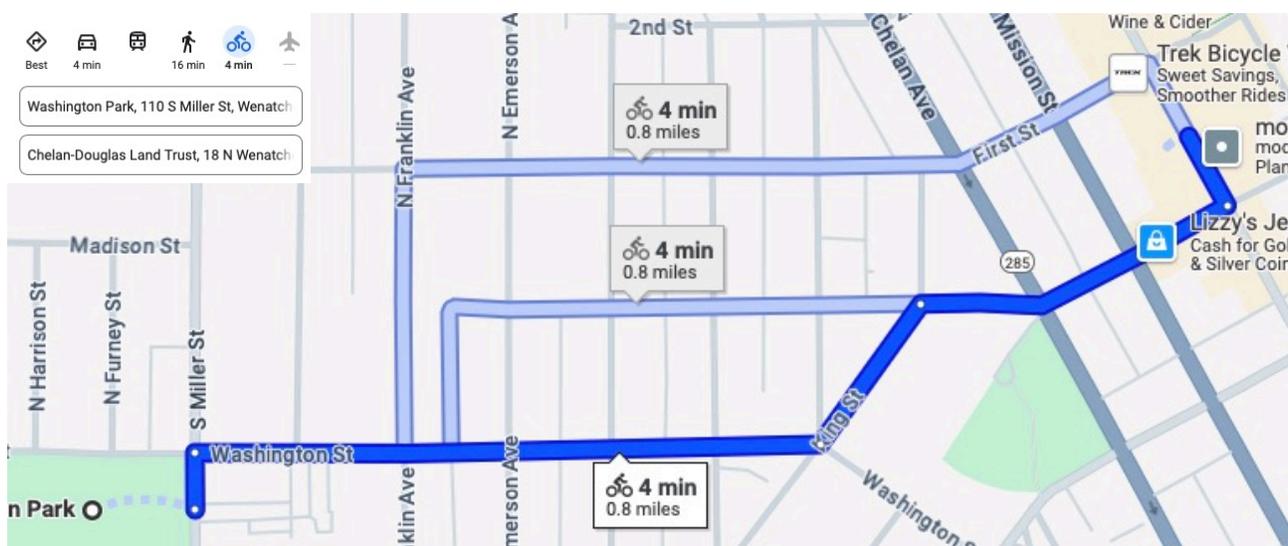
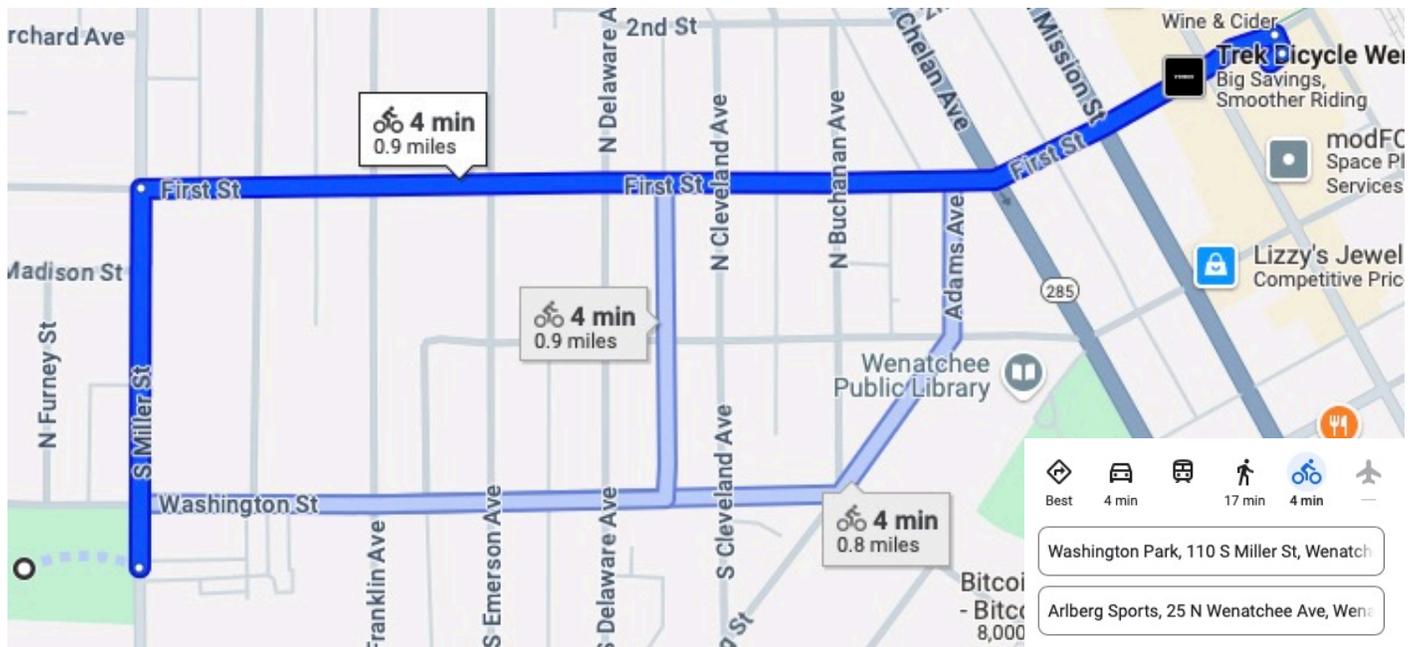


Bicycling in Wenatchee - Examining Google Routes

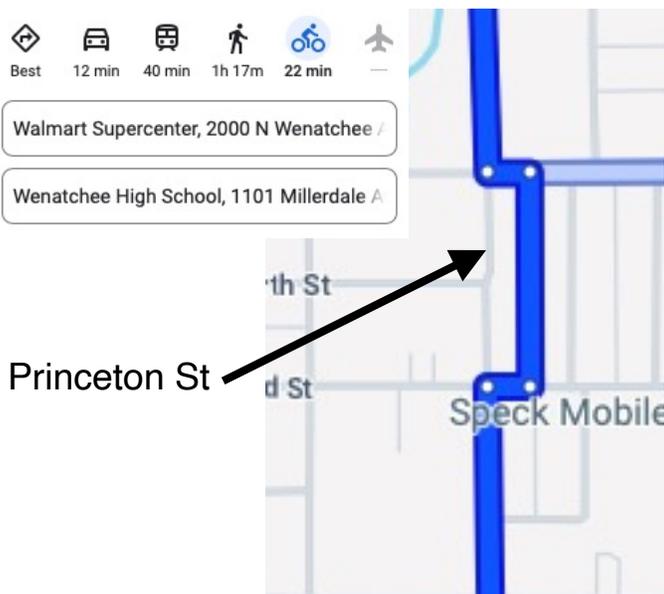
A friend who does not use a bicycle asked me recently about my thought process in deciding my topics and target audience for my bicycle articles hosted by Wenatchee Outdoors website. The friend's thinking was that "wouldn't it be simpler for a bicyclist to navigate on a bicycle using a cell phone and navigation software such as Google Maps instead of viewing the maps of recommended routes that I prepare?". My hunch was that I could do better than Google Maps, based on more than three decades of riding a bicycle on Wenatchee's streets. Below are some examples I chose for getting to and from some common destinations. Google Maps will show you one or more ways to bicycle to a destination. I will critique some of Google's routes and you can see what you think. I would say that my examples confirm my opinion.



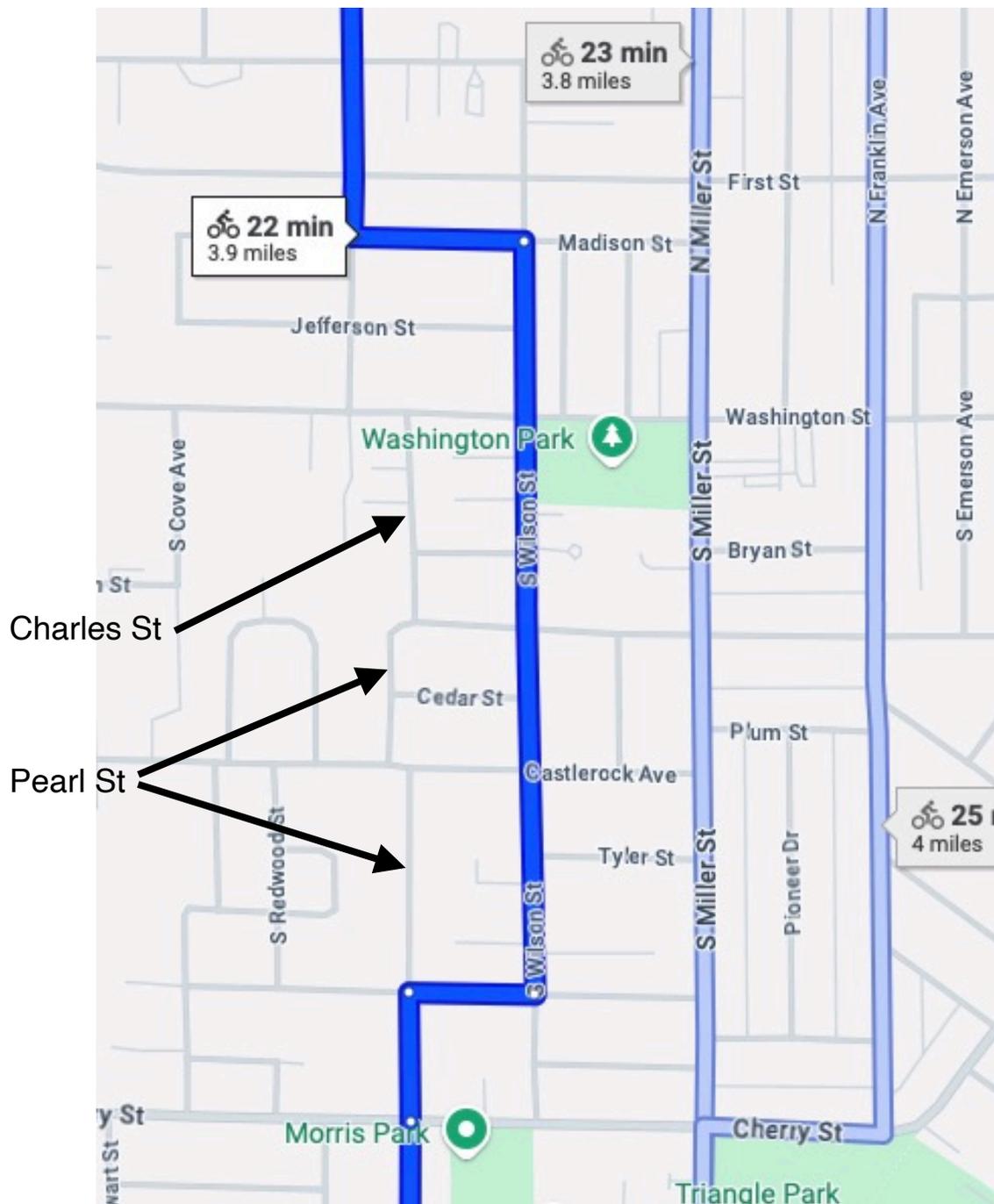
My first example (above) is a bicycle ride from Washington Park to the Chelan-Douglas Land Trust, located on Wenatchee Ave between First St and Palouse St. Note that the bicycling option on Google's choice of transportation types is selected. The blue line is Google's recommended route, and two alternatives are shown in gray. I would argue that using a longer portion of Palouse St is preferred, with the portion of Palouse St between Emerson St and Buchanan St having a much lower traffic volume than the parallel portion of Washington St. But I would suggest using Emerson St to access Palouse St. Google Maps shows use of an unpaved alley north of Washington St to reach Palouse St. An alley without pavement would be a rougher route and would see less maintenance for cleanup of broken glass. Palouse St between Chelan Ave and Wenatchee Ave is nicely downhill, allowing a bicyclist to "take the lane" for best safety without slowing down motorized traffic. Google Maps is "smart" enough to select this route. But Google Maps doesn't know to advise a bicyclist to dismount and walk the sidewalk for the one-half block portion along Wenatchee Ave north of Palouse St. Few bicyclists use Wenatchee Ave due to the back-out parking that places a bicyclist unduly at risk.



My second example (above) is a bicycle ride from Washington Park to Arlbergs Sports, also on Wenatchee Ave between First St and Palouse St. The First St Bikeway is Google's recommended way. I wouldn't argue with that, First St between Chelan Ave and Wenatchee Ave has protected bike lanes. But I'll take a pass on Miller St between Washington St and First St. While this portion of road has bicycle lanes, it is busy and noisy. A much more pleasant way would be Washington St to Emerson St to Palouse St to Buchanan Ave. This brings a bicyclist conveniently to the protected portion of the First St Bikeway. Because Palouse St does not connect with Miller Ave, its traffic volume is much lower than the parallel Washington St. Curiously, Google Maps suggests using an unpaved alley between Washington St and First St, a route that I would not recommend. Google Maps does not suggest Palouse St eastward to an alley just east of Wenatchee Ave, which is paved and leads directly to a bike rack on the east side of Arlberg Sports. The east side of Arlberg Sports is also the best access to the bicycle repair portion of the store and avoids using Wenatchee Ave to reach the store.



A third example is the north-south Princeton bike route between Walmart to the north and Wenatchee High School to the south. The portion of the route (left) between Fifth St and Third St has Google suggesting using Ramona St. Google Maps does not know that a bicyclist can use a contra-flow bike lane on Princeton St southbound between Fifth St and Third St. Northbound on Princeton St a bicyclist uses the guidance of bike sharrow to "capture the lane" and ride between Third St and Fifth St.



Still critiquing the Google Maps routing between Walmart and Wenatchee High School (above), Google suggests alternate routes on Miller St and Franklin Ave. Neither of these routes make sense for a bicyclist. Use of Miller St necessitates dropping and then regaining elevation, typically not what a bicyclist would choose. Franklin St is just adding additional distance for no particular reason. Missing from Google is the use of Charles St and Pearl St between Washington St and Columbine St, which is a common choice among bicyclists. The Princeton bike route passes by Washington Park, which is good. But a bicyclist not wanting to bicycle past Washington Park can take a shorter route towards the high school.

I would state that my point is made. Google Maps doesn't live in Wenatchee, hasn't studied maps of Wenatchee without A1, and hasn't tried alternative routes to assess suitability for bicycling. With that, I note that currently there are fourteen different writing pieces at the Wenatchee Outdoors website that I have authored regarding bicycle routes in the urban Wenatchee area. A fifteenth is underway to show the best ways to bicycle to our bicycle shops in town. Three different searches of the Wenatchee Outdoors website will give different results. Try "bicycle," "Charles," and "Charlie." Perhaps having the links on this page would be helpful.

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[Riverfront Park 2024-08-27](#)

[Bicycling Through Downtown Wenatchee 2024-08-13](#)

[Bicycle Routes to NCR Library 2024-07-23](#)

[Bicycle Routes to Plaza Super Jet 2024-06-18](#)

[Complete Streets Policy in Wenatchee 2024-04-10](#)

[First Street Bikeway 2024-02-06](#)

[Bicycling in Downtown- Ways to go N-S 2023-12-20](#)

[Downtown Wenatchee by Bicycle 2023-09-13](#)

[East Wenatchee to Wenatchee 2023-06-26](#)

[Importance of Yakima St 2023-05-03](#)

[Winter - Human Powered Commute 2023-01-16](#)

[Bicycle Commuting in Wenatchee 2022-04-29](#)

[Princeton Bike Route 2022-07-01](#)

[A History of the Greater Wenatchee Bicycle Routes 2022-03-22](#)

There are few paper copies left, but an electronic map is also highly recommended for planning bicycle routes. It is the Regional Bicycle Map available at <https://bikewenatcheevalley.squarespace.com/bike-map>. The map can be downloaded to a phone or computer. Charles Hickenbottom 1-15-2025



Charles Hickenbottom is the author of *Greater Wenatchee Bicycle Routes - A History Told Through Maps, Drawings, and Pictures*. The book is available for purchase through the Wenatchee Valley Museum, and can be checked out from North Central Washington Libraries. Rights to the book have been donated to the museum.

Hickenbottom has served for 25 years on local bicycle advisory boards and committees. For most of two decades he commuted by bicycle to Lewis & Clark Elementary School from his home near Chase Park. Most of his errands around town are done by bicycle. Since finishing the history book in 2022, he has completed several informational articles for the website Wenatchee Outdoors, focusing his efforts toward educating bicyclists and motorists about bicycling around Wenatchee. 1-15-2025