

## **Meet Andrew Tron, Our Cycling Enthusiast**

### **Andrew Tron**

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What got me started on cycling to work? A number of factors were in play, but a big factor was the G20 summit in Toronto in 2010. My place of employment was (and still is) at Toronto Pearson Airport, and there were one or two mornings during the summit when I was stuck in standstill traffic, as the police blocked the roads for some world leader's motorcade to pass by. I couldn't stand one more day of being stuck, so I resolved to bike to work the next morning. And so, I did. And though I was held up by the traffic police that morning when I biked to work, waiting for yet another motorcade to pass by, I was held up at the front of the line, rather than being stuck a kilometer or so to the rear. When the motorcade had passed, I and another bicycle-commuting work colleague were the first to be let through by the police.

That was my initial motivation. What I discovered, to my pleasant surprise, was how refreshing and invigorating a morning bicycle commute could be. And though I was living relatively far from work – about an hour's ride into work – I biked into work a few more times for the remainder of the summer and early fall. The next year, my family and I relocated to a new home that was closer to work - just over a half-hour's ride into work. With the encouragement of my wife, I started riding more often. As well, I started a log of all my bike commuting trips, one that I have kept to the present day. From 2013 (the first year I recorded my rides) to the present day, I've increased the frequency of my bicycle commutes. In 2013, during the "biking season" months, I commuted by bike 30% of all workdays. The corresponding percentage for this year is 73%, and the year is not over yet!

For me, the biggest benefit of commuting to work by bicycle is health. I often find it hard to get motivated and set aside the time for physical exercise. Bicycle commuting solves both problems. I use the time I'd otherwise be driving to work as my exercise time, with the necessity of getting to and from work as a motivator. As well, it is something I can do to help improve our environment, by reducing air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, because I am bicycling more, I am spending less on gasoline, thus saving money in the process. Finally, I'd like to acknowledge my employer (the Greater Toronto Airports Authority) and their recently-implemented Green Commuter Rebate Program. For every month where I manage to commute by bike 70 percent of the time, I receive a \$50 cash award. The money is nice, but the feeling of accomplishment is better. Thanks to this program, I have made great efforts to increase my bicycle commuter frequency. This year, I have hit the 70 percent mark for three months, and hope to do it again for another two months.

I have the following advice for somebody who is thinking about cycling to work. First off, you can start off small, like I did – maybe one or two times a month. Even with that low frequency of bicycle rides, you will reap some benefit. Secondly, when you do start, keep a log of how often you bicycle into work. The simple act of keeping the log will act as a subtle encouragement to ride more often, from one year to the next. Finally, if you don't have one already, purchase an air pump to keep at home. Before I had an air pump at home, I would endure the periodic frustration of finding my tires low on air, then having to haul my bike to the local gas station to inflate the tires to the proper pressure. Not having an air pump at home was, in effect, a barrier that resulted in lost bicycle commuting opportunities. Now that I have an air pump at home, tire pressure maintenance is quick and easy, and 'lost days' due to low tire pressure are a thing of the past.

I hope my story inspires somebody to try bicycling to work. There is a world of benefits to be had, and it all starts with a single ride in!