

Urban Transport Benchmarking Initiative



Annex A4.2

Cycling Working Group

Site Visits and Case Studies

July 2004



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Site Visits and Case Studies

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by



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1. SITE VISITS

The two site visits represented two totally different stages in the development of cycling provision. The Copenhagen site visit showed the sheer volume of cyclists that were present on the roads, on the dedicated cycle routes, at public transport interchanges, in recreational areas and parked at the side of the road.

The level of comprehensive provision was visible throughout the city centre and beyond with many types of infrastructure setting the standard for good practice. The other cities in the group were impressed by this level of provision and there was a discussion regarding the policy and implementation issues that Copenhagen had been through to achieve this level of provision.

Another example of good practice identified and approved by the group was the Copenhagen 'Bicycle Account'. The document is published every two years and asks key quantitative questions such as the number of kilometres cycled per day and the number of cycling casualties. Qualitative information is also obtained from carrying out interviews with cyclists to establish their opinion of current provision. The group were taken through the document (as well as being shown a presentation) at the start of the site visit and overall it showed a high level of detail undertaken by the city to measure performance and investigate the reasons why cycling was adopted. This supports the concept of mainstreaming cycling, certainly in terms of the level of resources and investigation work that goes into improving services in this way.

At the Lyon site visit, the group saw how the local administration had committed itself to the large Rhone riverside development. The project was made up of many different components to improve the liveable environment for all along a prominent stretch of the city's landscape. Cyclists were considered to be a prominent feature of the scheme and this is demonstrated by the level of infrastructure (cycling space) and other facilities intended to make the area more appealing to cyclists. This recognition sends a positive message to the city's population regarding the intention to improve facilities for cyclists and helps to instil confidence that cycling is a viable means for travel and leisure. The level of consultation that is on-going is helping to ensure that the views of cyclists are taken into account and this will ensure that the final project includes features that have been approved / optimised by cyclists.

1.1 Copenhagen, March 18th and 19th 2004

Day 1 of the visit started with a meeting at an old community house built by workers 100 years ago in a downtown area of Copenhagen. The residential area in which the house was situated was completely traffic calmed – similar to what might be expected of a ‘Home Zone’ in the UK. Niels Jensen (the host from the Roads and Parks Department in Copenhagen) started the meeting with a presentation on cycling policy within Copenhagen and some headline results that had been produced from the city’s ‘Bicycle Account’. The informal setting enabled the group to relax and to familiarise themselves with the project documentation and debate the complexities of identifying indicators and possible data collection. The group members were then able to visit some of the infrastructure measures that had been put into place to encourage and support cycling in central Copenhagen, e.g. designated cycle space along roads and at junctions.



Plate 1.1: Community house.

Day 2 started with a meeting at the Town Hall and at this meeting the thematic indicators were selected by the group. The afternoon comprised of a tour on foot of the many cycling measures in place within the central area of Copenhagen. Group members were given a schedule and map to enable identification of the various measures. Some of these are explained in more detail below.



Plate 1.2: Meeting room



Plate 1.3: Town hall.

Segregated cycle lanes

Alongside much of the road space in Copenhagen, segregated space has been built in parallel for cyclists. This takes the form of a flat smooth pavement on which cyclists are totally removed from the rest of the road traffic. Apart from when at junctions (see later), it is for much of the time also unbroken, i.e. the cycle lanes are not interrupted by driveways or ended intermittently. Even at some minor junctions, these cycle ‘pavements’ are not broken; instead vehicles have to give way to oncoming cyclists.



Plate 1.4: Dedicated cycle lane.



Plate 1.5: On-road cycle lane.

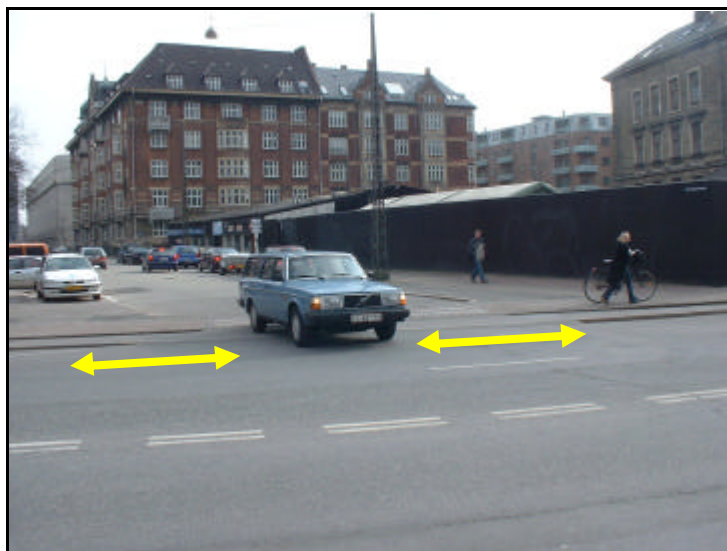


Plate 1.6: Seamless cycle lanes.

It was explained that the authority only employed non-segregated cycle lanes when there was no other option and situations where cycle space was merely painted in parallel with the road (i.e. not segregated) were not desirable.

Junction layouts

At major junctions, the cycle lanes are continued by clearly marking on the road (in blue paint) where the lanes exist so that it is easy for cyclists to follow and similarly easy for vehicle drivers to observe where cyclists will be travelling.



Plate 1.7: Junction crossing (1).



Plate 1.8: Junction crossing (2).

Cycle parking at the central train station

The group were shown the extensive space allocated for cycle parking at the central train station. Bicycles were either parked in racks at ground level, or in a 2-tier rack which featured a platform which could be lowered to receive the bicycle and then raised to allow storage for more bicycles underneath. It was confirmed that the racks (especially the 2-tier type) were only a temporary measure and that the city were planning to reorganise and tidy up the parking facilities for cyclists. In any case, the number of bicycles parked at the station certainly gives the new visitor to Copenhagen a good impression of the level of cycling in Copenhagen.



Plate 1.9: Cycle parking at the train station.

Other parking adjacent to road space

Parking facilities for bicycles are also a regular occurrence by the roadside. Racks can range from accommodating about 10-12 bikes to 20-25 and these can be connected end-to-end especially at locations such as transport interchanges (the Metro). The smaller racks give easy access to shops and other locations such as tourist attractions.

It is worth noting that even with the level of parking installed in Copenhagen, there is a problem with the amount of bikes merely left abandoned in non-designated areas, causing a hazard to pedestrians and arguably 'littering' the area. The city is looking into this problem of popularity for cycling.



Plate 1.10: On-street cycle parking.



Plate 1.11: Metro cycle parking.

Signage and advanced green lights for cyclists

Signage is a common feature employed to tell citizens/visitors where cycling and walking are permitted and where these modes are given priority over motorised traffic.

At certain junctions and traffic lights, mini traffic lights are employed to give cyclists and walkers priority when crossing.



Plate 1.12: Cycle signage.



Plate 1.13: Priority traffic signals.

Pedestrianised areas

Many areas, especially in the older part of the city, are designated for cyclist/pedestrian use only. This gives citizens/visitors the freedom to browse/access shops and other attractions without fear of conflicts with motorised traffic.

1.2 Lyon, May 4th and 5th 2004

The site visit in Lyon started on the 4th May whereby participants of the Urban Transport Benchmarking Initiative were able to meet up with consultants involved in the European BYPAD cycling benchmarking initiative (for more information on BYPAD, see the note at the end of this report). The two groups had a chance to find out about the progress made so far in each initiative with a mind to developing a relationship of mutual benefit in the future.

The following day the Urban Transport Benchmarking Initiative cycling working group met at the urban administration of Grand (Greater) Lyon. The host, Florence Larcher (Project Manager for cycling promotion/initiatives in Lyon), welcomed the group and provided the appropriate facilities for undertaking the technical meeting of the site visit. The technical meeting involved discussion of:

- The data collection process so far (both common and thematic indicators)
- The research questions requiring refinement
- The data analysis process (only minor involvement was possible by the group due to a tight time-scale, but comments were requested for after the site visit and after the data collection had been completed)
- Various other issues such as: submission of ELTIS case studies; identification of a possible speaker from one of the cities to present good practice at the final conference; and thoughts on how the group would develop within the aspirations suggested by the EC for future benchmarking.

The technical meeting ended with a talk given by Tim Asperges (co-ordinator of BYPAD) outlining the structure and progress made by BYPAD, its period of duration, and how BYPAD and the Urban Transport Benchmarking Initiative could possibly continue working together in the future.

After the meeting, participants took part in a cycle tour organised as part of the ECOMM (Mobility Management) conference which was also being hosted in Lyon. The cycle tour and related information is described in more detail below.

The electric bus

The group took an electric bus (powered by overhead cables) to the town hall where the cycle tour was due to commence. The bus proved popular amongst local residents and provided a quick link for the group.



Plate 1.14: Electric bus.



Plate 1.15: Town hall.

The cycle tour

As part of ECOMM, the administration allowed the group to take part in a cycle tour aimed at presenting the cycling environment in Lyon, and visiting an exhibition which displayed a major project for improving the mobility and land-use along the River Rhone (see later section). Participants were encouraged to use fluorescent leg/arm bands and fluorescent jackets to promote their visibility on the tour.



Plate 1.16: Choosing a bike.



Plate 1.17: On the cycle tour.

Cycle measures on the road

As part of the tour, the group were able to see the efforts made by the city to allow space for cycling, e.g. on-street or on-pavement measures (see below).



Plate 1.18: Cycle lanes.



Plate 1.19: On-road provision.

Other cycle users

Examples of other cycle use in the city were apparent, including the provision of bicycles for police. The picture below displays one of the policemen that escorted the cycle tour with respective livery exhibited on the bicycle frame. The availability of electric bicycle taxi services was also prominent on stretches of the cobbled retail areas within the city.



Plate 1.20: Police cyclist.



Plate 1.21: Bicycle taxis.

The exhibition

The group were also able to visit an exhibition showcasing a major project being led by the administration to transform an extensive part of the riverbank, from what was mostly a car parking area (see picture below), to a space which is landscaped and developed with pedestrians, cyclists and other leisure activities in mind.



Plate 1.22: Group members.

A display board (shown below) gave a hint to the passer-by of how the area is intended to be transformed, but the exhibition on the barge went into greater detail about how the plans would be implemented.



Plate 1.23: Promotional signage.



Plate 1.24: The barge.

The exhibition showed multiple display boards depicting the proposed design elements of the scheme. These were computer generated to give the viewer some idea of the finished product (see below).



Plate 1.25: Display boards.

A talk given by the host Florence Larcher enabled the audience to learn of the way in which the administration had devised the plans for the waterside development and the political risk involved.



Plate 1.26: Scheme description.



Plate 1.27: Models of the development.

The development

The proposed development covers over 10 hectares and stretches along a 5km length of the river Rhone. It is intended to be an area that is ‘returned to the people’ where they can relax and enjoy it. It is not merely intended for inhabiting but to be totally transformed. The development overall is intended to enhance public life and allow people to live closer to the water.

The introduction of ‘soft’ modes is emphasised – there will be separate tracks for walking and cycling / roller skating that run in parallel to each other.

The development is audacious, bearing in mind its location next to a large powerful river which is prone to flooding the bottom area of the riverbank. The consideration of flooding in the plans demonstrates a degree of careful planning required.

The development will attempt to use an array of plants and materials in order to establish a high quality modern landscape. The development will feature 6000m² of grass/trees and 'prairie' style planting to maximise the extent of green space. It will focus on providing a green space for all to indulge in activities such as fishing, bowling and roller skating. It will be permanently accessible at all hours of the day, for example at night there are plans for it to be illuminated in its own right and as part of the annual 4-day 'Festival of Light' which attracts 3 million people.

The area will be regarded as a 'downtown' environment, suitable for families and all ages, and will feature houseboats, thus adding to the liveable nature of the project.

The development will start outside the 'City International', a large area for offices, residents and congress at the north end of the development.

There will be houseboats along the edge of the river and underground parking will be provided on the opposite side of the road, on the same side of the river (over 2,300 spaces). The parking development is independent however of the riverside development.

There will be construction of a terrace system, as well as an ice-skating rink for the winter and a water sprinkling system in the summer. Swimming pools will be installed near to the current towers situated along the river.

The University is located next to the development and will be a primary user of the cycle/walking tracks. Small cruise boats will connect with this area and there will be a new tourist information facility along with drinking outlets. Near to the railway bridge, there will be 2 piers serving boats and other water-based activities such as water skiing. Finally, there will be good access to the large urban Gerland Park area that exists at the south end of the development.

A key element of the project so far has been the level of consultation carried out with the public. Involving the people of Lyon has been paramount. Initially, retail stores were unhappy at the extent to which the current parking along the riverside would be removed and the impact this would have on trade. The administration has since researched the use of the parking in order to ensure this is not the case.

The project consists of the following schedule:

- The project was started in September 2002.
- On 13th February 2003, the project commissioned urban specialists and planners to make the necessary decisions on proposed format of the project.
- Choices for implementation will be made in the second quarter of 2004.
- Opportunities to tender will be possible in the third quarter of 2004.
- Work will commence in the last quarter of 2004.

- The project will be opened in the last quarter of 2006.

Future measures

Also tabled at the exhibition were depictions of future measures hoped to be implemented in the city. The first (below left) shows highly visible designated space for cycling, while the second (below right) shows the potential for mixing cycling with bus lanes, again segregating space for the cyclist.



Plate 1.28: More cycle lanes in town.



Plate 1.29: Combined cycle/bus lane.