Our 2024 Earth Pledge

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We have been trying to reduce our carbon footprint for many years: We share a single car. We have moved from a large house in Kent, to a much smaller townhouse in Seattle, with shared walls and roof. We have replaced all of our appliances with more efficient ones. We have replaced our exterior doors and windows, and re-insulated the lower floor.

Looking around for something meaningful to do this year, we have decided to see what we can do about transportation. We have two bikes already. We have used them to go to appointments, and Costco visits (about a 16-mile round trip). But these last few years have seen our bikes sit in the garage and not move much at all. Over the years, the hills have gotten higher, and the winds fiercer. The idea of having electric bikes (or 'ebikes') has been on my mind for many years, and this year it seemed like a good way to shrink our carbon footprint just a little bit more, get a little exercise, and have some fun doing it.

Chucking our two perfectly good bikes, that were configured just for us, was not very appealing. And with new e-bikes being pricey, I decided to look into buying conversion kits for our current bikes. I settled on a kit that looked like it would work with our bikes, and seemed well-regarded. I ordered two of these kits. I figured that this would make a nice winter project to work on in our garage.

I started in on converting my bike immediately. It was like unwrapping the best Christmas present ever. It has been fun, interesting, and challenging, getting it all together. There were some unexpected things, like I realized that I probably should not be using our old, and rather worn street tires. I got some new ones that would take a heavier bike, and would even work when flat! I have taken both of our bikes into a bike shop to check out my work, swap out the tires, check the brakes, and to solve a couple of technical issues that were best left to people whom are smarter than me.

The kit, battery, new tires, a waterproof pouch to contain the central controller, a connector cable between the battery and controller, and the bike shop labor: all came out to around $1045.00 for each bike.

My bike is working. It does all of the things it is supposed to do: flatten the hills, and scoff at the head-winds. I have now also started work on Sharon's bike, which is going more smoothly than mine! Along the way, I found a bike shop in Seattle that specializes in selling, installing, and supporting bike conversion kits.

We are looking forward to getting out there on our e-bikes soon, and to leaving our car in the garage more.

Bike Kit as delivered. Needs a battery and a few other parts

Sharon’s bike with parts

Doug & Sharon’s ebikes - all put together