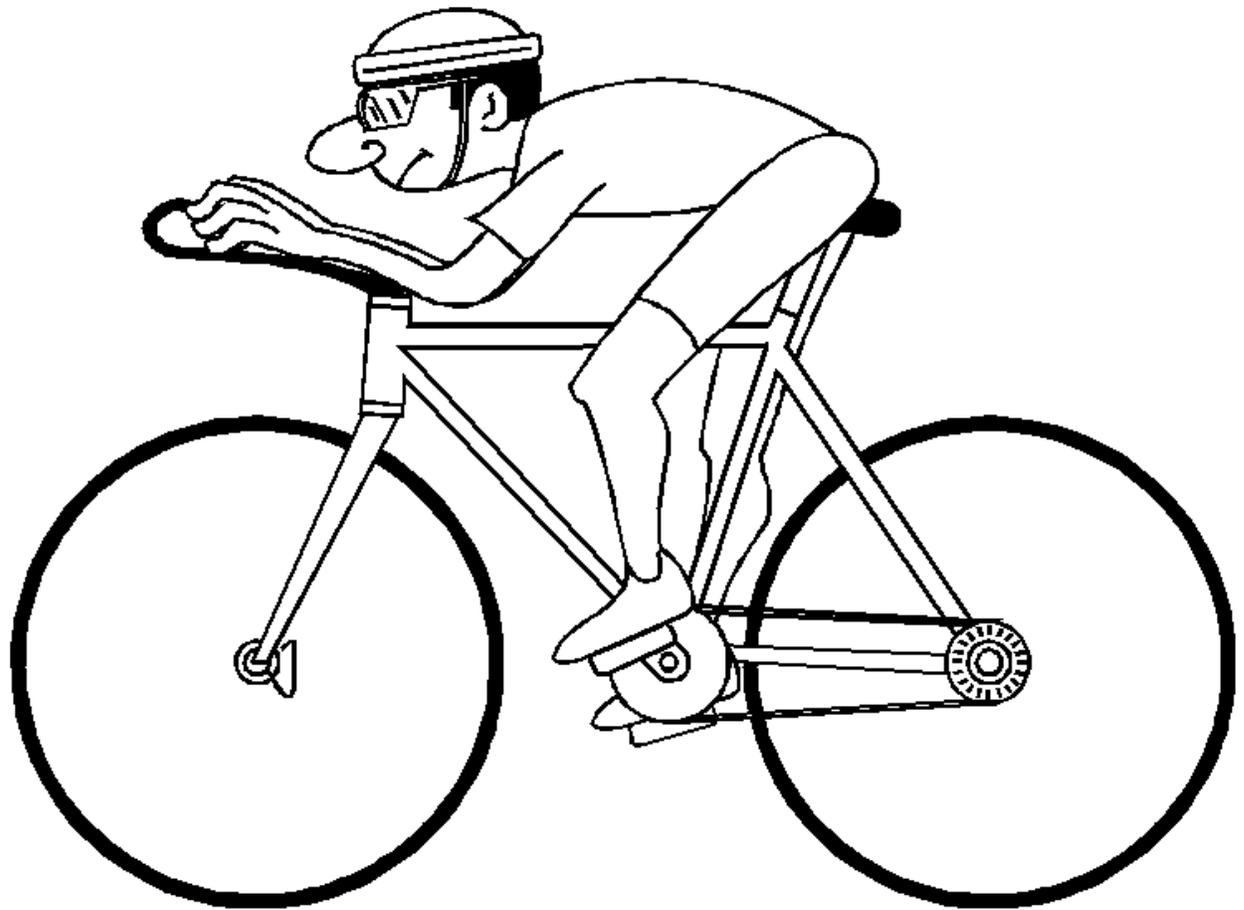


Nine Ways the City of Durango Supports Bicycling



And Nine Durango Biking Laws

~~Plus famous bicycling quotes~~

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This is drawn from actual records of the City of Durango. For further reading, visit
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Welcome, bicyclists!

Here are nine of the many ways in which the City has promoted bicycling in and around Durango:

- 1. Durango's City Council has a long history of supporting bicycling.** Bicycling is an established activity around here. This photo of members of the Durango Wheel Club at Baker's Bridge, north of town, was taken on June 16, 1895.*



* Historically, bicycles long preceded the introduction of motor vehicles, and (because of their riders' need for a safe traveling surface) contributed at least as much to the improvement of public roads in the formative days of our country.

The City of Durango Supports Bicycling!

Durango's City Council formalized its support for walking and bicycling in 1999 by adopting a Resolution declaring its "general desire and intent to integrate all forms of transportation into the plans and capital program of the City" and to encourage the State, the County and the School District to cooperate with the City "to broaden access to our community by making walking and bicycling safer," and that the City encourages the use of alternatives to the automobile, including walking and bicycling.

"When the spirits are low, when the day appears dark, when work becomes monotonous, when hope hardly seems worth having, just mount a bicycle and go out for a spin down the road, without thought on anything but the ride you are taking."

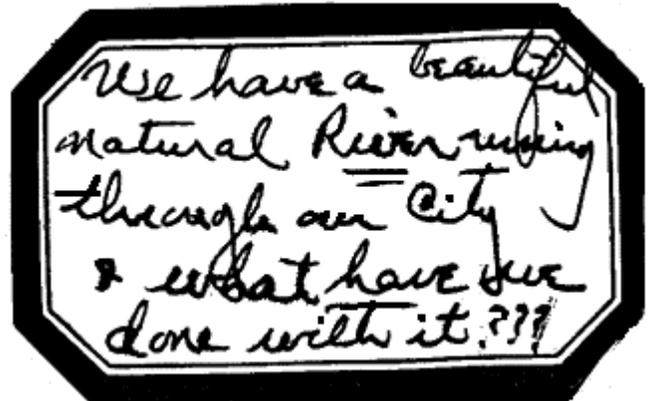
~ *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

"Nothing compares to the simple pleasure of riding a bike." ~ *John F. Kennedy*

2. The City's 7-mile Animas River Trail is, among other things, a bike path—part of more than 1,000 miles of trails of this community.

The City has been envisaging a bike path through Durango for over 35 years. In 1975, Council heard from members of the Open Space and Recreation Committee and had a lengthy discussion about establishing a bike lane from East 2nd Avenue to the 32nd Street Bridge, the need for bicycle route signage on Florida Road, and the need for more bike racks at various locations. The minutes note that "It is the future desire of all that one day a bike trail and park connected system will exist from the south to the north end of Durango."

In the mid-1970s Maxine Peterson, Durango's first female mayor, pushed through a plan for creating a continuous City park system with connecting bike paths. In doing so, she was unwittingly fulfilling the vision, back in 1946, of Ella Birkheimer, who repeatedly urged the City to improve its parks. Birkheimer attached this note to a map of Durango that she marked up:



Durango supports mountain biking in addition to road biking. In 2010 the City renamed its 300-acre Durango Mountain Park as Overend Mountain Park, in recognition of Durango's pioneering world mountain biking champion who contributed to the creation of the park in 1995. This park has 12 miles of natural surface trails and forms the western mountain backdrop of the city.

"Life is like a ten-speed bicycle. Most of us have gears we never use." ~ *Charles M. Schulz*

The City of Durango Supports Bicycling!

3. The City has built a bike-friendly infrastructure. To build it, the City has obtained many millions of dollars of grants and has kicked in a lot of its own funds to build and maintain the Animas River Trail and to make the city bike-safe and bike-friendly. The City's financial contribution is funded by a .5% sales tax increase that the voters approved in 1999 for the development of the City's Recreation Center and the Animas River Trail and adjacent greenways.

One of the first grants (and probably the smallest) the City obtained for building its bicycling system was on September 2, 1980 when Mayor Pro-Tem Maxine Peterson accepted a contract for the City to receive \$30,500 in federal funds for the design, construction and delineation of new bikeways. The City's match was 25% to the Federal government's 75%. In that same meeting, Council passed Resolution R-1980-0442 concerning the Bicycle Grant, Establishing Engineering and Construction of New Bikeways.

4. The City provides free on-street bicycle parking corrals in the Central Business District on Main Avenue during summer-time—and has installed 160 bike parking meter hitches throughout the downtown.



A few years ago, the City figured that downtown business patrons freed up an estimated 22,000-33,000 parking space hours during Durango's peak tourist season by bicycling rather than driving. Carver Brewing Company reported that July of 2010 was the most profitable year in their 24-year history to that time, despite the economic recession. They attribute some of that increase to the bike corral. And in 2014, the City unveiled a new way to lock your bike to a parking meter post, using beige parking-meter "hitches" like the one on the right that was pictured in the *Durango Herald* on 1/26/14.



5. Each of the City's buses and trolleys has a rack for carrying two bicycles.

What a great way to get around—combining biking, walking and public transportation. By the way, the City offers free Transit commuter passes to all of its full-time employees, and so do a number of Durango businesses. Does yours?

The City of Durango Supports Bicycling!

6. The City has a free service of registering your bike so the Police Department can reunite you with it in the event that it is lost, abandoned or stolen. If you're a local resident, bring your bicycle to the Police Department across from City Hall at 990 East 2nd Avenue to register it and get your sticker.



7. City Police themselves use bicycles for patrolling the City.



In 1997 Council adopted a Resolution authorizing \$2,000 to buy mountain bikes for the patrol. These are especially useful for patrolling the Animas River Trail and City parks.

“You haven't lived until you've put on a police uniform and hopped on a mountain bike. My daily commute became four to five minutes faster because drivers fight each other to see who gets to let me into the lane I want. Drivers would sooner cross the yellow line and hit a utility pole than breeze a cop on a bike. I've completed centuries and even won races, but this newfound respect is the sweetest cycling experience of all.” ~ *Allan Howard*

8. Durango is the start of a number of taxing and prestigious world-class bicycle races, notably the Iron Horse Bicycle Classic (racing the steam engine of the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge train from Durango over two mountain passes and 49 miles to Silverton since 1972; rated by National Geographic as one of the “Ten Great Races in Amazing Places” in 2012) and the 2012 USA Pro Challenge.



Photo source URL:

<http://www.ironhorsebicycleclassic.com/>

The City of Durango Supports Bicycling!

9. The City added bicycles to its public art by the selection of its contest-winning sculpture, "Endurance", by Josh Wiener, that was installed in the Florida Road roundabout on August 7, 2012 as part of the City's commitment to hosting the Overall Start of the USA Pro Challenge on August 20, 2012. The Bank of Colorado funded the project with a \$25,000 donation.



In May of 2012, the League of American Bicyclists named Durango a Gold Bicycle Friendly Community. "The City works hard to expand the bicycle footprint in our community," according to City Manager Ron LeBlanc. "We want everyone to know that bikes and their riders are given special status in our community."

Mayor Doug Lyon, himself an avid cyclist and dean of the business school at Fort Lewis College, added, "It is anticipated that the bike industry in Durango brings in several million dollars annually with the seven bike shops, trails and tourism, events, the 18-time Fort Lewis College National Championship bike team and the professional athletes who live and work here."

"Bicycles are the indicator species of a community, like shellfish in a bay."

~ *P. Martin Scott*

"Whenever I see an adult on a bicycle, I have hope for the human race." ~ *H. G. Wells*



Nine Durango biking laws:

1. Bicyclists must follow the same laws as drivers of motor vehicles. This includes not running a motorized vehicle (including an electric bike) on the Animas River Trail.

2. Don't run a red light on your bicycle. The fine is at least \$40.

3. Don't run a stop sign on your bicycle. It usually costs \$65—but by law it COULD cost a cyclist up to \$1,000 and/or 90 days in jail!

A Durango policeman cited a bicyclist who waited to run the red light until he thought the patrol car was out of range. It cost him \$53.

Another bicyclist told the officer that he knew it was wrong to disregard the red light, but "he was in a hurry to go fishing."



4. Don't be a careless rider. Always wear a helmet.

Use a headlight, taillight, and reflectors at night. Make eye contact with drivers. Never assume that drivers see you or that you have the right of way. Expect the unexpected; your first responsibility is to avoid a crash.

"Forget about your rights. Forget about what's fair. Forget all the rules of etiquette you ever learned. The average bicycle weighs twenty-five pounds. The average motor vehicle weighs twenty-five hundred pounds. Your job is to avoid getting into an accident, not to prove you were within your rights after you're involved in one."

~ *Bob Katz*

A few years ago, the driver of a car was about to turn left across North Main Avenue, when a kitten ran in front of his car. He hit his brakes in hopes of avoiding hitting the cat, but the mountain biker behind him (who admitted he shouldn't have been riding in the middle of the road) couldn't stop in time, rear-ended him, damaging the car, and was hurt when he fell off his bike.

"A bicycle does get you there and more.... And there is always the thin edge of danger to keep you alert and comfortably apprehensive. Dogs become dogs again and snap at your raincoat; potholes become personal. And getting there is all the fun."

~ *Bill Emerson*, "On Bicycling", *Saturday Evening Post*, 1967

5. Don't bicycle on the public sidewalk in the Central Business District. Cyclists have been fined \$20 for that.

This rule goes back more than a century. An 1892 City Ordinance set the minimum fine for someone caught riding a bike on a public sidewalk at \$5 (i.e., \$125 in today's dollars). In 1903 Council heard reports that people were cycling on sidewalks and told the "Committee on Printing" to have suitable notices printed and posted. In 1995 the City expanded this prohibition to parking lots in the Central Business District.

6. Walk—don't ride—your bicycle across the street and/or sidewalk when you're crossing it in a designated crosswalk.

You must get off and walk across.



Breaking this law sent a cyclist to the hospital. The driver of a car was travelling down 32nd Street within the speed limit when a cyclist rode out in front of him on the crosswalk. The driver stated that she came from nowhere, and he didn't see her until it was too late. Three witnesses confirmed that the biker rode straight onto the crosswalk without looking. She was taken to the hospital with (fortunately) minor injuries, and was given a police citation there for failing to get off of her bicycle before using a crosswalk.

7. Look both ways before cycling across an intersection, and use hand signals to indicate left or right turns, slowing, and stopping.

Failure to look to the left before turning left sent a cyclist flying 60 feet and sent him to the hospital for surgery. Good thing he was wearing a helmet! And, a Durango serendipity, the passenger in the truck that he struck knew the bicyclist. The police officer's incident report recorded that the cyclist's friend in the pickup noticed that he looked to his right but failed to look left before turning left into the oncoming traffic. When the bicycle struck the truck the driver at first thought he had hit a deer (it was at dusk and the sun was in his eyes), until he pulled over and saw someone lying in the middle of the road.

“Melancholy is incompatible with bicycling.” ~ *James E. Starrs*

“Next to a leisurely walk I enjoy a spin on my tandem bicycle. It is splendid to feel the wind blowing in my face and the springy motion of my iron steed. The rapid rush through the air gives me a delicious sense of strength and buoyancy, and the exercise makes my pulse dance and my heart sing.” ~ *Helen Keller*

The City of Durango Supports Bicycling!

8. Ride in the right lane, except when passing another vehicle, preparing for a left turn, or avoiding hazards. Always ride with the flow of traffic; never against. Ride on the paved shoulder whenever possible. Biking on the wrong side of the roadway can cost a bicyclist \$98 in fines and court costs.

9. Leave adequate distance between you and the vehicles ahead of you and around you. (Note: the Bicycle Safety Act requires drivers to give cyclists at least 3 feet of space on the roadway when passing.) Ride single file. Only ride two abreast when you are not impeding traffic or when all cyclists are on the shoulder—and never on the curving roads of a canyon.

Following too closely can cause an accident and cost you, as it did for a bicyclist who ran into a car that had stopped to enter a parking space. He further damaged the car by maliciously kicking off the side mirror in his rage. To his credit, he later wrote a letter of apology to the elderly woman he so upset by his words and actions. He observed that “the rush of adrenaline made me go a little crazy for a while, so I want to sincerely apologize for acting like a rude nut case.”

If a cyclist *does* break one of these 9 points and is stopped by the police, a bad attitude and poor excuses won't help.

Running a red light cost one argumentative bicyclist \$63 last year. His excuses didn't help his case:

- “I'm a paramedic.”
- “It's hard to unclip from the pedals.”
- “My bike doesn't trigger lights to turn.”
- “You shouldn't give **me** a ticket.”



“When man invented the bicycle he reached the peak of his attainments. Here was a machine of precision and balance for the convenience of man. And (unlike subsequent inventions for man's convenience) the more he used it, the fitter his body became. Here, for once, was a product of man's brain that was entirely beneficial to those who used it, and of no harm or irritation to others.” ~ **Elizabeth West**

“The bicycle is a curious vehicle. Its passenger is its engine.” ~ **John Howard**

“Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving.”
~ **Albert Einstein.**

Regarding the Theory of Relativity, he stated, “I thought of that while riding my bicycle.”

“When you're turning the crankset, you're riding the bike. When you're coasting, you're just along for the ride.” ~ **Ned Overend**

The City of Durango Supports Bicycling!

Mark Twain compared learning to ride a bike with learning a foreign language:

“The steps of one's progress are distinctly marked. At the end of each lesson he knows he has acquired something, and he also knows what that something is, and likewise that it will stay with him. It is not like studying German, where you mull along, in a groping, uncertain way, for thirty years; and at last, just as you think you've got it, they spring the subjunctive on you, and there you are. No—and I see now, plainly enough, that the great pity about the German language is, that you can't fall off it and hurt yourself. There is nothing like that feature to make you attend strictly to business. But I also see, by what I have learned of bicycling, that the right and only sure way to learn German is by the bicycling method. That is to say, take a grip on one villainy of it at a time, and learn it—not ease up and shirk to the next, leaving that one half learned.”

~ **Mark Twain**, *Taming the Bicycle*, 1884

“The bicycle is its own best argument. You just get a bike, try it; start going with the thing and using it as it suits you. It'll grow and it gets better and better and better.”

~ **Richard Ballantine**

“It never gets easier, you just go faster.” ~ **Greg LeMond**

“Chasing records doesn't keep me on my bike. Happiness does.” ~ **Lance Armstrong**
after his third Tour de France victory

“My legs and a silly something in me cry out for knocking the milestones down one by one and stopping at nothing. For years I have been telling myself that it's not the miles in the life that count but the life in the miles, but still this silly restlessness hurries me on.” ~ **Harold Elvin**, *The Ride to Changigarrh*

“When you're on the starting line of your first century, it's not wise to sit there and think, 'I've got to ride one hundred miles.' I remember my first one, and my thought was to get to the first rest stop. I made each succeeding rest stop my goal. When they're about twenty-five miles apart, you don't get intimidated by what seems an impossible distance. All you need to do is ride twenty-five miles four times.” ~ **Seana Hogan**

“Cycling fills the remotest cells of the lungs with outdoor air. The pores are opened and the dead secretions are thrown off. It aids the peristaltic movement of the bowels.”

~ **L. F. Korn**, *How to Bicycle*, 1892

“Tens of thousands who could never afford to own, feed and stable a horse, had by this bright invention enjoyed the swiftness of motion which is perhaps the most fascinating feature of material life.” ~ **Frances Willard**, *How I Learned to Ride the Bicycle*

“Let a man find himself, in distinction from others, on top of two wheels with a chain—at least in a poor country like Russia—and his vanity begins to swell out like his tires.”

~ **Leon Trotsky**

“You either love spinning the pedals and watching scenery whiz by, or you don't. And if you love it, not much can sour you on the idea of riding your bike.” ~ **Keith Mills**

This is one of a number of booklets produced by the Durango City Clerk's Office to inform, educate, and entertain those who live in Durango, visit it, or want to know more about a corner of the U.S. that has a lively, well-documented past and a vibrant current environment.



Informational eBooks and thousands of primary source documents of the City of Durango (ordinances, resolutions, minutes, agendas, etc.) from 1881 to the present are freely available and keyword searchable at the City's Documents search page: www.durangogov.org/docs.cfm

Durango: Where the mountains meet the desert
~ a playground of pine forests, aspen groves, lakes, streams,
and spectacular views ~



City website: <http://www.durangogov.org/>

“Few articles ever used by man have created so great a revolution in social conditions as the bicycle.” ~*U.S. Census Report*, 1900

“It would not be at all strange if history came to the conclusion that the perfection of the bicycle was the greatest incident of the nineteenth century.” ~ *Anonymous*