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Super commuter Dave Sotero, senior communications officer in Media Relations, at the Metrolink exit with his trusted folding companion, a bright green Brompton. *Photos by Gayle Anderson*



Imagine this:

Folding bike puts an end to automobiles, at least in this commuter's life!

- [More:](#) What to pack on your commute

By GAYLE ANDERSON

Dave Sotero grabbed his prized folding bike from his 19th-floor cubicle and headed for the elevator. In a few minutes he would join with other members of the Metro Cycling Club for their ride to Wilshire Center's Earth Day Festival.

At the bicycle parking area on P-1, his bright apple green folding bike unfolded in less than 20 seconds. He donned his sea-green stylish helmet, snapped on his reflective leg bands, flipped on his safety blinkers and pedaled off in style.



Sotero, center, pedals off to Wilshire Center Earth Day festival with members of the Metro Cycling Club. Foreground: Metro Cycling Club Chair Cory Zelmer.

One month ago, Sotero, a senior communications officer in Media Relations, imagined life without a car and then did something about it.

"I decided to buy a folding bike to solve my short bike-to-transit commute," said Sotero, who traces his moment of truth to reading the Long-Range Transportation Plan. "A single sentence in the plan gave me a call to action. It said the single most effective action a household can take to cut its carbon footprint is to replace one car in a two-car family with biking and transit. I already did the transit part, so biking to transit was the missing link in my becoming car-free."

Sotero remembers the day he first saw the Brompton folding commuter bike. Tucked away in an Oceanside bike shop, the British import is bright apple green, weighs a modest 25 pounds, sports a tasteful one-size-fits-everything tote bag on shapely handlebars and turns heads everywhere it goes. It was love at first sight.

Sotero plunked down the \$1,200 plus change and took his folded companion on the Metrolink ride home. Giving an Irish lilt to her English manufacturer's surname, he's christened the bike Bonnie Brae Brompton.

Sotero says that folding bikes are the missing link to reaching critical mass for bicycle commuting. For starters, folding bikes are a commuter's dream on the Metro system. "They fit easily inside a crowded rush hour bus or train," he said. "No need to compete for space on a bike rack. And you don't have to worry about leaving them inside a bicycle locker or stored some place where they might get stolen."

Sotero continues his litany of the bike's

It's so easy being green.



virtues: "My bike fits in a small corner of my cubicle. If you just need a quick ride from someone to a transit stop, the bike fits perfectly in the trunk or back seat of a car. There's no need for a bike rack on the car either. That makes hitching rides when needed a no-brainer."

"I've only had my bike a little more than one month, and I haven't burned any gasoline for commuting. I estimate I've already saved more than \$100 just leaving my car in the driveway," he said.

Sotero also attributes his turning point to a book he found in the Metro Library, *How to Live Well Without Owning a Car* by Chris Balish. "The book really makes the case that automobiles are wreaking havoc in our lives and recommends new ways to solve commuting problems for everyone," he said.



Now that his commuting dreams have all come true, is there anything left on Sotero's transit wish list?

"I'd like to see Metro develop a folding bike demonstration program similar to its Segway scooter program a couple years ago," he said. "I think agency employees and the public would love a chance to try these bikes out and show how easily they can be used on the transit system."

"Commuters are astonished when they see my folding bike on a Rapid Bus or Red Line train. Most never knew such a bike was available. They want to know how it works, how much it costs and where to get one. The demand is there. The bike raises awareness every time I take it on the system."

Here's Dave's list of "must-have" items to pack in your bike bag if you're thinking of commuting by bicycle:

- Helmet
- Sun glasses to keep the sun and bugs out of your eyes
- Metro Beanie for cold morning rides
- Metro reflective bands to keep your pant leg out of the bicycle chain
- Metro neon safety vest for staying visible, especially at night
- Timetables for all area bus and rail services in case you need to take a different transit service
- Spill-proof coffee container
- Sealed food container for breakfast on-the-go



- Lightweight windbreaker
- Portable snacks like granola bars or trail mix
- Flashing deflectors that fit on clothing
- Small water bottle
- Folding comb or brush
- Smart phone for checking Metro Rapid Bus schedules at rapidbus.net and Metro Local schedules on mobile Trip Planner and bike paths on bikemetro.com
- Paperback book for reading while in transit or waiting for transit connections
- Bike lock (cable and U-Lock recommended)



>Sotero's iPhone photos document the "I can do anything and go everywhere" attitude of Ms. Bonnie Brae Brompton, the amazing folding bicycle.