

Hannah Haberecht

Hannah Haberecht is a second-year medical student at the Mayo Clinic. She started commuting by bike in college.

How long is your commute and along which routes?

I commute just about a mile between Kutzky Park to the downtown Mayo campus. I usually use First St. SW. This is a lower volume road with a sharrow.

How do you transition from your commute to your work environment, especially when "Mayo-wear" is involved?

In good weather, I can usually just bike in my Mayo professional clothes. It's nice to have a bag large enough to carry my blazer (so it doesn't get sweaty), and some ankle straps to keep my dress pants out of the chain. If I'm wearing a skirt or a dress, I pin it near the hem to create some bike-friendly faux-shorts (:

How do you carry and store your items during your commute and at work?

I carry all my school items in my backpack (easy to bike with) and keep some clothes (like an extra blazer and dress shoes) in my locker in the student center, just in case.

What is one thing you couldn't go without while bike commuting?

A front and rear light are so important for a safe commute (and a helmet of course)! MCASOM [Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine] students can check out lights and locks from the Learning Resource Center in emergencies.

What items would you say are necessary for commuting during the winter, such as particular clothing and adjustments to the bike?

Studded tires are a good idea on the icy and snowy roads and a pair of bar mitts can be a real help in the cold. I also like ski goggles on especially cold days.

How concerned are you about bike safety when bike commuting?

It depends on where I am biking. Cycling on the downtown campus can be a little scary, especially with out-of-town drivers trying to navigate in a new space. If I ever feel like I am no longer safe on a road, I signal, move onto the sidewalk, and walk my bike.

Are there any routes/roads you avoid in particular?

I try to stay away from Second Street SW (which is a higher speed road with no bike infrastructure) and Third Avenue SW in front of the Mayo building entrance, though there is bike infrastructure at this point, drivers need to cross bike lanes to enter the drop-off area and are not always looking for cyclists.

What advice do you have for skeptics?

It can be intimidating (especially in the cold winter months), but with the right gear it's definitely possible and really rewarding. If you are new to cycling, try commuting with a buddy first and working out your path beforehand; that has helped me feel safer and less stressed on a new route.

Tell us about a time you were glad you were commuting by bike instead of car.

From a practical standpoint, cycling to class is faster for me than driving. When I need to get somewhere in a hurry, it is so nice not to worry about parking a car. I can just park my bike right outside and I'm there!

Tell us about an awe-inspiring/challenging/funny experience on your commute.

There is something so special about riding your bike in the spring. Biking gives you a chance to take in the details of the world around you, to slow down, and enjoy. I love to see the new buds on trees and the early spring flowers grow a little more on every ride.

What ways do you think Mayo and the city of Rochester could promote and support bike commuting?

Safety is at the top of my mind. Over the last two years, three of my classmates have been hit by cars while actively commuting, and I have personally had some close calls. Better signage, protected bike lanes, and better driver education would make Rochester a safer place to cycle.

Do you think bike commuting should be incentivized by Mayo in some form?

Absolutely! It would be a great way for Mayo to support their climate goals, incentivize a healthy activity, and reduce commuter traffic.