



# 2013 Bike & Pedestrian Plan

## A Vision for the Future



8  
TO  
80

MAKING THE CITY  
SAFE TO BIKE IN  
FOR EVERYONE  
FROM 8 YEAR-OLDS  
TO 80 YEAR-OLDS



ELM CITY CYCLING

Contact: [ecc\\_bike\\_plan@googlegroups.com](mailto:ecc_bike_plan@googlegroups.com)

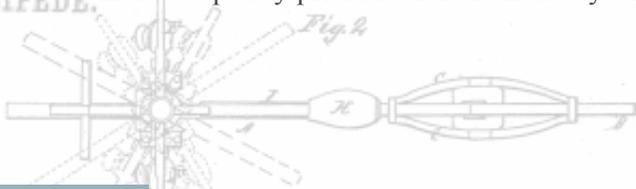
## I. Vision Statement and Background

Elm City Cycling and its partners envision the City of New Haven becoming a more inclusive and prosperous community by working quickly to implement the highest standards of infrastructure for pedestrians, bicyclists, and mass transit users.

For everyone in our city to prosper, New Haven must become a place where a person of any age - from a small child to a senior citizen - can feel comfortable taking a bike trip across town or walking across their street to catch a bus.

Walkable and bike-friendly cities have been shown to be more socially inclusive, economically prosperous, environmentally friendly, and safer for all road users. Increasing the rate of cycling, in particular, has been shown in other cities to result in major safety benefits for other users of streets. The benefits of walking include increased public health, greater neighborhood safety, and support for locally-owned businesses. Unemployment, vacant storefronts, the high costs of vehicle-related pollution and noise, concerns about public safety and childhood obesity rates within sections of our city suggest that making our streets friendlier to walking, biking, and transit use should be at the top of the Mayor's priority list. Moreover, the Alliance for Biking and Walking estimates that there are \$11.80 of benefits for every \$1 invested in biking and walking.

This plan contains observations and recommendations regarding the expansion of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in our city. At the request of the City administration, and to help inform the City's 2013-2014 Comprehensive Plan of Development, we have included policy priorities for the next 5 years.



April 1866

Pierre Lallement rides his "velocipede" from Ansonia to the New Haven Green - biking comes to New Haven

... and America



## II. History: Progress to a Walkable/Bikeable New Haven

New Haven has a long history of planning for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Efforts have included many reports in the 1990s, the City's 2003 Comprehensive Plan, the Plan for Greenways and Cycling Systems, and related documents including recent collaborations between Elm City Cycling and the City's Transportation Department such as the 2010 Bike Plan. The nationally-recognized Complete Streets Design Manual, adopted unanimously by the New Haven Board of Aldermen in 2009, was a major step forward and is considered a capstone of these planning efforts as well as a baseline for improvements going forward. Unfortunately, the city's current infrastructure does not come close to living up to these goals.

In recent years, neighborhoods in New Haven have seen increased rates of cycling and walking. Between 1980 and 2010, bicycle commuting in New Haven significantly increased, according to Census data. Looking only at resident workers, the proportion who bike to work every day increased from 0.5% between 1980 & 1990, to 1% in 2000, to 2.4% (1,400 people) in 2010. Business and employment at local bicycle shops has also increased. The proportion of residents who walk to work has also remained high, as it has been for decades - with an estimated 13% of resident workers (7,600 people) walking to work each day in 2010.

These figures only represent city residents' daily commutes to work; they do not

**Bike commuting in New Haven 1980-2010 (U.S. Census)**



include walks to school, errands, recreational rides or walks, walking or biking to get to mass transit, walking to and from parking lots, or occasional commutes done by biking and walking. For example, a 2010 survey conducted by the New Haven Community Management Teams, which interviewed over 1,000 residents in nine different neighborhoods, found that more than 25% got around by bike at least once per week, and more than 90% took neighborhood walks at least once per month.

These numbers far outstrip national averages and are a testament to the attraction to walking or biking around Elm City. With smart changes in infrastructure, these numbers can improve.





STUDIES SHOW THAT **CAR NOISE, AND TRAFFIC** REDUCE BIKING AND WALKING



77% OF PEOPLE WANT ABUNDANT SIDEWALKS AND PEDESTRIAN-FRIENDLY FEATURES

### III. PRIORITIES

#### 1. Slow Streets: Safer and More Enjoyable Streets for Walking

Too many of our neighborhood streets have highway-sized lanes and cater to commuters, rather than residents of all ages. Reduce the width of car lanes to bring driving speeds within the posted speed limits. Plant trees to slow traffic and make walking more enjoyable. Follow the lead of other American cities like New York and Portland, and implement 20 mile per hour speed limits on residential streets throughout New Haven, and in key pedestrian areas near neighborhood schools, universities, and hospitals.



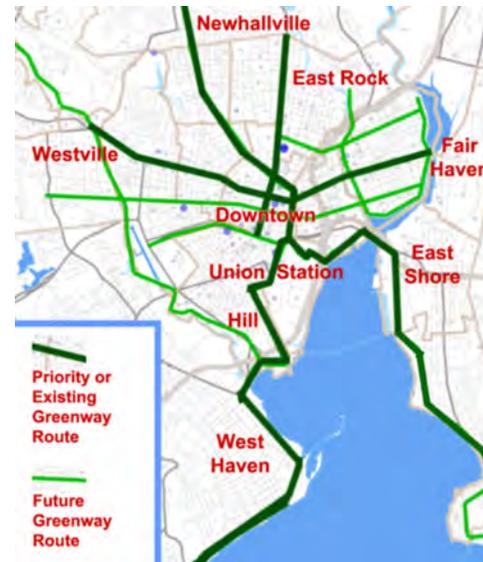
#### 2. Missing Pieces: Fix the Transportation Gaps

Connect the city by transforming our city's most important transportation routes into "Greenway Streets" that are usable for pedestrians and cyclists of all ages, not just vehicles. Elm Street, College Street, Whitney Avenue and Church Street through Downtown, the major routes to Westville and Fair Haven (Whalley, Chapel, Grand, Edgewood), and the Route 34 Corridor (including connections to Union Station and the Hill) can be converted into "Greenway Streets" through the use of raised crosswalks and separated bicycle facilities (i.e., not sharrows). The City also must address critical safety issues such as those found on the Tomlinson Bridge, the only viable pedestrian connection between Downtown and the East Shore. Creating "parallel" routes that allow cyclists and pedestrians to access these streets is a sort of "permanent detour" away from our city's most important streets, and is not an acceptable solution. Building appropriate infrastructure within these four areas will prompt a dramatic increase in cycling and walking throughout New Haven.

*Mayor Tom Harkin*  
*City of New Haven*

#### 3. Green City: Complete the Citywide Greenway System.

Provide critical places for people to walk and bike through their neighborhoods and beyond, first and foremost by completing the Farmington Canal Greenway to New Haven Harbor and Union Station. Make progress towards implementing the City's 2003 Plan for Greenways, which include a West River Greenway, Fair Haven Greenway, and Harborside routes from West Haven to Lighthouse Point.



#### 4. Eight to Eighty: World Class Urban Bikeways and Cycling for All Ages

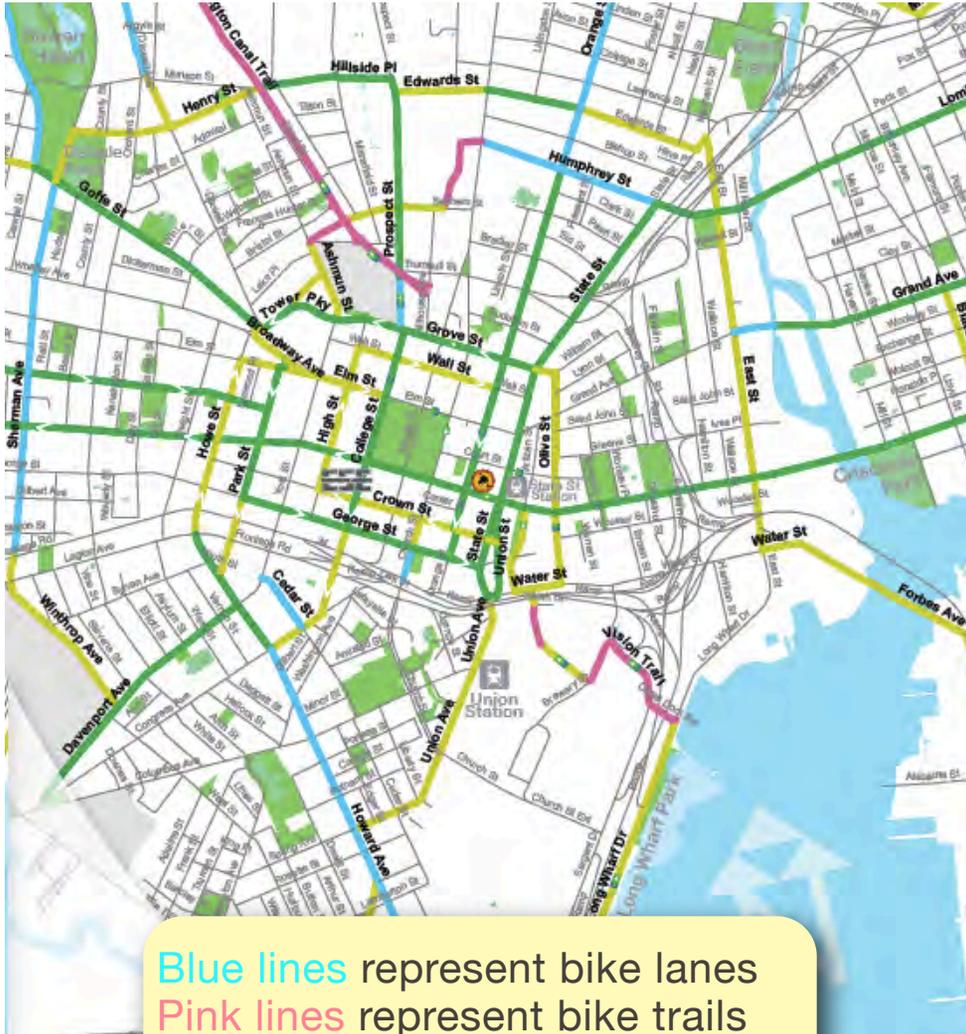
"A bikeway is not a bikeway unless it is safe enough for an 8-year old to ride on it unsupervised." (Former Bogota Mayor Enrique Peñalosa.) The City must launch a serious planning effort now with the goal of completing a North-South and two East-West bikeways by 2020, perhaps including the routes suggested above. This is the only way that city residents of all ages, in all neighborhoods, will be able to begin to access the entire city via bicycle.

#### 5. You Can Only Improve What You Can Measure.

Formalize a system to monitor and evaluate cycling and walking activity and safety on a regular basis, including annual bike counts, annual pedestrian counts, and quarterly reporting to the community about traffic safety and traffic enforcement data by neighborhood. Set a target of increasing bicycle mode share by 50% by 2017 and doubling it by 2020.



## CURRENT BICYCLE ROUTE INFRASTRUCTURE IN NEW HAVEN



Blue lines represent bike lanes  
Pink lines represent bike trails  
Green lines represent streets  
with sharrows  
Yellow lines represent common  
unmarked routes

New Haven has made  
improvements  
but ...

Routes suddenly stop  
and start or remain  
half-finished

There are no  
contiguous routes  
through city

The absence of safe  
cycling routes limits  
transportation options and  
decreases safety

### IVa. Moving Forward - Increasing Cycling in New Haven

There is an urgent need to separate the road space currently used for high-speed motorized traffic from that needed for cyclist traffic. Overall, the city needs to use its allotted road space more wisely, installing full bike lanes anywhere that space allows, and elsewhere, sharrows. For busier roadways such as Whalley Avenue, segregated bicycle facilities – urban bikeways known as “cycle tracks” or “buffered bicycle lanes” – are needed if the city wishes to reach its goal of equitable access for all road users. Directing cyclists to alternative routes on nearby streets is not an acceptable solution in these cases, as it does nothing to benefit neighborhood retail, which tends to be located on main arterial roads. In addition, more attention should be paid to intersection design, for example, by continuing bike lane markings through intersections and adding “bike boxes.”

We envision that the completion of an urban “Greenway Street” system by 2020, mentioned above as one of our priorities, will finally allow residents of all ages to travel by bicycle throughout New Haven. Most likely, this will involve completing the Farmington Canal Greenway as the North-South route (with high-quality connections to Union Station, City Point, and New Haven Harbor); and completing two East-West routes with connections between Union Station, Downtown, Quinnipiac River, Edgewood Park, and many city neighborhoods. The routes will incorporate high-quality facilities from Downtown to Westville and Fair Haven, and attractive routes to East Haven and West Haven, perhaps via the

Harborside Greenway route that the City identified in 2003.



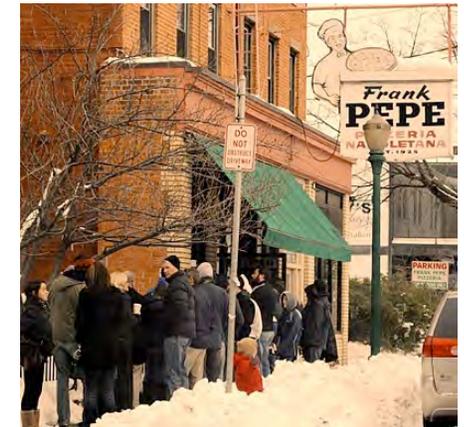
### IVb. Moving Forward - Increasing Walking in New Haven

As the Center for Disease Control has highlighted, physical activity has declined compared to previous generations. We believe that poor urban policy is a major contributor to elevated rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and other chronic health conditions in sections of New Haven. Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of injury-related death for many age groups. Pedestrians and bicyclists are at an even greater risk of death from crashes than those who travel by motor vehicles. In some neighborhoods, a majority of residents do not feel that it is safe for them to walk outside at night.



A more walkable, pedestrian-friendly New Haven would benefit virtually every current resident and make the Elm City an even more attractive place for businesses to create good jobs. It would also improve access to transit, particularly for senior citizens. The most effective location where New Haven can improve walking conditions is within its prime retail corridors, such as along Whalley, Grand, Dixwell Avenues, and

Downtown, and within its residential neighborhoods. In 2011, the National Association Realtors found that 77% of Americans said they would look for neighborhoods with abundant sidewalks and other pedestrian-friendly features and that 56% preferred smart growth neighborhoods over neighborhoods that require more driving between home, work and recreation. Among younger adults, the preference for a walkable neighborhood is even greater. Compared to most cities, New Haven is situated to capitalize on these trends if city government makes smart policy choices such as implementing slower speed limits and raised crosswalks along residential streets and throughout major pedestrian and transit hubs.



## Fairness

Less than 1%

of all Connecticut state transportation dollars go to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

## Public Safety

Buffered bike lanes reduce injury by

90%

## Public Safety

**85% of pedestrian collisions at 40 mph result in death**

versus just 5% of collisions at 20 mph.

## Economic Development

Studies show that **\$11.80 of benefits** come from every **\$1 invested** in biking and walking.

## Community Needs

Nationally only 13% of children walk or bike to school. In Fair Haven alone, 20% of students walk to school.

## Public Safety

Car collisions with pedestrian children in New Haven occur at a rate of

twice

the national average.

## VISION ITEMS

### *Bike Corral*

16 bikes parked in the space of one car. An economic boost for nearby shops.



### *Bike Share*

Commuters, tourists can use. Workers can take short work trips, e.g., to a local restaurant, without needing to get back in their car. The only form of public transportation that makes money.



### *Cycle Track/Buffered Bike Lane*

The most transformative step the city could take would be to invest in infrastructure that adhered to the 8 to 80 principle - infrastructure safe for residents from 8 to 80 years-old to bike across town. The only way to truly do this is to provide buffered bike lanes that cross the city and separate motorized traffic from bicycle traffic. According to researchers at the University of British Columbia, wide streets with parked cars and no bike infrastructure are the most dangerous, streets with bike lanes reduce injury by 50%, and streets with buffered bike lanes reduce injury by 90%. New Haven currently has plenty of wide streets with parked cars and no protected bike lanes. These design changes, which fortunately can be done relatively cheaply, will increase ridership by making biking safer, less stressful and more pleasant. Given that most major American cities are now taking this approach, failing to follow suit in New Haven will put the city at a major economic disadvantage.