



Insurgentes Cycle Lane: From Pop-Up to Permanent

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The global COVID-19 pandemic put urban cycling at the center of the public health debate. To prevent the spread of the virus, cities designed strategies and implemented actions to keep people safe and healthy. One of these actions was the implementation of pop-up bike lanes, to give people socially distanced, reliable, and equitable alternatives to move around the city. In Mexico City, over 40 kilometers of temporary cycle lanes were created along Insurgentes Avenue, one of the city's main transportation corridors.

Above: Woman on the soon-to-be permanent cycle lane on Avenida de los Insurgentes.
Photo: ITDP Mexico

Avenida de los Insurgentes has historically been one of the most important streets in Mexico City as well as Latin America. Spanning 28.8 kilometers, it is one of the longest urban streets in the world. Insurgentes connects Mexico City from south to north, traversing the economic and cultural core.

Throughout the years, Avenida de los Insurgentes has undergone many transformations. In 2005, the first bus rapid transit (BRT) line in Mexico City was constructed there. The BRT provided the city with a more sustainable and efficient public transit option and also made the street safer as crosswalks were redesigned to give pedestrians priority. Throughout these transformations, there have been several proposals to make Insurgentes a truly “complete street” by allocating dedicated space to cyclists. Complete streets are designed to prioritize and protect some of the most vulnerable road users: pedestrians and cyclists, and those who might struggle to move quickly, like the elderly, children, or people traveling with goods. Complete streets are different based on the communities that they are built in but have one thing in common: prioritizing people, not cars. In 2007, the civil society group Bicitekas, along with ITDP, created a cycling network proposal to prioritize a cycle lane on Insurgentes. The 2010 Bicycle Mobility Strategy and the 2018 Bicycle Mobility Plan of



Top left: The cycle lane has not only increased cyclists, but has led to more diversity among those cycling.

Photo: ITDP Mexico

Top Right: Mexico City's cycle network has been popular among people cycling for a variety of reasons: delivering goods, commuting, traveling to various destinations, and cycling for recreation.

Photo: ITDP Mexico

Above: Making the cycle lane permanent will help solidify the cycling gains made in the past year by Mexico City.

Photo: ITDP Mexico

the city's Ministry of Environment also proposed a cycle lane on Insurgentes. All these efforts, however, never moved beyond the planning phase. It was not until the COVID-19 pandemic hit, that the city finally implemented a temporary cycle lane. Without the pandemic shutdown, this cycle lane would not have happened as quickly or become permanent.

Ten months after the temporary cycle lane was built, the number of cyclists increased by 353%. Other types of users were also seen with more frequency, like families with children, people exercising, and people with disabilities moving smoothly in their wheelchairs.

In March 2021, Mexico City's mayor, Claudia Sheinbaum, announced that a permanent high-quality cycle lane along Insurgentes would become a reality. This experience also encouraged the city to implement and accelerate the construction of safe infrastructure for cyclists in other areas and streets. Now that 14.25 kilometers of the cycle lane is finally set to materialize, Insurgentes will truly become a street for all.