

EDMONTON

**2005/2006
BICYCLE USER
SURVEY REPORT**

**PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 2007
BY THE CITY OF EDMONTON
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT**

INTRODUCTION

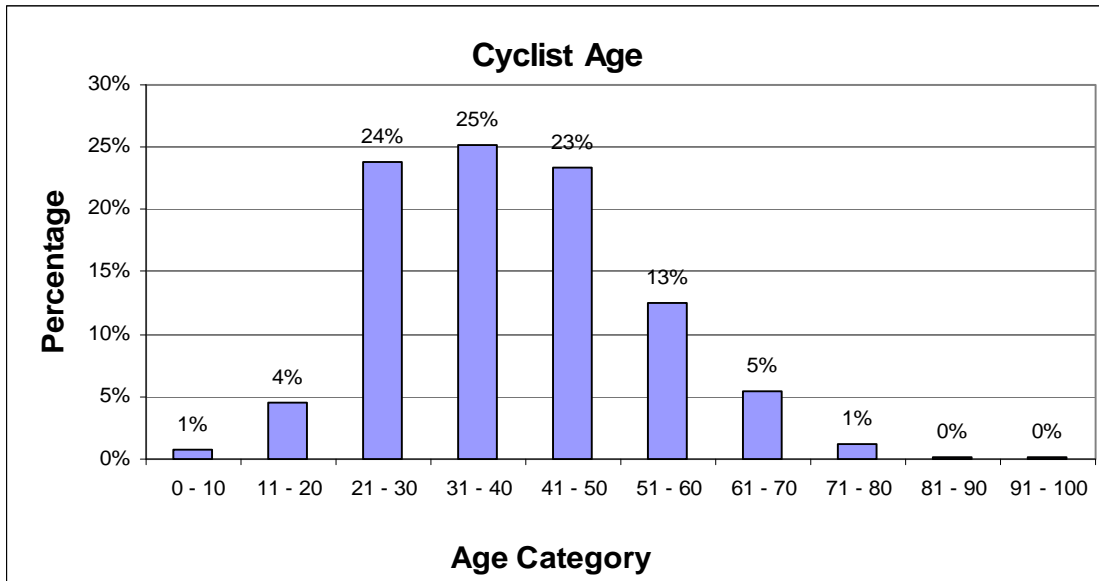
The 2005/2006 Bicycle User Survey was conducted in the Fall of 2005 and Summer of 2006 in Edmonton, Alberta. Surveys were distributed to bike stores, public libraries, recreational facilities, information centres and post-secondary institutions. An electronic version was also posted on the City of Edmonton website and several hundred were stapled to bicycles parked throughout high density locations like the downtown, University of Alberta, NAIT and other post-secondary institutions. A total of 943 responses were received, which, though due to the targeted distribution techniques is not a representative sample of all Edmontonians, still gives a reasonably good picture of cycling in Edmonton.

It is noted in some of the experience-related questions that the survey sample is more heavily representative of highly or moderately-experienced road cyclists than it is of less experienced or potential cyclists. It is also noted that at the time of the Fall 2005 survey, the weather was warmer than average for that time of year and that there was no snow through most of the winter months.

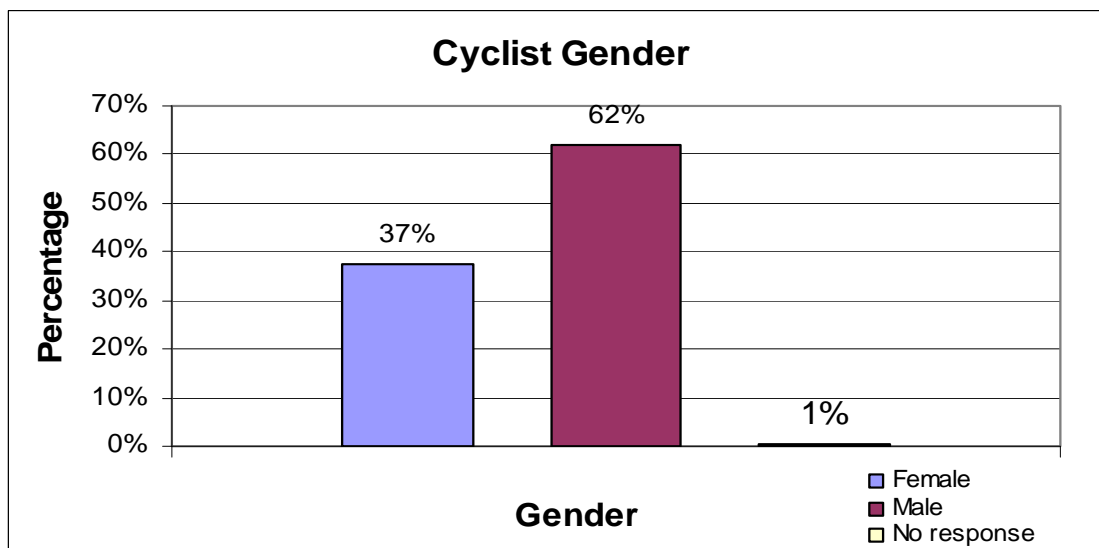
The Household Travel Survey conducted by the City of Edmonton in 2005 showed a 150% increase in the number of cycling trips taken per day (from 10,000 trips per day to 25,000 trips per day) between 1994 and 2005. With such a marked increase in cycling in the City of Edmonton, the 2005/2006 Bicycle User Survey provides some insight into the habits and preferences of these cyclists.

Gender and Age

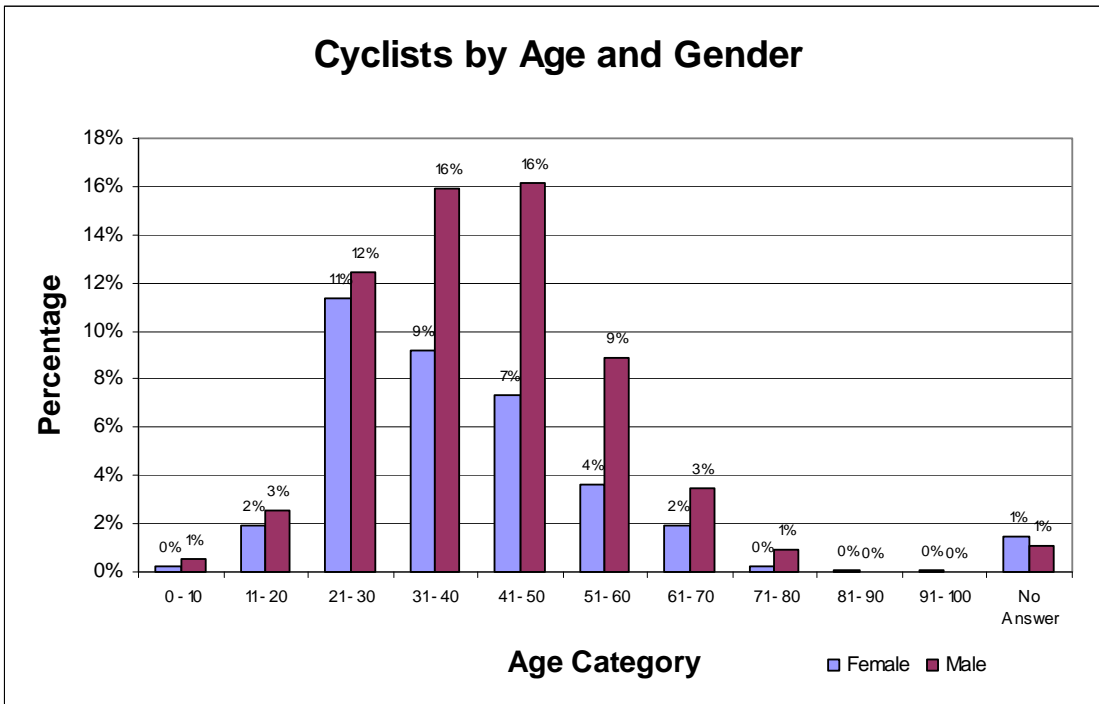
Of survey respondents, the majority (72%) of cyclists were fairly evenly distributed between the ages of 21 and 50, followed by the 51 to 60 year old grouping (13% of cyclists). The average age of respondents was 39 years old. The youngest cyclist to complete and return a survey was 7 years old, and the eldest was 92 years old.



Of cyclists surveyed, 62% were male, and 37% were female (1% no response).

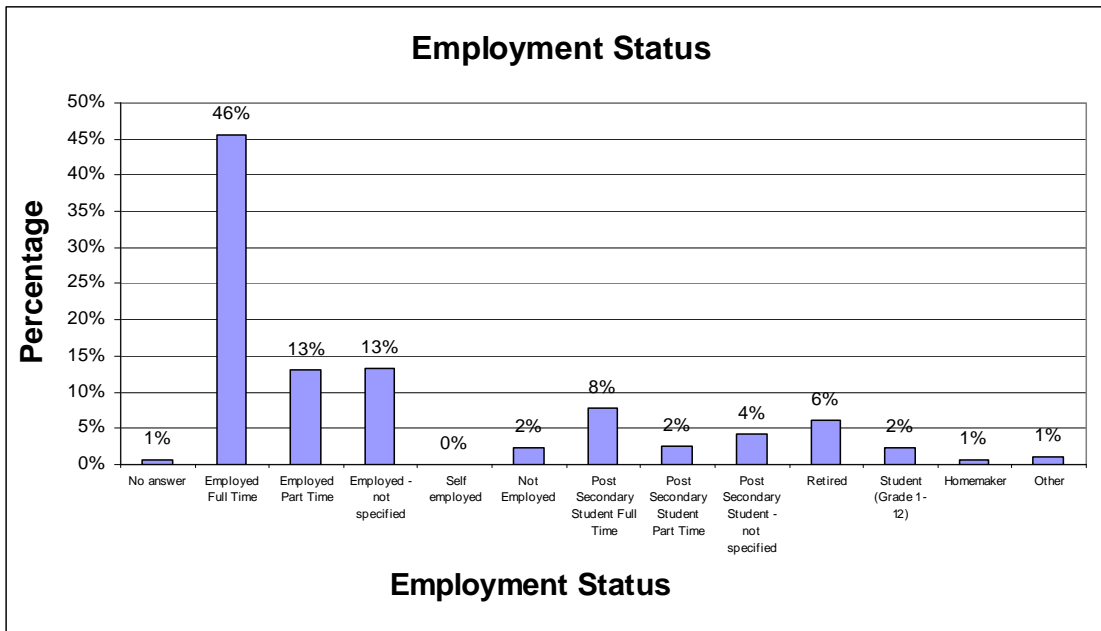


The largest demographic group who responded to the survey was male cyclists between the ages of 31 and 50 years old. The largest group of female cyclists consisted of the age group between 21 and 30 years old. It is noted that while the number of male cyclists who completed this survey grows or remains steady after age 30, the number of female cyclists steadily declines.



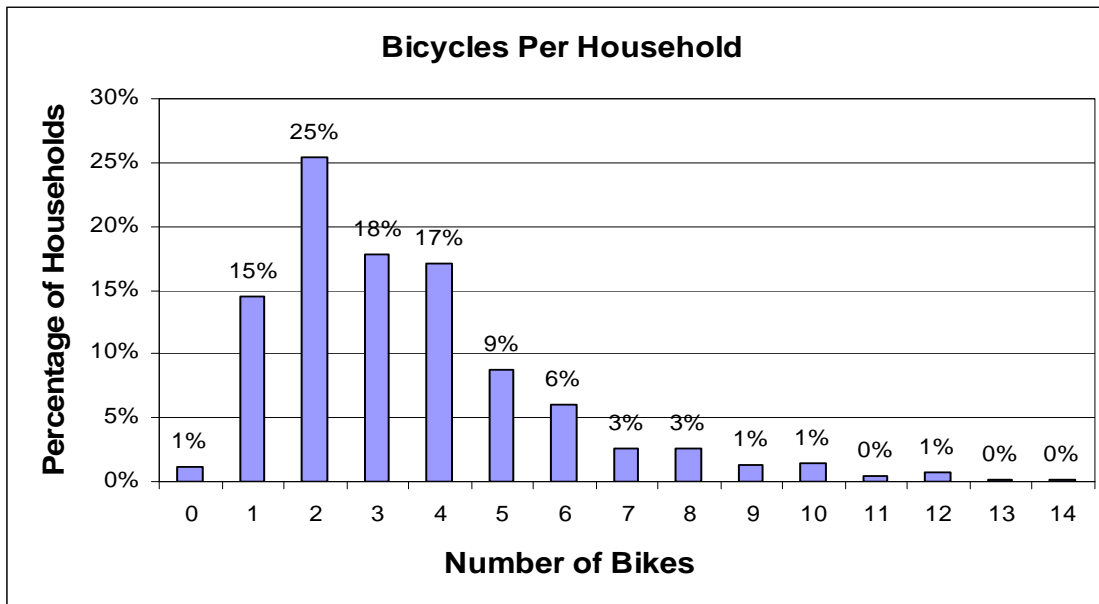
Employment

The employment status of cyclists surveyed is presented below. Though it was generally expected that post secondary students would have comprised a larger proportion of cyclists, the data from the second survey during Summer of 2006 may have been influenced by local post secondary institution classes being out for the summer. It is also likely that some of these students are captured in the “employed” or other categories, depending upon their summer occupations.



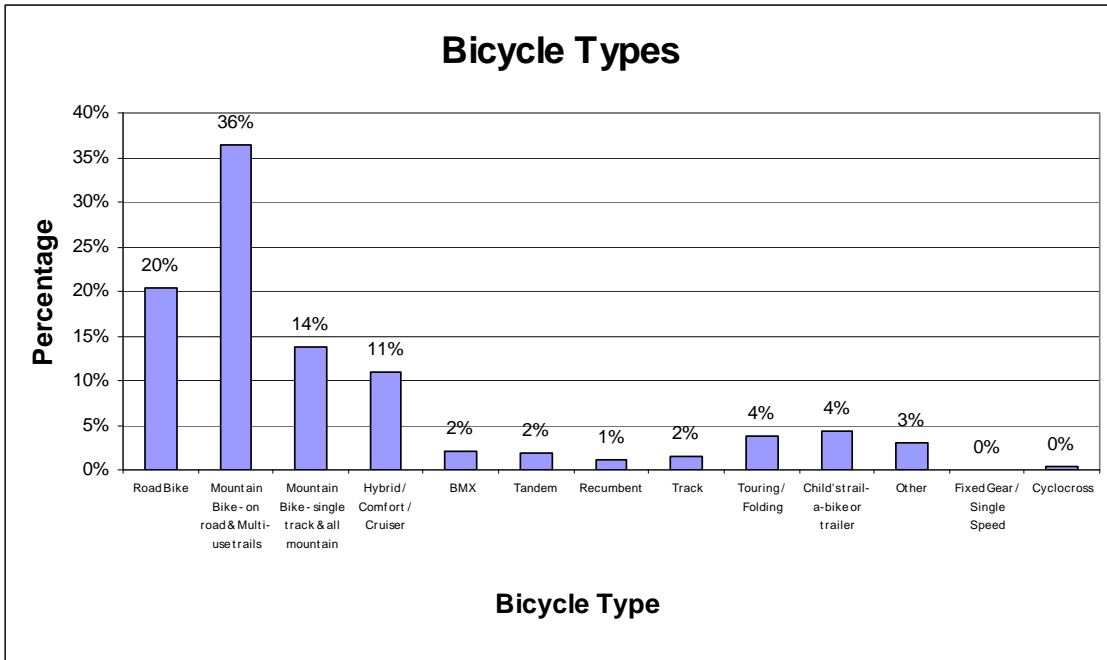
Bicycles per Household

While 84% of households had at least 2 bikes, responses ranged from individual households having no bikes up to having 14! The average household had 3.5 bikes.



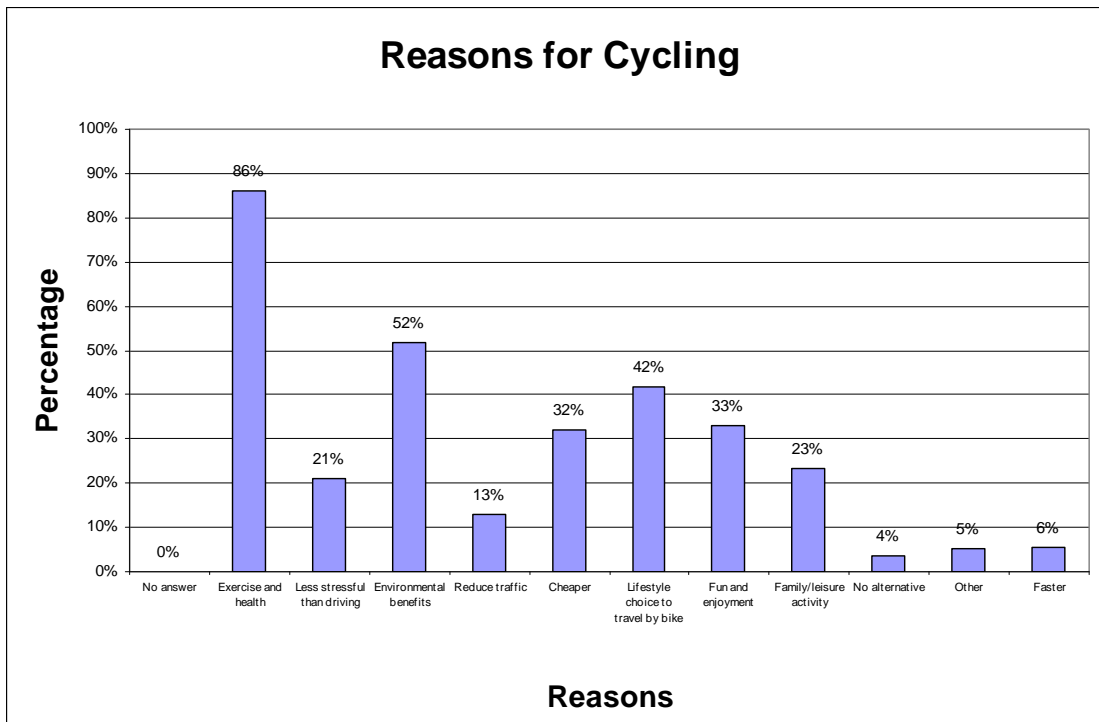
Types of Bicycles

Of the 2012 bicycles owned by survey respondents, 36% were on-road or multi-use trail mountain bikes, followed by road bikes at 20%. Close behind at 14% were single-track or all-mountain bikes followed by 11% for hybrid/comfort/cruiser bikes.



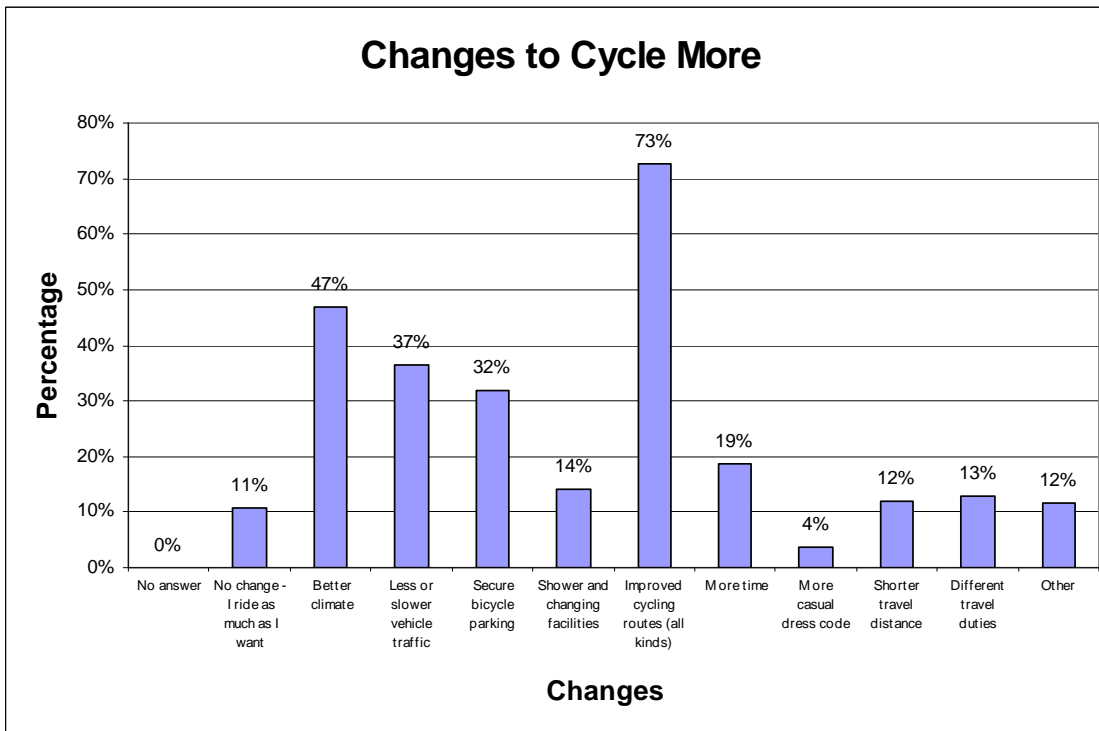
Reasons for Cycling

Survey respondents were asked to select the three most important reasons that they rode a bicycle. Of the most commonly cited reasons, 86% of respondents said they cycled for exercise and health, 52% for the environmental benefits and 42% said that it was a lifestyle choice to travel by bike. The least common reason that respondents chose to describe why they cycle was that they had no alternative (4%).



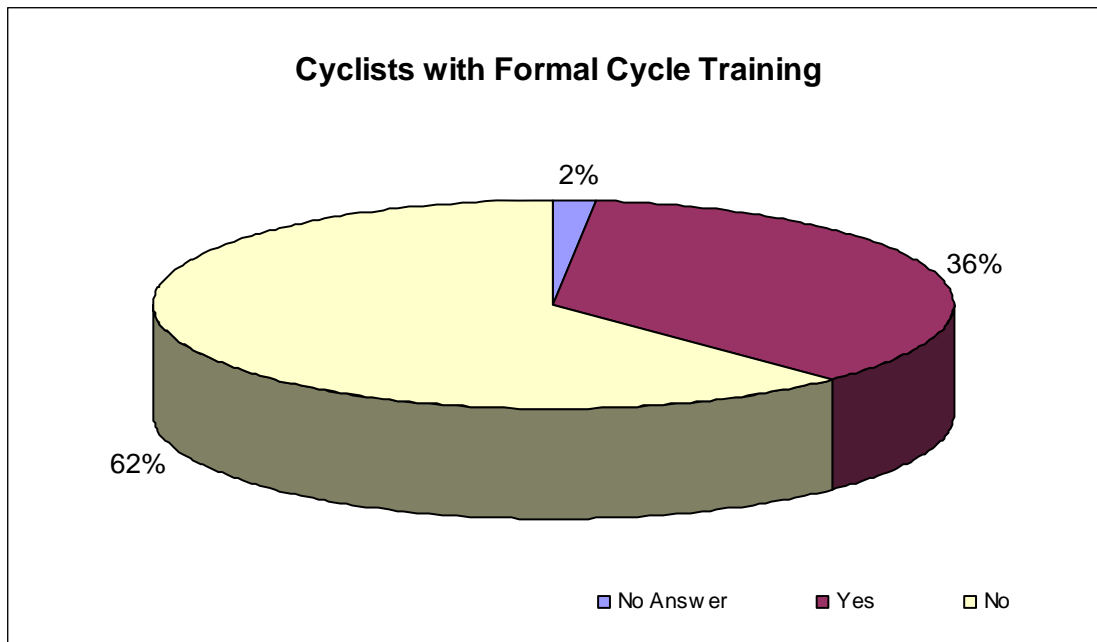
Changes to Cycle More

Cyclists were asked to select the top three changes that would allow them to cycle more. Of the most frequently cited changes, 73% cited improved cycle routes of all kinds, followed by a better climate at 47% and then less and slower vehicle traffic at 37%. The least frequently cited change was a more casual dress code at work (4%).



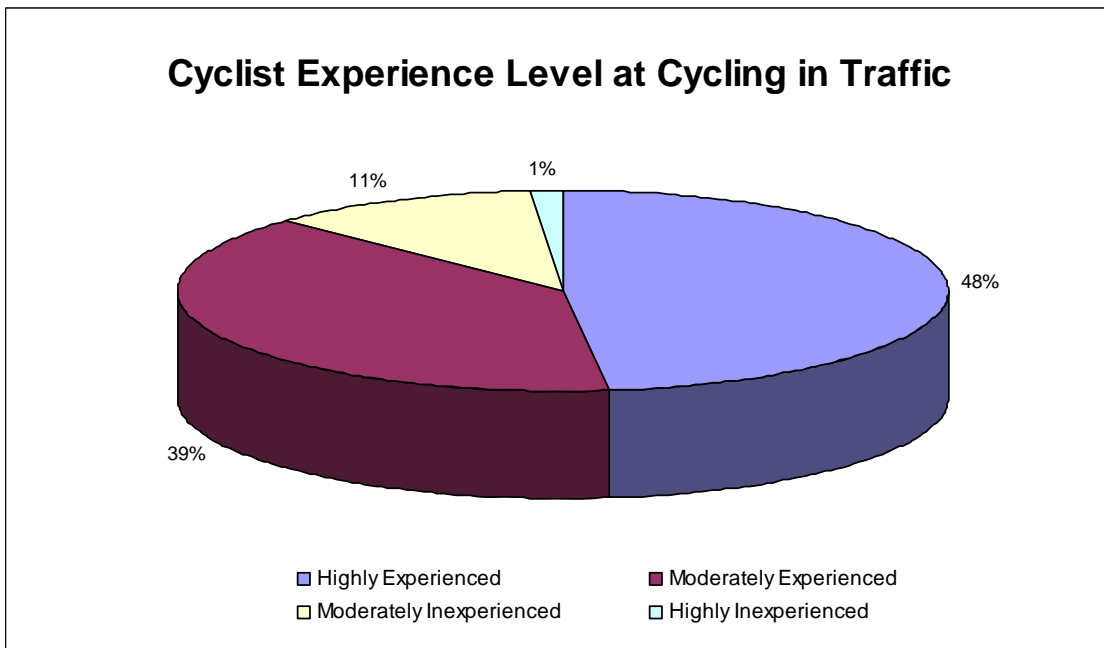
Formal Cycle Training

Of cyclists surveyed, 36% had taken some formal training on cycling skills and rules of the road, while 62% had not (2% no response).



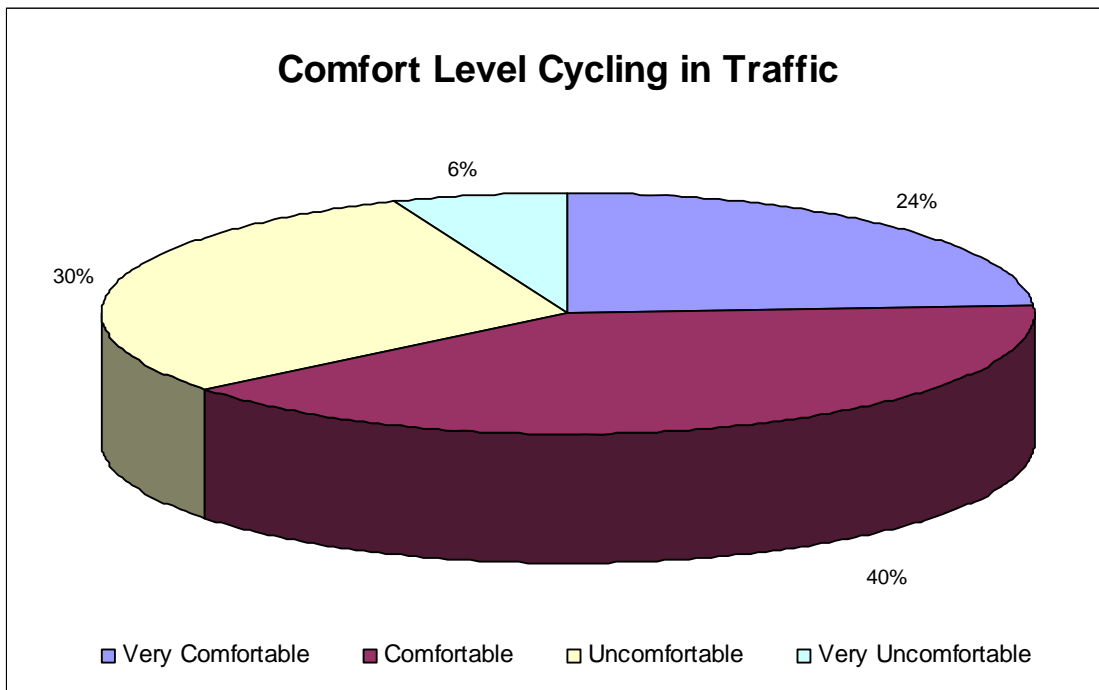
On-Road Cycling Experience

When asked about their experience at cycling in traffic, 48% of survey respondents said they were “highly experienced” at cycling in traffic and 39% said they were “moderately experienced.” 11% and 1% reported that they were “moderately” and “highly inexperienced” respectively. This indicates that very few cyclists are represented by the Bicycle User Survey data who were not already cycling with relative frequency on Edmonton roadways.



Comfort Level in Traffic

Of cyclists surveyed, 24% said they were “very comfortable” cycling in traffic and 40% reported that they were “comfortable.” 30% and 6% said they felt either “uncomfortable” or “very uncomfortable” cycling in traffic, respectively.



When comfort level is related to having had exposure to formal cycle training, 38% of those respondents who felt “very comfortable” riding on the roadway had had exposure to formal training, while 62% had not. Of those who said they felt “comfortable” on the roadway, 40% had had formal training whereas 60% had not. Of respondents who described themselves “uncomfortable” on the roadway, 31% had had exposure to formal training while 69% had not, and of those who felt “very uncomfortable” riding in traffic, 34% had had exposure to formal training and 66% had not. This may suggest that formal training is not the single dominating factor in the comfort level of cyclists on the roadway.

When comparing comfort level to in-traffic cycling experience, one finds that as a cyclist’s experience level cycling in traffic decreases, their level of comfort in traffic also decreases. The most confident cyclists were the ones that cycled in traffic more often, and the least confident were the ones that cycled in traffic the least. This could be interpreted in either of two ways; that confidence grows with experience or that a lack of confidence prevents cyclists from gaining the necessary experience to boost their comfort level in traffic.

Stated Preference

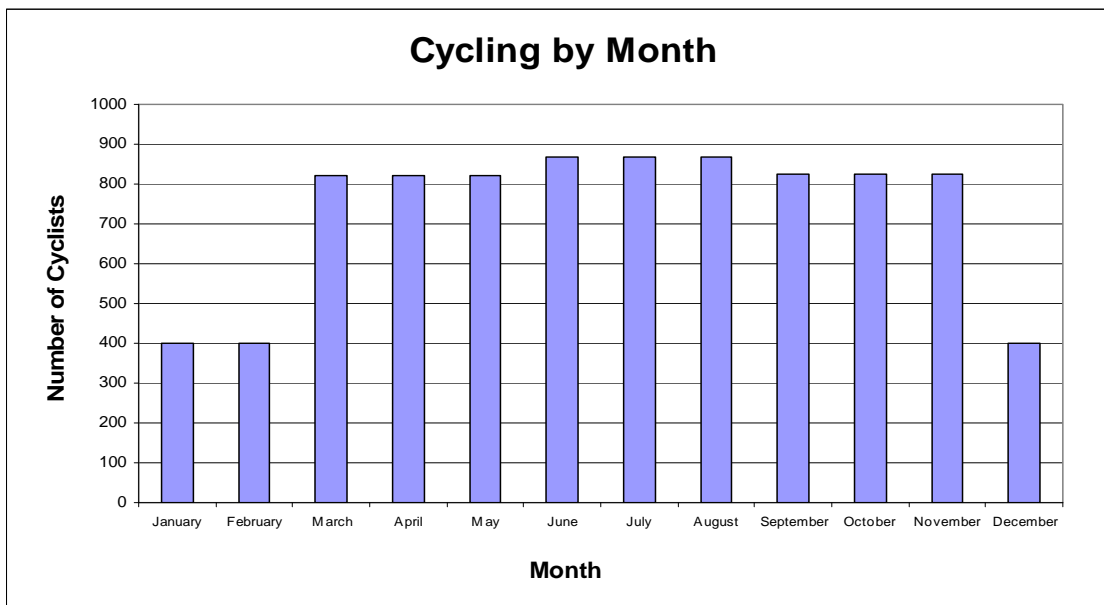
In this question, survey respondents were given a variety of options regarding their preferences for certain aspects of cycling. These gave a statistically significant indication of cyclist's preferences with regard to different types of bicycle facilities as well as end-of-trip facilities including showers and bicycle parking.

A strong preference was shown for cycling on designated bicycle facilities (bike lanes on roadways and bike paths shared with pedestrians) over cycling on roadways shared with cars. Survey results also indicated that there was a slight preference for cycling in bike lanes on roadways over bike paths shared with pedestrians.

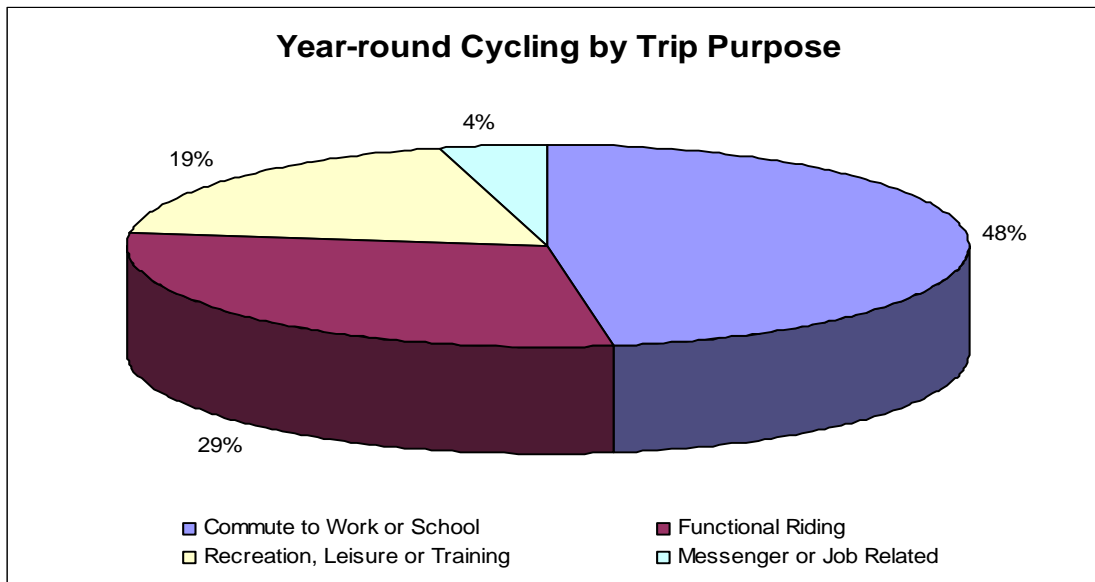
Additionally, both the availability of showers for cyclists at their destination and secure bicycle parking at their destination were important factors for the cyclists who completed this survey. Secure bicycle parking was also significantly more important to survey respondents than the availability of showers.

Riding Habits

This question gathered information about the frequency and purpose of cycling in Edmonton on a year-round basis. Cyclists were asked to outline how often they rode by season. Of the respondents, the graph below represents the total number who rode in each month of the year.



Of cyclists who reported that they rode year-round, 48% were commuting to work or school, while 29% were completing functional tasks such as running errands, shopping or going to the cinema. Another 19% were riding for recreation, leisure or training purposes and 4% were riding as messengers or for a job-related purpose.



Cycling Services in Edmonton – ETS Routes & LRT

When asked if they had used the free bike racks available on bus routes 1, 4 and 9, 85% of survey respondents said they had not used the racks, while 15% had.

Cyclists were then given an opportunity to comment on the bike rack service currently provided by ETS. 8% of survey respondents suggested expanding the free bike rack service on bus routes 1, 4 and 9 to other routes or all buses. 5% commented that they appreciated the service, while 2% indicated that they were unsure of how to use the racks. 1% indicated that they did not use the service on buses because the available bus routes did not travel to locations they needed to get to.

Bicycles currently travel for free on Edmonton's LRT at anytime other than peak hours. When asked if they had used this service, 78% of survey respondents said that they had never taken their bike on the LRT, while 21% had (1% no response).

When asked for any additional comments, 6% of survey respondents indicated that they would like to see changes to City of Edmonton policy such as hourly restrictions limiting when bicycles are allowed on the LRT. 5% commented that they appreciated the service

currently provided, while 2% suggested providing dedicated space (or a whole car) to transport bicycles on the LRT. 1% indicated that they were unsure of how/where to put their bike on the LRT and an additional 1% said they could not use the service because they did not live near the LRT line.

Added to the suggestions provided by survey respondents, the low proportion of cyclists who had used the services available from ETS may indicate that there is a low level of awareness about these initiatives and that more public outreach could be done to inform cyclists of the options currently available to them.

Similarly, because of their limited availability on routes traveling only to certain areas of the City, the current bicycle racks and access to the LRT are really only useful to individuals who live or travel along those particular routes. The combination of bicycles and ETS could be of potential benefit to cyclists who live a farther distance from their destination than they are able to cycle, or as an emergency alternative to cyclists who have mechanical failures or face inclement weather.

Cycling Services in Edmonton – Cycle Edmonton Map

When asked if they had used the free Cycle Edmonton Map available from the City of Edmonton, 80% of survey respondents indicated that they had used it, while 19% had not (1% no response).

Cyclists were then asked for any further comments or suggestions for the maps. 17% of survey respondents communicated that they appreciated the service and were generally happy with the map, while 3% commented that the map required updating at the time that the survey was conducted in Fall of 2005 and Summer of 2006. An updated version of the map was subsequently released in Spring of 2007.

Cycling Club Memberships

23% of survey respondents were members of a local cycling club, while 75% were not (2% no response).

Suggestions for Improvements – On-Road

This was an open-ended question in which cyclists were asked to list any improvements they would like to see for on-road cycling in Edmonton.

When asked about improvements to cycling both in and outside of Edmonton's downtown, 42% of survey respondents said they would like to see bicycle lanes applied to the roadway surface. 23% of cyclists responded that they would like to see more support/funding for

cycling infrastructure and more bicycle facilities in general. 15% requested more multi-use trails in Edmonton and 9% mentioned improved roadway maintenance. Another 9% of cyclists suggested better motorist education, while 6% said they would like to see better enforcement or law changes related to cycling. 2% reiterated that they would like to see expanded service for bicycles on buses and LRT. Among other comments, 2% specifically mentioned more and better snow clearing of bicycle routes in the winter, and 1% generally appreciated the services currently provided.

Suggestions for Improvements – River Valley

This was also presented as an open-ended question in which cyclists were asked for suggested improvements specifically related to cycling in Edmonton's river valley.

25% of cyclists surveyed responded that they would like to see more trails and connections to the existing river valley network. Another 23% said that they would like to see more funding and support for cycling facilities in the river valley. 11% requested better trail maintenance, while 8% expressed their appreciation for the services currently provided. Another 8% requested better enforcement for the behaviour of all trail users, including cyclists. 7% of cyclists said that they would like to have on-road bike lanes or trails outside of the river valley in order to access trails within parkland. 4% recommended better education of other trail users including pedestrians and dog walkers, while 3% wanted to see snow clearing of the trails during winter.

CONCLUSION

The information gathered in the 2005/2006 Bicycle User Survey has been compiled to give a picture of present day cycling in Edmonton. As one of the objectives of the Transportation Department is to successfully integrate cycling as a mode within Edmonton's transportation system, this survey has provided valuable information on both preferences and potential areas of improvement for cycling in Edmonton.

An additional aim of the Transportation Department is to encourage and increase cycling in Edmonton in the future. Though this survey generally represents experienced cyclists, the City would ultimately like to provide a transportation system that is attractive to cyclists of all ages and abilities. Some of the feedback provided herein, including improvements to cycling services on transit, end-of-trip facilities, snow clearing, maintenance, education and on-road treatments, provides guidance for some of the many approaches that the City of Edmonton may use to create an on-street environment that is attractive to all cyclists. Improvements in these areas may also make cycling a more attractive option for those who currently use other modes of transportation. This data will also be useful in the support and guidance of such initiatives as the update of the Bicycle Transportation Plan in 2008.