



**Left:** Jonah Clark of Icyde Sports says bikes flew out of the shop in 2020. **Above:** Dean Eyre of Cadence Cycle says there was increased interest in entry-level and commuter bikes. **Right:** The pandemic fueled an uptick in bike sales across North America.



**“WE MIGHT HAVE A SIX-WEEK WAITING LIST FOR REPAIRS IN MAY.”**

of their style of bikes, the more it encourages others to do so. “When fat bikes [with extra fat tires for riding on snow] became more popular ... it had a knock-on effect that people without fat bikes started biking more in winter.” He said that’s resulted in more people riding year-round. Clark hopes Yukoners will start seeing biking as a legitimate form of transportation and not something confined to a small segment of the population. Eyre said the City of Whitehorse and Yukon government should

**TYPES OF BIKES**

- E-BIKE:** A bike that runs on a combination of battery and human power. Type 1 e-bikes are pedal-assist only, with a top assisted speed of 32 km/hour. Type 2 can be used without pedaling.
- FAT BIKE:** A bike with extra wide tires that allow for travel over softer surfaces, including snow.
- MOUNTAIN BIKE:** A bike designed for riding on trails.
- HARD TAIL:** A mountain bike with front suspension.
- FULL SUSPENSION:** A mountain bike with front and rear suspension.
- COMMUTER BIKE:** Often a hard-tail mountain bike, road bike, or a hybrid of the two which may have a rear rack for attaching panniers (saddle bags).

makes improvements to cycling infrastructure to make it safer for commuters. “I feel a great deal of inaction from our civic and territorial leaders,” he noted. Eyre said the main priority should be improving connections between neighbourhoods and downtown and making Fourth Avenue at the bottom of Two Mile Hill more biker-friendly. “That’s me speaking as a person in business who wants to sell bikes, but also as a day-to-day-cyclist.” **Y**

**BIKING ZEITGEIST**

The pandemic is pushing Yukoners to discover the pleasure and practicality of two-wheeled travel

Although it’s still ski season, late winter is a good time to bring your bike out of storage and book it for a servicing at a local bike shop. If you wait until the brink of riding season to get those gears tuned or spokes trued, good luck getting an appointment. “We might have a six-week waiting list for repairs in May,” said Dean Eyre, owner of Cadence Cycle, in Whitehorse.

This spring could be even busier because, if 2020 bike sales are any indication, more Yukoners have discovered or rediscovered the benefits of biking. The COVID-19 pandemic spurred an explosion in ridership across North America as recreation facilities closed and people were urged to head outside for exercise and physically distanced socializing. *Bicycle Retailer* reported that Giant, one of the world’s largest bike manufacturers, saw a 25% increase in income in the first half of 2020. Bike shops in the Yukon experienced similar upticks. “At the start of the pandemic, in March [2020], we were panicking a little bit because we just had no idea what to expect,” said Jonah Clark, owner of Icyde Sports, in Whitehorse. “Then, it was pretty clear once the weather turned nice ... we were going to be overwhelmed by demand for bikes.” While an increase in bike sales is great for business, the jump was so drastic and unforeseen that bike manufacturers are scrambling to fill 2021 orders. “Whatever we ordered, that’s all we get,” said Eyre, who does the bulk of his ordering eight to 10 months in advance but is typically able to place additional, smaller orders throughout the season. “We won’t be able to buy any more bikes.” At Icyde Sports,

Clark said he’s confident he will get most of the inventory he needs to meet demand. “We will run out in some categories, but there are worse things that could happen.”

Clark and Eyre said the pandemic brought in many first-time bikers looking for a new recreational activity or way of the commuting, which fueled sales of entry-level mountain bikes. E-bike sales are also booming. Clark said one of the advantages of being in the Yukon is watching trends from afar. The e-bike surge moved from Europe to the U.S. and southern Canada over the last several years and has finally reached the North. Clark said e-bike sales at Icyde have been inching up every year. The shop sold 50 e-bikes in 2020 before the Yukon government announced its rebate on e-bikes in September. That resulted in another 20 sales the following month, more than tripling the number of e-bikes Icyde sold in 2019. Many people who buy e-bikes are looking for a convenient way to commute or run errands. “It’s quite a viable car replacer,” explains Eyre. Cadence sells more than a dozen models of e-bikes, including the popular cargo e-bikes that have an extra-long rear rack with room to attach carrier bags and a kid’s seat or two. Eyre said a smaller percentage of people are buying e-bikes for primarily recreational purposes. He said electric mountain bikes are becoming lighter and easier to use, so people feel like they are riding a regular mountain bike, but with a bit of extra help.

With the increasing number of people getting into biking for the first time, riders are hoping to see a culture shift in the Yukon. Clark said the more people who ride, regardless



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