

AUGUST 2020

Expanding cycling infrastructure to fight the COVID-19 pandemic:

Lima, Peru

CITY POPULATION: 10,719,000 ⁱ



Concerned about the risk of crowded public transport during a coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, the city of **Lima** is strengthening their cycling infrastructure with almost 50 km of emergency cycle lanes and additional parking. Public awareness and safety campaigns have been used to strengthen road use practices and promote cycling as a safe mode of transport with benefits to personal, population and environmental health.

COVID-19 puts cycling in the spotlight

Improving walking and cycling networks is a key recommendation of the World Health Organization to increase physical activity and reduce sedentary activity for better health.ⁱⁱ Promoting active transport can also improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions to tackle climate change.ⁱⁱⁱ During a COVID-19 outbreak, these benefits can be amplified. Cycling networks can help essential workers move around a city during rigorous quarantine measures and can also reduce crowding on public transport when movement restrictions are relaxed. From Berlin to Lima, cities around the world have been turning to cycling networks to provide residents with a safe mode of transport during the pandemic.

Emergency cycle lanes

Home to over 10 million people, the city of Lima reported its first case of COVID-19 on 6 March. Despite early and stringent national quarantine measures, by August the number of cases in Lima had exceeded 200,000 and over 9,000 deaths had been reported.^{iv} With growing concern for the impact of containment measures on the economy and its large population of informal workers, Peru began to ease restrictions at the beginning of May. The first of four phases saw mining and construction industries restart, alongside limited activities within the restaurant and tourism sectors.^v

Predicting a rise in public transport use – which risked exacerbating COVID-19 transmission – the city of Lima acted quickly to expand and strengthen its cycle infrastructure. With an improved network, Lima's leaders sought to encourage a modal shift which would be supportive of COVID-19 containment as well as population and environmental health.



Source: Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima

On 4 May, work commenced on 46 km of emergency cycle lanes and additional cycle parking.^{vi} When deciding on which roads to temporarily reconfigure, Lima prioritised routes which would connect with their existing 227 km cycle network and facilitate access to public services such as hospitals. Across the city, twelve locations were selected to benefit from parking infrastructure, each with the capacity for 20 bicycles. By August, over 13 km of new cycle lanes were open for Lima residents.

Implementation and communication

To optimise cyclist safety, Lima chose to install protected two-way bike lanes. Vertical bollards, rubber humps and painted markings separate the cycle lanes from the roadway, and dedicated traffic lights have been added to intersections. The city is using on-road directional arrows and cycle symbols to further define the new space.^{vii}

Through the city government's website and social media accounts, residents have been informed of cycle network developments. The city government's Non-motorised Transport Office, Ciclolima, has its own social media accounts and these are the primary channel of distribution for updates and communication campaigns. During the pandemic, Ciclolima has used simple infographics to connect with local people. They have helped to communicate important messages around distancing while cycling and other safe cycle practices, as well as promotional messages of the benefits of cycling and examples of when to travel by bike. Social media has also been used to promote and host live sessions with city practitioners and experts, covering recommendations for parking, and how to stay safe while cycling.



Source: Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima



Source: Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima

How Lima is promoting cyclist safety and experience

With notoriously bad traffic, Lima faces the challenge of promoting cycling against a backdrop of road safety concerns. On World Bike Day, 3 June, Ciclolima kicked off a public awareness campaign to raise the profile of the emergency cycling network and promote safe conduct by all road users.^{viii} Titled Yo Respeto (“I Respect”), the campaign encourages every type of road user to acknowledge the roads as shared spaces and observe regulations on encountering cyclists or pedestrians. As well as social media outreach, Ciclolima has spent time at cycle intersections across the city with large and handheld banners displaying the slogan “I respect cyclists and pedestrians”. Through August, the awareness campaign ran three times per week, 07:30 – 09:30, at intersections with high cycle traffic.

Road users who breach safety directions by obstructing a cycle lane can be fined S/516. The city of Lima has encouraged the public to report such incidents via the mobile application VIPA. This platform facilitates crowd-sourced reporting of traffic offenses and sends incident data to the authorities for validation and distribution of penalties.^{ix}

Community police officers are also being trained in urban cycling. In August, over thirty female officers who ordinarily patrol by bike underwent a 12-day training course which focussed on sustainable mobility, road safety, cycling regulations and bicycle mechanics.^x The officers have been supporting Ciclolima’s Yo Respeto campaign and the enforcement of road traffic regulations. This similarly demonstrates Lima’s commitment to improving the experience and safety of cyclists.



Source: Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima

Making emergency infrastructure permanent

Amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, city and national governments have the opportunity to mark recovery with a commitment to build a healthier, fairer and greener society. In cases where temporary measures have been beneficial to population health, they could be considered as longer-term changes.

In June, the national Ministry of Transport and Communication of Peru accelerated the approval of national legislation which promotes and regulates the use of the bicycle as a sustainable mode of transport.^{xi} In Lima, the city authorities are currently evaluating the success of their measures, but if positive outcomes are identified, they are already planning to make their emergency cycle infrastructure a permanent feature. Their experience has shown that with the right political will and policy landscape, mobility habits can be shifted to deliver long-term benefits in both population and environmental health.

In addition...

Lima's COVID-19 response has also included a three-prong project with the [Partnership for Healthy Cities](#), a global initiative funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, in collaboration with the World Health Organization and Vital Strategies. Their work has involved:

- the development of protocols for reopening the city;
- the creation of a dashboard for monitoring local density of COVID-19 cases and other city data; and
- a communication campaign to encourage adherence to public health and social measures (PHSMs) such as mask-wearing, hand-washing and physical distancing.

For more information on COVID-19 resources for cities, visit the [Partnership for Healthy Cities COVID-19 Response Center](#).

Key Resources on Physical Activity and Road Safety

- WHO Regional Office for Europe (EURO) [Moving around during the COVID-19 outbreak](#)
- WHO Regional Office for Europe (EURO) [Staying physically active during self-quarantine](#)
- NACTO Webinar: [Slow, Shared, and Safe: Closing Streets to Thru-Traffic During the Coronavirus](#)
- International Transport Forum [COVID-19 Transport Brief - Re-spacing Our Cities For Resilience](#)

ⁱ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, custom data acquired via website. (<https://population.un.org/wup/>; accessed 6 August 2020)

ⁱⁱ Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world. Page 32. World Health Organization. 2018. (<https://www.who.int/news-room/initiatives/gappa>; accessed 6 August 2020)

ⁱⁱⁱ Healthy environments: why do they matter and what can we do? Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019. (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/healthy-environments-why-do-they-matter-and-what-can-we-do>; accessed; 6 August 2020)

^{iv} Sala Situacional COVID-19 Perú. Instituto Nacional de Salud y Centro Nacional de Epidemiología, Prevención y Control de Enfermedades – MINSA. (https://covid19.minsa.gob.pe/sala_situacional.asp; accessed 11 August 2020)

^v Decreto Supremo N° 080-2020-PCM. 2 May 2020. Estado Peruano. (<https://www.gob.pe/institucion/pcm/normas-legales/544911-080-2020-pcm>; accessed 7 August 2020)

^{vi} Municipalidad de Lima inició implementación de una red de 46 km de ciclovías temporales. Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima. 4 May 2020. (<http://www.munlima.gob.pe/noticias/item/39962-municipalidad-de-lima-inicio-implementacion-de-una-red-de-46-km-de-ciclovias-temporales>; accessed 11 August 2020)

^{vii} Ciclovías: Seguridad. Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima. (https://www.descubrelima.pe/ciclovias/?fbclid=IwAR34-p_UZo6WKxJs9MEJxBA7wc97XUKUUIBTvUqT9bIsTS5ILbQ0JhFxxkY#seguridad; accessed 11 August 2020)

^{viii} Ciclolima Facebook Post 4 June 2020. Ciclolima, Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima. (<https://www.facebook.com/CICLOLIMA.munlima/posts/2626780997586190>; accessed 11 August 2020)

^{ix} Municipalidad de Lima insta a los ciudadanos a reportar invasión de ciclovías mediante vpa. 8 July 2020. Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima. (<http://www.munlima.gob.pe/noticias/item/40305-municipalidad-de-lima-insta-a-los-ciudadanos-a-reportar-invasion-de-ciclovias-mediante-vpa>; accessed 11 August 2020)

^x Municipalidad de Lima capacita a la policía femenina de tránsito sur 1 en ciclismo urbano. 4 August 2020. Municipalidad Metropolitana de Lima. (<http://www.munlima.gob.pe/noticias/item/40424-municipalidad-de-lima-capacita-a-la-policia-femenina-de-transito-sur-1-en-ciclismo-urbano>; accessed 11 August 2020)

^{xi} Decreto Supremo N° 012-2020-MTC. 4 June 2020. Estado Peruano. (<https://www.gob.pe/institucion/mtc/normas-legales/633229-012-2020-mtc>; accessed 11 August 2020)