



ENABLING CYCLING CITIES INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS

INTERVIEW WITH JANETTE SADIK-KHAN

Commissioner of the New York City Department of Transportation





Janette Sadik-Khan

Commissioner of the New York City
Department of Transportation

NEW YORK

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

In your view, how important is political support and commitment for pro-cycling policies to happen and if so why? For example, how important is it to have a political 'champion' or could your cities pro-cycling stance have happened anyway?

Our streets are for New Yorkers, and, in increasing numbers, they are being made safer by New Yorkers. Our projects have only tapped into an incredible hunger for more public space and safer, more inviting streets and these projects accomplish all of these goals at the same time. Through bike lanes, public plazas and neighborhood slow zones New Yorkers themselves are the ones that are now demanding safer streets and calling on their elected officials and community groups for safer places to walk, bike and take it all in..

Have you a particular success story in respect of the importance of political support?

Bike share is one of the greatest examples of community and political alignment. What started as a station-siting project has turned into one of the most publicly sourced transportation projects ever. We held nearly 400 meetings with elected officials and community groups and another 50,000 New Yorkers weighed in on bike share locations through our online project portal. There probably hasn't been a transportation project in the city's history that's so thoroughly integrated the planning process into both the public and political processes.

Is a well-planned and steady flow of finance for cycling measures necessary? Can a city best achieve success by making a lot of funding available in one or two years to make an impact, or is a sustained funding program a better route to success?

Bike lanes have to be one of the most cost-effective projects we can bring to our streets. We've been able to tap into federal resources that pay for 80% of the construction of new bike projects, and many of our bike paths are anchored with pedestrian refuge islands, so they don't just make biking safer, they actually make the entire street safer for everyone who uses it-by 40% or more, even motorists. Compared to the many millions of dollars and years needed for capital projects on bridges and roads, cities can put down a life-saving network of bike lanes in something close to real time.

What is the position of cycle planning within your wider land-use and transport policies? Do the two policy areas fit together in NY in terms of making the city cycle-friendly?

Planning for bikes-and for all modes of transportation-is smart urban planning. Transportation safety, zoning, public space, economic development-these all must be aligned and working from the same playbook. In New York City, that's where PlaNYC comes in. It's big picture thinking, with a clear outline for what each City agency needs to do to engineer a greater, greener New York City by 2030. And the different parts of government are mutually-reinforcing. Where we installed protected bike paths on 9th Avenue in Manhattan, retail sales increased 49%. Where we installed bus lanes on 1st and 2nd avenues, travel times improved nearly 20% while injury crashes decreased 37% at the same time.

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

It's extremely important to actually demonstrate what's possible on the streets quickly, even on a temporary or pilot basis. People are naturally skeptical. But if you can actually show them a real, if temporary, project instead of just showing pictures or renderings, it can help make the case that our streets can be used in ways very different from what they may be used to. That's the guiding principle behind Summer Streets, which is New York's phenomenally successful car-free-street event. For three Saturday mornings in August bike riders, runners and roller-bladers have the run of the road from the Brooklyn Bridge seven miles up Park Avenue to Central Park. It's a chance to see Grand Central Terminal up close, take part in healthy, fun activities, and it shows that our streets don't have to be used the same way every day. The event is so popular that dozens of neighborhoods across the city have followed suit with community-organized car-free streets, and the experience of these events help feed new ideas of how we can use our streets differently every day of the year.

The interviews were taken by Oliver Hatch,
from Urbtrans in London
oh@urbtrans.org

THIS INTERVIEW IS PART OF 'ENABLING CYCLING CITIES: INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESS'

THE BIRTH AND GROWTH OF A CYCLING VISION

1. The essence of senior political and executive commitment: success stories and prejudices

Randy Neufeld (SRAM Cycling Fund)

3. Integration beats isolation: equal planning dignity delivers dividends

Brian Deegan (London Borough of Camden), Johan Diepens (Mobicon), & Angela van der Kloof (Mobicon)

4. An empowered delivery team: skills, motivation and manpower, the recipe does not differ

Frederik Depoortere (Brussels) and Niels Tørsløv (City of Copenhagen)

5. Support and engagement of local stakeholders: strengths and boundaries of partaken decision making

Damien Ó Tuama (Dublin, IE), János László and Zsolt Kilián (Budapest, Hungarian Cyclists' Club), Adam Bodor (ECF)

6. A supportive institutional coalition: synergies with relevant authorities to dodge obstructions

Fokko Kuik and Ria Hilhorst, Municipality of Amsterdam, Department of Traffic, Transport and Infrastructure

THE DISCERNING AND INCLUSIVE DESIGN

7. No solution fits all: adapt the programme to the local context, priorities & opportunities

Hermann Bluemel (Berlin), Burkhard Horn (Berlin), and Karl Reiter (FGM-Amor)

8. Understanding and valuing the audience: the focus is on 'people' and their habits, strengths and weaknesses

Jeff Risom and Claire Mookerjee, Gehl Institute

9. Handling hard and soft measures: first tackle the must have, then the nice to have

Gil Peñalosa, Executive Director, 8-80 Cities

10. New mobility habits require extra attention: information encouragement and promotion for a smooth modal transition

Tilman Bracher (DIFU), Tom Bogdanowicz and Marguerite Reinig (London)



Copyright

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.

Legal Notice

Neither the EC, nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission, is responsible for the use that might be made of the information contained in this publication. The views expressed in this publication have not been adopted or in any way approved by the Commission and should not be relied upon as a statement of the Commission's views.