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Content

03



Editorial

04



State of the art

06



Cycling in
Ferrara Province

08



Sustainable mobility in
the Province of Ravenna

10



Improving conditions
for cyclists in the Košice
Region

12



Local government
Budaörs – cycling as an
alternative for transport

14



Cycling as a modern
form of transportation
in Koper

16



Graz – the cycling city
of Austria

18



Velenje – cycling city
of the future

20



Cycling in Prague

22



Bicycling in the Free
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Editorial

The great English writer H.G. Wells, best known for his science fiction literature, was also a historian and sociologist. He once remarked: "Cycle tracks will abound in Utopia".

A focus on the promotion of bicycle traffic would indeed solve many urban problems and improve our lives. Just visit a city with a lot of bicycle traffic, like Groningen (NL), Odense (DK), Ferrara or Bolzano (IT), and you can't help but notice the positive influence on community spirit and quality of life. A modal shift should moreover not be too hard to achieve, especially when you consider that every second car trip in urban areas is shorter than 5 km and that cycling is the fastest way to get around in a town. Cycling is definitely the best choice when you want to get out of rush hour jams or when you are simply tired of finding a parking space.

Traffic fatality numbers usually only include those people who have died in motor accidents. Yet the numbers of people dying due to pollution and a lack of exercise caused by car use are respectively 4 and 6 times higher. A bicycle can thus be viewed as a tool to prolong lives. In support of this, a Danish study showed that cyclists are 30 % more likely to live longer than non-cyclists. This also has socio-economic implications since € 2,- invested in cycling will mean a saving of € 5,- for the Health System.

Cycling not only keeps you healthy and slim, it also makes you smarter – physical exercise enhances memory, concentration and learning aptitude and even IQ. It's maybe no surprise then that Albert Einstein, when asked about the theory of relativity, said: "I thought of that while riding my bike!"



The 11 partners from 8 central European countries participating in the project BICY – Cities & Regions of Bicycles – would like to contribute to the improvement of life quality and the reduction of pollution in urban areas. The aims of the project are to:

1. Promote cycling in everyday life, e.g. commuting, shopping trips etc.
2. Develop local and regional cycling strategies based on mutual transnational learning
3. Implement concepts for bicycle networks, bike parking and theft prevention as well as innovative bike services on a trans-European level.

This brochure is intended to provide an overview of existing and planned cycling policies and to promote bicycle traffic in the various partner cities and regions.

State of the art

Of the numerous things that make a city a "City of Cyclists", many are indeed so obvious that we often don't consider them. Sometimes it might be best to visit a city with a well-developed cycling culture such as Groningen (NL) or many other Dutch cities or Münster and Freiburg (DE), Odense (DK) or Bolzano and Ferrara in Italy for a first hand experience. The excellent quality of life in these cities quickly becomes obvious to the visitor. The fact is that the quality of life in public spaces rises in line with the number of cyclists.

Cycling is so much more than just a mode of transport. It's also a means of self-expression and a way to participate in public life. An abundance of cyclists changes the face of a city.

The City of Bolzano had exactly this fact in mind when it decided to make the city more livable. As well as opting to improve the city's cycling infrastructure, they simultaneously started a marketing campaign by creating a corporate identity as they felt that it was of paramount importance to make cycling a part of the city's identity.

Planners, engineers, marketing people and advertising experts set out to change the face and image of Bolzano. That's how BICY BOLZANO came into being. The corporate cycling concept consisted of branding, visual identity, events & emotional activities and socialization. The results clearly show that change is possible. This is an encouraging message for all other cities that want to improve their quality of life. Another city that successfully transformed itself into a cycling city is Freiburg which increased its share of cyclists from 15 to 27% within 15 years. Amongst the successfully implemented measures was a restriction of car use.

Turn-around to Cycling

City	Before	After	Time period
Bolzano IT	18%	29%	7 years
Freiburg DE	15%	27%	15 years
Odense DK	20%	27%	10 years

Peak hour traffic jams can be most effectively and efficiently reduced by promoting cycling. An expansion of the road network for car traffic or an increased public transport capacity just to deal with 2 hours of peak traffic in contrast are very expensive solutions. Measures that help to increase cycling include awareness programs for commuters and pupils, good access to companies & schools for cyclists, e.g. through bicycle highways for long-distance commuters, excellent safe, weather-protected cycle parking facilities and other services for daily commuters.

Cyclists love direct connections. Short cuts and allowing cyclists to use one-way streets in both directions, bus lanes and cul-de-sacs are thus important supporting measures. Safe,



weather-protected cycling racks close to the entrances of buildings and points of interest, such as companies, schools, shopping malls, cultural sites, sport facilities, etc., are equally important.

Socialization towards cycling should ideally start in pre-birth courses with instructions on how to transport your baby on a bike to crèches and kindergartens. Cycling toys and cycling picture books and running bikes are perfect training tools to teach children that cycling is fun because they make learning fast and easy. Later on, guided cycling trips to primary school can also help to make parents more aware of the advantages of cycling. Cycling training in the real traffic world can help children to become competent and safe cyclists. Only by starting the bicycle socialization process at a very early age can a true cycling culture develop in society.

Cycle Logistics – a lot of cargo can be moved by bicycle, especially within inner cities. This includes delivery activities, municipal services and business services. Whilst cargo cycling has a long history and is widely used elsewhere, it's relatively new in European cities where it is currently undergoing a type of reinvention. Electrically-supported cargo bicycles in particular open up new market possibilities for Cycle Logistics.

Complementary measures

Complementary measures restricting car use are just as important as measures supporting cycling. These are:

- Paid parking in public spaces.
- Inner city access restrictions
- A blanket speed limit of 30 km/h (except main roads)



- Effective enforcement of speed limits
- Living streets/Children's streets/Home zones
- Shared Space areas
- School streets closed to car traffic in the morning
- Continuous transformation of car road space into space for cycling

The goal of all of the above measures is to reduce car traffic privileges in a city. Few people however remember that they should actually be regarded as privileges and they are instead usually taken for granted. For example: 92% of all space for "stationary traffic" is dedicated to car use, 3% to pedestrian facilities, 3% to tram & bus stops and only 2% to bicycles. Although the citizens of Graz own more bicycles than cars, this situation has nevertheless become widely accepted.

Download "20 good reasons for cycling" in the www.bicy.it downloadcenter

Cycling in Ferrara Province

Ferrara, "The City of Bicycles": this simple title on road signs at the entrance to the city is enough to show the importance that Ferrara attaches to this means of transport. The city has in fact always actively promoted cycling and sustainable transportation. More than 400 km of bike paths run through the province, winding through the city and the countryside, along protected wildlife areas and plains villages. Actually these are more than simple paths; they are in fact itineraries through the history of this wonderful land between land and water, which is included in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage list.



In any conversation about cycling in Italy or Europe you can be sure that the name Ferrara will come up. To confirm the role that this means of transportation plays for Ferrara suffice it to say that 89.5% of its population are cyclists (27 % in Ferrara city in the modal split). Statistics confirm that every family in Ferrara has on average 2.63 bicycles, a number that has moreover remained constant over time.

The bike is therefore an actual symbol, in some ways almost a lifestyle. The development of cycling in Ferrara was primarily made possible by the nature of the terrain. The city lies on the Po Valley plain and the surrounding area is almost completely level, which makes it ideal for the creation of trails and bike paths. The success of this means of transportation is however also due to a deliberate policy conceived and implemented over the years to promote and encourage the use of bicycles, including the creation of an important pedestrian zone in the city centre and of parking areas around this.

The fact that 75% of the journeys made by the residents (especially those for study or work purposes) are less than 5 km long moreover made the bike a "competitive" mean of transportation, capable of "stealing" passen-

gers from public transport and private cars, and of becoming increasingly important over time. Since the mid ,90s many measures were adopted to promote cycling, which was no longer seen simply as a means to move about, but rather as a real added value for the city. It is thus not surprising that cycling is today one of the first elements that tourists associate with the City of Ferrara. The cycle path network has grown year-on-year through the creation of paths, both within the city and linking the city to the surrounding countryside. Today the province of Ferrara has more than 400 km of bike paths. The 120 km Destra Po path which links Stellata with Gorino via a long and extraordinary journey that crosses the right bank of the river Po, accompanying it to its delta, is outstanding. That said, whilst Ferrara represents a virtuous example of a bicycle-friendly city, there is still a lot of room for improvement. The aim is to offer local residents more pleasant surroundings. As the leading partner of the BICY Project, Ferrara aims to identify and intensify all specific actions that can produce significant and measurable changes in cycling. The following tasks have the highest priority: mapping of intermodal routes in the territories;

***What are the priorities to be considered when constructing mobility infrastructures?
Is there a different way of looking at the landscape?
Cycling is the right answer!***

activation of a network of operators providing services to cyclists and route users; testing of new technologically advanced means for the analysis of tourist flows and promotion of tourism and hospitality; new tools and technical investigation of the phenomenon of cycling; greater sustainability in transport; development of an integrated urban and regional mobility plan through the use of bicycles; promotion of the use of bicycles to complement the existing transportation system; raising awareness at a local level with regard to the use of bicycles and promoting the image of the bicycle as a safe, modern, environmentally friendly means of transport.



Sustainable mobility in the Province of Ravenna

Cycling mobility is one of the core elements of the politics of sustainable mobility in the Province of Ravenna for quality of life, air and environmental reasons. Since the end of the '80s the Province of Ravenna has been carrying out a road safety program which includes the creation of protected/safe cycling ways next to roads. This is aimed both at improving the cycling ways connecting business areas to allow and motivating citizens to go to work by bike rather than by car and to connect outstanding environmental and cultural areas in order to stimulate tourism

„Cycle to move... the environment thanks you!“

The province's cycling mobility promotion initiatives aim to provide a concrete response to the growing demand for the development of dedicated routes for cyclists and pedestrians serving both local mobility and tourism. The goal is to increase and upgrade the usually short and discontinuous cycling – pedestrian trails through interventions that increase and connect individual routes, to create a network linking residential units with major points of service, crafts and industrial zones, with the aim of providing an effective alternative to motorized transport. Encouragement of non-motorized transport should decrease the use of motorized traffic, especially for short and medium distance journeys, the constant growth of which contributes significantly to increases in the already high levels of air and acoustic pollution.

In order to be sufficiently appealing, the offer must ensure adequate pathway safety standards, branch sufficiently throughout the territory, and cover both urban and suburban routes. The issue of cycling network development in

urban areas is the responsibility of the Municipalities, coordinated by the Province, whose main role is to coordinate interventions and to favor connections between urban and extra urban cycling routes, with particular emphasis on routes from home to work and connection of areas of environmental, historical and cultural interest.

Many interventions favoring sustainable mobility have been carried out up to now thanks to different sources of financing. The provincial cycling network is currently about 26 km long and a further 10 km of cycling routes are already planned and partially under construction. Further improvement is nevertheless necessary to fill the connection gaps. Moreover, other problems must also be faced: the need for a proper systematization of the interventions (proper information system/activities, light infrastructure, services) that have already been carried out to improve their effectiveness and positive impact on the quality of life of citizens and on the environment; the need for innovation and systematization of services

in the field of sustainable mobility (i.e. creation of a Bicycle Office); the need for proper “inter-municipal” planning within a structured strategy framework, in cooperation with the Municipalities belonging to the Provincial area; the need for better, properly tailored communication with citizens.

It must furthermore be pointed out that one of the main dragging sectors of the Province of Ravenna is tourism, founded on its seaside, culture and nature, and also one of the main causes of CO₂ production, especially during spring and summer when it causes very significant pollution peaks. Within this framework, particular attention is also paid to the development of multimodal mobility, to provide concrete alternatives to car mobility since the latter causes enormous territorial problems. The concentration of most tourist visits during the weekends and the almost exclusive use of cars as a means of transport cause heavy congestion of streets and tourism areas, environmental pressure and excessive use of fossil energy sources. A possible solution could be provided by the combination bike-train. Thanks to BICY, the Province of Ravenna will set up a specific area by Cervia railway station as an “exchange area” equipped with bicycle to enable travelers to reach their destinations without a car. The aim is to run a pilot project conceived as a model adaptable to different situations, providing a possible way to change the behavior of people towards car use. By checking the results it will be possible to evaluate the effectiveness of the model and its strengths and weaknesses and upgrade and replicate it in other areas.



Picture: Wilfred Krause, CC-by-sa 3.0/de

Improving conditions for cyclists in the Košice Region

As a starting point one of the results from the SWOT analysis is a low level of awareness amongst the region's citizens concerning activities to increase bicycle traffic and cycle tourism areas.

The BICY project is the latest and biggest opportunity to improve conditions for cyclists in the Košice Region and could be a key event in KSR, that starts a process through which bicycle traffic comes to be viewed as an equally important part of the region's transportation system.

The most important findings from our SWOT Analysis

The region presently has no strong points due to the state of bicycle paths/lanes (number zero) and cycle tourism routes in the region (no competency and it is not under the Košice Self-Governing region (afterwards "KSR") administration). The detailed findings of the SWOT analysis are listed below:

Strengths:

- KSR is preparing and developing strategic documents and urban planning documentation and participating in the creation of national strategies for RD, transportation concepts, etc. This influences the executive administration of the Self governing region, which can also introduce requirements for bicycle traffic and cycle tourism into planning documentation.
- KSR owns and maintains 2379 km of 2nd and 3rd class regional roads and thus has the possibility to realize key measures for cycling infrastructure within the framework of road maintenance/reconstruction.
- Bicycles are viewed positively and used relatively frequently by the region's inhabitants

Weaknesses:

- KSR does not have an official bicycle traffic and cycle tourist infrastructure policy or any other planning documentation for bicycle traffic.
- KSR does not yet have competency for the funding, realization and maintenance of tourist cycle trails.
- A low level of coordination and cooperation on bicycle traffic issues and cycle tourist routes in the regional context.

Opportunities:

- Appoint a cycle coordinator for KSR to deal comprehensively with the problems associated with bicycle traffic and cycle tourist routes.
- Incorporate the needs of bicycle traffic in the upcoming Integrated Transportation Concept for the City of Košice and surroundings.
- Organize close cooperation with active cyclists from NGO and schools, department of transportation to obtain bicycle traffic data at relatively low cost.



Picture: Tomas Palo

Threats:

- A competent person is not appointed to handle the region's cycling transportation and cycle tourism issues.
- Bicycle traffic is not a part of the regional transportation policy.
- Monitoring data is not collected (for example: usage of cycle tourist routes, numbers of cyclists) preventing politicians and executive officials from mustering the arguments needed to handle cycling promotion issues.

Recommendations:

BICY project output should be posted on KSR web pages and project management should also use all opportunities to get the topic to other print and digital media outlets on a regional level. People should have the possibility to involve themselves in the cycling infrastructure planning process.

Short term activities – organization of a series of official meetings with the relevant KSR departments, repeated discussion of all opportunities identified by SWOT analysis and the specifying of the possible ways to improve cooperation between all relevant departments to increase the chances for bicycle traffic policy. This will also be important for the setting-up of the Action Plan and for the obtaining of other data sources.

The plan to prepare an Action Plan for bicycle traffic and cycle tourism was highly welcomed by all workgroup members as an important opportunity to improve current bicycle traffic and cycle tourism conditions.

Local government Budaörs – cycling as an alternative for tra

Cycling within the City of Budaörs occurs mainly during the day and its purposes include riding to work or to school, for shopping, for going out and journeys by cyclists who use the trains in a B+R style. These people cycle approximately 2–4 km at an average speed of 25 km/h. Cycling could become the daily means of transport among high school students and young to early middle aged adults. Older generations could also be encouraged to cycle, though for different reasons and to a more limited extent. For this to work, a system of bike lanes is required in which dedicated bike paths are physically separated from main roads only (otherwise they are independent lanes).

By Bike Everywhere – Budaörs is about to start unique developments

On streets with lighter traffic the bike lane could in contrast be part of the road itself. In the latter case the traffic should when necessary be reduced to make cycling safer. Parking places for bikes are furthermore needed near busy institutes, shopping centres and railway stations. On top of this, there is a need to enhance cycling conscious attitudes in all traffic participants, for easy access to all of the accessories needed for cycling, for cycle maintenance facilities and for the establishment of places for the everyday life of cyclist communities.

Safe parking places for bikes, rental places and bikes equipped with theft prevention devices. The opportunity to cycle available everywhere. Csaba Vágó reckons that if this were to come true, it would raise everyone's awareness. According to the cabinet director of the City of Budaörs, the development of cycling lanes and the expansion of services should go hand in

hand. Emphasis should however be shifted somewhat towards the less ordinary branch of service expansion which means bikes should become the means of public transportation.

It is commonly said that the building of more motorways simply attracts more and more cars, resulting in a deterioration in living standards. Budaörs, a small, rapidly developing town to the west of Budapest has decided to go down a different path. The city is encouraging more and more local people to ride a bike instead of using a car.

To sum up the opinion of Emma Domahidi on the mid-term future plans of Budaörs, the only way to get more and more people to ride a bike on a daily basis is to extend the cycling path network and implement quality services. According to the director of the city development centre the goal is to get drivers to ride every once in a while – i.e. they should cycle as well as driving a car.



The Budaörs recipe – cycling as an alternative for transport

I. Strengths

Attributes of an institutional and/or territorial context helpful to achieving the objective(s)

- The Local Government is committed to improving cycling facilities and cycling tourism
- Budaörs is well-located with respect to local cycling and cycling tourism
- The inhabitants are motivated to use bicycles and are open to a healthier and more environmentally friendly lifestyle
- New cycling routes are under construction and the infrastructure is under continuous development in Budaörs
- All relevant players can be found at the settlement (NGO, local gov., etc.) and are willing to co-operate. They contribute ideas, experiences and existing knowledge to the project.

II. Weaknesses

Attributes of an institutional and/or territorial context harmful to achieving the objective(s)

- The cycling infrastructure in Budaörs is presently inadequate
- Serious air and noise pollution
- Traffic is poorly disciplined
- A lack of sources and funds
- Insufficient communication

III. Opportunities

External conditions helpful to achieving the objective(s)

- The establishment of a diversified and nationwide cycling network



- Powerful communication, national propagation of a cycling culture and promotion of a healthier lifestyle and environmental awareness
- Building new connections to other civil organizations and relevant stakeholders
- Adoption of the good practices of neighbouring countries

IV. Threats

External conditions which could thwart achievement of the objective(s)

- Car use will continue to have priority
- Missing sources and funds
- Bad weather conditions during spring, autumn and winter
- The present attitudes of people towards cycling will not change
- Infrastructure problems will not be solved

Cycling as a modern form of transportation in Koper

Cycling has only recently developed as a modern form of transportation and a part of traffic infrastructure in the town of Koper-Capodistria, and more generally in Slovenian Istria, as the modern way of life has granted greater meaning to recreational activities and bicycle transportation in urban areas. It is safe to say that years ago (e.g. after the war), Slovenian Istrians believed the terrain and the road infrastructure in this area to be unsuitable for cycling. Consequently, cars became practically synonymous with personal transport – traveling to work, during free time and for secondary purposes. Since bicycles were never an important means of transport in Istria, the building of cycling routes and lanes was never a priority during the urbanization of this area.



The existing traffic system has been shaped predominately for personal vehicles, which has caused great spatial, environmental and social problems. In addition to traffic density, it should also be noted that public transportation is poorly developed and cannot compete with personal vehicles, while cycling areas are limited and only cover short distances in the towns of Koper and Izola. Cycling as a healthy and environmentally friendly alternative has thus been strongly neglected. The lack of organized cycling lanes and other recreational paths in these coastal tourism centers also hinders full utilization of the available accommodation and all they have to offer.

With regard to traffic and recreation, ca 70% of the population living in coastal areas are relevant, since they commute to work or school and use various modes of transport to run everyday errands or merely to satisfy recreational needs. Presently only 2% of these journeys are made by bicycle. Building more cycling tracks would significantly increase this to 10%. Raising the

cycling awareness of the local residents is also important, especially of young people who can spend their free time well by cycling.

The situation is similar in the neighboring Trieste region where both utility and recreational cycling are poorly represented in local traffic, which furthermore results in the neglect of potentially interesting tourist itineraries in the direction of Central Europe/Mediterranean and northern Italy/Istria/Dalmatia. The abandoned route of the Trst-Poreč (Parenzana) railway track, reconstructed as a recreational path for pedestrians and cyclists, runs in those very directions, forming a link between coastal towns. Besides having a tourist function, it thus also meets the daily needs of the local populations of all three countries. In this way, it helps to establish a strong connection through the Path of Health and Friendship as well as maintaining interesting technical heritage.

Local communities in Croatia, Slovenian Istria and the Province of Trieste (Italy) are striving to form even closer connections and would like to form a common Euro-region. The renewed route of the Trst-Poreč (Parenzana) railway track can contribute to this trend.

The Koper municipality has a very favorable strategic location, both geographically and with regard to tourism. A mild climate, accessibility, multiculturalism and a long-standing tourism heritage should enable the successful development of cycling in the area and open up connections to both mainland Slovenia and neighboring countries. The new highway section leading up to the Croatian border will moreover allow cycling routes to be placed on existing roads since these will carry less traffic in the future. The already fairly well-developed tourism sector will thus be granted the opportunity to organize a profitable offer in the field of cycle tourism.



Graz – the cycling city of Austria

As in most other central European cities, bicycle traffic was marginalized in Graz during the '60s and '70s by the increasing use and importance of the personal car. In the '80s however, a group of activists started to initiate citizen's protests, demonstrations on bikes and guerrilla measures, including the illegal nocturnal marking of the first bike paths using homemade pictograms. Owing to the fact that the responsible city councillor at the time did not seek prosecution but instead purchased the stencils from the activist to mark out the first official bicycle lanes, the foundation was thus laid for the first bicycle policy of the City of Graz.



Picture: Active Access

Graz bicycle policy initially focussed mainly on the creation and establishment of a bicycle traffic network with bicycle routes that guaranteed cyclists optimum access to the inner city and direct connections to important destinations and outer districts. Graz was one of the first cities to open one-way streets and cul-de-sacs to bicycle traffic. Bicycle parking facilities were another early focal point.

Another milestone in the history of the city's bicycle policy was the introduction of a city-wide speed limit of 30 km/h, except on main roads.

Many studies have demonstrated that the introduction of such a measure increases cyclist safety in two synergistic ways. Thus, a lower speed of motorized traffic itself reduces the risk of an accident. This in turn encourages more people to cycle on roads without separate bicycle paths which further increases safety since the more cyclists there are on the roads, the safer cycling is in general.

The introduction of parking space management with parking fees for motorized traffic and simultaneous parking space reduction is likewise an important measure to increase bicycle traffic. Started in the inner districts, over the years this has been gradually extended to the outskirts.

2 BYPAD audits, carried out in the '90s and the beginning of 2000, enabled detailed action plans for further targeted improvements of the city's bicycle traffic system to be established. These audits resulted in, amongst other things, the establishment of a user platform with bi-annual meetings between politicians, administrators and users. Since then the city has also created a bicycle network to connect the urban hinterland with the city centre.

Despite the many improvements to bicycle policy within the last decades and the fact that cycling has a modal share of 16% in Graz, one

of the highest rates in Austria, there still remains a lot of room for improvement. In this regard we would like to strive to emulate the sister town of Groningen where bicycle traffic reaches 38%! The city administration is furthermore aiming to considerably increase the importance of cycling traffic in Graz. The goal is to shift half of all car trips under 5 km to bicycle traffic. The City of Graz is currently aiming to achieve a target of 60% soft mobility modes (walking, cycling and PT) and 40% motorized traffic by 2013. The communal energy concept foresees a 65% to 35% distribution compared to the current figure of 55% to 45%.

Several focal areas have been identified within the bicycle concept prepared on the basis of the SWOT analysis. These include a clear commitment to bicycle traffic that might also result in the reduction of privileges for motorized traffic with an interdepartmental cooperation to achieve this aim. Another important point will be the creation and extension of high quality bicycle connections in which existing priority routes could be extended to a network with bicycle highway standard, which also includes the continuous acquisition of traffic areas that can be used for cycling (strategic land acquisition, conversion of car parking and car traffic areas into bicycle traffic zones).

It is also planned to provide more room for bicycle parking, including high quality and lockable parking facilities to prevent bicycle theft and an increased connection with public transport. Cyclists should not be inconvenienced by poorly maintained or inadequately cleared cycle paths and alternative routings, due to road works, should be clearly marked for cyclists. It is planned to continue and extend existing programs that encourage cycling in all age groups (bicycle related programs in kindergartens,



schools, for senior citizens, for migrants etc.). Cycling will be specifically promoted as a daily means of transport through measures in companies and schools. Complementary measures will reduce privileges and accessibility for motorized traffic (e.g. preference given to bicycle traffic at traffic lights, extension of parking management, enforcement of speed limits, temporary access restrictions for cars in front of schools, etc.).

The transfer of light goods transport to bicycles, especially e-bikes will be tested in pilot projects. Awareness raising and promotional activities for bicycle traffic will be continued with campaigns like "Bike to Work". The integration of user interest is guaranteed through bi-annual steering committee meetings that include responsible politicians, administrators and users to monitor the progress of the cycling policy. Cyclists will furthermore be periodically interviewed about their satisfaction with the cycling system in Graz. Last but not least, the city should demonstrate its appreciation for its cyclists through counting machines that can also be used to monitor and evaluate the bicycle network.

Velenje – cycling city of the future



Cycling as an alternative form of transport offers many opportunities for use in everyday life; it has many advantages over other transport modes and few limitations yet the construction of an efficient bicycling network presents many challenges. Cycling is an economical, environmentally friendly and healthy means of transportation. The City of Velenje offers many opportunities and the ideal conditions to become a true “bicycle friendly city” in the near future. Besides the completion and integration of cycling infrastructure, our other biggest challenge – popularization of cycling as a way of life – remains before us.

The City of Velenje lies in eastern part of the Šaleška valley at an altitude 396 m. The urban part of the Municipality of Velenje has 34000 inhabitants within an area of 83.5 sq km. The City of Velenje itself has 28000 inhabitants, making it the fifth largest Slovenian city. The inhabitants of Velenje are among the youngest in Slovenia, with an average age of around 35 years.

The City of Velenje is a city where people cycle and has around 30 km of bike lanes. With its modern architecture, Velenje is different from other Slovenian cities. Without an old city centre, without dense streets, open and green, it sets its own, quite unusual standards. It has a lot of free standing buildings, extensive lawns, large pedestrian areas and many other differences. Flat terrain in the most densely populated part of Velenje represents the biggest advantage when we talk about the possibilities for cycling in Velenje. It has all the topographic and urban conditions to become a friendly cycling city, but is not (yet). This will only happen when inhabitants start to use bicycles for daily transportation to work, school, shopping and for other errands and when they identify a bike as an economical, environmentally friendly and healthy mode of transport. We are trying to achieve this goal through a wide variety of actions and projects.



Velenje can become a cycling city if it further develops and takes care of:

- adequate cycling infrastructure, including an expansion of the network of bicycle routes, paths and lanes and regular maintenance, bicycle racks, and bicycle rental to the public;
- appropriate spatial measures – extension of steady traffic zones, construction of parking garages and P & R.
- appropriate changes to traffic arrangements – expanding the network of cycling roads, reducing the maximum permitted speed in cities with 50km / h to 30km / h, spreading steady traffic zones, introducing innovations such as „shared spaces“, „bike-boxes“ and „bicycle boulevards“
- parking restrictions that are in place with an appropriate tariff policy and effective control
- the introduction of congestion charges and other personal car limitations
- overall improvement of traffic culture, including the improvement of the traffic culture of cyclists.



“Within the BICY project, the Municipality of Velenje wants to provide better and more sustainable intra-city mobility, indirectly contribute to the reduction of the negative effects of motorized traffic in the city and to upgrade the current project: Velenje, prijazno kolesarjem (Velenje, a bicycle friendly city).

Through the exchange of good practices within the project consortium, we also plan to improve traffic security, infrastructure and raise the awareness of the positive effects of bicycle usage in the city.

We also want to increase the number of cycling tourists in the city and its surroundings. By developing a holistic cycling offer we will join the national project: Slovenija, kolesarska destinacija (Slovenia, the cycling destination).”

Mr. Alojz Hudarin; director of Tourist Information Centre Velenje (TIC Velenje)

Cycling in Prague

Cycling has been a very important issue for Prague during the past decades. It resonates strongly with the younger generation and has become a recurrent political topic. Despite the many setbacks that cycling has had to face in Prague the situation is gradually improving. Despite this there is an urgent need for intensive cooperation between the public and non-government sectors for the implementation of an effective cycling strategy.



Bicycle travel has great potential in Prague. Cycling is a popular leisure activity and a significant number of Prague inhabitants own a bicycle. Moreover, according to the recent poll, the number of people using a bicycle as a means of transportation is steadily rising. The conditions for bicycle travel in the city are far from ideal, however, and, according to the poll, the number of bicycle users would be much higher, if these conditions were improved. On the other hand it should be pointed out that the situation is gradually improving. Cycling has been an intensively addressed topic in Prague policy making for the past decade and bicycle-friendly policies have enjoyed long-term political support. Unfortunately it must be said that turning such policies into practice has started late, compared to other cities. The upside of this situation is the fact that Prague and its policymakers now have many examples of successful policies to use as inspiration.

There are a few natural obstacles to bicycle travel in Prague – most importantly the hilly terrain that disadvantages Prague compared to other European cities. A problem related to this is that bicycles have limited access to public transportation (which could help overcome the terrain barriers) – during rush hour a bicycle is not allowed on any means of public transportation. There is however optimism that the promoters of cycling in Prague will eventually overcome this and the other problems currently facing them. The latter includes the bad image of city cycling amongst the inhabitants. Although cycling is mostly favored by the younger generation, the reluctance of the older inhabitants could be overcome by a pro-bicycle campaign, which has not yet taken place. As well as this there is a relatively low awareness amongst potential cyclists of the other possibilities for bicycle usage in a city, such as bicycles with engines, city bikes or folding bikes. In Prague, as in other cities, bicycle travel faces

permanent obstacles such as theft. Temporary impediments include low availability of affordable bicycles, including the non-existence of a coherent rent-a-bike system. The existence of such a system on a local level however, provides hope for improvement in this area.

Bicycle travel offers many obvious opportunities to Prague as a metropolis, which resonate with the interests of its inhabitants – a healthy lifestyle, environmental friendliness, increased safety and decreased traffic. All of these form a foundation for a coherent cycling strategy. On the other hand, the main threats to this have become obvious during recent years, most importantly the need for a coherent city level strategy as different Prague municipal districts adopted their own strategies and policies. The

inconsistency of the cycling strategy becomes more obvious around elections as it tends to become a political topic. Promotion of cycling has also proven to be demanding both administratively and financially. Some projects have even undermined the reputation of cycling promoters, after turning out to be overpriced and not as effective as expected.

In conclusion, it can be said that, despite all the negatives and failures, there are reasons for optimism. Cycling has great potential in Prague and the overall conditions are not unfavorable. There is still a lot to be done however. Most importantly, the awareness of the situation must be increased and the implementation of a coherent cycling strategy must be more consistent and effective.

„The time for promoting the bicycle as a means of transportation has come.“



Bicycling in the Free State of Thuringia (Germany)

The Free State of Thuringia is situated in central Germany and borders the federal states of Niedersachsen, Saxony-Anhalt, Saxony, Bavaria and Hessen. The Free State has a population of 2.3 million inhabitants and its capital city is Erfurt, where bio and solar technologies are flourishing.



In 2002 the German Parliament passed a resolution to institute a National Cycling Plan. This political move was spurred on by the demands of the German Cycling Association (ADFC), the German Transport Association (VCD), and the German Länder and Municipal representatives. The new cycling promotion program for the

Free State of Thuringia was adopted by the Thuringia cabinet on June 17th 2008.

The bicycle traffic concept designates the necessary tasks and the corresponding measures the Free State of Thuringia will take to implement the national bicycle traffic plan. The concept thereby addresses itself to the municipalities and other participants in Thuringia. Thuringia's unique countryside and cultural attractions attract tourists from all over the world. Many are cyclists and Thuringia's tourism experts have thus christened 2010 as the year for "Fun in the sun – on Thuringia's bike trails!"

The state already has 2000 km of bike trails – and plans to extend these to 3200 km by the year 2020. Exploring Thuringia on a two wheeler is well worth doing since most of its principal and long distance bike trails wind along rivers, through breathtaking countryside and close to tourist attractions. Thuringia's bicycling concept included the construction of the bicycle station in Erfurt. Erfurt, the capital of the Free State of Thuringia, has made some good progress with its cycling infrastructure in recent years.

Erfurt's striking new Bicycle House was opened on April 25th 2009. Located directly in front of the main station it provides bicycle parking, rentals and repairs. The name "Radhaus" (Bicycle House) is a clever choice because it sounds very similar (in some dialects identical) to the word "Rathaus", which, in English, means City Hall.

Bicycling roads in Thuringia

Thuringia has numerous attractive, high quality cycling tracks that meet all aspirations. Cyclists might wish to explore the lovely landscapes along the rivers Werra, Saale, Unstrut and Ilm. Many of these tracks not only pass through breathtaking sights but also offer riders views of picturesque villages and historic towns. Excellent quality cycle paths, traffic-free lanes and quiet side roads steer tourists through a variety of landscapes in the green heart of Germany. Thuringia's network of cycling paths stretches from mountainous to low-lying areas.

Thuringia is this year investing Euro 4.6 million of federal money and Euro 1.5 million of national funds in road-accompanying cycle tracks. In 2010, Thuringia will triple its budget for tourist cycling trails.

Road construction management has planned a schedule of cycle track work for the period until 2020 encompassing 123 state highway construction measures and 185 federal highway construction measures.





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A large, light red silhouette of a person riding a bicycle, positioned in the background of the bottom section of the page.

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