

BIKING

WITH ADELLE

My name is Adelle Donohue. I live in the Slant Streets and bike commute to Hellgate Elementary in the Mullan Neighborhood. This school year, I got serious about sustainably commuting by setting a goal. **We have 180 days of school and I wanted to sustainably commute for 100 of them.** I barely did it, but I got to 101 days by the very last week of school. It ended up being an average of 3 to 4 days a week, reserving at least one day to commute by car to transport stuff that had accumulated throughout the week (*piles of Tupperware!*).

I had been kind of a fair-weather bicycle commuter, but this winter I really stuck to my goal. I got my studded tires, put on warm clothes and reflective vest and had a blast. I got a little exercise and fresh air before the day started and arrive at school feeling a sense of accomplishment.

My commute is about 5 miles one way. It generally takes 20 to 30 minutes. I leave early in the morning so there's very little traffic and that makes a huge difference. I take trails until Mullan and cross Reserve into the neighborhood around my school. This is where it gets a little dicey, since there's no bike lane and hardly any shoulder there. It's a missing connection point that I'm hoping gets attention while all the development is happening right there. I've tried a bunch of different ways, and I've found my little route, but I would still love to see more connection there.

People don't always expect to see bicycles crossing on roads like Reserve, but in my experience, people are really aware out there. I'm cautious and patient and other road users tend to be as well. I've certainly noticed other bikers out on Reserve. People, in general, really try to make space.

I've always loved biking. In the past few years, I just really liked the idea of being able to get where I want to go and do things I want to do without depending on a car, so once I got into that habit and set up my bike to carry stuff it got so much easier.

Part of it was making sure I spent some portion of the day outside, another part decompressing on the way home, and part was about crossing Reserve.

I honestly could get home faster on my bike sometimes - I've timed it!

I love biking down the river trail. That's obviously the best part because it's calm and separated from the road. I saw a ton of birds. I saw neighbors I didn't even know out there on the trail with me, waving everyday! I was never the only person biking, even in really challenging weather. It feels really liberating to me. I can just get on the bike and pedal somewhere. My personal enjoyment of biking led me to achieve this goal just as much as advocating for sustainable transportation options. I teach science at school, so it's fun talking to kids about how I got here and modelling ways I try to live sustainably. Especially on snowy days, they wanted to know if I biked to school.

I'm a creature of habit. Laying out my warm clothes the night before, packing clothes to change into at school, and setting everything up in my bike bags for the next day made biking my routine. **Even on days when I thought about driving, I wouldn't because I**

had everything ready for my bike commute. That's not to say there weren't hard days, but my 100 day goal kept me motivated. I could see how much CO2 I'd saved and how many miles I'd travelled by logging my commutes on Way to Go Missoula.

For my next challenge, **I'd love to incorporate more bus rides into my commute.** The bus stops a mile from my school, so I'm thinking about combining biking and busing!

