay extra attention.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

Bicyclists should be alert and look for cars crossing green pavement areas.





## WHAT ARE SHARROWS?

Shared lane markings or “sharrows” guide bicyclists to the best place on the street to ride and help motorists expect to see and share the lane with bicyclists.

### HOW DO I USE IT?

Use the sharrow to guide where you ride within the lane. Remember not to ride too close to parked cars. Follow the rules of the road.



# WHAT IS A BIKE DETECTOR?

Bike detectors tell the traffic signal when a person on a bike is waiting for the light to turn green. Markings indicate where to position your wheels on the pavement in order to change the signal.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

Place your bicycle on the bike detector symbol to trigger the green light.



OR





## WHAT IS THE SAFEST WAY TO CROSS TRAIN TRACKS?

Because the track groove is just slightly wider than the typical bike tire, your wheel can easily get stuck. The key to staying safe is to cross as close to a 90 degree angle as possible.

When it's raining, it's often better to walk your bike across as the tracks can be slick.







## HOW DO I TAKE A BIKE ON THE BUS?

When you need a bus to help complete part of your trip, you can load your bike onto the bus's front bike rack. Let your bus driver know your plan before loading the bike and then get on the bus as usual.

A step-by-step how-to guide (and video) is available on King County Metro's website. If you're feeling unsure, King County Metro offers practice racks in downtown Seattle, West Seattle, and the University District. [metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/bike](https://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/bike)

# MAKING IT SOCIAL

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Bicycling doesn't have to be a lonely pursuit. Seattle is home to a number of great biking organizations, including Cascade Bicycle Club, Cyclists of Greater Seattle, and Seattle Bicycle Club. They hold daily and weekly rides for people of all levels and offer lots of opportunities for socializing and learning.

If you're interested in working up to a longer distance—dare we suggest the famed Seattle to Portland Bicycle Classic?—you'll encounter experienced folks who can show you how to prepare.

You might also consider bike to work month/day in May, or rides to raise money for your favorite cause.

If you're looking for someone to ride with, check out [RideShareOnline.com](http://RideShareOnline.com) which offers matching services for car, van, and bike trips with someone making a similar trip near you.

Cascade Bicycle Club also offers great group classes to help you get started riding. Check out their website for dates and times at [cascade.org/learn](http://cascade.org/learn)



# RIDING 101 FAQs

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## WHERE DO I RIDE?

If bike lanes are unavailable, or the lane ends, you can use the general travel lane. Make sure to look over your shoulder for approaching cars, and signal before entering.

## HOW ABOUT ONE-WAY STREETS?

On one-way streets, people on bikes can ride in the direction of traffic and can use either the left or right side. Use the side that best serves your destination.

## HOW FAST SHOULD I GO?

Always make sure to stay under the posted speed limit, and feel free to take it as slow as you'd like. Confident and predictable bicyclists are safe bicyclists, so travel the speed that makes you most comfortable.

## HOW DO I TURN?

You can use turn lanes while you're on your bike. Before changing lanes, remember to look behind you for approaching cars and signal that you intend to move over or turn. You may also use the crosswalk.

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## WHERE SHOULD I STOP AT AN INTERSECTION?

Some people prefer to stop behind vehicles. Others prefer stopping to the right of vehicles, or at the very front of intersections for visibility. Remember to stay clear of drivers' blind spots and watch for right-turning vehicles. This is really important near large vehicles with large blind spots.

## WHAT ABOUT PARKED CARS?

When you're riding your bike near parked cars, look out for drivers who are about to open their car doors. Ride as far from the parked cars as possible to avoid a collision.

## WHAT ABOUT USING THE SIDEWALK?

In Seattle, it's legal to ride on the sidewalk. You should ride slowly, always yield to pedestrians, and use a bell (or your voice) if passing pedestrians. Also pay extra attention at driveways and intersections.

## HOW SHOULD I CROSS TRAIN TRACKS?

Because the track groove is just slightly wider than the typical bike tire, your wheels can easily get stuck. Crossing a train track at a 90-degree angle (or as close to that as possible) can help you cross safely. When it's raining out, it's better to walk your bike across.

# I'M THERE. NOW WHAT?

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Depending on your destination, there are a variety of options for securing your bike. SDOT has a list of all on-street bike racks available here:

[seattle.gov/transportation/bikeparking.htm](https://seattle.gov/transportation/bikeparking.htm)

Larger office buildings often have indoor bike parking, which keeps your bike dry on rainy days. Ask the building management team about what's available.

If you've decided to make biking a part of your regular commute, check to see if there are locker room or shower facilities. Some people keep a second set of toiletries, a hairdryer, and towel at work.

Now that you know what to do, it's time to hit the road and enjoy all that Seattle has to offer. Remember that getting around by bike should be something fun and relaxed. **Be safe and enjoy yourself.** See you out there!



# RESOURCES

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A list of Seattle's bike laws

[seattle.gov/transportation/bikecode.htm](http://seattle.gov/transportation/bikecode.htm)

A list of Washington State bike laws

[wabikes.org/growing-bicycling/washington-bike-laws/](http://wabikes.org/growing-bicycling/washington-bike-laws/)

A map of Seattle's bike routes

[web6.seattle.gov/SDOT/BikeMap](http://web6.seattle.gov/SDOT/BikeMap)

How to load your bike onto a Metro bus

[metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/bike](http://metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/bike)

Washington Bikes

[wabikes.org](http://wabikes.org)

Cascade Bicycle Club

[cascade.org](http://cascade.org)

Washington State Department of Transportation's  
biking resources

[wsdot.wa.gov/bike](http://wsdot.wa.gov/bike)

If your bike is lost or stolen, email the Seattle  
Police Department at [FindMyBike@Seattle.Gov](mailto:FindMyBike@Seattle.Gov)





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