

# Opinion: Cycling is important aspect of transportation

By Paul Gaffney, Via

While I do work for an auto club, I still ride a bike. I'm happy to report that I'm not alone. Cycling is on the rise in most parts of the country. People ride for fun, for exercise, and, increasingly, just to get from here to there. According to a Rutgers University study, the number of bike commuters in the United States grew 64 percent over the past two decades.

The two-wheeled, self-propelled commute is especially strong in major cities such as New York, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Portland, pushed on by improvements in cycling infrastructure and bike-friendly public policies and programs. In San Francisco, where an annual city bike count shows a 71 percent jump over the last five years, riders benefit from such initiatives as Sunday Streets, which closes certain streets to cars and opens them to bicycles and other people-powered modes of transportation.



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“There’s also no discounting the importance of word of mouth,” says Kit Hodge, deputy director of the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, a nonprofit advocacy group. “People are seeing their friends, family, and coworkers ride, and it’s just becoming part of their lives.”

May is National Bike Month, but don't let the calendar limit when you ride. With the current price of gas, cycling is good for your wallet. It's also good for your health and good for the environment. It might even put you in a better mood. There's something liberating about hopping on a bike that brings back a freewheeling sensation of childhood and learning to fly without training wheels.

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