

Project Title: Analysis of Bicycling Trends and Policies in Large North American Cities: Lessons for New York

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Summer Streets in 2008 and 2009

Source: Pucher, Thorwaldson, Buehler, Klein, 2010, "Cycling in New York," *World Transport Policy and Practice*, 2010.

This research report reviews trends in cycling levels, safety, and policies in large North American cities over the past two decades. We analyze aggregate national data as well as city-specific case study data for nine large cities (Chicago, Minneapolis, Montréal, New York, Portland, San Francisco, Toronto, Vancouver, and Washington, DC).

Cycling levels have increased in both the USA and Canada, while cyclist fatalities have fallen. The number of bike commuters in the USA rose by 64% from 1990 to 2009, and the bike share of commuters rose from 0.4% to 0.6%. Over the shorter period from 1996 to 2006, the number of bike commuters in Canada rose by 42%, and the bike share of commuters rose from 1.1% to 1.3%. From 1988 to 2008, cycling fatalities fell by 66% in Canada and by 21% in the USA; serious injuries fell by 40% in Canada and by 31% in the USA.

There is much spatial variation and socioeconomic inequality in cycling rates. The bike share of work commuters is more than twice as high in Canada as in the USA, and is higher in the western parts of both countries. Cycling is concentrated in central cities, especially near universities and in gentrified neighborhoods near the city center. Almost all the growth in cycling in the USA has been among men between 25-64 years old, while cycling rates have remained steady among women and fallen sharply for children.

Cycling rates have risen much faster in the nine case study cities than in their countries as a whole, at least doubling in all the cities since 1990 (see detailed graph on following page). The case study cities have implemented a wide range of infrastructure and programs to promote cycling and increase cycling safety: expanded and improved bike lanes and paths, traffic calming, parking, bike-transit integration, bike sharing, training programs, and promotional events. Portland's comprehensive package of cycling policies has succeeded in raising cycling levels 6-fold and provides an example that other North American cities can follow.

Although cycling has almost doubled in New York City since 1990, it lags far behind the other case study cities in almost every respect. It has the lowest bike share of commuters, the highest cyclist fatality and injury rate, and the lowest rate of cycling by women. New York has built the most bikeways of any North American city since 2000 and has been especially innovative in its use of cycle tracks, buffered bike lanes, bike traffic signals, bike boxes, and sharrowed streets. Yet New York has almost completely failed in the important areas of bike-transit integration and cyclist rights and falls far short on bike parking and cycling training.



9th Avenue cycle track in Manhattan

Source: Pucher, Thorwaldson, Buehler, Klein, "Cycling in New York," *World Transport Policy and Practice*, 2010.

Moreover, the refusal of New York's police to protect bike lanes from blockage by motor vehicles has compromised cyclist safety. New York has much to learn from the other case study cities, which have

implemented far more comprehensive, integrated package of mutually reinforcing policies to promote cycling.

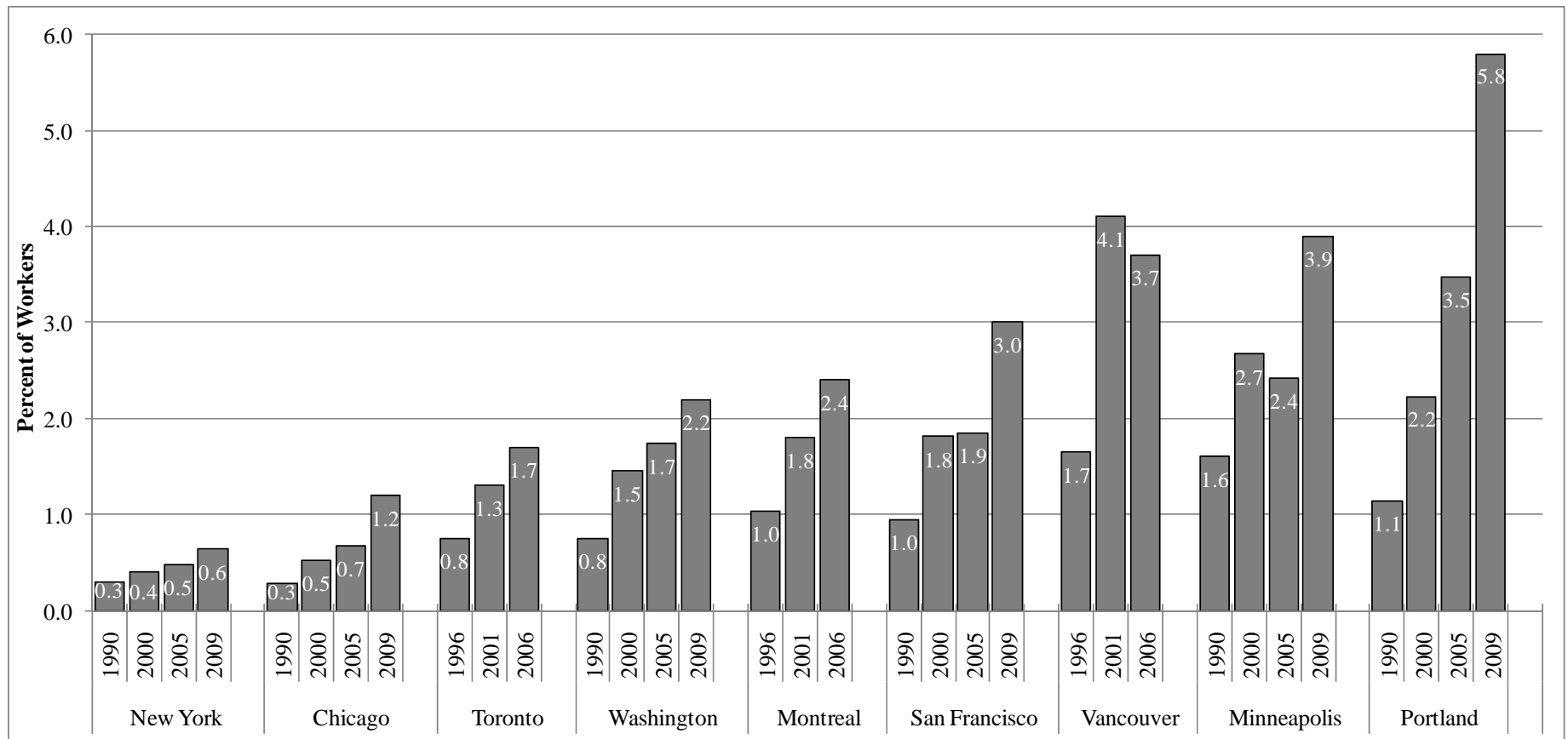
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Link to the Study Report: <http://utrc2.org/research/assets/176/Analysis-Bike-Final1.pdf>





Trend in Share of Workers Commuting by Bike in Large North American Cities, 1990-2009. *Source: Pucher, J., Buehler, R. "Analysis of Bicycling Trends and Policies in Large North American Cities: Lessons for New York," Report for UTRC/USDOT, March 2011. For full report see: [Link to the Study Report: http://utrc2.org/research/assets/176/Bicycle-Brief1.pdf](http://utrc2.org/research/assets/176/Bicycle-Brief1.pdf)*