

Active Living Research

Using Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity
and Create Active Communities

ARTICLE SUMMARY

February 2013

Bike Lanes Increase Cycling

Introduction

Making it easier and safer to bike by improving the built environment (e.g. installing bike lanes) can help people be more physically active. This study examined whether more people cycled and whether people cycled more safely (i.e. riding with the flow of traffic and on the street versus on the sidewalk) after the installation of new bike lanes in New Orleans.

Key Findings

We observed more people riding bicycles after the bike lanes were painted; this was true in the neighborhood overall but the increase was greatest on the street with the new bike lane and among women. Also, there was a decrease in the number of people cycling on the side streets, and more people chose to ride in the correct direction. However, the number of cyclists riding on the sidewalk did not change following the installation of the bike lane.

Methods

Observers counted the number of cyclists at two different points in time for 10 days in a racially and socioeconomically diverse, mixed-use (i.e. mix of homes and shops) urban neighborhood. Data included information on the number of males, females, adults, and children riding a bicycle with traffic, against traffic, and on sidewalks on S. Carrollton Avenue and its two adjacent side streets, Short and Dublin Streets.

Implications

Our study shows that bike lanes are an effective and low-cost way to increase bicycling in a diverse urban area. Planners, engineers, and public health practitioners should consider the installation of bike lanes to increase physical activity.

SOURCE

Parker, K.M., et al. (2013). Effect of Bike Lane Infrastructure Improvements on Ridership in One New Orleans Neighborhood. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 45(1Suppl): S101-S107.

Open access to the full text article is available at:

<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12160-012-9440-z>

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