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Bike to Work day organizers aim for more diversity



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The event has grown every year since its start in 2001. (Getty Images/iStockphoto/boumenjapet)

WASHINGTON – In about a month, more than 18,000 people will strap on a helmet and commute to and from work on two wheels.

On Friday, May 20, organizers of Bike to Work Day are expecting one thousand more riders than last year to get in gear. This year, the number of sponsored pit stops has expanded throughout the region to 83.

“Bagels and bananas and coffee seem to be the popular items,” joked Colin Browne with the [Washington Area Bicyclists Association](http://www.waba.org/) (<http://www.waba.org/>), which helps run the event.

Participants will get a T-shirt too (http://org.salsalabs.com/o/451/p/salsa/event/common/public/?event_KEY=85303), but the pit stops provide a sense of community that makes the event fun, Browne said, mentioning how he bumped into people he had previously seen on the trails and never spoken to before.

The pit stops will span from Frederick to Bowie, Alexandria down to Prince William, Browne said.

The event grows every year since its start in 2001 and Nicholas Ramfos, operations programs director for the Transportation Planning Board, said a recent survey indicated that most Bike to Work participants are first-time commuters.

“What we found is 17 percent had never participated before in Bike to Work Day and after Bike to Work Day, 10 percent of those responders started to bike to work more often,” Ramfos told the TPB last week.

Participants are guaranteed a ride home if they need it and can join a convoy of cyclists if they prefer not to go it alone.

“A typical participant is a younger, white male so we’re reaching out to women and minorities this year,” Ramfos said.

Working with community organizations like We are Casa and the U.S. Black Chamber and launching a social media campaign, organizers hope to diversify the event.

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