

# Cycling Cities: The Johannesburg Experience

For more information, see  
[CyclingCities.info/](http://CyclingCities.info/)  
Johannesburg



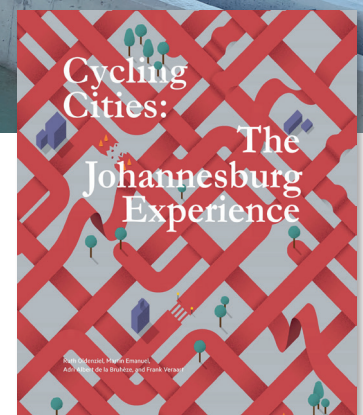
## Bringing Johannesburg's history of everyday cycling from the past into the present

Think of Johannesburg and cars come to mind: highways, robots, rush hour, minibus taxis and 4x4s. But it wasn't always like this. Before Gautrain, Metrorail and trams, Johannesburg was a cycling city. Dr Njogu Morgan brings this other city to life through historical photographs and groundbreaking research, showing that a different future was one possible. By matching this halfway-funded project, you can contribute to bringing this work to a wider audience of cyclists, mobility planners and all those interested in resilient, healthy, accessible African cities.

Gauteng's famously sprawling city region has seen its fair share of attempts to provide for something other than the car. Yet cycling infrastructure is often criticised as an investment that should wait until a real cycling culture emerges. Dr Morgan's work reveals that just such a culture thrived for decades, drawing in a cross-section of early Rand society. From elites to mineworkers, cycling provided a viable way of getting around well into the mid-20th century. These findings directly challenge today's criticism of cycling and walking infrastructure as premature - in fact, it is decades overdue.

Uncovering Johannesburg's cycling history means telling a new story of independent movement for people of colour, as well as one of official backlash against it. This history is deeply relevant from current debate in an urbanising and growing South Africa. Support for this research can see a missing social and cultural dimension brought back into frame, and also point out pitfalls in cycling provision in the past.

*Cycling Cities: The Johannesburg Experience* documents phenomena such as the 1930s bike lane along Louis Botha Avenue, or the tens of thousands of bicycle licences sold into the 1950s. Importantly, it brings a theoretical perspective to this history to account for why cycling



## Proposed Publication

*Cycling Cities:  
The Johannesburg  
Experience*

Author: Njogu Morgan  
Editors: Ruth Oldenziel  
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88 pages, 37 images,  
2 graphs, full colour  
Publication date:  
**June 2019 (est.)**

## Fundraising Targets

Author Fee:  
**Fully Funded**  
Printing Costs:  
**Fully Funded**  
Editing, Design,  
Typesetting and  
Production Costs:  
**EUR 9000**

Top Image: A new pedestrian and cycling bridge connects Alexandria with Sandton (Source: Njogu Morgan)  
Inset: *Cycling Cities* (2016) cover.



disappeared from Johannesburg streets the first time around, and what should be avoided to get it right this time.

Above all, Dr Morgan shows that by taking cycling seriously, Johannesburg could once again see cycling become an important part of daily life. At the same time, *The Johannesburg Experience* brings the city into dialogue with a growing list of world cities in the *Cycling Cities* series, enabling comparison and collaboration.

Our fundraising process thus far has produced a generous response. Support for the author's fee has seen the manuscript completed and image rights secured. Printing costs in South Africa have been covered by a generous single donation. Now we seek to match these funds with your support, in order to see produce a new work to the same excellent standard as the existing *Cycling Cities* titles.

### More about the author

Njogu Morgan took undergraduate studies in Political Science and International Relations at Northwestern University, Chicago, and a Master's in Public and Development Management from the University of the Witwatersrand before completing his PhD in Town and Regional Planning at the same institution. His doctoral research, which examines the changing dynamics of bicycle use in Amsterdam, Beijing, Chicago and Johannesburg, forms the basis for this book, along with Morgan's involvement in present-day efforts to bring about a more cycleable greater Johannesburg through organisations such as JUCA, the Johannesburg Urban Cyclists' Association.

"In the wake of the bicycle's role as an affordable transport solution that also delivers health, economic, environmental and other social benefits, one intention of the book is to re-inject a sense of agency into bicycle planning in Johannesburg. A major theme of the book is how deliberate (and unintentional) decisions by a variety of actors transformed the city into a less friendly space for the bike. Therefore, while some of those decisions made in the past have strong echoes today (inhibiting everyday cycling), other ones can be taken over time to create a better cycling context."

- Njogu Morgan



Two early cyclists on the Rand. (Source: Museum Africa Picture Archives)



Workers cycling along Louis Botha. (Source: Museum Africa Picture Archives)



A society wedding by bicycle (Source: Museum Africa Picture Archives)



Growing numbers participate in a city-centre Critical Mass Ride (Source: Critical Mass Johannesburg)