

FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

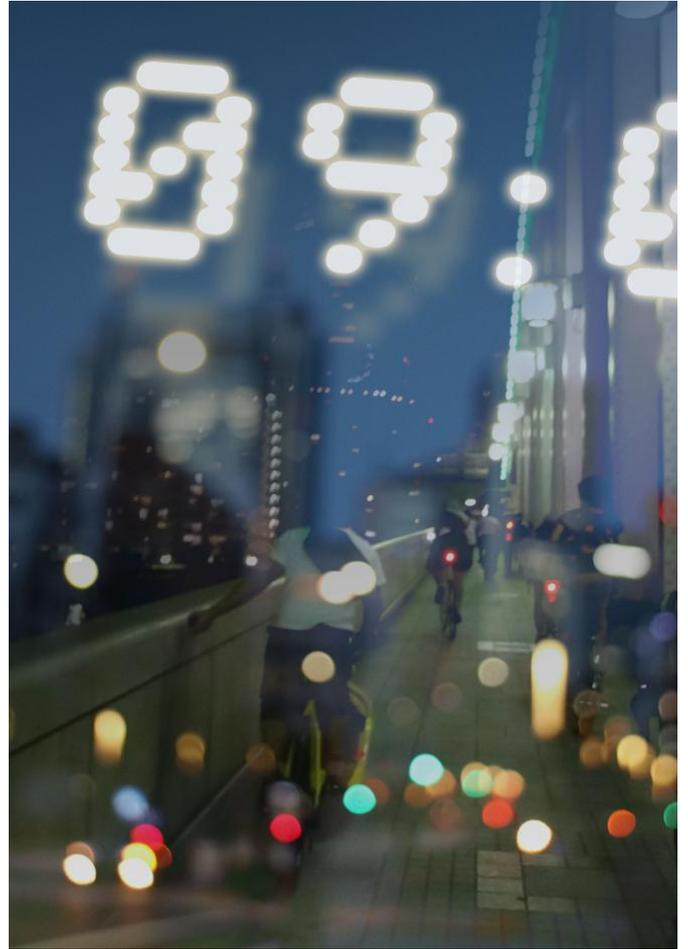


- TOKYO COPENHAGENIZED // NEW 9TH PLACE RANKING
- REVISED MLIT's GUIDELINES
- CHERRY BLOSSOMS & TOKYO BACKSTREETS
- NEWS FROM EMBASSY MEMBERS

TOKYO RANKS

9TH

BICYCLE FRIENDLY CITY INDEX



Tokyo has returned to the Copenhagenize Bicycle Friendly Cities Index in position 9 after having been ejected from the 2015 ranking of the most thriving cycling cities around the world.

Ranked 4th in 2011 and 12th in 2013 Tokyo slipped from the rankings in 2015 primarily due to local authorities regressive stance regarding cycling policy.

While cities around the world had embraced cycling and placed it firmly on the agenda Tokyo literally failed to do anything to support the city's astonishing number of everyday cyclists.

Conversely during the period from 2013 to 2015 cycling was painted in an increasingly bad light by local media after a high profile accident in which a 67 year old woman was killed by a cyclist after which the cyclists mother was then by the Kobe District Court to pay a record 95 million yen in compensation to the victim's family. This single incident firmly set the media against cycling for an extended period with articles appearing almost weekly claiming an "alarming increase" in cycling accidents and demanding that cyclists be bound by stronger laws.

Call me cynical but I believe this incident opened up a lucrative market for cycling insurance,

hitherto unheard of, and that insurance companies had a vested interest in seeing that this and other "dangerous cyclist" stories never disappear from our newspapers. Many articles appearing at the time read like infomercials for lawyers and insurance companies.

Not wanting to be seen as sitting on their hands the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department began a shocking series of crackdowns on cyclists. Beginning in February 2012 police took to the streets on the 10th of each month, setting up effective roadblocks targeting cyclists for numerous offences including cycling with headphones, without brakes, and carrying passengers.



TOKYO RANKS NINTH CONT.



A two strike policy was implemented which would see repeat offenders sent to cycling safety courses at their own expense. The helmet debate was reignited and an "expert panel" was charged with investigating the notoriously impractical idea of bicycle number plates.

Even the announcement in September 2013 that Tokyo would host the 2020 Olympics and that a network of cycling paths was being planned for the city could not turn the negative tide of publicity against cycling. It was indeed a bleak time for cycling not only in Tokyo, but all around Japan.

Despite the events of those years and the lack of action by Japanese authorities it is undeniable that Tokyo's 15% modal share for cycling (Up to 30% in some neighborhoods) is a monumental statistic for a modern mega city which already boasts one of the world's greatest networks of clean, safe and punctual trains and subways.

Also despite the lack of dedicated cycle paths Tokyo proves once and for all that good urban design, even without cycling lanes, can greatly increase the number of cyclists. Tokyo's compact neighborhoods contain all the shopping and amenities for daily life all within a short ride from home.

In fact the average trip distance by bicycle in Tokyo is under 2.5km which demonstrates how the bicycle is used for shorter journeys where it makes sense and that cycling complements rather than competes with the rail network to which Tokyo's residents, the majority of whom do not own cars, naturally turn to for longer journeys.

Some cities have been ranked in the survey because of their forward thinking cycling policies, some because they implementing wide ranging cycling infrastructure, others because of a rising wave of cycling activism. Tokyo on the other hand is a paradox, without any of these things cycling numbers are insanely high among all sectors of the population including women and children. Cycling is not only practical and safe but also surprisingly easy and enjoyable when you start riding like a local.

All cities and their residents are wonderfully unique, and what is required to cultivate a great cycling culture in one may not be necessary in another. In Tokyo, cycling just works which is why it's 9th place in the Copenhagenize Bicycle Friendly Cities Index is well deserved.



ARTICLE BY: BYRON KIDD
 EDITOR OF THE TOKYO BY BIKE WEBSITE AND
 INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED AUTHORITY ON
 CYCLING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND CYCLING LAWS IN
 THE MEGA-CITY OF TOKYO.

WWW.TOKYOBYBIKE.COM



MIKAEL COLVILLE-ANDERSEN IN TOKYO

CEO COPENHAGENIZE DESIGN CO.
 HOST OF THE LIFE-SIZED CITY
 @COPENHAGENIZE

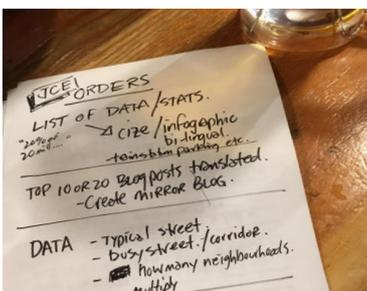


One of the leading voices in the “cycling makes cities better” crowd is none other than Mikael Colville-Andersen. With that voice he now has a new platform to preach his message, TV. MCA is the current host of a documentary series called “The Life-sized City”. This show will feature cities around the world and present solutions to how life exists even in the places not originally designed for it.

While he was in Tokyo MCA meet with members of the Cycling Embassy of Japan at a pub to discuss some action items we could do to move our cause forward.

Our marching orders are to:

	Provide statistics about infrastructure and bicycle usage for his company “Copenhagenize Design Company” for use in the making of an infographic.
	Get the top 10 or 20 blog posts on TokyoByBike translated into Japanese.
	Start collecting our own data such as what is happening on typical streets, and busy avenues, bustling corridors.
	Conduct regular meetings
	Visit at least 1 cycling conference every year



Some of us also got to play soccer with the crew of the TV show while they were in Tokyo. The visit has inspired us to work even harder to reach our goals at the Cycling Embassy of Japan.



PHOTO CREDIT // BYRON KIDD



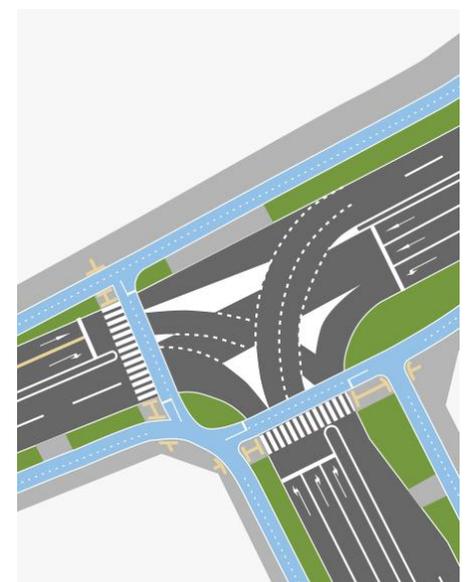
M.L.I.T. GUIDELINES PERFECTED



When the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) released their guidelines for cycling infrastructure it was great to see that the government had a plan for cycling infrastructure but when members of the Cycling Embassy of Japan and others took a closer look at the guidelines they revealed some flaws.

In order to address these flaws a taskforce was setup to review and suggest alternatives to the suggested MLIT guidelines. A massive effort was made in the creation of a 300+ page document to rework those guidelines.

When the document was released it was sent to 20 authorities (mainly local governments) around Japan. Hopefully they will take a close look at the findings.



CYCLING FALLACIES TRANSLATION

 Our roads are too narrow	 It's too hilly here	 Shopkeepers rely on people driving
 Shops won't get deliveries	 We're not Dutch or Danish	 Cycling isn't safe
 People with physical disabilities can't cycle	 I'm too old to cycle	 Liability laws will make people drive safely
 Everyone needs to share the road	 We need more cycle training, not cycling infrastructure	 The weather isn't right
 People should wear helmets when cycling	 Cycling infrastructure slows down cycling	 Cycling causes danger to people walking
 It's too expensive to	 People don't use cycling facilities that	 Higher standards of driving would make

Supported by the [Cycling Embassy of Great Britain](#), this amazing website provides users with the ammunition they need to blow away any criticism or skepticism about cycling. Inspired by "[Your Logical Fallacy is...](#)" the website has a great interactive layout and can be linked directly to any listed fallacy. For instance this nugget: [Freeloader Cyclists Don't Pay for the Roads](#). A constant claim. There's even the one about helmets.

There's only one major problem for us... it's not in Japanese.

Fortunately, our guys Kosuke Miyata and Youhei Hayakawa are on the job. At the moment they are translating all the text from English to Japanese.

Excerpt Fallacy:

“ THERE SHOULDN'T BE ANY PROVISION FOR CYCLING BECAUSE PEOPLE WHO CYCLE DON'T PAY FOR THE ROADS ”

REPLY: More cycling benefits everybody in society, even those who never travel by that method. More people getting around by cycling means fewer cars in traffic jams, more space on public transport, less motor-caused pollution, and a healthier population in general. It's also worth considering that most people who cycle do also use motor vehicles – very few people travel exclusively by one mode of transport – and are therefore also paying motoring taxes. Cycling also causes almost no damage to the roads, which therefore require fewer repairs.

In most countries, highway networks are built, repaired and maintained from general

taxation, and the duties paid for fuel, vehicle taxes, etc., are used for a variety of purposes, like any other tax. Even if motoring taxes were hypothecated exclusively to 'pay for roads', that would still leave a huge financial black hole for the social and societal costs of driving, such as the harm caused by pollution and collisions. In any case, we don't expect people who walk anywhere to pay a tax for walking along footways – so cycling should be no different, especially as more cycling benefits everyone in society. Similarly, should only people who travel at night be expected to pay for street lighting, or does it benefit us all?

CHERRY BLOSSOMS & TOKYO BACKSTREETS



WWW.FREEWHEELING.JP

Spring is one of the best times to visit Japan. There is a narrow window of only a week and a half that you can fully experience the cherry blossoms. In those fleeting weeks visitors from around the world came to the small station of Sasazuka to visit Freewheeling Japan and take a bike ride along the backstreets and river paths of western Tokyo.

Bradley Bennett, who runs the company, would guide groups as large as 11 people to places rarely visited by guests to Tokyo. There was one temple that had the first bloom of the year.

Guests who thought they may have come too early were treated to the majestic sights of the tiny pink and white flowers.

The riverways are especially nice during the spring as most are lined with cherry trees and the branches curl over the path making a natural tunnel of blossoms.

Many people wonder what time of the year is best to visit Tokyo and springtime is amazing, but if you are thinking of cycling in Tokyo, anytime is a good time. Winter is cold but clear,

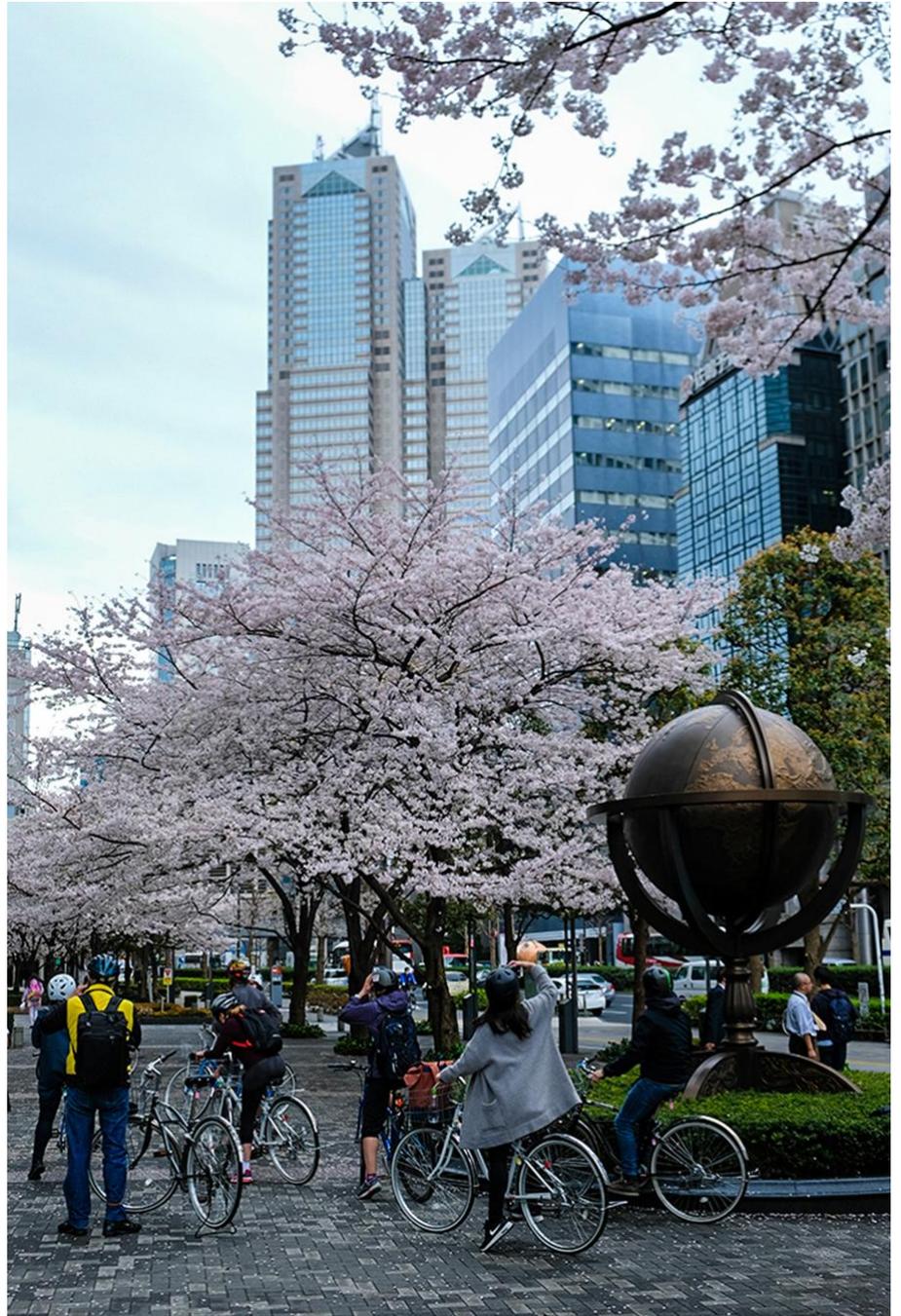


Spring is gorgeous with the cherry trees, Summer is hot but only if you are standing still, Fall has the colors.

Freewheeling Japan offers tours and rentals and is one of the homes of the Cycling Embassy of Japan. We work together with Brad to show off how great cycling in Japan can be. Many guests are amazed at how easy it is to get on and ride in a city of 13 million.

Tokyo is best by bike.





TALKING "NEW YORK" AT MASS X MASS

On May 17th James Szypula (a member of the Cycling Embassy of Japan) made a short presentation for a small group at MassXMass.

The event included a sunset tour of Yokohama's finest cycling infrastructure - The group rode all the blue paint and bicycle marked sidewalks. They then, following the letter of the law, walked their bikes all the way through Rinko Park. Hopefully, the city planning types in attendance got the message! (It's silly to walk your bike through a city park).

Following the ride around town James presented his photo and DOT graphic intensive talk on NYC's bike infrastructure.

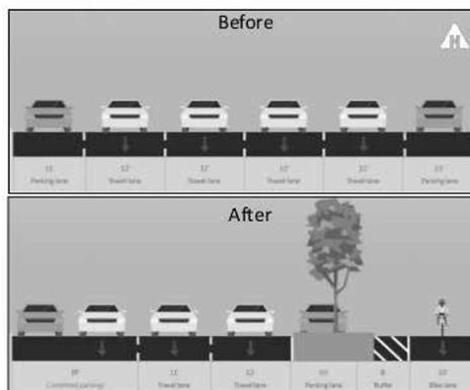
James introduced the group to Sadik-Khan and the history of the lanes, the influence and importance of Transportation Alternatives, Citibike, and also the East Coast Greenway It was followed by a Q&A session. Minds were blown.



- 70' wide
- No Pre-Existing Bike Lane
- Lane Removal; Lane Narrowing
- Split Phase Signals at All Turning Conflicts

Crashes w/ Injuries
-48%

Bike Volume
+65%



Left turn signal phase with bike signal on 9th Avenue

Crash Data Source: NYPD AS/TRANS Crash Database
Count Data: 19th Ave from 18th and 19th St, average of before vs after 12 hour counts taken between April and October

REPORTED BY: JAMES SZYPULA

JAMES OPERATES [YOKOHAMA RIDES AND RENTALS](#), WHICH PROVIDES QUALITY FOLDING BIKE RENTALS, AS WELL AS CYCLING TOUR EXCURSIONS AROUND THE YOKOHAMA AREA.



FREEDOM UNIVERSITY / TOKYO GOOD RIDE



Kosuke Miyata (Cycling Embassy of Japan member) joined the first Freedom University event as a guest speaker.

The main speaker was Mr. Nakajima from Jitensha Sogyo, but Kosuke had a chance to introduce the Embassy to the class. Things he mentioned in the introduction included:

BIKES VS. CARS

The movie "Bikes vs. Cars". The Cycling Embassy of Japan helped bring the film to Japan by providing the Japanese subtitles and hosting the screening with the film's director in Tokyo. Kosuke was the interpreter at the Q&A sessions following the premiere.

OUR MISSION

Ways the Cycling Embassy of Japan works on similar kinds of diplomacy missions, and attempts to spread the word regarding better bike infra and policies domestically by talking with local government officials.

NYC

Kosuke recently went to NYC to check out the latest efforts there, especially the protected bike lanes on major arteries and to see how Janette (former DOT commissioner) changed NYC to make cycling a normal everyday activity like you see in Tokyo.

Quite surprisingly, no one stressed how helmets could reduce injury risks, and even the athletically-oriented guys said they don't always wear them. At the Cycling Embassy of Japan we believe in personal choice when it comes to helmets. While the Japanese government mandates helmets for certain ages they also fail to provide safe infrastructure, indirectly blaming the victims of road accidents.

Less than half of the class were riding uninsured. One of the participant's had a company insurance policy that covered his bike commute (which is rare). Surprisingly, there was no "you must ride insured" kind of talk from anyone.

There wasn't much time for a detailed discussion on rules and manners, but here are what Kosuke managed to say:

If you try to stick to legal definitions, you'd find it hard to tell one type of bike infra from another.

On the sidewalk you basically have to go at a speed by which you can immediately stop the bike.

A short explained the different types of bike infra in Japan.

The bike lane-ish space on Yamate-dori is not a bike lane or path. And the bike path-ish space on Daigaku-dori in Kunitachi isn't a bike path, although they are physically separated from car traffic with planters.

The group then went out for a ride to Yoyogi Park, lead by Mr. Kiyota stopping frequently at bike-related shops along the way.

VELO-CITY 2017

The Cycling Embassy of Japan was invited to give a short presentation at this years VELO-CITY conference. The submitted talk revolved around Chad Feyen's (The Cycling Embassy of Japan's Chief Aesthetics Officer) project to document that variations of different bicycle signs around Tokyo.

While the presentation "100 Signs That Reveal What it's Like to Cycle in Tokyo" was a talk about the variety of different signage used in the megacity, it had a larger message about what it meant for a supposedly internationally minded city like Tokyo not have standard ISO bicycle signage, let alone an agreed set of standards for each city or ward.

Signage points the way to the right path it also points out what not to do. Yet what is so interesting about bicycle signage is how often it is ignored. In a country and culture that prizes obedience, the bicycle seems to be one of those gray areas that allow people to bend the rules.

The amount of signage is yet further proof of how popular cycling is here in Tokyo. You don't need signs for things that don't exist. However in Tokyo, they love to include bears, slugs, anime, and a bunch of other cartoons on their bicycle signs. While it doesn't fit any ISO standards it sure is fun to see hundreds of different ways to as cyclists to behave, even though we all know it's just a sign.



The Cycling Embassy of Japan was unable to fund the price of admission, transportation, and accommodations for the conference and were forced to decline the invitation. It was nice to visit vicariously via the other cycling groups we follow on social media. We wish we could have been there too.

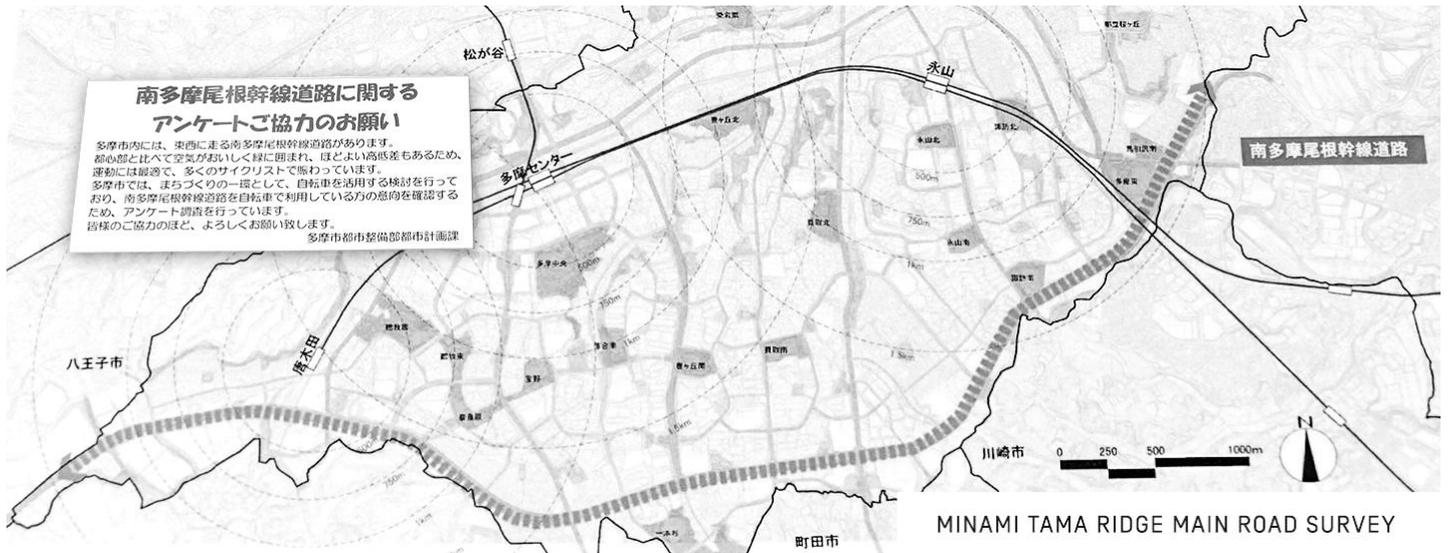
It is a costly conference and one that a little group like ours could not afford to attend. You have to wonder if that financial barrier to entry is in a way censoring the debate and limiting the discussion to only the people with the money to talk. We may not have the cash but we still have a voice.

"100 SIGNS THAT REVEAL WHAT IT'S LIKE TO CYCLE IN TOKYO"





CALL TO ACTION !



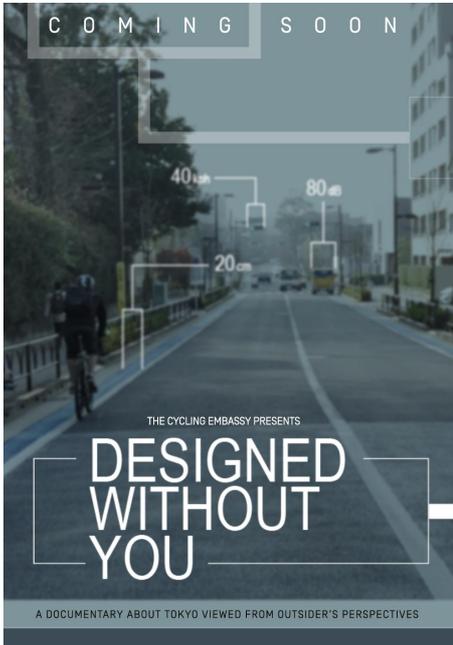
YSROAD.CO.JP/FUCHU/2017/06/09/22843

STAFF / MEMBERS

STARTING FROM THE UPPER LEFT AND READING RIGHT.

- BYRON KIDD
- CHAD FEYEN
- BRADLEY BENNETT
- YOUHEI HAYAKAWA
- YASUYUKI SAITO
- KOSUKE MIYATA
- JAMES SZYPULA
- MEGUMI FEYEN
- JAZLYN FEYEN

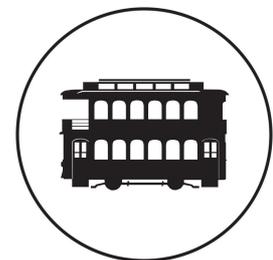




SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE LOVELY FOLKS:



YOKOHAMA
RIDES & RENTALS



FREEWHEELING
TOKYO BIKE ADVENTURES X URBAN HIKING

