

**BMTS Article Digest**  
**September – October 2022**

BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee Members:

The following is a compilation of articles that may be of interest to BMTS Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee members. This and past digests can also be accessed from the Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee page at <http://bmtsonline.com/about/committees>.

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## 'Historic' Memorial Bridge to be upgraded with safety, other improvements

Mayor Kraham says it's time to invest in it



(Office of Binghamton Mayor Jared Kraham)



By [Matthew Benninger](#)

*Published: Sep. 26, 2022 at 11:05 AM EDT | Updated: 1 hour ago*

BINGHAMTON (WBNG) -- Mayor Jared Kraham announced Monday that Binghamton will reimagine the Memorial Bridge with new streetscape improvements.

[Bergmann](#), an architecture and engineering firm, develop concept renderings of the project that showcase new lighting, landscaping and safety features for the bridge. Kraham's office said Binghamton will hire a team of civil and traffic engineers and landscape architecture professionals to provide the Memorial Bridge's final design.



(Office of Binghamton Mayor Jared Kraham)

"Upgrades at Memorial Bridge will enhance our riverfront and make the bridge safer and more attractive for the many pedestrians and cyclists who use it," said Kraham. "Memorial Bridge is a historic piece of infrastructure with some of the best views of our two rivers. It's time we invest in it."

Binghamton Metropolitan Transportation Study Executive Director Jennifer Yonkoski said the project will be a big upgrade to one of the city's main bridge areas.

"It's the kind of project that can be a catalyst for further revitalization in the surrounding area, and we're excited to see it move forward," Yonkoski said.





(Office of Binghamton Mayor Jared Kraham)

The city noted that an average of 14,500 cars cross the bridge every day and more than 100 pedestrians use the intersection at Washington Street and North Shore Drive during peak travel hours.

Funding for the design is included in Mayor's Kraham proposed 2023 budget. Kraham [presented the budget](#) on Sept. 15.

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By Lindsey Galloway

13th September 2022

Inspired by Covid-19's long lockdowns and safety concerns, cities are implementing pedestrian-friendly initiatives and pushing for more car-free spaces.

When the initial wave of Covid prevented indoor gatherings in most countries around the world, many cities responded by quickly reimagining what life could look like outside. Some introduced pedestrian-only streets, turned parking spots into pop-up restaurants and added more bike lanes – transforming once car-filled areas into walking- and cycling-friendly spots.

The changes paid dividends, not just in increased economic activity, but studies also showed the virus may [spread less quickly](#) in highly walkable neighbourhoods. And while many places have now rolled back these initiatives as life returns to the new normal, some cities have held fast to their pedestrian improvements and have been pushing for even more car-free spaces.



We're profiling four cities around the world that made some of the boldest and fastest pedestrian-friendly changes during the pandemic – and are keeping many of those initiatives to encourage residents and visitors to get around on foot.

Story continues below



Paris residents are increasingly enjoying car-free spaces (Credit: Spooh/Getty Images)

## Paris, France

Even before the pandemic, Paris had a head start in becoming more pedestrian-friendly. As part of a city-wide effort to reduce the number of cars, the lower quays that run along the Seine river were fully pedestrianised in late 2016, a move that was [made permanent in 2018](#). In 2020, Mayor Anne Hidalgo was re-elected in part due to her support of the "15-minute city": a new [urban planning concept](#) that allows residents to complete all their daily tasks – from shopping to schooling to work – within the distance of a 15-minute walk or bike ride.

*I've lived in Paris for 14 years, and I can confidently say that I've never seen a greater, city-wide transformation than the one that's happened most recently to encourage cyclists*

The pandemic, paired with numerous public-transportation strikes prior to lockdown, only strengthened the popularity of these human-centric and environmentally sustainable initiatives. "The beauty of getting around by foot in Paris is highlighted more since Covid," said Kathleen Peddicord, founder of [Live and Invest Overseas](#). "Public transportation was a no-go for a long time and was also more uncomfortable having to wear masks. So, more people started using their feet."

Additional bike lanes have also been introduced to alleviate car traffic. In fact, the city plans to add an [additional 180km of bike lanes](#) and 180,000 bike parking spots by 2026.



"I've lived in Paris for 14 years, and I can confidently say that I've never seen a greater, city-wide transformation than the one that's happened most recently to encourage cyclists," said Sadie Sumner, who runs the Paris branch of bike touring company [Fat Tire Tours](#).

Major thoroughways like the Rue de Rivoli in central Paris have been reduced to one lane, while cyclist paths have been expanded to the width of three car lanes.

The city also plans to plant [170,000 trees by 2026](#), with the intention of cooling Paris to make it more comfortable and enjoyable for pedestrians. In anticipation of the city's hosting of the 2024 Olympics, the bridge between the Eiffel Tower and Trocadero will be fully pedestrianised, too.

Overall, residents have appreciated the widespread changes, and look forward to even more. "The locals really like it, there are less cars and people seem to be a bit more relaxed," said Paris native Roobens Fils, who blogs at [Been Around the Globe](#). He had suggestions for walking-minded travellers: the Parc Rives de Seine, a 7km-long stretch by the river; rue Montorgueil in the heart of Paris for its cheese, wine and flower shops; rue Saint Rustique in Montmartre for its ancient cobblestones (this is the oldest street in Paris); and Cour Saint Emilion for its boutiques, cafes and restaurants.



*Bogotá was one of the first cities to add "pop-up" cycle lanes during the pandemic (Credit: Pablo Arturo Rojas/Getty Images)*

## **Bogotá, Colombia**

While Bogotá (and Colombia in general) has always had a strong bicycling culture, with cycling as the country's national sport, the pandemic accelerated many car-free changes. In 2020, Mayor Claudia Lopez designated [an additional 84km of temporary bike lanes](#) to the city's existing 550km Ciclorruta bike path network – already one of the largest in the world – and they have since become permanent.



Bogotá was among the first cities globally to add "pop-up" cycle lanes during the pandemic, and residents have noticed the permanent changes have been for the better. "The city has really started to develop a noticeable Amsterdam and Copenhagen vibe over the last few years," said Alex Gillard, founder of [Nomad Nature Travel](#) blog and who lived in Bogotá on and off during the pandemic. "There are so many bikes on the streets at all hours of the day, it is quite inspiring."

On Sundays and public holidays, cars are completely banned from certain routes in a programme known as the [Ciclovia](#), attracting more than 1.5 million cyclists, pedestrians and joggers each week.

The city's new SITP buses, which run on electricity and gas, have also improved the public transportation system significantly, according to locals. "The vibe of Bogotá has changed. It's much easier, calmer and safer to move around in the city now," said resident Josephine Remo, who writes an [eponymous travel blog](#).

She recommends travellers check out the historical neighbourhood of La Candelaria where the city was born more than 400 years ago; they'll find plenty of museums about the city's rich history, as well as restaurants housed in centuries-old buildings. She also suggests Usaquén Park for its weekend open-air market, where visitors can check out local Colombian food, crafts and music events.



*Milan's new CityLife district is one of the largest car-free zones in Europe (Credit: M M Photographer/Getty Images)*

## **Milan, Italy**

Italy was one of the countries hit hardest initially in the pandemic, and its cities had to adapt quickly to provide alternatives to densely populated public transportation. In summer 2020, Milan embarked on [an ambitious plan](#) to widen pavements and expand cycling lanes along 35km of roads previously centred on car traffic. The changes have transformed the city, bringing with it more outdoor dining, open-air markets and urban gardens.



"It's not the Milan I remember from 10 years ago during my college days," said resident Luisa Favaretto, founder of living abroad site [Strategistico](#). "I love the concept of the 15-minute city [\[a plan Milan has also explored\]](#) and was drawn by the city's evolving infrastructure that prioritises people over cars." She's seen a growth in what she calls an "old world" sense of community, as there are more reasons to be outdoors and to meet in communal spaces.

The new [CityLife district](#) is not only Milan's largest car-free area but one of the largest car-free zones in Europe. "It is filled with public green spaces along with tons of bike lanes, and offers a glimpse into the future of a sustainable Milan," said Favaretto. She also recommends strolling the [canals of Navigli](#) and enjoying the neighbourhood's outdoor dining options and nightlife. The north neighbourhood of Isola has been transformed from an industrial district to a walkable and bikeable area full of hip cafes, galleries and boutiques.

Travellers also don't have to worry about finding a bike to enjoy the cycling lanes. The city's bike sharing service, [BikeMi](#), has 300 stations across the city and offers both regular and e-bikes.



*The Embarcadero was originally a freeway until a 1989 earthquake rendered it unusable (Credit: Christopher Chan/Getty Images)*

## **San Francisco, US**

This northern California city moved quickly during the early pandemic to launch [Slow Streets](#) – a programme that used signage and barriers to limit car traffic and speeds on 30 corridors in an effort to make them more pedestrian- and cyclist-friendly. According to [data collected by the city](#), the programme saw a 50% reduction in vehicle traffic, a 17% increase in weekday pedestrian traffic and a 65% jump in weekday cyclist traffic.



## *It is lovely for pedestrians and bikers to be able to share the streets*

Though many of the streets have since been returned to pre-pandemic status, residents pushed to make four sections permanent, including those on Golden Gate Avenue, Lake Street, Sanchez Street and Shotwell Street. In September, [a vote will be held](#) on the future of the other corridors.

"It is lovely for pedestrians and bikers to be able to share the streets," said resident Leith Steel on the roads that are still closed. "You see families out walking, kids playing – it is a much different experience."

She also notes that the city has put money and effort into building better bike routes throughout the city, and they are more clearly marked than previously. She recommends really exploring each neighbourhood in San Francisco, since they each have their own feel and character. She likes the tree-lined Hayes Valley for its upscale and modern vibes; Outer Sunset for its laid-back surfer vibe and 3.5-mile stretch of white sand beach; and North Beach for its lively street cafes (and the 4th [most walkable neighbourhood](#) in the city).

Though there's still much to be done to change San Francisco into a truly pedestrian-friendly city, history shows it can be done. One of the city's most walkable areas – the Embarcadero along the waterfront – was [once a freeway](#) until a 1989 earthquake rendered it unusable for vehicles.

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# THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

## Can You Actually Ditch Your Car for an E-Bike? Maybe



**If you're looking to take advantage of your city's improved biking infrastructure, you'll need the right bike and accessories.**

**THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE**  
For many riders, new e-bikes offer all the same functionalities one expects from SUVs, pickup trucks and sedans. ILLUSTRATION: JACK RICHARDSON

By Brigid Mander

Sept. 20, 2022 3:45 pm ET



**EACH WEEKDAY MORNING**, like millions of other American parents, Emily Lecuyer, 39, drops her kids off at daycare.

Instead of loading them in a car, however, the CFO for an IT security company in Kansas City, Mo., transports her 1- and 2-year olds on her Rad Power Bikes RadWagon, a long tail cargo electric bike. After pedaling her progeny 3 miles to their destination, Ms. Lecuyer journeys another 5 miles to her office. She might arrive with her hair a bit windswept, but, thanks to the bike's powerful motor, she never breaks much of a sweat. "I do everything on it," she said.

She finds the RadWagon so useful that she sold the [Ford F-150](#) pickup truck on which she once relied. She and her husband now live in a one car, one e-bike household.

Bicycle industry analysts and advocates say Ms. Lecuyer is part of a growing contingent. According to the Light Electric Vehicle Association (LEVA), which tracks e-bike imports to the U.S., 880,000 e-bikes came into the country in 2021, up from about 450,000 in 2020.

The NPD Group, an American market research firm, estimated total sales at one million for 2021. E-bikes outsold electric cars in the U.S. and in Europe in 2021, according to data from Bloomberg and Deloitte. And U.S. e-bike sales are expected to reach at least three million annually by 2025, according to LEVA.

Sales of accessories for bike commuting have ticked up significantly in recent years, too. Nicholas Martinez, director of sales at Burley, a Eugene, Ore.-based bike trailer company, says demand has jumped dramatically with the rise of e-bikes. Trailers, along with baskets or panniers (storage bags attached to the bike frame), let e-bikers transport passengers and goods without committing to a larger cargo bike. Trailers such as those Burley sells attach to the rear hub of any bike, and have interiors designed specifically for children, pets, or cargo. Panniers can lug office and gym gear. Retailers have been scrambling to keep sales floors stocked with all the new options from traditional bike manufacturers, American and foreign. New direct-to-consumer companies are also doing brisk business.





Some Americans say cargo e-bikes like the Yuba Spicy Curry (From \$5,199, YubaBikes.com) offer all the core functionalities of their SUVs and trucks. They can be accessorized with child seats, trailers and, of course, bungee cords.

That puts would-be e-bike shoppers in an excellent position. “Four years ago, there weren’t a lot of options. But now, there are so many kinds of e-bikes,” said Jake Lanich, assistant manager at Mike’s Bikes, a group of 12 bike stores in San Francisco. Cargo bikes, such as Ms. Lecuyer’s, offer enough supplemental power to tow a respectable 300 pounds of stuff and to supplant her pickup as a way to handle daily tasks. Other ebikes promise smooth rides and a protracted battery life akin to what you’d get with a practical hybrid sedan. And other bikes are pumped with cutting-edge technology that lets them zoom along.

Among the caveats: Though many e-bikes could go faster, their speed in the U.S. and EU is capped at 28 mph. Still, John MacArthur, a researcher in sustainable transportation at Portland State University in Oregon, says the explosion of e-bike options should push more people to view two wheels as preferable to four.

He points out that [nearly half of all](#) American vehicle trips are under 3 miles, according to household travel surveys conducted by the Federal Highway Administration. Most people, he says, consider 5 miles a reasonable distance to travel on a bike. But thanks to their motors, e-bikes make even 10-mile errands easy.

In some parts of the country, Mr. MacArthur’s prophecy already appears to have been realized. As Mr. Lanich reported, “E-bikes are very popular transportation here in San Francisco for hauling kids, groceries, work commutes. People want to avoid the hassles of parking and cars.” He’s even noticed that Oracle Park, home of the city’s Major League Baseball team, has introduced a free e-bike valet, which is usually fairly in demand.

Nearly half of all American vehicle trips are under 3 miles, according to the Federal Highway Administration.



Among the other advantages listed by those who favor e-bikes over cars: the new freedom from dealing with congestion, gas prices and expensive maintenance. E-bikers like Shawn Lohkamp, 50, a retired U.S. Air Force nurse in Albuquerque, N.M., say that their new vehicles have made getting around more enjoyable. “E-bikes just changed my life,” said Ms. Lohkamp. “I save on gas, I get a workout, I can get downtown on the bike path faster than driving. And my e-bike makes it fun.”

If there is a catch, it is that e-bikes can cost anywhere from just over \$1,000 to well over \$10,000. Advocacy groups at federal and local levels are lobbying for e-bikers to get similar tax breaks and incentives as those for electric car drivers.

Help is already on the way. California has a statewide e-bike subsidy. Denver has designated funds of up to \$1,700 per purchase for e-bike rebates, with half reserved for lower-income applicants. And e-bikers also benefit from some of New York City’s programming for non-powered bikers, including its free helmets program.

And even if you don’t buy an e-bike yourself, you can rent one in cities across the country through bike-share systems, an option which has proven popular in New York, Austin, Texas, Cincinnati, Ohio, and other metropolises. Data from 2021 shows that, in cities with e-bikes in their bike share programs, people were 36% more likely to travel with power than without, according to Ash Lovell, electric bicycle policy manager at national industry trade group People for Bikes. The popularity has led cities including Nashville, Tenn., and Madison, Wisc., to replace their entire fleet of rental bikes with e-bikes.

But that means cities will have to improve the infrastructure that’s available to e-bikers. Ms. Lovell is hopeful this will happen. “It looks like the U.S. is really going to lean into this as more people see bikes as an alternative to cars,” she said.

It is already happening in Kansas City, which is on track to meet its promise to install 15 miles of new protected [bike lanes by the end of 2022](#). Ms. Lecuyer says the additions have already “completely changed the culture here. The lanes are busy, and I see more bikes showing up outside my office building.”

Biking advocates hope drivers see that the projects are good for them too. “The more people biking, the more biking infrastructure, the less traffic on the road,” said Bill Nesper, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based League of American Bicyclists. “That benefits everyone.”

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## The Washington Post

### [INSPIRED LIFE](#)

**These kids ride a ‘bike bus’ to school. Residents line the streets and cheer.**

‘Bikes provide a sense of freedom and joy that I was not expecting,’ said teacher Sam Balto, who leads a caravan of kids to school



By [Sydney Page](#)

October 11, 2022 at 6:00 a.m. EDT





Phoebe, a 65-pound goldendoodle, rides with students every Wednesday morning in Portland, Ore., during their weekly “bike bus” ride. (Ian Downard)

Every Wednesday morning, people in Portland, Ore., go to their windows and stand on their stoops to watch a group of about 170 children roll by on their bikes, music trailing behind them, sometimes drowned out by the kids’ excited chatter. The onlookers cheer and take photos.

“This brings so much joy to so many people,” said Alison Warlitner, whose children attend Alameda Elementary School and join in the bike commute each week. “It’s the coolest thing.” Physical education teacher Sam Balto leads the caravan of kids on their collective commute to school starting about 8:10 a.m. He wears a neon yellow safety vest and blasts music on a portable speaker.

Warlitner’s two children, ages 6 and 7, spring out of bed Wednesday mornings, she said, to join the bike caravan to school. Warlitner shared a [video of the “bike bus” on TikTok last week](#), and it has been viewed more than 7 million times. She said she thinks it hit a nerve because of the sheer joy it spreads.

“They just get to school happy,” she said.

The bike bus has become the students’ favorite way to get to school. The community likes it because it reduces congestion and pollution caused by buses and cars — while also promoting physical activity and fostering community.

Balto — who is from Chevy Chase, Md., and has been a teacher for 10 years at schools in D.C., Boston and now Portland — has long been interested in the idea of active transportation.





Alameda Elementary PE teacher Sam Balto leading the bike bus in Portland. (Jonathan Maus/BikePortland)

While teaching in Boston, Balto started a “walking school bus” in 2016. He plotted out a safe route and encouraged students, parents, teachers and community members to join a group stroll to school.

“I saw great success with that,” said Balto, 37. “Children really love a chance to be out walking with their friends, and it was a great way to support students who did not have a parent who could walk with them or drive them to school.”

Balto said walking as a group addressed several problems, including childhood inactivity, bus driver shortages, morning drop-off congestion, pollution and safety concerns — since some parents and students aren’t comfortable with solo walks to school.

“There is tons of research about the importance of physical activity before school,” Balto said, adding that he noticed morning exercise improved students’ ability to focus in class.

What struck him most about the walking school bus, though, was how it strengthened the sense of community at the school.

“When we can provide more opportunities for children to connect with their peers, they absolutely love it,” he said. “It’s how we build stronger, more connected, safer school communities.”



When Balto moved to Portland in 2018, he brought the walking project to his new school. Then the pandemic hit, and he began working at Alameda Elementary in the fall of 2021. In April, to mark Earth Day, he proposed trying out a bike bus, which he saw was gaining popularity in Barcelona. Administrators were enthusiastically on board. He had also participated in National Bike to School Day. This is that idea writ large.



Alameda Elementary students on the bike bus. (Jonathan Maus/BikePortland)

“That first run of it on Earth Day was a super-successful event,” said Matt Goldstein, the principal of Alameda.

The bike bus was also an opportunity for students to learn about climate change and how they can help. “This has proven to be a really cool, actionable item for kids and adults,” he said.

The whole school was invited to join the ride, and about 75 students showed up, many bringing their parents along to help chaperone.

Having led several walking school buses in the past, Balto was surprised that the bike bus had an even more powerful effect.

“Bikes provide a sense of freedom and joy that I was not expecting,” he said.

Given its success, they decided to do it again — and again and again. It quickly became a weekly Wednesday ritual at the school, and by the end of the school year roughly 120 students were taking part each time. Now, more than 170 kids — nearly 30 percent of the student body — meet every Wednesday morning, ready to ride. Goldstein also participates.





Balto leads the students and parents in what has become a Wednesday ritual in Portland. (Jonathan Maus/BikePortland)

“The energy and the sense of community and the smiles, the day feels a little bit different than other days,” Goldstein said.

Every Wednesday around 8 a.m., the kids and parent volunteers congregate at two meeting spots, depending where they live. Balto has mapped out two routes — each about 1.5 miles long — and the groups meet in the middle. Both rides are entirely on a neighborhood greenway, which is a road intended for walking and biking. Parents wait at major crossings to stop the bike bus until there’s a break in car traffic.

There is always “a good ratio of adults to kids,” Balto said, adding that although they stay on a designated bike route, “there’s safety in numbers.”

The school community provides bikes to any student who doesn’t have access to one, Balto said. He has also contacted to local cycling organizations, with the aim of offering bikes to students in need at other schools in the city.

“At other schools, there’s a higher need for support,” said Balto, who shares videos of the bike bus on social media, hoping it will inspire other schools. “These videos are really touching something in people. There’s a sense of joy and freedom that they see with the children biking, but it also gets them to stop and reflect on how we can do student transportation differently.”

“My goal is to bring more awareness about active transportation and also to change how we fund student transportation,” Balto continued, adding that relying on parent volunteers to



facilitate bike buses is inequitable and unsustainable. “Just as we have infrastructure for buses, we need to create an infrastructure around active transportation.”



Parent volunteers help with the initiative and scatter themselves throughout the crowd of children. (Jonathan Maus/BikePortland)

Ian Downard, who has two children — ages 8 and 10 — at the school, helps lead the group every Wednesday.

The concept “touched me deeply,” he said. When the project started in the spring, “people were just so starved for community.”

“When we do bike bus, people come out of their homes and watch us. It’s kind of like a parade,” Downard said. “It’s palpable, the excitement in the neighborhood and community, and how much joy everyone gets just by seeing kids going to school and being happy and exercising.”

Downard brings his 65-pound goldendoodle, Phoebe, along for the ride. He straps her into a basket on the back of his bike.





Phoebe joins students on their weekly bike ride. (Ian Downard)

"The dog is definitely a mascot for the bike bus," he said.

As a parent, he has taken note of the benefits the bike bus, particularly for children.

"They not only enjoy biking, but it gets them in a great frame of mind for learning," Downard said. "The whole thing is just such a delight. It's nothing but goodness."



"The energy and the sense of community and the smiles, the day feels a little bit different than other days," said Alameda Elementary Principal Matt Goldstein. (Ian Downard)



Since starting the bike bus, Balto has noticed groups of students riding to school together on non-bike-bus days, which “has been truly amazing to see,” he said.

“When you get students and parents out of their cars and out in the community,” Balto said, “that is where the magic happens.”

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