

Understanding the Link Between Bicyclists and Light Rail

Survey Results from Bicycle Riders on MAX in Portland, Oregon

By **Matt Lasky**

Portland State University

[Masters of Urban and Regional Planning](#): Field Area Paper, Spring 2005

[Play stream of Matt Lasky's seminar presentation](#)



BACKGROUND

Portland's transit service has a history of allowing bicycles on transit. However, there is still potential to increase the number of bicyclists making the multi-modal connection. This could help increase the bicycle commute share by reducing travel time and helping bicyclists avoid obstacles such as sloped terrain and roads without bicycle facilities.

Trimet has never studied riders with bicycles to learn how they can better serve this group. The Portland *Bicycle Master Plan* suggests increasing the number of bicycle-transit trips, but does not establish any benchmarks for measuring success. The goal of this research is to understand more about bicyclists accessing transit and, more specifically, those that use Portland's Light-Rail Transit (the MAX). Understanding more about the population of MAX-riding bicyclists, why they make this transportation connection, and where are going and coming from on their trips can increase the number of bicycle riders. As a result, this could improve the bicycle mode share in Portland and also increase TriMet's Light-Rail Transit ridership.

RESEARCH

The report gives an overview of existing reports and literature, and then builds

upon this research with the use of five-minute bicyclist surveys conducted on the MAX.

FINDINGS

- Bicyclists on MAX are predominately men.
- Bicyclists on MAX are predominately more experienced bicyclists.
- More experienced bicyclists deem bicycle lockers as secure.
- More experienced bicyclists would use free bicycle lockers if they were more readily available.

CONCLUSIONS

This research shows that with specific policies aimed towards specific populations and some additional amenities near stations, more people would make the bicycle-transit connection. These policies hold the potential to increase transit ridership with existing as well as new bicycle commuters. These policies also hold potential to increase the appeal of the bicycle-transit connection to new bicycle commuters and increase the bicycle mode share in a region.

The bicycle transit link also needs to better serve women.

Research Digest prepared by IBPI staff