Ride: Downtown Mesa

Pedaling and Protecting: Staying safe on the streets of Mesa

Stretch It Out: Three easy stretches to do at your desk

Geared Toward Giving: WE-CYCLE U.S.A. gives bikes to kids in need
The City of Mesa has proudly ranked a “Silver Status” as a Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists since 2015. Mesa’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Program provides many services and educational opportunities to enrich the safety of cyclists and pedestrians in the City. The goal of the Bike and Pedestrian Program is to increase the ridership and activity throughout the City so residents can take advantage of the form of affordable and healthy transportation.

Welcome

Summer temps in Mesa may get bashed by most folks, especially outdoor lovers who yearn for cooler temperatures to run, ride or roll on the shared-use pathways, but our Bike and Pedestrian staff love summer. The hotter months give our event and safety coordinator time to plan for the next season of cycling culture for residents and visitors of Mesa. And let us tell you, she has been working on some exciting updates and extras for the fourth season of Mesa’s Ride-in Movies at the Park series that launches in September.

Our safety classes for adults and children have continued to grow in popularity over the last few years and we’re working on new takeaway materials and giveaways for participants. The free helmets will always be a mainstay of those classes—those aren’t going anywhere, but we’re adding more to the mix. We’ve added classes for the season, check out the Mesa Library events page to register.

That’s not all the team has been working on in the cool air conditioning of our office. New way-finding signs along bike routes will be installed in the coming months with a new Mesa Moves logo we cooked up. These new signs will help to connect riders, walkers, and rollers to the pathways and routes throughout Mesa.

The updates and upgrades to our programming comes from resident feedback. We want to hear from you! Our annual survey is now open, and we encourage you to take a few moments to complete the survey, so we know what to work on next summer! Visit the survey at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018MesaBikePedSurvey

Happy Riding!
City of Mesa Bike & Pedestrian Program team

A Letter From The Team

Spoke Life Mesa was recently honored by the Public Relations Society of America as a recipient in the 2017 Copper Anvil Awards, which celebrates excellence in public relations and communications. The spring 2017 issue won in the “print magazine” category and competed against publications from across the state of Arizona.

Spoke Life Mesa received a Platinum Award in the Print Media Publication category by the MarCom Awards for the fall 2017 issue. The MarCom Awards is administered by the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals and is one of the largest international creative competitions for marketing and public relations.

Rio Salado Pathway
Photo credit: Ryan Glauser

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Rio Salado Pathway
Photo credit: Ryan Glauser
Jackie Dishner, mountain bike enthusiast, journalist and author of Backroads & Byways of Arizona (The Countryman Press, 2010), has been riding for 15 years. For one of her assignments for SpokeLife magazine, she finally learned how to change a flat tire. But she’s still not giving up thick inner tubes.

Michelle Turner is an Arizona native who is excited about the idea of biking to a grocery store that is being built close to her house. She has already planned a route that will take her along side streets and has bought a bike helmet in anticipation of her grocery store trips.

Meghan Finn Sepulveda is a local freelance writer and communication professional. A native of New York and ASU grad, Meghan enjoys spending her free time running, cooking and volunteering at the school where her children attend. She lives in the East Valley with her husband and three children.

Gretchen Pahiar is an Arizona native and NAU alumn. She keeps active by running, working out, playing sports and watching movies with her husband and two kids. Gretchen has been writing in the Valley for more than 15 years and is Principal and Owner of Media by Connection.

Ryan Glausser is an event, wedding and commercial photographer who loves spending time with his family. Ryan has a passion for all things photography. In his spare time, he collaborates with a team of rad local creatives creating short films.

Amy McConnell is a City of Mesa PIO by day and a lover of shopping local, supporting the slow-foods movement and connoisseur of Broadway shows by night. This is SpokeLife’s fourth issue with Amy at the helm.
Tyler Viliborghi

Age: 34

Environmental Technician

Bicycling background: I began riding as an adult at age 26. I have cycled as a regular commuter and social rider ever since. I picked up athletic riding later, but only do so occasionally. When I do ride athletically I enjoy long distance road riding and mountain biking.

Where do you ride? Everywhere. I ride to and from the light rail stations while commuting to work, but I will run errands and meet up with friends on my bike as well. Mesa, Tempe, and Phoenix have done a good job building infrastructure that makes the communities accessible by bike. So now when I want to grab groceries, go to the hardware store, or go to a concert I can usually make the choice to skip the car and ride my bike instead.

How many miles do you ride or commute each year? Currently one to two thousand, there have been several years well over six or seven thousand, almost all commuting around town.

Average length of ride? 15-30 minutes

How often do you ride or commute? Four to five days a week. Most days I'll commute to work with my bike and the light rail. About once a week I also do a social ride with friends. Sometimes I'll find it easier to ride to a store than drive so I'll take my bike on those occasions as well.

What do you like most about riding in Mesa? Bike lanes are well designed and do a good job keeping cyclists and drivers safe on the same road. The designated bike routes are very helpful for safely navigating the City. Mesa has also been installing mixed use paths that improve connectivity and make riding much safer and more relaxing.

Sabine Ellis

Age: 39

Traffic Engineer

Bicycling background: I grew up in Germany and knew how to ride a bike before I could walk. I rode my bike daily (school, work, fun) even when I had a car. Sometimes I couldn’t even remember where I parked my car because it had been so long since I used it. When I moved to the Valley 12 years ago I stopped riding completely because being on high speed roadways scared me. Last year I got back into it to take a break from running and I recently started mountain biking because I am an adventure junkie and love to explore places off the beaten path.

Where do you ride? My preference is singletrack trails and Mesa’s designated bike paths.

What do you like most about riding in Mesa? While the cash register should be, there’s a candy dispenser instead.

Where the cash register should be, there’s a candy dispenser instead.

That pretty much sums up WE-CYCLE U.S.A.’s philosophy: the nonprofit provides recycled bikes to those who need them. Since beginning in Robert Chacon’s garage in 2008, the community cycling center has given away thousands of bikes.

“We have these bikes, we teach recycling, bike safety, bike maintenance,” Chacon says. “We promote independence, get kids moving and get adults to their jobs. We are here for everyone and for every reason they need a bike.”

Sometimes even grandmas need a bike.

“We had a grandmother come in with her grandkids to get bikes. And we got Grandma a bike, too. We told her she had to keep up. By the time we were done, she was laughing and riding,” Chacon said.

To get a bike, WE-CYCLE U.S.A. requires people 18 years old or older to complete eight hours of service at the center with a volunteer mechanic. Kids who are 15 years and younger may qualify for a free bike.

Chacon emphasizes that We-cycle isn’t interested in competing against local bike shops. “We don’t charge for anything.”

After partnering with the City of Mesa to find space in downtown Mesa.
Police patrol assistance

The central bikes division maintains the Downtown Mesa area between Dobson and Horne Roads and often receives calls that are related to the METRO light rail system. “We respond to individuals who do not cross the tracks appropriately and check to make sure passengers have valid passes and pay the proper fare,” Gerbich explained.

Additionally, central bikes division officers will handle calls to free up the patrol units because of their close proximity. When a call comes in that requires a large amount of police presence, Gerbich and his officers will go to assist.

Positive, public interaction

A big focus of the central bikes division is to establish relationships with local business owners in Downtown Mesa, which is currently undergoing a revitalization. "Business owners feel secure and more comfortable calling us if any issues arise such as loitering or disorderly conduct, and know we will be there immediately to assist," Gerbich said.

Historic Downtown Mesa also hosts a variety of popular events that draw large crowds such as Motorcycles on Main, 2nd Friday Night Out and Merry Main Street. During these events we have the ability to ride around barricades and stop and say hello to people," Gerbich said. "Because we are on bicycles, our police presence is more casual, and people want to talk to us."

The central bikes division also participates in activities for local school-aged children to promote bike safety. “We all wear the same uniform,” Gerbich said. “But, put a police officer on a bike and the perception immediately changes. We’re no longer seen as tough, scary guys, but friendly and approachable.”

Learn more about the Mesa Police Department’s central bikes division at mesaaz.gov, or search “bicycle registration” on the website to register your bike online.

On the Road

Pedaling and Protecting

Staying Safe on the Streets of Mesa

By Meghann Finn Sepulveda

When the Mesa Police Department brought back the bicycle patrol division in 2015, Sergeant Quentin Gerbich thought the opportunity sounded like a great assignment. The 24-year law enforcement veteran applied for the job and was selected to lead the specially unit central bikes division in Downtown Mesa. Today, Gerbich, along with his team of four bicycle officers, rides between six and 10 miles a day, connecting with local business owners, monitoring METRO light rail operations and keeping Mesa citizens and visitors safe.

Training and conditioning

Although Gerbich has always been physically fit, running and lifting weights, he had to learn how to apply bicycling to police work. He attended a 40-hour bike training class to get acquainted with the basic mechanics of his TREK bicycle, the necessary safety gear including a helmet and gloves, and how to negotiate the roadways.

“Not only did I have to learn how to safely operate the bike, I had to train on ways to utilize the bike in a law enforcement setting, such as how to dismount quickly in the event of an active pursuit,” Gerbich said.

The 51-year-old says the officers in the central bikes division are a self-selecting group who are in good shape, which comes in handy, especially with the physical demands of the job and when it’s time to hit the streets during the hot summer months.

“We carry a lot of water with us,” he said. “We also do a lot of stopping so we can cool down.”

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NUMBERED MESA BIKE ROUTES

Route 1 (11.9 mi)  •  Route 2 (4.5 mi)  •  Route 3 (14.2 mi)
Route 4 (11.2 mi)  •  Route 5 (16.0 mi)  •  Route 6 (9.4 mi)
Three easy stretches to do at your desk

First, you hunch over your bike on your commute into work. Then, you lock into position at your desk working over a keyboard. Your body needs more movement in the day if you want to continue riding and living a healthier life.

By doing some quick, simple moves that don’t require you to leave the privacy of your cubicle, cyclists can care for the muscles that helped you ride into work and prepare them for longer journeys ahead.

Stretching improves your range of motion which helps you bicycle more easily, says Craig Nolan, fitness and stretching instructor at Mesa Community College. Flexible hamstrings, for example, also reduce your risk for injury. “And we know that sitting can be bad for us if done for long periods of time, even if you didn’t exercise that morning,” Nolan says.

Nolan suggests these stretches: (First, make sure your office chair is secure).

Twist: Inhale and as you exhale, turn to the right and grab your chair back with your right hand, and the chair arm with your left. Twist your torso around as far back as possible. Switch sides, repeat.

Knee up: While seated, pull up your right knee so your foot is on your chair. Bend forward and hug your knee into your chest, feeling the stretch in your back. Switch legs, repeat.

Arms up: Sit up straight in your chair. Stretch your arms above and interlock your fingers. Inhale, exhale, release.

By Michelle Turner

The Power Of a Good Massage

Healthy Tips to Keep Cyclists on the Road

By: Gretchen Pahia

Angela Powers of Innerlight Wellness in Mesa says there are certain massage techniques that work well and can be most beneficial. “A therapeutic massage with deep tissue techniques is most effective for frequent cyclists.”

Deep tissue massage involves applying firm pressure and slow strokes to reach deeper layers of muscle.

The frequency of how long and how often a cyclist should get a massage depends on how often they ride, but at least every three to four weeks between therapy sessions for any rider in need of some extra TLC is a good rule of thumb, Powers advised.

The benefits of massage for cyclists include improved flexibility, blood flow to stressed and injured muscles, increased range of motion and easier recovery time from long rides.

According to Powers, it isn’t just about massage therapy either, there are plenty of good stretches that cyclists can do on their own to keep up a healthy status. “I like to suggest easy yoga stretches and the use of a tennis ball and of course, a foam roller.”

At the end of the day, it is about keeping your body happy so you can head on out for that next ride without any serious concerns about your health and safety.
Slow Biking
By Jackie Dishner

On most days, Alan Hall, 59, rides his hybrid to work. He lives in Mesa but owns a commercial truck gear shop in Phoenix. He takes the Stadium Connector Shared Use Pathway for his 18-mile, hour-long route.

Hall started commuting by bike in 1997, when he lived at Southern and Gilbert. “There was no freeway then, so it was faster to ride my bike to work than sit in traffic… I just never stopped… By the time I get to work, I’m warmed up and ready to go,” he says.

Hall also spends Thursday nights on local mountain bike trails with a riding group. He says he and his wife Cindy, who rides an e-bike, take their bikes with them on vacation. Sometimes, he and his wife ride over to Riverview and visit the Brass Tap for beers.

Jeff Quick, who has lived in Mesa for nearly 10 years, says he fits in to bikes here, though especially when they are leaving driveways.” For Quick, who has lived in Mesa for nearly 10 years, says he fits in to bikes here, though especially when they are leaving driveways. Hall says he’s never heard of “slow cycling” but says most of his advertising is geared toward recreational cyclists.

“We’re trying to get less cars on the road,” he says, “get people out there.”

Buying Saddles
By Jackie Dishner

Noticing discomfort on your long rides? The problem might not be “bike fit;” it just might be the saddle. Especially for long rides, the right – or wrong – saddle can affect both how you feel and how you perform.

“There’s no absolute formula to consider because everyone’s posterior is built a little bit differently,” says Mark Hickey, a custom bike builder in Mesa and owner of Hababero Cycles. But he offers these tips for your next purchase:

1. Avoid cushy saddles. They may be good for the pub ride. But long term, they cause harm. The cushion forces weight to be redistributed, and that can lead to numbness – the problem cyclists want to avoid. If you’re buying a high-performance saddle, with or without cut-out, they are made to support pressure on the sit bones (the boney tissue that rests on the seat). Since women tend to have wider sit bones, they should consider saddles made especially for women.

2. Try them out. Saddle manufacturers send a group of eight to ten sample saddles as a demonstration kit when bike shops buy their merchandise. Ask to test a saddle out. Ride on it for a few days to see if you like it. Then test another till you find the right fit and feel.

3. Stick with the one you have. Saddles are built to last. But if your old one has worn out, no need to switch models and brands if what you had worked for you. Buy a new one just like it.

4. Pay up. You can find quality saddles for as low as $35, but the sweet spot when taking price points is in the $50-$75 range.
A long chain of vintage motels, their neon signs ready to light up the night like Route 66, gives me an immediate sense of history as I approach Mesa’s historic Main Street to explore by bike a downtown established in 1878. At Country Club on the west to Mesa Drive on the east, University on the north and Broadway on the south, there are no bike paths. Cyclists are expected to ride on the side of the road. Up and down Main Street, however, cyclists become like motor traffic. I claim my own space on this single lane. Called a “sharrow,” the lane designation is marked by two arrows and a bicycle painted in white on the road. Signs on light poles act as reminders that cyclists “MAY USE FULL LANE.” It’s a headache for some motorists to follow slower speed cyclists, so Venti recommends pulling into bus lanes to let frustrated drivers pass.

Instead, I follow Lori Ann Mecham’s cautious advice. “Use the alleyways.” The owner of Arizona ING Tours, Mecham, a long-time Mesa resident, offers walking and biking tours in the area and tells me this way I’ll see historic architecture, back alley entrances unique to this part of the Valley, and more of the 26 downtown murals. I follow her suggestion and also explore surrounding neighborhoods. The area north of Main, with its wide, tree-lined streets and large front lawns, is where I spot the Sirrine House, circa 1896. It’s a Queen Anne, cottage-style home on the corner of 2nd and Center streets. Around it are rambling ranch homes that remind me of the Midwest where I grew up. The area south of Main leads me to historic bungalows, tiny mission style abodes and the historic Alhambra Hotel that now houses college students. The famous LDS Temple west of downtown is under construction, so I sadly bypass that.

Back on Main Street I find a bike rack in front of the Mesa Arts Center (others in the area are at Light Rail stops and at the Mesa Public Library) and head out on foot. “Walk Your Wheels” signs painted in desert color hues on sidewalks and hung on walls remind visitors on bikes, skateboards or scooters to keep the area pedestrian-friendly. Grid Bikes and other bike shares are plentiful but still need to be walked or parked while exploring Main.

With buildings of gray concrete on one side and multiple color and texture on the other, Mecham says the Mesa Arts Center reminds her of geodes. But as I tour the property, I see “prism” in the many colors, moving metal parts and water features.

Because of hot weather, I skip an urban garden in favor of checking out businesses on and off Main. Behind brick or stucco buildings and underneath awnings – reminiscent of the old western town this once was – sit cafes, localist shops, a cidery, menswear store, an antique typewriter repair shop, maker space, and too many empty spaces. A jewelry display in the window of Jarrod’s calls me inside the funky coffee shop that also serves as an art gallery. Meanwhile, dozens of history plaques, murals and bronze sculptures wait to be explored. It’s an eclectic mix of the past, passion and promise of more to come.

So no riding on sidewalks? Cyclists zooming in and out of pedestrian traffic would upset the dynamic. Like most things in life, it’s a balance – a pleasant balance to ride over and see for yourself.
The Rules of the Road

Staying Safe on the Streets of Mesa

By Gretchen Pahia

Cars, bikes, pedestrians, oh my!

The streets of Mesa are filled with a variety of modes of transportation but the reality is that not everyone understands the proper etiquette when it comes to moving throughout the City.

For bicyclists, it is right to assume that you have the same responsibilities as drivers and are subject to follow the same state laws and ordinances. For example, Mesa residents are required, by ordinance, to register bikes through Mesa Police.

According to Mark Venti, Senior Transportation Engineer for the City of Mesa, there are proper ways to ride your bike in a busy traffic area. “A busy traffic area is relative, but in general, be sure to stay on the right side of road. Always wear bright colors and maintain eye contact with the road. Also, always be scanning the road, be predictable, do as we expect cars to do, including crossing at intersections, signal, slow down to turn and change lanes. And of course, always wear a helmet!”

For walkers throughout the City, it is also ultra important to be aware of your surroundings. While pedestrians have the right of way on sidewalks when cyclists are present, there are other items walkers need to be aware of when out and about. “Pedestrians should consider cyclists to be just like any motorized vehicle, and adjust accordingly,” says Venti.

For bike riders, it is also about safety awareness, especially if your commute takes you on the road during the darker hours. According to Arizona Law, you are required to have lights on the front and back of your bike, and the front light must be white, attached to bike and shine for at least 500 feet. The rear light must be red, the same height as a vehicle and shine for 50 to 300 feet. Mesa’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Program gives away free bike lights to class participants of Smart Cycling FUN-Damentals participants, a 90-minute bicycle safety class taught by the City of Mesa’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Educator. Upcoming class dates are listed at mesaaz.gov/bikeped. To register a bike in Mesa, search “bicycle registration” on mesaaz.gov for the online form.
**EVENTS 2018 - 2019**

**October 6**
Tour de Fat Tempe
3 p.m.
menscjun.com/event/tour-de-fat

**October 7**
W5:30 a.m.
Tour de Scottsdale
TourdeScottsdale.net

**October 10**
International Walk to School Day
http://www.walkbiketoschool.org/

**October 10**
Kid’s Bicycle Safety Class
3 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**October 19**
Moonlight Madness 13 Live - Run Your Race
Rose St Fun Run
www.facebook.com/RunYourRaceAZ/

**October 20**
Catalina Mesa
5-7 p.m.
www.mesaparks.com/info-contact/
special_events/catalina-mesa

**October 27**
Movies in the Park at Mountain View Park
6:30 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**November 10**
Movies in the Park at Pioneer Park
6 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**November 14**
Bicycling FUN-damentals Adult Class
6 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**November 17**
El Tour de Tucson
7 a.m.
poweredbybicycling.com/ ElTour-de-Tucson

**December 5**
Kid’s Bicycle Safety Class
3 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**December 6**
Kid’s Bicycle Safety Class
3 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**December 15**
Cycle Mesa Winter Race
2:30 - 5 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**January 12**
Intermediate Adult Skills Class
10 a.m. - Noon
Mesa library.org/events

**January 23**
Bicycling FUN-damentals Adult Class
5 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**February 23**
Movies in the Park at Mariposa Park
7 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**March 2**
Movies in the Park at Mariposa Park
7 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**March 6**
Kid’s Bicycle Safety Class
3 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**March 7**
Kid’s Bicycle Safety Class
2 p.m.
Mesa library.org/events

**April 6**
El Tour de Mesa
3:30 a.m.
poweredbybicycling.com/ElTour-de-Mesa

**April 6**
Cycle Mesa
9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Cyclemesa.com

**Bike Clubs & Organizations**

- Blazing Saddles Ride Club
  Group rides and mountain bike rides for all levels. Skills and maintenance clinics.

- Gravity Riders Organization of Arizona
  Advocacy, rider education and trail work. The Gravity Rider community includes downhillers, freeriders, all-mountain riders, dirt jumpers and BMX riders of all ages.

- San Tan Shredders
  Group rides for mountain bikers of all levels. Downhillers, freeriders, all mountain riders, dirt jumpers and BMX riders of all ages.

- The Gravity Rider community includes downhillers, freeriders, all mountain riders, dirt jumpers and BMX riders of all ages.

**BIKE SHOPS**

- ABC Bicycle & Jitski Rentals
  3053 E. Main Street
  480-640-2463
  abcrjtski.com

- Adventure Bicycle Company
  110 W. Southern Avenue
  480-649-3034
  233 E. Baseline Road
  480-649-3194
  adventurebicycle.com

- Archer’s Bikes
  1150 N. Country Club Drive
  480-861-8901
  archersbikes.com

- Bikeworic Mesa
  1545 E. Power Road
  480-857-7000
  bikeworics.com

- DNA Cycles
  2336 E. Baseline Road
  480-924-2453
  DNAcycles.com

- Electra Bike Shop
  1545 S. Power Road
  480-830-1620
  Electra Bike Shop

- Mike’s Bike Chalet
  1545 S. Power Road
  480-807-2944
  Mikesbikechalet.com

- Mike’s Bike Chalet
  5050 E. University Drive
  480-428-2349
  Mike’s Bike Chalet

- Performance Bicycle
  1555 S. Power Road
  480-891-8901
  bikesdirectaz.com

- Two Wheel Jones
  2367 E. Power Road
  480-640-7022
  newbikes.com

**MPDJOBS.COM**

Join MPD@mesaaz.gov

For rates, additional information or to schedule a bulk pickup, visit

Don’t have time to coordinate an event? The City of Mesa also offers a curbside bulk item collection service.

Join MPD@mesaaz.gov

- Various Detective, Assignments
- SWAT
- K9 Unit
- Aviation Patrol Unit
- Traffic Control Unit
- School Resource Officers
- Competitive Salary
- Comprehensive Benefits
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Public Safety Retirement Plan
- Promotional Opportunities
- Shift Differential Pay

MPDJOBS.COM
JoinMPD@mesaaz.gov

**Schedule Your Neighborhood Cleanup Event TODAY!**

Mesa Police Department
“Hiring the Future”

480.644.6471

Don’t have time to coordinate an event? The City of Mesa also offers a curbside bulk item collection service.

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Don’t have time to coordinate an event? The City of Mesa also offers a curbside bulk item collection service.

For rates, additional information or to schedule a bulk pickup, visit MesaAz.gov/waste or call (480) 644-6789.
Recent trends continue to highlight a strong desire for communities to be bike-friendly, and the City of Mesa’s Transportation Department Bike & Pedestrian Program is continuously working on creating enhanced pedestrian pathways to provide safe connections for residents to travel through the city on two-wheels.

Stay up to date with current projects and announcements!
Sign up for e-notifications on Mesa’s Bike & Pedestrian Program at mesaaaz.gov/bikeped or follow us:

- MesaBikePedProgram
- @cityofmesa
- @mesaaazgov