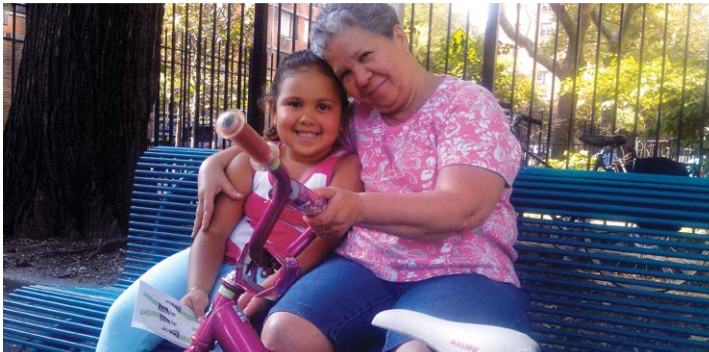


# THE NEW MAJORITY

PEDALING TOWARDS EQUITY



PRESENTED BY



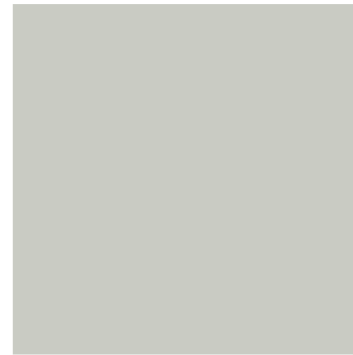
THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS  
Since 1980



SIERRA CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

# THE NEW MAJORITY

## PEDALING TOWARDS EQUITY



**B**icycling is on the rise across the U.S. Adults are capitalizing on the health and economic benefits of active transportation, while an increasing number of young people are forgoing drivers' licenses to save money and embrace more walkable, bikeable lifestyles.

The new majority that elected a president — youth, women and people of color — is playing a key role in pedaling the country toward a more Bicycle Friendly America. These diverse communities are embracing bicycling at a high rate, redefining the face and trajectory of the bicycle movement and the way the nation addresses transportation. An increasingly powerful and growing constituency, previously underrepresented groups are cultivating new campaigns and bike cultures that address the needs, serve the safety and improve the health of all residents who ride — or want to ride. These new riders, leaders and organizations are making

biking accessible and inviting to all Americans — while making the case for a safer and more equitable transportation system in communities nationwide.

For too long, many of these diverse populations have been overlooked by traditional organizations and transportation planners. In too many instances, people of color have been largely left out of transportation decision-making processes that have dramatically impacted their neighborhoods. Rising up in response to this disenfranchisement, new leaders are rallying against stark disparities in bicycling facilities — and safe streets. These organizations aren't just engaging new communities in traditional campaigns, but opening new avenues of conversation — shifting the focus from bicycling itself to how bikes address the core everyday issues faced in their unique communities.

Red, Bike and Green chapters are using the bicycle as a means to address health, economic and environmental disparities that disproportionately affect the black community. In Los Angeles, Multicultural Communities for Mobility is working with immi-



Liz Clayman



Community Cycling Center, Portland

Cover image photo credits, clockwise from top left: Major Taylor Cycling Club of Minnesota, Biking Public Project, Andrew Shiu, Red, Bike and Green - Atlanta, Liz Clayman, Dmitry Gudkov, Local Spokes



Community Cycling Center, Portland

**THE FATALITY RATE FOR BICYCLISTS IS**

**23%**

HIGHER FOR HISPANIC  
THAN WHITE BICYCLISTS

**30%**

HIGHER FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN  
THAN WHITE BICYCLISTS

grant worker populations, producing Spanish-language public service announcements and securing bike parking at a day laborer center. In Chicago, Girls Bike Club is making bicycling an integral part of the personal and social lives of young women of color. The Biking Public Project in New York City is giving voice to the often-invisible delivery bicyclist. And these are just a few examples.

But, while many communities are enjoying new opportunities because of the boom in bicycling, significant challenges persist in many underserved communities. While some residents of a city have access to a variety of transportation options, many communities of color in that same city are in transit deserts that lack safe streets for walking or biking. In fact, according to 2001 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, compared to white bicyclists, the fatality rate was 23% higher for Hispanic and 30% higher for African-American riders.

To address these pressing issues, community groups are developing their own educational and advocacy material catering to the specific needs and cultural understandings of their members be-

cause of the lack of ability and interest of larger local, regional and national cycling advocacy to address these expressed needs. There are clear and potent opportunities for transportation planners, departments of transportation at all levels, bicycling advocates, and industry leaders to address the many issues highlighted by this new wave of grassroots leaders in a manner that advances the movement for transportation equity nationwide.

Safe infrastructure for biking will help bring the health, economic, and environmental benefits of biking to those who want to ride but don't currently feel safe on the streets. These sorts of improvements along with the standardization of safe bike infrastructure design by the U.S. Department of Transportation and other agencies across the country are integral in implementing equitable access to safe infrastructure across jurisdictions.

This report showcases new data and analysis from the League of American Bicyclists and the Sierra Club, as well as compelling statistics and information that highlight the new face of biking in America.

# THE CHANGING FACE OF BICYCLING

## AN OVERVIEW

**B**icycling is an important form of transportation and recreation for a growing and diverse number of U.S. residents. In 2009 alone, African Americans took 461 million bike trips, Hispanics took 196 million bike trips, Asian Americans took 92 million bike trips and Native Americans took 91 million bike trips [1].

In fact, the fastest growth in bicycling is among the Hispanic, African American and Asian American populations. Between 2001 and 2009, those three groups grew from 16 to 23 percent of all bike trips in the U.S. [1]. Within those groups, the percent of trips taken by bike has grown much faster than in the white population (see chart I).

Diverse populations are commuting by bike, too. The average percent of commute trips by bike from 2006 to 2010 was higher for Native and Latino than white workers (see chart II) [2].

According to a September 2012 national poll by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 86% of people of color\* and 82% of white respondents said they had a positive view of bicyclists [3].

**86%**

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR\* WHO HAVE A POSITIVE VIEW OF BICYCLISTS

**71%**

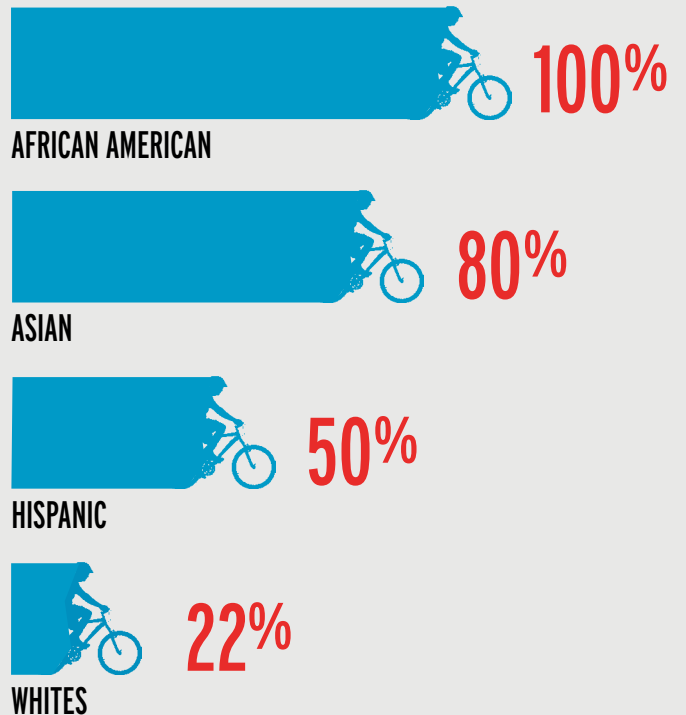
PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR\* WHO AGREE SAFER BICYCLING WOULD MAKE THEIR COMMUNITY BETTER

**43%**

GROWTH IN LATINO AND ASIAN BICYCLE CONSUMER SPENDING FROM 2000 TO 2010

### CHART I:

GROWTH IN THE PERCENT OF ALL TRIPS THAT ARE BY BIKE (2001-2009) [1]





In fact, the fastest growth in bicycling is among the Hispanic, African American and Asian American populations.

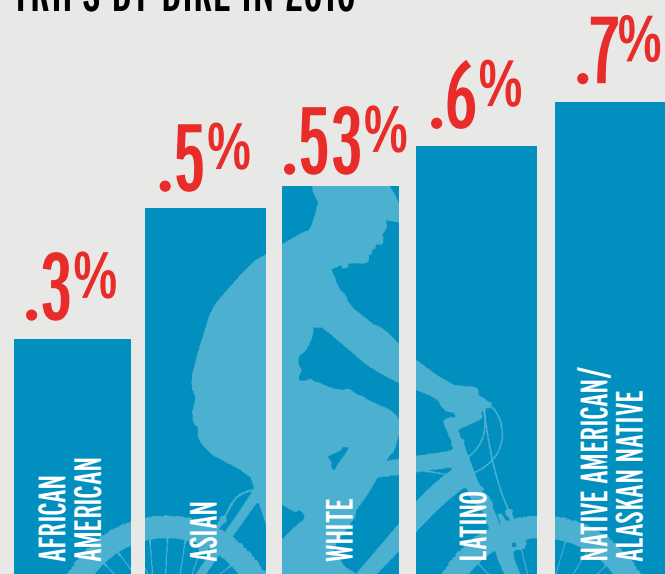
According to the Outdoor Foundation, “road biking, mountain biking and BMX” was the second most popular outdoor activity for both Asian/Pacific Islanders and Hispanics (14% of respondents choosing it as their top activity) and third most popular for African Americans (10%) in 2010 [4].

In the PSRAI study, two-thirds of all Americans agreed with the statement: “My community would be a better place to live if bicycling were safer and more comfortable.” More than 30% of people of color said they “strongly agree” with that statement — 24% of white respondents said they “strongly agree” [3].

That support and interest in bicycling is showing up in the bike shops, too. According to the Gluskin Townley Group, between 2000 and 2010, the impact of Latino consumers grew 43%, Asian consumers 43% and African American consumers 12% — compared to 6% for white consumers [5].

## CHART II:

### AVERAGE PERCENT OF COMMUTE TRIPS BY BIKE IN 2010

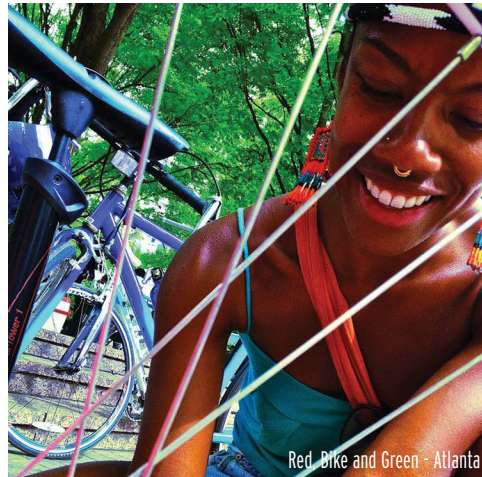


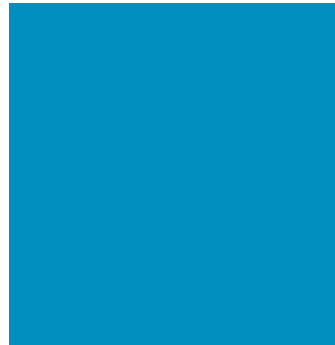
\* Note: The non-white category, as reported by PSRAI, is defined as Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, mixed or other race.

# BUILDING EQUITABLE INFRASTRUCTURE



In Atlanta, leaders from bicycling organizations Red, Bike and Green, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, Metro Atlanta Cycling Club – alongside local bicycling councilmembers like Aaron Watson and Kwanzaa Hall – are working to ensure better access to bicycling infrastructure for all communities. One recent campaign surrounding the city’s historic Auburn Avenue successfully united neighbors, business leaders and advocates when the city overlooked the important African American corridor in the distribution of bike lanes. The petition not only forced planners to reconsider design plans for Auburn Avenue, but also re-focused funding in a new bicycling bill to improve infrastructure in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color.





Equitable access to safe infrastructure makes biking safer for those who are already riding and helps to get those who want to use a bike for transportation out on the streets. Unfortunately, there are still disparities in access to safe infrastructure for low-income and people of color communities across the country, including in cities like New York, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and many others [6].

One study in Portland, Ore. found that 60% of the population is interested in bicycling for transportation but is concerned about safety, and would try bicycling for transportation with better infrastructure [7].

Only 9% of Americans say they will ride on all roads and feel confident riding in traffic. Only 6% of women and 5% of African Americans feel confident riding on all streets with traffic.

However, 26% of people of color\* said they'd like to ride more but worry about safety in traffic. The same was true for 19% of white respondents [3].

**26%**

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR\* WHO WOULD LIKE TO RIDE MORE BUT WORRY ABOUT SAFETY

**60%**

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR\* WHO SAY MORE BIKE FACILITIES WOULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO RIDE

A strong and diverse majority of Americans say more bike lanes and trails would encourage them to ride more, including 60% of people of color\* and 59% of those earning less than \$30,000 per year [3].

It's not just the polls that show that more people want to get out and ride — if they have access to infrastructure that makes them feel safe. In New Orleans, the installation of a bike lane on South Carrollton Street dramatically increased the number of diverse riders, including a 135% growth in youth, 115% rise in female and 51% increase in African American bicyclists [8].

In a national Princeton Survey Research Associates poll in March 2012, people of color were also more likely than whites to support more federal funding for sidewalks, bike lanes and bike paths, with 56% of people of color\* and 44% of white respondents supporting increased investment for people who walk and bike [9].

Safe infrastructure for biking will help protect the communities that are already out there on their bikes, and enable those who want to ride to access the benefits of biking. In its capacity to ensure safety on the streets for everyone, the U.S. Department of Transportation should move forward to set design standards for safe bike infrastructure, and transportation agencies across the country should move forward to implement equitable access to safe infrastructure across their jurisdictions.



*\* Note: The non-white category, as reported by PSRAI, is defined as Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, mixed or other race.*

# ENGAGING NEW AMERICANS



Los Angeles is home to many Latino bicyclists who ride to work each day – but many of these riders are invisible. These “invisible” bicyclists, often without equipment like lights and helmets, ride out of economic necessity and come from immigrant or marginalized communities without access to safe bicycling education and disconnected from bike advocacy groups and resources. The formation of City of Lights (Ciudad de Luces), now known as Multicultural Communities for Mobility, is bridging the gap between the movements for Latino social justice and bicycle advocacy, bringing underrepresented immigrant bicyclists into the decision-making process and taking an active role in transforming the built environment in their neighborhoods to serve their transportation needs by becoming more bike-friendly.



Photos by Multicultural  
Communities for Mobility







Photos by Multicultural Communities for Mobility

Immigrants are twice as likely as US-born Americans to travel by bicycle. Those earning less than \$35,000 and living in dense residential areas are more than 10 times as likely to travel by bike. Over four years, bicycle mode share among new immigrants drops from 1.8% to 0.4% — highlighting the importance of efforts to ensure bicycling remains a viable form of transportation for the health and greater mobility of these communities [10].

Data gathered by the Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition revealed that neighborhoods with the highest percentage of people of color had a lower distribution of bicycling facilities — and areas with the lowest median household income (\$22,656 annually) were also the areas with the highest number of bicycle and pedestrian crashes [11].

According to the PSRAI poll, people of color\* (39%) were more likely to indicate that “learning about safe riding skills” would increase their riding — far higher than white (20%) respondents [3]. In Minneapolis, for instance, 84% of participants in Cycles for Change “Learn to Ride” classes identify as immigrants — and 87% as people of color [12].

People of color\* (47%) were also far more likely than whites (32%) to indicate that “plentiful, secure bike parking” would increase their bicycling. While 45% of those earning less than \$30,000 per year, only 30% of those earning more than \$75,000 per year indicate that bike parking would increase their riding [3]. A survey conducted by the Community Cycling Center in Portland, Ore., found that 57% of Hispanic respondents cited not having a safe place to store their bicycle as a barrier to bicycling [13].

People of color were also more likely than white respondents, in the PSRAI poll, to be encouraged by an active riding club or advocacy organization, including 36% of people of color\* — compared to 21% of white respondents [3].

Events like CicLAvia in Los Angeles — with more than 150,000 participants on just a single day — are bringing communities together and uniting diverse bicycling cultures with open streets events that close roads to cars and open them to all forms of active transportation and recreation.

**39% vs. 20%**

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR\* VS. WHITES WHO SAY LEARNING SAFE RIDING SKILLS WOULD INCREASE THEIR RIDING

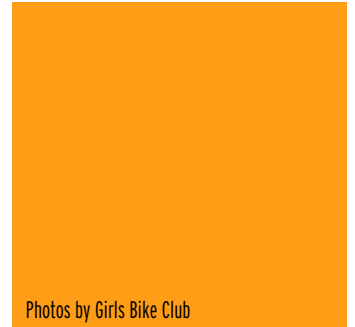
**36% vs. 21%**

PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR\* VS. WHITES WHO SAY AN ACTIVE RIDING CLUB WOULD INCREASE THEIR BICYCLING

\* Note: The non-white category, as reported by PSRAI, is defined as Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, mixed or other race.

# GEARING UP THE NEXT GENERATION

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Photos by Girls Bike Club



In Chicago, the Girls Bike Club at West Town Bikes is changing the perception of biking in their community and getting more of their peers to hop on a bike for fun, building life skills and developing relationships with friends and their community. Working predominantly with underserved communities, bicycle co-ops and collectives like West Town Bikes are playing a key role in expanding the number and diversity of people who ride. Girls Bike Club was created by a group of female high school students participating in a summer apprenticeship who began meeting every week to form their own unique group. Creating a welcoming space within the often male-dominated shop atmosphere, the young women of color plan rides together, make jewelry from bike parts and even have time set aside for homework help – not only creating friendships, but also cultivating healthy lifestyles and job skills along the way.



The percentage of children walking or bicycling to school has dropped precipitously, from approximately 50% in 1969 to just 13% in 2009. Over the past 40 years, the percentage of children who are overweight and obese has grown to more than 33% [14].

This epidemic has hit hardest in communities of color: Close to 40% of Latino and African American children ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese, compared to only 28% of white children [15].

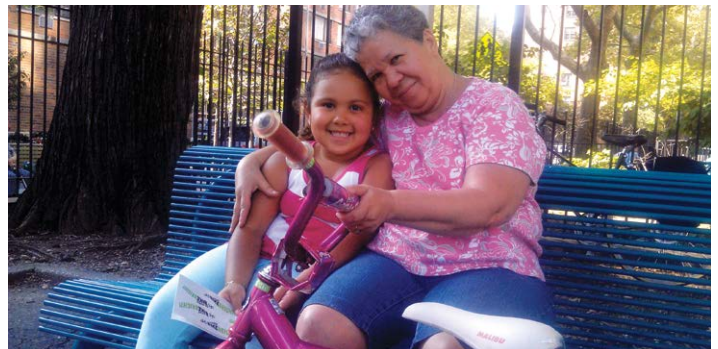
89% of young adults — aged 18-29 — have a positive view of bicyclists and 75% agree that their community would be a better place to live if biking were safer and more comfortable [3].

Of all age groups, young adults (18-29) were the most likely (62%) to indicate that having “people to ride with” would increase their bicycling — nearly 20 percentage points above all other age categories [3].

African Americans were more than twice as likely as whites (38% vs 14%) to agree that their perception of bicyclists would improve if people on bikes represented a “broader cross section of Americans, such as women, youth and people of color” in their community [3].

In just its third year, the Youth Bike Summit drew 369 youth and adult attendees representing 23 states and four countries [16].

Young adults are pressing for better biking on college campuses: There are now 58 Bicycle Friendly Universities in 38 states [17].



*\* Note: The non-white category, as reported by PSRAI, is defined as Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, mixed or other race.*

# DELIVERING ACCESS TO JOBS

There are more than 6,000 restaurants in New York City that deliver food – and many of those deliveries arrive by bike. While present in great numbers on the streets, these riders are often overlooked by traditional bicycling advocates, bike counts, and transportation planners. The Biking Public Project is working to change that, expanding local bicycling advocacy discussions by reaching out to underrepresented bicyclists around New York City including women, people of color, and delivery bicyclists. The group has worked with NYC Department of Transportation to distribute bike safety equipment and material, as well as elevating visibility with a Bike Portrait Project that's putting a face on the full diversity of bicyclists in New York, whether riding to an office at 9 a.m. or pedaling from a restaurant for a late-night delivery.



Andrew Shiu





Bicycling is an increasingly important mode of transportation, with bike commuting rising 47% nationwide between 2000 and 2011. From 2007 to 2011, the number of women commuting to work by bike grew by 56% [2]. That growth was significantly higher in the largest Bicycle Friendly Communities, rising 80 percent over that same timeframe [18].

The nation's poorest families spend the highest portion of their income on their commute, spending more than 40% of take home pay on getting to work. Nationally, the average family with an income less than \$50,000 spends 28% of its annual income on housing — and 30% on transportation [19].

The annual cost of owning and operating a bicycle is \$308 compared to \$8,220 for the average car [20].

Residents earning less than \$30,000 per year accounted for 28% of bike trips in 2009 — more than 1.1 billion bike trips overall [1].

Black and Latino male workers are the most likely to work non-day shifts — 28.2% and 22.5% respectively — often commuting

during the off-peak hours of public transit schedules that are vulnerable to cuts due to inadequate budgets, if off-peak service exists at all. For these individuals and many others, bicycling provides a viable mode of transportation [21].

However, many communities are still disenfranchised from new public resources that make biking more accessible and convenient, including the growing number of bicycle sharing systems. Memberships in these systems are still overwhelmingly white — including 90% of Denver B-cycle members (2011) and 77% of Capital Bikeshare members in Washington, D.C. a majority minority city (2012). Ensuring that safe infrastructure reaches all communities, especially those communities who rely on bikes and public transit to meet their transportation needs, is essential.

Building better integrated bicycling and multimodal networks provides opportunities to reduce transportation costs and close gaps in job access for low-income families and individuals.

**30%** **56%** **\$308**

PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL INCOME SPENT BY THE NATION'S POOREST FAMILIES ON TRANSPORTATION

GROWTH FROM 2007 TO 2011 IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN COMMUTING TO WORK BY BIKE

AVERAGE YEARLY COST OF OPERATING A BIKE, AS OPPOSED TO \$8,220 FOR THE AVERAGE CAR



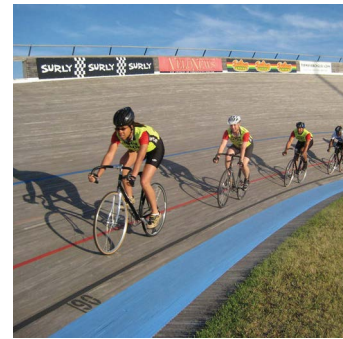
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# BIKING TO BETTER HEALTH

From higher rates of obesity to a greater prevalence of heart disease, African American communities suffer disproportionate health burdens across the United States. With a mission to “promote an appreciation of bicycling and its beneficial impact on health issues affecting those communities disproportionately affected by health disparities,” the National Brotherhood of Cyclists and many Major Taylor groups around the country are working to change that. Several Major Taylor clubs share beginnings in local health initiatives or health-related events. The Minneapolis Major Taylor Bicycling Club got its start when a group of black women looking to train for a local AIDS Ride approached two local black bicyclists, who found that more members of the African American community were interested in bicycling for reasons beyond just transportation. Members of the club work with city officials to inform health improvement and engagement strategies, while ensuring that people of color are involved in efforts around bicycling events and the city’s bikeshare program.



Photos by Major Taylor  
Bicycling Club of Minnesota



Photos by Major Taylor  
Bicycling Club of Minnesota

Infrastructure that helps people feel safe on the roads and get out biking can also have an impact on air quality, which is an important factor for good health. Currently, one in three children and more than 127 million Americans live in areas where air pollution levels are sometimes dangerous, meaning asthma attacks, hospital visits, and premature mortality [22].

Cars and trucks are a major source of this health-threatening pollution, particularly in urban areas with lots of traffic and few transportation options [23]. Low-income and people of color communities are disproportionately impacted by this pollution as busy roads pass through these communities [24].

Biking has well-established health benefits — as a part of an active lifestyle, biking can lower incidence of obesity, diabetes, and heart and lung disease, as well as health care costs.

One study in Nebraska discovered that for every dollar invested in trails, there was a medical costs savings of nearly three dollars [25].

A 2012 study by Quality Bicycle Products showed that its \$45,000 investment in a robust bicycle commuting program resulted in more than \$200,000 in employee healthcare cost savings [26].

Moving short trips from cars to walking, bikes, or transit is key to significantly reduce this air pollution, and part of making this shift possible is to have accessible infrastructure that makes people feel safe walking and biking on their streets.

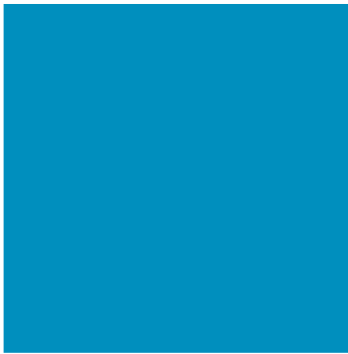
## CONCLUSION

Biking is on the rise across the country, especially among youth, women, and people of color. And, even more people want to get on their bikes and ride. Better, safer infrastructure, like dedicated street space including bike lanes and cycle tracks, means more people feel comfortable riding a bike and are therefore better able to access jobs, their communities, and the health benefits of bicycling.

But this issue is bigger than bike lanes. As the national demographic map shifts, so too is the way people are reaching places of work, school and play. This reality presents both an opportunity and challenge to ensure that bicycling is not just a safe transportation option, but also a multi-layered solution for communities burdened by significant social, health and wealth inequalities. The opportunity: The demand and interest in efficient transportation alternatives are increasing in the face of rising gas prices, public transit costs and sprawl. The challenge: Level the playing field when it comes to access to safe, efficient and well connected bike travel for all communities.

The time to prioritize equity is now – or risk marginalizing the new majority.

*\* Note: The non-white category, as reported by PSRAI, is defined as Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, Native Americans, mixed or other race.*



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