

Closed Streets, Open Access: Ciclovías to Promote Active Living among Disparate Populations

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Background

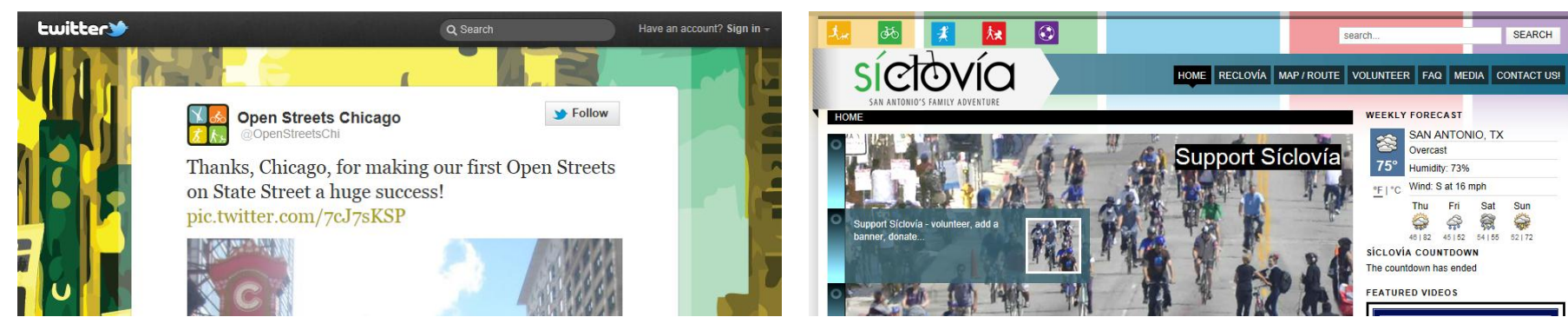
- Increasing opportunities for physical activity is recommended as a policy and environmental strategy for obesity prevention and general health improvement.
- Ciclovías are one strategy to increase physical activity in target populations.
- A ciclovía is a community-based initiative where streets are closed to motorized traffic for exclusive access to individuals to engage in physical activity.**
- Although there is a long history of ciclovías internationally, interest in the U.S. has been scattered.

This study aims to:

- Identify and describe ciclovías and similar open streets events hosted in the U.S. in 2011
- Identify potential populations to target and discuss promotion and evaluation strategies

Methods

- A search for ciclovía and similar terms was conducted using web searches, publication databases, and social media sites.



- A spreadsheet was developed to assess the components of the events:
 - Number of events held in 2011
 - Year of event inception
 - Route length
 - Attendance
 - Evaluation procedures

- Host city characteristics were obtained from 2010 U.S. Census data.

Results

- 47 cities in the U.S. hosted 50 open streets events in 2011.
- Populations of host cities range from 12,000 (Cornwall, NY) to 8 million (New York City).
- 26 (55%) cities with ciclovías in 2011 had a higher percentage of minority residents than the national average.
- 35 (75%) cities had a higher percentage of children residents than the national average.
- Nearly half (44%) of the events were annual events, and only 7% were held weekly.
- Routes typically ranged from .25 to 10 miles, with one 51 mile route (Silent Sundays Phoenix), and routes often varied in cities that hosted multiple events per year.
- Most events lasted from 1.5 to 8 hours, and four cities host initiatives that close streets for entire days (≥ 24 hours).
- Attendance estimates ranged from 1,200 (St. Louis, MO) to 100,000 (Los Angeles and New York), however the methods for estimating attendance varied.

Figure 1. U.S. Cities that hosted ciclovía events in 2011.

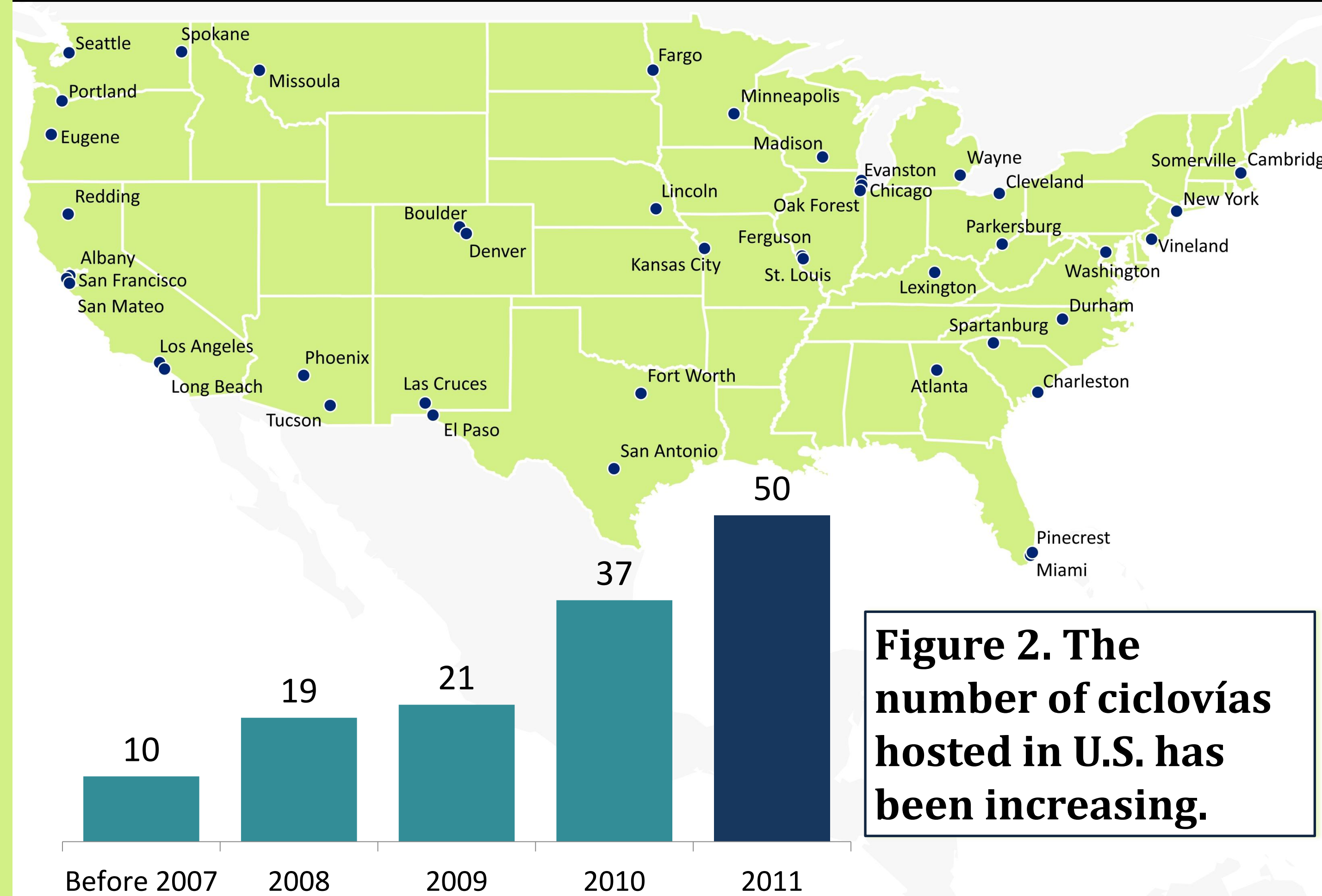


Figure 3. Funding and evaluation of 2011 ciclovías in the U.S.

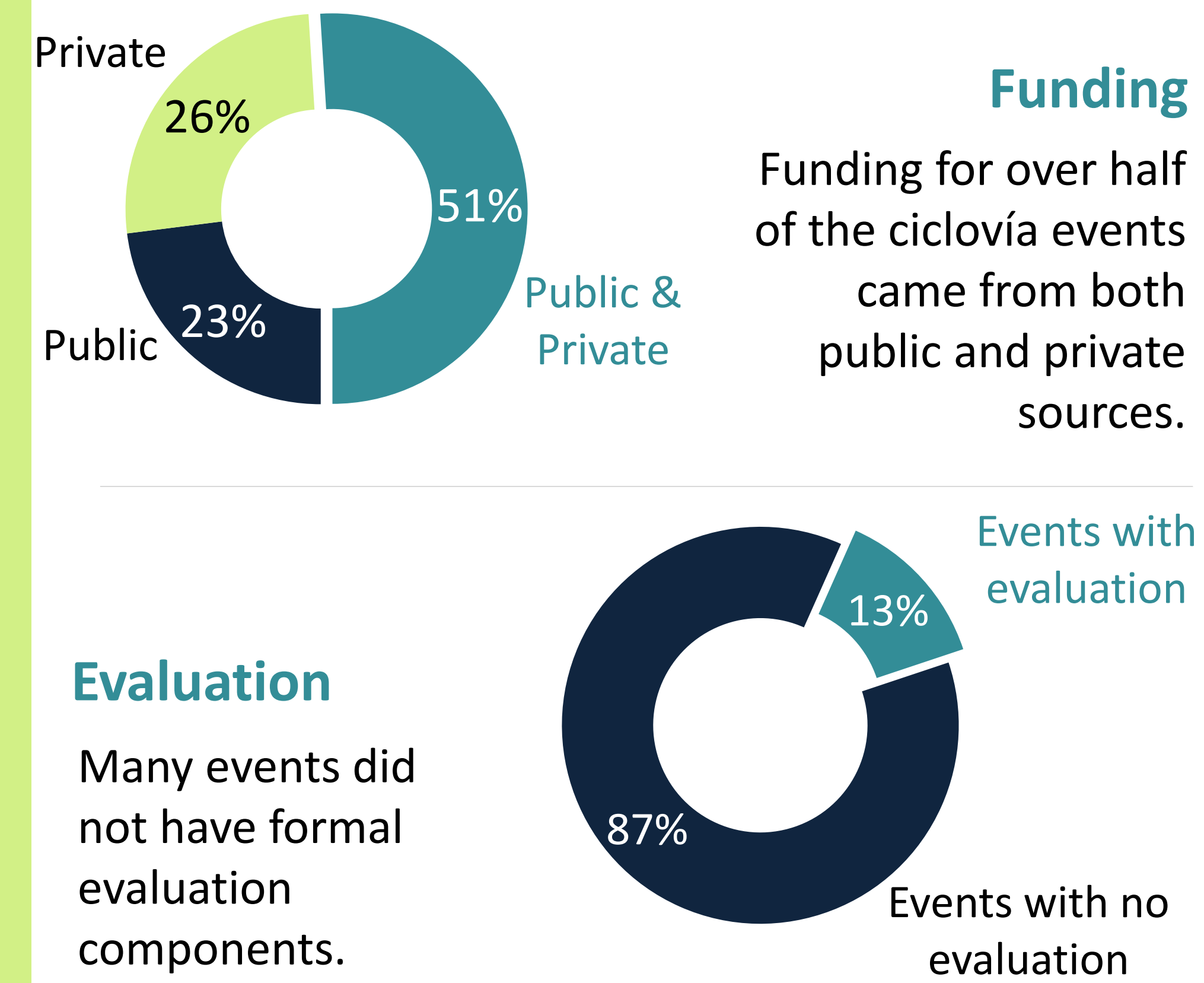


Table 1. Ciclovía characteristics are as diverse as their host cities.

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Ciclovía attributes		
Route length (miles)	6.2	9.1
Event length (hours)	3.9	7.4
Host city diversity		
% Minority	17.0	5.6
% Under 18 yrs. age	27.5	6.7

Photos from Ciclovías Across the U.S.

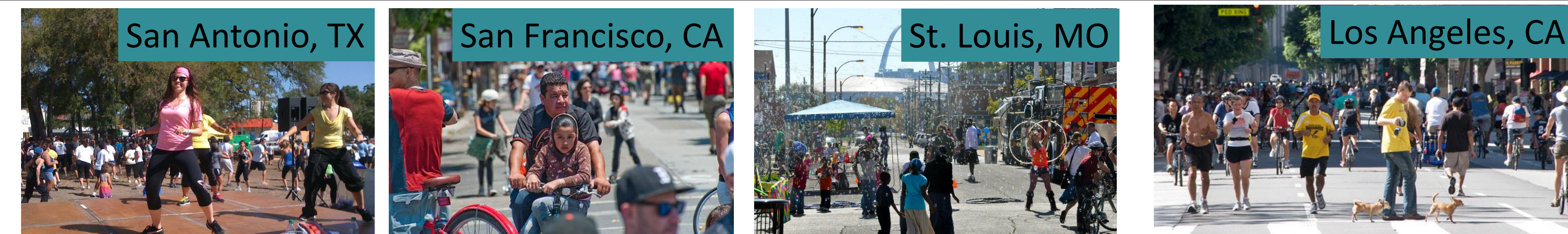
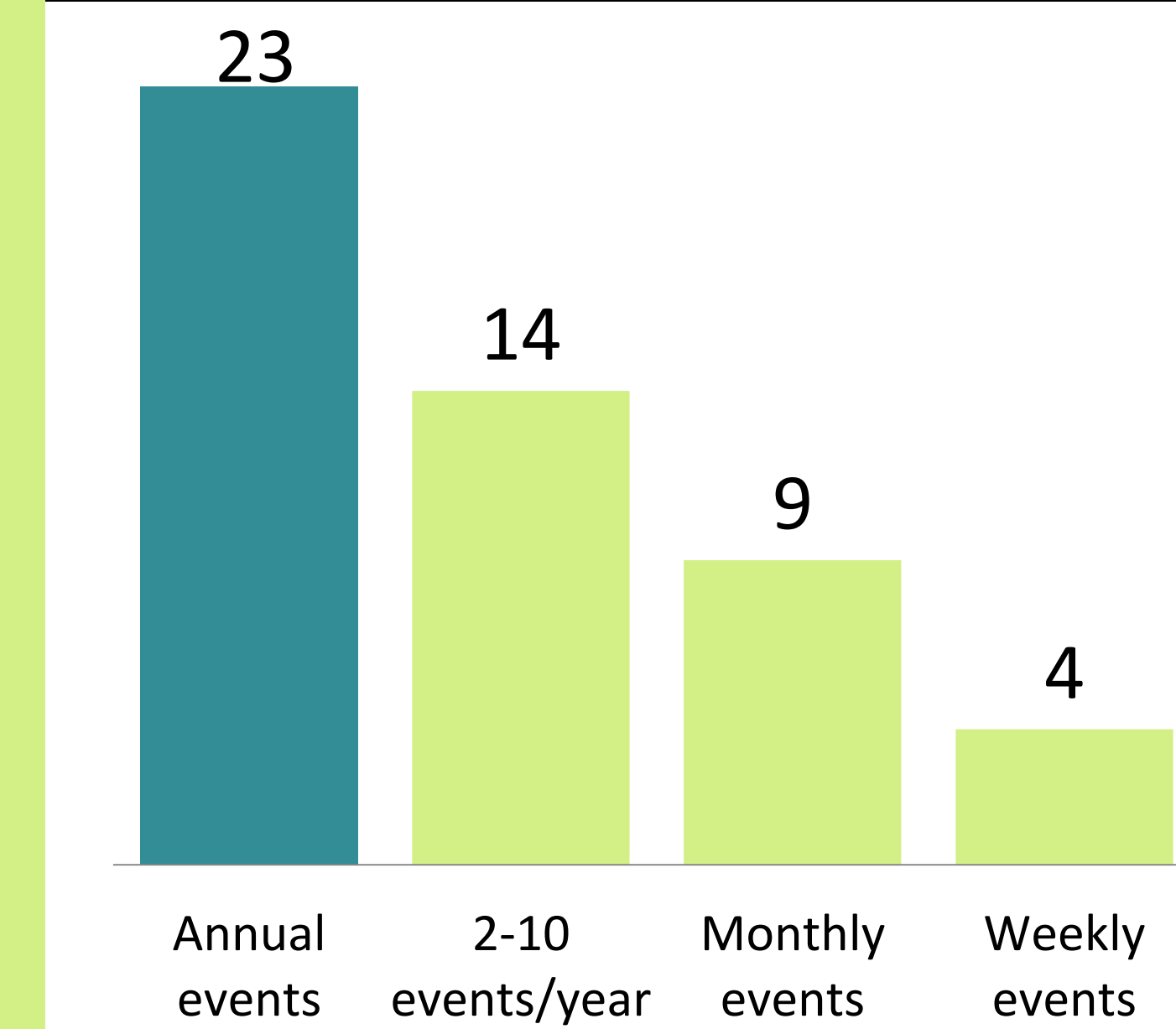


Figure 4. Most ciclovías held in 2011 were annual events.



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Based on demographics of host cities of 2011 events, there is potential to increase access to physical activity opportunities particularly to urban minority children.
- Increased evaluation efforts may help to increase support for ciclovías both in current cities (increasing frequency) and potential cities.
- Mechanisms for identifying successful promotion and evaluation tactics would help develop best practices for these events and future policy considerations.

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