



ENABLING CYCLING CITIES INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

INTERVIEW WITH JACQUES GARREAU

Vice Président de Nantes Métropole, City of Nantes





Jacques Garreau

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NANTES

Interview by **Oliver Hatch**, Urbrans.org

Jacques Garreau, Vice Président de Nantes Métropole en charge of soft modes, contributes to the definition of the conurbation public policies. He represents the Local Authority within the various political decision-making bodies on cycling policy, he participates to board meetings in the various associations Nantes Métropole is a member of: Rue de l'Avenir, Club des Villes Cyclables, Cities for Cyclists. In the Greater Nantes, the political representative responsible for the cycling policy is Mr Jacques Garreau, Nantes Métropole's vice president in charge of soft modes and Mayor of the suburban town of Bouaye. Within its SUMP, Nantes Métropole has set ambitious objectives in terms of cycling modal share. Starting with a modest rate, the conurbation wishes to double the share of cycling by 2015 and to reach 15% by 2020.

In your view, how important is political support and commitment for pro-cycling policies?

The involvement of elected representatives is strategic to carry out policies requiring supporting behaviour changes in mobility habits. To obtain positive results in terms of cycling practices, it is necessary to conduct proactive policies for the development of infrastructures and services and to bet on major communication actions. A strong political support is therefore essential to these efforts.

Have you a particular success story you can describe in respect of this?

The implementation of right turns on red light devices for cyclists has only been authorized at the national level after the completion of an experiment on the territory of Nantes. Elected officials were very willing to perform an experiment at a local level even though the legislative framework did not yet ensure the legality of our actions. By forcing the administration to adapt, Nantes Métropole politicians contributed to change the legislation at national level in a very short period of time.

Is a well-planned and steady flow of finance for cycling measures necessary?

The planning of actions in terms of infrastructure and service development has to be set together with a full financing plan just like for other infrastructure projects. It is a prerequisite to make political intentions a reality.

What is the position of cycle planning within your wider land-use and transport policies?

Nantes Métropole's first two urban mobility plans (1991-2000 and 2000-2010) strongly promoted public transport whereas the current SUMP (2010-2015, perspectives 2030), while still proposing measures to develop it, aims at a strong increase in cycling services and cycling and walking habits. However, to promote these "local modes", the shape of the city should be worked on. The objective is to make it more compact and to bring together various functions thus favouring short trips easily made on foot and by bicycle: the "short distance city".

This is done thanks to a better coherence between urban development policies (urban planning, economic, housing,...) and transport policies. For instance new urban projects have to articulate with the existing cycling network.

The new SUMP includes an action plan for the period 2010 to 2015, which gives a large part to actions in favour of cycling and walking, thanks to traffic control and the wide spreading of traffic calming measures, or by the development of adapted infrastructure (cycle lanes or paths, sheltered and / or secure parking for bikes, pleasant and comfortable pedestrian routes, public space dedicated to soft modes) or communication, information, awareness raising measures to promote behaviour changes in favour of public transport and soft modes.

Does your city have a cycling department or team and if so, how vital are they in promoting cycling?

Within Nantes Métropole, the soft modes department is directly attached to the Head of the transport and mobility department. The department includes 5 people working full time on the subject. Each of Nantes Métropole's nine local centres also has referents for all actions carried out over the 24 towns. Overall, around fifteen people work on the cycling policy.

Do you consult with your cycle user groups and neighbourhood groups on cycling and how useful are their views and their role?

Nantes Métropole was rated second best project for the CIVITAS award 2012 on public participation. The project consisted in the drafting of soft mobility scheme. More than 150 workshops with citizens were organised in the various districts between 2011 and summer 2012 and allowed programming about 5 million euro of works decided by district committee representatives.

How necessary for cycling is it that different city departments cooperate and work together?

Working on behaviour changes implies that the bike should not remain a specialist's business but that all stakeholders in the city should act at their level to promote cycling in the various projects. The challenge in terms of driving change is therefore important internally for Nantes Métropole: all operational departments should include the issue of cycling development in their discussions.

Has your city been able to learn and adapt ideas from other cities for cycling - if so, how?

The Nantes city centre project was directly inspired by successful experiences in Italy (Rome, Ferrara, Padova). After several study tours, we have translated their experiments into a coherent project including a large-scale reorganization of traffic, cycling developments, low traffic zones and pedestrian areas, a new Bus with a High level of service system (Chronobus). The concept lead to an general pacification of urban environments, traffic speed reduction thanks to the extension of 30kph areas and improved conditions for pedestrians and cyclists.

To what extent do your city transport planners listen to the views of residents on cycling?

Public participation is a primary concern in all public space projects led by Nantes Métropole, which are often adapted with respect to the expectations of the citizens.

How does your city balance the provision of 'hard' measures for cycling (infrastructure) with the provision of 'soft' measures such as maps and promotion measures?

It is easier to assess the impact of investments carried out on infrastructure rather than those conducted in the field of promotion and awareness raising. However, infrastructure is useless if the inhabitants don't change their habits. We make sure that there is a balance between measures related to infrastructure and measures linked to encouragement to practice and institutional communications campaigns targeted at specific services to promote new developments.

How necessary are the communications and marketing of cycling initiatives to all your city residents?

Regular appointments are organized in terms of communication: during the Festival of cycling, for the distribution of winter lighting kits, for the European Mobility Week. These appointments are very successful.

Why is cycling important to you and your city?

In a time of environmental and economic crisis, cycling development is essential in order to build a city fair, accessible, with good living conditions and where people can blossom individually and collectively.

How did you become convinced that cycling has an important role in your city?

I went to Copenhagen for the Velocity conference in 2010 and it was a revelation to me. The atmosphere of the city, the easiness to cycle safely: the bike really is the means of transport best suited to the city!

If you had one recommendation to make to another city starting to plan for bicycles, what would it be?

I would like to recommend the same method that has proven successful for our political cycle: the 3 "S":

- ▶ Safety,
- ▶ parking Supply (in French: stationnement),
- ▶ Services.

This is the key to the success of any cycling policy. A bit of stress and a lot of conviction.

The interviews were taken by Oliver Hatch,
from Urbtrans in London
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THIS INTERVIEW IS PART OF 'ENABLING CYCLING CITIES: INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS'

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The CIVITAS Initiative is co-funded by the Energy and Transport parts of the EU's RTD Framework. This publication is produced under the auspices of CIVITAS MIMOSA, a collaborative project of the CIVITAS Initiative, funded through the EC's Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. All text in this publication is based upon the experiences gathered by the editorial board of CIVITAS MIMOSA and by the contributing authors. The images used have been provided by CIVITAS MIMOSA and by the contributing authors, unless stated otherwise.

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