

TRIPPING IN MANAYUNK



Manayunk welcomes the Pro Cyclists every June. They climb the Manayunk "wall" and do their laps on its streets to finish the 127-mile course. But many more cyclists pass through Manayunk every day...and on weekends the steady parade of multi-colored bikes adds to the vitality and excitement of this old mill town's Main Street. The refreshments they consume also give the local economy a boost.

Yet many Manayunk residents do not bicycle. Many probably think it is too risky, or judge themselves to be too old to climb uphill on a bicycle. Too bad, really, because Manayunk is a virtual gateway for recreational cyclists, and is the perfect location for commuters who want to get to work by bike.

Some day in the near future the Schuylkill River Trail that runs through Manayunk will stretch all the way to Reading and beyond. Even today, Philadelphia cyclists can get on the trail in Fairmount Park and ride 33 miles to Graterford in Montgomery County. Whether one rides to Conshohocken, Norristown, or Valley Forge

Biking in Manayunk? Not Just for Race Day...

National Heritage Park, for people trying to lose a few pounds, access to this marvelous "workout" is one of the "extras" for living in the Manayunk community.

Biking to work to any of those places, as well as Center City, is also convenient. Using the Schuylkill Valley Trail provides even first-time bicycle commuters the safety of a side path, or a trail separated from the vehicular roadway. Of course, walkers, runners, and rollerbladers also use the Trail.

Tips for new cyclists:

- Choose your bicycle carefully and deliberately. The kind of bicycle you buy depends on what you want to do with it. Higher quality bicycles come in three basic types – road, off-road, and hybrid. Good road bikes are lightweight with narrow tires made for longer trips and faster speeds. Off-road bicycles have sturdy frames and components and wide tires for navigating narrow dirt or stone paths and hill climbing. Hybrids (sometimes called 'city bikes') are a combination of the other two, made for commuting and everyday riding. A reputable dealer will help fit a cyclist to her/

- his bike to ensure years of safe and comfortable riding.
- Buy the best security lock you can afford. You need to take protecting your investment in a good bike seriously. A means of locking both wheels to the frame and the frame to a permanently fixed object (like a bike rack or parking meter) should be your first bicycle accessory! A Kryptonite brand U-lock WITH a plastic-covered three-eighths aircraft cable makes an excellent combination that

usually come with a new bike, but lights do not. Lights visible for greater distances are not only required by law, but highly desirable. Fortunately, both white and red lights are now available using Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) and are very reasonably priced.

- Lastly, keep your bicycle in top working order. Check brakes and moving parts often. Lubricate with oil or grease specifically made for bikes. Learn how to fix a flat

tire, particularly if you plan to be off-road riding far from assistance if you happen to get into trouble. Fortunately, bicycle commuters in the Philadelphia area are usually not far from the nearest bike shop.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.titletown.org>

will frustrate all but the most determined bicycle thief.

- Some commuting cyclists will need to acquire lights for safe night riding. You want to be seen by everyone on the road or trail. Reflectors

Manayunk's perfect location for bicycling. Leave the car home once in a while and pedal yourself to work...and to better health.

So, get out there and take advantage of

Money for Public Transportation: Making a Wise Investment for Economic Development

Investment in public transportation is an investment that pays off. Public transit creates jobs, protects the environment, enhances quality of life, and makes it easier to get to work and leisure activities. For those reasons, public transit should be a linchpin of Philadelphia's economic development strategy – and state and federal policymakers should help with adequate funding.

Public transportation is an investment in the truest sense of the word: An outlay today will result in a considerable pay out down the road. Consider this snapshot: Nationwide, government invests \$15.4 billion in public transportation each year. Public transportation generates upwards of \$60 billion in economic benefits. Public transportation boosts state and local tax revenues by as much as 16 percent. Some 30,000 people work directly for the public transportation industry, which creates thousands more jobs indirectly in fields ranging from engineering to construction.

Every dollar invested in running public transit systems boosts business sales by another three. A \$10 million investment in building public transportation systems creates more than 300 jobs, and the same amount spent on running the system generates nearly 600 more.

Public transportation generates economic benefits for several reasons. It helps the

right people to get the right jobs, without wasting otherwise productive hours in the process of being caught in traffic or caught at home without a way to travel. It allows employers to tap into the labor pool created by the nation's welfare-to-work initiative: 94 percent of welfare recipients have no other way to get to work. And public transit helps get customers in the door as well, so that businesses conveniently located near public transportation can have a steady stream of customers.

Of course, economic development ultimately comes down to consumers having money in their pocket to spend. Public transportation helps ensure they have more of it. A typical family living in an area with several public transportation options can save \$250 a month on car-related expenses.

Perhaps most importantly, public transportation contributes to a critical component of economic success: quality of life. Communities that are good places to live attract the best businesses and the most skilled labor force. Public transportation improves quality of life in several ways. It cuts down on the time drivers lose to traffic congestion. While all those cars are idling in traffic, they're pumping pollutants into the region's air. Public transportation, on the other hand, prevents the emission of more than 126 million pounds of hydrocarbons and 156 million pounds of nitrogen oxides, which combine to produce

ozone (smog). The result is air that can cause and worsen lung disease. These and other pollutants from vehicles make Philadelphia's air quality among the worst in the nation. Public transportation conserves energy by reducing gasoline consumption by 1.5 billion gallons a year. All that adds up to a more livable community.

All those benefits help explain why use of public transit is on the rise nationally. In 1999, Americans rode 21.2 billion miles on buses – enough to circle the earth nearly 850,000 times – 8.8 billion miles on commuter rail and 445 million miles in vanpools.

But this increased use also makes for increased costs. In the Philadelphia area, we need to invest more in public transportation to meet those costs of operating and maintaining the system and the area also needs to expand transit to serve more people and accommodate future growth. Now is not the time for the state and federal lawmakers to be talking budget cuts!

Public transportation systems aren't cheap to build or operate and policymakers have more demands than they have dollars, but public transit pays for itself several times over. And if a stronger economy is the destination we seek, public transportation is the fastest way to get there.



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