

CHAPTER 3

VISION & GOALS

Chapter Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	
DEVELOPING THE VISION AND GOALS	
BIKE PLAN VISION STATEMENT	
PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	
GOAL STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT	

3-1

I WANT TO REDUCE
MY ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT, STAY FIT -
BICYCLING IS A

3-2

3-4

3-5

3-13

SAFELY TO AND BACK	
-----------------------	--

BIKE PLAN VISION STATEMENT	
----------------------------	--

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	
-------------------	--

GOAL STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT	
----------------------------	--

I WISH IT WAS EASIER TO BIKE...

near
UH.

HOUSTON WOULD BE A SAFER, HEALTHIER,
MORE BIKE FRIENDLY PLACE IF...

STRICTER &
ENFORCED LAWS

FOR MOTORISTS

& BIKERS

HOUSTON WOULD BE A SAFER, HEALTHIER,
MORE BIKE FRIENDLY PLACE IF...

You had ev-

LIBRARY STI

A BOOK MAR

LIKE THIS IN

EVERY BORROWE

BOOK!

HOUSTON WOULD BE A SAFER, HEALTHIER,
MORE BIKE FRIENDLY PLACE IF...

The t

facili

easier

and w

the

I WOULD BIKE

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

W

03

VISIONS & GOALS



*Bike Plan
Community Meeting*

Houston has a passionate bicycling community of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. To develop the overall vision and goals for the Bike Plan, Houstonians throughout the city were engaged in a variety of ways to take advantage of the community's knowledge of the city's streets and infrastructure, and opportunities to make bicycling better. A robust public outreach process was conducted to understand overall goals for improving bicycling in Houston. Participants provided broad feedback on themes of safety, bike facilities, and access to better opportunities for people to bike. More specific feedback included what streets people thought were appropriate for new or improved bike facilities, barriers to riding, opportunities to get more people riding bikes, and policies and programs to support increasing bicycling.

Each area of the city has its own unique opportunities and challenges. Bicycling in Midtown or Sharpstown is different from bicycling in Montrose or Acres Homes, and bicycling on Washington Avenue or Lamar Street in Downtown is different from bicycling on the Columbia Tap Trail, or Brays Bayou Trail. In order to develop a citywide plan with effective and achievable goals that is appropriate for all neighborhoods in Houston, close collaboration was necessary with local residents and leaders. This included public meetings led by the City of Houston, outreach at community events and smaller neighborhood meetings, as well as multiple online tools to reach as many people as possible.

DEVELOPING THE VISION AND GOALS

The development of a vision and goals for the Bike Plan required conversations with a diverse set of participants to reflect the broad values and expectations of a well-connected, citywide bike plan. These conversations were two-way, both to listen to the community's questions, concerns, and objectives but also to educate and inform the community of the findings from existing conditions and opportunities for the Plan and outline the path forward. Information about existing conditions and opportunities was provided to stakeholders, City staff, and the community to think about how better bicycling conditions can serve the City's population and how they envision the Plan to influence larger goals, e.g., mobility, health, safety, innovation, and economic development.

Building a broad consensus with cyclists and non-cyclists ensures that the Bike Plan reflects regional ambitions, as implementation has the potential to affect not only the mobility of residents, but also their quality of life. The results of this phase established a framework around stated values from the community, stakeholders, and City staff as the goals that will frame the development of recommendations.

A variety of approaches were used to collect feedback. These tools were utilized in public meetings, online through the project website, stakeholder meetings, and outreach at community events and meetings. In all, over 3,000 people provided feedback on the plan



and many more signed up for updates about the plan progress.

A Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC) was developed that consisted of representatives from various stakeholder groups in order to help provide feedback throughout the Bike Plan development, including development of goals and performance metrics, and assistance with public outreach methods and materials. BAC members represented schools, bicycle advocacy organizations

Participants gathered to discuss bike-friendly design on the Project Kickoff Ride at the May 30th Bike Ride & Open House

Figure 3.1 Houston Bike Plan Vision & Goals Relationship**Vision**

An inspirational description of your desired future conditions

Goals

Tangible objectives that deliver against the vision

Metrics

Measurable variables and milestones used to assess progress

Strategies

Specific projects, programs, and policies to achieve goals

and businesses, various City of Houston departments, the business community, neighborhood associations, management districts, transit interests, and other organizations that provide advocacy and representation for bicycle issues in Houston. This group was instrumental in refining the goals and metrics to represent public and stakeholder input.

The results of this process and community input provided support for the development of a Vision and Goals for the Bike Plan. As described in Figure 3.1, the Vision and Goals provide a clear direction for the development of the plan. Additionally, performance metrics will track the plan's performance against the goals. These metrics should be readily measurable and support activity that advances the goals of the plan. The Goals will be supported by strategies which include recommendations related to projects, policies, and programs that will help move Houston towards the stated goals. Specific strategies are detailed in **Chapter 5 Network Plan & Map**.

The Goals for the Bike Plan address categories of improving safety, increasing access, increasing ridership, and developing and maintaining facilities. The input from communities and stakeholders directly informed these goal statements through public meeting activities and online activities, such as surveys and discussion forums. The Vision and Goals for the Bike Plan are shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Houston Bike Plan Vision & Goals

VISION

By 2027, the City of Houston will be a Safer, More Accessible, Gold Level Bike-Friendly City

GOALS



Improve Safety

To provide a safer bicycle network for people of all ages and abilities through improved facilities, education, and enforcement



Increase Access

To create a highly accessible, citywide network of comfortable bike facilities that connects neighborhoods to transit, jobs, and activity centers, including schools, universities, parks, and libraries



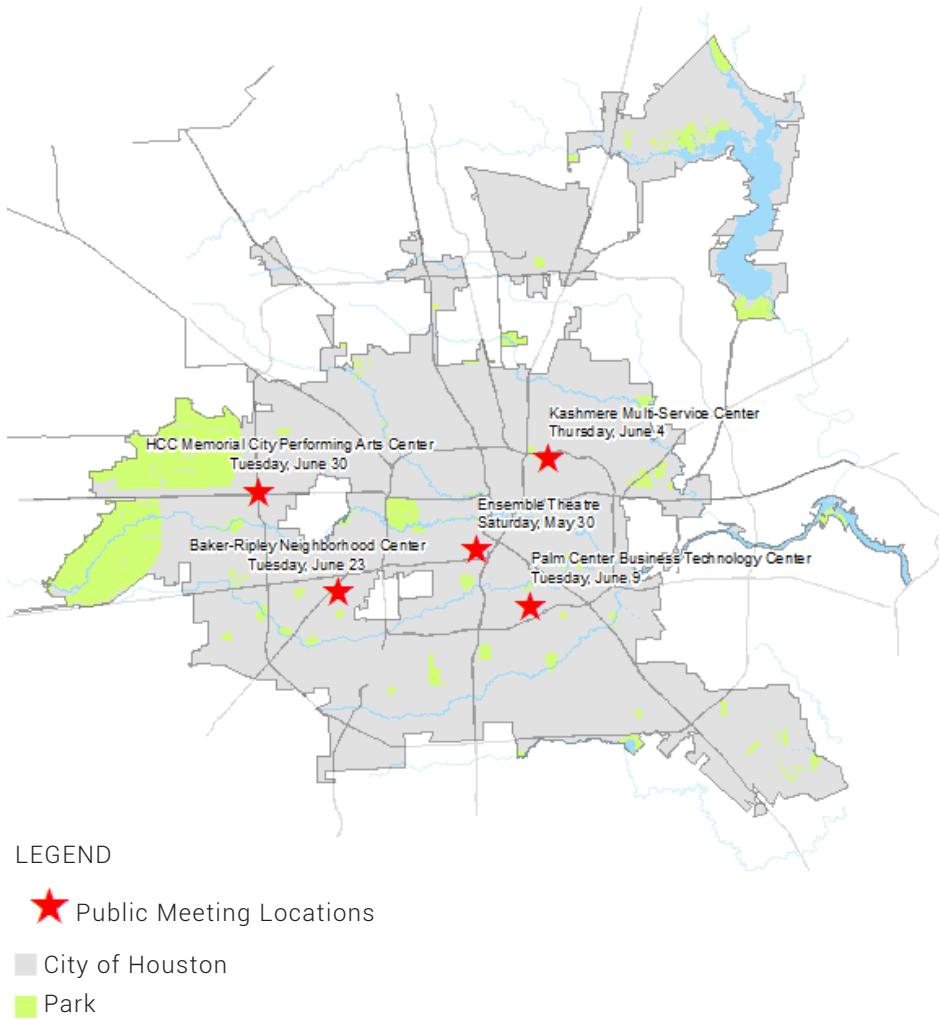
Increase Ridership

To exceed average ridership levels in peer cities by implementing policies and programs that enable more people to ride bicycles and encourage healthy, active transportation choices



Develop and Maintain Facilities

To develop and sustain a high-quality bicycle network, including both bikeways and end-of-trip facilities

Figure 3.3 Houston Bike Plan Public Meeting Locations

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Five public meetings were held throughout the City to discuss current bicycling conditions and goals for the Houston Bike Plan. The outreach process kicked off on May 30, 2015 with an open house meeting and educational bike ride at the Ensemble Theater in Midtown. Four more open house meetings were held throughout the city between June 4th and June 30th. See Figure 3.3 for meeting locations.

All open house meetings included a presentation from the City of Houston staff and the study team that introduced the need for a new bicycle master plan, the Bike Plan project scope and timeline, initial findings from the analysis of existing conditions, and opportunities that exist in Houston today that can be leveraged or improved upon by recommendations in the plan.

Participants were encouraged to provide ideas and comments by drawing on maps to identify challenges and barriers with the existing bikeways, and desired locations of future facilities and connections. The community was also asked to create and identify goals for the Houston Bike Plan by completing the following statements:

- I wish it was easier to bike...
- My favorite place to bike is...
- I bike because...
- I would bike more if...
- Houston would be a safer, healthier, more bike-friendly place if...

A total of 237 people attended the public meetings and completed 258 goals cards, 455 map ideas and comments, and 35 general comments. Analysis of the public input received was encouraging and highly consistent across the City. Major themes that resonated across communities are shown in Figure 3.4, which includes public meeting and online comments.

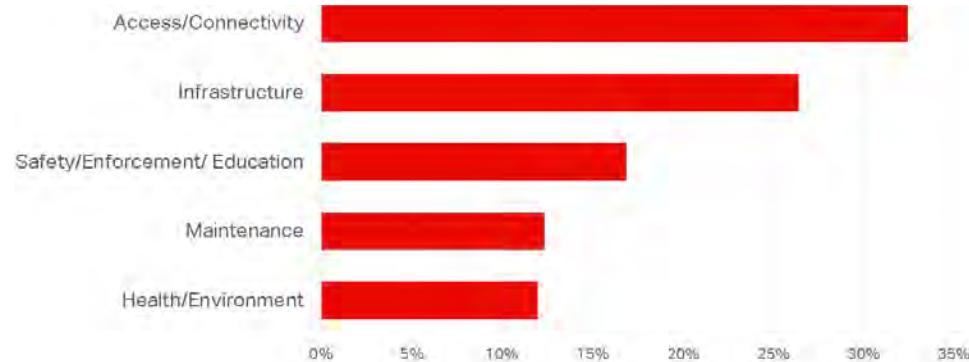
- Safety/Enforcement/Education
- Infrastructure
- Access/Connectivity
- Maintenance
- Health/Environment

In addition to the five public meetings, the City provided opportunities to comment on the plan at 25 community events and meetings throughout Houston between March and July. Events included Sunday Streets, Art Car Parade, Tour de Houston, METRO Rail opening, Critical Mass, and others. This effort was done to increase the availability of opportunities to participate and increase awareness of the Bike Plan to the public. Overall, an additional 830 comments on the plan were received through these efforts and over 3,800 people signed up to receive email updates about the plan.



Goal statements from the May 30th Bike Ride & Open House

Figure 3.4 Goal Comment Themes & Percent Distribution

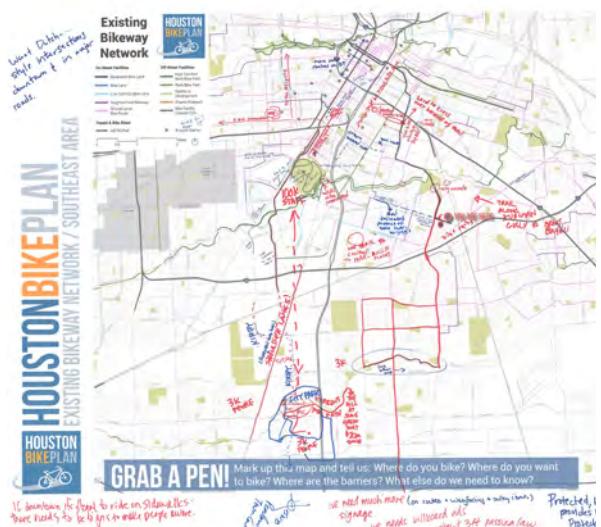


Maps with comments from participants at the public meetings

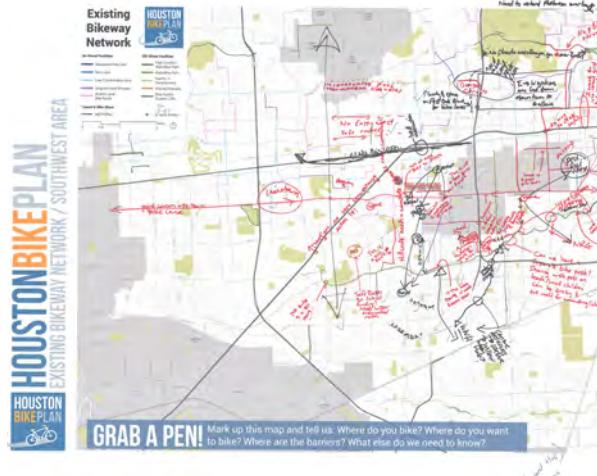


Ensemble Theater

May 30



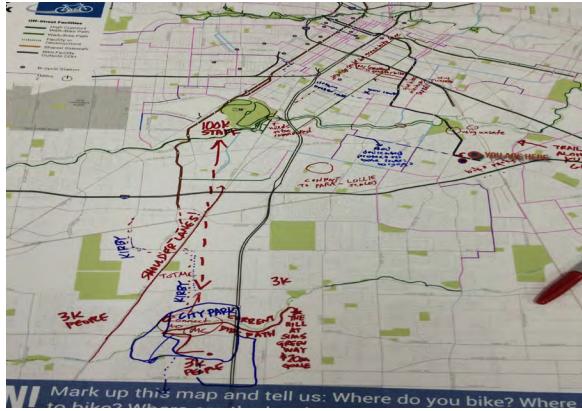
Palm Center
June 9



Baker Ripley Neighborhood Center



HCC Memorial City
June 30



*Participant at May 30th
public meeting (right)*

Map ideas from June 9th public meeting (left)



Participants drawing map ideas at June 23rd public meeting (right)

Participant at June 4th public meeting (left)



A woman with long, curly hair is smiling broadly at the camera. She is wearing a white button-down shirt with small black dots. In her hands, she holds a piece of paper with handwritten text. The text reads: "Delivers are educated on bike safety, more visible, clean bike lanes, promotion of delivery benefits". There is also a small graphic of a blue bus with the word "Delivery" written on it. The background shows a corkboard with pinned papers and a small blue ribbon.



Participant at June 30th public meeting (right)

Participants drawing map ideas at June 9th public meeting (left)



3-8

Online Tools and Outreach

To reach as broad of an audience as possible for the Houston Bike Plan, a project website was set up and provided the following tools for community input:

- An online discussion forum which asked for input on the same five goal statements as the public meetings
- An interactive map that allowed participants to draw ideas such as routes and needed connections, as well as allowed for others to comment on those ideas (Figure 3.5)
- An online survey in both English and Spanish
- Meeting in a Box, an opportunity for anyone to host their own public meeting with all the activities and tools available online to download

Figure 3.5 Online Screenshot of Discussion Forums and Interactive Feedback Map

The screenshot shows a web-based interface for the Houston Bike Plan. At the top, there is a header with the title "Map Question #1" and a sub-question "What would make Houston's bike network better?". Below this, there is a button labeled "Add an Idea in this Topic". On the left side, there is a sidebar titled "TOPICS" with a list of items: "Map Question #1", "Vision Question #1", "Vision Question #2", "Vision Question #3", "Vision Question #4", "Vision Question #5", and "Select Language". Under "Select Language", it says "Powered by Google Translate". The main area features a map of Houston with various bicycle routes and facilities highlighted in green and blue. Numerous blue circular icons are scattered across the map, representing user-submitted ideas. In the top right corner of the map area, there are statistics: "Views: 1516", "Interactions: 616", and "Days Remaining: 17". At the bottom of the map, there is a note: "Sources: East, HERE, DeCorme, USGS, Intern., ESRI".

In order to drive as many participants to the public meetings and website tools as possible, the project team promoted the meetings at community events and partnered with local organizations to inform the community of the Bike Plan, opportunities to be involved, draw and provide comments on maps, and sign up to receive future information about the project. Additionally, Bike Plan posters and postcards were distributed at bike shops, libraries, multi-service centers, businesses, METRO buses and train cars, Parks and Recreation community centers, and more.

Opportunities to participate through the online tools were available throughout the public engagement period from May 30th to July 20th. During that time period, the online survey was taken by 2,895 people, the discussion forum had 130 comments, and the interactive map had 387 ideas. Participants in the online survey were representative of:

- A wide geographical area with higher participation in areas that have greater levels of existing bicycle facilities such as within the I-610 Loop and the Energy Corridor,
- A variety of ethnic groups with a majority being Caucasian,
- Millennials and baby boomers over other age groups,
- Individuals with income higher than the regional average, and
- A greater number of men than women.

Overall, the input received through the website tools echoed what was heard at the public meetings and community events. Additionally, across varying ages, incomes, and locations across the city, similar feedback regarding existing conditions, challenges, and opportunities for improvement of the bicycle network were echoed.

In an effort to create partnerships and extend the outreach of the project, particularly to populations not reached through online methods, the Meeting in a Box was developed and utilized with assistance from BikeHouston and the Energy Corridor Management District. The Meeting in a Box contained materials consistent with what was provided in public meetings and online tools.

The online survey was designed to help inform the Bike Plan about goals, specific barriers that reduce the amount of people biking today, why people do or do not bike, their preferences for facilities, and demographics of those interested.

Overall, the survey reached a wide geographical area encompassing most of the larger Houston region, however, survey participants tended to concentrated more within areas that have higher levels of existing bicycle facilities such as within the I-610 Loop, southwest Houston, and the Energy Corridor. Additionally, survey responses showed consensus across geographic and demographic factors for a majority of the survey questions, particularly those relating

to goals, barriers, facility preferences, and their reasons for bicycling.

The online map received 387 individual "ideas" that noted locations of barriers, desired facilities or connections, and other information such as facility conditions. The ideas noted on the online maps were highly consistent with the comments that were drawn on the maps in the public meetings.

In addition to the online map, online participants could provide vision/goal comments intended to be consistent with the goal cards in the public meetings. There were 130 discussion comments on the vision/goals statements. Online participants could also "like" comments as a method to vote on them and signal agreement. The 130 comments received over 1,300 "likes" which provided significant insight as to the

Figure 3.6 Online Survey Goals

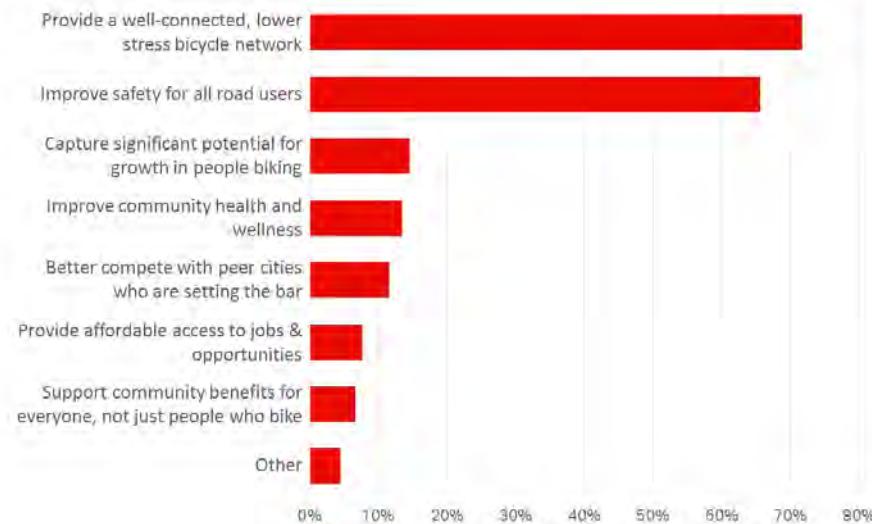
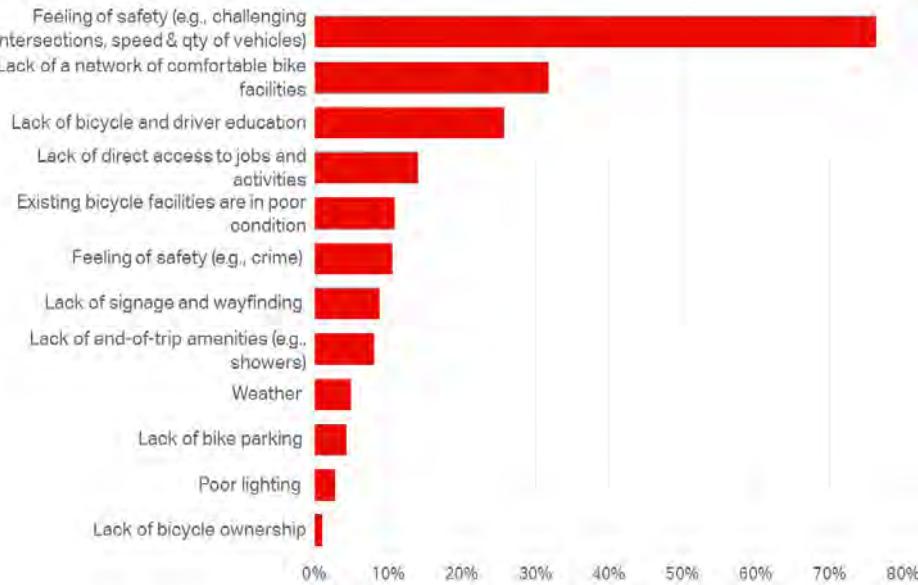
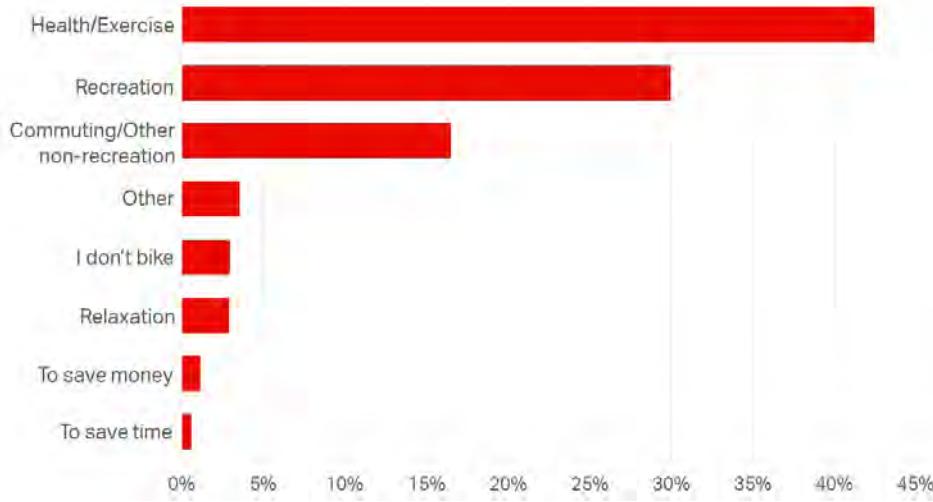


Figure 3.7 Barriers to More People Riding Bikes in Houston**Figure 3.8 Why People Ride a Bike**

level of importance of the goal areas. The data in Figure 3.4 (on page 6) includes the online comments and likes with the goals comments from the public meetings to show comprehensively the level of support in each of the goal areas.

Overall, public comment from online tools and public meetings were complimentary and consistent. Residents in areas throughout Houston had similar goals for the Bike Plan. Additionally, barriers and preferences were highly consistent between various areas of the city indicating a high degree of need throughout Houston.

An analysis of the Houston Bike Plan survey responses reveals that safety, increased access, and improved infrastructure are key elements for the Bike Plan to address to be successful at increasing biking in Houston (Figures 3.6 & 3.7).

A majority of the respondents (83%) identified themselves in the "Enthused and Confident" or "Interested but Concerned" rider categories. These are people who would prefer not to share the road with vehicles and would ride more often with improved facilities.

As shown in the Existing Conditions Chapter, the current network has many low-comfort gaps limiting access to activity and job centers. This is reflected in the barriers identified that prevent more people from bicycling in Houston (Figure 3.7).

A majority of the trips made by survey participants are for health and exercise or

recreational purposes (Figure 3.8). For these trips, people can define more easily their route and riding environment than if they need to make a specific trip, such as traveling to work. There is likely an opportunity to increase the number of people who primarily bike for other reasons, such as commuting, or support people who currently bike to experience more trip types.

In order to better understand which types of bike facilities survey respondents perceive as desirable, the survey provided a visual preference question on which types of bikeway facilities the respondent would most want to ride. In addition, a similar question was asked about which types of bicycle parking options respondents would prefer to use.

The survey provided images of six types of facilities that ranged from off-street trails, dedicated facilities within the street right-of-way, and on-street shared facilities. As identified in Figure 3.9, both off-street shared use paths or trails and on-street separated bike lanes received a majority of the preference with 74% and 73% respectively (survey respondents could pick their top 2 choices). These results indicate that dedicated facilities, separated from vehicle traffic with some type of barrier are likely to encourage increased biking levels in Houston. This was also a theme of the open comments provided to the survey with a significant number of people requesting a network of high comfort bikeways that would

Figure 3.9 Bikeway Preferences

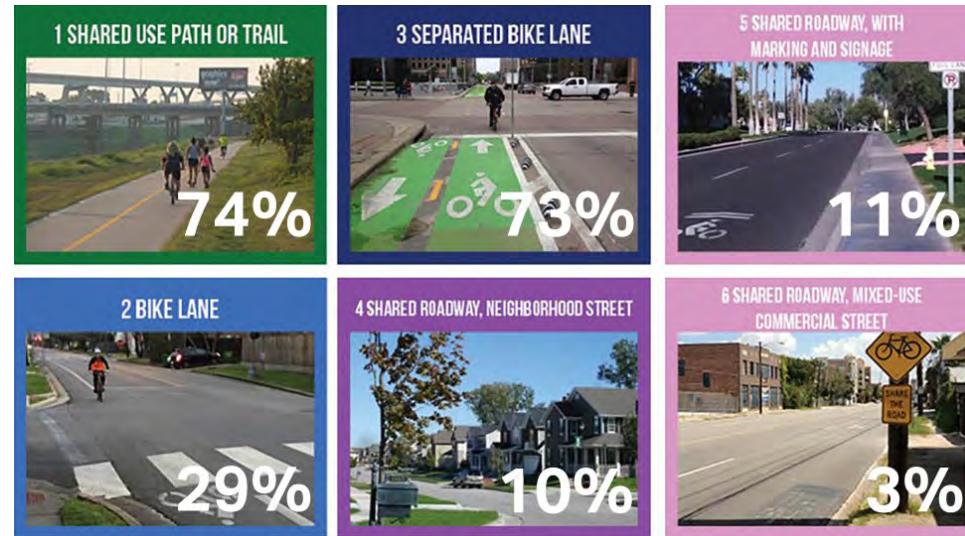


Figure 3.10 Bike Parking Preferences



support more of their trips. The preference of the facility types is consistent across survey respondents and correlates with the desired goals and identified barriers to more people bicycling in Houston.

In addition to bikeway facilities, bike parking facilities are an important amenity that facilitates more people biking by addressing concerns about bicycle storage. Preferences for bicycle parking facilities, as shown in Figure 3.10, are more variable than bikeway facilities, but indicate that secured facilities, such as bike lockers or stations, and bike racks are desirable. Survey respondents could pick any number of parking facilities they would use. Secured bicycle facilities are most appropriate for long term storage, such as all day, while bike racks are more appropriate for short term bicycle parking, at places such as restaurants, businesses, schools, libraries, or other destinations of interest. Of particular interest is the 34% of survey respondents that indicated they prefer to use a sign post or whatever is available. This indicates that convenience is important and that bike parking should appropriately address this need at destinations.

GOAL STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT

In order to best create aspirational, yet attainable goals for the Bike Plan, all public and stakeholder input was gathered and compiled in connection to the existing conditions. Four major goal areas stood out: improving safety, increasing access, increasing ridership, and developing and maintaining facilities. Each of these goal areas are shown in greater detail on the following pages (Figures 3.12 to 3.15) and include specific goal statements, supporting information from the public meetings, online tools, and the assessment of existing conditions.

Improve Safety

Overwhelmingly, safety was an important topic in the public meetings and online feedback. The goal to improve safety focuses on creating a bicycle network that is safe for users of all ages by improving bike facilities, focusing on educating bicyclists and drivers of all ages, and properly enforcing bicycle laws such as the 3-feet clear passing law (Vulnerable Road User Ordinance).

Increase Access

Access to high-quality bicycling opportunities was another area of focus for many people. The goal to increase access was derived from map ideas and a significant number of comments. The goal focuses on creating an easily accessible network throughout the City of Houston comprised of high comfort bikeways. Feedback focused on the need for the bikeway network to connect

neighborhoods to transit, jobs, and activity centers including schools, parks, and libraries to better allow people to safely bike for many trip purposes. Comfortable access to facilities and destinations was also consistently a highly discussed topic amongst the public.

Increase Ridership

The Bike Plan will be successful if it helps more people get out and ride a bicycle in the city. The goal to increase ridership focuses on supporting an enhanced bikeway network by utilizing programs and policies to increase the mode share of bicycling for all types of trips in Houston. The intent of these policies and programs is to encourage people who don't bike as much as they would like to today, or not at all, to bike more. Many of these programs and policies include things that Houston is doing today, including Sunday Streets, a Complete Streets policy, organized bike rides, and an online bike safety program. However, there are many activities that can support a culture of bicycling in Houston, such as bike parking requirements, promotion of bike-friendly businesses, outreach programs, and more. These have been shown as successful in other peer cities to Houston.

Develop and Maintain Facilities

The last goal to develop and maintain facilities is largely related to the need to improve existing infrastructure and develop new facilities that are part of a high comfort network. Comments focused on improved

Figure 3.11 Vision, Goals and Sample Metrics

Vision: By 2027 Houston will be a Safer, More Accessible, Gold Level Bike-Friendly City

Area	Goal Statement	Example Metrics
Improve Safety	To provide a safer bicycle network for people of all ages and abilities through improved facilities, education, and enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • # of bicycle fatalities • # of bicycle related crashes
Increase Access	To create a highly accessible, citywide network of comfortable bike facilities that connects neighborhoods to transit, jobs, and activity centers, including schools, universities, parks, and libraries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % population and jobs within $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of a high-comfort bike facility
Increase Ridership	To exceed average ridership levels in peer cities by implementing policies and programs that enable more people to ride bicycles and encourage healthy, active transportation choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commute mode share • # of permanent count stations • % adults meeting minimum recommended weekly activity
Develop and Maintain Facilities	To develop and sustain a high-quality bicycle network, including both bikeways and end-of-trip facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miles of bikeways per capita • % bikeways in good or better conditions

bike parking and other end-of-trip amenities, such as showers at people's place of work or school.

A key theme was ensuring maintenance of the bicycle network. This included feedback on the condition and cleanliness of existing bike lanes. Feedback received included wanting a better means for bicyclists to identify needed maintenance or repair to the City. Bikeway sweeping programs were discussed as methods to ensure facility quality and that safety is upheld.

Figure 3.12 Goal 1 - Improve Safety

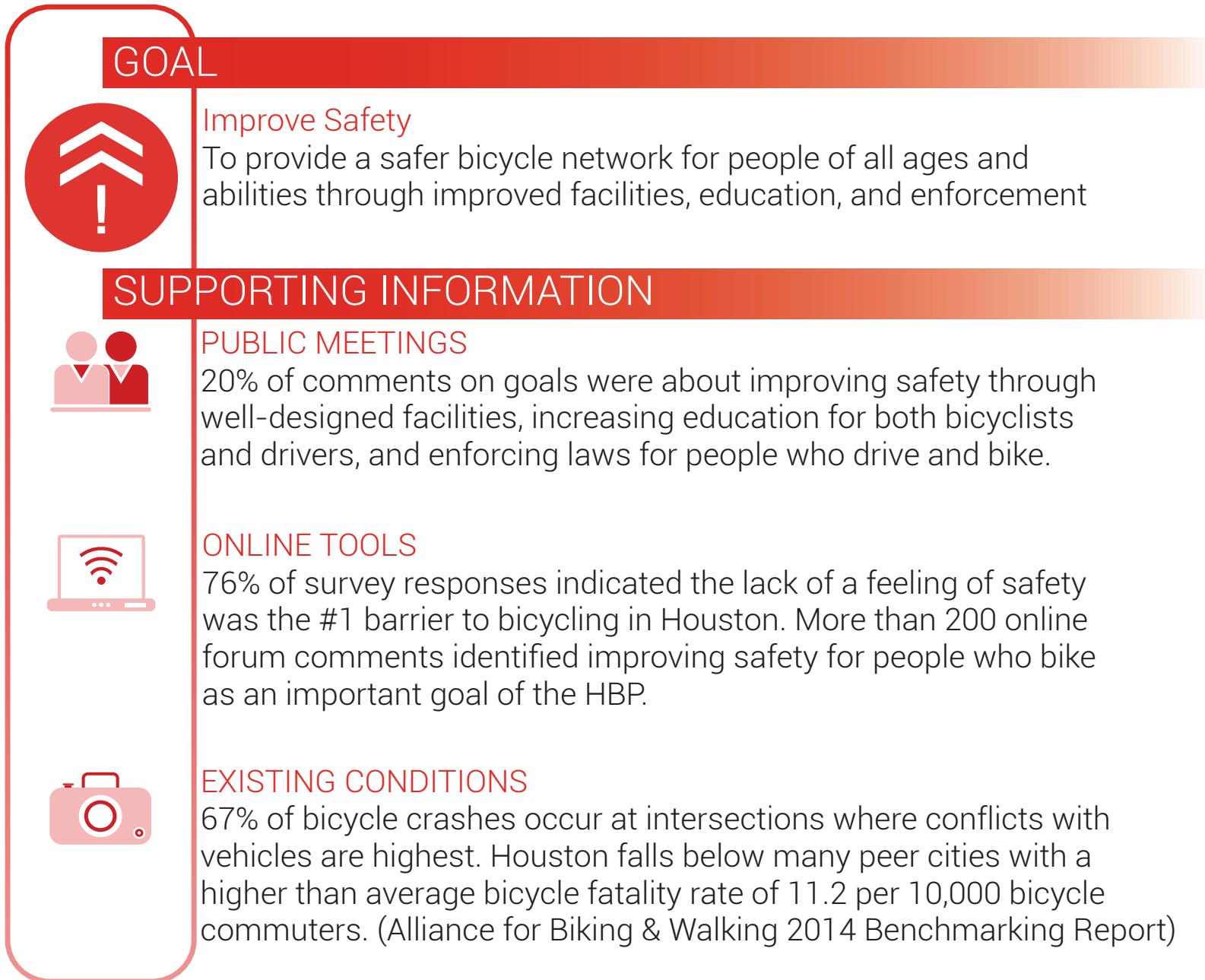


Figure 3.13 Goal 2 - Increase Access

GOAL



Increase Access

To create a highly accessible, citywide network of comfortable bike facilities that connects neighborhoods to transit, jobs, and activity centers, including schools, universities, parks, and libraries

SUPPORTING INFORMATION



PUBLIC MEETINGS

30% of comments on goals focused on easy access to facilities that provide connections and a seamless bicycle network throughout the city.



ONLINE TOOLS

72% of survey responses identified providing a well-connected lower stress bicycle network should be the top goal of the HBP. 33% of forum discussions identified increasing bicycle access as a priority.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

Only 38% of the population and 46% of jobs are within 1/2 mile of a high comfort bike facility. A majority of schools, libraries, community centers, and multi-service centers are not within 1/4 mile of a high comfort bike facility.

Figure 3.14 Goal 3 - Increase Ridership

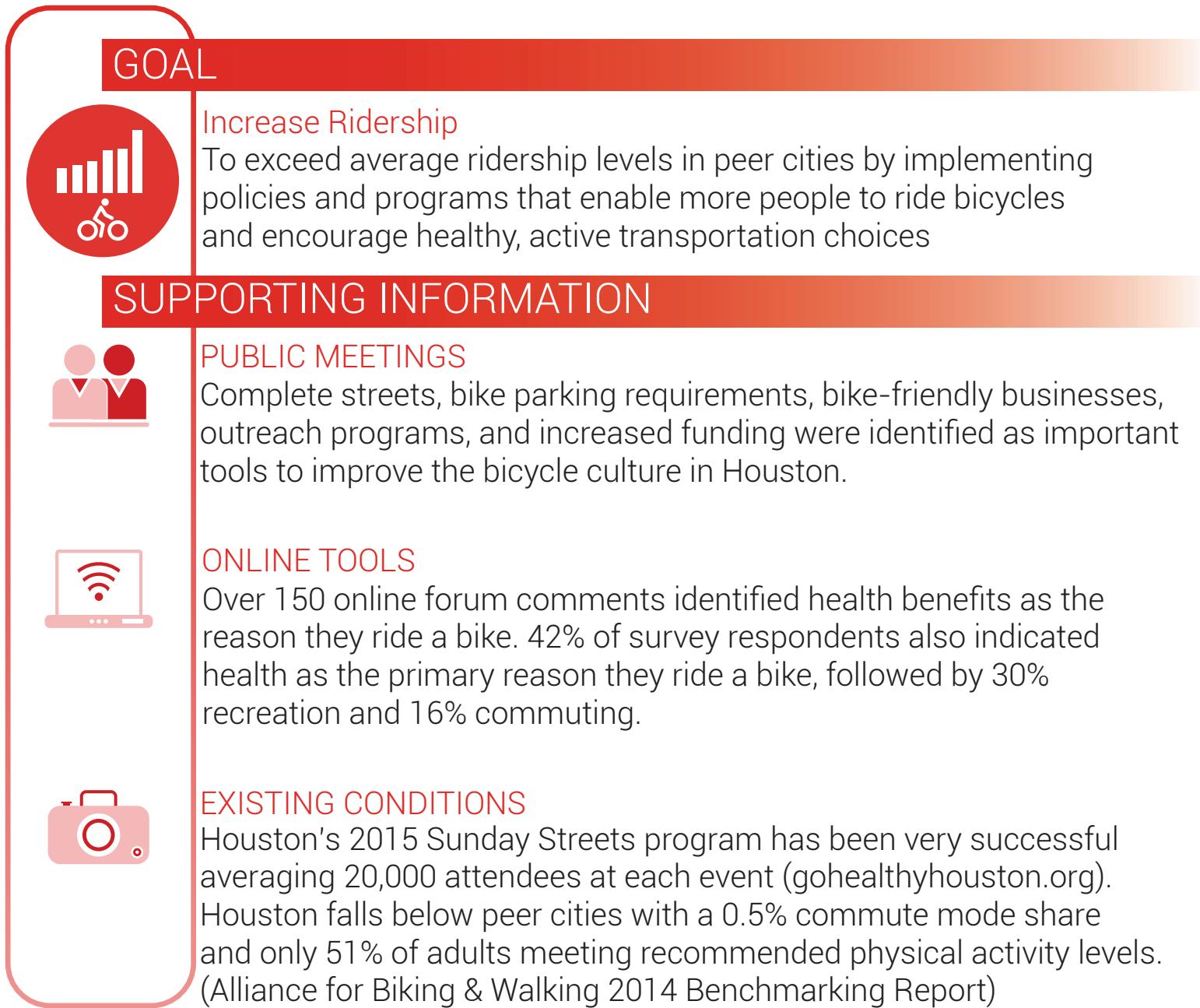


Figure 3.15 Goal 4 - Develop and Maintain Facilities

GOAL**Develop and Maintain Facilities**

To develop and sustain a high-quality bicycle network, including both bikeways and end-of-trip facilities

SUPPORTING INFORMATION**PUBLIC MEETINGS**

Maintenance of existing facilities (improving riding surface, cracks, replace striping/signage) identified maintenance as a priority issue. A bike lane sweeping and debris removal program was identified as a needed improvement.

**ONLINE TOOLS**

Over 70% of survey participants selected shared use paths/trails and separated bike lanes as preferred facilities. Feedback identified a lack of bicycle parking and end-of-trip amenities, such as showers, as barriers to increasing bicycling in Houston. 25% of online forum comments discussed the importance of safe, comfortable infrastructure.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Less than 30% of dedicated bike facilities are up to current standards. Houston ranks well below peer cities with only 1.1 miles of bike facilities per square mile. (Alliance for Biking & Walking 2014 Benchmarking Report)

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK