May is National Bike Month, sponsored by the League of American Bicyclists and celebrated in communities from coast to coast. May 11-15 is Bike to Work Week. QCBC was interested in gathering statistics about bicycle commuting by our club members. Thank you to all who took time away from your bicycling to participate in the survey. For others, we hope you will find something here that will inspire you to do more commuting by bicycle in addition to miles you may already ride for recreation. No better time to start than now!

A total of 174 QCBC members responded to the survey. 54 members responded that they currently commute to work. The charts below present statistics for our work commuter members. In addition, 4 members responded that they are retired but had some pretty amazing days of commuting during their working years.

A number of members responded about experiences with other commuting. Bicycle commuting does not just mean an alternative means for getting to work!

Read on for some great reasons and advice from fellow cyclists for commuting by bicycle!
Following are responses from all survey responders to open ended questions.

**Does your employer support bicycle commuting? How?**

Here are some great ideas to take to your employer to request support for building your own bike culture!

- **$200/year subsidy!**
- Yes, assuming you can schedule outside meetings and site visits accordingly
- My wife says it is ok.
- By default. Fire station facilities are naturally set up for the commute.
- We are trying to convince Project Now to install bike racks on buses they use for the Route 84 Express.
- Provide secure rack, showers, locker rooms, & fitness programs.
- Bike racks and employee locker room/showers.
- Racks, changing and shower areas, lockers.
- Racks, inside storage, showers and lockers.
- Racks at some facilities, locker rooms with showers.
- Bike racks are available. However, not all locations have shower/changing facilities.
- Bike racks, changing lockers
- Providing an indoor area to park my bicycle
- Can keep bike in office
- Space to park bikes and multiple other cyclists in office
- I helped design bike racks still in use at the plant
- Racks for bike available.
- Provide a place to park my bike
- Not really. We have a small bike rack available, but that's it.
- In concept, yes. Not too much is done concretely.
- Minimally
- Too many “NO” responses!
What is your primary reason for commuting by bike?

The following reasons are listed in order of number of times responses recurred. Exercise was by far the number one reported reason but LOTS of other GREAT reasons to leave the car parked at home and use your bike instead!

- Exercise with a cause
- Health - Mental and Physical
- Two Wheels are more fun
- Weight Control
- Transportation miles + recreation miles = more miles
- Save Cost
- Stress Relief
- Better for Environment
- Active transportation is part of a healthy lifestyle
- Because I have the time and it is what I do
- It's a great way to start the day
- It's so much more relaxing than driving
- Support biking
- It is generally a more peaceful experience
- It's quiet, No Stress, No Traffic
- To eliminate one car
- Enjoying the river in the morning, reduce stress
- Relaxation

What other benefits to biking to work have you experienced that you were not expecting?

Regardless of the primary reason for commuting, a bunch more benefits were reported. Contemplate these benefits in case you have not already been convinced to join the commuting sub-culture.

- Actually faster than riding public transportation most days.
- Answering a lot of questions: Isn't it cold out? Did you ride your bike today? Etc
- Better mood
- Camaraderie among others cyclists.
- Cheaper
- Clear mind and reduce stress.
- Contentedness, stamina, back improvement, economic.
- Don't worry about parking; allows a "cool down" from work frustrations on way home
- Easy way to build miles for longer rides, and maintain cycling preparedness over winter.
- Drastically reduced miles on my car
- Freedom
- Greater stress relief at the end of the day
- Greater hunger.
- I get to spend more time on a bike
- I ride after work more because I have my bike with me already
- I'm relaxed by the time I get home
- In the winter about 20 bald eagles will fly alongside the bike behind the old case plant.
- Increased energy and productivity.
- Encouraged children to ride when they saw me riding.
- I've crossed paths with large bullfrogs, turtles, snakes, deer, coyote, owls, crawfish, eagles.
- Learning more about streets/neighborhoods. Discovering restaurants etc. that I wouldn't have noticed/seen if driving a car.
- Less stress - don't have to deal with driving in traffic, parking, catching the bus from parking lot to work.
- Less wear and tear on car
Meeting other bicyclers and sparking conversations about bicycling.
Met lots of good people.
No other benefits other than physical fitness, peace and not answering the telephone
Noticing more things in my neighborhood
Noticing others doing the same thing!
Prepared me for 11 RAGBRAI's, and 17 TOMRV's
Prompts me to better 'plan' my travel, errands, trips
Psychological and environmental benefits
Relaxation
Respect of co-workers.
Save money on gas.
See lots of friends bikin'
Site seeing
Some spectacular mornings on Duck Creek path
Stayed in shape
Talking to people.
Travelling by bike seems to put me in a better mood compared to driving a car. Car related expenses have been significantly reduced. I've set a positive example for my co-workers and some of them have starting biking to work on occasion.
Try to get others active
Watching the seasons change. Increased familiarity with new streets, subdivisions and construction (beneficial for my job). Meeting other commuters.
Helps my running
Keeps the rest of the worlds issues at bay
Learned more about wear and tear on bikes
Learned about the challenges and beauty of all seasons on the road
Positive interaction with other citizens out exercising
Realized the need for better bicycle infrastructure
Made new friends
Hill climbing
Very alert at work all day. Feel safer on the bike paths and city streets than highways. Co-workers admiration

What advice do you have for others who may want to start commuting by bicycle?

Have you often thought about commuting by bike but just did not feel comfortable? Well, heed some advice from experienced commuters.

- Backpacks can be very hot on your back - consider saddlebags if you have a laptop to carry.
- Be aware of your surroundings
- Be careful, everyone is in a hurry and does not want to be unconvincing by a bike.
- Be safe, keep an eye on everyone else.
- Be smart and wear reflective clothing and use strobes and red flashers.
- Be visible. Lights and reflective apparel. Dress for the weather you’re riding in. Look out for critters!
- Best advice is to help them realize that it does not substantially increase commute time
- Buy a bike that fits you, take your time and enjoy the ride
- Check your planned route ahead of time in broad daylight. Always pack a light snack, like cliff bar. Get a tire pump (not canned air).
- Choose a lightly traveled route (even if it is a little longer). Don't give up. It can be difficult at first. Eventually you will just be the crazy bike person (and that isn't bad)
- Do it
Don't worry about having "right" gear; bring Kleenex; don't ride on ice
Dress in the clothes you plan to wear for the day.
Dust off that and scwheenn in the garage and just try it. And wear a helmet.
Easier to do than you think; additional bike paths make it safer
Enjoy riding
Ensure that your employer supports you by allowing you to provide an adequate and reasonable place to park/lock up your bicycle.
Find a route - even if it's out of the way - that is as safe as you can find.
Find a safe route and increase visibility with plenty of lights and high-vis clothing.
Get a copy of the QC bicycling map and do it!
Get a good light and start early before traffic picks up.
Get organized the night before, it's too easy to put it off because you ran out of time in the morning.
Get panniers to carry stuff
Get started, and buy gear to support your ride. Don't blow a ton of money up front.
Good lights; ride defensively
Have a place to change clothes when you get to work.
Have an extra change of clothes at work in case of puddles, mud, accident, etc.
Helmet! Just get started, any ride is better than no ride.
If your commute to work is a short distance, it doesn't take that much more time to ride.
Install your best set of tires.
It’s a great way to get around
It's easier than it looks, all you have to do is leave the house a couple minutes earlier. And get Active Wipes if your work doesn’t have showers.

Just do it! I keep a coat and tie in my office for days when I need them, and carry a clean shirt and slacks in my back pack.
Just try it! Just once! Just for one or two weeks!
Live close enough so you can commute, 3-8 miles
Make an arrangement to store clothes to change into and a place for a shower
Make sure people can see you.
Map your route ahead of time and be weather smart
Obey all traffic laws; don't cross intersections until you see the driver's eyes.
If your commute is just too far, drive and park your car and ride part way.
Plan ahead - choose a safe route.
Get a good, dependable bike. That makes all the difference.
Plan on not being in a hurry - always use a bike bag or string bag. Seems like common sense but I've seen lots not doing that.
Plan your routes, plan your clothing, use good gear if transporting items and use appropriate lighting.
See if it is safe to ride in your town.
Spend the money on good equipment. Lights, etc.
Start at one or two days a week and stash some clothes at work.
Start out slowly in decent weather, don't overdo it, get your bike tuned up, use the QC bike map + Google Earth to plan safe routes [use residential streets as much as possible avoid most major arterial streets], Don't use the Duck Creek trail in winter, get a backpack or panniers to carry your stuff, carry a few basic tools and a spare inner-tube, wear bright colors to be seen (e.g. neon yellow), run bright rear and front flashers in DAYTIME as well as night time, inform your family members and/or co-workers of your travel routes, carry a fully charged cell
phone in your pocket and, if you must talk while riding use a Blue-tooth headset, register your bike with the city, securely lock your bike (U-lock is best) any time you leave it unattended, ALWAYS wear a helmet, ride defensively, follow applicable traffic laws, dress comfortably and carry work clothes in your bag, don't treat your commute like the Tour de France, consult more experienced commuters and on-line resources for additional advice.

- Start out with no expectations, don't worry about the time it is going to take you, and enjoy the feeling of starting your day outside and getting that adrenaline going to start the day.
- Start riding for leisure first
- Start slow, don't burn yourself out. Commute 1 day a week to start when you can do that without being tired and sore then do 2 days a week eventually you will get to 5 days a week.
- Start with one day a week when the weather is great
- Studded tires are a must in the winter.
- Take advantage of the many bike paths being added, particularly in Bettendorf.
- Think about what you will need, where you can change etc - just plan ahead
- Try it you will like. Be respectful of the traffic lights.
- Wear a helmet and have proper lights and follow rules of the road.
- Wear bright, reflective clothing.

- Wear safety equipment.
- Stop at stop signs
- Scout the route(s) Short route on way in and long one on way back
- Take at least one major hill each day so you can use your commuting as a base for longer rides
- Ride as often as possible.
- Have two headlights...one as a back up
- Light gloves and hooded rain gear, helmet cover
- Tire pump with a gauge, Tire levers 3, spare tube 2, patches
- Floor pump at home with easy to read dial
- Check your bike in the morning about 1/2 hour before leaving to make sure a tire didn't go flat during the night.
- Carry bus money if you are along a bus route
- Use your tire quick release lever for a tire lever in an emergency if you forgot to pack one.
- Carry three energy bars
- Two rear flashers on seat stay
- Bell on your bike...still pass persons on bike path at a speed you can make a sudden stop if necessary
- Take a pre-ride so you can see how long it would normally take to arrive
- Try routes on your off days so you know long it takes, how you feel, what you require for transition time before and after the ride. Have a back-up plan if you run into bad weather, traffic issues, etc. that will delay your commute.
**What other commuting do you do by bike?**

Lots of biking going on by QCBC members and not just for recreation and work! Now is your time to become a commuter too, if you are not already. Just jump on your bike next time you need to tool around town!

Bicycle commuting does not just mean an alternative means for getting to work! Some examples of other bicycling jaunts our QCBC members are making.

- Bank
- Car service - drop-off for repairs and pick-up.
- Coffee shop, or small items at Home Depot or Hobby Lobby
- Commute to group bike rides
- General errands around town
- I rent a big garden plot in summer and bike over to work on it
- Medical/dental appointments, shopping, continuing Ed classes
- Movie store
- My grandson's school.
- Post office
- Recycling
- Shopping
- To the Y
- Too many brewery trips! Exercising the dog in the fields with the Fat bike.
- Visiting family and friend
- Neighborhood events
**Anything else you want to share?**

Some great comments to finish with!

- Thank you, QCBC, for all you do! What a great organization!
- A person riding a bike see and hear things one does not see or hear driving a vehicle
- As more towns become bike friendlier this is becoming easier
- Bicycle commuting is a wonderful solution for multiple issues - Health, environmental, oil dependence, economics, road congestion, noise, etc.
- **Bicycling has changed my life!**
- Davenport roads especially Jersey Ridge are terrible to ride on.
- **Enjoy life!**
- Get off busy streets and use bike paths as much as possible.
- Good gear for adverse weather really helps on the rainy and snowy days
- I had to ride on streets and highways. Now there are bike trails from my house to the plant. Good show!
- It would be great if there were tax benefits to businesses that offered lockers, showers, and safe bike storage
- Just keep up the good work to educate non cyclists. Too many people still yell at me to get on the bike path - obviously bike paths don’t lead to all work places!
- Only ride to work if it is safe to do so.
- Own only one bike at this time, might consider another with lights and reflectors for night riding.
- **QCBC rocks!**
- Stay upright and have fun in the early hours of your day.
- Thanks for the survey. I typically feel like the club is more interested in the athletic and long-distance aspects of biking than things just like fun and riding around the town. Even the casual rides are (at least as posted) too fast for me to join in.
- Tx for surveying!
- We need better on and off street bike trails in Davenport! On street riding becomes more dangerous every day as there are more and more distracted drivers. North-South bike commuting in Davenport is difficult. East-west bike commuting in Davenport is difficult north of Duck Creek Trail.
- Would highly recommend biking to work when you can.
- Would like to see more bike lanes in davenport - Division St., Eastern Ave, Kimberly, 53rd for example
- **Commuting by bicycle will put more Life in your Life!**
- Stressing a bit about what part of my route will be shut down this year due to street/bridge construction.
- I support QCBC advocating for us commuters whose transportation needs should not come a distant second to auto rerouting. Thanks for all you do!

*Hope these responses have motivated you to start cycling to work during Bike Month!!*

*Thanks again to all who contributed to the QCBC Commuter Survey!*