



Prescott Alternative Transportation

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Ten Greatest Myths About Bicycling in Prescott

1. Only 2-3% of Prescott residents own/ride bikes.

Truth: There are an estimated 40,000 bicycles in the Prescott area. The most common response offered when asked "why don't you ride them" is "it's not safe to ride in Prescott."

2. Bicyclists are a "special interest group."

Truth: With 40,000 bicycles in the area, this group is similar or larger in size to other major government funded groups including public schools, libraries, law enforcement, downtown business owners, dog owners, Yavapai College students, etc

3. Bicyclists demand five feet for bike lanes on all roads.

Truth: In order to encourage people to ride bicycles there must be a logical and connected system of safe routes. Children must have safe routes to ride bicycles to school. While five foot lanes are the standard for major roads, it is not necessary for all roads. Proper facilities that connect common destinations can include simply signing roadways as routes (examples throughout downtown area), restriping existing roadway widths (example: Merrit/Montezuma) and adding pathways (example: Prescott Greenways). The key is connection, just as with providing for cars.

4. Once given something like a trail or bike lane, bicyclists will want more.

Truth: In order to ride their bikes people need a connecting system of bicycle facilities as stated in the Prescott Bicycle-Pedestrian plan.

5. It costs \$1 million per mile to accommodate bike lanes...most of this in acquisition cost.

Truth: As stated above, proper provisions for bicycles are most often implemented through low cost measures like signing and restriping. On occasion a costly retrofit becomes necessary in order to connect the bikeway system (example: new bike/ped pathway to be included in the 89/69 interchange, funded by the bike/ped specific federal Enhancements program). The most effective way to mitigate these costly retrofits is to provide appropriate bicycle and pedestrian facilities at the design stage (example: Copper Basin Road).

6. Bicycles are illegal in the roadway.

Truth: Bicyclists have equal rights, access and responsibility as cars while riding in the roadway including riding with traffic. If cars must slow down and wait for oncoming traffic to clear before passing a bicyclist, although annoying, it protects all users of roads. Compare it to passing a tractor or street sweeper going 15 miles per hour. With roads designed to accommodate all users, roads are safer for all users. In fact, Prescott is a part of a Metropolitan Planning Organization that requires by law a multi-modal transportation system which includes safe accommodation of bicyclists.

7. Rumble strips are an acceptable divider between the road and the bike lane.

Truth: Rumble strips on rural roads are usually placed inappropriately and pose a hazard to bicyclists. They should NEVER be used in urban settings. Any barrier placed between travel lanes and bike lanes will be a safety hazard likely to pitch a bicyclist into traffic. Also, bicyclists must easily enter and exit bike lanes in order to make their turns and avoid obstacles that may end up in the bike lanes. Cars must also be able to easily cross the bike lane line in order to make turns and avoid hazards.

8. Only a few people would use bike facilities, once built.

Truth: Without exception, communities that accommodate all users of roadways see increased use by all users. When Prescott includes connected routes and facilities for bicycles, more people will use them. Just look at the limited current facilities in Prescott today. The Peavine Trail is only a recreational trail at this point. It does not connect communities as it will in the future. It is always in use. There are regularly bicycles on Willow Creek road, even though it does not connect to other routes. Bike racks at Prescott High School and Prescott College are full every day. Flagstaff and Tucson have invested in facilities and have not only seen more riders, but have become destinations for cyclists. In fact, reasonable facilities will make Prescott an ideal destination for more bicyclists. Many people come here to ride on our great trails, but have to drive to ride. Mountain bike and road races come to Prescott each year, but these are confident, experienced riders who come for the natural benefits our community. With facilities, we will attract larger organized events targeting families, recreational riders and other “regular folks.” Facilities can be a catalyst for more tourism dollars. We must realize that over 40,000 bicycles in this area could be used for regular short trips if we provide for them.

9. Bicyclists break the law regularly.

Truth: Cyclists do routinely break the law by riding against traffic, riding on sidewalks, and riding through pedestrian crosswalks. These “crimes” are typically the result of a lack of knowledge on their part (parents still routinely teach kids to ride on sidewalks and ride against traffic) and a lack of facilities. Think about it. Would bicyclists be encouraged to ride on Sheldon Street sidewalks if the road accommodated them? More experienced cyclists sometimes roll through stoplights (like motorists), or don’t come to complete stops at stop signs. As more riders take to the roads, enforcement becomes more important. On the other hand, motorists are much guiltier of minor traffic infractions than cyclists. How many motorists don’t push speed limits? Turn right into traffic where prohibited? While riding, bicyclists are routinely harassed, spit at, honked at, pushed off roads, mooned, slapped, had garbage thrown at them, etc. All this is done by motorists. We support responsible and safe bicycle riding.

10. Only people who buy gasoline pay the taxes that build roads...cyclists do not.

Truth: Most bicyclists own and drive motor vehicles. All bicyclists pay sales taxes, income tax, and other taxes. In fact, less than 60% of roadway costs are paid for through gas taxes. When examining City roads, this percentage is much lower. Bicycle advocates also pay their way by working with local governments to help fund facilities. In Prescott, we would not have a Peavine Trail, West Granite Creek Greenway, signs installed, or extra money for the redesign of the 69/89 interchange if Prescott Alternative Transportation did not partner with Prescott to raise more than \$3 million for enhancements. We will continue to help in the future.