



Quality Criteria for Improving Cycling and Walking Policies & Practices

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Overview of CYCLEWALK Quality Criteria

Together the partners in this consortium co-created the CYCLEWALK Quality Criteria – a catalogue of classifications for working towards improved walking and cycling policies and practices. This list is based on their experiences during CYCLEWALK visiting each region, witnessing policies in action and utilizing the collective knowledge held within the group of participants.

To ensure the best practices could be widely used and implemented by the partners – and by other European authorities – three gradient indicators were added for functionality and usability. The three-level indicators mean an easy assessment of what level your organization is at when it comes to walking and cycling can be made, and identify how to get to the next level.

The following tables outline 17 best practices for walking and cycling, and their associated gradient indicators.

1. Infrastructure Use and Design

	Practice	Description	Indicators
1.1	Plan and construct a continuous bicycle network from urban centre outwards	A bike trip is only as safe as the least-safe section. For cycling to become attractive for a large audience, ensure that your cycle network is built to a consistent standard of safety and quality, eventually connecting the whole urban area. Start with areas with the largest concentration of people and potential destinations (grocery stores, workplaces, schools) and build out from these areas. Make use of existing low-stress facilities such as greenways or recreational paths and include facilities for bicycle parking.	<p>(a) A planning document exists plus an action/implementation/financial plan that specifies a cycling network which is continuous, comfortable for users of all ages and abilities and connected to public transit nodes.</p> <p>(b) A planning document exists, but may not specify a complete and coherent network.</p> <p>(c) There is no document, but new construction is somewhat interconnected.</p>
1.2	Build a walking and cycling network which ensures a high level of design specification	Design details are crucial for ensuring a safe, comfortable and attractive network that people will use. These details must follow systematic safety principles of speed and separation and must be consistent and recognisable across the whole network. This ensures safety and accessibility and a feeling of being appreciated when using facilities.	<p>(a) Design and implementation of cycle network and facilities follow systematic safety principles of vehicular speed and separation, as well as CROW principles: 1) Cohesion; 2) Directness; 3) Safety; 4) Comfort; 5) Attractiveness.</p> <p>(b) Recommendations and design guidelines exist.</p> <p>(c) Recommendations or design guidelines are minimal or non-existent.</p>
1.3	Connect your walking and cycling network to public transit nodes (stops and stations)	To optimise sustainable transport potential, it is vital to combine public transport with walking and cycling. Not only does this combination allow for longer trips, it also helps create a more successful public transport system and increases the viability of walking/cycling as a transport mode. By connecting walking and cycling networks to transit nodes (and vice versa) and by creating proper facilities at stations, a more sustainable and efficient transport system can emerge.	<p>a) All public transit nodes and stations are well-served with ample, safe, and easy to use walking and cycling facilities (such as bike parking racks) and amenities (such as furniture).</p> <p>(b) Basic facilities for cycling and walking are often met and there is a plan for improvements and expansion.</p> <p>(c) Basic facilities are often not available.</p>

2. Financial Investment

	Practice	Description	Indicators
2.1	Dedicated funding to walking and cycling on city and regional levels	Walking and cycling can serve many purposes including reduced congestion, better air quality, better public health and economic benefits. This means that many stakeholders can benefit from increased walking and cycling mode share. Each stakeholder who has the chance to benefit also has the potential to invest in infrastructure and behaviour change. By pooling financial resources from multiple stakeholders you can more easily fund the required interventions, with broader support.	<p>(a) Cycling and walking are prioritized in the annual budget with regards towards capital improvement projects, programs and events. Political figures and stakeholders support this budget and seek ways to increase it through inter-departmental coordination.</p> <p>(b) Cycling and walking budgets are present but inadequate and/or not well-coordinated, with limited supported.</p> <p>(c) Cycling and walking budgets are not present but discussions have broached future possibilities.</p>

3. Maintenance, Evaluation, Operation

	Practice	Description	Indicators
3.1	Create and define a maintenance plan, including responsibilities, staffing, and funding	Included in funding schemes should be a plan and finances for maintenance and evaluation. A proactive bicycle network maintenance schedule is vital for increasing uptake. The network should be expanded by coordinating with works on roads that have yet to be added to the cycle network. This coordination can save financial resources.	<p>(a) Walking and cycling infrastructure and facilities are proactively well-maintained and improvements are quickly addressed.</p> <p>(b) Basic maintenance needs are met and there is a plan for improvements and expansion.</p> <p>(c) Basic road maintenance needs are met most of the time, but there is not yet an integrated plan for cycling and walking.</p>
3.2	Collect data to assess the success of walking and cycling interventions	Data on usage and satisfaction (both before and after) of interventions, facilities, programmes and events will greatly assist public and political support for cycling and walking. More than usage rates, however, is it also important to measure changes in injuries/fatalities, retail sales, air quality, use of public transit, social inclusion, and other social, health, and economic factors that support the uptake and implementation of cycling and walking policies. This information can be used as the basis for future interventions.	<p>(a) A broad set of criteria is defined and measured for each intervention, and used to leverage political will/actions.</p> <p>(b) Minimal criteria are measured and measurement is a standard practice; some decisions are made according to findings.</p> <p>(c) At minimum, users and changes are measured.</p>
3.3	Involve citizens in data collection and information exchange for inclusive feedback loops	Create channels where people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds can be actively engaged with walking and cycling programmes. This can help identify gaps in the network, achieve quick wins and can help you better understand the wishes and desires of the users. This ensures transparency and civic engagement within top-down interventions.	<p>(a) Many diverse groups and individuals are highly involved in the process and can easily give feedback, plus responses are prompt.</p> <p>(b) Some citizen groups and individuals are involved, responses are sufficient.</p> <p>(c) There is very little engagement and reactions are minimal.</p>

4. Communication and Education

	Practice	Description	Indicators
4.1	Organise programmes and interventions that encourage cycling and walking for different target groups	To support wider behavioural changes, training programmes provide opportunities to increase interest in active transport, and increase required skills from a young age. Potential interventions could include cycling lessons, walking and cycling school-bus and traffic education courses. Additional attention should be paid to walking and cycling within formal driver training/education programmes.	<p>(a) A number of high-quality programmes, events, and interventions are in place, supported by politicians. Target groups have been identified and prioritised, such as key employers, advocacy groups, and institutions.</p> <p>(b) Local advocacy groups program a limited number of events, programs, or interventions with limited political support.</p> <p>(c) Information about cycling and walking is accessible to some generic target groups, but program efforts do not yet exist.</p>
4.2	Develop, fund and disseminate marketing and communication strategy for behaviour change	With changes to the region/cities mobility system and infrastructure, people must be triggered and encouraged to try something new. When implementing new cycling infrastructure, the success can be amplified if combined with targeted campaigns focused on potential users. This can be achieved through cooperating with large employers, providing trials and incentives (i.e., to use electric bikes or give bikes to employees).	<p>(a) An office/staff and budget is dedicated to marketing and communication specifically for cycling and walking promotion, is well-coordinated with all or most region/city staff and politicians, and there is evidence of behaviour change.</p> <p>(b) A marketing and communication strategy is in place, is mildly coordinated with region/city staff but behaviour change is not yet evident.</p> <p>(c) Some marketing and communication activities are underway, but there is no strategy or coordination with region/city staff and politicians.</p>

5. Policy and Vision

	Practice	Description	Indicators
5.1	Publish a strategic policy document that articulates a vision for active mobility	A comprehensive document should include policy and planning strategy, while setting measurable targets with a strong political commitment. A key part of the strategic document (or at least a vision) underlines equity, sustainable safety, parking policies (increasing fees, restrictions and management), traffic calming measures, and prioritising vulnerable road users (i.e., children and elderly). The public should be consulted and involved throughout the development process.	<p>(a) Cycling and walking vision and targets are articulated in either a standalone or represents a significant portion of a strategic policy document, which is the basis for implementation, and is fully supported by politicians and region/city officials.</p> <p>(b) The process of developing the strategic document is underway, selective projects have been or are being implemented and there is general political support among high level decision makers.</p> <p>(c) There is a common understanding among high level decision makers that cycling and walking is a part of the region/city's vision and political agenda.</p>

6. Management and Networks

	Practice	Description	Indicators
6.1	Cycling and walking policies and interventions must be implemented with strong political backing	A common factor in successful emerging bicycle friendly areas is a walking and cycling coordinator, appointed or directly reporting to an elected official. This ensures each policy and project has a champion who can speak on its behalf. This helps push walking and cycling up the agenda and can assist in resolving internal conflicts within the local authority.	<p>(a) A dedicated and permanent, independent of funding schemes and election cycles, walking and cycling coordinator or team with full political backing at a high-level, implements and coordinates the strategic vision and activities (cross-referenced with policy above).</p> <p>(b) A project-based walking and cycling coordinator is present but not permanent or independent.</p> <p>(c) A person is coordinating cycling and walking activities in addition to regular responsibilities.</p>
6.2	Involve government departments, the private sector and citizens in decision making processes	Cooperation between different sections of government will create a joined approach when it comes to walking and cycling policy. A walking and cycling coordinator (see above) should be responsible for this process. Include bicycle advocates, local organisations, large employers, universities, and other critical stakeholders early on in the process to reduce the chance of opposition in the delivery stage of the programme and creates better outcomes based on local knowledge and concerns.	<p>(a) A strong network or working group which meets regularly, that contains a range of stakeholders, and is committed to a co-creation process to optimise interventions and avoid opposition upon implementation.</p> <p>(b) Legitimate working groups, advisory groups, or round table formats meet as-needed and provide feedback to decision makers.</p> <p>(c) A process for information exchange exists, but there is minimal participation.</p>

7. Legal framework

	Practice	Description	Indicators
7.1	Ensure laws protect vulnerable road users	The region/city's legal and fiscal framework should support sustainable modes and encourage their usage. For example, vulnerable road users, such as cyclists and pedestrians, should have appropriate legal protection while participating in traffic. Choosing a sustainable mode should not, in any way, be disadvantageous in comparison to non-sustainable modes. Enforcement of speed limits and parking policies should be directed towards vehicles which can do the most environmental damage.	<p>(a) Laws and enforcement protect pedestrians and bike users, while limiting cars in urban centres.</p> <p>(b) Pedestrians and bike users are granted some additional legal protections. Car use is somewhat restricted.</p> <p>(c) Lobbying for legal protections for pedestrians and bike users has started.</p>
7.2	Ensure laws facilitate Innovation for walking and cycling	Often existing laws can block the realisation of innovative measures without an evidence base. The safety of an idea/ facility should lead the discussion in terms of its viability instead of existing laws that would	(a) Laws hindering cycle and pedestrian projects have been amended. Law makers/ politicians are willing to make further changes.

		otherwise block its implementation. For example, allowing cycling in a park or shared-space schemes may not be currently legal but either could be both beneficial and safe.	(b) Some progress on changing the laws which hinder projects the most.
			(c) Laws and rules that act as obstacles to cycle and pedestrian projects identified, initial discussions about how to amend them has begun.
7.3	Require developers to design, plan and fund cycling infrastructure	Many regions/cities are requiring developers to unbundle private car-parking facilities to encourage sustainable travel and reduce reliance on cars. Developers can design and build appropriate walking and cycling facilities (and other amenities like landscaping) within the context and standards of the cycling network and strategic document.	(a) Private developers are engaged and committed to active travel, their projects follow the regional/city guidelines.
			(b) Some developers are committed and see through walking and cycling projects when building facilities.
			(c) In dialogue with developers to start working on walking and cycling interventions in future projects.

8. Experimentation and learning

	Title	Description	Practice
8.1	Leverage maintenance works, construction, or large events as opportunities for trials	During large roadworks or construction projects (or even events) people often look for other ways to get around. This may create an opportunity to test a certain intervention without spending political capital and effort. A municipal working group including maintenance department, traffic operations, parking and events departments can identify opportunities for walking and cycling trials. Success of these trials, especially with the strategic help of the media, can create public support for future formal interventions.	(a) A trial and intervention working-group that includes key stakeholders (who might be opposed) early on in the process and from across the municipal organisation identifies potential locations for trials. Trials are rigorously evaluated and coordinated with the media and policy makers.
			(b) No working group exists, but trials occasionally are planned and used for cycling and walking improvements.
			(c) Trials occur by chance, with little coordination.
8.2	Use city-to-city visits as an opportunity for strategic relationship-building, agenda-setting and learning	Many regions/cities around the world are trying to do the same thing - increase walking and cycling, reduce car use. Learn from their mistakes and successes, be inspired! Also, use conferences and study tours as opportunities to strategically build relationships not only with foreign peers, but also your own colleagues, supervisors and elected officials. Spending time with these individuals, out of the office and riding bicycles, could facilitate a common understanding of values and beliefs.	(a) A range of staff and decision makers from different departments, sectors and organisations regularly visit other regions/cities for continued learning.
			(b) Some staff are somewhat engaged in external learning opportunities and open to learning in general.
			(c) Little commitment to learning exists and there is some resistance to learning.