



Industry and Cities Positioned to Maintain Growth of Bicycling in 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unexpected challenges to the health, livelihood and well-being of every community last year. Working, shopping and getting around fundamentally changed amidst global efforts to control the spread of the virus. Adapting to a “new normal,” people turned to the outdoors for exercise, mental relaxation and to help escape the stress caused by the new patterns of daily life. By May 2020, bicycling was one of the most popular forms of recreation and exercise in cities around the world. PeopleForBikes launched two simultaneous studies at the end of 2020 to better understand how personal riding habits changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as what cities had done to improve and create spaces for the increased number of bikes on their streets. Our research creates the framework by which we can build on this momentum for bicycling and position our partners to activate opportunities in 2021.

KEY FINDINGS:

- **During the COVID-19 pandemic, 10% of American adults engaged with bicycling in a new way.**
Since March, 4% of the U.S. population (ages 18 and older) rode a bike for the first time in one or more years, or for the first time ever. An additional 6% participated in a different type of bicycling during the pandemic, such as trying indoor riding or riding their bike for transportation.
- **Approximately 200 U.S. cities changed the functionality of their streets to accommodate increased outdoor activities.**
Influenced by requests from community members, elected officials directed changes to local streets and parks that accommodated outdoor activity. While street closures and other measures did tangentially benefit biking, fewer than half of cities advanced measures specifically designed to sustain increased levels of bicycling.
- **New riders were motivated to ride because they enjoy exercising and being healthy (56%) or found bicycling a fun, safe way to interact with others while remaining socially distanced (43%).**
Before the pandemic, new riders indicated a lack of time (35%) as the primary reason why they weren't riding bikes. New riders were more likely to participate in only one type of bicycling and were motivated to ride for the socialization that bicycling offers (43%), while existing riders (18%) enjoy the solitude of riding their bike.
- **In nearly half of American cities, a lack of community engagement jeopardized the success of measures taken to support bicycling during the pandemic.**
Only 58% of cities engaged in a public input process before the implementation of any measures, temporary or permanent. Nearly half of cities that implemented new programs or projects during the pandemic faced vocal opposition to those changes. Of those cities, about one-third removed or significantly altered their projects in response to cited objections.
- **Those who started riding during the pandemic recruited others to ride and plan to stick with bicycling.**
New riders were more likely than existing riders to invite their friends or family to join them for a bicycle ride during the pandemic. Those who were invited to ride were twice as likely to be a beginner or infrequent rider.
- **86% of cities now consider the measures taken to support biking during COVID-19 as critical components of their future mobility or recreation networks.**
In spite of mixed outcomes across cities, there is a general consensus that cities will carry momentum to accommodate and grow biking into 2021, although an uncertain financial future and lack of preparedness are identified as primary obstacles heading into the new year.

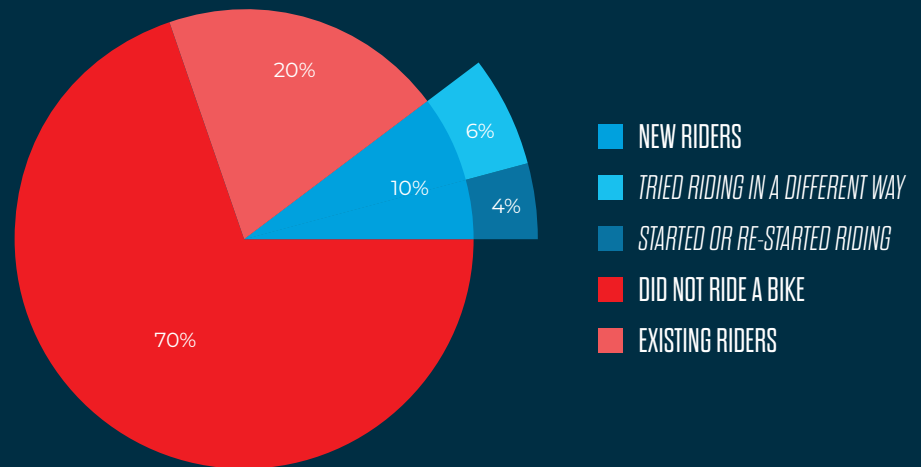
These results are based on two surveys fielded by PeopleForBikes during October and November, 2020:

- A consumer insights survey was fielded with the goal of understanding how riders across the United States have been responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample includes 2,603 Americans (ages 18+), and is representative of the US population based on age, gender, geographic region, income, and race/ethnicity;
- A survey of cities was conducted with the goal of understanding how cities across the United States have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample includes a minimum of 40 respondents, with some cities providing partially completed questionnaires.



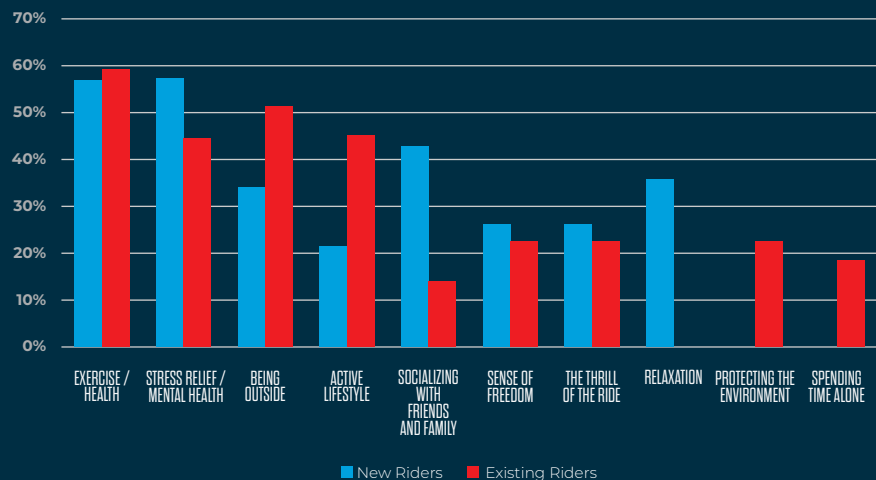
Share of U.S. adult population that rode a bicycle during COVID-19

2020 COVID Participation Study, PeopleForBikes



Major motivators for riding bicycles during COVID-19

2020 COVID Participation Survey, PeopleForBikes



SELECTED CHARTS:

Measures taken by U.S. cities to accommodate active modes of transportation or recreation in response to COVID-19

2020 COVID Community Survey, PeopleForBikes

