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# Dallas trails most U.S. cities in people walking or biking to work

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Dallas residents don't like to walk to work, and they don't cycle either.

That's clear in a major new report issued by the Alliance for Biking and Walking, which ranked Dallas 49th out of 51 cities in the share of commuters who cycle or walk to work.

Based on a three-year average from 2007 to 2009, just 1.8 percent of residents in Dallas walked to work; 0.1 percent rode a bike.

Boston, ranked first in the study, had 13.9 percent of commuters walking and 1.5 percent biking.

Dallas also has the fewest miles of dedicated bike lanes, zero, of any city studied.

Lest you think it's the weather or Dallas' historic dependence on cars, think again. Sprawling Los Angeles, sizzling Tucson, Ariz., and steamy Atlanta are all far ahead of Dallas on the list.

About the only good news for Dallas is that it's (barely) ahead of [Oklahoma City](#) (1.4 percent walking, 0.1 percent biking) and [Fort Worth](#) (1.2, 0.2), which brought up the rear.

For perspective on the commuter numbers, the study cites National Highway Traffic Safety data to show that nationwide, 10.5 percent of all trips for any purpose are taken by walkers. One percent ride bicycles and 1.9 percent take mass transit.

An interesting takeaway from the study concerns the importance of city efforts to maximize cycling or walking. Dallas dedicated \$4 million in 2010 to bike or pedestrian projects, according to the survey.

That's better than many cities on the list, including [Washington, D.C.](#), Fort Worth and Houston, which spent no city funds. Even Boston, the reigning champ when it comes to its residents walking and biking to work, spent far less, about \$600,000 in 2010.

Austin spent \$12 million that year and Minneapolis spent \$15 million.

Another silver lining in the study is that Dallas' plan to build hundreds of miles of dedicated bike lanes is the most ambitious in America. (New York City wants 1,800 new miles but will take 20 years to build them.)

On the flip side, the ambitious plan is projected to cost \$16 million that city leaders have said isn't available in the budget.

Jeremy Ordaz, 33, who cycles every day he can from his home in downtown Dallas to the [Oak Cliff](#) bike shop he opened about three years ago, said the absence of bike lanes keeps people from giving alternative transportation a try.

"Having more lanes would be good for the city and good for cycling," Ordaz said. "People would see more people on bikes, and with new lanes they would feel safer."

"It seems like in this city whatever the people want, it's never in the budget."

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The Dallas Bike Plan calls for building 840 miles of bike lanes in the next 10 years.

David Lyles, president of the Fort Worth Avenue Area Development Group, said merchants and residents were disappointed recently when the city repaved portions of Fort Worth Avenue and — with money so tight — did so without marking off bike lanes.

His group recruited partners and came up with \$25,000 to buy paint for new bike lanes on a two-mile stretch of city streets.

That's not enough to pay for the striping, which he said the city has estimated at \$60,000. But with the help of council members in the area, who can fund small-scale public works projects out of their discretionary budgets, he said he's optimistic the new lanes will be completed by July.

North Oak Cliff, he said, "is supposed to be our urban innovation zone. So our thought was if we are going to be the city's innovation zone, let's innovate."

### IN THE KNOW

Some highlights of what the study by Alliance for Biking and Walking said about Dallas:

**Of those who do bike** to work in Dallas, 91 percent are men.

**Walking commuters** are almost evenly split between men and women.

**Of those who walk to work**, 42 percent earn less than \$15,000 a year and 76 percent earn less than \$35,000. Just 8 percent earn more than \$65,000.

**To read** the entire study, go to: <http://bit.ly/AgkHlv>

SOURCE: *Dallas Morning News* research

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