Older Adults and Cycling: What we’ve learned from the 50+ Cycling Survey

Carol Kachadoorian

Safe Routes Partnership
September 30, 2020
“They thought they'd peak at 30, but as culture changed and what we think of as 'old age' became a much more active and engaged phase of life, they're doing the same thing as many of their listeners.”

Ann Powers, NPR, July 1, 2020
50+ Cycling Survey (current cyclists)

- February 14 to August 2 (open through October 31)
- Cycling history, habits, preferences
- Visual preference survey of facilities
- Online journal

Who answered?
At least 2 responses from all 50 states

- 100+ responses
- 50-75 responses
- <5 responses
Nearly 3,000 women and men, ages 50 to 85+
Cycling rates, frequency

- Strong rates of regular cycling
- Higher with men

Declines with age
- 50-55 = 95%
- 81-85 = 75%

Recoups @ 85+ = 92%
Trip types and distances
29. For which trip purposes do you ride and what is the average trip length?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Checks</th>
<th>Row Check %</th>
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<th>Row Check %</th>
<th>Checks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To be social or for companionship</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>2402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To travel to and from work</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1,240</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>2025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For exercise</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>635</td>
<td>23.8%</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>784</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>2667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For daily errands, including shopping</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>692</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>2091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a competitive cyclist</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>1,635</td>
<td>84.5%</td>
<td>1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>899</td>
<td>57.1%</td>
<td>1574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Checks</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>2562</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>1199</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>1664</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>4960</td>
<td>12.69%</td>
<td>12694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total Checks</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>39.1%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Total Checks**: 2402

- **Row Check %**:
  - To be social or for companionship: 2.7%
  - To travel to and from work: 1.5%
  - For exercise: 1.3%
  - For daily errands, including shopping: 5.3%
  - As a competitive cyclist: 0.3%
  - Other: 2%
  - **Total Checks**: 2.2%
To be social, companionship

2 to 10 miles → 27%
11 to 15 miles → 14.3%
15+ miles → 22.6%
To and from work

2 to 10 miles → 19.4%
Daily errands

2 to 10 miles ➔ 33.1%
Exercise

2 to 10 miles → 23.8%
11 to 15 miles → 18.7%
15+ miles → 29.4%
Cycling changes in the past year

- 52% more
- 30% same
- 18% less
Now that I am retired and have the time, I am extending my rides each week. I am shooting for a 100-mile run this summer.

- Someone to ride with
  - Good on-road and trails

- More cycling destinations
  - Cycling instead of running
    - Training for long distance ride

- eBike purchase
  - New cycling facility
  - Better climate

70% COVID-19

52%

8%

4 to 5%

2 to 3%
18% less

17%
Roads feel less safe; Constricting physical condition

13%
Work & Family responsibilities; loss of energy

4 to 8%
Loss of cycling companions; job or home change; different sport; less confident due to crash
eBikes rates increase with age, not gender

Overall ownership rate of 7.8%

Overall ownership rate of 8.4%

eBike Ownership Rates by Age
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of cyclist</th>
<th>No Way, No How</th>
<th>Interested, but Concerned</th>
<th>Enthused and Confident</th>
<th>Strong and Fearless</th>
<th>Depends on Circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I just don’t bike anymore and am unwilling to do so even if there are places to bicycle that look safe and comfortable</td>
<td>I am willing to bicycle where there are places to bicycle that look safe and comfortable</td>
<td>I am willing to bicycle if some bicycle-specific infrastructure is in place, such as a bike lane, wide shoulder or a trail along a road</td>
<td>I am willing to bicycle with limited or no bicycle-specific infrastructure</td>
<td>Depends</td>
</tr>
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*DBI Tilde Collaborative*
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<td>I just don’t bike anymore and am unwilling to do so even if there are places to bicycle that look safe and comfortable</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>depends on circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am willing to bicycle where there are places to bicycle that look safe and comfortable</td>
<td>Interested, concerned</td>
<td>Enthused, confident</td>
<td>Strong, fearless</td>
<td>I adjust my approach to bicycling depending on who I’m riding with and where I’m riding.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What’s needed to ensure bikeability?
Reasons why older adults would stop cycling

Cannot envision a time when I would stop riding

Peggy Lott, late 80’s bike daily after a stroke
Reasons why older adults would stop cycling

- Health
Reasons why older adults would stop cycling

- Moved where not safe
- No one to ride with
Best supportive cycling opportunities

- Someone to ride with
- Bikeable destinations with bike parking
- Pleasant views
- Benches, bathrooms, water
Best supportive cycling conditions

- Overall feeling of safety
- Roads in good condition and clear of debris
- Fewer points of conflict
- Enough space for all users
- Protected bike lanes
- More trails
Consistent theme: Need for overall feeling of safety, companionship
Responsive infrastructure and programs

- Effective maintenance programs
- New or updated infrastructure
- Continuous pathways
- Agency coordination
  - Transportation ~ Public Works
  - Recreation
  - Health
  - Aging
  - Community organizations
- Community engagement
- Supportive programs
### Responsive programs and infrastructure

- Determine where older adults live; existing bike network
- Outreach and engagement designed for them, with them

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<tr>
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<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
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- I adjust my approach to bicycling depending on who I’m riding with and where I’m riding.
Responsive programs and infrastructure

- Determine where older adults live; existing bike network
- Outreach and engagement designed for them
- Responsive programs
  - Cycling groups
  - Learn to cycle, refresh skills
  - Bicycle acquisition programs
  - On-site v. on-road or trail
Safety and Community Engagement

- Consider community conversations
- See this guide from dblTilde Collaborative
- As well as AARP’s Roadmap to Livability
Age-based and residential context
<table>
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<th>Different engagement and outcomes</th>
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<td><strong>Fully independent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+ or Active Adult Communities (including apartments)</td>
</tr>
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<td>55 – 80+ (Avg of 60-65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Independent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(can move to assisted, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71 + (Avg 82)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assisted, Institutional</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 – 84 (Typical)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Memory or Nursing care</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varies</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
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<td>---</td>
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# Different engagement and outcomes

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<td><strong>71 + (Avg 82)</strong></td>
<td><strong>75 – 84 (Typical)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More residents already cycling</td>
<td>Some cycling, some want to</td>
<td>Very low rates, but may be interest with right approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior network with many connections to adjacent neighborhood network</td>
<td>Denser interior network that connects to adjacent neighborhood network. Benches, shade, etc.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Opportunity for cycling experience with tandem bikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>On-site cycling machines and campus pathways, with benches, shade, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Always consider

- Who are older adults?
- How do they remain active?
- How could they become more active?
- What can we do to encourage and support?
Thank you

Carol Kachadoorian

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