



Global Call to Action for the Continuous Prioritisation of Active Mobility in a post COVID-19 Society

June 3rd, 2020
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The unprecedented curtailing of traditional rhythms of urban mobility brought upon by the COVID-19 pandemic has been the impetus for an extraordinary uptake of cycling in cities across the world. It has also triggered the fastest process of street transformations for the benefit of pedestrians and cyclists in modern history ¹, which we highly welcome.

The global health emergency we face has highlighted the bicycle as a resilient mode of transportation and a failsafe tool to mitigate transmission while keeping essential members of society moving. The continued encouragement of active mobility will be a critical tool to ensure safe, appropriately distanced access to vital public spaces, as well as face the short-term decrease of public transportation usage, counter the risk of increased use of private automobiles as movement restrictions ease ², and warrant the commitment to the reduction of carbon emissions and pollution in cities.

It is thus crucial that the current policies aimed at facilitating cycling extend well into the recovery period and jumpstart a permanent shift towards human-centric cities where pedestrians and cyclists are placed at the top of mobility hierarchies.

BYCS is a social enterprise with roots in Amsterdam and Bengaluru that has been coordinating a network of citizen leaders from 100 cities in 35 countries working together towards social progress through grassroots cycling initiatives. We are convinced that the value of the bicycle in society is not limited to transportation but has the capacity to advance social transformation.³ By improving social equity, enhancing mental and physical health, enabling cleaner air quality and strengthening

1. Combs, T. (2020). Local Actions to Support Walking and Cycling During Social Distancing Dataset. http://pedbikeinfo.org/resources/resources_details.cfm?id=5209

2 <https://www.tomtom.com/covid-19/>

3 https://bycs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/About-Bicycle-Mayors_two-pager_29-April-2019.pdf

communities and local neighborhood economic development, the bicycle has the capacity to remedy deeply entrenched social ills that have been made more evident than ever during this pandemic.

On World Bicycle day 2020, BYCS and its network of Bicycle Mayors are calling for municipal governments across the world to adhere to the following actions, deemed necessary from a citizen perspective to ensure the health and wellbeing of ALL members of society:

- **The facilitation and extension of temporary “Light Individual Transport” lanes across key urban corridors, and commitment to permanent, protected infrastructure⁴.**
- **Increase the provision of public space for outdoor activity especially in neighborhoods without public parks and other open spaces to ensure harmful physical and mental health effects can be mitigated.**
- **The acceleration of existing programs aimed at improving active mobility and implementing traffic-calmed streets at the neighborhood level as well as policies designed for the reduction of car use in urban areas.**
- **The development of programs and policies aimed at strengthening “Human Infrastructure” to facilitate an inclusive uptake of cycling and the development of a “culture of the bicycle”, such as bike purchases and repair subsidies, funding for local advocacy groups, trainings to teach citizens how to cycle and increase confidence on the road, with an emphasis on children and communities historically excluded from cycling investments⁵.**
- **The establishment of an international cooperative framework to share knowledge and best practices for the implementation of measures directed at improving cycling and walking.**
- **The implementation of more rigorous participatory tools for citizens to vocalise their needs in terms of active mobility and access to public space, including surveys, forums and digital democracy tools.**

We call our bold, global mission 50by30: 50% of all city trips by bicycle by 2030. It demands the brightest ideas and the most determined action. And we believe it will unlock massive social, economic, and environmental gains for all citizens.

4. <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/respacing-cities-resilience-covid-19.pdf>

5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2019.1709757>

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