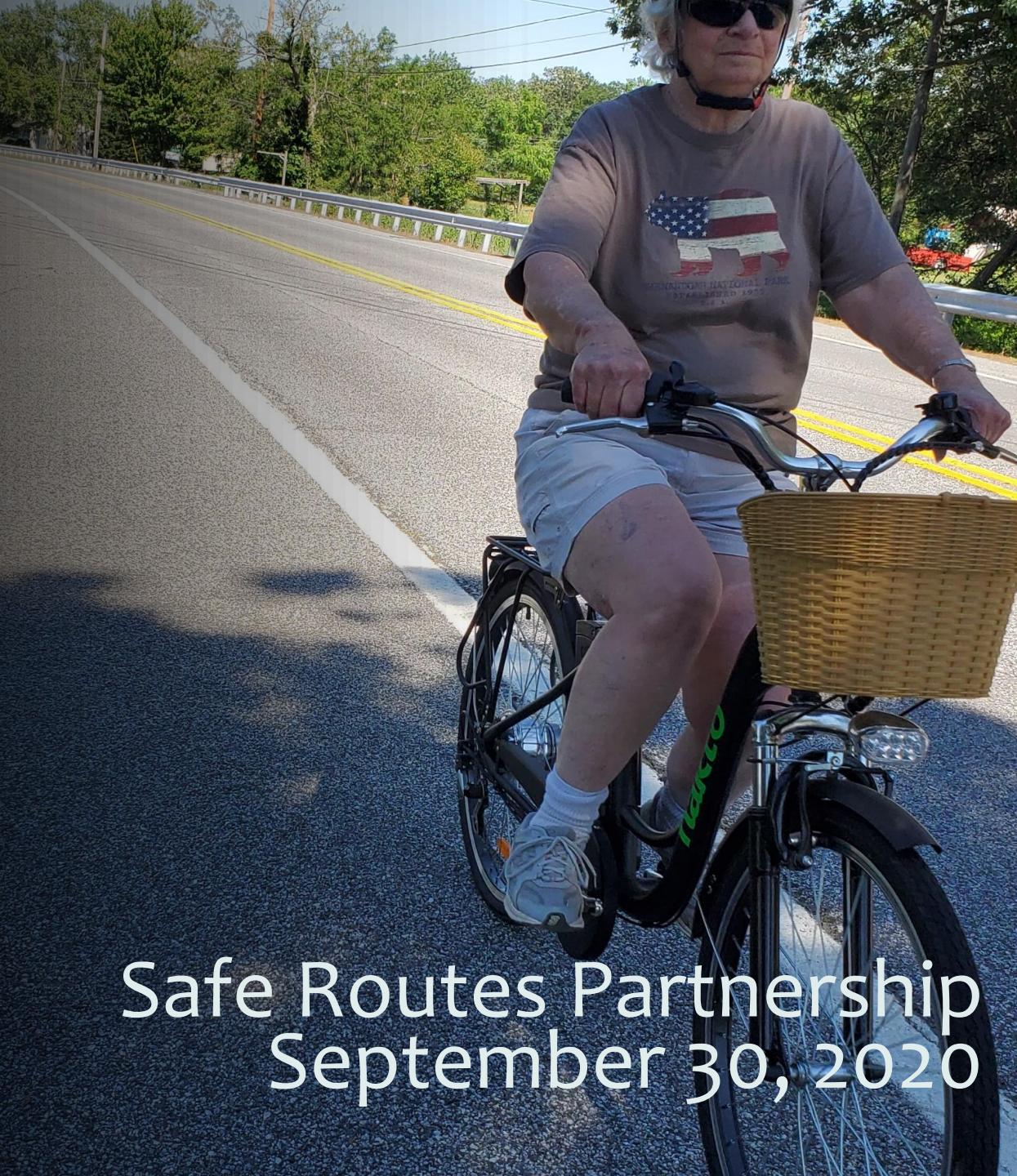


# Older Adults and Cycling: What we've learned from the 50+ Cycling Survey

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Carol Kachadoorian



Safe Routes Partnership  
September 30, 2020

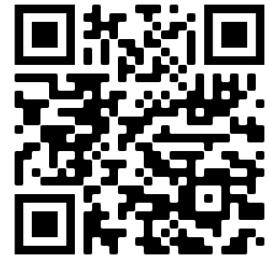


**“They thought they'd peak at 30, but as culture changed and what we think of as 'old age' became a much more active and engaged phase of life, they're doing the same thing as many of their listeners.”**

Ann Powers, NPR, July 1, 2020

# 50+ Cycling Survey (current cyclists)

- February 14 to August 2 (open through October 31)
- Cycling history, habits, preferences
- Visual preference survey of facilities
- Online journal
- Partnered with AARP for Year 3 survey. See:  
<https://bit.ly/Over50CyclingArticle>



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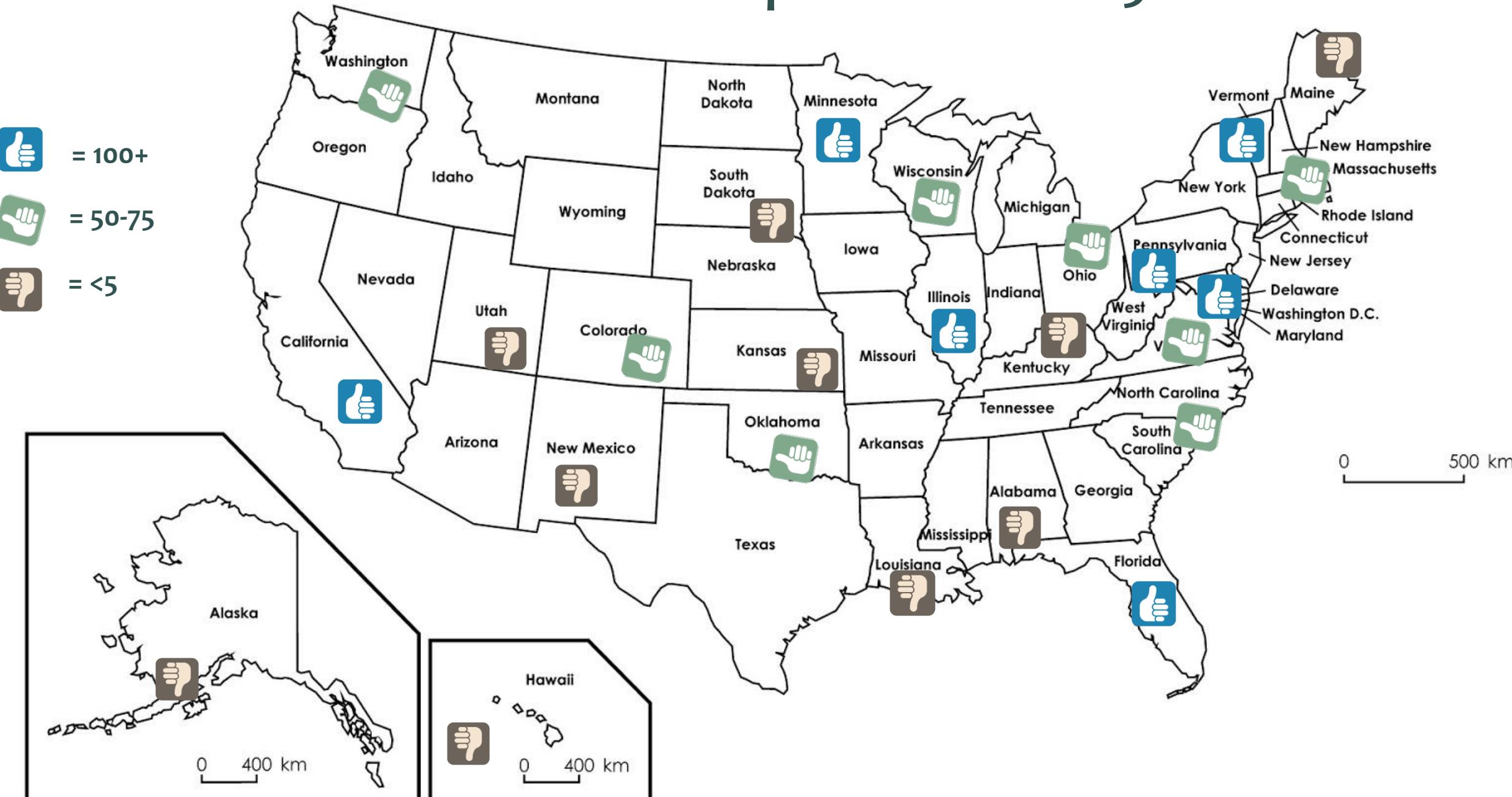
## The 50+ Cycling Survey

Older cyclists reflect on their bicycling preferences and experiences in a nationwide survey. Many consider cycling to be a staple of their lives and can't envision ever not being able to ride a bike

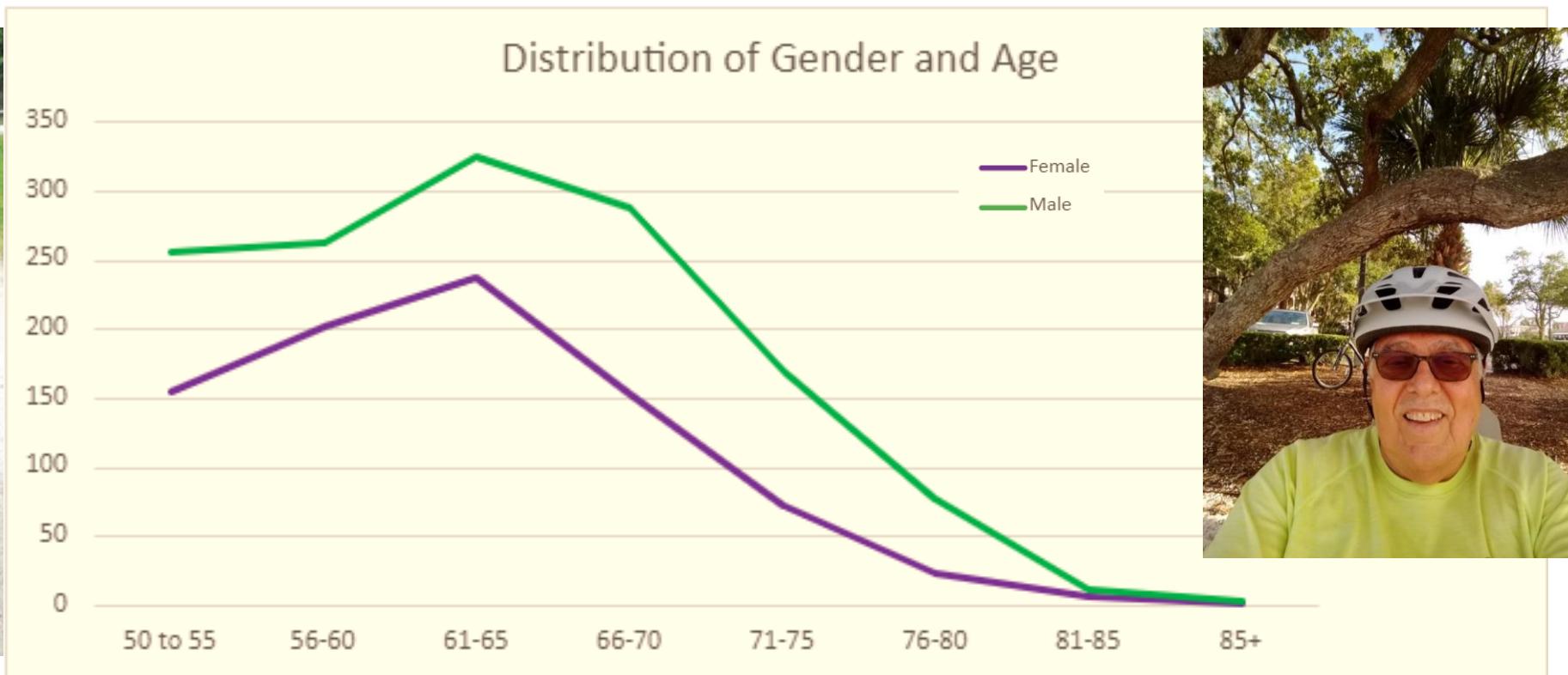
**AARP Livable Communities**, September 2020

# Who answered?

# At least 2 responses from all 50 states

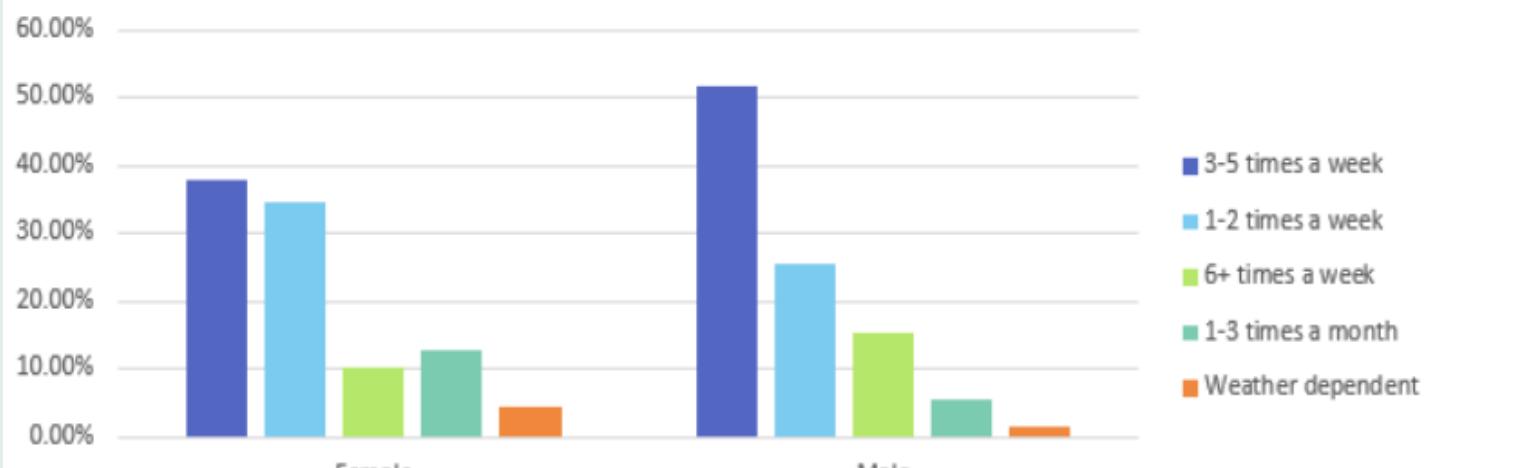


# Nearly 3,000 women and men, ages 50 to 85+



# Cycling rates, frequency

- Strong rates of regular cycling
- Higher with men



Declines with age

50-55 = 95%

81-85 = 75%

Recoups @ 85+ = 92%

# Trip types and distances

# 29. For which trip purposes do you ride and what is the average trip length?

	A few blocks		No more than 2 miles		Between 2 and 10 miles		More than 10 but fewer than 15 miles		More than 15 but fewer than 50 miles		More than 25 but fewer than 40 miles		40 or more miles		NA		Total Checks
	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks	Row Check %	Checks
To be social or for companionship	65	2.7%	145	6%	649	27%	344	14.3%	542	22.6%	177	7.4%	150	6.2%	330	13.7%	2402
To travel to and from work	31	1.5%	116	5.7%	392	19.4%	129	6.4%	89	4.4%	18	0.9%	10	0.5%	1,240	61.2%	2025
For exercise	36	1.3%	103	3.9%	635	23.8%	498	18.7%	784	29.4%	295	11.1%	258	9.7%	58	2.2%	2667
For daily errands, including shopping	110	5.3%	356	17%	692	33.1%	94	4.5%	28	1.3%	9	0.4%	4	0.2%	798	38.2%	2091
As a competitive cyclist	6	0.3%	3	0.2%	15	0.8%	26	1.3%	77	4%	47	2.4%	126	6.5%	1,635	84.5%	1935
Other	32	2%	50	3.2%	179	11.4%	108	6.9%	144	9.1%	60	3.8%	102	6.5%	899	57.1%	1574
Total Checks	280		773		2562		1199		1664		606		650		4960		12694
% of Total Checks	2.2%		6.1%		20.2%		9.4%		13.1%		4.8%		5.1%		39.1%		100%

To be social,  
companionship

**2 to 10 miles → 27%**

**11 to 15 miles → 14.3%**

**15+ miles → 22.6%**



To and from work

2 to 10 miles → 19.4%



# Daily errands

2 to 10 miles → 33.1%



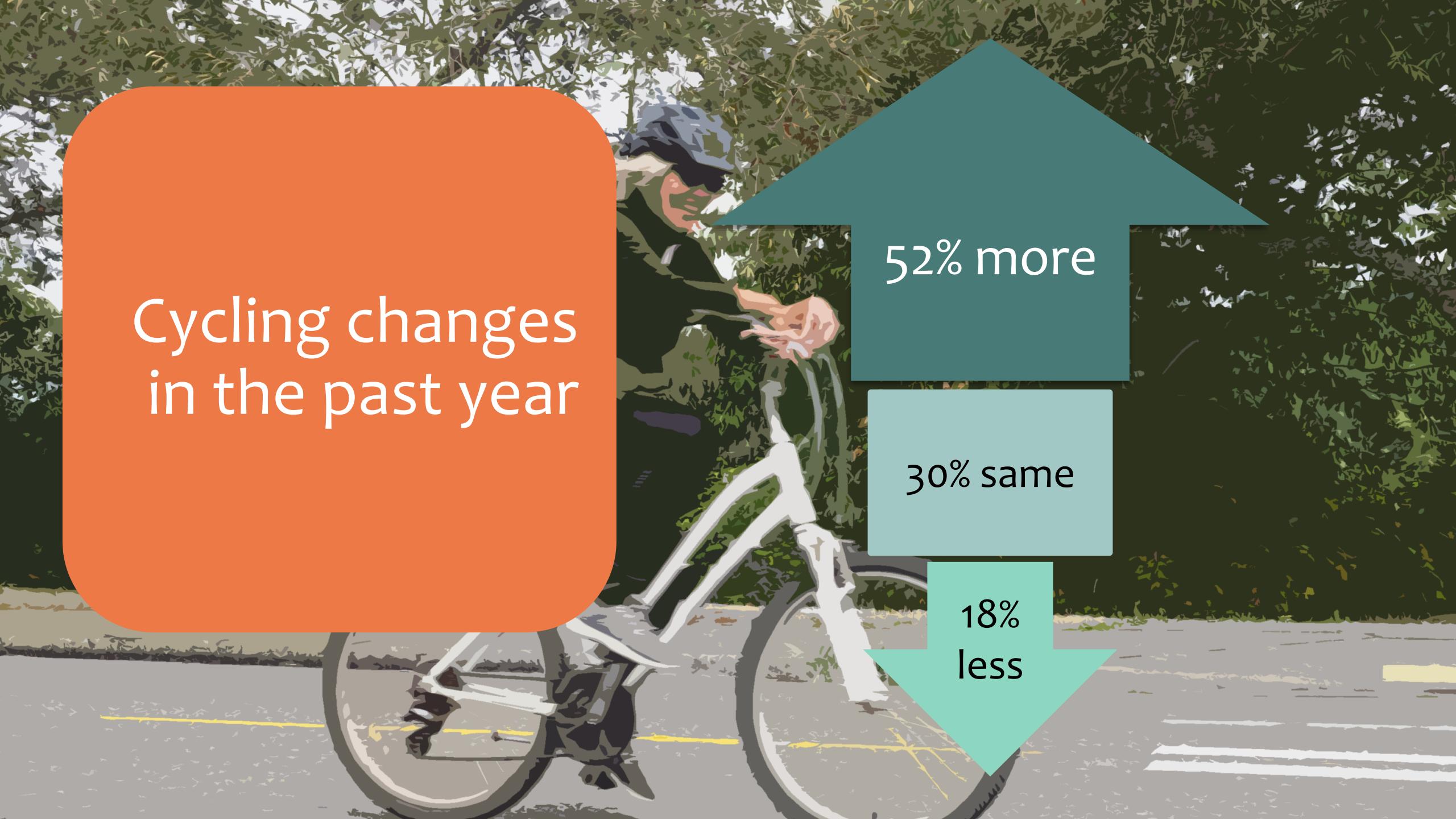
## Exercise

**2 to 10 miles → 23.8%**

**11 to 15 miles → 18.7%**

**15+ miles → 29.4%**





# Cycling changes in the past year

52% more

30% same

18%  
less

52% n.

Now that I am retired  
and have the time, I am  
extending my rides  
each week. I am  
shooting for a 100-mile  
run this summer.

70%  
COVID-19

Someone to ride  
with  
**Good on-road and  
trails**

8%

**More cycling  
destinations**  
Cycling instead of  
running  
Training for long  
distance ride

4 to 5%

eBike purchase  
New cycling  
facility  
**Better climate**

2 to 3%



18%  
less

17%

Roads feel less  
safe;  
Constricting  
physical condition

13%

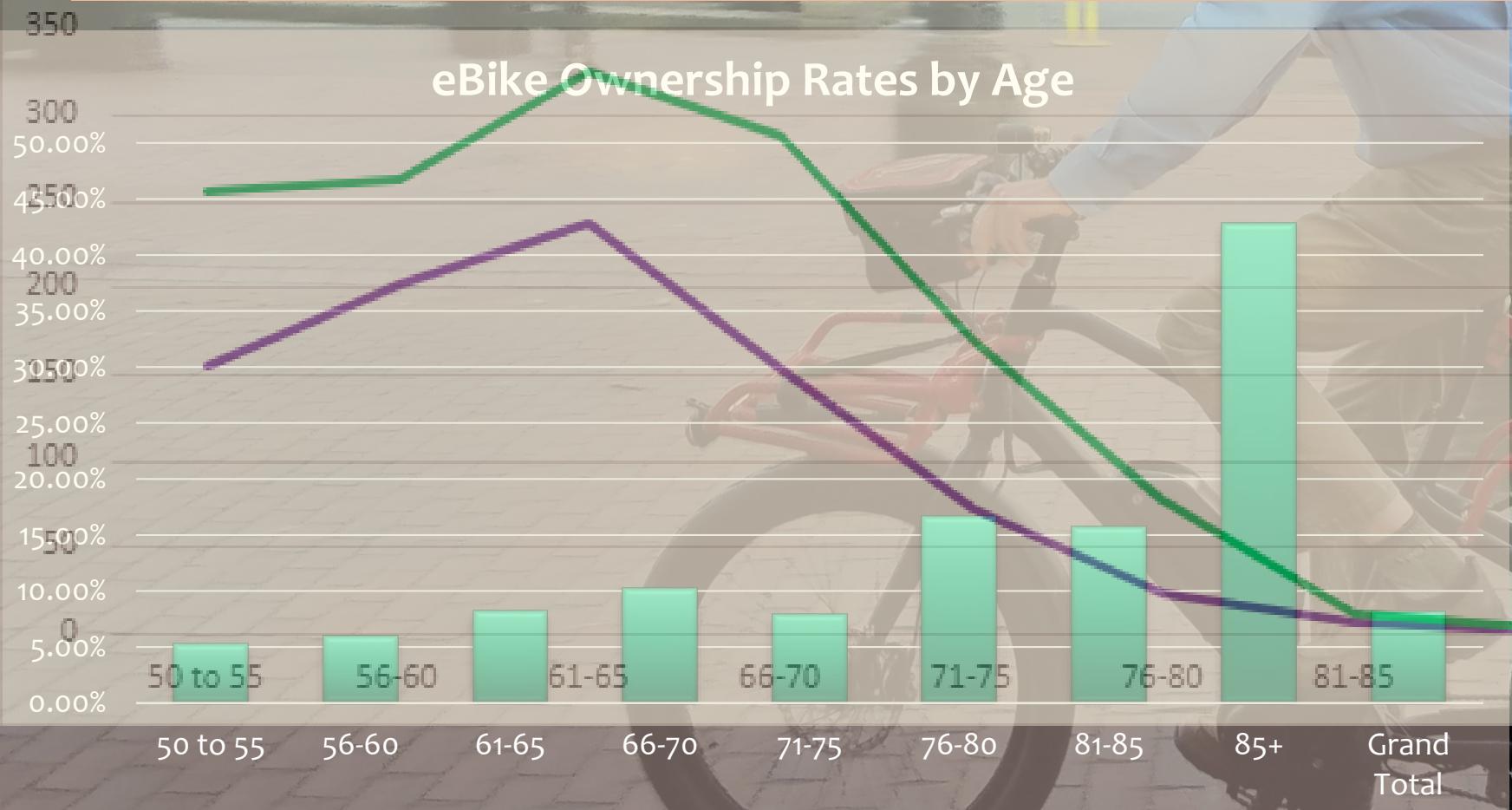
Work & Family  
responsibilities;  
loss of energy

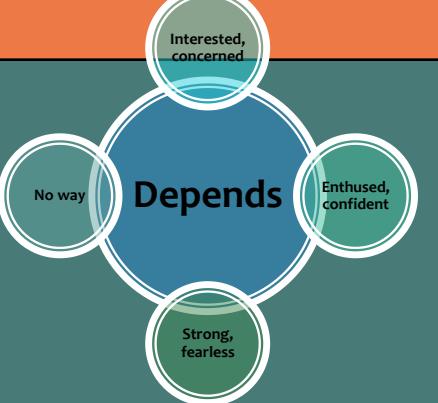
4 to 8%

Loss of cycling  
companions; job or  
home change;  
different sport;  
less confident due to  
crash

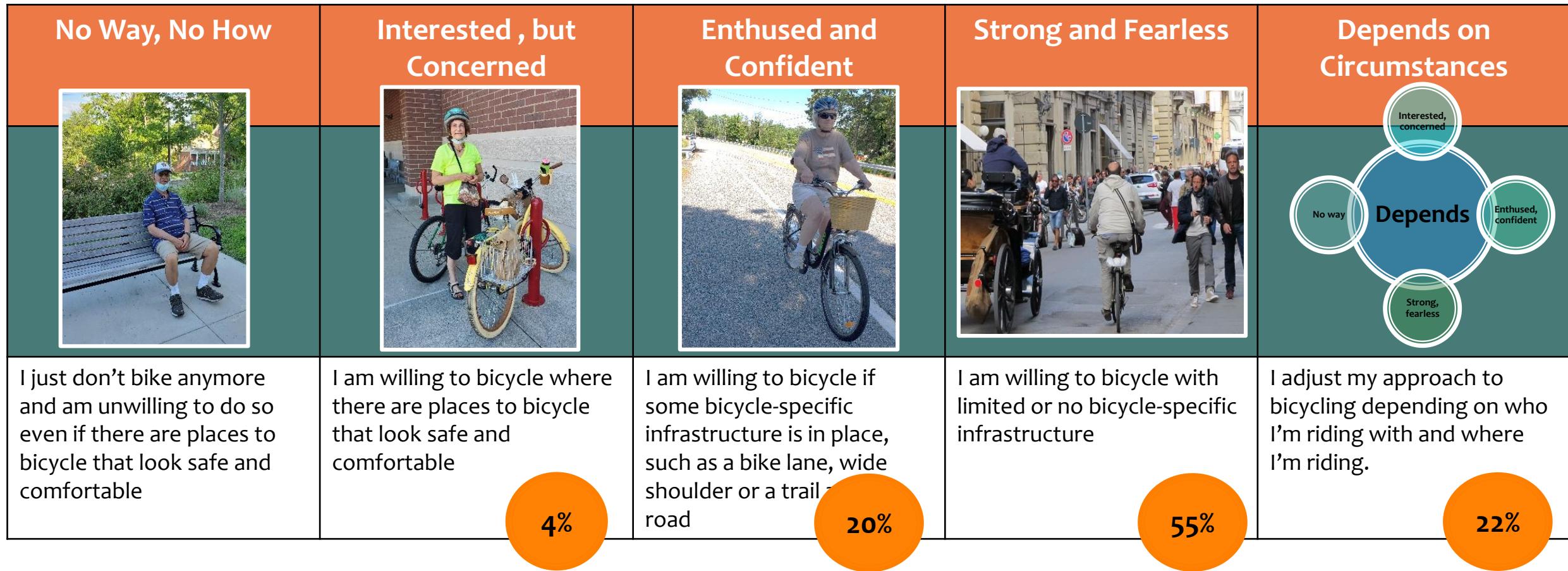
# eBikes rates increase with age, not gender

Distribution of Gender and Age



No Way, No How	Interested , but Concerned	Enthused and Confident	Strong and Fearless	Depends on Circumstances
 <p>I just don't bike anymore and am unwilling to do so even if there are places to bicycle that look safe and comfortable</p>	 <p>I am willing to bicycle where there are places to bicycle that look safe and comfortable</p>	 <p>I am willing to bicycle if some bicycle-specific infrastructure is in place, such as a bike lane, wide shoulder or a trail along a road</p>	 <p>I am willing to bicycle with limited or no bicycle-specific infrastructure</p>	 <p>I adjust my approach to bicycling depending on who I'm riding with and where I'm riding.</p>

# Type of cyclist



# Type of cyclist

# What's needed to ensure bikeability?

# Reasons why older adults would stop cycling

Cannot envision a time when I would stop riding



Peggy Lott, late 80's bike daily after a stroke

# Reasons why older adults would stop cycling

- Health



# Reasons why older adults would stop cycling

- Moved where not safe
- No one to ride with



# Best supportive cycling opportunities

- Someone to ride with
- Bikeable destinations with bike parking
- Pleasant views
- Benches, bathrooms, water



# Best supportive cycling conditions



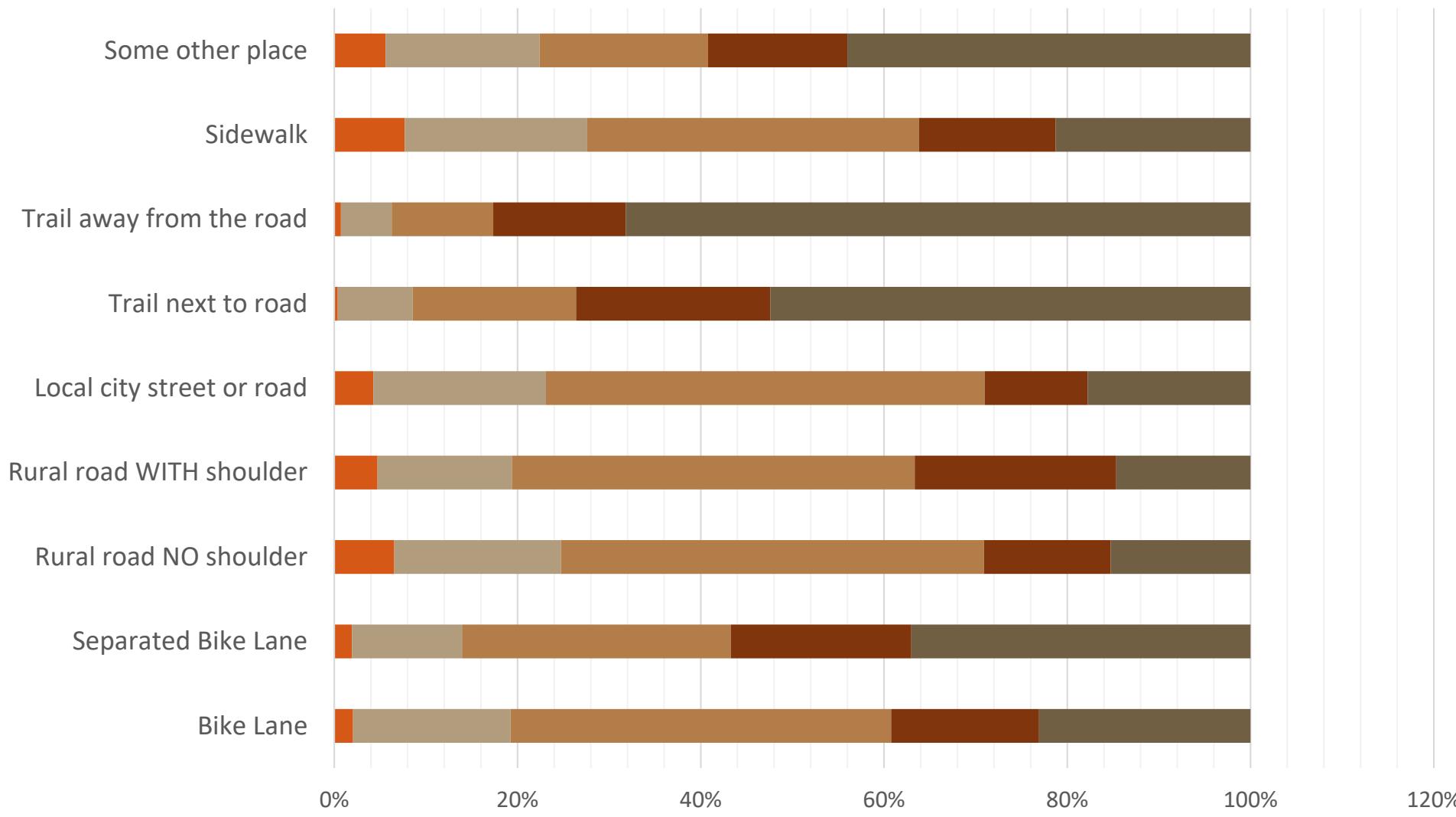
- Overall feeling of safety
- Roads in good condition and clear of debris
- Fewer points of conflict
- Enough space for all users
- Protected bike lanes
- More trails

# Safety and Comfort of Facilities Used

From online journals



- Safe and Comfortable Not at all
- Safe and Comfortable Average
- Safe and Comfortable Very
- Safe and Comfortable Somewhat
- Safe and Comfortable More than average



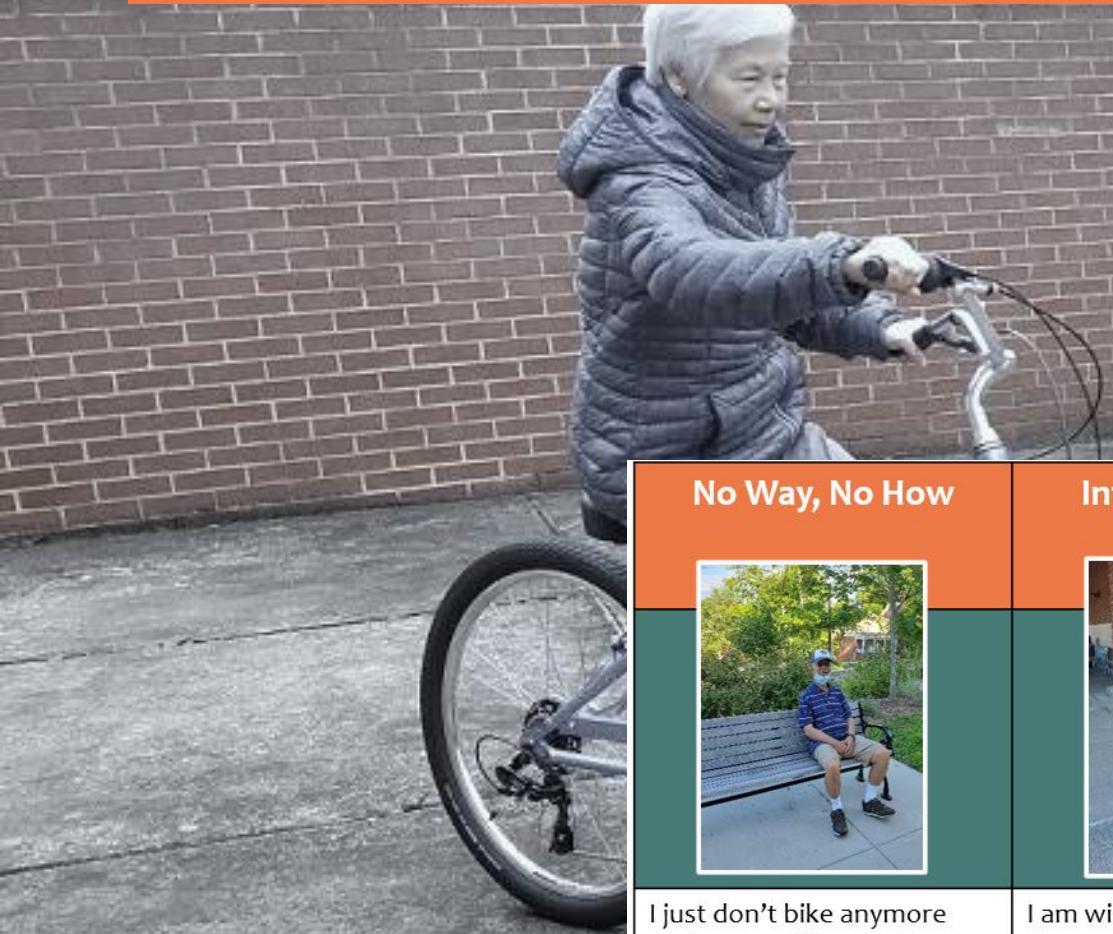
Consistent theme: Need for overall feeling of safety, companionship

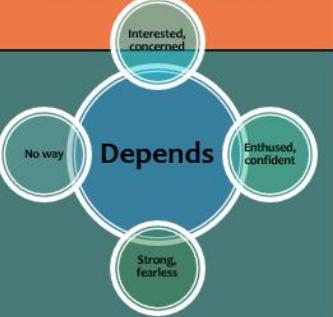
# Responsive infrastructure and programs

- Effective maintenance programs
- New or updated infrastructure
- Continuous pathways
- Agency coordination
  - Transportation ~ Public Works
  - Recreation
  - Health
  - Aging
  - Community organizations
- Community engagement
- Supportive programs



# Responsive programs and infrastructure



<b>No Way, No How</b> 	<b>Interested , but Concerned</b> 	<b>Enthused and Confident</b> 	<b>Strong and Fearless</b> 	<b>Depends on Circumstances</b> 
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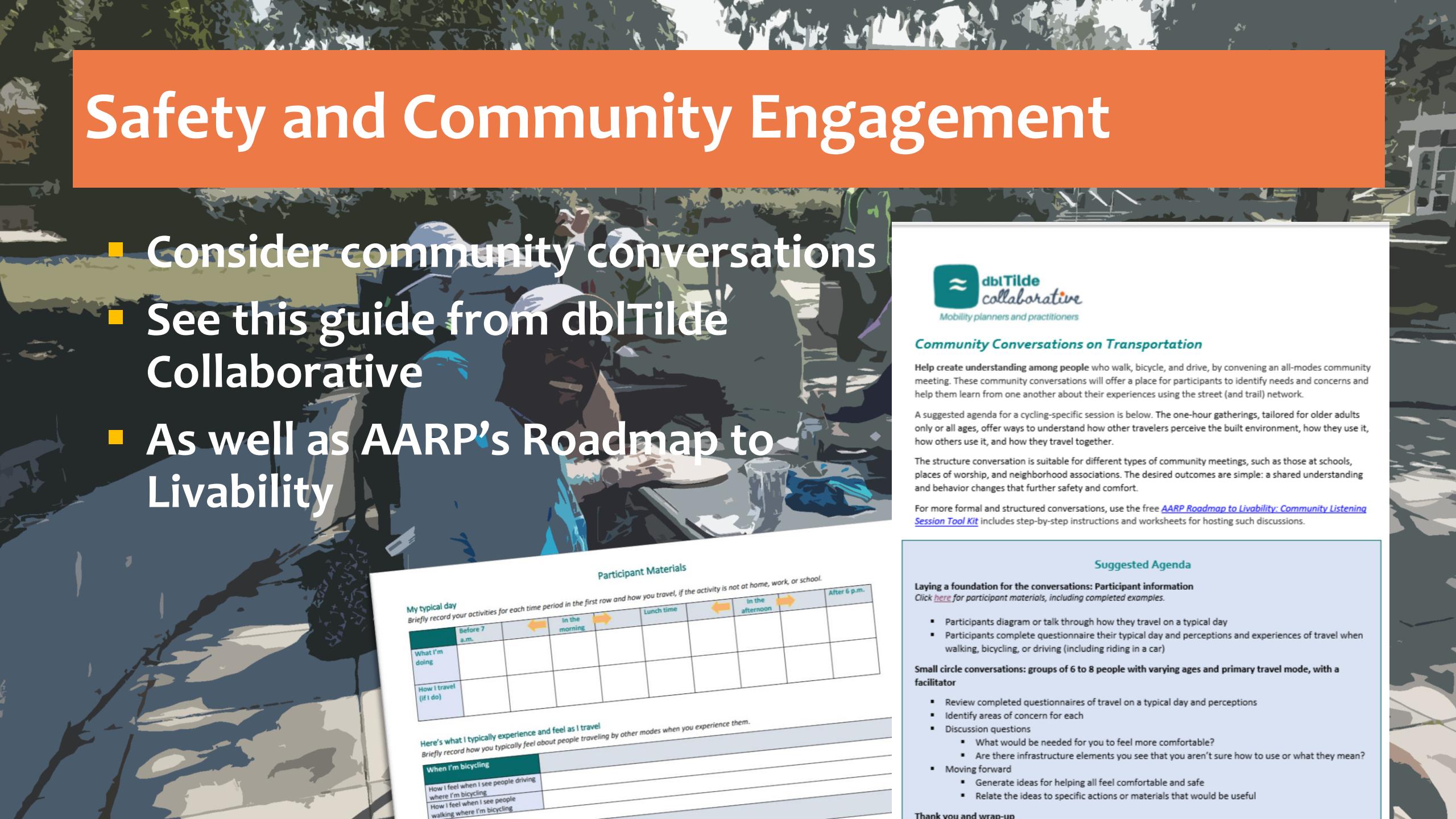
# Responsive programs and infrastructure

- Determine where older adults live; existing bike network
- Outreach and engagement designed for them
- Responsive programs
  - Cycling groups
  - Learn to cycle, refresh skills
  - Bicycle acquisition programs
  - On-site v. on-road or trail



# Safety and Community Engagement

- Consider community conversations
- See this guide from dblTilde Collaborative
- As well as AARP's Roadmap to Livability



**Participant Materials**

**My typical day**  
Briefly record your activities for each time period in the first row and how you travel, if the activity is not at home, work, or school.

What I'm doing	Before 7 a.m.	In the morning	Lunch time	In the afternoon	After 6 p.m.
How I travel (if I do)					

**Here's what I typically experience and feel as I travel**  
Briefly record how you typically feel about people traveling by other modes when you experience them.

When I'm bicycling	
How I feel when I see people driving where I'm bicycling	
How I feel when I see people walking where I'm bicycling	



## Community Conversations on Transportation

Help create understanding among people who walk, bicycle, and drive, by convening an all-modes community meeting. These community conversations will offer a place for participants to identify needs and concerns and help them learn from one another about their experiences using the street (and trail) network.

A suggested agenda for a cycling-specific session is below. The one-hour gatherings, tailored for older adults only or all ages, offer ways to understand how other travelers perceive the built environment, how they use it, how others use it, and how they travel together.

The structure conversation is suitable for different types of community meetings, such as those at schools, places of worship, and neighborhood associations. The desired outcomes are simple: a shared understanding and behavior changes that further safety and comfort.

For more formal and structured conversations, use the free [AARP Roadmap to Livability: Community Listening Session Tool Kit](#) includes step-by-step instructions and worksheets for hosting such discussions.

## Suggested Agenda

Laying a foundation for the conversations: Participant information  
Click [here](#) for participant materials, including completed examples.

- Participants diagram or talk through how they travel on a typical day
- Participants complete questionnaire their typical day and perceptions and experiences of travel when walking, bicycling, or driving (including riding in a car)

Small circle conversations: groups of 6 to 8 people with varying ages and primary travel mode, with a facilitator

- Review completed questionnaires of travel on a typical day and perceptions
- Identify areas of concern for each
- Discussion questions
  - What would be needed for you to feel more comfortable?
  - Are there infrastructure elements you see that you aren't sure how to use or what they mean?
- Moving forward
  - Generate ideas for helping all feel comfortable and safe
  - Relate the ideas to specific actions or materials that would be useful

Thank you and wrap-up

# Age-based and residential context



# Different engagement and outcomes

Fully independent  
55+ or Active Adult  
Communities (including  
apartments)

55 – 80+ (Avg of 60-65)

Institutional Independent  
(can move to assisted,  
etc.)

71 + (Avg 82)

Assisted, Institutional

75 – 84 (Typical)

Memory or Nursing care

Varies



# Different engagement and outcomes

Fully independent 55+ or Active Adult Communities (including apartments)	Institutional Independent (can move to assisted, etc.)	Assisted, Institutional	Memory or Nursing care
55 – 80+ (Avg of 60-65)	71 + (Avg 82)	75 – 84 (Typical)	Varies
More residents already cycling	Some cycling, some want to	Very low rates, but may be interest with right approach	Opportunity for cycling experience with tandem bikes

# Different engagement and outcomes

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Interior network with many connections to adjacent neighborhood network	Denser interior network that connects to adjacent neighborhood network. Benches, shade, etc.	Denser interior network that connects to adjacent neighborhood network. Benches, shade, etc.	On-site cycling machines and campus pathways, with benches, shade, etc.

# Always consider

- Who are older adults?
- How do they remain active?
- How could they become more active?
- What can we do to encourage and support?



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# Thank you

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