



Commuter of the Month

Casey Sanders

I started biking to work in May of 2017 when Hwy. 169 was closed to rebuild the bridge, and many side streets were also under construction. Driving the five miles to work took an hour.

I heard that UnitedHealth Group offered a “Bike to Work” program that allowed commuters access to an assigned full-time locker, locker room, and showers. This gave me the push I needed. I went out and bought my first “adult” bike. I hadn’t biked since college. The first few times I rode to work I took everything I needed to get ready for the day. Once I knew it was what I wanted to do, I applied for the “Bike to Work” program and began bike commuting year-round. After a year of full-time biking my husband and I dropped down to one car and became a single vehicle household (I drove so rarely that it didn’t make sense to keep two). On the occasions when I do need access to a car during the work day, I take a Lyft or get a ride from a co-worker.

What I enjoy most about biking to work is that I get to start the day with some exercise and fresh air. Even on the days when I don’t sleep well or am under the weather, it always wakes me up and clears my head. At the end of the day, it’s a great way to wind down. It gives me time to process everything without interruption, and I can take different routes if I choose to create a new challenge or add in more distance to get more exercise.

Most people are surprised that I bike commute through the winter. One of the reasons for doing so was to change my mind about the cold. I thought spending more time outdoors would help me adjust to the cooler months. I’m going into my third winter of biking, and I love it! It’s hard, but worth it. The key to taking on the snow and ice is to have studded winter tires, a good set of lights, and plenty of hand warmers. It takes some fine tuning, but once you figure out what to wear at different temps, the cold really isn’t that bad.

Bike commuting has opened up many new adventures for me. I’ve been able to volunteer and bike for the Tour de Cure with the American Diabetes Association and ride for UnitedHealthcare Children’s Foundation (UHCCF). There are many great local rides, groups, and opportunities to help the community that I encourage anyone still on the fence to gear up, clip in, and join your fellow enthusiasts!

Commuter Services has several bike commuting resources including a [Winter Bike Commuting Handbook](#) and [Clothing Recommendations](#) that tells you what to wear in all temperatures and weather conditions. Complete the [Commute Assistant form](#) on our website at www.494corridor.org and we’ll send the resources to you.

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