

CORONA CYCLEWAYS

**How cycling became the new post
lockdown commuting trend.**

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Realised by the Econogy Project.

COVID-19 MADE CITIES MORE BIKE FRIENDLY

UN claims bicycles as driver of post-COVID-19 'green recovery'

As lockdowns started to lift in many countries in Europe and around the world, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) seized the opportunity to set an obligation for the transport sector to restart in a manner that is conducive to a more efficient and greener system.



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR CHANGE

The disruption created by COVID-19 has significantly changed people's perception of walking and biking, leading many decision-makers to rethink the role of sustainable transport. India's Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry declared that the pandemic constitutes an opportunity to make cities more accessible to pedestrians and cyclists. The same observation was made in many countries across the globe, as cities seized that momentum to advance their urban sustainability agenda. From Singapore and Kolkata in Asia, to Berlin and Milan in Europe as well as Kisumu in Kenya or Auckland in Oceania, more than 1,800 cities have taken action to bolster NMT -Non Motorised Transports - since the start of the pandemic.

EACH KM CYCLED AVOIDS 250 GRAMS OF CO2 EMISSIONS.

"In times of COVID-19, cities are being challenged to rethink their infrastructure, with bicycles playing a vital role in offering a quiet, economical, and non-polluting alternative to cars and public transportation systems". said Mohammad-Bande, president of the UN general assembly.

"Safe, efficient, low carbon and affordable mobility for all", bikes are essential to achieve a post COVID-19 "green recovery".



THE 'SLOW STREETS' MOVEMENT AS A RESPONSE TO COVID IN ASIA

While cities across the world have been encouraging cycle-friendly streets for years, COVID-19 accelerated the repurposing of roadways to bike lanes.

SHARED BYCICLE USE DOUBLED IN CHINA

Chinese Transport Ministry official estimated the average distance travelled per trip by shared bicycle to have doubled to 3km to 3.7km in July, from 1.4km to 1.7km before the pandemic.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE ADAPTATION

In Myanmar, Yangon City Development Council (YCDC) unveiled in March its willingness to make Yangon city more cycle-friendly by putting a bike lane and bike symbols on the Seikkanthar Street.

£1BN PLAN IN SINGAPORE

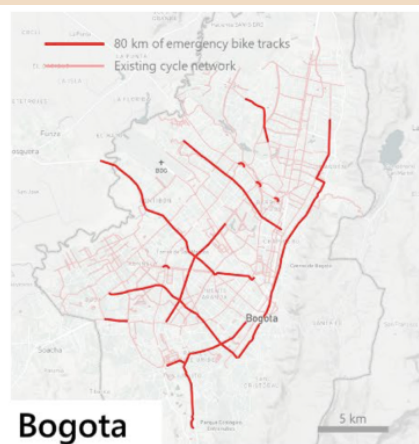
In March, Singapore announced a S\$1 billion investment plan to triple Singapore's cycling path network to 1,320km by 2030.

INDIA LAUNCHED A NATIONWIDE PLAN

The India Cycles4Change Challenge was introduced to quickly implement cycling-friendly initiatives in response to COVID-19. It aims to help cities connect with their citizens as well as experts to promote cycling.

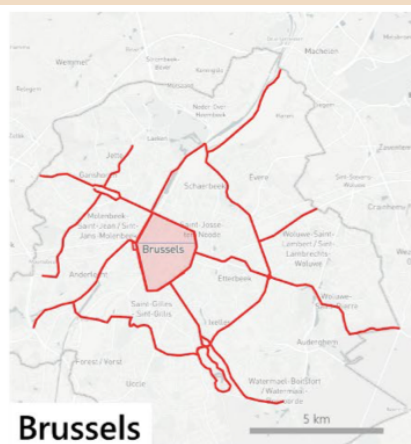
THE NEW SPACE RACE: LARGE-SCALE STREET SPACE RE-ALLOCATION INITIATIVES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19.

These maps show the networks of emergency cycle-ways that were implemented throughout lockdown to encourage cycling.



Demand-responsive emergency cycle routes deployed overnight

Pre-lockdown, the city deployed 112 kms of emergency cycling lanes (in addition to the 550 km already in place) to handle displaced public transport trips. Post-lockdown, the city iterated the network 3 times and currently has deployed 80 kms of emergency lanes (28 April).



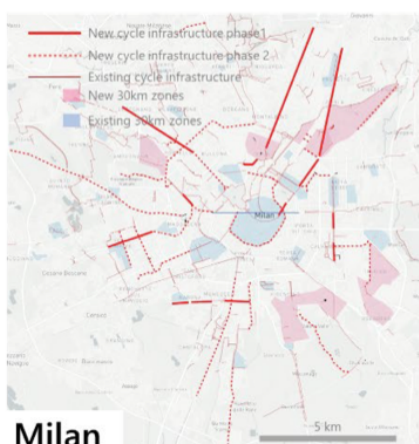
City-center re-prioritisation for walking, cycling and scootering and additional lanes

Brussels centre will become an emergency shared space zone with priority given to pedestrians and cyclists and 20km/h speed limits. Pedestrians will be able to walk on the carriage-way in order to facilitate physical distancing. An additional 40km of cycle tracks will be deployed in the region.



650 km regional bicycle network fast-tracked to help compensate for public transport loss

The region will help build a network of cycle routes and provide EUR 300 million funding (~60% of the total cost). Construction will be fast-tracked starting May 11th, 2020 and will include the rapid deployment of emergency cycling infrastructure. The city of Paris will deploy another 150km of pop-up cycle lanes.



Post-Covid19 mobility plan starting w/ emergency lanes, speed zones and plazas

In order to adapt to post Covid-19 travel behaviour and meet sustainability goals, Milan's « Strade Aperte » mobility plan calls for new cycle track infrastructure, new slow speed zones, and pedestrianised plazas, starting, deployed first as emergency infrastructure.



Planned 301 km cycle network to be deployed as emergency lanes first

The first phase of the network planned to be deployed in 5 years will be deployed in 3 months. It will first be implemented as emergency cycling lanes and will be extended and converted to hard facilities in later phases.



75 miles of Slow Streets to allow social spacing for walking, cyclists and scooters:

The city of Oakland has converted its neighbourhood cycling network (10% of all streets) into pop-up 'slow streets' closed to through car traffic. San Francisco has implemented a similar measure with a number of streets prioritised for walking and cycling.

A photograph of a bicycle parked in tall grass at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The bicycle is a light blue or silver color, and its wheels are partially visible. The grass is tall and dry, and the overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

PATHWAYS OUT OF THE PANDEMIC

Turning a boom into a cultural shift to make cities more inclusive.

'It's a strange window of opportunity [...] we need to jump into it'

Henk Swarttouw, vice president of the European Cyclists' Federation

The COVID crisis has brought a unique opportunity to advance green policy goals. The cycle boom that most countries experienced around the world resulted in positive repercussions for the environment, inducing less traffic and pollution, and was also beneficial to citizen's health. From a public health perspective, cycling is a form of physical activity that boosts physical and mental health, while preventing a number of chronic diseases. According to a Norwegian study case, for cities, the benefits of investing in cycling far outweigh the infrastructural costs

necessary to implement cycle-ways, with a positive economic return estimated around 400 to 500% (WEF 2020).

A major concern for the future is to preserve the cycling developments that were implemented since the rise of the pandemic. It would be a considerable waste to see the positive changes brought by COVID reverted back as cities return to their pre-lockdown habits. However, it seems that governing officials are willing to ensure emergency cycleways turn into more durable infrastructures. A significant shift has been observed in the way people consider their commute alternatives, with a lasting preference for cycling in many countries since lockdowns eased.

Yet, as Antonio Lugo warns (cultural anthropologist researcher at Antioch University), 'a boom movement does not necessarily translate into a cultural shift'. It therefore stands into governing authorities and citizens' hands to ensure the cycling habits that were developed throughout lockdown turn permanent, along with the infrastructures in place.

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