



**Bike Month 2019 – Commuter Challenge  
Business Participation Package**

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# What is the Commuter Challenge?

The Commuter Challenge is an annual event held by the Truckee Meadows Bicycle Alliance (TMBA) during May. It is a free and easy way to challenge your colleagues and your community to ride more and drive less while competing with other businesses at the local level. The Commuter Challenge provides a way to promote teamwork within your business, create a healthier workplace, and get people excited about bicycling.

Commuters who choose to replace car trips with bicycle trips during the month of May can log their miles on the RTC Smart Trips website. Everyone who logs at least one trip during the month will be entered to win an individual prize from TMBA. Businesses that sign up to participate in the Commuter Challenge by adding their business as a workplace location on the Smart Trips site and have at least one employee log miles during the month will be entered for a special recognition prize from TMBA as well.

Want to help us promote cycling in Washoe County and retain active, healthy employees? Let's get started!

## Participating in Bike Month's Commuter Challenge

### 1. Create Employer Page on SmartTrips

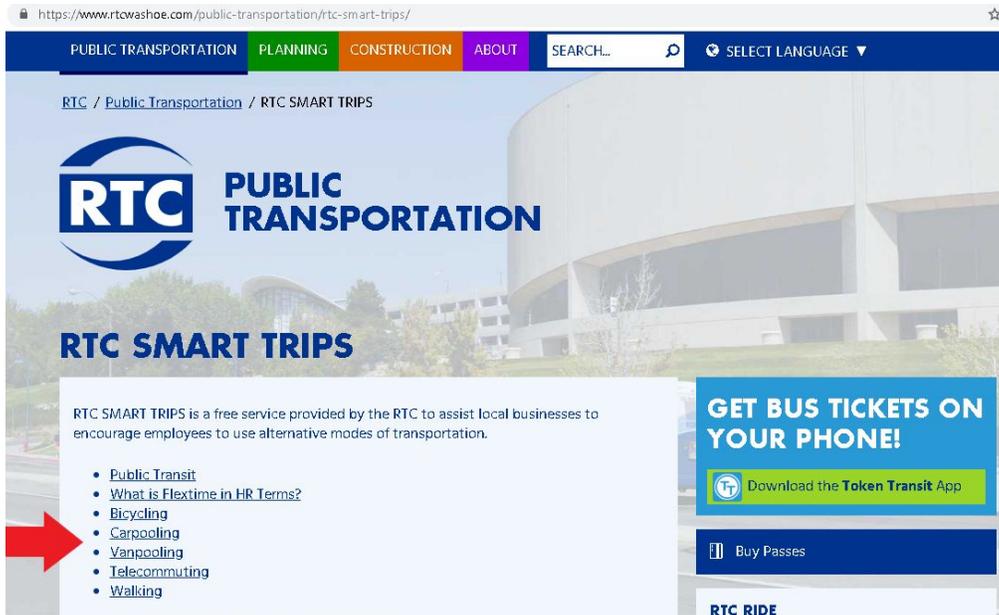
Email [smiklos@rtcwashoe.com](mailto:smiklos@rtcwashoe.com) and [bikewashoe@gmail.com](mailto:bikewashoe@gmail.com) with the following:

- Company name (and specific office/ worksite name, if applicable).
- Company logo.
- Estimated number of employees in your company or office/ worksite of company.
- Your name, email address, and phone number.
- A message saying "I want my company to participate in the Commuter Challenge and to be listed as an employer on the RTC Smart Trips site."

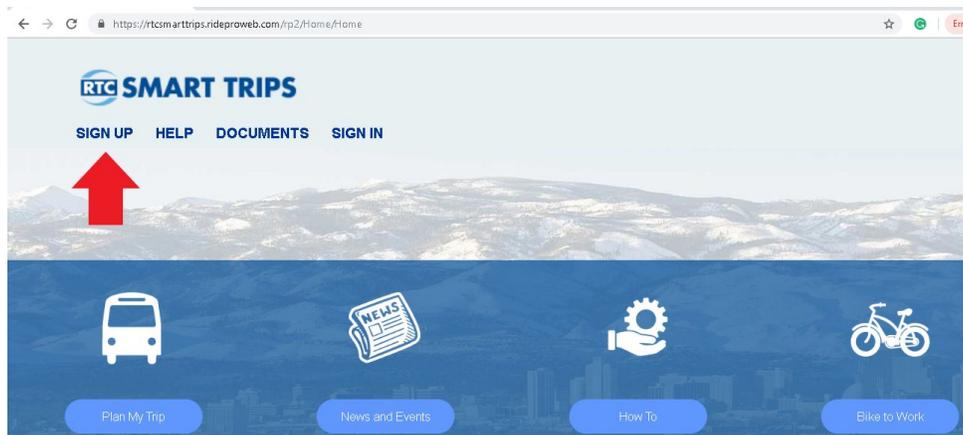
### 2. Encourage your Employees to Sign Up and Log Miles

#### Instructions for creating a Smart Trips Account:

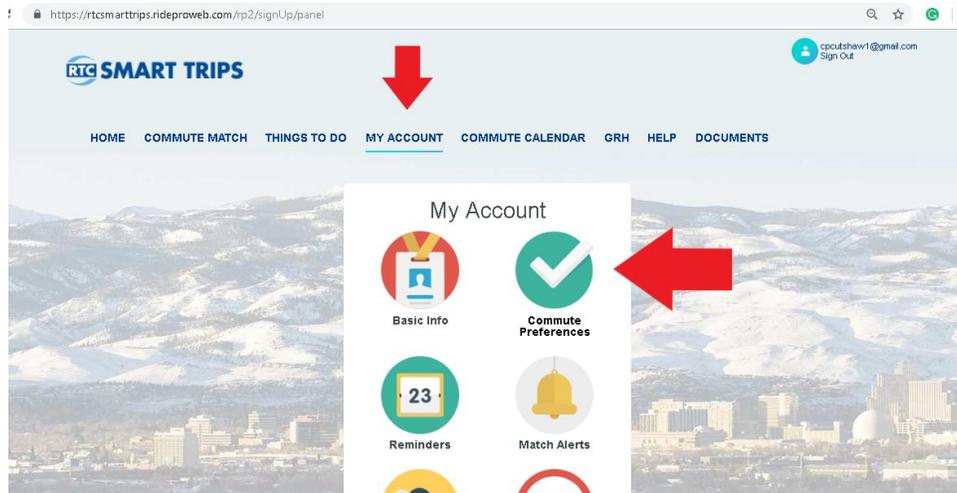
1. Download the Smart Trips App (coming April 2019), OR go to <https://rtcsmarttrips.rideproweb.com/rp2/signUp>, OR Google "Smart Trips RTC" and select the RTC Washoe website. Then select either "Carpooling" or "Vanpooling"



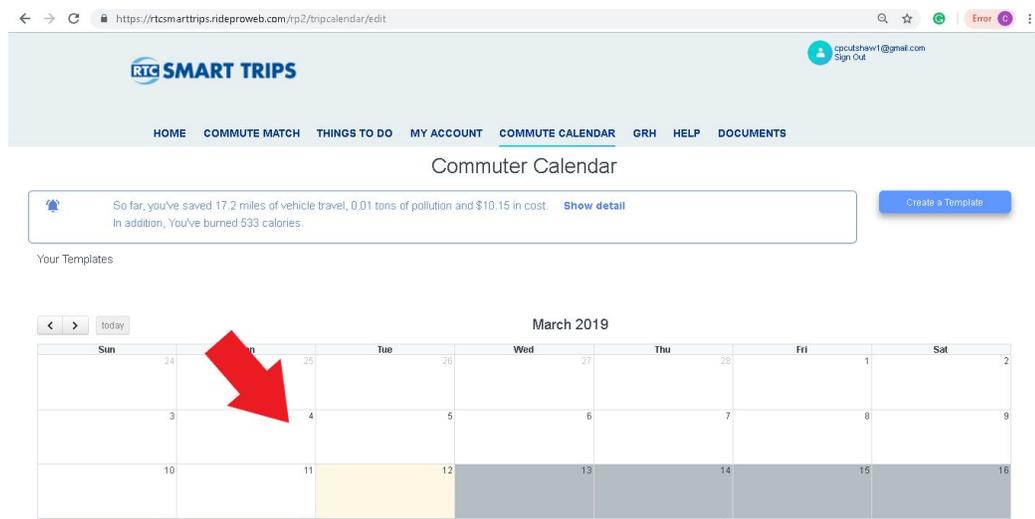
2. Select “Sign Up” and create an account



3. Once you have created an account, select “My Account” and then “Commute Preferences.” Under “Commute Preferences” there will be an option to select your Employer.



- Once your account has been set up and you have selected your employer you are now ready to record your commute! This is done by selecting “Commuter Calendar,” selecting the date you commuted, and then filling out the form.



- You're done! Enjoy your commute!

If you look at the top of your calendar, you will see fun statistics such as pollution saved, money saved, and calories burned.

### 3. Get the Recognition you Deserve!

By emailing your company's information (including a logo) to [bikewashoe@gmail.com](mailto:bikewashoe@gmail.com) and signing up as an employer on the RTC Smart Trips site, we will promote your company's participation in Bike Month on [bikewashoe.org](http://bikewashoe.org) and on our social media accounts (@bikewashoe)!

## Benefits of Bike Commuting

**Save Money:** Bicycling is one of the least expensive ways to get to work

- The average American household spends over \$8,000 per year on owning and driving their cars—more than they spend on food!

**Improve Health:** Bicycling is a great way to improve health and reduce healthcare costs

- 3 hours of biking per week reduces the risk of heart disease and stroke by 50%
- The average person loses 13 pounds in the first year of commuting by bike.

**Reduce Stress:** enjoy the scenery and travel on minor streets and trails to your worksite. You'll help reduce congestion on major streets instead of being a part of it.

**Convenient, Low-Cost Parking:** bicycling can get you from your front door to the door of your office building. There is no need to hunt for a parking space.

**Improve Air Quality:** bicycling helps the environment by reducing traffic congestion. As more people bicycle, more autos are removed from the road.

- Traffic congestion wastes nearly 3 billion gallons of gas per year in the U.S.

**Environmentally Responsible:** if you bicycle commute just one day in a five-day work week, you have reduced your automobile emissions by 20%!

- For every 1 mile pedaled rather than driven, about 1 pound of CO<sub>2</sub> is saved.

## Building a Year-Round, Bicycle Friendly Business

Imagine your employees arriving at work energized, alert, and more productive. Picture your healthcare costs dropping and staff morale skyrocketing. The bicycle isn't just a great transportation option; it's an economic engine that can drive your business to higher profits, happier employees and more loyal patrons. Encouraging bicycling showcases your commitment to sustainability, healthy living, and accessibility for all. And biking doesn't just enhance your bottom line — it makes your business a fun, engaging and exciting place to work or shop.

Building a bicycle friendly business comes down to the 4 E's: Engineering, Encouragement, Education, and Evaluation.

Engineering:

- Provide plenty of secure and convenient bike parking.
- Provide lockers and showers on-site, free for employee use.
- Advocate for better bicycle infrastructure near your business and throughout the city
  - Better bike infrastructure, such as protected bike lanes, can increase property values, attract talented workers, and increase revenue and customer numbers
  - plus, 10 customers who arrive by bike fit in the parking space of 1 customer who arrives by car

Encouragement:

- Provide incentives for employees to commute to work by bike.

- Incentives can be as little or big as you desire. They may include:
  - Extra money for biking, special recognition, awards, raffles or prizes, insurance premium discounts, extra vacation time, or subsidies for bicycles or bike gear.
- Create a Bike Coordinator position (part-time or volunteer) to help promote cycling among employees and customers
  - This person can organize events, raffles, or friendly competitions to encourage riding. They can also spearhead efforts to make the office more bicycle friendly and work with local bike advocacy groups
- Work with local advocates to improve cycling conditions and infrastructure for the community

Education:

- Host bicycle education classes
- Provide bicycling education materials to employees on a regular basis

Evaluation:

- Set and evaluate annual goals to help increase ridership

For more ideas and resources on creating a bicycle friendly business, please email [bikewashoe@gmail.com](mailto:bikewashoe@gmail.com)

## Resources for Employees

### Before you Ride

*What is a reasonable distance to commute by bicycle?*

Many consider three to five miles an optimum distance for bike commuting, although many seasoned cyclists commute fifteen miles or more each way. Base your decision upon your own experience and abilities. Since most urban cyclists travel a little faster than 10 miles per hour, you should be able to bicycle 3 miles in less than 20 minutes, or 5 miles in 30 minutes. If you live more than five miles from work, and feel it's too far to bike the entire distance, consider bicycling to a carpool, a vanpool or a transit center or bus stop. This is called a "multimodal" commute.

*What routes should I take to bicycle to work?*

Plan your commute route thoroughly. Your objective is to find the most pleasant routes to your work site with lower speed limits and less traffic. Drive your route to see if you would be comfortable bicycling on that route. Before a work-day, practice on a holiday or when traffic volumes are low like during the morning on a weekend.

*Can I take my bike with me on the bus?*

All RTC RIDE and RTC INTERCITY buses are equipped with racks to hold two or three bicycles. Bike racks are convenient and easy to use and there's no additional cost for using the rack.

*How can I make my bike more comfortable to ride?*

How your bike fits you is even more important than the type of bicycle you choose. Riding the correct size bike is as important as wearing shoes that fit. To make your bike more comfortable to ride, adjust the seat height to allow comfortable leg extension with only a slight bend in your knee when sitting on the seat. Adjust the seat angle so that it's level. Loosen the mounting bolt underneath the seat to adjust your forefoot position over the pedals. Adjust the handlebar height for a comfortable riding position. Handlebar stem-lengths vary to accommodate all combinations of arm and torso lengths.

When riding a geared bike, select the lowest or easiest gear that your feet can spin smoothly while maintaining pressure on your pedals. This reduces strain on your knees. Pedal constantly instead of intermittently to keep a steady heart rate, thereby avoiding muscle cramps and fatigue.

### **Bike Accessories**

*Bicycle Helmet:* a bike helmet can prevent head injuries when worn properly. Be sure your helmet meets protection standards set by the Snell Memorial Foundation, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), or the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM). And replace it whenever it sustains a hard impact (even if you cannot see the damage), or every five years due to deterioration of the protective Styrofoam liner.

*Sunglasses or Other Eye Protection:* to protect your eyes from bright sunlight, bugs and fine road debris thrown up by tires. Protective eyewear is especially important for those who wear contact lenses.

*Bike Lock:* For all short term and some long term parking, you'll need to carry a lock. U-locks are best, but are heavy. Consider leaving one at work where you park.

*Water Bottle and Holder:* for any commutes, you'll want to drink water to avoid dehydrating. A bottle holder on your bike can keep your water bottle handy for easy access.

*Lights:* Nevada Law, and an important feature to use while it is dark or during dawn/dusk. Blinking and steady lights on your bike can help you be seen by other traffic whether it is day or night.

*Pannier bags:* come in a variety of sizes and shapes, hang onto your bike's racks, and enable you to carry your briefcase, laptop, lunch, extra clothes, groceries, etc.

*Baskets:* whether in front of the bars or in back on the rear rack are also a great way to increase your bike's cargo capacity.

*Fenders:* They aren't just for rain. They keep any road wetness such as irrigation run off from being thrown up your backside.

*Tools:* The most common problem you may encounter is a punctured or pinched tube which leads to a flat tire. You may want to carry a flat tire kit that contains tire levers, spare tubes, and a portable bicycle pump. Some commuters also choose to carry a multi-tool as well, you can pick these up at most bike shops or stores which sell bike accessories.

### **Dressing for Commuting**

If you do not have far to ride, what you normally wear to work might do. Dressing in layers allow you to peel off layers as you get too warm or add on layers if the weather becomes cooler during your ride. You can also carry your clothing to change into upon arrival. Stack your clothing pieces onto each other and

roll them, rather than folding them, will help reduce wrinkling and creasing. Some bicycle commuters prefer to wear cycling jerseys and shorts if they have a long way to ride.

Take a week's worth of work clothing in once a week and store it in a locker, or carry your clothes with you on the bike. When carrying them with you on your bike, roll clothing or use tissue paper to prevent wrinkles from folding, or use a garment-bag type pannier.

## **During Your Ride**

### **How to Ride as a Commuter/Utility Cyclist**

*Route Selection:* chose routes with lower speed limits and less traffic such as side roads, residential streets, and trails.

*Pacing:* it is not necessary to pedal hard and fast as if you are trying to get a workout. Getting some exercise is nice but you also may not want to arrive at work sweaty or soil your clothes in the process of commuting to work (unless there is a shower facility at work). The average bicycle commuter travels between 10 m.p.h. to 15 m.p.h.

*Follow the Rules of the Road:* respect other users of the road by following the rules and laws as if you are driving a vehicle.

*How should I interface with bus traffic and large vehicles?*

Make sure the bus driver sees you. Always keep the bus driver's rear view mirror and side mirror in sight. Never pass a stopped bus on the right. Passengers may step off in front of you. Do not come to a stop on the right side of large vehicles such as buses and garbage truck; the driver may not see you should they decide to make a right turn. Stay behind it or pass on the left when it is safe to do so. Stay a safe distance behind stopped buses since they sometimes roll backward when starting up.

*What should I do to protect myself if I am in a crash?*

Similar to when being involved in an automobile incident, get the License Plate Number and State of the other party, the driver info including name, phone number and insurance company, the time and location of the incident and name and contact information of witnesses. If you are injured, contact [Josh Zisson](#) at [www.bikesafeboston.com](http://www.bikesafeboston.com) for a referral to a qualified bike law specialist in your area.

## **After you Ride**

### **Worksite Support**

*Showers:* if your workplace has a facility where you can shower then great. Otherwise, you can carry a towel or washcloth for wiping off after your commute.

*Bike Parking:*

Choose a bike rack near the most visible primary entrance(s) and make sure your bike is securely locked through the frame and at least one wheel, preferably both. Some workplaces offer long-term bike parking facilities for bike commuters who plan to be at work all day such as bike lockers, a covered bike pend or a storage room. In some instances, employers may consider allowing you to park your bike near your work station.

*Storage:* there may also be bike lockers or cages for storing your bike during the day while at work or should you need to leave your bike overnight (in the case of bath weather) and take other modes of transportation home.