

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

'Bike Commuting 101' illustrates pedaling basics

By Bob Karlovits
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Scott Bricker knows that many aspects of bicycling are "learned through osmosis," but saw a need to educate the growing population of Pittsburgh bike commuters.

The result is a clever and informative 30-page comic book, "Bike Commuting 101," which will be formally released this evening as it pedals into area bike shops and into the hands of potential bike commuters.

The free book was put together by BikePGH, the South Side-based bicycle-advocacy group. and will be premiered at Tuesday evening's membership meeting at the Union Project in East Liberty.

The book was put together when members of the group saw a need to boost knowledge about bike commuting as it gains "more popularity as a viable option," says Bricker, executive director of BikePGH.

Commuting numbers still are being researched by various groups, including the transportation-oriented Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission. But its growth is clearly seen on city streets where bike-lane markers are being steadily added and on trails that line the rivers.

Louis Fineberg, program director of BikePGH, says the book looks at the three basic elements of bicycle commuting: safety, comfort and convenience. He did much of the writing and organization of the book.

"Bike Commuting 101" examines the ideas in a logical, reasonable way. starting what kind of bike to ride, clothes to wear, ways of hauling all you need, sharing the road, developing a route, even what to do in an accident.

Glen Johnson, who illustrated the book, is owner of Squirrel Hill's [Plasticarm.com](http://www.plasticarm.com), an illustration and animation firm. His illustrations are done with a Downtown Pittsburgh backdrop and often look at biking issues -- such as riding at intersections -- from above to give a more analytical view.

The need for a book came about at commuting classes BikePGH has held since it was formed in 2003. Fineberg had put together a sheet participants could pick up at those classes, but the organization felt the need for something more permanent.

With the help of the Sprout Fund, Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership and the City of Pittsburgh, BikePGH was able to put together 5,000 copies for this first edition. The project cost \$13,000, which does not count staff time, Bricker says.

He says they are eager for reaction to see if there are topics that need to be examined more, but thinks the book "pretty well nailed" the topic.

Bob Karlovits can be reached at bkarlovits@tribweb.com or 412-320-7852.

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