

Letters

Helmets are Good, Safety in Numbers is Better

Dear T.A.,
How can you have several pictures of cyclists not wearing helmets in your bulletin?

HARRY ARMON

Dear Harry,
Transportation Alternatives strongly supports helmet use and child helmet laws, and we always encourage cyclists to wear helmets. All of our literature, on-line cycling resources and other publications recommend helmet use.

We try to get photos of cyclists wearing helmets, but there are a lot of specific elements to include in photos and sometimes we do not have enough time to get the "perfect" photo before deadline.

Helmet use is very important, yet helmets do not prevent crashes. Health professionals around the world agree that the benefits of cycling, even without a helmet, outweigh the risks of not riding.

When it comes to improving cyclist safety and preventing crashes, encouraging more people to bicycle and increasing the number of cyclists on the street greatly improves the safety of all cyclists. Studies from the U.S., the U.K., Europe, Australia and New Zealand show doubling the number of cyclists on the streets reduces the number of crashes by one-third. Data from New York City over the past decade backs this up: daily cycling has been increasing and annual crashes have been decreasing.

To prevent crashes and get more people cycling, New York City needs safe streets, drivers and cyclists. The City should be doing everything in its power to encourage cycling, improve our streets and prevent crashes, not just for cyclists, but because street safety is a quality of life issue that affects everyone all the time.

East Siders Want Bike Lanes Now

Dear T.A.,
When will we get a bike lane on the East Side??? How about 1st Avenue all the way up and 2nd Avenue all the way downtown?

JENNY KANE

Dear Jenny,
A T.A. volunteer is currently coordinating community support for a 1st and 2nd Avenue bike lane, email volunteer@transalt.org to join us.

You can also contact DOT and your elected officials and ask them to support bike lanes on 1st and 2nd Ave. You can identify your elected officials by clicking on the



The Word on the Streets

Thank you to the many readers who send letters in response to *Transportation Alternatives Magazine*, the T.A. E-Bulletin or transalt.org. Feedback from readers is hugely helpful.

We encourage all readers to send us comments. E-mail info@transalt.org; mail to 127 W. 26th St. Ste. 1002, New York, NY 10001; fax 212-629-8334; or submit a comment through our web site. We look forward to hearing from you!

"Who Represents Me?" link on nypirg.org and you can contact DOT Commissioner Iris Weinshall here:

Commissioner Iris Weinshall
NYC Department of Transportation
40 Worth Street
New York, NY 10013

Let Reverse Commuters Bring Bikes Aboard

Dear T.A.,
I have an issue with MTA/Metro North's bike policy. Their current policy is NOT to allow bikes on out bound trains between 7 am and 9am, and 3 pm through 8:15 pm. And similarly for in bound trains between 5 am to 10 am and 4 pm and 8 pm. I work in Tarrytown and thus reverse commute. And from my own observations, I have noticed that there are very few riders on the reverse commute. I believe that there is no practical reason why the MTA/Metro North should force a bicycle restriction for reverse commutes such as me. I would like to know if T.A. has a stance on this issue. If so, how could I join the effort? And if not, would T.A. consider undertaking this or a similar campaign?

VIJAY RAO

Dear Vijay,
I encourage you to look at the Bikes to Transit page in this magazine or explore the links on this page transalt.org/info/aboard.html of our website that detail local transit operator policies regarding bringing bike aboard. The MTA in the past has been very firm in its policies regarding bikes on trains during rush hour, but it couldn't hurt to ask them to review their policy. You can contact MTA/Metro North here:

Mark Manniz
Director of Community Relations
MTA Metro North Rail Road
347 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10017
212-340-3000

Additionally, you might consider buying a folding bike that comes with a cover case. On the LIRR folding bikes do not require a

permit and are not subject to bike restrictions. Metro-North staff might also be more flexible about folding bikes.

Glare on Greenway Gets George's Goat

Dear T.A.,
I have a fairly minor suggestion for the Manhattan West Side Greenway Bike Path.

Right now, if a biker rides north up the Greenway between 103rd St. and 125th St. after dark, the headlights on cars coming south on the west side drive pretty much ruin the biker's vision. There are two islands in the middle of the bike path on this stretch, and although I have a headlight, it is not strong enough to overcome the glare from the on-coming cars and I have nearly run into the trees in those islands on several occasions, even when I try to anticipate them.

I suggest either placing a sign just south of each island warning that the islands are coming up, or there is an even better suggestion.

There is a green painted line that divides the path between pedestrians and bikers/skaters. It is quite visible in the dark in spite of the glare. Paint the left (west) edge of the biker/skater lane with this same line (the right [east] edge of the pedestrian lane has the line now), so that the island is surrounded by this paint line. That should be enough to indicate the island is there.

With daylight savings time coming up, this is not quite so important now, but if we can start the wheels moving now, maybe we can get something to happen by the fall when it gets dark before we can finish biking home from work.

GEORGE BAIRD

Dear George,
Great idea! Please contact the Riverside Park operations office at:

Arsenal West
24 West 61st Street
New York, NY 10023
(212) 408-0100

The chief administrator for Riverside Park is KC Saul. □