

PREFACE

CAMBRIDGE BICYCLE PLAN 2020 UPDATE

A MESSAGE

When the City embarked on this update of the 2015 Bike Plan in 2019, it could not have foreseen the events of 2020 and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused the City to direct a large part of its resources towards addressing the public's immediate needs. This led to an extension in the time it took to complete the update.

From the experiences of 2020, it became even more apparent that among peoples' critical needs is access to safe, affordable transportation, including the use of bicycles. In fact, bicycle use throughout the US increased markedly during the year, as people discovered or rediscovered its benefits for health,

affordability, and convenience. The significant value of bicycle transportation highlighted the importance of completing the Bike Plan Update work underway. We were fortunate to have engaged with many stakeholders and received feedback for the Plan before March of 2020. However, COVID-19 required that we shift engagement from primarily in-person to primarily virtual. During this pivot, efforts were made to ensure feedback was representative of the diverse Cambridge community. It is important to note that this plan is intended as a framework and roadmap, and the work we are doing will be ongoing. As the work was substantially completed during 2019-2020, the Plan will be referred to as the '2020 Update'.



Despite the pandemic, bicycling activity remained high in Cambridge and riding increased, including on Memorial Drive when it is closed to motor vehicle traffic.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2020 UPDATE

You will see in this 2020 Update:

- + **Spotlights on members of our community:** this plan is for the people who live, work, and visit here and we want to keep them front and center.
- + **The principle of achieving a bikeable city for people of “all ages and abilities” has been expanded to include the term “identities.”** This expanded definition recognizes that many factors beyond age and physical ability influence how people experience bicycling.
- + **A heightened focus on equity and inclusiveness.** While these are values that were present in the development of the 2015 Plan, the 2020 Plan more explicitly highlights how those principles inform our work and what we can do to enhance those efforts.
- + **Descriptions of City policies and ordinances adopted since 2015, including: Vision Zero; Complete Streets; and the Cycling Safety Ordinance.**
- + **Updated information throughout, including highlights of our expanded Safe Routes to Schools program and new programming for older adults.**
- + **An updated map of the Network Vision, along with information on new tools and procedures for implementation, particularly as they related to the Cycling Safety Ordinance.**
- + **Information on “Quick-Build” tools, which have become very important in expanding the pace of facility implementation.**
- + **Updates on our Action Items, including the successful completion of over 80% of the action items identified in the 2015 Plan.**
- + **Updates on the ever-expanding and successful Bluebikes bike share program.**



Bicyclist riding with two children.

NB: COVID-19 safety protocols were followed in all work undertaken as part of this Plan Update after the beginning of the pandemic. Note that the Plan Update includes photographs of engagement and outreach activities that were taken prior to the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ADAPTING AND RESPONDING TO PANDEMIC CIRCUMSTANCES

This Plan is intended to be long-lasting, and we are optimistic that in the future we will not be living under the constrained conditions of a pandemic, which reduced our ability to engage with the community in-person. The events of 2020 required some creative thinking, and innovative efforts were implemented to support the community’s ability to be outside safely. This included more room for outdoor restaurant dining to support small businesses and piloting “shared streets” to promote physical activity. We expanded outdoor “tabling” events to be able to reach people where they were and provide opportunities for input with appropriate safety protocols in place.

The following images highlight some of the ways the City and the members of the community adapted to the unprecedented challenges of 2020 to build a better and more resilient plan, environment, and culture for bicycling.

REPURPOSING STREET SPACE FOR OUTDOOR DINING



Inman Square, Summer 2020

SHARED STREETS FOR PHYSICAL DISTANCING



Bicyclist riding on shared street.

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENT FOLLOWING HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOLS



Members of the outreach team spoke with people at Starlight in Central Square to get feedback on their thoughts about bicycling in Cambridge.

OUTDOOR "ADVERTISING" TO REACH THE COMMUNITY



Sign about the Cambridge Bike Plan Update.

About 70 signs were placed throughout the city to let people know about opportunities to engage in the Bicycle Plan Update efforts.

BLUEBIKES

The Bluebikes bike share system was not only in continuous service throughout 2020 but also provided enhanced support to ensure that people had access to safe, reliable transportation. In addition to the ongoing income eligible program, supplemental resources provided key sectors with support.

During the summer of 2020, free memberships were offered to those on the front lines of the fight against the pandemic through our Hospital Workers program, which helped 1130 riders to take over 20,000 trips, with 15 hospitals participating. Free memberships were also offered to essential workers in grocery, pharmacy, retail and restaurant sectors. The Essential Workers program helped 305 members take over 6000 trips through the end of 2020. See Chapter 8 for more details about Bluebikes.



Person riding a Bluebike.



Nurse biking with child.

I'm a nurse practitioner who lives in Cambridge and works at MGH. Before COVID, I was very reliant on public transportation. But since March 2020, I've dusted off my bike and gotten back onto the road. It's been a beautiful and invigorating way to start and end my day- especially after some rough days at the hospital during the peak of COVID. My young children have also gotten in on the excitement- they love riding on the back of mom's bike even if it's just a loop around the block or a trip down the bike path.

- Tiffany Clapp, North Cambridge

GRASS ROOTS ENERGY

Cambridge Bike Give Back is a grass roots organization started during the COVID-19 pandemic in response to needs the founders saw in the community for affordable and safe transportation. They collect old bikes, fix them up and donate them to those in need.

Cambridge Bicycle Safety, a local advocacy organization, organized Volunteer Emergency Delivery Service during the COVID-19 pandemic. They offered seniors, parents of small children who could not get out to stores, and other vulnerable residents help picking up store orders by bike from local businesses that support “curbside pick-up” and “contactless” ordering.



Co-founder of Cambridge Bike Give Back, Lonnell Wells, familiarizing a recipient with his new bicycle.

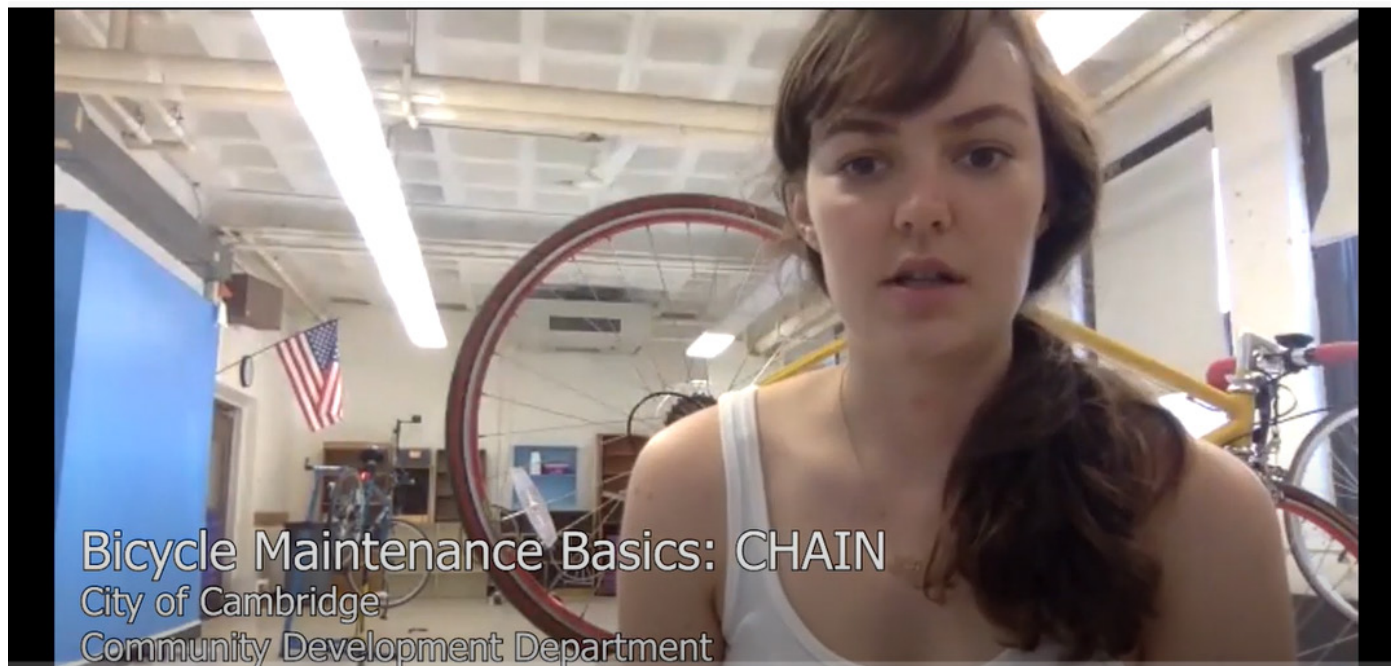


Bicyclist from Cambridge Bicycle Safety making a delivery during COVID-19 pandemic.

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

The Safe Routes to School trainings normally held in-person – in classrooms and outside– were done online this year. A special series of virtual workshops focused on urban cycling for older adults was held

in the fall of 2020. See Chapter 6 on Programs for further details on these and more; virtual programming is available on line.



Adi Philson (Community Development Department) provides bicycle maintenance tips in this free online series.