

Biking Through Seattle's History

The modern "safety bicycle" was invented in the 1890s, and they were instantly popular. Cyclists formed riding clubs and began to advocate for better roads and paths. In this period the first 25 miles of Seattle's bike paths were laid out, some of which you can still ride on today!

After a decades-long decline in urban cycling, cycling groups were once again behind the push to increase the popularity of biking and to advocate for better bike infrastructure through petitions and public outreach events. The first Bicycle Sunday, an annual event in which Lake Washington Boulevard is closed to cars, was held in 1968. The same year, a group of neighbors formed the Burke Gilman Trail Park



Two people on the Lake Washington cycling path, ca. 1901. MOHAI, shs2968.

Committee to convince Burlington Northern and the City of Seattle to transform an overgrown railway into a 12-mile multi-use trail for bikes and pedestrians. The specific legal process they used provided a blueprint for future rail-to-trail conversions across state and nationwide.

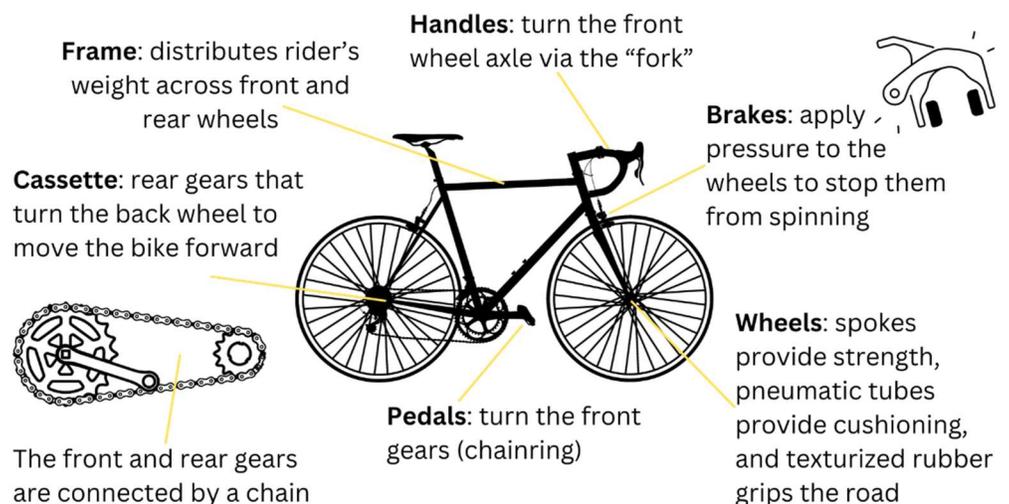


Kids riding bikes in Wallingford, Seattle, 1986. MOHAI, Seattle Post-Intelligencer Photograph Collection, 2000.107.021.20.02

Seattle began reinvesting in separated bike lanes in the 2010s, and Neighborhood Greenways shortly after. These improvements were largely thanks to organizing efforts by several groups of community members across the city. Greenways work to connect protected bike lanes and trails with safer, calmer neighborhood streets.

How bikes work

Bikes are an amazing machine that help increase the force or speed of kinetic energy created by your body to move you further, faster, and/or uphill more easily.

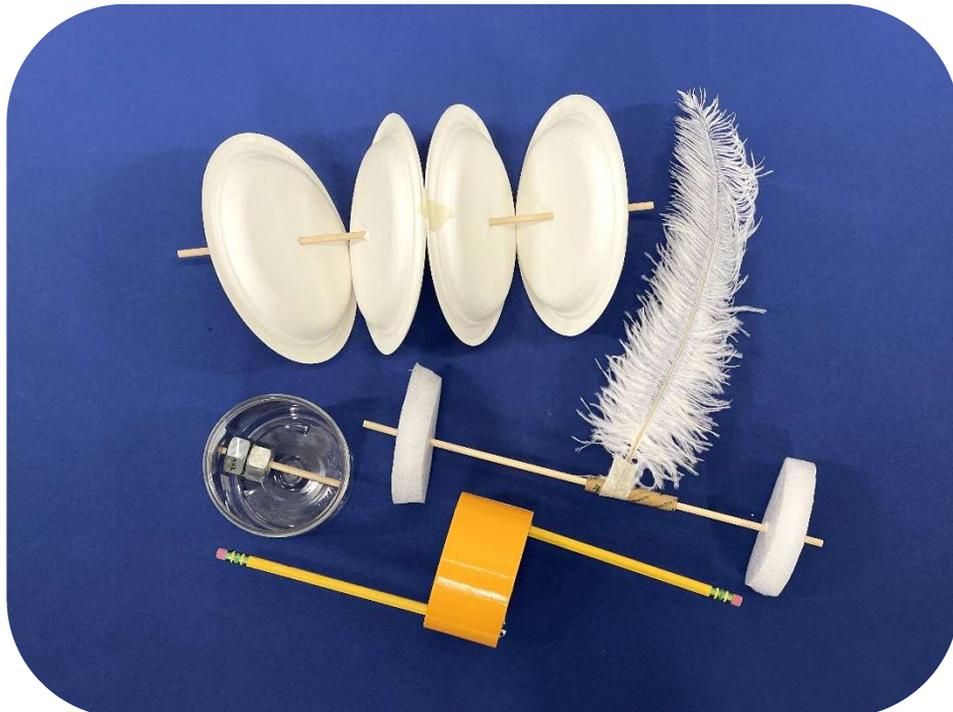


Rambunctious Rollers



Explore some of the forces that make bikes move by building whimsical rollers that move in interesting ways.

Watch the video introduction on the MOHAI YouTube Channel (@mohaiprograms) to see how they roll!



What you'll do:

1. Set up your ramp



- A ramp is a flat surface with one end that is higher than the other.
- You can build one by propping up a flat surface like cardboard with something sturdy and even, like a shoebox, or fold and place a dishtowel under two legs of a table to raise one end higher than the other.
- You want your ramp to be just high enough that rollers move down on their own slowly enough to observe their movements. Consider using a ramp wide enough to allow you to watch two rollers at the same time side by side.

2. Gather supplies

- Establish some ground rules with your grown-ups about what kinds of materials you are allowed to collect.
- Look for the following kinds of materials and objects to use or alter:
 - Circular wheels of equal or different sizes
 - Non-round wheels – ovals, spheres, rounded triangles, etc.
 - Tubes, cans, and other round containers.
 - Connectors: dowels, chopsticks, tape, glue, etc.
 - Decorations that will move with the rollers in fun and interesting ways: feathers, pipe cleaner, springs, etc.



3. Build your rollers

- Play around with different combinations of materials and construction methods. Play around with...
 - Wheel shape, size, and alignment.
 - Adding stable and moveable weights to the inside or outside of your roller to explore weight distribution and balance.
 - Surface texture of your wheels.
- Here is a gallery of example rollers for inspiration. See how they roll in the video introduction on the MOHAI YouTube Channel (@mohaiprograms)!



4. Watch them go!

- How do they roll down the ramp?
- What do you notice about how they move?
- Which ones are the fastest, the slowest, or the wobblest?
- How can you make their effects even bigger?
- What do your observations inspire you to try next?

Share your rollers with us on social media!

