



Watching for riders

City gears up to promote bicycle safety

With gas prices still high, many are considering bikes as their future mode of transportation. As bikes become more popular throughout the City, officials want to reinforce the importance of bicycle safety as part of the City's Traffic, Mobility and Connectivity priority.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator for Broward County Mark Horowitz is a local expert on proper cycling guidelines, and Horowitz practices what he preaches. He cycles to and from work three times a week and admits that bicycle training prevented serious injury on one occasion.

Four years ago, after 40 years of bicycling, Horowitz was in his first and only accident with an automobile. While on his way home from work, he was riding on Andrews Avenue when a driver took a sudden left turn. If it wasn't for Horowitz's knowledge of how to make an emergency turn, he would definitely be telling a different story today. Horowitz suffered only a glancing impact because he was trained in how to quickly execute the turn when he hit the car. Instead of going over the hood, he bounced off the side of the car and fell to the pavement, walking away from the incident with only a few bruises and a cracked helmet.

So what can you do to make it safer to cycle?

When driving your car:

- If you are passing a bicyclist on the road, Florida law states that you must pass by at least three feet. Wait for a safe opportunity to pass.
- When turning or exiting a driveway watch for bicyclists on the sidewalk. On the sidewalk they can be traveling in either direction.
- When exiting a drive be sure to stop at the sidewalk and look for bicyclists in both directions.
- When making a right turn, look behind you on your right to check for a bicyclist. If there is a bike lane next to you treat it as a travel lane. Look for bicycle traffic behind and to the right, then merge across the bike lane to block a bicyclist

from passing on your right before your turn.

It's important for cyclists to realize that there is a greater chance of getting hit on the sidewalk than if they were to ride on the street. The chances of being hit by a car increases when riding on a sidewalk because when exiting a driveway, motorists typically cross the sidewalk without looking and generally only look in the direction traffic is coming from.

"There is up to a 35 percent chance of getting hit on the sidewalk, versus a 10 percent likelihood when riding along with traffic on the road," Horowitz said.

You dramatically decrease your chances of getting hit by a car if you ride in the road and follow the rules.

When riding your bike:

- Obey all traffic laws and use hand signals.
- Wear a bicycle helmet.
- Make sure your bicycle works properly.
- Ride with the flow of traffic, never against it.
- Wear bright clothing.
- Have working lights and reflectors if riding at night.

If you are riding on the sidewalk you have the rights and responsibilities of a pedestrian. When encountering a pedestrian remember they have the right of way. Give them an audible signal when passing. When approaching a driveway or intersection be alert to both right and left turning motorists.

For more information on bicycling in Broward, visit broward.org/transportationplanning/tpi02003.htm or broward.org/parks/bicycle.htm.