BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE & COMMUTING IN LOWER MANHATTAN
The ongoing Coronavirus crisis has forced us all to rethink many of our most basic routines — including how to get to and from our offices when the time comes to return to work. For both employers and employees, finding alternative ways to get to and from the office will be critically important in the coming months.

Thankfully, Lower Manhattan is well served by a remarkably diverse set of transportation options. Over 2.3 miles of bike lanes, 28 CitiBike stations and 15 ferry routes supplement Lower Manhattan’s 13 subway lines and 2 PATH lines, making Lower Manhattan among the most easily accessible business districts in America.

Lower Manhattan’s young and well educated workforce is primed to take advantage of alternative transportation methods like biking. Over 20% of Lower Manhattan’s workforce already either walks or bikes to work. Lower Manhattan’s growing residential population can easily walk or bike to work, as over 30% currently do. In 15 minutes or less by cycle, the district can easily be reached from most of Manhattan south of 23rd Street, as well as key neighborhoods in waterfront Brooklyn. And the neighborhoods where the most people currently bike to Lower Manhattan are seeing their populations grow. These communities are home to over 508,000 people, over half of whom are college educated and over one-third work in the creative and professional industries.
2.3 MILES OF BIKE NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE AND 28 CITIBIKE STATIONS ACROSS LOWER MANHATTAN
As companies consider strategies for bringing workers back to the office, Lower Manhattan’s ability to accommodate growth in bicycle commuting is a decided advantage. Lower Manhattan’s young and well educated workforce was already beginning to take advantage of alternative commuting methods before the outbreak of Coronavirus. According to a 2019 survey of Lower Manhattan employees conducted by the Downtown Alliance, 20% of Lower Manhattan workers walk to work and 2% bike. Lower Manhattan’s 64,000 residents are well situated to walk or bike to work and 31% of them currently do so.

And those numbers are primed to grow. According to the New York City Department of Transportation, the number of people throughout the city commuting to work primarily by bicycle has grown 55% since 2012 to nearly 49,000 daily commuters — averaging an annual growth rate of 9%. Cycling to work in New York City has grown nearly twice as fast as other peer American cities. Most bicycle commuting is concentrated to Manhattan and Brooklyn, representing 20,000 and 21,000 commuters, respectively.

Research has shown that younger people are more likely to bike to work. Nationally, the majority of urban bicycle commuters in cities are under 44 years old. Nearly 60% of Lower Manhattan’s workforce is younger than 40 years old, placing these employees in the prime cycling age group. Parts of the district are even more primed for a switch to bike commuting. Approximately 54% of workers west of Broadway are millennials (aged 22-38 years old). This concentration of young employees has exceptional bicycling commuting options along the Hudson River Greenway which offers easy, scenic and direct access to points further north into Manhattan.

1 Estimate 2019 population based on occupancy of existing residential buildings
2 New York City Department of Transportation. Cycling in the City. May 2019
3 Peer Cities: Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, Chicago, Minneapolis, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington
4 New York State Dept. of Labor. Private and public-sector jobs in Lower Manhattan reflect 2019, pre-COVID-19 data
Within a 15 Minute Cycling Radius of Lower Manhattan You Have Access To:

- Up to 23rd Street and Parts of Brooklyn
- 130 CitiBike Stations
- Over 60 Miles of Bike Lanes
Lower Manhattan has long been at the center of the region’s workforce. The vibrant and transit rich urban neighborhoods in Manhattan and Brooklyn are popular among those working in creative and professional industries. These same neighborhoods are also easily to Lower Manhattan by bike. Using 2019 Citibike data, the Downtown Alliance has identified the top 10 origin neighborhoods for weekday morning cycling commuters. The majority of these neighborhoods are within an approximately 15 minute bicycle commute of Lower Manhattan.

Nearly 20% of all CitiBike commuting trips began and ended within Lower Manhattan (defined as south of Chambers Street). In addition to all other Manhattan neighborhoods south of 14th Street, other top cycling origin neighborhoods include Union Square, Flatiron, Chelsea, Murray Hill and Kips Bay. In Brooklyn, DUMBO, Brooklyn Heights, Downtown Brooklyn, Boerum Hill and waterfront Williamsburg are top cycling feeder neighborhoods commuting into Lower Manhattan.

Of note, an analysis of the top ten origin stations for weekday morning Citibike commuters traveling to Lower Manhattan revealed key geographic trends. Among the top ten, the most used CitiBike origin station was the farthest away – at 12th Avenue and West 40th Street at Pier 78 near the Javits Convention Center. This station sees multi-modal commuters who use the New York Waterway ferry service from Weehawken and Lincoln Harbor in New Jersey.
Among the other top origin Citibike stations, seven out of the top ten stations are in the Lower East Side. These stations are located along dedicated bike paths that feed into the East River Esplanade, providing protected and direct access to the east side of Lower Manhattan, all the way to The Battery. Furthermore, the Lower East Side features dual residential populations well served by its proximity to job-rich Lower Manhattan. The neighborhood has seen an 11% rise in young, college-educated adults, as well as historically under-served communities in low and middle-income housing developments.

Overlaying the top cycling origin neighborhoods with 2013 and 2018 Census data, some key findings emerged.

Overlaying the top 10 cycling origin neighborhoods with 2013 and 2018 Census data\(^3\), some key findings emerged.

- Over 508,000 people live in the top 10 cycling neighborhoods that commute to Lower Manhattan.
- Furthermore, within these top origin neighborhoods, the population of college-educated adults saw an 8% growth between 2013 and 2018, with the addition of more than 19,900 people with at least a Bachelor’s Degree.
- Of people working in the creative and professional industries\(^4\), 183,000 people live in these top origin neighborhoods growing by nearly 5% between 2013 and 2018.
- Among these top origin neighborhoods, overall bicycle commuting has grown by 54% — a huge growth that roughly correlated with the unveiling of CitiBike in 2013. Even more interesting was the specific growth in bicycling within just Lower Manhattan — a 184% growth between 2013 and 2018.

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\(^3\) American Community Survey 2013 and 2018 data. 2018 was the latest available data and 2013 data was chosen to reflect a five-year growth period.

\(^4\) Creative and professional industries collectively defined as including the fields of advertising, media, arts and entertainment, professional services, management, information technology, finance, insurance, and real estate.
15 Minute Bike Commute from Select Office Buildings

200 LIBERTY STREET
Farthest North: W. 20th St.
Farthest East: Downtown Brooklyn

200 WEST STREET
Farthest North: W. 20th St.
Farthest East: Downtown Brooklyn

28 LIBERTY STREET
Farthest North: 14 St.
Farthest East: Brooklyn Navy Yard & Cobble Hill
Farthest North: 14 St.
Farthest East: Downtown Brooklyn & Fort Greene

Farthest North: 14 St.
Farthest East: Brooklyn Navy Yard & Cobble Hill

Farthest North: Houston St.
Farthest East: Brooklyn Navy Yard & Cobble Hill

15 Minute Bike Commute from Select Office Buildings in Lower Manhattan
Earlier this year, Mayor de Blasio committed to a dramatic expansion of bike infrastructure citywide. This “Green Wave” is expected to include:

- Install over 80 miles of protected bike lanes and fortify existing protected bike lanes;
- Installation of traffic signals that favor cyclists;
- 2,000 bike parking spots added annually;
- New shared streets; and
- Double CitiBike service area footprint by 2023

Even with all its advantages, a few simple projects could make Lower Manhattan even more attractive to cycling commuters:

- Grow capacity at existing CitiBike stations across Lower Manhattan and add additional stations near other transit stops, including around the World Trade Center.
- Better activate publicly-owned private space (POPS) by installing bike racks and protected bike parking in POPS.
- Potentially utilize vacant retail storefronts for protected bike parking and find creative ways to improve bike access to commercial buildings. Protected bike parking for office tenant at 85 Broad Street (seen in image on right).
- Improve bike infrastructure on the Brooklyn and Manhattan Bridges, allowing for greater ease of access to residential and business communities between Lower Manhattan and Downtown Brooklyn.
- For deliveries, use bike delivery methods over van delivery. Delivery bikes take up less street and sidewalk space, making the public realm safer for bicyclists and pedestrians alike.