More than Bike Lanes

From Bike Equity to Bike Justice in Greater Boston

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Executive Summary
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For whom are our streets designed? Does design alone inform how we use our transportation networks or do other factors play significant roles in shaping how we move through our communities?

These questions surfaced and resurfaced throughout our research as we interviewed community members and bike advocates, reviewed existing literature, and analyzed data regarding the challenges for biking among people of color and low-income individuals in Boston, Massachusetts.

Advocacy organizations, such as the Boston Cyclists Union (BCU) play a critical role in addressing the gaps in access to biking. Regardless, major barriers persist when it comes to providing all Boston area residents with the opportunity to bike safely and enjoyably.

To this end, BCU tasked us, a team of graduate students in Tufts University’s Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy program, to identify the barriers to biking for low-income people and people of color in Boston, and, in turn, propose ways BCU can tackle these challenges through programming and advocacy work. We framed our research using three questions:

1. What are the structural, institutional, cultural, and personal barriers that people of color and low-income people face when it comes to biking overall and, more specifically, in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan? Why aren’t people in these Boston communities considering biking as a mode of transportation?
2. To what extent is biking important to these communities? What is being done to serve and support these communities in regards to bike equity?
3. How can BCU build on their current programming and
outreach to commit to bicycle justice in Boston? How can BCU, with community partners, and the City of Boston, help support communities in regards to transportation needs overall?

Throughout this report, our team approached these questions using a mixture of methods. We chiefly employed open-ended interviews with bike advocates, community members, and professionals in Boston and a number of other cities across the country.

At the foundation of our research was two nuanced approaches to bike advocacy: bike equity and bike justice. Whereas bike equity focuses on a “if you build, they will come” strategy wherein providing equal access to biking infrastructure is the goal, bike justice, we argue, is informed by an intersectional understanding of how identity, people, and places influence who gets to travel safely and where. We apply this bike equity and bike justice duality throughout our analysis in order to identify justice-oriented issues and practices that better address challenges at their root. For the purposes of this report, we do not see bike equity as incompatible with bike justice. Both are founded on the premise that biking can be a powerful vehicle for social change. We believe, however, that bike justice goes deeper than bike equity and is capable of enacting more transformative change.

We identified four key barriers to biking for low-income and people of color populations in the Boston area: infrastructure, cost & awareness, safety, and sociocultural factors. There was widespread consensus that the built environment remains a formidable challenge when it comes to getting more people biking. However, we found that ubiquitous sociocultural factors, such as a feeling
that people of color and low-income people are not represented in biking culture in Boston, pose as much as a challenge as infrastructure because they speak to powerful perceptions of who should or should not be biking.

Although many of these barriers were specific to Boston, we found that they were common throughout cities in the United States. We learned how advocacy organizations and government programs are addressing bike equity and bike justice by interviewing practitioners in five metropolitan areas. Through our case studies, we identified several organizations and programs such as the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, Bike Easy, Nice Ride, and The Street Trust that have made progress toward bike justice in their communities.

To apply some of these emerging practices here in Boston, we developed three recommendations for BCU’s staff, board, and members.

**Recommendations:**
- Commit to bike justice as an organization
- Build partnerships for change
- Advocate for bike justice

We see these three steps as a path forward as the organization moves toward a bike justice framework in order to address the unique biking needs of people of color and low-income people in Boston.
Introduction
Introduction

The Boston Cyclists Union (BCU or the Cyclists Union) was founded in 2010 to “promote the everyday use of bicycles by advocating for safe, convenient, and enjoyable cycling facilities in all of Boston’s neighborhoods” (“Mission, Vision, and Values” 2019). A member-based organization, the Cyclists Union builds a community around cycling by organizing group rides and programs, such as their annual Biketoberfest event, which encourages civic engagement in local and state elections. The 1,300-strong membership base is largely concentrated in Jamaica Plain, Cambridge, and Somerville, three higher-income communities in Greater Boston.

BCU is a predominantly White organization both in terms of its membership and its staff, but their office and community mechanic shop are located in Roxbury, a lower income community of color in Boston. This racial contrast between BCU and the surrounding community has encouraged its staff to think about how its advocacy and programming fit into race and class dynamics. To this end, the organization is currently undergoing a strategic planning process centered on offering additional programming to reflect their commitment to meaningful engagement with communities of color in Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan.

In January 2019 BCU asked us, a team of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning graduate students, to research why low-income individuals and people of color in Roxbury,
Dorchester, and Mattapan, which we will refer to as the target communities, bike at relatively low rates compared to other Boston neighborhoods. The Cyclists Union also asked us to develop recommendations for how they could work to break down the barriers we identify to cultivate interest in biking in the target communities.

We should note here that while our analysis focuses on the target communities mentioned above, Roxbury serves as a focal point since BCU’s office is located there. We are focusing on these target communities in terms of the people who reside in these neighborhoods, we recognize that these residents have experiences biking to other areas of Greater Boston. As is mentioned later on in our Barrier section, some of our interviewees identified Fenway and Jamaica Plain (JP) as two neighborhoods that they perceive typify White neighborhoods with better bike infrastructure.

Roxbury’s share of people of color and low-income people is higher than Boston as a whole or Fenway and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income, Race, and Commuting Demographics of Greater Boston Neighborhoods of Interest</th>
<th>Boston (Citywide)</th>
<th>Roxbury</th>
<th>Dorchester</th>
<th>Mattapan</th>
<th>Fenway</th>
<th>Jamaica Plain (JP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Income</td>
<td>$62,021</td>
<td>$27,721</td>
<td>$49,662</td>
<td>$48,197</td>
<td>$39,550</td>
<td>$84,446</td>
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<tr>
<td>% Black</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>51.5%</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Hispanic</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>23.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% White</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>55.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commute Method</td>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subway</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
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<td>21.5%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walk</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bike</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Bikers as Percent of Total</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>.53%</td>
<td>.84%</td>
<td>.2%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>3.1%*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Boston Planning & Redevelopment Agency, 2019; Boston Bike Counts, 2017
Note:* This average does not include the percentage of bikers on the Southwest Corridor Trail as the inclusion would not be an accurate representation of bikers on the street as a whole.

Figure 2: Demographics and Commuting in Select Boston Neighborhoods
Created by Allie Wainer
Jamaica Plain in particular. While the percentage of residents who drive to work is similar in Roxbury, JP, and Boston citywide, the breakdown of how the remaining 60% gets to work differs significantly. While in Roxbury, 10% of residents take the subway to work and 30% commute by bus, the reverse is true in JP. On average, rates of biking in JP are four times higher than in Roxbury, and these differences increase when compared with Mattapan and Dorchester.

After conducting a literature review of the barriers to biking for low-income people and people of color, both in Boston and nationally, we recognized the need for a framework to classify the barriers we found, along with current bike organizations, and potential solutions. To lay out our framework, we must first define how we understand the bedrock concepts of bike equity and bike justice. Bike equity centers around building equal access to connected bike infrastructure across a city which includes bike lanes, bike share systems, and bike storage. Bike justice aims to empower individuals and communities to correct and connect the systems that limit them from biking by placing biking in the broader context of the overall transportation system, including intersecting issues such as sociocultural values, public health, and housing.

We do not see these concepts as a binary but instead as two related stages in bike advocacy. Bike equity focuses primarily on equal access to infrastructure, and our literature review and initial stakeholder interviews revealed that poor bike infrastructure is only one of many barriers in the target communities. Thus, bike equity alone cannot succeed in addressing the gap in bike ridership between low-income, people of color and privileged communities. This is where bike justice comes in as it speaks to the root causes of barriers to biking, which go far beyond bike lanes alone.

Throughout our case studies, in particular, we found that many biking organizations and programs have adopted a bike equity approach, but fewer are practicing bike justice. Based on its current programming and advocacy that emphasizes expanding access to bike infrastructure, we have identified BCU as primarily a bike equity organization.

Throughout our report, we apply this bike equity and bike justice framework and often use the following icons to signify their interrelatedness and the degree to which certain organizations or programming employ bike equity.

Figure 3: Bike organizations fall somewhere on the spectrum from bike equity to bike justice depending on membership base, their programming, mission statement, etc.

Image credit: Andrew McFarland
alone or bike equity and bike justice together.

As we mentioned above, we started this project by researching the barriers to biking for low-income people and people of color nationally through a literature review, and locally, through stakeholder interviews. We then researched and spoke with staff members at bike and transportation organizations across the country to determine where their organizational missions and programs fall on the spectrum from bike equity to bike justice. Specifically, we wanted to understand how BCU could incorporate more justice-oriented programs into their work. The last section of this report builds off the first two sections by outlining recommendations for BCU to increase bike ridership in their target communities by breaking down the barriers we identified in a way that embraces bike justice.

This report is anchored in the belief that in order for BCU to address the barriers to biking in the target communities it must move toward a bike justice framework. We recognize that bike justice is more complex than bike equity, but in this complexity lies the opportunity to work with community members on the issues that discourage them from biking.

**Methodology**

We conducted our research by asking the following three questions:

1. What are the structural, institutional, cultural, and personal barriers that people of color and low-income people face when it comes to biking overall and, more specifically, in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan? Why aren’t people in these Boston communities considering biking as a mode of transportation?
2. To what extent is biking important to these communities? What is being done to serve and support these communities in regards to bike equity?
3. How can BCU build on their current programming and outreach to commit to bicycle justice in Boston? How can BCU, with community partners, and the City of Boston, help support communities in regards to transportation needs overall?

To answer these questions we used a mixed-method approach which consisted of: a literature review of the barriers to biking, interviews with local transportation and equity advocates, group interviews with Boston residents who do and do not bike currently, and city case studies.

We pulled out the barriers to biking from our literature review and interviews with six local advocates working on transportation equity initiatives in Boston. The literature spoke to general trends across the country and the local advocates provided concrete examples of programs, campaigns, and active initiatives being implemented in Boston to increase bike ridership.

Bikes Not Bombs is an international solidarity organization based in JP that runs educational, empowerment programs around biking and bike repair. The group interview convened in partnership with Bikes Not Bombs provided insights into the personal experiences lived by four Boston
male teenagers who bike. Two of the four participants spoke another language in addition to English and all four identified as non-White. One participant lives on the border of Dorchester and Mattapan, two live in Dorchester, and one lives in Jamaica Plain.

The research team held two group interviews in partnership with Union Capital Boston (UCB), a civic engagement group committed to volunteering, dialogue, and resource sharing. One group interview was held at the Jackson Square Networking Night in the UCB office and the other was at the Freedom House in the Grove Hall area. Between the two group interviews, we spoke with nine members of UCB (some members participated in both group interviews). Seven of the nine participants were women; all identified as Black, and one identified as Black and Native American. The median age of the participants was 59, and seven of the nine participants were over the age of 50.

We explored the following cities as case studies due to their geographic diversity and demographic or population variables compared to Boston: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, New Orleans, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Portland, and Philadelphia. Preliminary research revealed that these cities were at the vanguard of bike equity and bike justice. Five interviews were conducted with an advocate each in Atlanta, Baltimore, New Orleans, Minneapolis, and Portland. Successful programs and policies were identified from these cities and classified according to the main components of bike equity and bike justice.

We quantitatively investigated one of the themes that came out of our interviews using GIS. Specifically, we looked at the spatial correlation between gun violence and bike ridership.
Barriers to Biking
Barriers to Biking

To identify the major barriers to biking among low-income people and people of color in Boston and across urban communities in the United States, we reviewed existing academic and grey literature, talked with leaders in the Boston bike community, and conducted group interviews with local community members who do and do not bike currently. Based on our research, we sorted the barriers into four categories: infrastructure, cost and awareness, safety, and sociocultural factors.

Barriers that fall under infrastructure include elements of the physical infrastructure itself, planning processes and decision-making, and the perceived relationship between bike infrastructure and gentrification. Cost and awareness barriers include financial and knowledge gap barriers to biking, including barriers to joining bike share systems. Safety barriers address the causes and implications of feeling unsafe while biking, bike theft, police discrimination against bikers of color, and the cultural implications of promoting helmets. Sociocultural barriers consider how social and cultural norms interact with biking and how when perpetuated, sociocultural stereotypes are significant factors that keep people from biking.

These barriers follow the spectrum from bike equity to bike justice. Infrastructure and cost barriers fall on the equity side of the spectrum, as these barriers are often approached with solutions that aim to make the same infrastructure and opportunities available to all.
residents and are very specific to biking. Awareness and safety barriers fall somewhere in between bike equity and justice. These barriers are somewhat interlinked with other modes of transportation, for example pedestrian and bike safety are closely related, while at the same time, some of them focus specifically on biking such as knowing how to ride a bike. Finally, sociocultural barriers fall on the bike justice end of the spectrum seeing as they are rooted in societal and cultural differences between communities, and thus cannot be met with a one size fits all approach that bike equity embraces. Addressing these barriers, also forces bike advocates to think about issues that intersect with biking starting with race and class.

**Infrastructure**

**Literature**

Some of the most visible and understandable barriers to biking are those involving infrastructure, including bike lanes, bike parking and storage, and bike share systems. Many organizations and individuals advocate for better bike infrastructure where it is lacking, oftentimes in under-invested communities, which ultimately contributes to a more equitable bike network, but not necessarily a more just transportation system.

Recently, researchers investigated the differences in opinions about bike infrastructure among ethnic and racial groups in Roxbury. The researchers
found that a significantly smaller percentage of Black respondents thought sharrows, painted symbols to indicate that bikers are sharing the lane with cars, and protected bike lanes would increase the desirability and safety of biking, compared with White respondents. Additionally, half of the Hispanic respondents believed that bikes do not belong on the road compared to only one-fifth of White respondents. The researchers concluded that investment in bike infrastructure in low-income communities should prioritize wide protected bike lanes which allow bikers to ride together, a preference expressed by Black respondents, and that bike parking should be included in new affordable housing units (Lusk et al. 2017).

A bike justice approach provides a more nuanced appreciation for infrastructure that goes beyond just evaluating where bike lanes, biking parking, and bike share docks should be located. Understanding community members’ opinions of bike infrastructure and how it fits in with their overall transportation needs is crucial to developing policies that further these needs (Bratman and Jadhav 2016). To think about bike justice in an infrastructure context, one must consider who makes decisions about what gets built and where. Thinking about the process behind who gets to define and decide bike infrastructure’s creation is arguably more important than the infrastructure itself.

The disparity in bike storage and parking is one example of the difference in bike infrastructure between wealthier and low-income neighborhoods. Saviskas and Sohn (2015) found that bike storage is a major barrier for low income cyclists as they do not have enough room to store bikes in their apartments.

One reason for this stark difference is that wealthier communities direct more resources to and have more political support for bike infrastructure. Infrastructure improvements are inherently political and tend to reflect those who have the resources to influence the improvement of their roads and their built environment (Hoffman 2016). Furthermore, wealthier communities and bike advocates with connections to city government often ignore or are unaware of the interests of people of color and low-income riders.

Research indicates that city governments typically prioritize a White audience when pushing for bike access and infrastructure, which contributes to a perception that cycling infrastructure serves as an economic development tool to attract young, affluent, mostly White residents to a neighborhood (Lubitow, Rochester, and Zinschlag 2016).
Literature focusing on biking’s close association with gentrification has found that marginalized communities and neighborhoods—those with majority minority populations or a high density of low-income households—are unlikely to attract as much cycling infrastructure investment without the presence of privileged populations, predominantly White and middle to upper class individuals, even when taking into consideration a neighborhood’s proximity to the downtown area and its population density (Flanagan, Lachapelle, and El-Geneidy 2016). Thus, perceptions of infrastructure discourage communities of color from advocating for bike improvements due to the possibility it will increase gentrification.

**On the Streets of Boston**

Our interviews with local advocates and youth who bike in Boston illustrated the challenges stemming from the infrastructure inequities identified in the literature. According to Michelle Cook, founder of biking group Roxbury Rides, painted bike lanes without vertical separation (grade separation, flex-posts, etc.) do not make people biking in Roxbury feel safe. She described how she frequently sees motorists drive and park in these painted lanes. In the wintertime, bike facilities are not properly maintained or shoveled, and year-round, nearby multi-use paths, like those in Franklin Park, are not well lit at night.

Cook is acutely aware of the infrastructure gaps in Roxbury where there are many instances of bike lanes that last for two blocks and then stop. Much of the neighborhood’s bike infrastructure is limited to sharrows, painted bike symbols that do not specify where on the road bikers should travel to be safe from passing vehicles. The lack of connections in Roxbury’s bike network is also a major issue for people to bike between transit hubs, businesses, and homes. The Southwest Corridor Trail is a multi-use path that runs alongside the Orange Line, bordering Roxbury. Yet the trail is difficult to access due to the high volumes of speeding vehicles traveling along Columbus Avenue. When Cook connects to the Southwest Corridor near Jackson Square, she typically walks her bike on the sidewalk to avoid the hostile traffic (see Figure 5).

With few protected bike lanes available to them and sidewalks off limits to bikers, teenagers who live in Dorchester and work for Bikes Not Bombs, an organization based in Jamaica Plain that uses bikes as a vehicle for social change, described being frustrated with existing infrastructure in their neighborhoods. There are plenty of local destinations they want to bike to, but there are not enough bike facilities to get them there safely.

Several of the teenagers expressed wanting a place of their own to do BMX biking, similar to skate parks available to skateboarders. Instead, they ride in parking garages and often travel far outside of their neighborhood to access safe bike facilities in Cambridge or along the Minuteman Trail in Lexington (more than 15 miles from Dorchester). The need for safe bike infrastructure was particularly important to these teenagers because they do not have...
drivers’ licenses and the public transportation available to them is unreliable.

**Bike Storage in Boston**

According to our interviews, the lack of secure bike storage and parking in the target communities is a major concern for local bikers. Cook pointed out that most people in Roxbury live in three-family homes where there is typically no secure place to store bikes (carrying bikes up narrow flights of stairs is impractical and difficult). One of the Bikes Not Bombs youth mechanics recounted a story where he left his bike on the porch of his multi-family home and it was stolen within five minutes. All of the other youth mechanics shared similar stories of having their personal bikes stolen from their homes and backyards.

Bike racks are often not available in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, and perceptions of where one is safe greatly contribute to fears of bike theft. One youth mechanic described how whenever he bikes to the McDonalds near his home in Dorchester he feels on-guard and checks nearly every minute to ensure his bike is still safely locked up to a traffic sign outside. This contrasts greatly with his experience biking in downtown Boston where he does not always lock up his bike before going into a store.

None of the youth mechanics have access to secure bike parking at their schools, and this lack of infrastructure is the main reason they do not bike to school. Most of the youth expressed interest in biking to school if there was a bike cage in which to lock their bike. Within our target communities, the only publicly available bike cage is located at the Dudley Square MBTA bus station in Roxbury.
“The Black community hears the words neighborhood and change and has a visceral response because of how urban renewal destroyed their communities.”

Angela Johnson Rodriguez, Transportation for Massachusetts & BCU Vice Board Chair

People of Color’s (POC) Voices are not Heard

There is a deep-seated and justified fear of change in low-income communities of color in Boston. Angela Johnson Rodriguez, Transportation Justice Organizer at Transportation for Massachusetts and Vice Board Chair of the BCU Board, captures this fear well: “the Black community hears the words neighborhood and change [in reference to bike lanes] and has a visceral response because of how urban renewal destroyed their communities.” These anxieties manifested themselves during our group interviews, as well, where conversations about biking quickly turned to a sense of betrayal and mistrust stemming from past transportation projects. For instance, several seniors we interviewed brought up the removal of the Orange Line from Dudley Square in the 1980’s as an example of why they are weary of transportation planning.

Today, changing neighborhoods harken back to earlier processes.

Figure 7: The Neponset River Greenway is a multi-use path servicing Mattapan and Dorchester, but there are few adjacent bike facilities connecting community members to it.

Image credit: LivableStreets
such as urban renewal, where homes and businesses were demolished regardless of community resistance. According to Cook, a long-time Roxbury resident, whenever her Black neighbors see infrastructure changing “they immediately think gentrification.” The perception that transportation improvements are not sincerely intended for the people who currently live in historically underserved neighborhoods like Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan plays a major force in planning conversations.

Tamika Francis, Community Engagement Manager for the Boston Alliance for Community Health and longtime BCU partner, is confident that Latino men have one of the highest rates of bike commuting in the city. However this group of residents are rarely involved in planning processes or represented by bike advocates. Vivian Ortiz, a coordinator for Safe Routes to School and Mattapan Food and Fitness, has observed first-hand how infrastructure decisions are made without soliciting the opinions of her neighbors in Mattapan, a predominantly African American and Afro-Caribbean community. According to Ortiz, the planning process to create the Neponset River Greenway, a multi-use path traveling along Boston’s southern border with the Town of Milton, did not include her neighbors or address their needs. Although the greenway was purported to be for the benefit of the residents, simply providing the infrastructure was not enough to ensure the project’s success.

While multiple stakeholders firmly believe that building bike infrastructure in areas where it is lacking will help all riders, including those in low-income areas, they also acknowledge the fear and resentment that change triggers in the communities where this infrastructure is needed most. Thus, the infrastructure barrier to biking goes beyond the built environment and speaks to the ways in which bike planning can be symbolic of gentrification processes meant to attract more White and wealthy populations.

Cost & Awareness

Literature

The financial cost of biking is complex and multifaceted as evidence suggests biking can be both prohibitively expensive and an affordable, accessible form of transportation. In Berkeley, California researchers found that people start to purchase bike share memberships when their annual income reaches $50,000 revealing that low-income individuals have less purchasing power for bike share memberships (Saviskas and Sohn 2015). The Community Cycling Center in Portland, Oregon found that while most of the low-income people and people of color they interviewed do ride a bike, 60% cited that the cost of purchasing and maintaining a bike was a major barrier (“Understanding Barriers to Bicycling Project Final Report” 2012).

Other studies indicate that financial constraints are a major reason why people of color and low-income people choose to bike in the first place. Statistically, low-income people (defined in this study as individuals
making less than $24,000 per year) and Latinos in the US bike at higher rates compared to the average American, yet, the places where they live have inferior access to bike facilities, infrastructure, and storage (Hoffman 2016). This finding was corroborated in another study which found that people making less than $25,000 per year walk and bike to work at a higher rate than any other income group (Zimmerman et al. 2015). Lugo’s ethnographic research in Los Angeles supports these findings. The low-income people and people of color she interviews bike because they do not have the financial ability to get around by any other means (Lugo 2018).

While financial means can act as a driver or barrier to biking, there is fairly wide consensus in the literature that there is a lack of awareness in communities of color and low-income communities about biking. Much of the academic literature focuses on the lack of awareness about bike share systems, a relatively new development in biking. About half of non-White respondents in a study about bike sharing in Berkeley had not heard of the system (Saviskas and Sohn 2015). A third of low-income people of color who responded to a survey about using bike share in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn cited lack of knowledge of how to use bike share as a major barrier (McNeil, Broach, and Dill 2018).

**Who learns how to ride?**

The Bikes Not Bombs youth mechanics agreed that everyone they grew up with learned how to ride a bike. Almost all of the participants in our group interviews at Union Capital Boston learned how to ride a bike, though few to none currently rode one. Michelle Cook, on the other hand, in her work on Roxbury Rides, has found that there are many kids who do not learn how to ride a bike in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan because these neighborhoods lack safe spaces for this learning to happen. It is assumed by many advocates that people know how to ride a bike, yet it is clear that this remains a barrier for some. As the rest of this section will explore, the lack of awareness about biking goes beyond how to ride a bike, thus even if many people in the target communities once learned how to ride a bike, there are other awareness gaps that serve as major barriers.

**Lack of Awareness in Boston**

Bike organizations in Boston are working to increase awareness of biking; however, evidence from our interviews with advocates and youth who bike indicates that significant barriers persist when it comes to understanding biking’s potential in low-income communities and communities of color in Boston.

According to Cook, many of her neighbors are unaware of where they can affordably purchase a bike. Beyond access to a bike, Cook identified the general lack of awareness around bike-related terms including a road diet, sharrows and parking-protected bike lanes as a barrier. Cook noted that a lack of understanding may keep people from biking on the streets in Roxbury or getting involved in planning processes. To address this barrier, Cook has created and shared a glossary of bike-related vocabulary.
with five to six word definitions. Ortiz stressed the importance of sharing bike terms with other people because there is a reason for each measure, and they can, and do, save lives.

The Bikes Not Bombs youth mechanics we interviewed brought to our attention the lack of awareness of youth recreational and BMX biking in Boston. When they bike together on the street, many assume that they are engaging in reckless behavior. The youth we talked to want others to know that they are riding their bikes to escape violence, not to incite it. One young man we spoke with mentioned that it was important for him to promote bikers who do tricks and let other young people know that this biking community is a welcoming space.

Reframing Financial Barriers to Biking in Boston

We have seen several financial barriers to biking laid out in the literature, and Michelle Cook, who organizes Roxbury Rides, pointed out potential financial barriers to biking for residents of Roxbury. First off, buying a bike is a large upfront cost, whereas taking public transit requires a small fee for each use. The upfront cost is an issue for people who are forced to think about making their monthly rent payments and buying enough food to feed their families each time they spend money.

Cook raised the common stereotype that biking is associated with poverty – it is seen as last-resort means to getting around. Instead, she proposed, one can view biking as a way to save money on transportation costs, especially compared to owning a car – allowing people in the community to spend more money on other necessities.
Interestingly, the cost of biking did not come up as a barrier in our group interviews with Boston residents (predominantly in Dorchester and Roxbury) who do not currently bike. Safety and physical ability were much bigger issues for this group.

**Barriers to the Blue Bikes System**

Blue Bikes has stations in low-income areas and communities of color in Boston, and offers a discounted rate to low-income Boston residents. Our stakeholders recognized that Blue Bikes coverage is improving, but is still largely inaccessible in their communities. Residents of Mattapan long advocated for greater bike share access, subsequently receiving Blue Bike stations in their neighborhood. Yet, according to Vivian Ortiz, the City of Boston and Blue Bikes are not promoting the stations to people in this neighborhood. Angela Johnson Rodriguez underlined this point, noting that people in the target neighborhoods are largely unaware of programming and discounted membership rates that Blue Bikes offers for low-income riders. Ortiz also pointed out that not all stations are in safe locations, as one of the new Mattapan stations is on a street with angle parking, which makes it difficult for drivers to notice bikers.

Although Blue Bikes has discounted membership rates available for low-income residents, Michelle Cook noted that there are still financial barriers for using the system. The discounted membership rate has risen from $5 to $50, and Cook commented that this is a steep up-front cost for many people who are thinking about the daily necessities that they must pay for. It is hard to think about this up-front cost as a daily cost, which may make it more appealing than other transportation.
Cook does not believe that the cost of Blue Bikes is the biggest barrier to biking; rather, it is the need for Blue Bike users to have $110 dollars in a bank account linked to their debit card as collateral in case they do not return a bike. Thus, even if Blue Bikes lowered the discounted membership back to an annual rate of $5, many people would not have the $110 collateral in their bank accounts to use the service.

The youth we spoke with stated that they believed that Blue Bikes were intended for tourists visiting Boston and not for long-time residents. They do not enjoy riding these bikes which is a reflection of how biking is tied to their personal identity so riding a generic, clunky bike is not enjoyable for them.

**Safety**

**Literature**

Relatively little research assesses whether cyclists of color experience a higher likelihood of being in a traffic crash compared to White cyclists. This lack of research may be due in part to the emphasis contemporary urban cycling advocates place on safe infrastructure for downtown-oriented commutes, particularly in bike-friendly cities like San Francisco and Portland, at the expense of other bike-riding populations (Stehlin 2015). Some counterexamples to this exclusive picture of cycling, the author argues, can be found in cities like Detroit, where community organizations and advocacy groups have focused their programming on skills-building, knowledge-sharing, and neighborhood-oriented routes that recognize the invisible cyclist. Invisible cyclists are often working-class, low-income individuals who utilize biking as a lifeline for commuting/working to survive but are often overlooked in conversations on bike advocacy.

Nonetheless, existing research indicates that people of color are more likely to be killed or seriously injured while traveling by other modes of transportation. A 2003 analysis of National Center for Health Statistics data conducted in Arizona found that American Indian, Hispanic, and African American populations were generally more likely to be in a traffic crash while either driving or walking (Campos-Outcalt et al. 2002).

An additional national study conducted in 2002 found that across the United States, African Americans were the most likely to die or be seriously injured in a traffic crash compared to any other racial group (Daniels et al, 2002). The authors cite...
causes similar to those listed above. Notably, higher rates of pedestrian fatalities among people of color accounted for higher traffic fatalities overall.

For many who do ride, particularly African Americans, there is also a fear of discriminatory treatment from police while biking. Although this phenomenon is not specific to biking, prejudice from law enforcement is present in biking as well (Hoffman 2016).

As more American cities have embraced biking in the last two decades, public concerns related to bike safety, particularly bike helmet usage have increased. The bicycle helmet alone has come to represent bike safety, and many American cities and states have passed mandatory bike helmet laws despite inconclusive evidence connecting helmet usage with overall bicycle safety (Culver 2018).

The need for helmets and strong moralizing tone of helmet wearing decreases bike ridership amongst certain populations (Culver 2018).

This framing presents biking as a dangerous and violent activity particularly in communities where there is little infrastructure to promote safe biking. Wearing helmets and other gear associated with biking, such as form-fitting spandex pants, might also discourage certain immigrant communities from biking such as Muslim communities who wear more modest clothing for religious reasons (Steinbach et al. 2011). These barriers point to the need for more substantive interventions that engage more directly with people’s perceptions of biking (Bratman and Jadhav 2016).

How a city agency promotes the necessity (or lack thereof) of a bike helmet affects the perception of biking that places a preference for the views of certain people over others, which inherently creates an exclusive attitude (Culver 2018). According to a qualitative survey, Boston is an example of a city that has shifted from a more exclusive stance on helmet usage to a more inclusive one in the last several years. For example, a 2017 city website overhaul included prominent images of women of color biking while wearing hijab – and not a bike helmet (Culver 2018).

“'In Roxbury and Dorchester, you ride at your own risk. People in cars don’t have a lot of respect for the people on bikes.'”

Union Capital Boston Participant

Who Does Not Bike

Safety on Boston Roads

For many riders in Boston, particularly in the target neighborhoods, the lack of adequate bike infrastructure contributes greatly to perceptions and feelings of safety on the streets. Michelle Cook mentioned that there is a fear of biking in Roxbury and has described the experience as horrifying. Vivian Ortiz noted that the streets in Roxbury are essentially a “free for all”, leading to a depressed
“I don’t understand why you have to wait for someone to die before you change something. Why is that a thing? They don’t see it as a priority until someone gets hurt.”

Bikes Not Bombs Youth Mechanic

This fear of using the roads was frequently mentioned as a barrier to biking in our group interviews with Union Capital Boston. One participant noted that “In Roxbury and Dorchester, you ride at your own risk. People in cars don’t have a lot of respect for the people on bikes.” This fear is justified and reinforced by themes in the literature, where evidence illustrates that people of color are at a higher risk of being involved in traffic incidents and fatal accidents while on the road.

Due to lack of infrastructure and perceptions of roads being unsafe to bike on, those who want to bike are often forced to bike on the sidewalk. One of the youth mechanics noted in our group interview the dilemma of “running the risk of hitting a kid [biking] on the sidewalk or being on the street and possibly being hit by a car.” Biking on the sidewalk is illegal, meaning these youth are forced to choose to follow the law or risk their own lives on unmarked streets where in their own words, they are not respected.

Safety concerns are not limited to biking. Many interviewees also expressed feeling unsafe as a pedestrian in the target neighborhoods. It is important to recognize the intersectional nature of bike safety and how it fits in with broader feelings of safety. Michelle Cook cited the need for greater resources for pedestrian safety such as dedicated, well-kept paths. She believes that if bike and pedestrian advocates work together, they would be more successful in the fight for safer bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

Consequences of the lack of safe pedestrian infrastructure in the target communities were illustrated viscerally in our interviews. Vivian Ortiz noted the lack of crosswalks and protected areas for walking on roads in Roxbury when compared to other neighborhoods in Boston. In one of our group interviews with Union Capital Boston, an elderly man recalled how it took the death of a pedestrian several years ago for the city to refurbish the crosswalks on Warren St. in Roxbury. Within the past three years alone, there have been several traffic fatalities within Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan, all but one of them were pedestrians struck by a vehicle (“Vision Zero Boston” 2018). It is clear that any strategy that accounts for bike safety also needs to ensure that all forms of active transportation receive attention.

Crime and Personal Safety

Although the literature mentions it
Gun Violence Clustering and Bike Count Density

Figure 10: Gun Violence Clustering and Bike Count Data
Image credit: Miranda Briseño

Cartographer: Miranda Briseño
Coordinate System: NAD 1983 2011 StatePlane Massachusetts
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic
Data Sources: City of Boston, Analyze Boston & Census Bureau

*Local Moran’s I Spatial Analysis was used to determine clustering of instances of gun violence.
**High High Clustering refers to high instances of gun violence surrounded, geographically, by other high instances.
***Low Low clustering refers to low instances of gun violence surrounded, geographically, by other low instances.
briefly, personal safety repeatedly came up as a barrier to biking from people who live in Roxbury, Dorchester and Mattapan. Jasmine Wilson, Program and Outreach Coordinator for Bikes Not Bombs, noted that public safety is a major concern for some residents of Roxbury in particular. Additionally, Roxbury is not as safe as many other neighborhoods in Boston and crime is more present in the area. It is difficult to get more people to feel safe biking on the streets if they do not even feel safe being outside in their own neighborhoods.

The Bikes Not Bombs youth mechanics noted that the neighborhoods where they are from “revolve around violence, drugs, killings” and that it is easy to get ensnared in that lifestyle. In this manner, biking is a means to get teenagers active and away from negative influences, yet there are many other barriers related to safety that deter youth from biking.

Even at their schools, one of the youth mechanics mentioned that “if you leave your bike outside [at school], what if the seat or handlebars are missing?” Michelle Cook noted as well that bike theft is a huge risk in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan and has even seen bikes on a U-lock get taken. Bike theft goes beyond the action of locking up and storing bikes to the deeper issue of feeling on guard while leaving a bike unattended. This sense of insecurity is not typically included in discussions related to bike infrastructure.

To further analyze the lived experiences of our interview participants, we utilized data from the City of Boston including Bike Counts and crime data (see the appendix for more information on the datasets used) to visualize the correlation between gun violence and bike ridership rates. The areas of Boston shaded in red are areas with high instances of gun violence, and these areas mostly fall within the target communities. The blue areas signify low rates of gun violence — there are no blue areas in the target communities. The yellow bubbles show the Boston bike count data — the bigger the bubble, the more bikers were counted at that intersection. We can see from this map that bike counts are relatively big in the areas of Boston with low gun violence. There is one intersection at Massachusetts Avenue where many people ride their bikes, and the area is bordering the high gun violence area of Boston. Overall, the bike counts are smaller in the high gun violence areas.

While we cannot claim any causality from this analysis, the map shows that bike ridership rates are the lowest in the middle of the high crime area of Boston, which lies within the target communities. This spatial analysis supports the barriers cited by many interview participants, especially the youth mechanics who are eager to bike more but are concerned about their safety when attempting to bike in and around their neighborhoods.

Police Harassment While Biking

The contentious relationship between communities of color and law enforcement manifests itself for bikers in the Boston area. Michelle Cook noted that “black people have been stigmatized by the police in
general but when on a bike there is an assumption, especially when it is a young person, they are criminalized and assumed to be up to no good.” Michelle Cook further noted that Black men on bikes are perceived to be more dangerous since they have an added element of mobility as compared to walking or running.

The concept of “biking while Black” was further reinforced in our group interview with the Bikes Not Bombs youth mechanics. Our interviewees, all of whom were people of color, described being harassed frequently by police when they participated in group rides in the wealthier, Whiter neighborhood of Cambridge when compared to their homes in predominantly POC communities. One of the youth mechanics described a scenario where he and the group he rode with “got chased by four different police cars… and would cut you off, like a PIT maneuver [police blocking the path of bikers].” As mentioned earlier, there is a lingering assumption that people of color, particularly African Americans, are suspects by law enforcement, including those who bike.

**Sociocultural Factors**

**Literature Review**

Socio-cultural barriers to biking are some of the most nuanced amongst both low-income communities and communities of color. These barriers are multifaceted and stem from issues that intersect race, class, citizenship, and personal preference. The perception of biking in low-income communities and communities of color reveals a vastly different viewpoint than the ones held by transportation advocates, who see biking as a net benefit on the whole. Attitudes associating biking with poverty, Whiteness, and children are a few of the cultural associations held by people of color. These attitudes are often difficult to address because they are self-perpetuating within communities of color, so the reality of biking reflects these perceptions.

For many low-income households, biking is not seen as a permanent mode of getting around; instead, the ultimate goal is car ownership (Steinbach et al. 2011). Better car infrastructure and a culture in this country that emphasizes car usage above all else may explain part of the reason for this goal. Active transit, such as walking and biking, and public transportation are associated with poverty in low-income neighborhoods.

A study of Minneapolis youth of color in a low-income neighborhood corroborated our own interview findings, revealing that a bike is seen as a symbol of poverty, whereas cars are tied to greater access to resources and upward mobility to escape poverty (Hoffman 2016). Interviews in Portland revealed that African American residents associate bikes with children and gang culture (“Understanding Barriers to Bicycling Project Final Report” 2012).

There are inherent privileges that are associated with the predominantly White, male biking culture in the United States. Biking is seen in many populations outside of this one as a marker of Whiteness and people of color do not want to associate with the typical image of a slim, Lycra-fitted, helmet-wearing, White male
on a sports bike (Hoffman 2016). There are few depictions of bikers of color in the media and on the road (Steinbach et al. 2011). Biking is also strongly linked with identity, thus low-income people and people of color may not bike because they feel that it poses a threat to their identity (Steinbach et al. 2011).

Additionally, the decision to bike out of choice and not out of necessity is seen as a privilege that low-income residents do not enjoy. The privilege in being able to choose to bike when there are other options (Hoffman 2016) and the sanctimonious attitudes associated with biking alienates many potential low-income riders.

**Cultural Perceptions of Biking**

Nearly every interviewee mentioned negative connotations with biking that corroborate many of themes from the literature. Angela Johnson Rodriguez stated that “for many people in low-income communities and communities of color in Boston, biking is a marker of childhood and is left behind once one ages out of childhood.” This strong association with youth serves as a deterrent because it sets an expectation that one should access other means of transportation once one is old enough. According to Michelle Cook, Roxbury residents also associate biking with poverty; she has the sense that Roxbury residents feel as though “there must be something financially wrong with you if you have a bike.”

Although many in the target neighborhoods rely on public transit to get around, most aspire to own a car. As with many parts of the country, there is a strong and prevalent car culture in communities

![Figure 11: Many interviewees associated bike culture with White road bikers. Image credit: Max Pixel](image-url)
of color and especially for low income communities. According to Vivian Ortiz, when people make more money, they feel as if “I deserve a car and I will never walk or take the T again.” Michelle Cook echoed this sentiment and added that for many residents car ownership is equated with safety, security and convenience.

The stakeholder interviews echoed the findings in the literature that biking is not a common means of transportation for people of color. Angela Johnson Rodriguez noted that in Boston, the perception of biking is a key barrier for communities of color. Johnson Rodriguez pointed out that White men are seen as the main benefactors of biking and “these depictions of biking are internalized by many within these communities who hold the belief that biking is solely a means of transportation for White males.” This belief is reflected in the ethnic makeup of transportation advocacy circles in Boston and BCU’s predominantly white advocacy base in the more affluent neighborhoods of Boston.

Biking amongst African-Americans, in Roxbury in particular, is seen as something that White people do, noted Michelle Cook. Although many of the interviewees mentioned that they see people of color riding bikes, one of the youth mechanics from Bikes Not Bombs noted that “there’s not enough of us biking… and you would enjoy seeing more people that look like you out there.” This comment speaks to the fact that for some bikers of color, the lack of representation in this sphere is a socially isolating experience.

“[T]here’s not enough of us biking . . . and you would enjoy seeing more people that look like you out there.”

_Bikes Not Bombs Youth Mechanic_

_Biking as a Catalyst for Health and Recreation_

BCU and many transportation advocacy organizations focus on biking as a way to get around. In our interviews, many highlighted how this focus functions as a barrier of entry for many people of color and low-income people. Vivian Ortiz noted how the needs of cyclists who use their bikes to commute are prioritized over the needs of other cyclists by transportation advocates and organizations, which is not always in the best interest of the community. Johnson Rodriguez noted that health and recreation are useful alternatives to commuting as a way to frame biking in communities of color.

The youth mechanics at Bikes Not Bombs, primarily bike for recreation: “Biking is more for recreation not just traveling or going to work… kids aren’t really interested in that as much. There’s more to it [than that].” Michelle Cook stated that the goals for her organization Roxbury Rides are chiefly to get residents to begin to use biking for exercise and recreation. Cook organizes themed rides for Roxbury Rides and always “lets people know that it is a casual bike ride… and emphasize that it’s supposed to be fun,” framing biking
using health and recreation and not as a transportation mode.

Michelle’s group rides have themes that range from biking in skirts, biking with music to Prince themed bike rides on the singer’s birthday, and biking in dressy outfits to shed the stereotypical image of what a biker looks like. Cook also has campaigns around photographing people of color biking to address cultural barriers around who bikes and what bikers look like.

**Social Networks and Community Context**

Youth mechanics at Bikes Not Bombs have also found community through biking, specifically BMX biking and group “ride outs”. One of the youth mechanics mentioned how difficult it was for him to connect with others at school until he found BMX biking through which he has formed connections with like-minded peers. For all of the youth mechanics, biking is about freedom of mobility and mind, and is a means of connecting with others. Through the group rides, the youth mechanics noted that everyone is “friends [while on the group rides] whether we know each other or not.” Additionally, it was stated that at the group rides “your skin color doesn’t matter, if you show up and are riding, you are part of the movement.”

Advocates mentioned the need to ground biking in community context, as this has yet to happen in the target communities, for the most part. Utilizing members of the community as leaders and spokespeople for bike equity and bike justice was a method that Vivian Ortiz mentioned. Ortiz discussed the Talbot Neighborhood Triangle as a community engagement strategy that helped to tie in this aspect of community. The Healthy Communities Champion Program positioned biking as a pillar within a broader framework that dealt with challenges to transit access that the community identified. Francis along with Angela Johnson Rodriguez and Michelle Cook all spoke of the need to address systemic racism and being willing to grapple with the historical inequities and tensions between predominantly White spaces such as the bike advocacy sphere and communities of color. This acknowledgement and reconciliation of the legacy and impact of racism and its detrimental effects has also come up in the literature as being crucial to any progress in addressing barriers to biking.

Connecting to the layout and history of a community is one way to increase bike ridership in communities of color according to Cook. She highlighted the role that Group Tours around the city of Boston serve in providing a little known history of certain neighborhoods and landmarks, enmeshing residents in a spatial understanding of their community through biking. Street closures, open street events and street festivals are additional ways that could allow residents in Roxbury to see the recreational opportunities in biking and demonstrate positive effects more biking can have on the community. For our interviewees, it is evident that framing biking in community and social networks is key to overcoming many of the sociocultural barriers to biking.
Case Studies
Case Studies

We chose to conduct case studies of prominent bike programs across the country to better understand how bike organizations were grappling with issues of equity and justice. As this process was done in tandem with our literature review and Boston advocate interviews, we started to realize that bike equity and bike justice were defined differently by different organizations and took different forms in practice as a result. We found this piece of information valuable for the Cyclists Union in understanding where the organization’s advocacy and programming fall on the bike equity to justice spectrum. With this information the Cyclists Union can determine what steps need to be taken to move closer to bike justice.

The case studies follow the spectrum of bike equity to bike justice based on our definitions of bike equity and justice previously described in the report. Furthermore we made a code book, seen below, that defines three themes of bike equity and three values of bike justice. These themes were informed by our interviews in the Boston area and from our case studies and also informed our typology, explained below. As a

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result we found that organizations such as Bike Easy and Philadelphia’s Indego were strictly classified as bike equity organizations. Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, the Street Trust, Major Taylor Cycling Club, Nice Ride, and Bikemore landed in the middle ground as these organizations aligned with different characteristics of bike equity and bike justice. None of the organizations highlighted strictly aligned with values of bike justice. The diversity in organizational purpose and practice is large. BCU has the opportunity to shape their programming and advocacy to align with the organization’s new strategic plan.

We created a typology to help determine where the bike organizations, and some of the programs they run, fall on the spectrum of bike equity to bike justice. It was important to include the programs that fell under

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Figure 13
Created by Makayla Comas
organizations because some programs did not hold the same characteristics as their parent organizations. For example, Bike Easy in New Orleans is an organization that aligns with the values of bike equity yet, their highlighted program holds values that encompasses bike justice. These could not be collapsed together as most programs were done in partnership with organizations outside of the parent organization or made specifically to address a community concern. In this section, charts will be displayed only for organizations, without their programs, mentioned in the case studies. See the appendix for a more comprehensive list of bike programs and organizations that are not included in this section.

**Code Book for Typology**

**Bike Programming (Bike Equity):** The presence of programs and outreach that incorporate the use, construction, or maintenance of bikes and the build out of bike share systems.

**Bike Safety and Education (Bike Equity):** Offering educational classes, workshops, and/or bike rides to make participants feel more safe when biking.

**Infrastructure and Access Advocacy (Bike Equity):** Advocacy for changes in infrastructure for bikers and/or pedestrians.

**Mobility Justice (Bike Justice):** Advocacy for improvement in transportation or increased use of transportation methods other than biking.

**Multi Issue Focus (Bike Justice):** Partnering with communities that are not primarily focused on biking.

**Community Representation (Bike Justice):** The bike organization or program is made up of and run by members of the community.

**Philadelphia**

Since the establishment of Philadelphia’s bike share program, Indego, addressing equity for marginalized communities has been the driving force for the city. In 2015, the City of Philadelphia partnered with the Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia’s Better Bike Share Partnership initiative, People for Bikes, and the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) to kickstart Indego (Better Bike Share 2019).

Better Bike Share awarded Indego a three-year grant to build an equitable bike share system. To do this, the city installed 20 stations in underserved neighborhoods, developed a cash payment option, created a discounted pass program, and implemented marketing, education and outreach programs focusing on low-income Philadelphians. Additionally, through their Bike Ambassador program, leaders from partnering organizations were trained in bike safety and spread their knowledge to the city’s residents (Goffman 2018).

**New Orleans**

Connect the Crescent is a campaign led by Bike Easy, a biking advocacy organization in New Orleans, in partnership with the City of New Orleans, AARP, American Heart Association, Louisiana Cancer
Prevention and Control, and the Big Jump (“About: Connect the Crescent” 2019). With the participation of such a wide coalition of organizations, over 200 volunteers have actively advocated for a series of walking, biking, and public transit improvements in the city.

These efforts culminated in a demonstration pilot where “quick-build” (paint markings, plastic delineators, signage, etc.) materials were implemented at major network barriers in the city to better connect adjacent neighborhoods to New Orleans’ Central Business District and French Quarter. Over a three-month period, bike ridership grew considerably at rates ranging between 20 to 84% throughout the pilot network. Speeding and traffic crashes also decreased within the intervention area (“About: Connect the Crescent” 2019).

Robert Henig Bell, a campaign manager for Bike Easy, attributed Connect the Crescent’s successes to the organization’s public engagement strategy, where door-to-door outreach and messaging proved critical. Instead of focusing solely on increasing bike ridership or improving physical infrastructure from a traffic safety standpoint,

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### Bike Easy

✓ Bike Programming  
✓ Bike Safety & Education  
✓ Infrastructure & Access Advocacy  
✓ Mobility Justice

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**Case Study Spotlight: Bike Easy**

New Orleans, Louisiana

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Figure 14: Bike Easy’s Youth Ambassador Program plays a critical role in supporting the organization’s Blue Bikes for All campaign, which aims to broaden access to New Orleans’ bikeshare system.  
*Image credit: Bike Easy*
Bike Easy’s supporters talked about the importance of connecting underserved neighborhoods and providing better access to major job centers and transit connections like the ferry to Algiers.

Emphasizing these points were critical for establishing trust with both people who do and do not bike, especially within a city that has been experiencing unprecedented gentrification and demographic change in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. A central tenet of this approach is the idea that biking is not dogmatic or identity-based. According to Bell, “part of what [Bike Easy focuses] on is the idea that our transportation identities are not fixed. We are not just bikers, drivers, etc. We espouse a general feeling of respect and deservedness for all in New Orleans.”

Beyond infrastructure-based campaigns, peer-to-peer programs play a central role in Bike Easy’s advocacy. The Youth Bicycle Ambassador Program employs young people between the ages of 10-16 years-old who work with the organization throughout the summer. Ambassadors learn about transportation planning and organizing, and then use the knowledge they’ve gained to conduct outreach and educational efforts in their communities (Bike Easy 2019). This program tackles bike equity in particular by increasing awareness of the bike share program in New Orleans and the reduced fare plan offered to eligible residents.

Baltimore

Bikemoore is an advocacy organization in Baltimore committed to increasing biking and transportation access for city residents. Bikemoore recognizes the need for an intersectional understanding of public health and transportation equity, sending the message that biking presents an opportunity to deepen community connections and improve environmental and individual health (“Baltimore Bike Advocacy Organization” 2019).

The organization primarily focuses on infrastructure policy to implement protected bike lanes, bike parking, equitable bike shares, and changes in zoning and land use regulations (“Baltimore Bike Advocacy Organization” 2019). A good example of this is their #DirectDOT campaign, which is pushing Baltimore’s Director of Transportation to prioritize and emphasize complete streets for city residents (“Baltimore Bike Advocacy Organization” 2019). In partnership with the Downtown Bicycle Network, Bikemoore has successfully advocated

“We see bike equity as adding safety, access, and affordability to everyone in New Orleans . . . We want to make sure biking is a part of keeping people in their homes. We don’t want to add to the problems. We want to be a part of the solutions.”

Robert Henig Bell, Bike Easy
for protected bike lanes throughout Downtown Baltimore. Bikemore’s Mobile Bike Shop supports bikers by offering free bike repairs. Lastly, the organization engages in civic activism by asking Baltimore residents to vote for improved transportation infrastructure in local elections (“Baltimore Bike Advocacy Organization” 2019).

Policy advocacy for complete streets in Baltimore and a Block Party for the The Big Jump are two of Bikemore’s most successful initiatives, according to their Executive Director Liz Cornish. The Big Jump “is a new path, accessible by foot, bike, and mobility devices along Druid Park Lake Drive and 28th Street” (“Baltimore Bike Advocacy Organization” 2019). The Big Jump connects East and West Baltimore, previously completely separated by the expressway which divided the areas physically alongside their divided sociodemographics. The divide between East and West Baltimore, according to Liz Cornish, is “a story of divides; a story about investment or disinvestment in communities.” The Big Jump looks to, literally and figuratively, bridge that divide. It will be piloted for a year, while academics conduct research and gather community feedback, before more permanent solutions are considered. Cronish noted that it is important to build programming and investment to combat the large disparities based on racial lines in the city of Baltimore. The Big Jump is representative of more bike justice oriented program in what is primarily a bike equity organization.

Minneapolis & St. Paul

The Twin Cities have been at the vanguard of integrating equity through their bike share program, Nice Ride, which is co-managed by Nice Ride Minnesota, a nonprofit organization, and Motivate, a private operator. The Community Partners Program, which began in 2011, provides free annual memberships to low-income students and residents identified through social service providers in Minneapolis and St. Paul. Nice Ride provides new users with free helmets, a station demonstration ride and internet access to sign up for their membership.

During the 2014 biking season, the Community Partners program worked with 16 organizations to distribute 884 Nice Ride memberships in Minneapolis and Saint Paul (Wade 2015). This program has been integral to promoting greater bike share equity since 2014 in three Twin Cities neighborhoods: North Minneapolis, East St. Paul and West St. Paul. These three communities are all comprised of over 60% people of color, and more than half of the population in North Minneapolis is below the federal poverty line (Wade 2015).

Nice Ride quickly realized that even with its success, the Community Partners Program was still lacking in providing a more justice oriented biking environment in the Twin Cities. To address these inequities, Nice Ride began the Nice Ride Neighborhood Program, approaching bike ridership with more of a bike justice framework. An interview with Anthony Taylor, a bike advocate involved in the Major Taylor Cycling Club and Slow Roll Minneapolis, revealed that the city directly approached POC activists for assistance in devising a plan to get more people riding in communities of
Case Study Spotlight: Nice Ride
Twin Cities, Minnesota

“The most crucial thing was that Nice Ride and the city took our input and they listened. Nice Ride supplied the funding and the resources but allowed those on the ground to design and implement the program.”

Anthony Taylor, Major Taylor Cycling Club and Slow Roll Minneapolis

Figure 15: The Nice Ride Neighborhood Program is a standout program that shows how city bike share can be a tool for equity. Image credit: Better Bike Partnership

Nice Ride
✔ Bike Programming
✔ Multi-Issue Focus

color in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. Taylor noted that a key facet of the Nice Ride Neighborhood Program was to “build up a value for biking in a selected group of people in the community” and have them function as advocates for their community through biking.

The program started as a pilot program that provided 145 participants the opportunity to try
biking during the summer months of 2014 (Wade 2015). Each neighborhood rider received a lock, helmet, distinct orange bicycle, and a log to track their trips (Hoffman 2016). Each rider was also required to attend at least four community events during the summer organized by Nice Ride and POC-led, bike equity organizations such as the Major Taylor Cycling Club and Slow Roll Minneapolis.

These events included group rides led by a member of Major Taylor Cycling Club and were generally organized around pre-existing community gatherings such as farmers markets and music festivals (Hoffman 2016). Taylor mentioned that all of the group rides ended with a celebration, and this emphasis on building community worked to strengthen solidarity and reciprocity within the communities by connecting various issues.

According to Taylor, having the community lead the initiative was a key first step to ensuring the success of the Nice Ride Neighborhood program. Local organizations such as Saint Paul Public Housing and NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center chose the Nice Ride Neighborhood riders (Wade 2015). This selection process empowered local organizations, localized the program, and leveraged preexisting relationships to provide buy-in for the program.

When Neighborhood participants brought their bikes back to Nice Ride staff in October, those who attended at least four events were awarded a $200 credit to purchase their own bikes from one of two bike organizations in Minneapolis: Cycles for Change and Venture North (Brandt 2015).

A study conducted by the University of Minnesota’s Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center found that the Nice Ride Neighborhood program positively impacted participants’ opinions of cycling as a mode of transportation, heightened the visibility of bike commuting in target areas, and improved riders’ knowledge about bike safety (Wade 2015). Some participants even reported an increase in physical and mental well-being. Currently, other cities are looking to the Nice Ride Neighborhood program as a model for how to increase ridership in communities of color through bike share, according to Taylor.

Anthony Taylor has also brought the Slow Roll organization and its ethos to Minneapolis with inspiration from similar organizations in Detroit and Chicago. Taylor describes Slow Roll Minneapolis as “a community reclamation project with a goal of reconnecting riders with the communities” using biking as a conduit. It has grown rapidly since the first group rides in 2015. In the summer of 2018, Slow Roll Minneapolis held 12 group rides, that featured over 2,700 riders total and 600 unique riders. Taylor estimates that the rides were 90% POC and 75% women and included people from various backgrounds in the area including African Americans, Latinos, Hmong and Somalis. He described the riders as “people who had an evolution to biking and not just people who want to convince you to bike.” The organization also has substantive connections with
Nice Ride Minnesota and provides a community and the means for Nice Ride Neighborhood participants to continue to ride.

**Portland**

Formerly the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, the Street Trust is now an organization that promotes all modes of sustainable transportation in Portland to ensure that people can get around safely and affordably without a car (“The Street Trust: Our Work” 2019). Since this shift in their mission, the organization’s staff has also turned over, according to Richa Poudyal, the current Advocacy Director.

Poudyal and her colleagues are largely transit-dependent, in addition to being diverse in race, age, and geography. Their diverse staff and broader framing of active transportation allow the Street Trust to approach their work from a mobility justice perspective. Poudyal puts it like this: “There is an unfair advantage for some people over others for bikes but access to everything is more important.”
Poudyal, as an organizer, is committed to uplifting the voices of residents who are people of color or low-income and often get left out of the planning process for infrastructure changes. She and her team build partnerships with place-based organizations that do not have a specific transportation focus, yet their members care about getting around safely and affordably. Poudyal stressed the importance of uplifting these voices: “These folks don’t have a lot of capacity to be really involved in the planning, so it feels really important to take the lead because we are a transportation-focused organization.”

Poudyal’s commitment to bike justice is also present in her legislative advocacy work. When the organization was solely a bike advocacy organization, it served as a voice for bikers for legislation that might affect biking infrastructure. Now, Poudyal prioritizes visits to the state house to support legislation that is at the intersection of transportation and other pressing issues like housing, climate change, and public health. It is one thing to recognize the intersections between transportation and other issues; it is another to show up and support policies that advance these issues.

Through the Bike More Challenge, which encourages people to ride more by logging the time they spend biking, Poudyal and her team reach informal biking groups that organize bike rides and walks around the city. The Challenge serves as a connection point between the more formal, advocacy-driven Street Trust and informal groups that focus on bringing the community together.

Poudyal, as the Advocacy Director, approaches advocacy from a bike justice perspective, yet she noted that it will take time for other aspects of the organization to reach beyond biking. The organization’s membership base remains largely White and its educational programs are centered around biking. Poudyal believes that this will change over time and crucial to making that change happen is centering their work around dismantling White supremacy, taking care of each other, and building community.

Chicago

Slow Roll Chicago is a bike advocacy organization founded in 2014 by Oboi Reed and Jamal Julien, who were inspired by a sister organization in Detroit. Slow Roll Chicago’s mission and objectives are spelled out in its
Bicycle Equity Statement of Principle, which approaches transportation advocacy by acknowledging factors such as racism, community ownership and bicycling as a human rights issue.

Oboi Reed founded his own organization in 2017 called Equiticity, which focuses on racial equity first, with a lens towards mobility and access. One of the Equiticity’s main programs is its Neighborhood Mobility Justice Tours program which brings riders into Chicago neighborhoods in a unique way. Equiticity co-sponsors these tours with various organizations that are advancing social transformation in their neighborhood. The Neighborhood Mobility Justice Tours combine elements of community outreach and engagement with local stakeholders, while also integrating economic development opportunities by patronizing minority-owned businesses (“Equiticity 2019).

Atlanta

The Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, Atlanta’s bike advocacy organization, sought to increase bike ridership and bring workforce development opportunities to the Westside, a set of neighborhoods separated from the rest of the city by highways and suffering the long-term effects of redlining and disinvestment by leveraging the community’s social networks. In 2016, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition launched Atlanta Bike Champions, a peer-to-peer program in partnership with the city’s planning department and several Westside community organizations. These community partners worked with the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition to recruit Bike Champions and spread awareness of biking opportunities including bike share (Atlanta Bike Champions 2018).

LaMiiko Moore, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s development coordinator, began her career at the Coalition first as a Bike Champion, and stressed how the program is able to reach community members through its workforce development programming. In addition to engaging community members in biking, the Bike Champions program trains Westside residents in leadership skills and bike repair and provides short-term, paid job opportunities to underemployed or unemployed individuals. Moore credits this approach as critical to getting more people involved in ABC and, like herself, eventually taking on leadership and full-time roles within

“People of color and low- to moderate-income people have the human right to fully access the complete range of mobility options, of their own free will accord, making the choice to safely and conveniently engage in cycling, walking, public transit, bike share, car share or driving.”

*Slow Roll Chicago: Bicycle Equity Statement of Principle*
the organization.

Prospective Bike Champions first undergo a 40-hour paid training program that focuses on outreach and education-based strategies for promoting biking. After the training, Bike Champions receive an event organizing toolkit and begin working 3-10 hours per week in the community (Alabanza 2017). Moore credits this peer-to-peer approach with getting more Atlantans biking and shifting how the Coalition frames bike equity as an organization, contributing to an increase in more diverse membership in recent years.

Since 2016, the program has expanded to five more neighborhoods across the city, and the Bike Champions have become a central part of the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s Shifting Gears initiative, which brings bike safety education to Atlanta’s elementary schools (“Atlanta Bike Champions” 2018). Shifting Gears prioritizes schools.

**Figure 17:** The Atlanta Bike Champions has been integral in promoting a more justice oriented framework that puts bikers of color at the forefront.

Image credit: Steve Eberhardt, Atlanta Bike Coalition

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**Case Study Spotlight:**
**Atlanta Bicycle Coalition**

Atlanta, Georgia

[Image of people biking]

Atlanta Bicycle Coalition

✔ Bike Programming
✔ Bike Safety & Education
✔ Infrastructure & Access Advocacy
✔ Mobility Justice

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**More than Bike Lanes**
“It is really important to pay people who don’t have time to be doing advocacy for free.”

LaMiiko Moore, Atlanta Bicycle Coalition

with high populations of students of color to remain committed to the organization’s equity principles.

The Coalition also organizes the annual Atlanta Streets Alive program, in which streets connecting neighborhoods to one another are opened to people and temporarily closed to car traffic. This open streets initiative is an opportunity for the Coalition to advocate for active transportation infrastructure, but the overall emphasis is on getting all community members - not just those on bikes - out into the streets to be active and enjoy their city. In a recent event, the Coalition presented to the community a shared street concept for Peachtree Street and collected feedback through a follow-up survey to gauge the project’s potential benefits to cyclists and all street users (“Save the Dates: Atlanta Streets Alive 2019” 2018).
Recommendations
Recommendations

Based on our interviews with local and national transportation advocates, and our review of existing literature, we have developed the following three-fold recommendations for BCU, which we believe will help forge a pathway toward bike justice.

1. Commit to bike justice as an organization
2. Build partnerships for change
3. Advocate for bike justice

The organization’s ongoing strategic planning process is a key opportunity to evaluate how and if their staff and members should move forward with these recommendations.

Our methodology was rooted in addressing the barriers we have identified – infrastructure, cost and awareness, safety, and sociocultural – working with BCU’s existing programming, such as Bike to Market and the Dudley Street Bike Kitchen, and applying emerging practices from our case studies within a Boston context. Each recommendation is connected to findings that came out of our analysis, and these are specified in the recommendation tables.

Figure 18: Roxbury Rides leads social rides to “encourage people of color in Roxbury, Dorchester & Mattapan to use biking as a source of transportation, exercise & fun.” Image credit: Roxbury Rides
Recommendation 1: Commit to Bike Justice as an Organization

There are over 50 associated tasks, potential outputs, and next steps, which include:

- Work with members to define BCU’s vision to move toward bike justice.
- Prioritize existing campaigns and programs that align with bike justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Tasks</th>
<th>Potential Outputs and Next Steps</th>
<th>Precedent and Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work with members to define BCU’s vision to move toward bike justice</td>
<td>Integrate definition process into ongoing strategic planning</td>
<td>Interviews with BCU stakeholders; Slow Roll Chicago’s Bicycle Equity Statement of Principle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prioritize existing campaigns and programs that align with bike justice</td>
<td>Invest more in Bike to Market and the BCU Bike Kitchen</td>
<td>Interviews with BCU stakeholders and Boston-area advocates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 19: BCU’s Bike to Market program brings bike mechanics and tools to farmers markets in Roxbury and surrounding neighborhoods. Photo Credit: Boston Cyclists Union.
Overview of Recommendation 1

BCU’s ongoing strategic planning process is an opportunity to have a dialogue about the organization’s vision for bike justice. Establishing this vision will inform future programming, partnerships, and investments, as it has for organizations in other cities. According to interviews with BCU stakeholders, several long-established programs and campaigns such as Bike to Market and the Dudley Street Bike Kitchen move beyond bike equity toward bike justice values, which BCU can bring to the table in this dialogue.

Starting a conversation with membership, and the greater community, around bike justice and centering programs that embody it is the first step in moving toward bike justice. In having this conversation, BCU should explicitly consider their role as a predominantly White organization working with communities of color. We believe moving toward bike justice is crucial for BCU in working with communities of color, as it does not assume that communities of color want bike lanes, rather it takes a more holistic approach to biking.

We did hear from one interviewee that “if BCU leaves their clientele (mostly White members in the communities of Cambridge, Somerville and Jamaica Plain), they will lose their power to make policy changes happen due to the way the system of power in Boston functions.” Thus, there is a lot of thought that must go into this transition toward bike justice. BCU must think about what a change in their membership would mean for their organization and how moving toward bike justice will impact their advocacy work.

Figure 20: Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley leads a community discussion about bike equity in the Boston area at home stand bakery & café in Fields Corner, Dorchester, on Thursday, February 28, 2019.

Image credit: Andrew McFarland
**Recommendation 2: Build Partnerships for Change**

![Figure 21: Atlanta Streets Alive is a national best practice of how car-free events can spark community conversations around street improvements.](Image Credit: Atlanta Bicycle Coalition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Tasks</th>
<th>Potential Outputs and Next Steps</th>
<th>Precedent and Rationale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explore developing a Boston Bike Coalition, centered around shared issues (bike education, bike theft, promoting social rides, etc.)</td>
<td>Reach out to potential coalition partners including Bikes Not Bombs, Mattapan On Wheels, Roxbury Rides, Bowdoin Bike School, and Sip n’ Spoke</td>
<td>Interviews with BCU stakeholders and Boston-area advocates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish stronger connections with youth ride-out participants, Roxbury Rides, Mattapan on Wheels, and other informal biking groups</td>
<td><strong>Barrier Addressed: Safety</strong>&lt;br&gt;Connect with ride leaders and send BCU members to participate in their rides; Explore working with community organizations on a “Know Your Rights” training for youth while biking</td>
<td>Bikes Not Bombs Youth Mechanics group interview; Bike Easy’s Street Ambassador outreach to social ride groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with community members and organizations to give neighbors a first-hand sense of how streets can be redesigned</td>
<td><strong>Barriers Addressed: Safety &amp; Sociocultural</strong>&lt;br&gt;Organize open streets events in target communities with partners; Reach out to organizations such as ACE and the Ujima Project</td>
<td>Bikes Not Bombs Youth Mechanics group interview; Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s Atlanta Streets Alive; Interviews with BCU stakeholders and Boston-area advocates</td>
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</table>
Overview of Recommendation 2

Nearly all of our case studies interviewees focused on the importance of community partnerships and social networks in building a bike justice-oriented movement. Teaming up with outside organizations and neighborhood groups on shared projects provides a strong foundation for strengthening relationships and cultivating trust for ongoing and future advocacy campaigns. According to advocates, peer-to-peer programs seemed to be especially effective at involving more low-income individuals and people of color when compared to educational efforts or purely infrastructure-focused campaigns.

Further, programs like Bike Easy’s Street Ambassador program, Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s Bike Champions program, andNice Ride’s Neighborhood program, have been instrumental at building pathways to leadership within their organizations. By leading job training initiatives and compensating community members for their outreach work, these organizations are upending the notion that advocacy is led by individuals who have expendable time, know-how, and resources. Advocacy messengers are just as important as the messaging itself.

Several bikers of color in Boston stressed the personal importance of seeing people biking who look like them, and some non-bikers of color noted how they perceive biking as an activity largely for middle class White men. Building peer-to-peer programs with community partners within low-income, people of color communities could be a major opportunity to contribute to a social biking culture and counters the stereotypic notions of who biking is for.

Finally, few advocacy tools are more effective than providing community members with direct, hands-on experiences. For example, the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s Atlanta Streets Alive event attracts a broad cross-section of community members. In contrast, interviews with Boston-area advocates noted how programming like Open Newbury Street, a car-free event in one of Boston’s most affluent neighborhoods that has taken place multiple times in the last few years, reinforces the perception that street improvements are intended for the White, affluent parts of the city. Others fondly recalled Circle the City, a similar event that took place on Blue Hill Avenue in 2014. Working with community partners to bring car-free programming to streets in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan would work to reframe biking as a community building tool.

“We need to start relying more on people in the community and maybe giving them some type of leadership role so that the community as a whole knows that this is a person that can speak on our behalf.”

Vivian Ortiz
## Recommendation 3: Advocate for Bike Justice

### Figure 22: Improving first-mile, last-mile trips and amenities for connecting residents to public transit through biking could attract new bikers

*Image Credit: Liana Genito / LivableStreets Alliance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Associated Tasks</th>
<th>Potential Outputs and Next Steps</th>
<th>Precedent and Rationale</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Critically assess BCU’s role in bike advocacy in relation to low-income, POC communities in Boston</td>
<td>Identify where BCU should take the lead and when it should partner with community organizations on campaigns in POC, low-income communities; Leverage skills and resources in BCU’s network to build critical partnerships with non-biking community organizations</td>
<td>Bike Easy’s community ride series; The Street Trust in Portland uplifting the voices of people of color in NE Portland regarding the location of a new protected bike lane in the neighborhood</td>
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<td>Build new campaigns that target some of the challenges faced by POC, low-income residents; Work with the proposed Boston Bike Coalition and local community groups when appropriate</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barrier Addressed: Safety</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with Boston City Councilors, Boston Housing Authority, Boston Public Schools (BPS), and MBTA officials to expand access to secure bike parking and storage on their premises to combat bike theft</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bikes Not Bombs Youth Mechanics group interview; Literature Review; Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s Bike Champions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barrier Addressed: Infrastructure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocate for improvements in public transit and first-mile, last-mile connections for biking in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union Capital Boston group interviews; Boston bike ridership data</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barriers Addressed: Cost &amp; Awareness &amp; Infrastructure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop peer-to-peer programs that promote Blue Bikes and biking in general in low-income, POC communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bike Easy’s Blue Bikes for All &amp; Street Ambassador initiatives; Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s Bike Champions; Nice Ride Neighborhood Program</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barriers Addressed: Cost &amp; Awareness &amp; Infrastructure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocate for expanding community access to bicycles in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan through a bike lending library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equicity in Chicago; Nice Ride Community Partners Program; Interviews with Boston-area advocates</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Barriers Addressed: Cost &amp; Awareness &amp; Infrastructure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Work with Bikes Not Bombs to further biking education curriculum to ensure that all BPS students have the opportunity to learn how to ride</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bikes Not Bombs Youth Mechanics group interview; Interviews with BCU stakeholders and other Boston-area advocates; Atlanta Bicycle Coalition’s Shifting Gears program</td>
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**Overview of Recommendation 3**

There are myriad ways that BCU can pursue more inclusive forms of bike advocacy. The above table offers a number of ideas based on the barriers we identified. Future programs and advocacy efforts should reflect the needs and priorities of community partners and BCU as an organization.

“In Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, there are so many kids who don’t know how to bike ride.”

Michelle Cook, Roxbury Rides
Conclusion
Conclusion

As BCU works through its strategic planning process, it must come to the realization that pursuing bike justice cannot truly be achieved without organizational shifts and a willingness to be open and bold. BCU must ask difficult questions as to whether it is the best organization to engage in bike justice work, and how it might be able to form partnerships to put a bike justice framework into practice. Embracing bike justice forces the organization to not only think about the end goals of bike advocacy, but also the process, which must explicitly include discussions around race and class.

We believe that moving toward bike justice allows the communal aspects of biking and bike organizing to shine, whereas focusing on bike equity emphasizes the individual experience of biking and organizing. Uplifting community voices and adhering to the desire of residents are two elements of bike justice that reinforce the communal aspects of biking. In our interviews we found that the decisions that organizations make about their programming and advocacy align them with particular values of bike equity and/or bike justice. BCU has the opportunity now to take a proactive approach to their work by intentionally framing their advocacy and programming with a bike justice lens.

As a mode of transportation, biking has rightfully gained a loyal following. Although it’s admirable to share the benefits of biking with others, we need to recognize that biking is not only about bike lanes and commuting to work. People of color and low income people have limited access to biking because of institutional racism and systemic inequality. If organizations like BCU truly want to enhance the biking experience for all, they need to understand how racism and inequality have created tensions in the bike advocacy sphere dividing bikers across race and class lines. BCU must also look at how biking intersects with public transit, health, and culture, and how these intersections impact their work. It is only when we advocate for biking in a more holistic sense, can we figure out how bike lanes might fit into our vision for a more just transportation system.
Appendix
Appendix

Glossary

• **Bike Equity**: An approach to bike programs, advocacy, and education with the goal of establishing equal access to connected bike infrastructure across a city including bike lanes, bike share systems, and bike storage.

• **Bike Justice**: An approach to bike programs, advocacy, and education that aims to empower individuals and communities to correct and connect the systems that limit them from biking by placing biking in the broader context of the transportation system, including issues that intersect with transportation such as public health and housing.

• **Bike share**: A bicycle-sharing system, public bicycle system, or bike-share is a service in which bicycles are made available for shared use to individuals on a short term basis for a one-time price, subscription, or for free.

• **City-run organizations**: A bike organization that is primarily organized and funded by a local city/municipality. Examples include Nice Ride Minnesota.

• **Complete Streets**: A transportation policy and design approach that requires streets to be planned, designed, operated, and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities regardless of their mode of transportation.

• **Dockless bike share**: A sharing system that relies upon location-based smartphone applications, instead of built infrastructure facilities (such as docking stations), to track and access bicycles for a limited period of time, typically for a subscription fee.

• **Formal bike groups**: Groups of individuals who ride bikes and/or engage in bike-related activism under the leadership of a non-profit organization or the supervision of a city department.

• **Informal bike groups**: Groups of individuals who ride bikes and/or engage in bike-related activism without the organization of a non-profit group or formal leadership system.

• **Infrastructure advocacy**: Advocacy efforts which focus on the built facilities and city structures to facilitate biking in a safe way. Examples include protected bike lanes and bike lights.

• **Invisible Cyclists**: Often working-class, low-income individuals who utilize biking as a lifeline for commuting to work, but are often overlooked in conversations surrounding bike advocacy.

• **Peer to peer programs**: Programs, typically run by formal bike groups, that utilize individuals as a way to increase bike ridership rates and build community.

• **POC-led organizations**: Organizations and programs led by and used by people of color.

• **Policy advocacy**: Advocacy efforts which focus on legislation initiatives that would help facilitate safe and equitable biking. For example, Complete Streets initiatives and land use regulation to support biking.

• **Protected bike lanes**: A high-comfort bike facility with at least one form of vertical separation from moving, vehicular traffic.

• **Road diet**: Technique used by
planners and engineers that decreases the lanes available to cars, often making more room for bikers and pedestrians to make a safer road.

- **Shared streets**: An urban design approach that minimises the segregation between modes of road user by removing features such as curbs, road surface markings, traffic signs, and traffic lights.
- **Traffic calming measures**: Built-environment interventions to slow down vehicular traffic to improve safety for all road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Vision Zero**: A citywide effort led by Mayor Martin J. Walsh to prevent all traffic fatalities by the year 2030.

### Extended Methodology

What are the structural, institutional, cultural, and personal barriers that people of color and low-income people face when it comes to biking overall and, more specifically, in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan? Why aren’t people in these Boston communities considering biking as a mode of transportation?

**Barriers to Biking**: The Barriers to Biking section addresses four of the primary barriers that we categorized based on the sources: infrastructure, cost & awareness, safety, and socio-cultural factors. By understanding the barriers that people of color and...  

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual</th>
<th>Connection to BCU</th>
<th>Position and Organization(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela Johnson Rodriguez</td>
<td>BCU Board Vice Chair &amp; Neighborhood Bike Forum Organizer</td>
<td>Transportation Justice Organizer, Transportation 4 Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doug Johnson</td>
<td>Former BCU Organizer</td>
<td>Public Involvement Specialist, Howard Hudson Stein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vivian Ortiz</td>
<td>BCU Member &amp; Partner</td>
<td>Boston Outreach Coordinator, Safe Routes to School, Board Member, LivableStreets Alliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamika Francis</td>
<td>Neighborhood Bike Forum Organizer &amp; BCU Partner</td>
<td>Community Engagement Manager, Boston Alliance for Community Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jasmine Wilson</td>
<td>BCU Partner</td>
<td>Program and Outreach Coordinator, Bikes Not Bombs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Cook</td>
<td>BCU Partner</td>
<td>Founder/Executive Director, Roxbury Rides</td>
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</table>
low-income people face to biking, we were able to develop a well-rounded view of the factors that need to be addressed to push for an equitable and just bike movement at an organizational, national, and local scale. We searched the literature for articles at the intersection of bike equity and each of the barriers listed above--some articles used particular cities as case studies and others are a survey of the literature at a national scale. The literature brief was supplemented by qualitative data and analysis from our interviews that provided a comprehensive overview of what are some of the key barriers to biking in the greater Boston area.

### Interviews with Local Transit and Equity Advocates

We conducted six interviews with local advocates that work on transit equity initiatives in Boston and can speak to the current situation on the ground, while providing concrete examples of programs, campaigns, and active initiatives to increase bike equity. The advocates that we interviewed are listed in the table to the left, Figure 24. These interviews provided a clearer picture of how practitioners perceive the identified barriers to biking in minority and low-income communities and helped to address the nexus of biking with many overlapping elements such as public health, mobility, and gentrification.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<th>Location</th>
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<tr>
<td>BCU Activist Committee Meeting</td>
<td>February 19, 2019</td>
<td>Northeastern University Ryder Hall 11 Leon St Boston, MA 02115</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bike Equity Roundtable with Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley</td>
<td>February 21, 2019</td>
<td>Home.Stead Bakery &amp; Cafe 1448 Dorchester Ave. Dorchester, MA 02122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bikes Not Bombs Organizing Workshop &amp; Group Interview</td>
<td>March 27, 2019</td>
<td>Spontaneous Celebrations 45 Danforth St. Jamaica Plain, MA 02130</td>
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<td>Union Capital Boston Network Night</td>
<td>April 3, 2019</td>
<td>UCB Office 1544 Columbus Ave. Roxbury, MA 02119</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union Capital Boston Network Night</td>
<td>April 10, 2019</td>
<td>Freedom House 14 Crawford St. Dorchester, MA 02121</td>
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## Interviews with Bike Advocates in Case Study Cities

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<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Robert Henig Bell</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>Campaign Manager</td>
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<td>Bike Easy</td>
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<td>Anthony Taylor</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>Founding Member</td>
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<td>Major Taylor Cycling Club</td>
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<td>Equity Advisory Council Member</td>
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<td>The League of American Bicyclists</td>
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<tr>
<td>LaMiiko Moore</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>Development Coordinator</td>
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<td>Atlanta Bicycle Coalition</td>
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<td>Richa Poudyal</td>
<td>Portland</td>
<td>Advocacy Director</td>
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<td>The Street Trust</td>
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### Interview Questions:
- How do you define bike equity? 
- How do you define bike justice? 
- What makes one different from the other if you define them differently? 
- How did you become involved in the bike equity or bike justice movement? 
- What is the mission of your organization, what are the main programs and advocacy work you do? 
- What is your role in the organization? 
- Why is it important for the organization to take part in the bike equity or bike justice movement? 
- Of the programs that the organization has to address bike equity and/ or justice what was the original goal of the program? 
- Do you think the program has obtained that dream? 
- How do you measure the success of the program? 
- Do you collaborate with other bike and/or transit groups and non-profit organizations in your city? 
- To what extent do you have an understanding of the overlaps and gaps in programming, services, and advocacy among the organizations in your city? What are they? 
- Are you aware of informal bike groups in your city? What relationships exist (if any) between more established bike organizations like yours and more informal groups that lead group rides? 
- To what extent do you work
toward bridging the divide between formal and informal biking groups? What about the divide between White, affluent folks who bike versus those who bike out of necessity?

- What is the demographic makeup of your membership base? Of the people who attend programs? Who attend meetings?
- Do you feel your organization focuses more on programs, advocacy, or both? Why do you focus on one over the other if you do? Do you believe you need both to be an effective organization?
- To what extent is biking important to these communities? What is being done to serve and support these communities in regards to bike equity?

**Group Interviews**

We determined that group interviews were critical in receiving detailed feedback from local residents on their own perceptions of biking, its importance, and what can be done to better support biking within their communities. The Field Projects Team conducted three group interviews, one with youth mechanics from Bikes Not Bombs and two others at network nights convened by Union Capital Boston. Through these interviews, we heard from two separate populations, those who currently bike and those who do not, which provided us with different perspectives central to the above-stated research question. There were also two events that we attended: a BCU Activist Committee Meeting and a Bike Equity Roundtable convened by Massachusetts Rep. Ayanna Pressley.

**Interview Questions:**

- Do you bike?
- Why is it important to you?
- Why is it not important to you?
- Are you aware of the terms bike equity and/or bike justice?
- How aware are you of your local bike/transportation advocacy organizations?
- How often do you see members of your racial/ethnic group riding bikes?
- Have you had any negative experiences riding your bike directly related to your race/ethnicity?
- What resources or programs would you like to see offered by the city or nonprofits to expand biking in your neighborhood?
- How can BCU build on their current programming and outreach to commit to bicycle justice in Boston? How can BCU, with community partners, and the City of Boston, help support communities in regards to transportation needs overall?

**Case Study Research and Interviews**

It was important for us to source best practices and programs from across the nation to help address bike equity and justice in Boston. After initial research into a number of cities in the US, our group decided to explore the following cities further to develop into case studies for the report: Atlanta, Baltimore, Chicago, New Orleans, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Portland, and Philadelphia. Our research and interviews were useful for gleaning strategies, policies, and programs that have been used to increase the bike ridership of people of color and people in low-income communities. Successful programs and policies were identified from these cities.
and classified along principles of bike equity or bike justice as determined by the typology. These programs, policies and interviews with bike advocates within the cities themselves also helped inform our recommendations to BCU for how they expand programming and outreach in their target communities.

The group identified key organizations and people working on bike equity and bike justice in their respective cities. The interviews that
took place are listed in Figure 26. These interviews were semi-structured open-ended interviews. We asked the same questions as we asked to local transit and equity advocates.

From the case studies and understanding of other bike equity and bike justice organizations a typology was constructed to visualize the networks and connections between bike equity and bike justice organizations. This visualization highlights what type of work an organization does and categorizes how their programs have an impact. Due to the possibility of different understandings of bike justice and bike equity the organization of the typology was done solely off of the definition of the two categories mentioned earlier in the report.

**Organizations & Programs in Case Study Cities**

**Atlanta**
- Atlanta Bike Champions
- Atlanta Bicycle Coalition
- Atlanta Streets Alive
- Relay Bike Share
- Red Bike & Green Atlanta Chapter
- Shifting Gears

**Baltimore**
- Bikemore
- Downtown Bike Network

**Chicago**
- Slow Roll Chicago
- Divvy for Everyone (D4E)
- Equiticity
- Red Bike & Green Chicago Chapter
- Bronzeville Bikes
- West Town Bikes

**Minneapolis/St. Paul**
- 2wheelgods
- Nice Ride Bike Share
- Major Taylor Bicycling Club of Minnesota
- Cycles for Change
- Tamales y Bicicletas
- Nice Ride Community Partners Program
- Nice Ride Neighborhood Program
- Slow Roll Minneapolis

**New Orleans**
- Bike Easy
- Connect the Crescent
- Blue Bikes for All
- Bicycle Second Line

**Philadelphia**
- Indego Bike Share
- Bicycle Coalition for Greater Philadelphia
- Bike Ambassador Program
- Digital Skill and Bicycle Thrills
- Better Bike Share Partnership

**Portland**
- Bike Town
- Sunday Parkways
- Street Trust
- Community Cycling Center
- ABC Portland
- Extended Typology

**Quantitative Data Sources**

**American Community Survey**
- Data source: US Census
- Years: 2013-2017 ACS 5-year Estimates
- Data Type: CSV
- Link: https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t

**Boston Vision Zero Crash Data**
- Data source: Analyze Boston; City
of Boston
• Years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018
• Data Type: CSV
• Link: https://data.boston.gov/dataset/vision-zero-crash-records

**Boston Bike Count Data**
• Data source: Boston Bikes; City of Boston
• Years: 2017
• Data Type: XLSX
• Link: https://www.boston.gov/departments/boston-bikes/bike-data/2017-boston-bicycle-counts#downloads

**Existing Bike Network**
• Data source: Analyze Boston; City of Boston
• Years: 2015 (updated in 2019)
• Data Type: CSV, Shapefiles
• Link: https://data.boston.gov/dataset/existing-bike-network
Bibliography
Bibliography


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Henig Bell, Robert. Interview by Andrew McFarland. Phone Call between Medford, MA and New Orleans, LA, April 1, 2019.


Moore, LaMiiko. Interview by Eliza Parad. Phone call between Boston, MA and Atlanta, GA, March 15, 2019.


