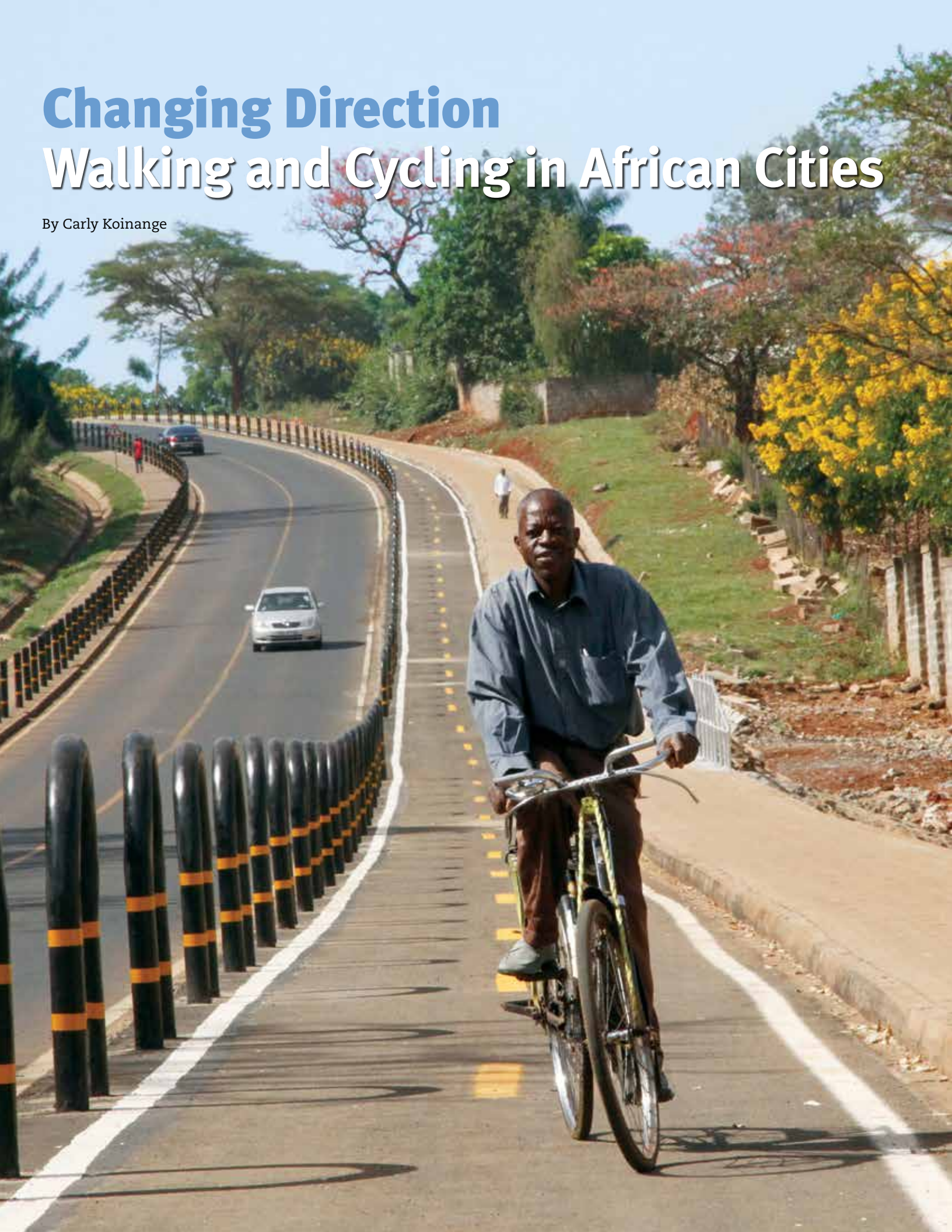


# Changing Direction Walking and Cycling in African Cities

By Carly Koinange







No matter where you live or how you travel, nearly everyone begins and ends each trip as a pedestrian. In cities across Africa, most people rely almost exclusively on walking and cycling as their primary forms of mobility. Due to a lack of infrastructure, however, people spend several hours each day walking to and from school and work—and accessing basic services.

Throughout the region, the percentage of people using cycling and walking, or nonmotorized transport (NMT), varies from 50 percent in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to 82 percent in Dakar, Senegal. In rural areas, these numbers are even higher. Even where public transport exists, the urban and rural poor are dependent on NMT because they simply cannot afford public transport fares. One of the greatest things these cities can do to improve quality of life for the majority of their citizens would be to prioritize NMT by providing safe and accessible cycling and walking infrastructure.

According to the World Health Organization's (WHO) *Global Status Report on Road Safety* in 2013, Africa has the highest number of road traffic accidents per capita of any region, with 43 percent of transport-related deaths occurring among pedestrians and cyclists. Traffic accidents in Africa are now the leading cause of death after malaria and HIV/AIDS, with huge societal and economic costs for African cities. The simple option to safely cycle to work would significantly increase the job opportunities available to the majority of Africans by extending the reach of their commutes without additional costs.

Encouraging walking and cycling saves households time and money, and is essential for the long-term protection of health and the environment.

Vehicle emissions contain particulate matter and other harmful gases, which are a leading cause of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. WHO estimates that 3.7 million people die each year as a result of outdoor air pollution. The transport sector currently contributes 23 percent of all carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. Emissions are projected to grow at a rate of 2.5 percent annually until 2020, in part because of rising numbers of cars. Fortunately, changes are afoot. African governments are realizing how important it is to support walking and cycling by investing in infrastructure for NMT.

In 2008, South Africa's Department of Transport took the lead by developing a national NMT policy. This is supported by a number of city-level NMT policies including the City of Cape Town's NMT Policy and Strategy and the Johannesburg Framework for NMT. South African cities also have taken a lead in adopting guidelines for pedestrian-friendly street design, with documents such as Tshwane's *Streetscape Design Guidelines* and Johannesburg's *Complete Streets Design Manual Guideline*. In 2000, Cape Town constructed 22 kilometers of bike paths, resulting in a 30 percent increase in the number of students who commuted by bicycle.

The city of Tamale, Ghana, built 60 kilometers of bike lanes, supporting two-thirds of trips by bicycle. Tamale's



Walking and cycling infrastructure is severely lacking in cities throughout Africa, but some cities are making positive changes.

cycle network is fully integrated with other transport modes, including long-distance taxis and buses. The Ghana Ministry of Transport and National Road Safety Commission launched a stakeholder engagement process in October 2015 with the aim of developing a national NMT policy.

In Uganda, the Ministry of Works and Transport launched a National NMT Policy in 2012 in partnership with the First African Bicycle Information Organization (FABIO), demonstrating the important role of civil society in NMT planning and implementation. Design is now under way for an NMT pilot corridor in central Kampala. The project incorporates a plan to reorganize two informal minibus parks, as well as a proposed BRT corridor running diagonal to the pilot street.

In Kenya, the Nairobi City County government launched an NMT policy in March 2015 to develop and maintain a fully integrated NMT transport

system. The government went further by committing 20 percent of all road construction spending toward NMT infrastructure and is now planning to build on the policy by following up with on-ground infrastructure as well as exploring how to scale up and finance NMT at a national level.

In Burundi, the Ministry of Transport, Public Works, and Equipment has already undertaken an environmental and social impact assessment and has identified a pilot NMT corridor in Bujumbura. Talks have also commenced in Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire to develop NMT policies. The United Nations Environment Programme's Share the Road is working with governments in Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Ghana, Nigeria, and Cote d'Ivoire to promote systematic investment in NMT.

Planners across Africa are also leveraging public transport initiatives to improve mobility for NMT users. Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Lagos have





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ies will see an influx of more than 150 million new residents in the next fifteen years, an increase of 50 percent. The majority of these new urban residents will rely on the most affordable and accessible modes of transport: walking and cycling. Transport-related investment decisions in the coming years will help define the economic, environmental, and social development of Africa, and will “lock in” travel and mobility behavior for many years into the future. The way to avoid continent-wide gridlock is to build cities that thrive on an integrated, multimodal transport system that includes NMT. A political and financial commitment from decision makers and a genuine commitment from the development community is required for this to become a reality. This is also a prime opportunity for governments and development partners all over Africa to give NMT, and the millions of Africans who travel by foot and bicycle—and their environment—the priority it deserves.

introduced BRT and busway corridors that have significantly improved the efficiency of public transport. Cities such as Dar es Salaam; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Kampala; and Nairobi are planning for BRT and LRT or have projects under construction. While the core aim of these projects is to improve public transport, they also present an opportunity to implement parallel and integrated facilities

for walking and cycling. The Dar Rapid Transit (DART) in Dar es Salaam is a good example of the importance of integration between public transport and NMT facilities. DART corridors feature accessible footpaths and wide cycling tracks, allowing for the integration of cycling with the BRT system.

As part of the worldwide movement toward urbanization, Africa’s major cit-

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