



A GUIDE TO GROUP RIDE PLANNING

Section 1: GROUP RIDE OVERVIEW

- Ride Planning.....Page 1
- Setting Expectations.....Page 1
- Marketing your Ride.....Page 2
- On the Ride.....Page 2

Section 2: RECREATIONAL BIKE RIDES

- Planning your Own Ride.....Page 3
- Kinds of Rides.....Page 3
- Mapping your Route.....Page 4

Section 3: PLAN YOUR GROUP RIDE

- Big Picture Goals.....Page 5
- Logistics.....Page 5
- Marketing.....Page 5

GROUP RIDE OVERVIEW



Ride Planning.

Start your plan.

Start out by getting the basics out of the way. Who do you want to be on the ride? What are your goals? Where will you go? When will you hold your ride? Why are people coming together to do your ride? How many people do you want to participate? Answer these questions first as it will help you with the rest of your planning. Don't be afraid to revisit these answers to keep yourself focused on your goals.

Picking a route.

Think about the slowest person in your group and plan for them. Every ride is different and the choice is up to you to make the ride as hard or as easy as you like. For advice on picking a route start with what you would do as a solo rider.

Mileage.

Pick a distance that you are comfortable for leading people on.

Traffic.

Minimize conflicts with car traffic when possible.

If there are parts of your ride that are potentially dangerous be sure to communicate that with signs or verbally before riders hit an area. It is a good idea for larger rides to have marshals/volunteers remind riders of any potential hazards.

Setting Expectations.

- **Route.** Are you on roads with traffic or bike paths?
- **Distance.** How far should riders plan on going before a stop?
- **Pace.** How fast is the group going to be riding?
- **Support.** What will you be providing and what should people bring to your ride? If there are rest stops planned what will they have?
- **Money.** Is there a fee associated with your ride?
- **Dropped Riders.** Will you wait for them or not?

Marketing your ride.

Social Media. In our digital age social media is king. Depending on your audience though don't be afraid of old school methods like flyers and posters to help get the word out about your ride. Flyers should be simple with just the who, what, where, when and an action item.

Allies and Collaborators. Reach out to your allies and collaborators to help promote the ride. Leverage the people you know to help you promote your ride.

Email. A very effective tool to getting people to a group ride. Be sure to be friendly and respond to any questions that people might send your way.

Message Boards. BikePGH.org/MB, the Roboto Board, Next Door, and Reddit are a great way to tell others what you are up to for your ride.

GROUP RIDE OVERVIEW



On the Ride

Before you start pedaling. Take a moment to talk to all of the riders together before the ride starts to go over expectations for the ride. Tell people the rules of the ride and set the tone for the rest of the day.

Leading the ride.

- Turns. Tell people early and often where they are going. Unless you are planning a psychic ride. In that case you won't have any problems at all.
- Hills. Be sure to communicate ahead of time if you will be stopping at the top of hill for people. If you are leading a beginner ride plan on stopping and waiting up for everyone before continuing. Remember to consider that hills tend to split up riders based on fitness and skill. The bigger the hill the more time you need to allow for everyone.
- Stopping. Be sure to pick a place where you can stop where everyone can get safely out of the roadway.
- Breaks. Make sure everyone has time to rest. Not just the first people who get to a rest area.
- Verbal and Hand Cues - Car up/back. Standing and Slowing are all really important when riding in a group. Use your voice to let other riders know what is going on.

Sweeping.

No not the vacuum. The last rider of the bunch. Make sure to have someone that knows the plan and route be the last rider on the course. This will help keep things together and that person can relay a message to the ride leader if there is a flat tire or other problem.

Other Volunteers.

Do you need other volunteers to help with the ride? What are the jobs that you need help with along the way?

SAG – Support and Gear.

Make sure you have a plan for flat tires, mechanical problems, and for emergencies. Be sure everyone leading the ride is on the same page before you start.

RECREATIONAL BIKE RIDES



Planning your own ride.

What kind of ride are you looking to do? Bike path, dirt, or road? City or Country? Any stops along the way? Does it end at the same place it started from?

Kinds of rides.

The Out and Back. These rides are exactly as they sound. You'll plan one way out and follow it to a destination and then take the same route back in reverse. They are the easiest to plan.

- The GAP trail to Ohiopyle and back (**)
- Northpark and back via Babcock Blvd (***)
- The Panhandle Trail (*)

The Loop. Loops tend to be start with an idea of the overall mileage that you are looking to ride. You can make loops as big or as small as you want. These tend to be the most popular style or recreational rides in the area and are great for a workout or lazy day taking in the sights.

- [Out North! Hartwood Acers](#) **20 Miles | 1,502ft climbing** (***)
- Major Taylor 3 state tour. (*****)
- Around the lake at Pymatuning (**)
- [The Riverview Park Loop](#). **20 Miles | 1,402ft climbing** (***)
- [Slippery Rock Old Stone House Ride](#) **28 Miles | 2,343 ft climbing** (***)
- [Loop around Settlers Cabin](#) **28 Miles | 1,622ft climbing** (**)

The Bike Tour. The most complicated to plan but it well worth the effort. You'll need to plan for more than just 1 day and create a plan for food, lodging (or camping) and anything else you might encounter on your trip.

- Pittsburgh to DC (***) (can be easier or harder by adding more or less days to your trip)
- An overnight bike trip to the Dravo Cemetery on the GAP Trail (**)
- Pittsburgh to Erie (****)

BikePGH's Difficulty Rating:

* **Easy Ride.** Flat without hills. Mostly or all car free. Very beginner friendly.

** **Beginner Ride.** On road with traffic. Includes short climbs and hills that never get "too steep".

*** **Intermediate Ride.** On road with traffic. Includes moderate climbs and short steep hills.

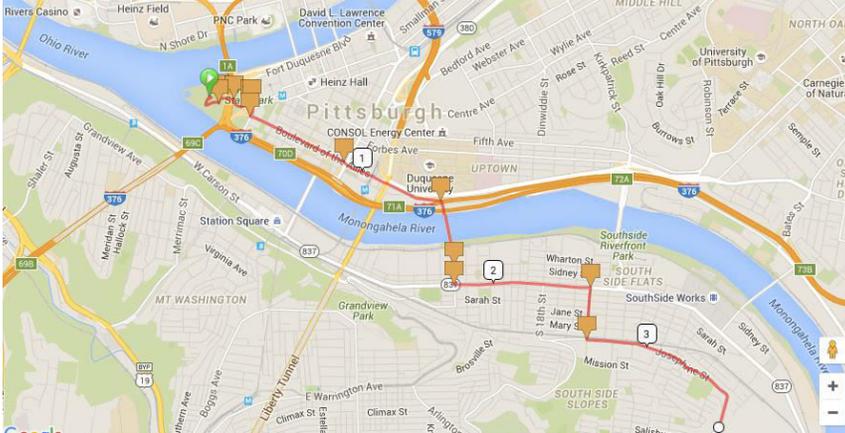
**** **Hard Ride.** On Road with traffic that at times can be very busy. Long climbs that will push you to your limit and longer distances.

***** **Advanced Ride.** Harder than a hard ride. Could be 100+ miles or the Dirty Dozen. Not for the faint of heart.

RECREATIONAL BIKE RIDES



Mapping your route.



Tools like [Strava](#), Google Maps, [Ride with GPS](#), and [Map my ride](#) make planning a route a breeze. These tools will help you map your ride ahead of time to see what kind of hills you might encounter, how far you will be going, and even give you turn by turn or maps to download to your phone or print out at home.

Each of these have their strengths and weaknesses.

Strava:

Heat maps and segments show where cyclist are already riding. Elevation charts tend to be accurate and if you log your rides on strava they will actually give you an estimate of how long it will take to ride given your average pace over the last few months of riding.

Pro: Only service with featured ride segments. Uploads

easily to your phone to check your directions.

Con: No turn by turn.

Google Maps:

The gold standard for driving directions. Pretty good for bikes too.

Pro: You probably have used it before for getting around in a car. It is super easy.

Con: Customizing can be difficult and sometimes routes are better for cars than they are for bikes.

Ride with GPS:

BikePGH's personal favorite.

Pro: Best cue sheets of the bunch. Easy to map out and try out different routes.

Con: Can get stuck on intersections and send your turn by turn in a loop. Lacks the segment features of Strava.

Map My Ride:

OG bike mapping tool. Tons of users with thousands of routes

Pro: Lots of data from other people planning their rides.

Con: Cue sheets are lacking and mobile platform is not as clean as others.

Look to the experts for ideas for good routes.

[BikePGH Pittsburgh Bike Map](#)

[Oscar Swan : Bike Rides Out of Pittsburgh: over 400 bicycle rides from .6 to 110 miles richly illustrated includes maps](#)

[Get a book: Road Biking in Western PA](#)

[Team Decaf Rides](#)



PLAN YOUR GROUP RIDE

BIG PICTURE GOALS

- 1
- 2
- 3

LOGISTICS

DATE:

TIMEFRAME:

AVERAGE SPEED:

REST STOPS:

STARTPOINT:

ENDPOINT:

DESCRIBE THE ROUTE:

TOTAL DISTANCE:

ONE-TIME/RECURRING:

LEADERS:

SUPPORT NEEDED:

MARKETING

TARGET AUDIENCE:

NUMBER OF RIDERS:

TARGET NEIGHBORHOODS:

THEME:

PR/SOCIAL MEDIA:

ALLIES/COLLABS: