

Bike to Work Day

Austin, TX

2012





Introduction

The League of National Bicyclists started the first National Bike Month in May 1956. Since then Bike Month has promoted safe cycling and encouraged new riders to bike to work.

In Austin, Bike to Work Day is organized by the Austin Cycling Association and takes place on the third Friday in May.

The 2012 Bike to Work Day in Austin offered dozens of morning and afternoon commuting stations for participants to rest, enjoy refreshments and snacks, and meet fellow commuters and local bike-friendly businesses.

For more information about biking to work you can visit these websites:

<http://biketoworkaustin.org>
<http://www.bikeleague.org>
<http://www.austincycling.org>

Bike to Work Survey

In order to learn more about what worked and what didn't at the 2012 Bike to Work Day event a survey was created and emailed to all the participants. 248 participants took the survey and the following report analyzes their answers.

Thanks to the comments from many of the Bike to Work Day participants we have a better idea about how to make next year's event even more successful!

“Although more than half of the U.S. population lives within five miles of their workplace, lack of knowledge and incentive has deterred many from commuting by bike. Hundreds of U.S. cities have been successful in increasing bicycle commuters by offering enticements on Bike to Work Day.”

- <http://biketoworkaustin.org>



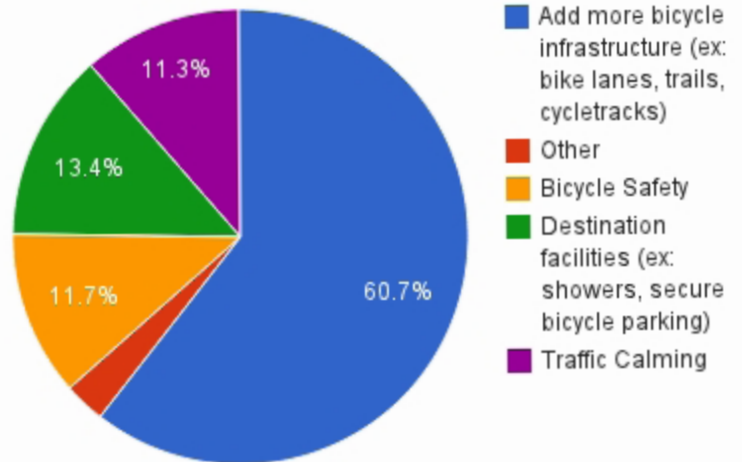
1. How can we get more people to bike to work?

Most participants agree that adding more bicycle infrastructure is the best way to encourage more people to bike to work.

The majority of respondents in 2011 and 2010 also expressed that adding more bicycle infrastructure, such as bike lanes and separated bike paths, proves the best solution.

Fun Facts:

Bicycle-commuting to work is on the rise! In 1990 the U.S. Census Bureau reported 466,856 Americans bike to work. In 2000 that number rose a little to 488,497. In 2010 the number of bicycle commuters rose by about 50% to 730,000 (LAB).



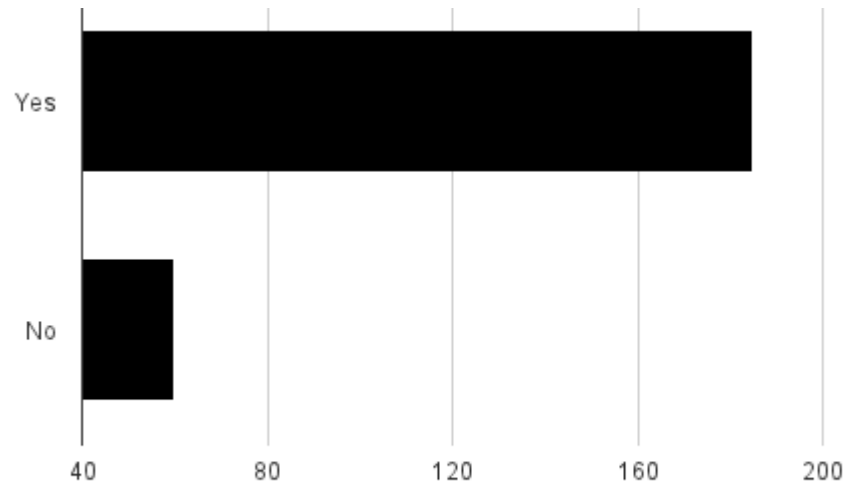
According to the Census Bureau's 2010 American Community Survey, the following cities have the largest percentages of people who bike to work (Maciag):

1. Davis, CA
2. Boulder, CO
3. Eugene, OR
4. Berkeley, CA
5. Cambridge, MA
6. Santa Barbara, CA
7. Madison, WI
8. Gainesville, FL
9. Portland, OR
10. Iowa City, Iowa



2. Would you consider yourself a regular bike commuter (riding a bicycle more than one time to a destination per week)?

Sixty participants responded “no” to Question 2. Last year participants were asked about their commuting experience and 130 responded as new or non-commuter cyclists.



Fun Facts:

Currently, over 6,000 Austinites bike to work.

In 2008, the city of Denver, CO reported that over 10,000 people tried biking to work for the first time during a city-sponsored event.

The city of Chicago, IL hosts “Car v. Bus v. Bike Commuter Races” in which these competing modes of transportation start and end at the same points during rush hour. The bicyclist always wins.

Other suggestions:

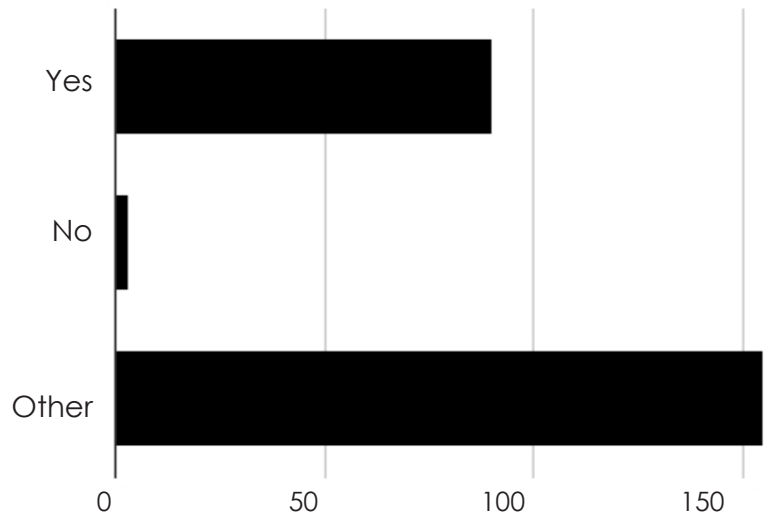
In 2010 participants were asked if route planning assistance would help encourage them to bicycle commute. Twenty-one percent replied “Definitely” but the majority replied “It would not matter/I plan my own.”



3. If not, would you consider bike commuting at least one day per week?

The majority of participants responded “Other.” This is largely due to the fact that most respondents already bicycle commute. However, other participants expressed sentiment ranging from seasonal habits to more specific reasons like the one shown on the right.

In 2010 participants were asked how important showers and secure bicycle parking at their place of employment would be for encouraging them to bike to work. Forty-one percent replied that showers were already provided and twenty-eight percent replied “It would make a big difference.” For secure bicycle parking twenty-nine percent replied it is already provided and twenty-one



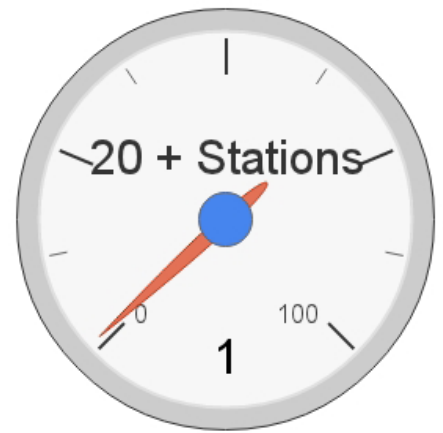
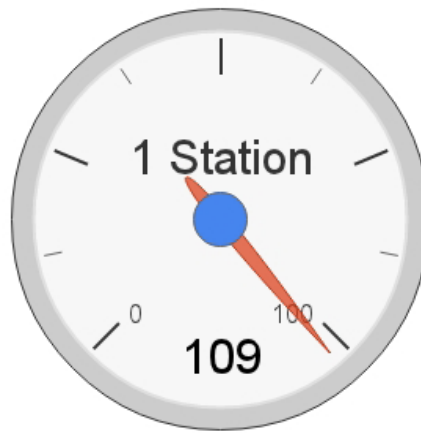
One testimony:

“I used to bike to work every day. But my new job is too scary to get to on the existing roads. Crossing 183 and cycling in the Braker/Metric area is terrifying. I would gladly go back to bike commuting if the city improved the cycling infrastructure north of 183.”

percent responded “It would make a big difference.” However, as observed from Question 1 in the 2012, 2011 and 2010 surveys bicycle infrastructure remains the singular most important factor for encouraging people to bike to work.



4. On Bike to Work Day, how many stations did you visit?



Map courtesy of biketoworkaustin.org

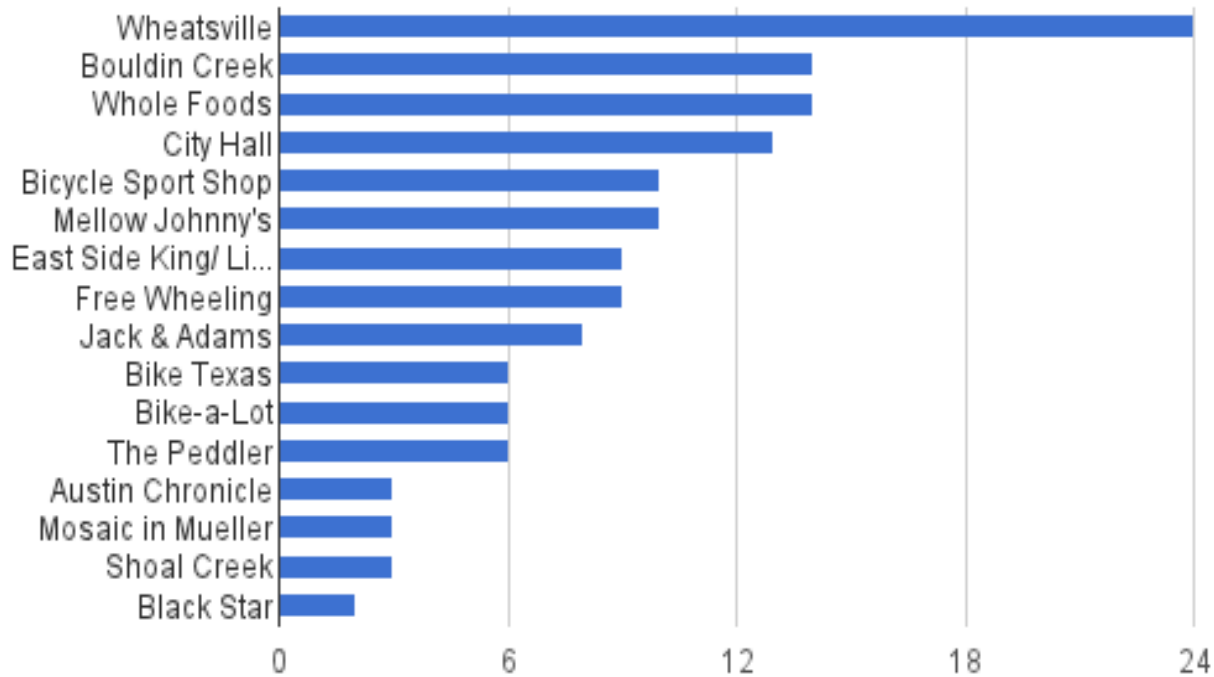
Most participants visited one station. These stations are represented by a yellow apple and jug (morning) or a martini glass (afternoon). For more information visit biketoworkaustin.org.

- Ghisallo Foundation @ Blue Dahlia Bistro
- Ghisallo Foundation @ Dolce VitaMorning
- Ghisallo Foundation @ Nelo's Cycles
- Austin Chronicle Offices
- Rocket Electrics
- Mueller @ Mosaic Apartments
- Jack & Adam's Bicycles
- City Hall
- Beat the Clock Messengers @ The Liberty
- Whole Foods Market on Lamar
- Freewheeling Bicycles
- Please Be Kind to Cyclists @ Bouldin Creek Cafe
- Clown Dog Bikes
- Wheatsville Co-Op
- Ozone Bike Department
- BikeTexas
- Bicycle Sport Shop, South Lamar
- Castle Hill Specialized Fitness
- Capitol Metro @ Saltillo Plaza
- League of Bicycle Voters
- Mellow Johnny's Bike Shop
- AJ's Cyclery
- The Peddler Bike Shop
- Caffe Medici 200 Congress Ave
- Bicycle Sport Shop Parmer
- LOBV @ Black Star Co-op Pub & Brewery
- BikeALot



5. Which station had the best food?

Refreshments are key to any good event. Sure enough, participants expressed enthusiasm and dismay regarding the Bike to Work stations.



Two things to improve on for next year:

A handful of participants did not know how many stations they were or where they were. Some stations did not have many vegetarian options or ran out too quickly. We need to work on communication/advertisement of stations and vegetarian options!

Other responses:

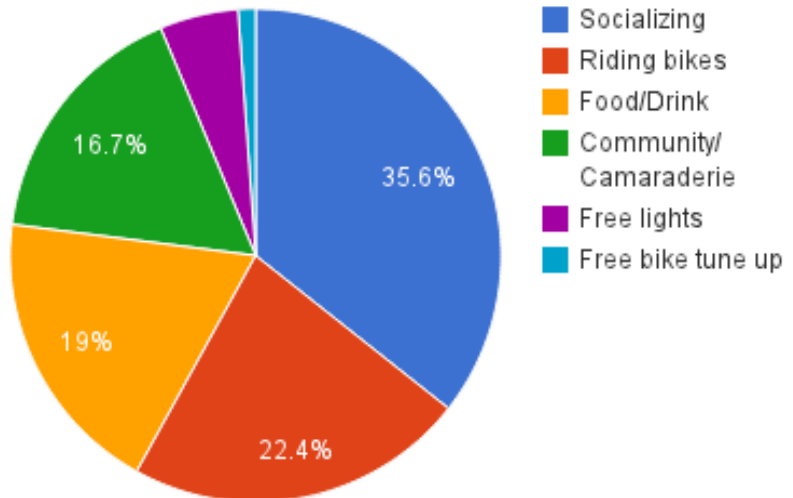
- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| Blue Dahlia | Banister Lane |
| Medici | Pine St. Station |
| Rocket Bikes | Packsaddle |



6. What was your favorite part of Bike to Work day?

There were a lot of enthusiastic responses for Question 6. Overall, participants expressed that they enjoyed the event because of the camaraderie formed around a simple pleasure—biking to work.

Apart from the social aspect of the event about twenty-two percent responded they enjoyed riding their bike and about the same percentage of responses expressed enthusiasm about the free food, beverages and bike lights.



“Seeing how many cyclists there were who biked to work.”

“The celebratory and self-congratulatory aspect of it. It makes you feel good inside and lets you share the joy with others”

“There should be a bike to work day once a month.”

“Employee camaraderie”

“Demystified the experience...it was easy.”



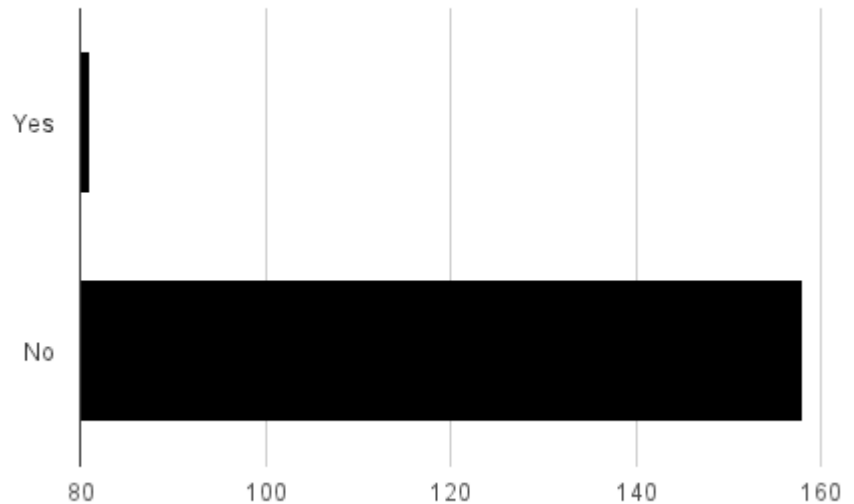
7. Was your company involved in Bike to Work Day?

In the survey last year participants suggested we contact major employers in the area so they could advertise within their organization.

This year, out of the 248 surveyed participants, 80 affirmed their company was involved in Bike to Work Day, 158 responded “no” and 10 left this question blank. Clearly we need to communicate more effectively or create interesting incentives to get more companies to participate.

Fun Fact:

Many cities, like Salem, OR, host “commuter challenges” in which businesses compete to have the highest



percentage of employees who pledge to Bike to Work every day of bike week. Companies that provide bicycle-related infrastructure or amenities such as bicycle parking and showers are awarded bonus points.

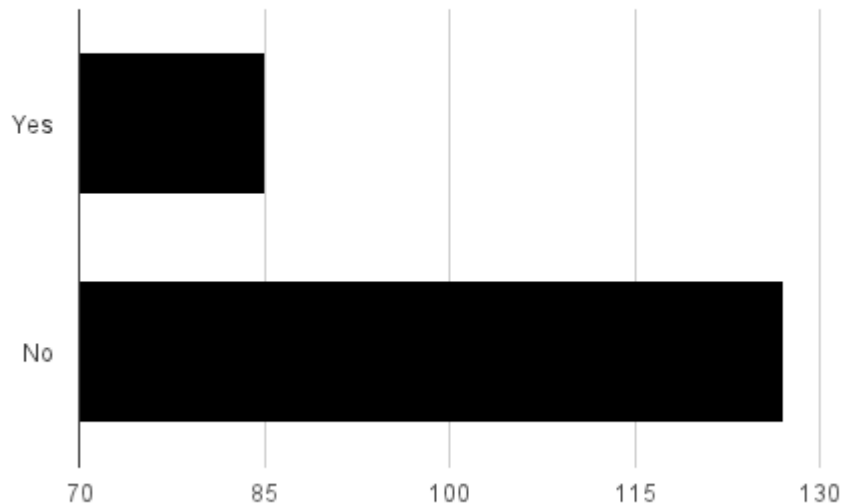


8. Did other companies/businesses offer incentives (for example, a 10% discount) for participants of Bike to Work Day?

The majority of participants responded “no” to this question. There should be better coordination with companies in Austin to make Bike to Work Day more appealing and rewarding.

Improvement for next year:

We need to get more companies/businesses to show their support for Bike to Work Day by offering incentives to participants.



Other incentives to bike to work:

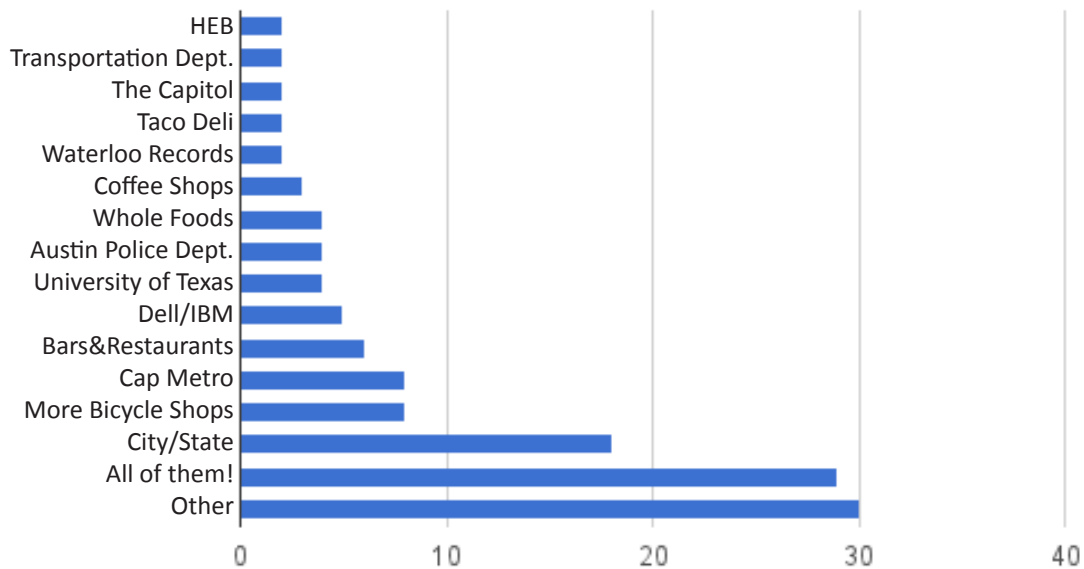
- It builds morale, encourages camaraderie, and is a great way to get active in your community.
- It's healthy and provides an efficient way to get some exercise and be outside
- You can reduce your carbon footprint, reduce traffic congestion and save money



9. What companies/ organizations would you like to see participate in Bike to Work Day?

“More on the eastside”

“More downtown companies”



Other responses:

Alamo Drafthouse
Public Library
The Domain
Lifeworks
LCRA
Food trailers

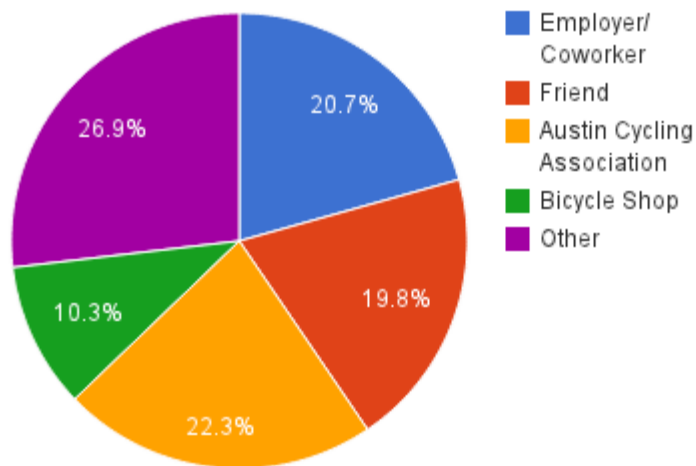
Twenty-nine participants expressed that they would like “all companies” to participate, four responded “everyone” and two wrote “as many as possible.” Several commented on wanting to see all the big companies in the Austin area participate. Clearly, participants want more companies/organizations to participate in Bike to Work Day!



10. How did you hear about Bike to Work Day?

Many participants heard about Bike to Work Day through their place of employment, a friend, ACA or a bicycle shop. However, there were a large number of “Other” ways in which participants heard about the event. These ranged from city advertisements, radio, newspaper, League Of Bicycling Voters, Yellow Bike to seeing a station while cycling by.

Last year participants were asked how we can better publicize the event. Suggestions included maintaining Austin Chronicle Ads, Bike Month Guide and ads in the Statesman but also exploring radio such as KUT and local TV stations.



4 participants heard about the event from the Austin Chronicle or Statesman.

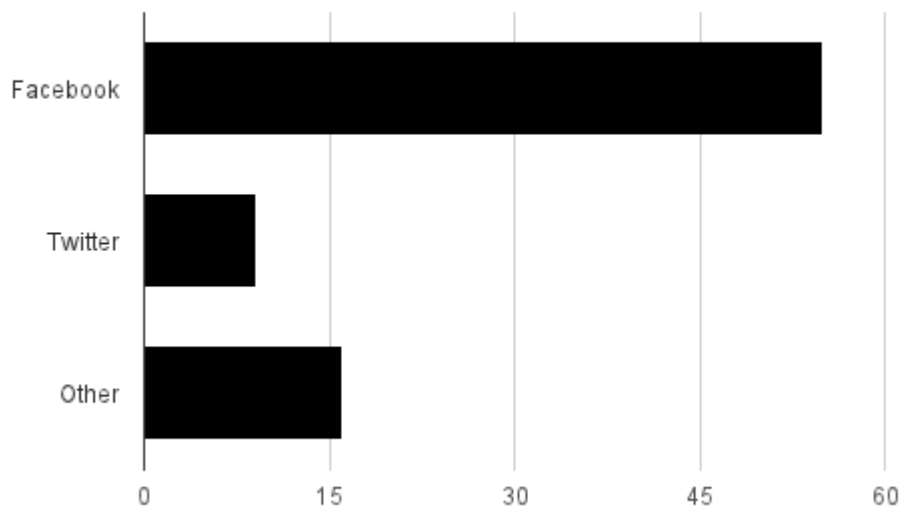
3 participants heard about the event from the radio.



11. Did you learn about the Bike to Work Day event through social media? If so, which one did you see?

Last year surveyed participants suggested that we better utilize social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

This year 91% of the participants who responded to this question wrote they learned about the event through social media. 167 participants left this question blank, 74 participants responded they learned about the event through social media and 7 wrote that they did not learn about the event through social media. Facebook was by far the most utilized, with over 50 participants having seen the event via Facebook.



Other responses:

email

internet

web site

work

text message

word of mouth

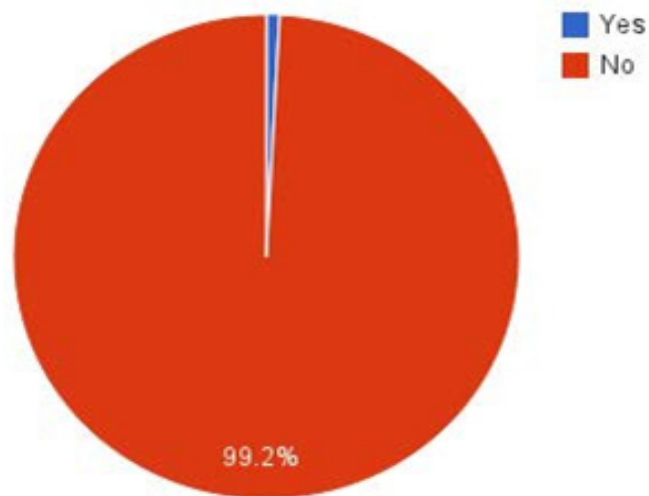
www.muellercommunity.com



12. Did you hear Lance Armstrong's Public Service Announcement about Bike to Work Day on the radio?

In the survey last year we asked participants how we could better advertise the Bike to Work Day event. Suggestions included enhancing advertisement through social media, TV and radio. One specifies the utilization of radio such as KUT during rush hour when people commute by car.

For Bike to Work Day 2012 the legendary Austinite Lance Armstrong recorded a Public Service Announcement on the radio. Out of the 238 participants who responded to this question only 2 responded "yes" to having heard it. 236 replied "no."



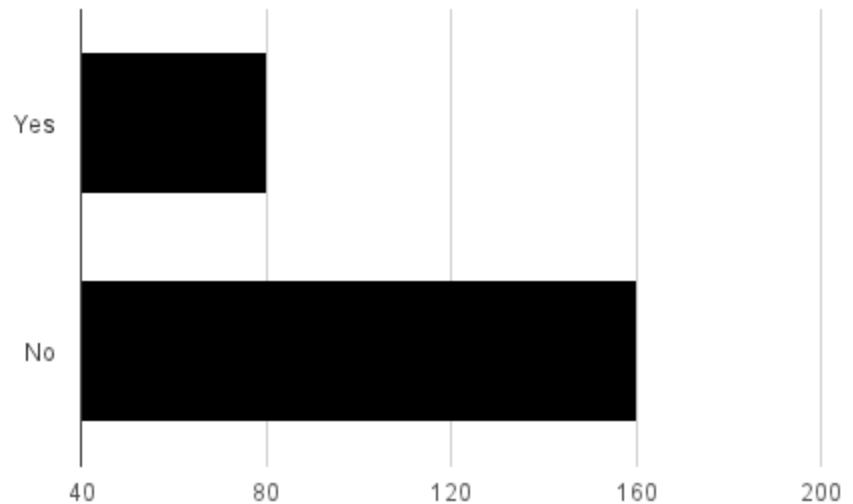
Less than 1% of participants heard Lance Armstrong's Public Service Announcement.



13. Did you see The Bike to Work Day street banners?

While the majority of this year's participants did not see the street banners it is an improvement from last year. We cannot aim for everyone to see the banners since a lot of people do not go downtown but we would like to increase awareness and visibility of the banners.

Considering the results of Questions 12 and 13 we need to be more strategic with how we publicize the Bike to Work Day event. Regarding Question 12, perhaps we should consider which radio station, time of day and frequency as factors. For Question 13, perhaps we should consider the location of the banners, the design and how long the banner is on display.

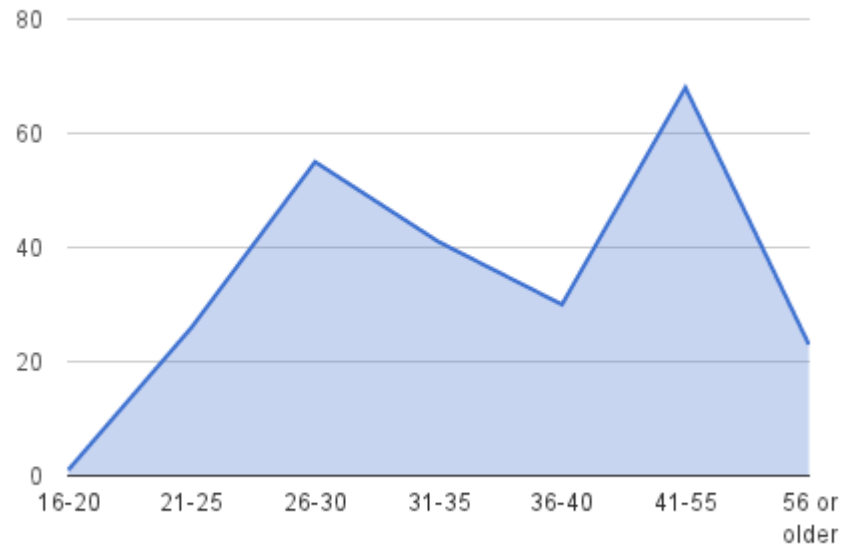


In response to Question 10 one participant reported having learned about the Bike to Work Day event by seeing the street banner. Success!



14. How old are you?

Most participants fell into the 41-55 age range category. While there is not a lot of data on the average age of cyclists here or around the country the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau provides some relevant data.



Fun Facts:

According to 2010 estimates, about 730,000 Americans bike to work, representing a 50% increase from 2000. This increase in bicycling is largely seen in metropolitan areas, densely populated areas and university towns (Maciag).

Questions 15 and 16 ask where you live and where you work. It's important for us to understand these patterns so we can provide adequate bicycle infrastructure.

Top 5 Residential Zip Codes

1. 78704
2. 78702
3. 78751
4. 78745
5. 78741

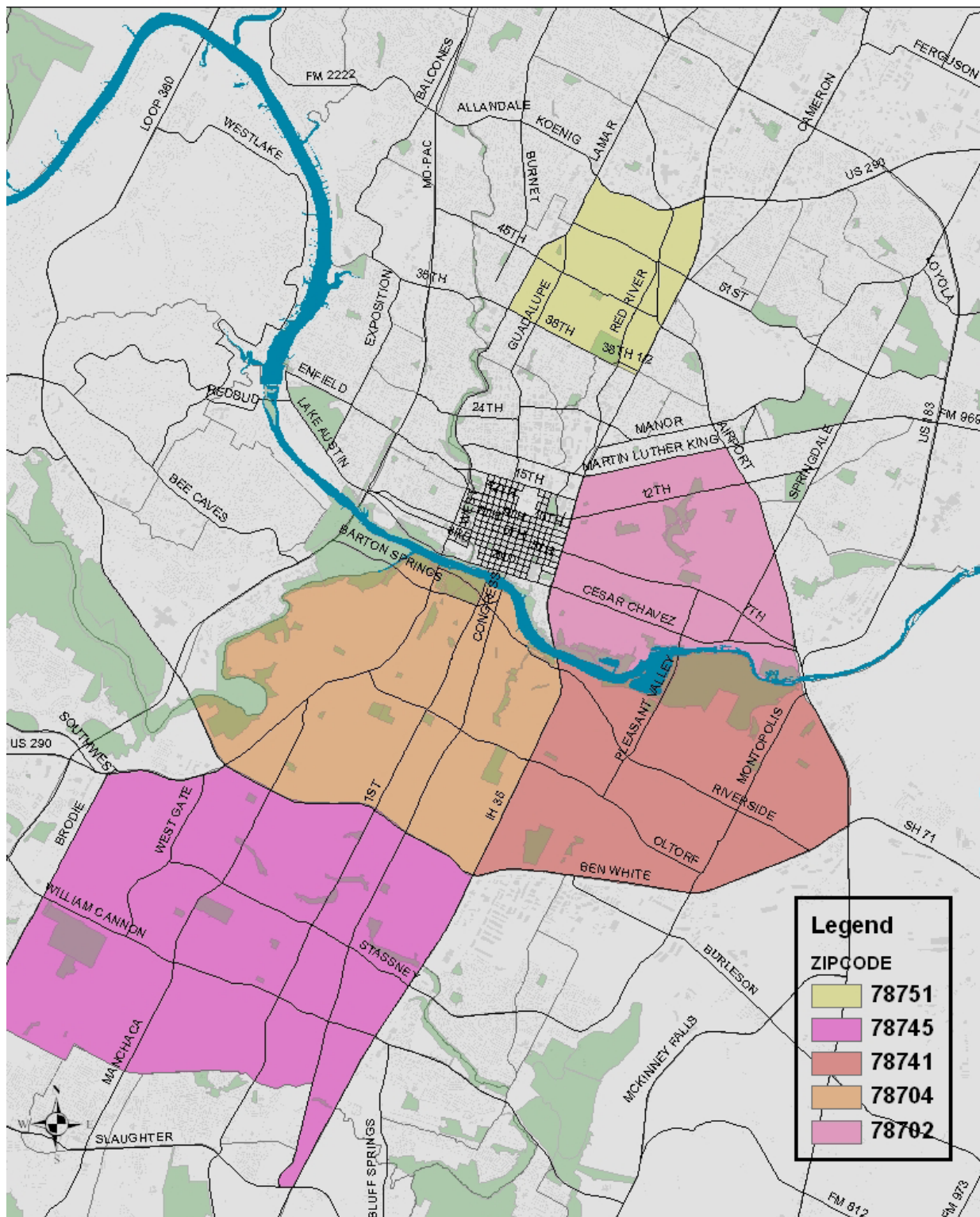
Top 5 Work Zip Codes

1. 78701
2. 78704
3. 78746
4. 78703
5. 78759



15. In which zip code do you live?

Top 5 Zip Codes in which People Live





Conclusions

Bike to Work Day 2012 was a great success! We had more participants, more first-time commuters and overall did a better job of publicizing the event. As always there is room for improvement and based on the survey results next year's event should aim for three areas of improvement:

Bike to Work stations

- Better information on Bike to Work station sponsors and locations
- More vegetarian food options

Company/Organization involvement

- More companies/organizations and more incentives!

Publicizing the event

- More savvy advertising—radio in particular.

Thank you to all who participated in the Bike to Work Day survey. Thanks to your feedback we have a better idea on how to make next year's event an even greater success!

References

Bike to Work Austin

Bike to Work Survey (Thank you Google Docs!)

City GIS data

League of American Bicyclists

Maciag, Mike. "Bicycle Commuting Gains Traction in Cities." *Governing*. April 11, 2012.

<http://www.governing.com/blogs/by-the-numbers/bicycle-commuter-data-for-american-cities.html>.