

***ACCESS DENIED:
Biking While Black and Hispanic in
New Jersey (and NY)***

Charles T. Brown, MPA

Plenary Session 4: Cycling and Pedestrian Equity

10th University Transportation Center Spotlight Conference

Washington, DC

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WHO AM I?

- Husband | Father | Army Veteran | Researcher | Lecturer | Mentor | Humanist
 - I have lived in three red states (MS, FL, OK) and one blue state (NJ)
- I have served my country and worked in the private sector, public sector and academia
 - I have survived poverty, racism, Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy
- I do this work because I don't see it as being work. This is who I am. This is what I love to do!



TWO SPECIAL MOMENTS

New Jersey | New York

Reminder



Planners:

“...professionals that work to improve the welfare of people and their communities by creating more convenient, **equitable**, healthful, efficient, and attractive places for present and future generations”—APA

New Jersey

Purpose, Research Questions and Methodology

- **Purpose**

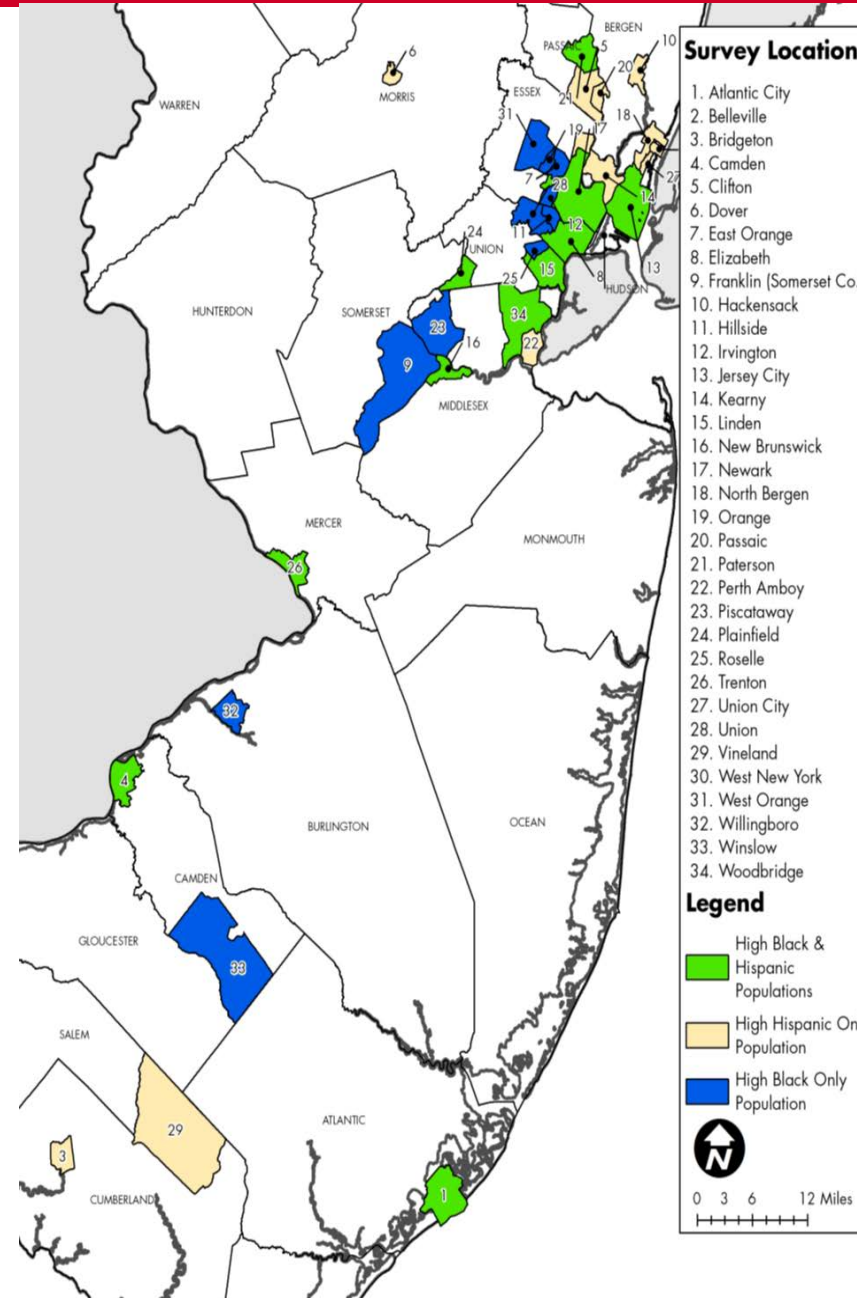
- Ascertain barriers to and identify solutions to bicycle use among Blacks and Hispanics

- **Research Questions**

1. Why do Blacks and Hispanics choose not to bicycle?
2. What prevents current B-H's from choosing to bicycle more?
3. What can be done to encourage all of them to bicycle more often?

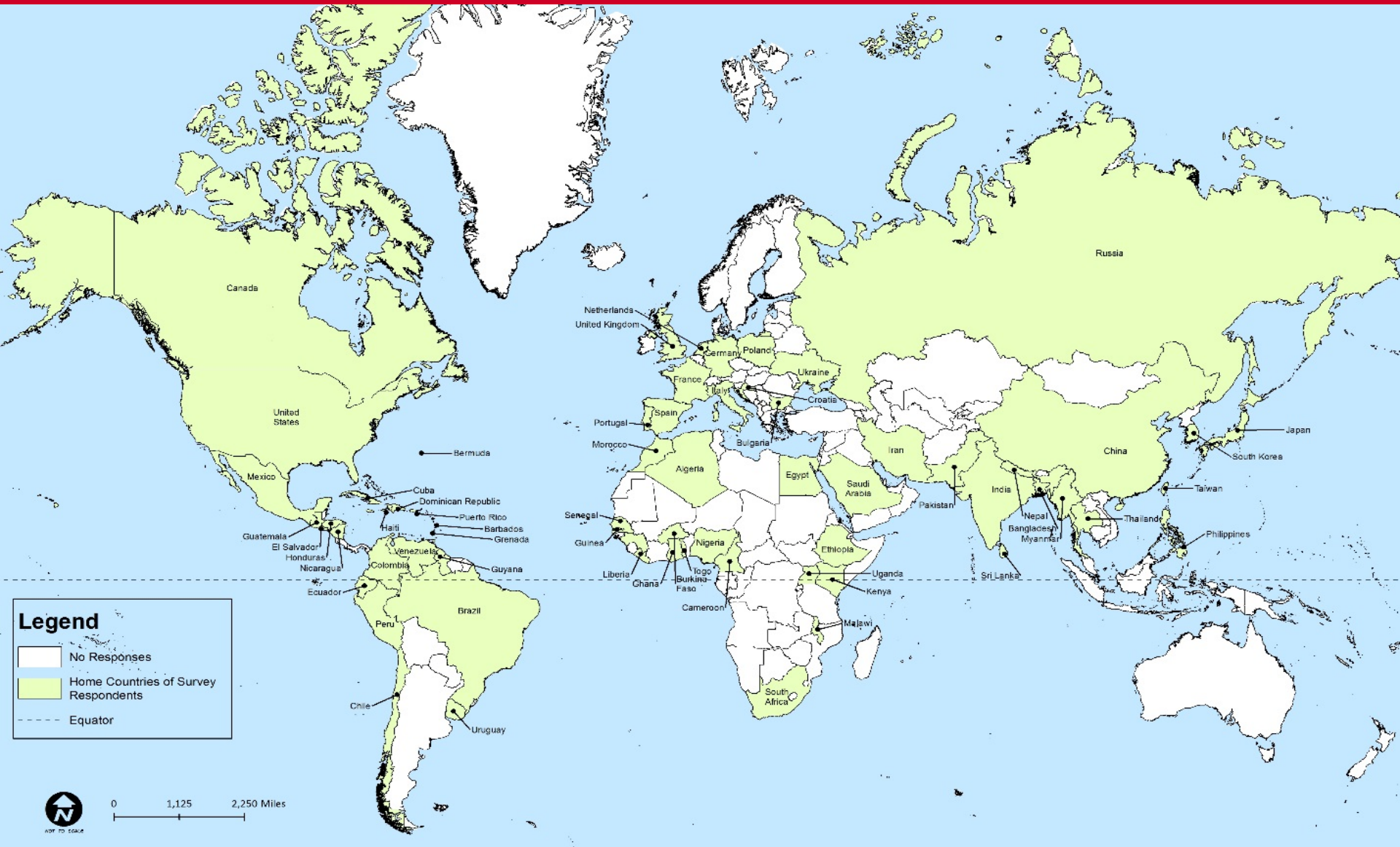
- **Methodology/Data Collection**

- Literature Review
- Two focus groups (\$50 cash incentive)
- Intercept surveys in 34 towns
- Two surveys (bicyclists & non-bicyclists)



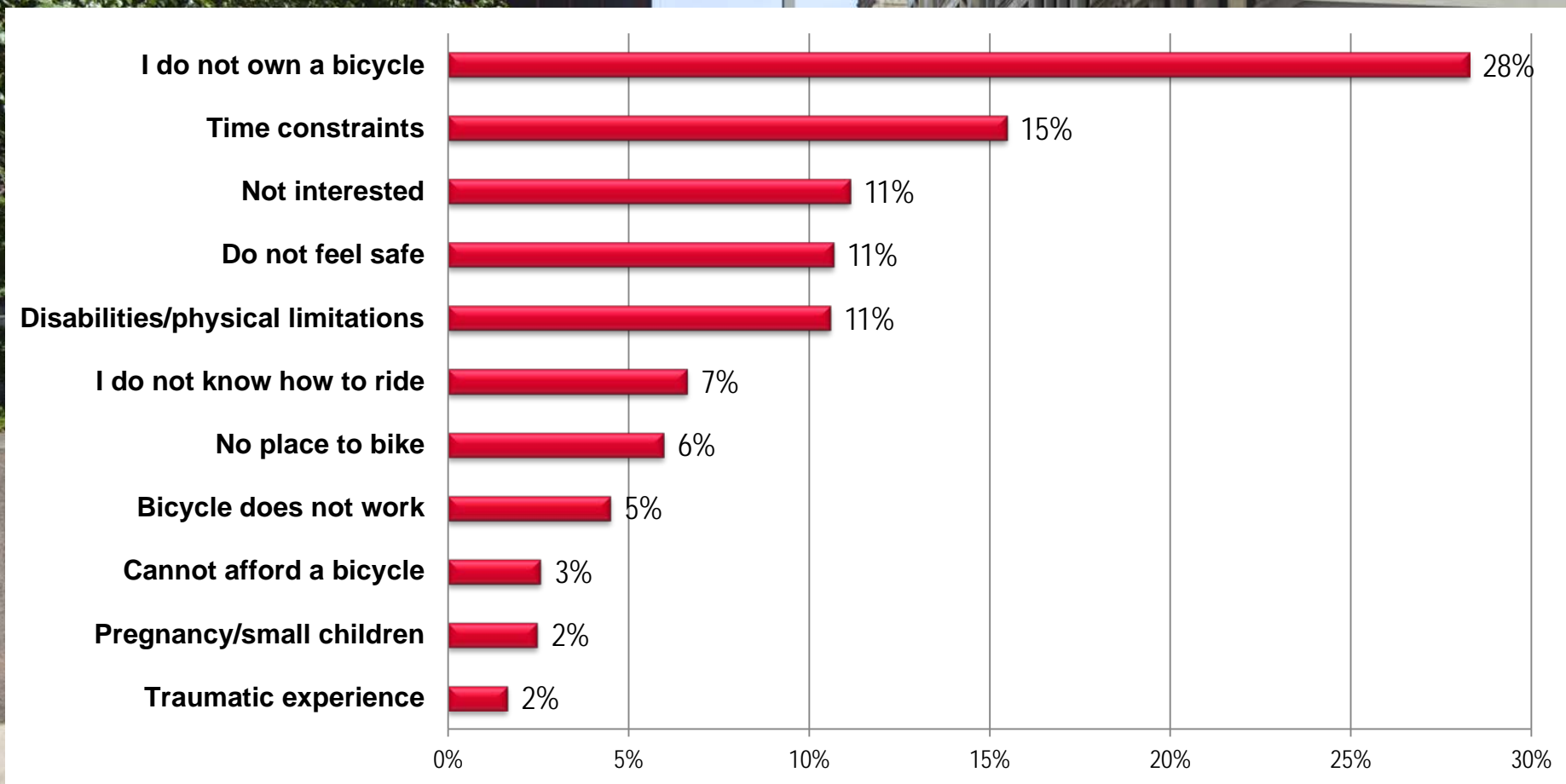
Survey Respondents (n=1,660)

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MAJOR TAKEAWAY: Nearly 40% spent their formative years outside the US.

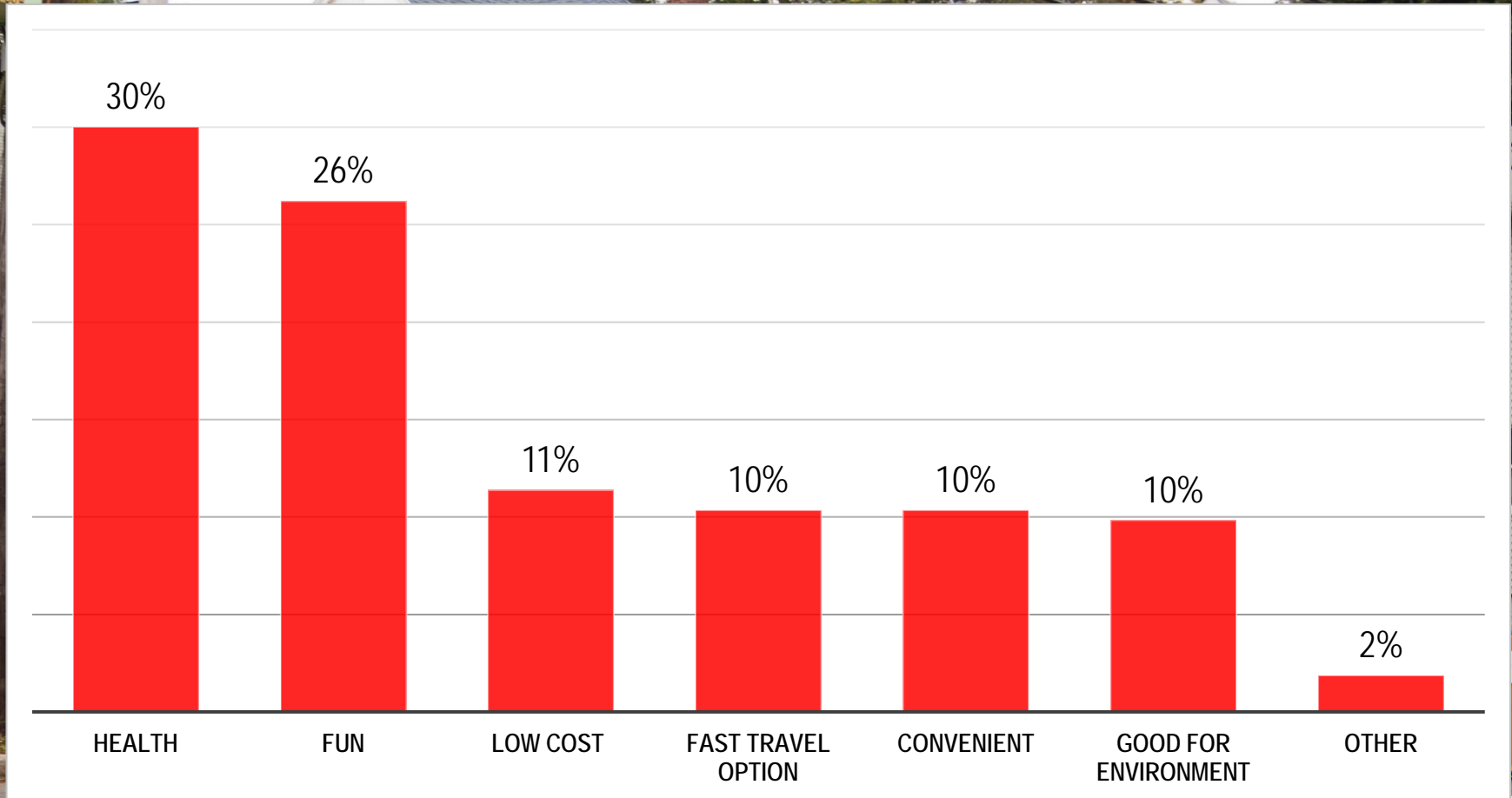
Non-Bicyclists (54% of survey respondents)



MAJOR TAKEAWAYS: More than 25% do not own a bicycle and 11% don't feel safe.

Bicyclists (46% of survey respondents)

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MAJOR TAKEAWAYS: People bicycle to be **HEALTHIER** and to have **FUN**.

New Jersey

Questions Identical in Both Surveys

Survey Findings: Cost and Maintenance



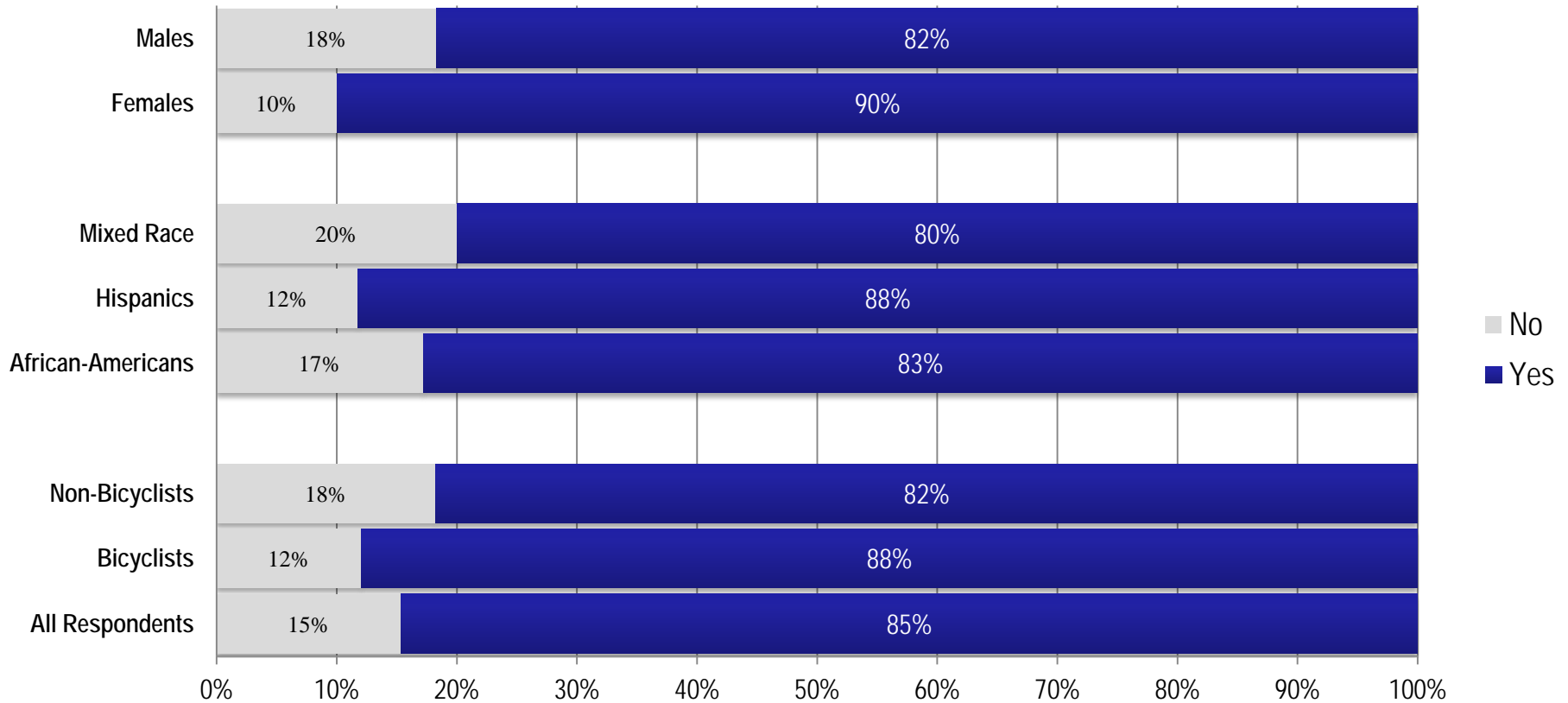
MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Nearly 25% feel that a bicycle is too expensive to purchase and maintain.
- More bicyclists, males and those earning less than \$14,000 annually (statistically significant)



MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Nearly 60% were not aware of CitiBike (NYC) or Indego (Philadelphia).
- Non-bicyclists, Blacks, females and those earning less than \$14k annually (income, statistically significant)



MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Overwhelming majority (85%) stated they would use bicycle share.
- Statistical difference between the responses of males and females and bicyclists and non-bicyclists

Survey Findings: Access to Political Power



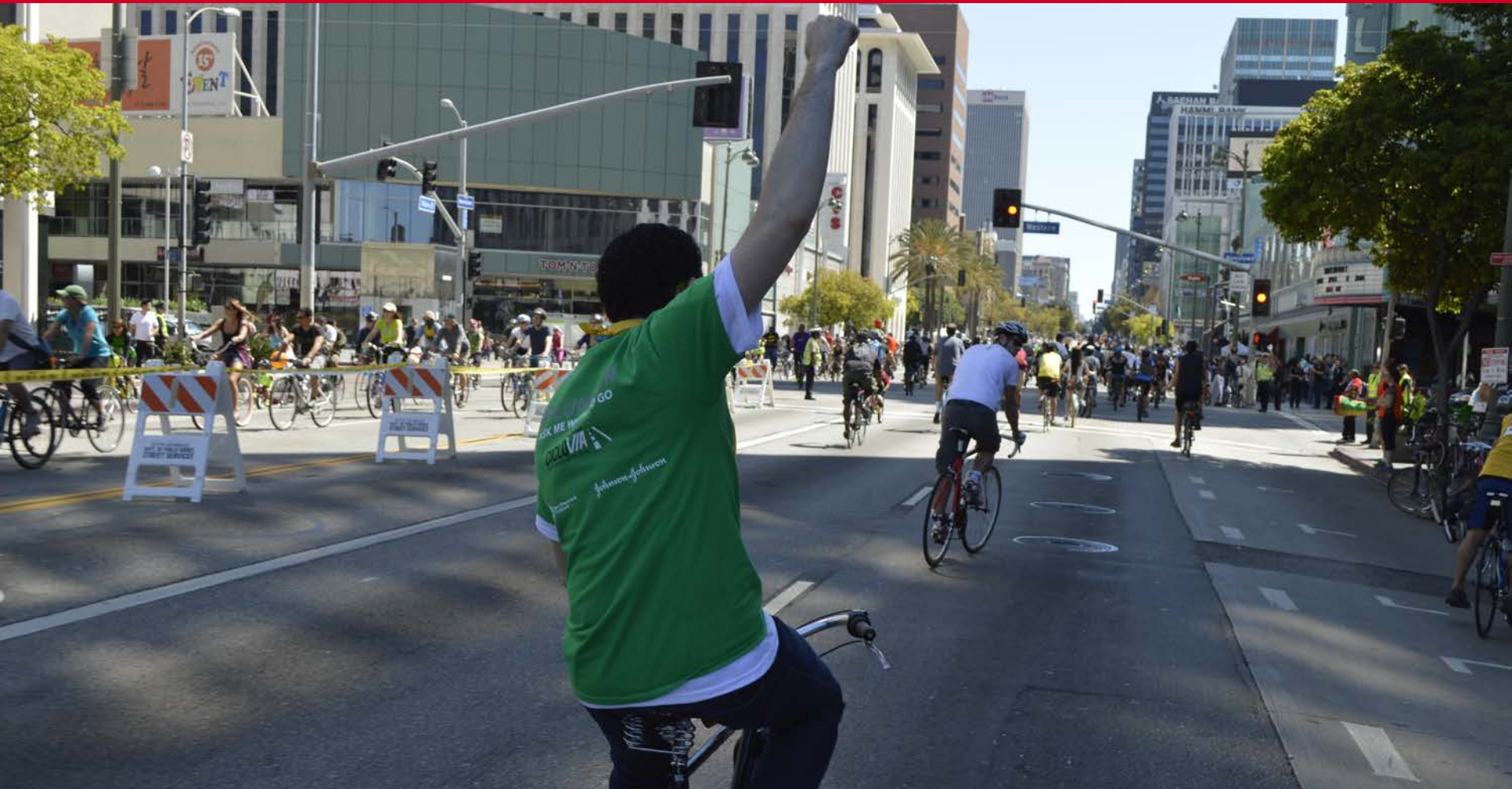
Survey Findings: Access to Political Power

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Majority (54%) believe that it is unlikely that government would do so.
- Males, bicyclists and those earning between \$75,000 and \$99,000 were more optimistic (statistically significant)



Survey Findings: Government Support and Investment



MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Majority (64%) do not feel their government supports and invests in cycling.
- Statistical difference between the responses of bicyclists and non-bicyclists (24% versus 12%)

Survey Findings: Safe Bicycle Storage

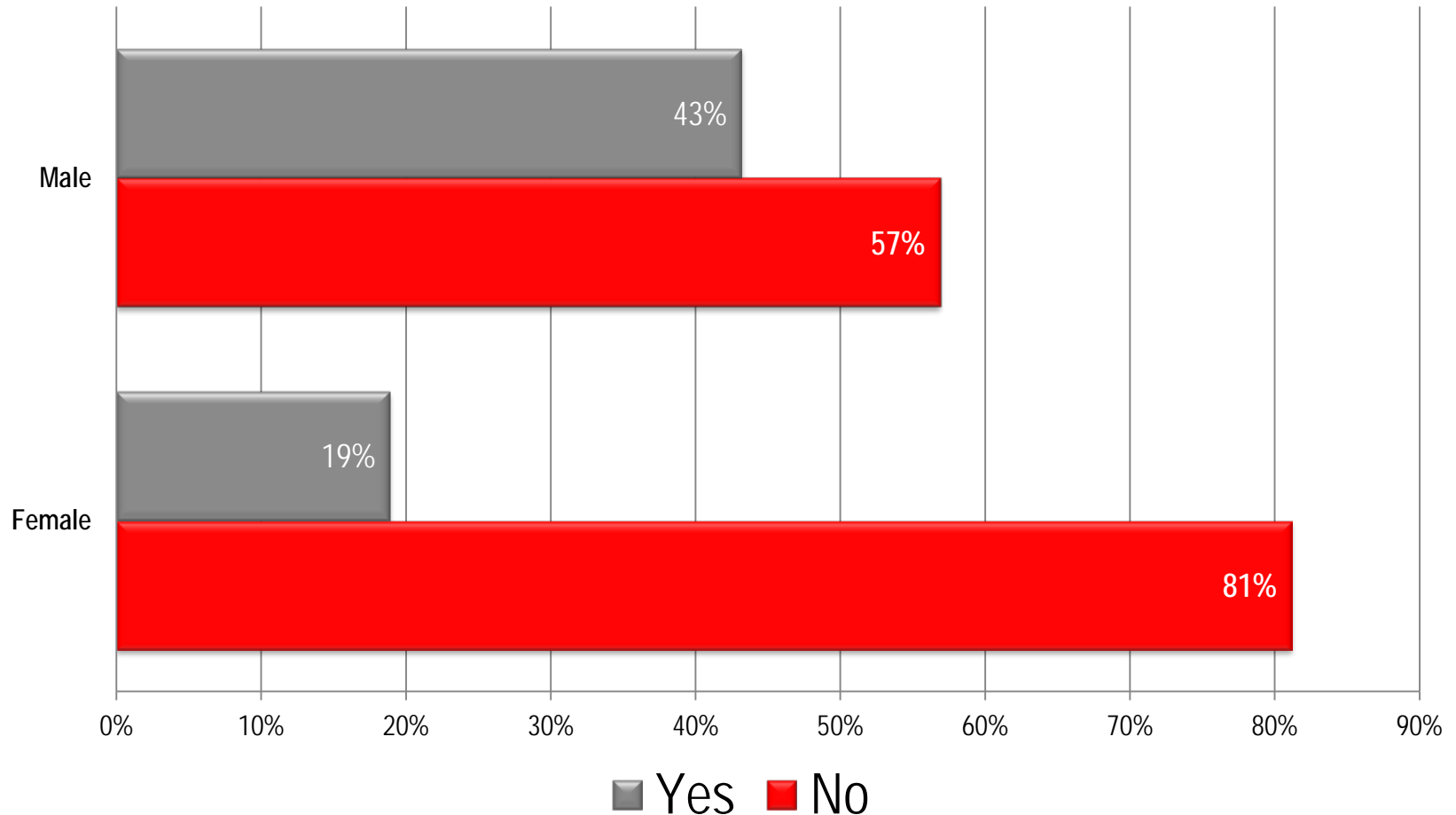


MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Only 1 out of 4 non-bicyclists reported having a safe place to store their bicycles, versus 9 out of 10 bicyclists.
 - Statistical significant differences in regards to race/ethnicity, user and income.

Survey Findings: Bicycle Theft

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MAJOR TAKEAWAY: 43% of males reported being victims; males reported being victimized more than **TWICE** as much of females.

Statistical significant differences in regards to user and gender.



MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Nearly 60% of respondents do not feel that children are safe from traffic when bicycling in their neighborhoods.
- Statistical significant differences in regards to user, race/ethnicity, gender and income (i.e., those making less than 2015 median household income in NJ),

Survey Findings: Professional Bicycle Training



MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- 90% of participants have not received professional bicycle training.
- Statistical significant differences in regards to user, with a higher proportion of the bicyclists receiving training than non-bicyclists (12.5% versus 7.4%).

Survey Findings: Perceived Police Harassment

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS:

- Nearly 15% reported being unfairly stopped by a police officer.
- Males reported being stopped at a rate 7x than that of females.
 - Black respondents were stopped more often than Hispanics.
- Statistical significant differences in regards to user, race/ethnicity and gender.



Survey Findings: Perceived Barriers to Cycling

Variables	All Respondents		Bicyclists		Non-Bicyclists	
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking
Fear of traffic collision	31%	1	27%	1	34%	1
Fear of robbery/assault	16%	2	17%	2	15%	2
Fear of being profiled by the police	8%	5	9%	5	6%	5
Fear of verbal harassment	5%	7	5%	7	6%	5
Fear of being stranded with broken bicycle	11%	4	10%	4	11%	4
Cost of bicycle maintenance	6%	6	5%	7	6%	5
Pavement Condition	14%	3	14%	3	14%	3
Pregnancy/small children	5%	7	4%	8	5%	6
Other	5%	7	8%	6	3%	7
Total	100%		100%		100%	

Survey Findings: Perceived Barriers to Cycling

EDUCATION

Fear: A Silent Barrier to Bicycling in Black and Hispanic Communities

BY CHARLES BROWN, MPA

Should transportation professionals be more concerned about the personal safety of cyclists in Black and Hispanic Communities? At the Alan M. Voorhees Transportation Center (VTC), the fear of being robbed and assaulted while bicycling ranked as the number two barrier to bicycling, second only to the fear of a traffic collision in our most recent study of bicycle access and usage among Blacks and Hispanics in thirty-four neighborhoods throughout New Jersey (see Table 1).

While the fear of a traffic collision does not come as a surprise—New Jersey cycling deaths are on a rise and the state has been designated a Pedestrian/Bicycle Focus State by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)—Blacks and Hispanics' collective fear of being robbed or assaulted while cycling is an eye-opener, a lightning bolt of revelation.¹ Considering the perceived difficulty in robbing and assaulting a cyclist, as opposed to a pedestrian who is moving at a much slower pace, this timely revelation has more to do with the overall ranking than the known fact that many Blacks and Hispanics reside in locations with disproportionate amounts of crime.

With only a few exceptions, the overall majority of the Blacks and Hispanics that responded to our intercept surveys reside in the six "Major Urban" centers and the "Urban 15" municipalities in New Jersey, as classified by the New Jersey State Police. During the period of 2005–2014, these major urban centers accounted for 39 percent of all violent crime. Similarly, the majority of all murders occurred in the Urban 15 municipalities, along with 27 percent of all purse snatching, 69 percent of highway robberies, and 11 percent of bicycle theft.²

Since "crime prevention is everybody's business," the personal safety of Blacks and Hispanics cyclists can no longer be ignored or dismissed by transportation professionals as simply a police issue.³ Transportation professionals must be more concerned about the personal safety of bicyclists in Black and Hispanic communities, and here is why.

Transportation professionals are responsible for the mobility and safety needs of all road users. As evident on the ITE website, "The Institute of Transportation Engineers serves as an international educational and scientific association of transportation professionals who are responsible for meeting mobility and safety needs." Historically, however, it can be argued that when it comes to the needs of all road users, transportation professionals have prioritized the mobility and safety needs of vehicles over the needs

of bicyclists and pedestrians during an era in which vehicles have dominated roadways. There can be reluctance by municipal and county engineers to embrace and support complete streets policy adoption and implementation, even though doing so would be the first step towards mobility and safety for all road users, especially in traditionally underserved communities.

Crash statistics fragment the reality and quality of safety. Too often design preferences and solutions are traffic safety-rich and personal safety bankrupt. This is due, in part, to transportation professionals' reliance on crash statistics to ascertain the safety of a particular roadway or corridor. The issue with this often-used sole approach is that absent of crime statistics, transportation professionals are fragmenting the reality and quality of safety; safety is best understood as being both traffic-related and personal. Decisions cannot be made in a bubble or outside the social context and realities of these communities. If only crash statistics are used to influence design and improvements, there may be a reduction in vehicle-cyclist crashes, but an increase in frustration among residents if the design leads them to the very parts of town that they seek to avoid. These residents are experts of their communities, and if their social realities are not taken more seriously during community engagement and public involvement activities, their personal safety concerns will remain ever-present and a dangerous reality for them and their families. Furthermore, the use of crash statistics absent of crime statistics leads to funding and policy decisions that only target safety from one angle.

Personal safety concerns are universally-silent yet culturally-known barriers to bicycling. Many transportation professionals have proposed creative design treatments and employed international and national best practices to increase bicycling in Black and Hispanic communities with varying degrees of success. Whereas many minorities use bicycles to go to work, school, parks,



Figure 1. African-American family enjoying the New Brunswick, NJ, USA Ciclovía ("Open Streets").

visit friends and family, or run errands, few initiatives (e.g. Open Streets) or recommendations directly address this silent barrier to bicycling in Black and Hispanic communities (See Figure 1). This is unfortunate considering that an increase in bicycling would lead to safety in numbers, less congestion, and overall reductions in air pollution. Increases in bicycling in minority communities can also lead to social change and economic impacts—the latter of which is a necessity in Black and Hispanic communities.⁴

Transportation professionals should be more concerned about the personal safety of Black and Hispanic cyclists because they are in a position to change how the built environment either acts as a conduit or barrier to criminal activity; they are in a position to advocate for the use of crime statistics and crash statistics to ensure the best design solutions; and they have taken an oath to ensure the mobility and safety of all road users and that includes bicyclists. Here are a few ways in which transportation professionals can make this change:

- Receive training in crime prevention through environmental design;
- Prioritize crime statistics with crash statistics;
- Ask personal safety questions during public involvement meetings;
- Embrace complete streets policy adoption and implementation; and
- Seek diverse transportation staff.

One way ITE has been becoming involved in this issue is through participation in the National Active Transportation Diversity Task Force, which seeks to uplift equity through coalition building. The National Active Transportation Diversity Task Force is composed of a

broad array of experts to engage in a national coalition to promote active transportation in underserved and assist states and localities to promote Complete Streets legislation in the co-

References

1. <http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov>
2. <http://www.rps.org>
3. <http://theivcenter.org/business/p/019-933/>
4. <http://njbikeped.org/>

Charles Alan M. Voorhees has extensive experience with municipal, county, and non-profit organizations. His current research efforts focus on bicycle usage and access to hiking and walking.

Table 1. Ranking of variables that are barriers to bicycling for bicyclists and non-bicyclists in Black and Hispanic Communities.

Variables	All Respondents		Bicyclists		Non-Bicyclists	
	%	Ranking	%	Ranking	%	Ranking
Fear of traffic collision	31%	1	27%	3	34%	1
Fear of robbery/assault	16%	2	17%	2	15%	2
Fear of being profiled by the police	9%	5	9%	5	6%	5
Fear of verbal harassment	9%	7	5%	7	6%	5
Fear of being stranded with broken bicycle	11%	4	10%	4	11%	4
Cost of bicycle maintenance	6%	6	5%	7	6%	5
Pavement Condition	14%	3	14%	3	14%	3
Pregnancy/small children	5%	7	4%	8	5%	6
Other	5%	7	8%	6	2%	7
Total	100%		100%		100%	

Source: Charles T. Brown, MPH, Northern Transportation Center

Criminal Activity



CPTED Audits



Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) is based upon the principle that proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in fear and incidences of crime, and an improvement in the quality of life.

Case Study: City of Newark CPTED

Crime in the Fairmount Neighborhood, 2008 to 2012 (Newark PD)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Murder	5	3	6	9	11
Shootings	18	17	14	21	22
Rape	3	4	8	4	4
Robbery	80	87	124	135	132
Aggravated Assault	49	48	61	55	50
Burglary	114	187	152	163	137
Theft	100	82	68	83	79
Auto Theft	176	172	193	171	176
Possession of Weapon	9	17	16	28	17
Drug Arrests	405	343	212	261	317

Survey Findings: Potential Solutions

Variables	All Respondents		Bicyclists		Non-Bicyclists	
	Number	Ranking	Number	Ranking	Number	Ranking
Bicycle lane between you and your destination	1071	1	517	1	554	1
Off-street bicycle path between you and your destination	1031	2	515	2	516	2
Secure bicycle parking at your destination	995	3	486	3	509	3
Better weather	970	4	480	4	490	5
If you did not have a car	963	5	459	6	504	4
If your destination was closer	949	6	440	7	509	3
Bicycle Events	871	7	460	5	411	6
If the bus/train was closer	730	8	367	8	363	7
If you did not have small children	652	9	337	9	315	8
Total	8232		4061		4171	

Survey Findings: Potential Solutions

Variables	African-Americans		Hispanics/Latinos		Mixed Race	
	Number	Ranking	Number	Ranking	Number	Ranking
Bicycle lane between you and your destination	552	2	423	2	53	1
Off-street bicycle path between you and your destination	534	3	401	5	52	2
Secure bicycle parking at your destination	555	1	351	7	49	3
Better weather	485	4	404	4	44	4
If you did not have a car	452	6	426	1	44	4
If your destination was closer	474	5	405	3	35	6
Bicycle Events	432	7	367	6	41	5
If the bus/train was closer	329	8	340	8	32	7
If you did not have small children	295	9	306	9	31	8
Total	4108		3423		381	

New York

Race, Place, and Public Space: Biking while Black



Focus Group Findings: Bicycle Lanes



KEY QUOTE: "Where did those bicycle lanes come from? Why are they here? I was not notified!"

Focus Group Findings: Police Harassment



KEY QUOTE: "I am tired of police harassment and the criminalization of bicycle lanes."

Focus Group Findings: Fear



KEY QUOTE: "I may be physically assaulted or killed." "Don't dress like you have money or use your expensive bicycle to commute."

Focus Group Findings: Cyclist?



KEY QUOTE: "I am not a cyclist! I simply like to ride my bicycle."

Focus Group Findings: Bike-Share



KEY QUOTE: "Bike-share is cool but will it ever come here?"

What am I pondering?

QUESTIONS:

- Will the change in demographics and reverse in White flight lead to non-Whites being stuck in the suburbs and Whites disproportionately benefitting from investments intended for minority communities?
 - Is there a criminalization of bicycle lanes in non-White communities?
- If bicycling is the “new golf” from a social perspective, what opportunities are being denied to non-Whites who lack access to this new golf?
- How would the bicycle research agenda differ if the people in this room better reflected the communities most disproportionately impacted by disinvestment in bicycle infrastructure?
 - Are bicycle safety programs at ALL levels reaching non-White communities?
 - Is it ever fair to discuss equity without discussing access to power?
 - Is FEAR limiting your ability to reach those that you are intending to help?



Thank You!

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