

# Study: Cyclists will come if there are bike lanes to ride in

By Brad Plumer, Washington Post

Is there anything cities can do to encourage cycling? Portland, for instance, has twice as many bike commuters per 1,000 people as Washington. But maybe that's just because Portland has nicer weather or more young people. It's not clear that there's an actual policy issue here.

Yet in a new study in the journal *Transport Policy*, Ralph Buehler and John Pucher suggest that cities might actually be able to influence how many cyclists are on the road. Perhaps all they have to do is – and this shouldn't come as a huge surprise – build more bike lanes and bike paths.

Buehler and Pucher found that the presence of off-road bike paths and on-street bike lanes were, by far, the biggest determinant of cycling rates in cities. And that's true even after you control for a variety of other factors like how hot or cold a city is, how much rain falls, how dense the city is, how high gas prices are, the type of people that live there, or how safe it is to cycle. None of those things seem to matter quite as much. The results, the authors write, “are consistent with the hypothesis that bike lanes and bike paths encourage cycling.”

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