

2015

## Bicycle Urbanism, Blog 5

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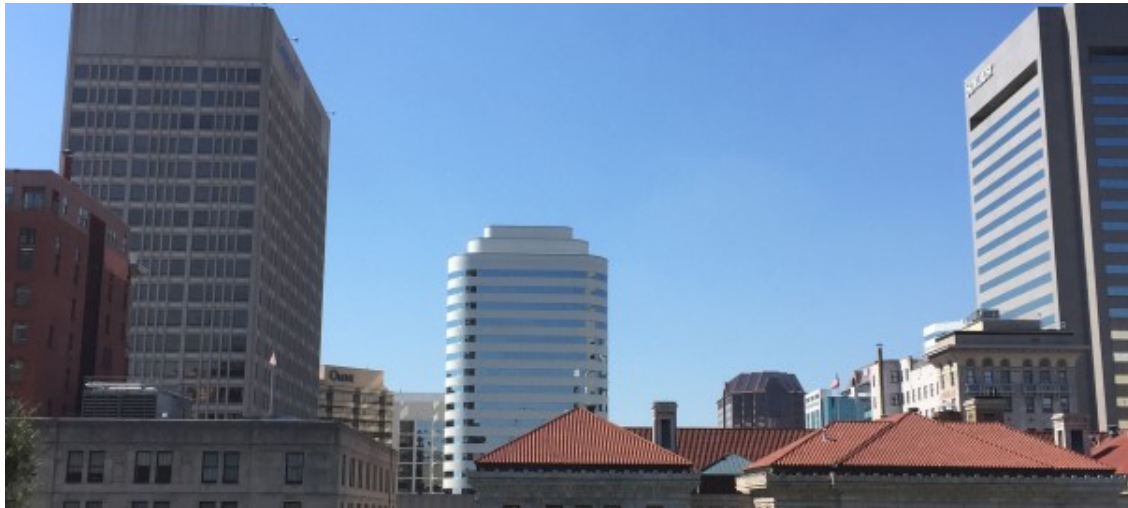
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# Bicycle Urbanism

Part of the Great VCU Bike Race Book Course



## The Base of a Bike Friendly city

🕒 September 27, 2015   📁 Student Post   👤 dpitt

When I think of what makes a city bike friendly, I think of dedicated lanes, separate lights, dedicated bridges, and all the bells and whistles of places like Copenhagen and Amsterdam. Which are all things that can definitely set great cycling cities aside from other cities, but there is definitely something more to using bikes as everyday transit than just infrastructure like parking and facilities. I think that the real bicycle use and friendliness comes from public use and social norms of transit. More specifically I think that a bike friendly city must contain a strong number of people who are passionate about bikes as transit, and Richmond definitely has a good start to that. One thing that came up a lot in my surveys was the fact that there are a lot of local bike shops in Richmond that have unique characteristics and an overall strong bike culture. Which made me think that the community and cultural aspects of cycling act as the foundation for bike friendly cities and that the people must have a demand to bike in order for a city to achieve this. In addition, the use of designated bike infrastructure must be socially popular or a social norm in order for the infrastructure to be successful and biking to become a widely used form of transit. About half of the people I surveyed said that they were not comfortable biking on higher volume streets such as Cary, Broad, or Main and the people who said they were comfortable on the larger and faster roads acknowledged that riding down those streets was less common and more dangerous. Which gave me the sense that if more cyclists in general didn't shy away from using the busier streets the infrastructure on those specific paths would follow suit and compliment the transit that is already happening there opposed to directing and controlling it. Which leads me to my next point that is the major arteries of the city like Main, Cary, Broad, etc. need to receive the most attention in terms of new bike infrastructure because they are the most efficient in going from point A to point B throughout the city and are not reserved for cars exclusively. In my field studies I found that taking Cary to get to downtown, which was a part of my section, was the roughest in terms of comfort but was also the fastest. I rode both Main and Cary to and from downtown several times and every time I could tell I stressed a few cars out and had some cars come much too close when passing. Although it wasn't a horrible experience I feel that it could be very discouraging for a first time rider to take their bike into work downtown and feel the pressure of a busy one way street going down steep hills. In conclusion and in relation to my section I think that the city should focus on Signage, lanes, parking, and other infrastructure along at least two

specified routes that cross 95 because that would open up a lot of housing in Churchill to downtown via bike.

Submitted by Justin

## *2 thoughts on “The Base of a Bike Friendly city”*



Brittany  
Prorise

October 2, 2015 at 11:16 pm

This is the second blog I've read that mentions Copenhagen, maybe Richmond should send some of its city planners there to take notes.

I never realized how hard it is to get downtown on a bike. Driving is obviously fine but on a bicycle it's like a roller coaster ride. There's a lot of oneway streets and drivers that don't check for people on bikes when making turns or switching lanes. There is a lot less bike riding in the downtown area than in the fan because of how much less bike-friendly it is down there.



Mariam  
Sankoh

October 5, 2015 at 10:48 pm

I am writing to compliment you on your post it actually really helped me write my own post and notice that in many of the community areas I went to in Richmond there was a severe lack of bicycle parking and general infrastructure, and how that related back to the general attitude towards cycling in the city of Richmond