



BIKENOMICS:

How bicycling can
save the economy

by Elly Blue

www.bikenomics.com

Summary

1. People who ride bikes do pay for the roads

2. Our current transportation system is not economically sustainable

3. Bicycling can create health and wealth for all of us



One of the biggest transportation myths today is that bicyclists are freeloaders, that we somehow don't pay taxes and thus don't pay for the roads. The implication is that when you drive a car, you DO pay for the roads: But this is false. Gas taxes have paid for about half the cost of our current national road system, and the share they cover goes down every year. The rest of the funding comes from taxes that we all pay—whether or not we drive a car.

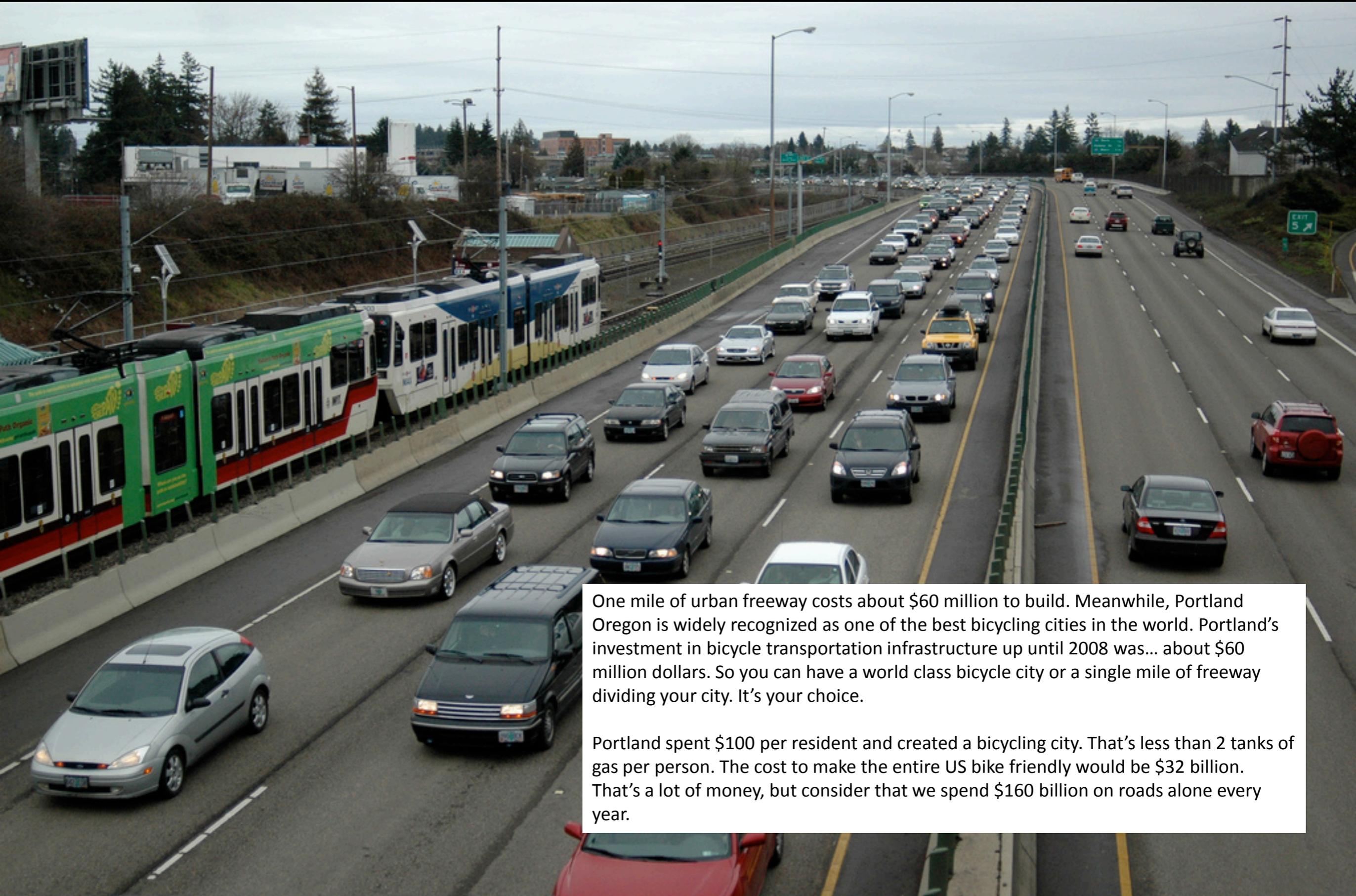
Meanwhile, when you ride a bicycle, you aren't wearing down the roads and you don't need as much asphalt to ride or park on. These benefits add up fast: The value of the right of way, the cost of paving, and the costs of maintaining car parking are huge.



But you still pay the same taxes as anyone else, so if you only bike and don't own a car, you're actually overpaying into the system. Bicyclists aren't freeloaders: We pay more than our fair share.

Our car-based transportation system runs at a net negative - highway picture- It's privately subsidized, too. The average US family spends \$10,000 a year on transportation—more than they spend on food. We spent the early 2000s using taxpayer dollars to incentivize sprawling developments that required residents to own cars, and required cities to pave and maintain new roads and utilities. The housing bubble was also a transportation bubble.





One mile of urban freeway costs about \$60 million to build. Meanwhile, Portland Oregon is widely recognized as one of the best bicycling cities in the world. Portland's investment in bicycle transportation infrastructure up until 2008 was... about \$60 million dollars. So you can have a world class bicycle city or a single mile of freeway dividing your city. It's your choice.

Portland spent \$100 per resident and created a bicycling city. That's less than 2 tanks of gas per person. The cost to make the entire US bike friendly would be \$32 billion. That's a lot of money, but consider that we spend \$160 billion on roads alone every year.

Bikes create wealth and health - For example, parking. Every business owner loves to have as much parking as possible right outside their front door. Bicycle parking takes up a 10th the space of car parking, and costs between 30 and 300 times less—while bringing as much or more revenue to businesses.



First protected bicycle lane in the US: 8th and 9th Avenues (Manhattan)

35% decrease in injuries to all street users (8th Ave)

58% decrease in injuries to all street users (9th Ave)

Up to 49% increase in retail sales (Locally-based businesses on 9th Ave from 23rd to 31st Sts., compared to 3% borough-wide)

Bikes make streets safer and help them thrive.





Bikes are healthy.

Our cars are making us sick. The chronic diseases that are becoming our leading causes of death—and that are leading our national health care crisis—are all deeply related with sedentary living, stress, and inhaling fine particulate air pollution. These things are caused by too much reliance on automobiles. They can all be solved in large part when we are able to take up bicycling.



The bicycle movement is growing fast. It is strong and organized. More people are biking to work each year. People are biking for errands, for fun, to school. Parents are biking with their children. People are racing cargo bikes loaded with hundreds of pounds.

70% of people in the US say they want to bicycle more often—the latent demand is huge. It's the answer we've been searching for to many of our problems, economic and otherwise. We need relatively small investments to make it a real option for tens of millions of people and families.

1. We can't afford to keep driving
2. Bicycling pays dividends
3. We win through community action



Thank you!

**Learn more:
Bikenomics.com**