



Operation Rescue Bike Complete

Posted by [Glenn](#) on September 11, 2005 - 4:10am in [The Oil Drum: Local](#)

Topic: [Miscellaneous](#)

So in preparation for today's [NY Century](#) Bike tour, I had to go pick up my old bicycle from my parent's house on Staten Island. I decided that as a warm-up to the 35 miles I would attempt to ride today, I should ride the bike all the way back to my apartment. That meant about 3 miles of biking on Staten Island to the ferry terminal and then about 5 miles of riding from the Battery Park area to the Upper East Side. The ride highlighted everything good and bad about riding a bike in New York City. Let me recount my experience and what I learned.

5:30pm: Leave parents house in the North Shore of Staten Island, near Snug Harbor, a beautiful arts center with old neo-classical buildings. Most of the ride is along Richmond Terrace, which is right off the Kill Van Kull and then as I got closer to the ferry, the Harbor itself. For most of the ride, there was a nice bike lane. I loved it. I owned a part of the road, everybody knows their place - I have the bike lane, cars have theirs. The only problem I experienced with the bike path was when I passed in front of the local police precinct - the 120. Tisk, Tisk - I guess some are above the law, but just those that enforce it. They had cars and equipment blocking the path. At least post a sign or something. Luckily traffic was light so I breezed by easily. I arrived in plenty of time for the 6pm boat. Even wait in the official bike waiting area!

6:00pm: The Staten Island ferry has a bike rack on board the boat. I feel very included and very proud of my home borough!

6:30pm: Offload into Manhattan. I couldn't decide what the best bike path was so I took the West Side bike path through Battery Park City and up to 14th Street, where I crossed over to the East side over to First Avenue. I passed the [High Line](#) which I recently saw an exhibition for at MOMA. No bike lane, meant that for the first time I was riding in the middle of traffic, dodging cars, taxis, trucks, buses and oblivious pedestrians. Traffic was heavy and therefore slow, which meant that moving across town I made even better time than most cars since I occasionally slipped by when everyone stopped. Still, it was uncomfortable not having my own space separate from the cars.

7:00pm: Made it to First Avenue. Made the left turn where I thought there would be a bike lane, since there is one in my neighborhood on the same avenue. I would have to wait until 72nd Street until I would have a separate path from the extremely fast moving traffic up First Avenue. Thus began the final and most dangerous part of my ride. Allow me to rant a little here:

Taxi Drivers: There is no need to race in front of me, blocking my path to get to your next fare, I'm not going to steal them from you. Instead, could you please ease in behind me and then pick up your customers (I am going nearly the city speed limit already)

People hailing Taxis: Instead of sticking your hand out into the street, even when you clearly see me riding in that lane, perhaps you could raise your hand directly up in the air. It accomplishes the same thing. Next time, I might be tempted to slap you five.

Delivery Trucks: I get it, you are big and need to double park. It's hard to get around you. But I will give you this much - when there is a bike lane, you actually respect it (most of the time), but

Cars making left turns: Before you race to an intersection and cut me off, please check if there are people in the crosswalk. The only thing worse than cutting me off, is stopping short right after cutting me off.

Delivery Guys on Bikes: I love that you are on a bike, but please observe the basic traffic rules - like don't go the wrong way on a one way street. Especially if it is in the bike lane! You give the rest of us a bad name when you do that. Otherwise, pedal on!

Totally in shape 50-year-old-guy who wizzed past me near 42nd Street: You Rock. Ride on!

7:30: Arrive home safely. Call Mom to confirm safe arrival, thus averting a call beginning with "Thank god you're alive".

I think each of the mayoral candidates should experience riding a bike on a regular New York street, with a bike path and without one. I bet they would get the picture very quickly!



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