SEATTLE BY BIKE

Your guide to bicycling around the city







CONTENTS

- **3** Why Bike?
- 4 Finding the Best Bike for You
- 6 Bike Share
- 7 Biking Gear
- 11 ABC Quick Check
- 12 Fixing a Flat
- 13 Flat Tire Aid
- **14** Minding the Law
- **15** Turn Signaling
- 16 Keeping Your Bike Safe

- **18** Planning Your Route
- **19** Ways to Travel
- 25 Bike Terms
- 31 Biking on Hills
- **32** Taking Bikes on Public Transit
- 33 Family Biking
- **37** Riding 101 FAQs
- 40 Resources
- **41** Appendix



WHY BIKE?

Whether you're discovering the joys of riding for the first time or you're an experienced rider, biking is a great way to see more of our city. If you're looking for a casual bike ride or planning a commute to work, we've got you covered. We at the Seattle Department of Transportation (SDOT) have been working hard every day to strengthen our bicycle network to help bikers get around Seattle, advancing the City's climate commitment that by 2030, 9 out of 10 personal trips are emissions free.

If you are hoping to be more active, find an inexpensive way to get around, or just spend less time behind the wheel of a car, bicycling can be a good option.

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.

FINDING THE BEST BIKE FOR YOU

There's not one single bike that works perfectly for everyone. Consider a bike that meets your needs, preferences, comfort level, and budget. You might try out a friend's bike or stop by a nearby bicycle shop to take one for a ride around the block for a short test ride.

Looking for a cost-efficient or budget-friendly option? Visit local stores that sell used bikes, such as Recycled Cycles, and bike rental options. Bike Works also sells quality pre-owned bikes, plus offers youth and adult education programs. 'Earn a Bike,' one of Bike Works' youth programs, gives participants the bikes they repair. On page 41, we list the locations of each of these bike shops.



Types of Bikes

ROAD

Primarily for people who ride on paved streets, road bikes are typically lighter, faster, and have narrower tires with lower handlebars.



MOUNTAIN

Typically has wider tires and a heavier frame, with a more upright seating position.



HYBRID/COMFORT

Provides the comfort of a mountain bike, with narrow tires and lighter frames of road bikes.



FAMILY

Provides options for bringing your child or children along with you on your bike before they are ready to bike by themselves.



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



CRUISERS

While not ideal for big hills, cruisers are a good starter bike for day-to-day riding, leisure, and errands. No gears, generally comfortable, affordable.



ELECTRIC

These bikes are great for hills with buttons that start a small motor that engages for uphill riding; then, riders can resume normal pedaling when on flat or downhill terrain.



BIKE SHARE

Seattle's bike share program lets you borrow a bike anywhere from the first and last mile to major transit hubs for a quick errand, a trip to Link light rail, an all-day adventure, and everything in between. You pick up the bike share bike closest to you, ride it to where you want to go, and leave the bike for the next person to ride.

Seattle's bike share consists of electric-assist bicycles, which help to make bike share a more accessible and convenient mobility option for more people. These bikes still require users to pedal, but the e-assist function helps make Seattle's challenging topography (hills of various inclines) a little more manageable.

There are two different types of bikes available, Lime and Veo, which can be accessed through their mobile apps.

We need your help to make sure bike share works for everyone in Seattle. Improperly parked bikes can cause problems for people getting around on our sidewalks, especially people with mobility challenges or other disabilities. Please do your part: when you end your ride, park the bike safely.





BIKING GEAR

When getting ready to ride your bike, stay up to date on best practices. Consider buying some useful pieces of bike gear if you can: more detail below to help keep you safe during your trip.

- A well-fitting helmet
- Front and rear lights Required by Washington state law
- Comfortable clothing

Bright and reflective clothing can be helpful when riding at night, but no matter what your preferred cycling attire is – be it spandex, jeans, or even a suit – comfort is important so you can focus on riding and the conditions around you while you ride!



Helmets

Protect yourself while riding. Helmets help prevent serious head injuries and keep you safe!

STEPS TO ENSURING A PROPER HELMET 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 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

- If a bike has quick release wheels, make sure to get a lock that is large enough to secure them to the bike
- Always make sure you've looped the lock through the frame, wheel, and bike rack
- Considering purchasing another lock to secure the seat



Additional Useful Gear



WATER

Bring a full water bottle to stay hydrated during your ride.



BELL

Bells come in handy when passing other bicyclists or pedestrians. If you do not have a bell, you can use your voice to signal when you plan to pass someone else.



SEAT

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



TOOLS

Plan to carry a spare tube and bike tools: tire level, patch kit, tire pump, and Allen wrench.



FENDERS

Fenders keep water from spraying up and covering you and your bike.



BRIGHT AND REFLECTIVE CLOTHING

During winter and night, try to wear bright and reflective clothing so that drivers can see you better.



WATERPROOF BAG

Waterproof backpacks, lining a backpack with a garbage bag, as well as waterproof bags that attach to your bike, come in handy often in rainy Seattle.

ABC QUICK CHECK

The ABC Quick Check is an easy acronym to remember – and can help you prepare your bike for your next ride.



A is for Air

Check your tire pressure. Low pressure can lead to a flat tire – so it's important to make sure your bike's tires are properly inflated.

B is for Breaks

Visually check the brake pads for wear. If there is less than 1/8 inch of brake pad left, they will need to be replaced. Make sure pads align with the wheel rim, too.

Check your hand-brake levers by squeezing to engage the brakes and letting go to release them.
Ensure that the levers operate

easily, and snap back once released – if not, lubricate and adjust them.

C is for Cranks and chain cranks

Cranks: Try to move the crank arms sideways, away from the frame. If the cranks are loose, you can tighten them with a crank wrench or visit a local bike shop for help.

Chain: Make sure the chain looks silver and is not rusted or showing black gunk, then turn the pedals backwards to see if the chain travels smoothly through the gears.

QUICK releases

Your bike will likely have the quick release levers that attach the wheels, brake, and occasionally the seat post. Check to make sure all levers are properly secured (tightly fastened, not loose).

CHECK your ride

Before going on your ride, take a few moments to ride slowly and make sure your bike is working well! Wear reflective clothing so that drivers can see you better.

FIXING A FLAT



Your step-by-step guide on how to fix a flat or damaged tire

Remove the bike wheel:
 Release your brakes, then the wheel.

2. Remove the tube from the tire:

Deflate the tube completely, then remove it by pressing on the edge of the tire or use a tire lever to access the tube.

3. Locate what is causing the flat:

Inspect the tire and tube to find the location where the puncture occurred.

4. Clean tube puncture area with a cloth:

Using any commercial patching kit, clean the area near the puncture.





5. Sandpaper on the tube:

Rub sandpaper around the punctured area to aid gluing on the patch.

6. Spread glue around puncture area on tube:

Spread glue around the punctured area, and wait until tacky.

7. Place on tube patch:

Apply tube patch and firmly hold down until dry.

8. Put the tube into the tire:

Once the patch has dried and set, place the tube back into the tire and ensure that the valve is place into the valve hole.

9. Inflate the tube:

Once the tube is back in the tire, use a tire pump to refill the air.

10. BIKE REPAIRED!

FLAT TIRE AID

When you're out riding, you may prefer to replace the tube with a new one and fix the damaged one later. Walk to a nearby bicycle shop for tube repairs; most shops also offer flat tire repairs too.

Don't know what to do with bike repair tools? Look for a "Bike Repair 101" class near you to learn the basics. Classes are offered by the following groups such as:

- Bike Works bikeworks.org, 3715 S Hudson St
- Cascade Bicycle Club cascade.org, 7400 Sand Point Way NE
- Recycled Cycles recycledcycles.com, 1007 NE Boat St
- REI rei.com/outdoorschool,
 222 Yale Ave N

For more bicycle shops near you that offer various bike services, see page 41 for community-based organizations and bike shops!

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.

AAA: https://wa.aaa.com/automotive/emergency-road-service/bicycle-service.html or call 1-800-AAA-HELP

Better World Club: betterworldclub.net/nationwide-bike-roadside-assistance



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

TURN SIGNALING

Use your arms to tell other road users when you're turning, slowing, or changing lanes.



Turning Left Signal

Extend your left arm out to the side, keeping it straight.



Turning Right Signal

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 Signal

Extend your left arm out to the side, bend your arm at 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/

KEEPING YOUR BIKE SAFE

There are many ways to keep your bike protected from theft. Make sure to lock your bike on a bike rack or a bike locker if available. Registering your bike on local bike watch registration programs can increase your chances of getting it back if stolen.

LOCKING YOUR BIKE

There are many options available to keep your bike safe. Consider using a security cable with any lock or a U-lock. Lock your frame and a wheel to a rack designed for locking bicycles. Locking the second wheel is also recommended.

To make sure your bike is stable, be sure to align your bike on the bike rack so there are two points of contact, one near the front of the bike's frame and one towards the back.

BIKE RACKS

Bike racks are commonly found around the city. Protect your bike by using the sidewalk or on-street racks, and make sure to use a lock.

BIKE LOCKERS

Bike lockers are available at most King County Metro and Sound Transit stations, with the options to pay for a single use or rent it through a long-term lease. These lockers typically cost 5 cents per hour and can be accessed using a Bike Link card. Bike Link cards are available on Metro's website.

REGISTERING YOUR BIKE

If your bike is stolen, you will need a description, serial number, and photographs to help recover it. You can register your bike at these two independent, **free**, and simple online registration systems that have proven effective at recovering stolen bikes.

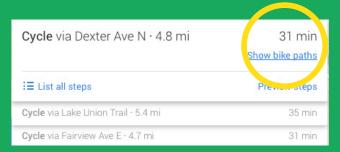


- Bike Index: bikeindex.org
 - As the official bike registration system for the University of Washington and Seattle Bike Blog, and used by several local bike shops, Bike Index is a non-profit bike registry website that utilizes community members and social media to help find lost bikes.
- **Project 529:** https://project529.com/garage As a community bike watch program, the 529 garage is a registration system that can be accessed through their website or mobile app and alerts the 529 community members of stolen bikes

PLANNING YOUR ROUTE

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





SDOT offers an online bike map available at seattle.gov/

bicycling. For a printed copy, call (206)-684-ROAD or download through the provided website link.

ONLINE

Another way to plan your next bike ride is Google Maps. When looking for directions on 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.

BIKE FRIENDLY ROUTES

When planning your route, check out the various options available for biking to find your perfect route. Consider trails where there is less car traffic if just starting out or looking around your neighborhood for Stay Healthy Streets and Neighborhood Greenways to practice biking. These methods are great for all ages and can be great to incorporate into your next trip!

WAYS TO TRAVEL

Neighborhood Greenways

Neighborhood greenways are safer, calmer residential streets for you, your family, and neighbors. We make people walking and biking the priority.

Neighborhood greenways can include:

- Easier crossings of busy streets with crosswalks, flashing beacons, or crossing signals
- Speed humps to calm traffic
- Stop signs for side streets crossing the greenway
- Signs and pavement markings to help people find their way
- 20 mph speed limit signs



Trails

Seattle has many bike-friendly trails to ride on; consider checking if these trails will fit your commute for a scenic route and less car traffic.

BURKE-GILMAN TRAIL

This trail is a regional, mixed-use facility that runs east from Golden Gardens Park in Seattle to the Sammamish River Trail in Bothell. The 20-mile trail is a major transportation corridor mostly separated from car traffic.

ELLIOTT BAY TRAIL

This paved multi-use trail connects Myrtle Edwards Park at Broad St. to Elliott Bay Marina at Smith Cove Park.

ALKI TRAIL

This Trail is a multi-use trail with a separate lane for those cycling, it connects Alki to S. Spokane St.

DUWAMISH RIVER TRAIL

This trail connects along West Marginal Way in Southwest Seattle.

MOUNTAIN TO SOUND TRAIL

This trail begins at the Seattle waterfront, and spans 100 miles to Ellensburg in Central Washington along I-90.





Stay Healthy Streets

Open to people walking, rolling, & biking, Stay Healthy Streets are designed to open more space for people to improve community and individual health and are available in most neighborhoods.



Pedestrian and Bike Bridges

Shorten your commute and safely cross busy roads using pedestrian and bike bridges that connect key areas within the city of Seattle.

JOHN LEWIS MEMORIAL BRIDGE

This bridge on the east and west sides of Interstate 5 (I-5) in Northgate and Licton Springs decreases travel time, and connects to the King County Metro bus park & ride and the Link light rail Northgate Station.

FAIRVIEW AVE N BRIDGE

This recently reconstructed bridge helps create connection between Eastlake and South Lake Union, the gateways to downtown Seattle, and makes it easier and safer for everyone to travel along Fairview Ave N. This bridge includes a protected bike lane along the West side.

PROTECTED BIKE LANES

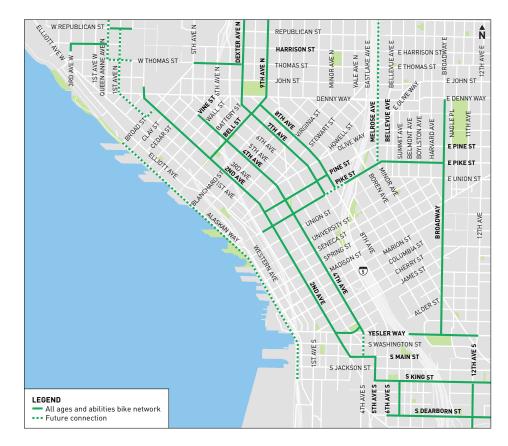
We have built new protected bike lanes throughout the city! Large projects include Westlake protected bike lane, a 1.2 mile stretch alone Westlake Ave N, the Green Lake outer loop 2-way protected bike lane around the lake, along with many other mobility improvements around Seattle neighborhoods. Learn more about what protected bike lanes consist of in the Bike Terms sections on page 25.

GREEN LAKE LOOP

While Green Lake offers a bike path next to the lake, there are also protected bike lanes around the loop itself.

CITY CENTER BIKE NETWORK

This network, shown in the map at right, shows protected bike lanes that separate vulnerable users from moving vehicles, provide safe all-ages and abilities facilities, and maintain transit priority downtown. We built this network of separated bike facilities to make biking a safer, more reliable travel choice.





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.



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 and be aware of your surroundings.



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.







What is the safest way to ride through train tracks?

To avoid getting stuck, cross the train tracks perpendicular to the direction of the train tracks, as the person in the photo below is doing.

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

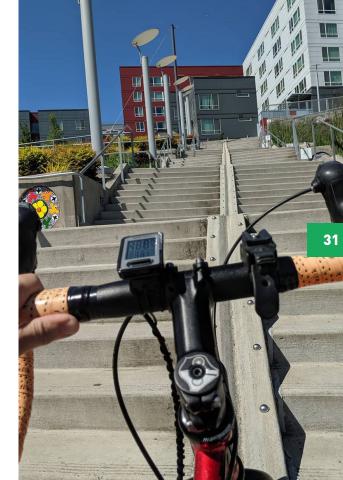


BIKING ON HILLS

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 FOR 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 exhausting your legs.
- Experienced riders know how to avoid the toughest hills. Ask a friend!
- Consider investing in an e-bike if you can.



TAKING BIKES ON PUBLIC TRANSIT

BUS

You can load your bike to the front of the bus bike rack. Let your bus driver know before loading it onto the bus.



The three position bus bike rack - How to use



LINK LIGHT RAIL TRAINS

Link light rail can accommodate 4 bikes per train car. There are also bike storage racks and/or lockers at all stations.

In each train car, there are two bicycle hooks for hanging bikes vertically. This hook area is for both luggage and bicycle storage, and is first come, first served. If the hooks are in use, one bicyclist may stand in each adjacent aisle. To use the hook, maneuver your bicycle so that the front wheel is facing the hook area. Lift the front wheel up to a vertical position, place your knee on the saddle, and use your leg to help lift the bike up onto the hook. Look out for others around you as you hang your bike.

To stand with your bicycle, stand by the doors near the hook area, restrain your bike with one hand and hold on to a secure pole or strap with the other. It may be necessary to move your bicycle around to allow other riders to get on and off or move about the train.

(source: Sound Transit)



Hook Your Bike On Link



FAMILY BIKING

TYPES OF FAMILY BIKES

- Front- and Rear-Mounted Child Seats
- Cargo Bikes and Electric Cargo Bikes
- Bike Trailers
- Trailer Bikes

Biking while pregnant? Consult with your doctor first, take it slow, and stay hydrated. Be sure to drink extra water even on short rides.





Biking with babies and toddlers (age 1-2)

Consult your pediatrician first, consider waiting until your child is 12 months old and their head is large enough to fit a helmet, take it slow and start with shorter rides until you are both comfortable. You can use a bike with a mounted seat, a trailer, or a cargo bike to bike with your baby or toddler. Once your child is a little older, they could start getting used to riding behind you on a trailer bike. Depending on your child's skill, they may be ready to start on a balance bike as a toddler, which is a small bike without pedals that allows your child to learn how to balance.

Biking with preschoolers (age 3-5)

Children ages 3 and up can start to learn how to balance on a balance or strider bike, which is a bike without pedals. A strider bike comes with pedals that can be added later, so you don't have to buy a completely new bike when they are ready to ride. Training wheels are another option for kids this age so they can learn how to pedal and develop handling skills. Neighborhood rides on the sidewalk or in a paved area at your school playground are good places to practice. You can turn your street over to kids to play and practice bicycling with a free Play Street permit. Be sure



to start talking about road safety with your child and model good bicycle safety skills, because our kids are always watching and learning from us!

TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO RIDE

When teaching your child how to ride a bike, make sure to practice in an area that is safe, like a Play Street or school playground. Lower their seat so their feet touch the ground and demonstrate how the braking system on their bike works. Before trying to pedal, have your child practice pushing off, gliding with big strides, coasting, and braking. Once they are used to

balancing and braking on their new bike, they can try using the pedals. Start with their dominant foot on the pedal at the 2 o'clock position so they can push off and gain momentum quickly. It will take many tries before they get the feel of it.

Let's Go – SDOT funds the 'Let's Go' program, which provides walking and biking safety education in PE classes for every Seattle public school student in grades 3-8. If your child attends Seattle Public Schools, they are learning the safety fundamentals included in this booklet at school.

BIKING TO SCHOOL

Biking to school is a great way to get kids familiar with routes and become comfortable cycling. Watch the Let's Go videos with your kids to cover the safety basics before heading out.

Use our walk and bike to school **maps** to plot out your route to school. Use trails, neighborhood streets including Neighborhood Greenways and Stay Healthy Streets, and protected bike lanes. Cross busy streets where there are traffic signals, stop signs, crossing beacons, marked crosswalks, or crossing guards.

- Check the weather and wear layers
- Bring water, snacks, and a first aid kit
- Start slowly to build confidence and bike single file with your child(ren) in front of you so you act as a caboose

BIKE TRAIN

Start a bike train at your school! A Bike Train involves a few parents or caregivers "picking up" students along the way to school on bikes. It's best to have one parent for every 2-3 students and front and rear adult riders to make sure children are all 'aboard' together. Cascade Bicycle Club offers **trainings** on starting a Bike Train.



RIDING 101 FAQ'S

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.

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 very 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 SIDEWALKS?

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.

Now that you know what to do,

it's time to hit the road and enjoy all that Seattle has to offer.

We want getting around by bike to be safe and relaxing for you.

Be safe and enjoy yourself.

SEE YOU OUT THERE!

RESOURCES

For more information, please visit these sites below for comprehensive information on cycling needs.

A list of Seattle's bike laws:

Seattle.gov/transportation/bikecode.htm

A list of Washington State bike laws: wabikes.org/growing-bicycling/ washington-bike-laws/

A map of Seattle's bike routes: Web6.seattle.gov/SDOT/bikeMap

A guide to family biking:

https://bikepgh.org/wp-content/uploads/ 2020/10/ BikePGH-Family-Guide-ONLINE.pdf

How to load your bike onto a Metro bus: Metro.kingcounty.gov/tops/bike How to load your bike onto a Link train: soundtransit.org/ride-with-us/know-before-you-go/ bringing-your-bike/how-to-bring-your-bike-link

Washington bikes: Wabikes.org

Cascade bicycle Club: Cascade.org

Washington State department of Transportation's biking resources:

wsdot.wa.gov/bike

If your bike is lost or stolen, you can email the Seattle Police Department at FindMybike@Seattle.gov

APPENDIX

BICYCLE SEATTLE ORGANIZATIONS

Seattle is home to organizations that support, educate, and answer individual's questions on how to use a bicycle. There are non-profits and small businesses that thrive serving the Seattle bike community. Below is a list of organizations and locations of the organization that can aid you and your biking experience.

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS-501(c)(3)

The Bikery (Hiawatha): thebikery.org/

Bike Works (Columbia City): https://bikeworks.org/

North Star Cycles (Central District): northstarcycling.org/

Cascade Bicycle Club (Magnuson Park): https://cascade.org/

BIKE SHOPS

Good Weather Bicycles & Café (Capitol Hill): https://goodweatherinseattle.com/

Montlake Bicycle Shops (Montlake): montlakebike.com/

ReCycled Cycles (U District): recycledcycles.com/

20/20 Cycles (Central District): https://2020cycle.com/home/

Gregg's Greenlake Cycles (Greenlake): greggscycles.com/

Westside Cycles (West Seattle): woodinvillebicycle.com/

Shots and Sprockets (Magnolia): https://shotsandsprockets.com/

Recreation Equipment Inc (REI) (Downtown): rei.com/stores/bike-shop



The Seattle Department of Transportation 700 5th Avenue, Suite 3800 PO Box 34996 Seattle, WA 98124-4996 (206) 684-ROAD (7623) seattle.gov/transportation

