

# **National International! Family Biking Survey**

## **Part I: Overview**

Data Collected as of February 28, 2013  
by Megan Odett, Kidical Mass DC

### States Represented: 21

- AK (Seldovia)
- AZ (Tucson)
- CA (Berkeley, Dublin, Eureka, Fairfax, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, Sunnyvale)
- CT (Bridgeport, New Haven, Thomaston)
- CO (Denver)
- DC (Washington)
- FL (Miami, Tallahassee)
- IA (Cedar Rapids)
- IL (Chicago, Evanston)
- IN (Fort Wayne, Indianapolis)
- MA (Boston, Cambridge, Reading)
- MD (Cheverly, Rockville, Silver Spring)
- MI (Grand Blanc)
- MN (Minneapolis, St. Paul)
- MT (Anaconda)
- NC (Carrboro)
- OR (Eugene, Portland, Salem)
- PA (Philadelphia)
- TX (Austin, Houston, Tomball)
- WA (Seattle)
- WI (Madison, Milwaukee)

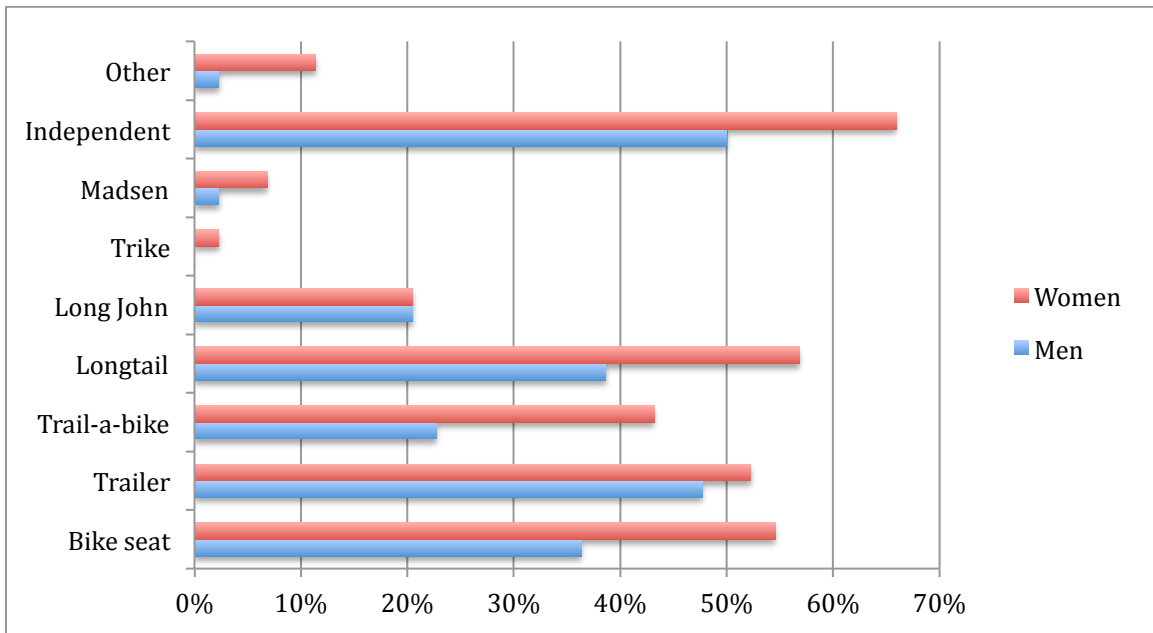
### Countries Represented: 4

- United States
- Canada (Winnipeg, Toronto)
- UK (Swanage [Dorset])
- Australia (Brisbane)

### Total Respondents: 96

- Women: 51%
- Men: 46%
- Gender Unspecified: 3%

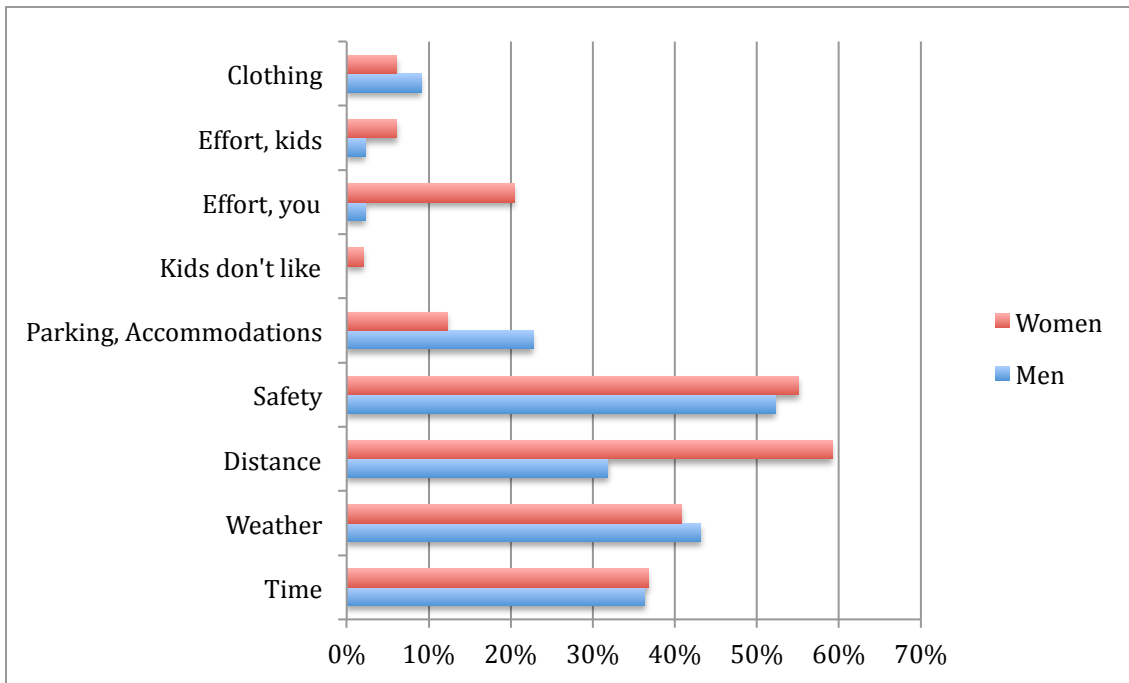
## What kind of bike(s) and/or equipment do you use to bike with your children?



### Notes:

- Other (Optional write-in category. Popular choices: Tandem, “Midtail” such as Kona MinUte or Workcycles Fr8)
- Independent (child is independent cyclist)
- Madsen (Madsen Bucket Bike, longtail/boxbike hybrid)
- Trike (Cargo tricycle, ex: Christiania Boxbike, Nihola)
- Long John (Ex: Bakfiets, Larry vs. Harry Bullitt, Gazelle Cabby)
- Longtail (Ex: Xtracycle, Yuba Mundo, Kona Ute)
- Bike seat (Either front or rear mounted)

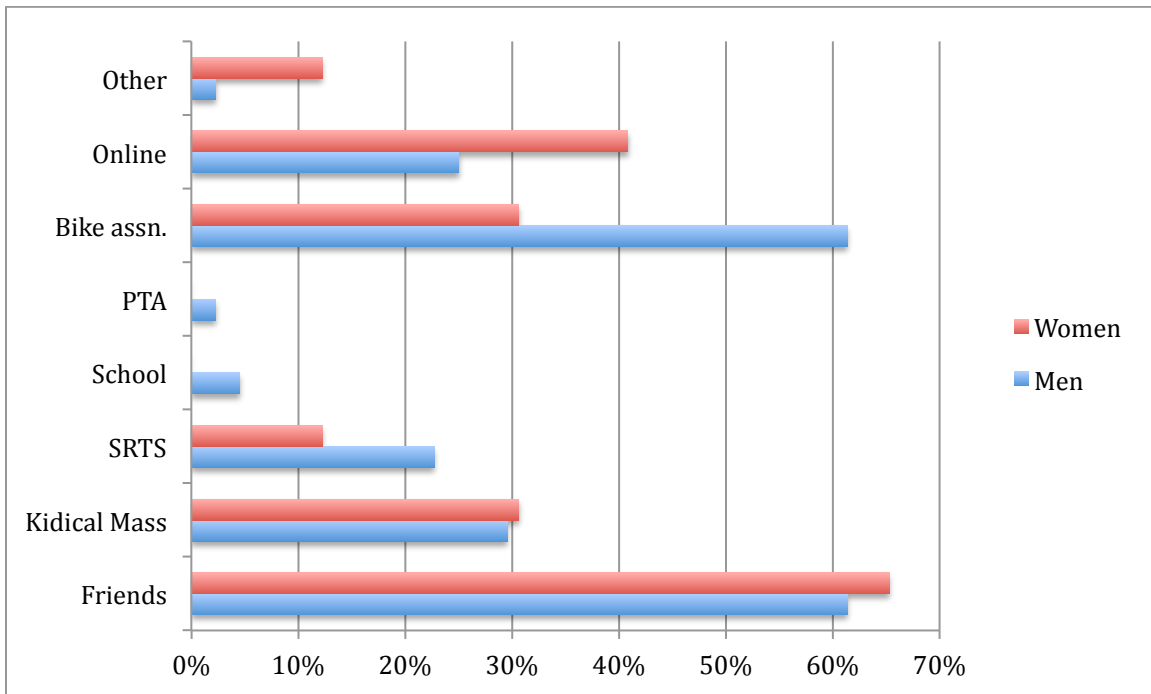
## Overall, what are the obstacles that keep you from biking with your children more often?



### Notes:

- Effort, kids (Physical effort is too demanding for your children)
- Effort, you (Physical effort is too demanding for you)
- Kids don't like (Children don't enjoy long bike rides)
- Parking, Accommodations (lack of bike parking or other accommodations)

## What organizations, groups or programs helped you learn about bicycling with your children?



### Notes:

- Other (Optional write-in category. Popular choices: bike shop staff.)
- Online (Originally included in "Other". Specific recommendations include Totcycle.com, HumoftheCity.com, (R)Evolution per Minute Facebook group, assorted personal parent cycling blogs)
- Bike assn. (Local bicycling association or advocacy group)
- PTA (PTA, PTSO, or other parent group at your school)
- School (Bicycling or phys ed curriculum in child's school)
- SRTS (Safe Routes to School program)

## **Would you have liked more information or support when you first started biking with your children? If so, what would have been helpful to you?**

- When I'm out and about with my kids, I don't really have time to talk and chat with other parents about bikes (I'm chasing kids and mediating fights and fetching groceries). Facebook groups and Twitter have been more helpful with support and ideas because I can chat/read when the kids are sleeping/napping/occupied at home.
- We didn't realize the immense difference an electric assist would make in our lives because they're still uncommon so we'd never tried one--as a result, we relied on a car as backup for far longer than was really necessary.... There are not enough role models to show how riding can be fun in all conditions, particularly on steep hills and in wet weather. I had never realized that cycling year-round as a commuting strategy would mean that I am one of the only moms I know getting daily exercise, which has been a godsend.
- More info about which bikes are easiest to manage for small and not-super-strong women.
- Information was even harder to get when we were starting [five years ago]. We relied on local cargo bikers who actually weren't riding with children, and weren't able to get test rides (their bikes were too big for us, though they were super helpful). No local shops had good info. They still don't.
- Bicycling in schools. I think it would help some families get involved. Local shops and school districts should work together for area schools.
- Kidical Mass rides, cargo bike roll calls, a local family biking group, a wrench we could trust, knowledge about the +/- of longtails, long johns, trailers, the variety of seats for various ages, etc.

## Is there anything else you'd like the national bicycling community to know about family bicycling or women's cycling?

- ❖ Make it about the kids...not the moms. Moms are notoriously good at sacrificing their own health/interests...but would give their left pinky to help their kids.
- ❖ Bike shops: You're missing out! Welcome us into your shops! Put a small table with some toys in a corner and some diapers and wipes in your bathroom and BOOM! here come the moms and dads.
- ❖ It's just plain more complicated for me than it is for my male colleagues who 1) have no hair and 2) don't have to transport young kids. The level of infrastructure and institutional support that's sufficient for them isn't sufficient for me. I want to bike with the kids but it's taken a huge investment to do so. First a bike seat (not such a big deal), then a trailer, then an entirely new bike. Plus lots of time and energy to figure out the logistics. We have an awesome bike share program in Boston that is inaccessible to riders with children. So I don't use it. What a shame!
- ❖ The bike community in Minneapolis can be somewhat anti-child. Many people don't believe having children is an environmentally correct choice and have been rude to my kids.
- ❖ Good infrastructure is really, really important, as is easy access to route-planning tools. I've talked to other mothers that don't bike in our area because there aren't or they don't know about good routes (the quiet streets, the dead-ends that go through for pedestrians/bikes, etc.).
- ❖ E-assist makes family biking (and commuting, for me) possible for our family. Our kids are big for their age, but not safe enough cyclists to go on their own power. There's such a stigma against e-assist for many cyclists. My wife and I had to overcome our own negative attitudes about it before we bought our cargo bike. But it has transformed our lives.... It makes it possible to have an invigorating but not overwhelming ride. I arrive at work without needing a shower -- and if I had to shower at work, I couldn't ride. I don't have access to a shower, nor would I have time to get my kids to school, then bike to work, THEN shower. I wish more people knew about the option of e-assist because I think we could

get some non-cyclists to ride if they did. It also needs to be more affordable – a tax rebate, like there is for hybrid cars, would be a huge help.

- ❖ Make bikes *\*including cargo bikes\** for smaller people. Not everyone is a 5' 8" or taller man, and handling varies a TON by how tall/strong you are. Bikes that are too big only make it harder. (my wife is 5' 1" -- can you tell we've had a lot of frustration due to this?).
- ❖ [My wife] didn't bike much growing up. We bought the Madsen with her in mind, with the idea it would be 'her bike' and it hasn't really worked out that way. She had one minor crash that really set back her idea that she was "good enough" with bikes to go on rides with the kid(s).
- ❖ I wish there were more family bikes found in more shops. I want them affordable but I also want people to recognize that they aren't a toy and aren't cheap for a reason. People are willing to spend hundreds (or thousands) on a single car repair but gasp at \$1500 for a family bike that can last them more than a decade and give them freedom, exercise, joy and save them thousands over that time. The industry needs to grow and change but so do peoples understanding of what cycling is and is worth.

–Shane MacRhodes, Kidical Mass original co-founder



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[www.KidicalMassDC.blogspot.com](http://www.KidicalMassDC.blogspot.com)