



**A Strategic Plan for
Working Bikes 2023-2025**

MARCH 9, 2023

PREFACE

This is Working Bikes' first formal strategic plan. The effort was undertaken in 2022 and early 2023 to build on Working Bikes' past success and allow the organization to affirm its mission and vision, articulate its beliefs and values, and develop a set of goals and objectives to guide the organization over the next few years.

We are grateful for all the efforts and contributions of the Working Bikes community, especially to members of the Strategic Planning Committee. To Trevor Clarke who provided his experience in the nonprofit sector and intimate familiarity with the Working Bikes community. To the talented Committee members for their trust in the process, contributions to the project, and patience, especially: Phil Kaplan, Angela Taylor, Ruth Rosas, Cauria Duarte, Alan Lloyd, Keith Oberg, Ed Hanlon, Luke Blakely, and Tom Mulhern (who co-facilitated the process with myself). Their collective efforts have contributed to a quality outcome. We are also grateful to the Working Bikes' Board of Directors for their support and encouragement, trust in the team, and participation in strategic planning workshops. Lastly, we thank the stakeholders of the Working Bikes community (volunteers, staff, donation drop-off sites, donors, partners, community members, and peer organizations) who provided insights upon which this plan is based.

These Strategic Goals are commitments to the growth and evolution of Working Bikes and identify areas of added focus and investment over the next 2-3 years but our day-to-day focus is and will remain the core activities of our social enterprise:

- Collect bikes (and maintain/expand our network of donation partners)
- Prepare and ship bikes, parts, and tools to new and emerging global partners
- Fix bikes for Cycle of Power/Peace partners
- Refurbish and sell great bikes at fair prices.
- Offer quality used parts and accessories in our retail space.
- Give service/support to Cycle of Power recipients and neighborhood customers.
- Cultivate and maintain the partner and donor relationships required for all of this.
- Support one another as a combined collective of staff and volunteers.

The steady growth of Working Bikes and the need to assure achievement of its mission, vision, and values requires a strategic plan to support a strong operation, well-functioning systems, sound processes, and great people to guide it into the future. We hope this plan will further those objectives.

Jim Lindsey (Board President)

WORKING BIKES HISTORY AND IMPACT

Working Bikes is a 501(c)3 organization started in 1999 by Lee Ravenscroft, Amy Little, and a group of volunteers dedicated to recycling bikes, helping local and international projects, and supporting bike culture. Since its inception, Working Bikes has collected over 100,000 bicycles via its donor network throughout Chicago and the Midwest and has redistributed them worldwide as tools for self-determination in local and global communities. A paid staff of full- and part-time employees and countless volunteers make this work possible. Working Bikes operates from its own warehouse at 24th Place and Western between Chicago's Pilsen and Little Village communities.

Countless bicycles are discarded, abandoned, or sit unused in basements or garages in the United States every year but, we believe that a bicycle can truly change the life of an individual, their family and their community. Bicycling is, of course, a form of transportation but in areas of low income with high levels of unemployment and lack of accessible transportation, a bicycle is much more and can provide access to jobs, education, health care and other resources to under-resourced populations. These bikes also provide livelihoods to the bike shops and mechanics who repair them and keep them maintained. Working Bikes donates over 7,000 bicycles each year to our international partners in Africa and Latin America including Ghana, Uganda, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Lesotho, Tanzania, El Salvador, Guatemala, and many others. In addition, Working Bikes donates over 1,000 refurbished bicycles and another 500 "as is" bikes annually to recipients in the Chicago area through its Cycle of Peace and Cycle of Power programs. The organization also operates an extensive volunteer program in which volunteers support the mission while finding community and building bike know-how and mechanical skills, and it routinely sponsors internships and events that increase access to bikes and knowledge about how to maintain, repair and enjoy them safely.

These efforts are funded, in part, by the sale of professionally refurbished bikes at below market prices, sales of parts and accessories, and contracted services such as our role in Bike Chicago, the City's program to advance affordable and climate friendly mobility. Over 90% of Working Bikes net operating budget comes from these revenues, making us a highly sustainable social enterprise.

1 REAFFIRMING WORKING BIKES MISSION AND VISION

In our Board workshops, we discussed the need to center people and communities in our mission. To reflect that discussion, these statements have been lightly edited from their previous versions.

Working Bikes Mission

Working Bikes strengthens local and global communities by giving donated bicycles new life and redistributing them as tools for self-determination.

Working Bikes Vision

We work toward a world where everyone has access to bicycle transportation—whether in Africa, Latin America, or Chicago—and where bicycles are the most reliable, sustainable, and environmentally friendly transportation available!

2 ARTICULATING WORKING BIKES BELIEFS AND VALUES

Throughout our history, Working Bikes has thrived in large part due to deeply held and widely shared beliefs and values. To date, for the most part, these values have been tacit. In this plan, we state them explicitly so that we may communicate consistently, align decisions, orient new members, and establish clear expectations for all who enter.

Working Bikes Beliefs

The Power of Bikes & Cycling. We take joy in the form, function, sustainability, cost effectiveness, safety, accessibility and impact of these amazing tools.

Equity & Racial Justice. We are intentional in actions and language to actively fight racism and all other forms of bigotry—ethnic, religious, gender, sexual— and to embrace equity including transportation justice and equity.

Communities drive Change. We actively engage with our local and global communities, improving quality of life and helping them to build their power.

Service & Volunteerism. We act from passion and commitment to mission and to one another in the belief that we can make a difference if we work together.

Working Bikes Values

Impact on People. We measure our mission in the positive effects we have on people's lives, not only the number of bikes we provide. We strive to treat each individual with kindness and care and to help them build power, prosperity, connection, and autonomy.

Environmental Sustainability. In all we do, we strive to create positive impacts and reduce negative impacts to the planet. We are great stewards of resources.

Inclusion & Representation. We welcome all people to our mission, our vision, our values and our community, with special consideration for those who have been marginalized historically.

Collaboration. We promote teamwork in our organization and collaborate with external partners to achieve common goals.

Learning & Teaching. All have something to learn, something to teach, and much to contribute. We pass on skills without intimidation or judgment to sustain our mission. And we are committed to helping community members build skills and confidence as a critical part of our commitment to self-determination.

3 THE WORKING BIKES MODEL: IMPACT AND FOCUS AREAS IN DYNAMIC ALIGNMENT

To pursue our mission, Working Bikes combines aspects of a mission-driven non-profit, a customer-driven business, and a community-driven collective. While a great strength, this model can also sometimes be hard to understand and manage.

Drawing on what we've developed in the strategic planning process, below is a summary picture meant to show how what we do relates to what we create.

Our Impact — the trail we blaze

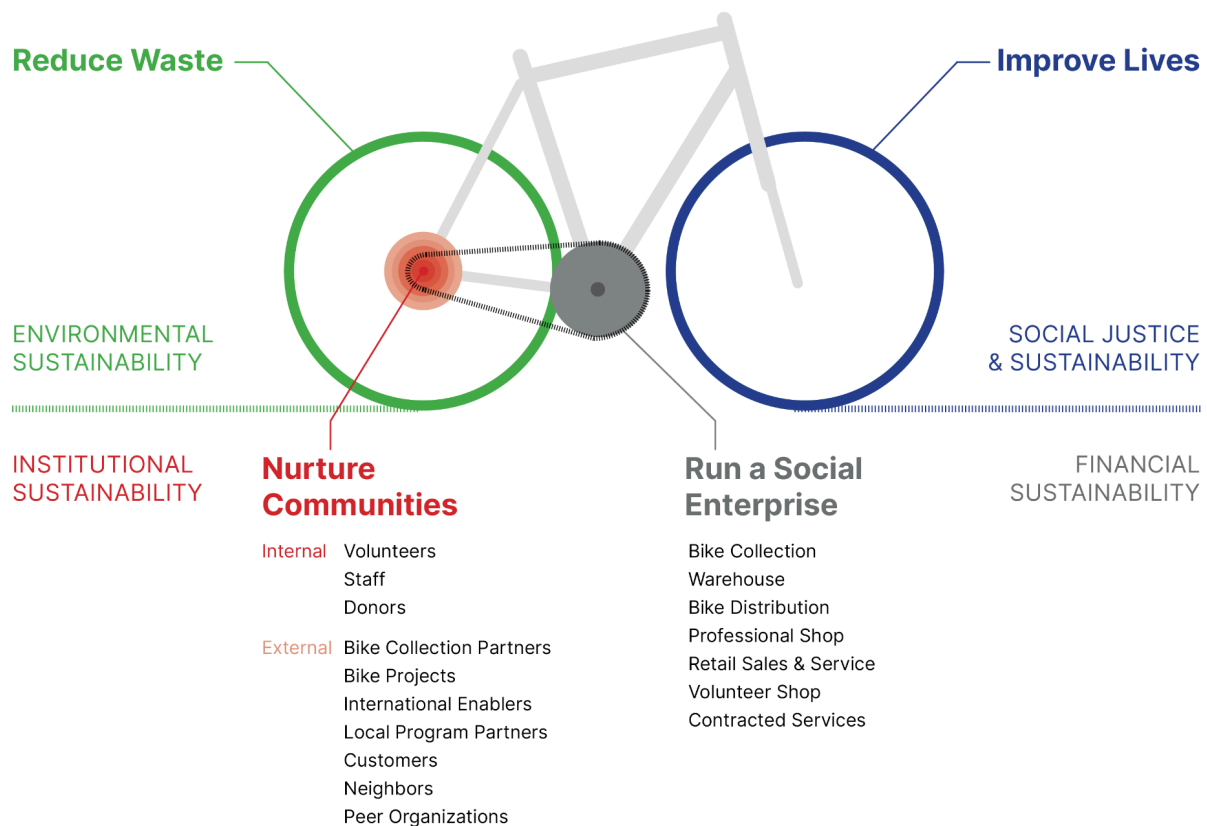
Improve Lives. This is our heading, the road ahead we are committed to.

Reduce Waste. This is our beneficial by-product, the tracks we leave behind.

Our Day to Day Focus — the drive train

Run a Social Enterprise. This is the everyday activity that propels our impact.

Nurture Communities. This is how we accelerate, leverage, and scale our impact.



4 STRATEGIC GOALS 2023 AND BEYOND

From Board dialogue and stakeholder input, we have prioritized 5 Strategic Goals. They are presented below in no particular order.

Goal	Objectives	Rationale	Model Alignment
1. Grow and Support our Volunteer Community	A. Grow Volunteer Base B. Improve Experience/Skills C. Boost Community Spirit	Volunteer energy is core to our success and key to achieving our mission.	Nurture communities Improve lives
2. Improve Functionality of our Building	A. Improve Dock B. Safety & Efficiency C. Comfort & Appeal D. Accessibility	Our building is a key strategic asset. We need to harness it to its best use to support our mission and impact.	Run a Social Enterprise Reduce Waste
3. Improve our Communications and Storytelling	A. Improve External Communication B. Improve Internal Communication C. Increase Visibility	With so much work in motion, it is critical to keep our stakeholders and the public informed, motivated, aligned and inspired.	Nurture communities Improve lives
4. Institutionalize our commitment to equity and social/racial justice	A. Diverse representation B. Practices & pathways C. Align conduct to Values and Beliefs	Driven by our stated beliefs and values, we need to formalize and live our commitment to diversity equity and inclusion.	Nurture communities Improve lives
5. Advance our leadership—local, national, global	A. Global collaborations B. National collaborations C. Local collaborations	Extend our impact through strategic collaborations.	Nurture communities Improve lives

1. Grow and Support our Volunteer Community

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
1A. Grow Volunteer Base (Recruit)	Attract more volunteers Increase the diversity of our volunteer community	Number of active volunteers People benefitted from output of volunteers Sources for volunteers

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Identify our needs (i.e., how many volunteers do we have, need, and have capacity for ?)
- Identify type of recruit and craft recruiting approach
- Identify ways to get the word out (e.g., VolunteerMatch.org, website, campuses, bike clubs, outreach at neighboring high schools, etc.)
- Develop better screening and intake process

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
1B. Improve Volunteer Experience/Skills (Engage)	Volunteers are clearer on Mission, Values and Beliefs Volunteers prepared/confident to do what needs to be done Provide meaning and purpose	Volunteer satisfaction Work accomplished

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Understand the paths volunteers take to stay (or leave)
- Skills/interest inventory among volunteers (what skills do they have or want to contribute?)
- Clear definition of needs (e.g., tasks, projects, partner needs, etc.)
- Develop a way to match volunteer skills/interests with needs/priorities
- Improve orientation and training materials and practices

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
1C. Build Community Spirit (Recognize and Retain)	Volunteers feel part of a community. Volunteers stay and deepen engagement Mutually beneficial experience	Volunteer retention Referrals for new volunteers Social events and activities Volunteer attendance

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Create a way to measure engagement and retention over time
- Explicit recognition of volunteers (e.g., photo walls, newsletter mentions, etc.)
- Organize volunteer appreciation events
- Group rides and other off-campus social events

2. Improve Functionality of our Building

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
2A. Improve Loading Dock	Eliminate dock bottlenecks	More bikes shipped and received
	Increase efficiency of shipments and receipts	Faster, easier loading/unloading
	Better staging of shipments	Labor savings (reduced handling)
	Bikes safely loaded year-round	Space efficiency

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Investigate lease/purchase of additional dock/storage space
- Investigate procurement of additional material handling and storage equipment to make better use of existing dock and vertical space
- Improve methods for categorizing bikes most useful to our mission

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
2B. Improve Warehouse Safety, Efficiency and Productivity	Safer, more orderly space for all	Space efficiency
	Reduce clutter	Labor savings (fewer touches)
	Curated parts on sales floor	Fewer safety incidents

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Space dedicated for sorting through incoming donations of used components
- Formalize warehouse organization, processes and layout
 - Remove unnecessary items, organize and clean warehouse areas
 - Develop floor plan, use signs and floor marking to indicate what goes where
 - Document and communicate new organizational practices
 - Train staff and volunteers. Assign roles for on-going warehouse organization/maintenance.
- Purchase shelves and handling equipment, as needed, to better use floor and vertical space

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
2C. Improve Appeal of Retail and Volunteer Space	Easier, more pleasant space to work for staff/volunteers	Increased sales
	Better customer experience	Increased production of Cycle of Power/Peace bikes
	Create space for neighboring communities to feel welcome	Better recruitment and retention

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Conceive better layout of store, service, and volunteer space with a space planner or architect
- Improve the environmental conditions (e.g., temperature, humidity, etc.) in the warehouse
- Acquire retail store fixtures, display racks, signage, and additional benches/stands, if needed

5a APPENDIX STRATEGIC GOAL DETAIL – WORKING DRAFT AS OF MARCH 8 2023

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
<p>2D. Improve Building Accessibility</p>	<p>Entry access from street ADA-compliant facilities Re-plan space to remove obstacles and remediate structural obstacles (stairs, front door, etc.)</p>	<p>Increase in customers or people entering working bikes Increased sales Better recruitment and retention</p>
<p>POTENTIAL STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professionally evaluate and develop a roadmap for alterations • Targeted fundraising to support necessary investments 		

3. Improve Communications and Storytelling

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
3A. Increase <i>External</i> Communication Capacity	<p>Improved clarity and consistency of messaging across channels</p> <p>Harness the power of storytelling</p> <p>Better understanding of impact by our supporters</p>	<p>More communication, more often</p> <p>More Donor and Donation partner engagement</p> <p>Mentions and stories about Working Bikes in local media</p>

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Collect and document stories of our impact on people’s lives — locally and globally
- Develop an impact measurement framework to monitor and evaluate the impact of our work through qualitative and quantitative data/analysis to help continuously improve our programs
- Incorporate stories across communications channels
- Build a more structured communication plan and process
- Evaluate whether to hire additional staff dedicated to communication

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
3B. Increase <i>Internal</i> Communication Effectiveness	<p>Greater clarity and alignment: staff, volunteers and board</p> <p>Enhanced, transparent communications</p> <p>Strengthen our institutional knowledge base</p>	<p>Reduced misunderstandings</p> <p>Increased staff and volunteer engagement, e.g., attendance at shipping parties, table events</p> <p>Staff and volunteer sentiments about organization</p>

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Create ways for staff, board & volunteers to give input, get to know each other, and build trust
- Celebrate shared successes and acknowledge shared challenges
- Clear priorities help guide clear direction and workflow
- Include staff in major workplace and operational decisions

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
3C. Increase Visibility in Little Village, Lawndale, Pilsen and Chicago overall	<p>Increased awareness, understanding, and trust in Working Bikes in surrounding areas and the City</p> <p>Beautification of building</p>	<p>More event participation from local area</p> <p>More walk-in customers and volunteers</p>

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Improve building signage
- Pursue mural funding and partnerships
- Proactive sponsorship, promotion, and participation in community rides and other events

5a APPENDIX STRATEGIC GOAL DETAIL — WORKING DRAFT AS OF MARCH 8 2023

4. Institutionalize our Commitment to Equity and Social/Racial Justice

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
4A. Increase Diverse Representation (Staff and Volunteers)	Organizational effectiveness Fair treatment and full social consciousness of all people in the warehouse Customers of all kinds feel at home, included, and welcomed Community agreements Great teamwork	Staff demographics Volunteer demographics Board demographics Customer, staff, and volunteer feedback

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Analysis of diversity and barriers to inequality
- Actively recruit from diverse, historically and systematically marginalized communities
- Make the retail space and warehouse accessible to people of all abilities
- Spanish speaking sales staff and Spanish language store signage
- Recognize that speaking two languages is a *skill* to be compensated accordingly
- Use professional development budget for Spanish classes

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
4B. Improve Practices and Pathways	Staff satisfaction both in short term and over longer term Safe/positive workplace Better relationships among team	Staff retention Reduced reported incidents of bias or mistreatment

POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

- Required diversity, equity and inclusion orientation/training for staff and volunteers
- Align HR practices and procedures

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
4C. Improve Alignment of Workplace Behaviors to Beliefs and Values	Safe and positive working environment All who enter (staff, volunteers, customers) truly experience our Beliefs and Values	Customer feedback Reduced reported incidents of bias or mistreatment
POTENTIAL STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalized Community Agreements • Develop community procedures for situations when people break/cross the agreements. • Conduct staff performance evaluations using our Values Statement 		

5. Advance our Institutional Leadership—Local, National, and Global

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
5A. Build on our global collaborations	Benefitting more people Strengthened relationships Increase in communicated and explicit impact Operational flexibility	Bikes shipped, donated, etc. # of partners globally Partner satisfaction with WB
POTENTIAL STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate new global partners to create more operational flexibility and expand our impact around the world • Develop and test pilot a rural mobility project with an existing partner, such as Africycle, as a proof of concept with USAID grant funding under the Bicycles for Rural African Transport Act 		

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
5B. Build national collaborations	Benefitting more people Strengthened relationships Increased impact	Bikes shipped, donated, etc. # of partners nationally Partner satisfaction with WB
POTENTIAL STRATEGIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a potential expanded role in the North American Bike Ecosystem. Working Bikes is a clear expert in collecting and shipping bikes. Other organizations are capable of attracting donations and rallying local volunteers, but may not be able to successfully connect to international outlets and arrange shipping. 		

5a APPENDIX STRATEGIC GOAL DETAIL — WORKING DRAFT AS OF MARCH 8 2023

OBJECTIVE	OUTCOMES	MEASURES
<p>5C. Build on our local collaborations</p>	<p>Strengthened relationships</p> <p>Strengthened local bike non-profit network</p>	<p>Profile/awareness of WB</p> <p>Partner success measures (e.g., class enrollment at WTB, ride participation for BON, etc.)</p>
<p>POTENTIAL STRATEGIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Strategic Community Partners to extend our mission impact. Identify peers with expertise (West Town Bikes Training Program, for example) and partner with them to avoid overlaps and redundancies. We can then focus more resources on our core competencies--collection, refurbishment, distribution to raise effectiveness. 		

5B APPENDIX NOTES ON PROCESS

In March, 2022, a Board/Staff/Volunteer Committee was formed. The Committee has met monthly, from March through November. Committee Members have included:

Jim Lindsey	Angela Taylor	Alan Lloyd*
Trevor Clarke	Ruth Rosas	Ed Hanlon*
Cauria Duarte	Keith Oberg	Tom Mulhern
Phil Kaplan	Luke Blakely*	

* Alan attended the first few meetings but decided not to continue. Ed joined later in the process. Luke was active through the summer, but then needed to step away.

From May-October, the Committee, working in sub-groups, sought stakeholder input.

<i>Engagement Type</i>	<i>Led By</i>	<i>Number Engaged</i>	<i>Report Link/s</i>
Individual Interviews with Staff, Volunteers, Financial Donors, Local Donation Partners, International Partners, Community	Jim, Phil, Keith, and Amy	11 Staff 9 Volunteers 5 Bike Shops 4 Financial Donors 6 International 4 Community	Staff and Volunteer Bike Shops and Donors International Partners Raw notes from all interviews
Small Group Discussions With Volunteers, Staff, Garfield Park Rite to Wellness Collaborative and Little Village neighbors	Angela, Ruth, Tom and Cauria; with facilitation help from Mario Gastelum, Seneca Kern, and Seobia Rivers (GPRWC)	9 Volunteers 3 LV/P 15 GPRWC 11 Staff	Volunteers Little Village/Pilsen Garfield Park Staff
Surveys tailored to folks onsite doing the work, folks supporting the work, folks benefitting from the work and the wider Community	Cauria, Luke and Trevor	16 Staff 15 Volunteers 23 others	Summary of Survey Responses Raw audience-specific surveys in this folder

In November, the Committee summarized this stakeholder input and met to discuss what we learned and discuss priorities and decisions a Strategic Plan might address. From stakeholder input and Committee Member insights, we created a **Draft Strategic Plan** meant to provide the Board with a starting place for conversations. **In the Board workshop December 2, 2022**, we discussed Values and Weaknesses and refined those two **sections** of the document. **In the Board workshop January 10, 2023**, we discussed our Mission Statement as well as the Opportunities and Threats. Based on these conversations we framed potential strategic goals for the next 2-4 years. **On February 1, 2023**, we issued a **DRAFT of the Strategic Plan** for review and comment by all WB stakeholders including Board and Staff. **On March 8, 2023**, we submitted this **FINAL DRAFT to the Board for adoption**.

Situation Assessment: SWOT

To summarize what we heard in our stakeholder engagement and in our Committee discussions, we developed a “SWOT” analysis to assess our current situation.

A SWOT analysis is an evaluation of the internal and external factors that may impact an organization’s performance and sustainability.

- **Strengths** = the internal tailwinds: our assets, competencies, and advantages. These are what our Strategic Plan should aim to preserve and extend.
- **Weaknesses** = the internal headwinds: our deficits, liabilities, and disadvantages. These are what our Strategic Plan should aim to eliminate or mitigate.
- **Opportunities** = externally-driven positives. Things in motion in the outside world that might benefit us. These are what our Plan should prioritize and direct us toward.
- **Threats** = external negatives. Things that happen in the world that might hurt us. These are what our Plan should prepare us for and buffer us against.

These lists are presented on the following four pages. In listing them here, we tried to be inclusive of all suggestions, whether they were put forward by an individual or agreed to by the majority of the committee.

Working Bikes Current Strengths

TOP FIVE

- **Building.** We own it outright, tax-free. It's a great basic support for our mission.
- **Our unique and distinctive story** — easy to understand, fun and compelling value proposition. People love bikes and our mission resonates with them.
- **Revenue Model.** Successful self-funding support.
- **Volunteer Community** that is self-organizing, highly committed, and sustained through multiple points of engagement (bikes, climate change, justice, community, meaningful service work, etc.)
- **Bicycle Collection Program** —bike shops, municipalities, organizations, individuals, real estate management companies, etc.

OTHERS DISCUSSED

- **Mission Effectiveness.** Bikes not wasted. People get bikes. By the 1000's every year.
- **Reputation.** Our name is known and respected widely.
- **Quality of Impact** in communities we serve. More than a bike: potential to change people's lives.
- **Attracting Quality People** — staff, board, volunteers, partners, and customers.
- **International Community Distribution Program** — Meeting partner needs & logistical expertise.
- **Local Community Distribution Programs** — Cycle of Power and Cycle of Peace.
- **Long-standing Partner Relationships**--donation drop-off sites, community partners, vendor partners, etc.
- **Resilience, Flexibility and Agility**—We approach our work with flexibility and adaptability to meet ever-changing challenges.
- **Donors** — a broad and growing set of supporters with diverse motivations.
- **Strong set of shared values.**
- **Significant demand for what we do.** The US has inexpensive bikes and expensive labor. The Global South has expensive bikes and less expensive labor. Economically, this means that WB has plenty of room to grow if it chooses.

Working Bikes Current Weaknesses

TOP FIVE

- **Impact Measurement.** Following up with the people we serve to learn and measure impact. We don't do enough to understand the impact our work has, both in Chicago and overseas. Especially true of impacts beyond numbers of bikes shipped/donated.
- **External and Internal communication** about WB impact and activities is inconsistent & insufficient and lacks transparency. Poor external communication is the main/only fault bike shop partners & donors find with us.
- **Vulnerabilities in the volunteer experience.**
 - **Negative impact from Covid.** Missing some long-timers. Lots of new faces. Less cohesion. Less out-of-shop engagement & social connection.
 - **Volunteers feeling under-prepared, mis-applied, and disconnected** from the community. Poor onboarding. Insufficient mechanical training and mentorship.
- **Building accessibility, livability and safety.** While clearly a financial strength, the building is not an ideal physical working environment for staff and volunteers or ideal for customers: ADA access, safety, HVAC, etc. More generally, we are not using the space well even as is. The loading dock is insufficient to our needs.
- **Diversity & Inclusion.** Getting better, but still need to attract, include & encourage BIPOC/ Queer/Women per our aim to improve access to bikes and cycling for all, and need to include a more diverse cross-section of community in decision-making.

OTHERS DISCUSSED

- **Continuity and succession planning.** Lots of tasks that are one-person operations, the history and past lessons of Working Bikes are often lost.
- **Reconciling tension inherent to our dual structure** as Not For Profit (donations, shipments) propelled by volunteers and Bike Shop (refurb, sales & service)
- **Process, Standards and Systems** e.g., for shipping, keeping and scrapping. We do not *intend* to ship bad bikes or hold on to bikes that should just be scrapped, but our processes and standards are not clear or consistent.
- **Staff/Board relationships.** Room for improvement in communication.
- **Employee retention** and turnover.
- **Visibility and Presence in the community.** Still not well understood, trusted or valued by some of our Little Village neighbors. Not seen as a place for them. E.g. no Spanish on site, signs, etc.
- **Inconsistent Board Engagement.** Some lack of clarity about roles and expectations for Board members. Different members have different ability to devote time and different working hours.

Working Bikes Potential Opportunities

TOP FIVE

- **Community- and Society-wide focus on Inclusion, Equity, Racial Justice and broader Social Justice and efforts to fight back against hate and bigotry of all kinds.** As people look for concrete, proactive ways to implement these values, bikes can be a powerful arena. We have begun to address (After School Matters, One Summer Chicago, BIPOC Night, etc.) *Should we more actively push/lead in these spaces? Should this be explicitly part of our mission?*
- **Gaps in the US/Canada not-for-profit bike ecosystem.** From an interview with Village Bicycle Project, it appears they might welcome a partner to take on bike collection, so they can focus on in-country projects. Local and regional peers in Portland, St. Louis, Atlanta and elsewhere may need partners too, since they often receive more donations than they can fix and distribute locally. *Should we look outside of Chicago to other roles we might play with these collection partners, sharing our expertise in the specific area of organizing and shipping bikes?*
- **Other Chicago-region bike non-profits are rising.** *Can we work with them as strategic partners to fill our gaps? E.g., with West Town Bikes for education?*
- **People seeking Purpose.** There is a rising interest in volunteer opportunities and chances to make a meaningful impact. *Should we focus on volunteer recruitment?*
- **Rise in Corporate Philanthropy due to adoption of ESG and DEI agendas.** Chicago is a city with many corporate HQs, for both large and mid-sized companies. Businesses have recently been increasing their budgets for positive social impact. *Should WB do the work required to secure funding from these corporations?*

OTHERS DISCUSSED

- **The rise of eBikes.** What is our relationship to this growing technology? Can we identify shipping destinations? Local donation destinations, etc.? How to manage repairs, battery recycling and other challenges.
- **Potential Government sources of financial support for International Projects.** Illinois US Senator Dick Durbin, working with World Bicycle Relief has introduced the [Bicycles For Rural African Transport Act](#) which could be a significant source of support to set up many more projects like the ones we support.
- **Increased interest and growth of ‘sibling organizations’ in the Chicago area committed to re-use and social good.** Furniture Bank, Tool Library, Rebuilding Exchange, WasteShed, CCRX and others inhabit similar space and have some similar needs relative to warehouse, logistics, online retail/inventory, etc. *Should we reach out to make connections and partnership with these organizations?*
- **Growing demand for used bikes internationally.** International partners and peers are signaling unmet “demand” for bikes we supply. Also, our partners, once established, are often dependent on our ability to ship bikes to them. *Do we want to expand donation programs, and if so, how? Or are there valid reasons that we should not overreach? e.g., do we want to refine our mission and strategy to focus on fewer recipient groups, or a specific subset of groups? And why?*
- **International partners are moving “Beyond Bikes.”** Some partners—e.g., Stylish in Sierra Leone & CESTA in El Salvador—have funding and aspirations that stretch beyond bikes. Today, we fill some such requests. *Should we deepen relationships to support these broader needs, perhaps partnered with other Chicago-based orgs?*

Working Bikes Potential Threats

TOP FIVE

- **Hard to attract and keep people—both Staff and Volunteers.** It is hard to attract and keep good / qualified people. And it is hard to attract and retain deeply committed volunteers. Without adequate staffing, many aspects of our operations could be negatively affected. *We need to prioritize making Working Bikes an extremely attractive community for staff and volunteers.*
- **Likability factor and being over extended.** City and other local partners are beginning to value us, but these demands, if not carefully managed, could exacerbate lack of operational focus. *Given that we can't help everyone effectively all the time, we need to recognize the need to set prioritized, realistic expectations for our team and for our partners.*
- **Supply Chain Vulnerabilities.** Our work is very dependent on a global shipping network that we have little control over. *This is largely beyond our control, but we can work with partners to more equitably share the costs and risks of shipping.*
- **Other models for providing bicycles to international communities.** Numerous companies (i.e. World Bicycle Relief, low-quality Chinese and Indian made bikes, etc.) that operate in international communities served by Working Bikes sell new bikes/parts and operate bike repair shops that could adversely impact demand for used bikes provided by our partners.

OTHERS DISCUSSED

- **Other organizations selling used bicycles.** Some companies take in, refurbish, and sell used bicycles, such as new bike retailers or other organizations, which could compete with Working Bikes or erode our sales.
- **Loss of Bike Shop support.** We have been very sensitive to this and have built amazing relationships, but we are not in control. Large chains are buying up a lot of the US retail market (Trek notably). As they do, their charitable focus shifts from local to broader national and international efforts.
- **Growing for-profit reuse and resale market for bikes.** E.g, Bicycle Bluebook in California. While this is good from a mission standpoint—we want bikes to be reused and recirculated—it's a potential challenge to our refurbished sales.

Original “long list” of candidate Values, discussed in 12.2.22 Board Workshop

- **Environmental Sustainability.** We are committed to reducing negative environmental impacts and creating positive ones, across all of our operations.
- **Human Impact.** We care for people and our community and measure our mission in terms of the impact we have on lives, not just the number of bikes we process.
- **Commitment.** To our mission. To our communities. To our customers, donors, and partners. To one another. We put our efforts towards a cause greater than ourselves.
- **Idealism/Service/Making a Difference in People’s Lives.** Helping people build power and autonomy.
- **Customer/Partner Oriented.** We work extra hard to meet the needs of local/international partners, bike buyers, and other ‘customers,’ often putting their needs above our own.
- **Community.** We are engaged with the local communities in which we operate, contributing to their quality of life and supporting their power.
- **Self-Determination/Liberation.** We embrace each person’s right to live their own truth within communities of their own choosing. Bicycles are a path to this, and a way to earn a living. Working on bikes enables livelihoods at home and abroad.
- **Inclusion and Representation.** We welcome all people to our mission and our community, with special consideration for those who have been marginalized and unwelcome historically. All communities should see themselves in Working Bikes.
- **Volunteerism.** We act from passion and commitment to mission and to one another.
- **Effective and Efficient.** We do a lot with a little and aim to put all resources to highest and best use. Midwestern pragmatism meets environmentalism. But we do not treat people in this way.
- **Freewheeling & Fun.** Life is precious and should be joyful and silly as needed.
- **Learning & Teaching.** We all have something to learn and something to teach, passing on skills without fear or judgment is how we sustain Working Bikes.
- **Regeneration.** We exist as a business in our society, but reject the conventional, extractive, exploitative, consumer-capitalist model of business operations.
- **The Power of Bicycles and Cycling.** We take joy in the form, function, cost effectiveness, sustainability, safety, accessibility and impact of these amazing tools.
- **Democracy.** We include voices of all stakeholders in decision making processes– whether staff, volunteers, or partners local and international– to expand ownership over the work we all do.

Other Potential Goals and Objectives that Emerged from this Process

Outside of five Goals outlined above, this process yielded a number of other ideas for how Working Bikes might evolve over time. While all of these are intriguing, none cleanly fit into the “top five” goals outlined above. Any or all of these may also move forward based on the energy of individual volunteers or groups. And any or all of them could be accelerated by outside opportunities.

- **Impact Measurement.** Following up with the people we serve to learn and measure impact. We don't do enough to understand the impact our work has, both in Chicago and overseas. Especially true of impacts beyond numbers of bikes shipped/donated. Learn from how other bike-related non-profits do this, e.g., [World Bicycle Relief](#).
- **Develop eBike strategy.** What is our relationship to this growing technology? What would be the implications to our facilities, tools, staffing, disposal procedures, etc.?
- **Expand Internships**—both HS and college. Expand to be a strong and active, year-round operational asset. Re-start partnership with After School Matters (CPS). Incorporate lessons from WTB Youth Training and Engagement Program.
- **Formalize Donor Stewardship.** While Working Bikes is largely self-funding, improving and broadening our donor network could have a big impact on our ability to take on larger opportunities such as those listed above.
- **Improve our internal and external institutional knowledge base.** Better systems to track our history and what we know and pass our shared knowledge to a broader audience. Measure and share our local and global impact. We must jointly know our stories to tell our story effectively.