

There's more to cycling than sport & recreation



Heading up Jefferson commuting home from work, you see deer, you hear birds, and you generally just feel pretty darned good! Don't get me wrong; there's a lot of reasons why cycling is great fun and nothing to feel guilty about. My Tuesday & Thursday-morning rides help keep me from slowing down and certainly appeal to my competitive nature (although that's now limited to sprinting & descents; competing on a climb isn't going to bring the results I'd like to see).

But there's something noble about using a bike when you'd otherwise be using a car, as is the case for commuting to work. It's not like it's very far, at almost exactly three miles. But with 2/3rds of it on busy 4-lane streets, it's not a route you'd pick for fun either. That's the thing about commuting by bike; you generally pick the shortest route, not the most-pleasant. Even so, moving with the flow of traffic and watching out for motorists that might not see you is one of those odd sources of enjoyment for me, as it forces you to engage your senses and almost go into a mental hyperdrive. I arrive at work feeling much more ready-to-go than I do on those days where I'm driven (typically Saturday).

And then there's the ride home. Not quite so easy, as there's a climb of significance, about 400ft, at the end of it. If I'm riding with Kevin, it can be brutal. Still, there's something about riding in the dark, with lights that do a much better job than those found on many motorcycles a couple decades ago, that's just as energizing as the daytime commute. It's likely safer too, as there's less traffic and the bike lights create a contrast that's not possible in daytime (and with two flashing lights to the rear, I'd love to see someone claim they didn't see me!).

So I guess I'm doing my part to try and improve Redwood City's stats as a "Bicycle Friendly Community" by adding to the 3.5% of trips made by bike here. 3.5% may not sound like much, but the national average is just 2%, and there are many places you'd think the numbers would be much higher, but aren't. Like Ventura, in Southern California. Just 1%. Long story how I know that; that will come another time. --Mike--