



HANDLING **HARD** AND **SOFT** MEASURES:
FIRST TACKLE THE **MUST HAVE**, THEN THE **NICE TO HAVE**



II



CHAPTER 9. HANDLING HARD AND SOFT MEASURES:

Topic: The right recipe for investments and energy is ultimately a function of the context conditions previously discussed. Still, some actions have been seen to be more fundamental than others in increasing cycling share in a city. What is not going to work is a programme that expects to trigger more cycling by purely investing in individual items such as additional cycling lanes, a new bike-sharing scheme or an umbrella promotion campaign. The secret is in balanced hard and soft provisions, and in integration with the entire transport network. Lessons are shared from Bogotá, New York, and beyond.



Lead Contributor:
Gil Peñalosa, Executive Director, 8-80 Cities

"The city of Graz is on a local level in regular contact with ARGUS, the Styrian cycling lobby... They always have a point of view of user groups which is very important and vital, sometimes we have also conflictive but fruitful discussions."

*Lisa Rucker,
Deputy Mayor of the city of Graz*

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9.1 The Influence of Champions

One of the key elements for increasing cycling share in a city that prevails across all cities and continents is to have champions who will get things done. People like Janette Sadik-Khan, New York City's Transportation Commissioner who understood that transportation meant "moving people" and not just cars, and built the first significant number of protected bikeways in North America. She also built hundreds of pilot projects to benefit pedestrians, cyclists and public transit and opened the eyes of North Americans and other regions to what was possible.

Another champion is Paris's mayor Bertrand Delanoë who implemented the first public bicycle system in a large city with 20,000 bicycles and over 1,500 bicycle stations which has translated into 200,000 additional daily rides; in the process he eliminated 7,000 car parking spaces in order to install these stations. Although there had been public bicycles in Denmark and Holland for years, the fact that Paris had them and at such grand scale, provided the "blessing" for politicians all over to move ahead with similar projects.

While Commissioner of Parks, Sport and Recreation for the City of Bogotá, Gil Peñalosa led the re-birth of the Ciclovía; this is a program where streets are opened to people and closed to cars for seven hours every Sunday and holiday of the year. This rebirth transformed a small dying program with a few kilometers and participants into a network of 121 kilometres, with a managerial structure, promotion and marketing. Furthermore, it increased the participants many times over, reaching over one million per Sunday for 52 weeks of the year and has been the inspiration to over 50 cities. In addition to improving the environment, public health, economic development and recreation, it is a great example of social integration, and demonstrates that streets are our largest public space and do not have to be used exclusively by cars.

When Enrique Peñalosa was mayor of Bogotá, he built more than 280 kilometres of protected bikeways in just three years. This was a very ambitious project, as there was previously not one metre of this type of infrastructure in Bogotá or Latin America. It increased the share of trips on bicycle from 0.4% to over 5%. With an investment of \$ 90 million, this network of protected bikeways is used by more people per day than a subway which was built at the same time in Medellín with an investment of over \$ 2,500 million. This project showed the world that modern day safe bikeways were not just for wealthy European countries but could and should be built in developing countries with enormous benefits to the community as well as to the individual rider's quality of life and personal economic wellbeing.

9.2 Lowered speeds - a "must have"

One action that has been shown to substantially increase the number of people riding bicycles in any city, small or large, is lowering the speeds of motor vehicles in neighbourhood streets.

In fact, no city where people have access to cars has achieved a cycling share of more than 10% without requiring low speeds in neighbourhoods or without creating networks of protected bikeways (see section 8.3).

Lowering the speed to below 30 Kph (or 20 Mph) is not just a pleasant thought - it saves lives. We walk at 5 Kph and bike between 12 - 20 Kph so when cars are going at 25 - 30 Kph we feel at ease, but not when they go at 40 Kph or more. If a car hits a person while moving at 30 Kph, the probability of killing the person is 5%, while if the car is moving at 50 Kph, it goes up to over 85%. There are many studies that confirm these results which is why the World Health Organization (WHO) and the European Parliament have recommended in 2011 that all cities make 30 Kph the maximum speed limit where people live. And, lower speeds not only benefit cyclists, but also benefit pedestrians, the elderly, parents with children and the disabled, and bring life to the city at large.



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"I am strongly committed to improving city life by creating a new way to move around the city: smarter and safer and using less energy polluting energy sources. New action plans for the historic city centre have been launched. These aim to revolutionise mobility in the city, giving priority to pedestrian orientated measures."

Mr. Andrea Colombo, Mobility Councillor for Bologna



9.3 A Network of physically separated bikeways - a "must have"

Creating a network of bikeways that are physically separated from motor vehicles and people is the other "must have" for achieving a high cycling share, particularly when traffic speeds are high. In Copenhagen the norm is that if a street has a speed limit of 40 Kph or higher or has more than 5,000 cars per day, it must have a cycle track, which is a bikeway with a physical separation from cars. This is often not in immediate reach for many cities just starting to raise cycling awareness but should be a target goal.

The network must connect places of origin with places of destination. Quite often, cities build a protected bikeway of a couple of kilometres and then claim that they do not have a "bicycle culture" as very few people use it. A bikeway is just a piece of a bigger network and will not function by itself. The network must enable people to ride bicycles from their places of origin to their destinations using exclusively neighbourhood streets with speeds below 30 Kph in combination with arterials that have physically segregated bikeways.

Ideally bikeways should be unidirectional, next to the sidewalk, with a physical separation from cars and be permanent. Nevertheless, if the city does not have the funds or the political support to make it permanent, it can build a grid of temporary bikeways for two to three years, as long as they meet the necessary conditions of creating an interconnected network with physical separation from cars.

Recent successful projects include Seville, Spain, where in 2007 less than 0.5% of the trips were made by bicycle. In 2007, they did not have one protected bikeway. In four years they built a network of over 150 kilometres of permanent segregated bikeways and the share of people using bicycles rose to above 6%. They aspire to double that by 2015.



New York City led the way in North America on creating temporary protected bikeways by painting a buffer zone and putting bollards in the middle of it. The new Administration in Chicago under the leadership of Mayor Emmanuel is using this model to build a network of 100 miles (160 kilometres) in his first term. He built the first one on Kinzie Street in the first 30 days of his Administration. Mayor Emanuel and his head of Transportation, Klein, are aligned with the champions mentioned at the beginning of the chapter and understand that the citizens are paying them every week to get things done.

One question to ask ourselves in designing a cycling network - would you send an eight year old or an 80 year old to use that infrastructure? If you would, it is safe enough, if you would not, we have to do better.

9.4 Balancing the "nice to haves"

Well intentioned decision makers and activists frequently promote actions that make cycling more comfortable to people who are already riding bicycles. These actions are often nice to have and include printing maps, installing parking racks or bicycle lockers, hosting workshops, mounting racks on buses, painting lines on the pavement of roads with traffic speeds over 40 Kph, signage, and more. They are easier than "must haves" as they usually do not create much conflict, are visible and create the sense of doing something. While the impact of these actions can depend on the context, they typically do not result in many new cyclists on the road, as witnessed by experiences of hundreds of cities.

Furthermore, these measures alone can run the risk of setting plans back when skeptical stakeholders claim that they should eliminate new investment of cycling infrastructure as "it's evident that we do not have a cycling culture as the number of people riding bikes has not substantially increased following the actions taken." "Nice to have" actions should be part of a comprehensive strategy that first focuses on "must haves" and seeks to increase and broaden the community of cyclists. Combining them with other initiatives can create a multiplier effect.



"There is still a need for political champions for cycling, even if we all agree. You need someone to lead the way and to keep the focus."

Mr. Steen Møller, Mayor for Culture and Urban Planning, Odense

"I recommend cities create a basic network of cycle paths to encourage cycling mobility and also take measures to calm traffic, allowing bicycles to share space with other vehicles in the streets where there is no cycling infrastructure."

Idoia Garmendia, Deputy Mayor of Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain

9.5 Conclusion

City champions and the right balance between hard and soft measures can move any city to achieve great progress. City leaders need to be decisive and proactive in getting things done, as the examples in this chapter have illustrated.

Implementing the two "must haves" above will not only increase and diversify the number and types of people riding bicycles. It will also improve public health, provide cleaner environment, more local economic vibrancy, recreation for all and better transportation. By striving to reduce the speed to below 30 Kph on all streets where people live and creating a grid of bikeways that are physically separated from pedestrians and from cars, we can substantially improve the quality of life for all citizens, create nice walkable communities, take full advantage of investments in public transport by improving links to it, and advance all car-free modes of transportation.



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