



dallasnews SportsDay GuideLIVE FD Luxe neighborsgo aldiatx

Subscribe Sign In My Account Premium Site

OBITS CLASSIFIEDS AUTOS JOBS REAL ESTATE SHOPPING

# dallasnews

Powered by *The Dallas Morning News*

93°

FORECAST TRAFFIC



COMMUNITIES CRIME EDUCATION INVESTIGATIONS STATE NATION/WORLD POLITICS

Home > Transportation Blog

## Dallas without a car: Local son takes on month-long transit experiment



By bschwab

bjs2203@tc.columbia.edu

11:52 am on July 8, 2014 | Permalink

0 3 Share 0 2

*(Benjamin Schwab, a University of North Texas alumnus and Columbia University grad student, is spending a month back home in Rowlett. An avid biker, he plans to move around North Texas primarily by bicycle and public transit. Follow his experiences getting around as much as possible without the region's beloved transportation mode of choice – the automobile.)*

Every time we step out of our houses, we make a transportation choice.

That choice is guided by time, logistics, money, convenience and habit.

Since most of us all dabble in this [phenomenon called a commute](#), I wanted to explore what Dallas would be like without a car.

For the past year, I have been living in Manhattan – in the upper, Upper West Side neighborhood of Hamilton Heights, where I have been pedaling between classes, cafes and parks as a graduate student at Columbia. Yet, even before moving to the Big Apple (nobody really calls it that), I had grown accustomed to not needing a car in my daily life while living and working abroad as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Armenia.

In fact, I have experienced a whole range of transportation options: walking, hitchhiking, tram, trolley, subway, *marshrutka* (the Soviet-version of the mini-bus), donkey and carriage. But none suit me better than bicycling, which has been my main mode of transportation over the past year.

Now that summer has arrived and I can afford a lengthy break from coursework, I've decided to take a month to head back to my home city of Dallas (well, the suburb of Rowlett actually) to visit friends and family. Given my newfound love for urban biking, I wanted to see how I would fare on the wide-open roads of Dallas. The goal: to get around Dallas for a month largely using public transportation and bicycling.

As I plan this Dallas transportation experiment, I am excited to see the city in a new way. I am excited to visit neighborhoods I had previously only driven through, to visit the city's museums and parks, and meet a host of friendly Dallasites along the way. But this "thrilling" experiment will also be taking place amidst the quotidian duties of life: running errands, picking up groceries and fulfilling obligations – all of which will require some logistical considerations.

Despite my enthusiasm, I'm admittedly a bit anxious. Dallas drivers aren't necessarily used to seeing cyclists on the road, prompting them to take the available – and often empty – sidewalk instead. Also, enduring a July in Texas heat isn't something to take lightly. Riding exposes you to the elements in a very real way.

For the foreseeable future, [Dallas will remain a city of cars](#) with little patience for anything but four tires and a steering wheel. Yet, Dallas also has a history of reinventing itself. As toll roads become a permanent fixture in our daily lives and gas prices fluctuate, people may become understandably frustrated with the status quo. Big cities across the nation are already experiencing an increase in [car-free households](#). A new generation more and more wants to live in [denser, urban city centers](#). Even in Dallas, people are already starting to seek [alternatives](#) – even old-fashioned ones like a simple [bicycle](#).

My hope is to show the city-on-the-Trinity that bicycling and available public transit are viable alternatives for most of Dallas county. I am well aware of the challenges and difficulties that may arise from not using a car in Dallas, but I'm excited to try to adapt and figure them out.

Let's just hope I survive the heat.

### You Might Also Like