

Policy brief: Car-independent lifestyles

Statement of issue

Many CIVITAS measures aim to get people out of their cars and on to public transport or engage in active mobility, which includes walking and cycling.

Modern information technology, more cycle- and pedestrian-focused infrastructure, car-free zones, and bike sharing services are examples of city initiatives to encourage cycling and walking.

By reducing private car dependency, cities will become safer, more attractive, and economically viable places to live, work, and spend leisure time. Quality of life increases for all inhabitants as a result.



Policy options from the CIVITAS 2020 project FLOW

FLOW is a European project which aims to put walking and cycling on an equal footing with motorised transport modes as a solution to tackling urban congestion. It aims to develop a user-friendly methodology, involving transport modelling, to assess the effectiveness of walking and cycling measures.

The FLOW project is dedicating particular attention to decision makers and politicians as they are the ones taking the strategic decision to integrate a measure into the local policy.

It focuses on developing a support package for key decision makers that will help them argue effectively that walking and cycling can reduce congestion. The support package consists of a targeted set of educational materials to present results of the FLOW project in the light of the barriers and drivers identified through a survey involving 160 key decision makers.

Policy recommendations

The FLOW Quick facts – looking differently at congestion

The first one of these materials is the Congestion Quick Facts for Decision Makers that presents a collection of short and to-the-point facts to provide decision makers with powerful arguments for investing in cycling and walking measures as a means to reduce congestion and thus enhance quality of life in their cities.

They describe some – perhaps surprising – results about overall transport efficiency that have been achieved whilst improving conditions for walking and cycling.

The facts are divided into four categories according to the different ways that congestion is impacted upon:

The effect of walking on congestion

1. Pedestrianisation improves mobility and accommodates 700 more people during rush hour (Dublin, Ireland).
2. Narrowing roads to reduce pedestrian crossing distances does not increase congestion (Lisbon, Portugal).
3. Pedestrian improvements reduce bus travel times by 40% (Strasbourg, France).
4. New pedestrian plazas reduce journey times for taxis and buses by 15% (New York, USA).

The effect of cycling on congestion

5. Cycling improvements lead to 45% less car traffic and faster public transport (Copenhagen, Denmark).
6. Cycle highway reduces time spent in congestion by 3.8 million hours (The Netherlands).
7. Cycle highway network reduces the need for 50,000 car journeys daily (Ruhr area, Germany)
8. A bike share programme eases congestion during city works (Bordeaux, France).
9. A bike share programme reduces congestion by 4% (Washington DC, USA).
10. New bike lanes reduce automobile travel times by 35% (New York, USA).

The effect of vehicle access restrictions on congestion

11. A car-free zone leads to almost 30% fewer inner-city cars (Paris, France).
12. Neighbourhood access restrictions lead to 16% less traffic and 10,000 fewer car journeys a day (London, UK).

The potential of walking and cycling to reduce congestion

13. One million daily journeys could be walked in less than 10 minutes (London, UK).
14. 8.17 million daily journeys made by motorised modes could be cycled in less than 20 minutes (London, UK).
15. The School Streets programme keeps over 4,000 cars off streets during peak period (Bolzano, Italy).

Policy recommendations

This series of recommendations is based on the experience derived from the FLOW project. See the full project summary [here](#).

Recommendations for local decision makers:

1. Insist on up-to-date walking and cycling data. Local authority staff need political backing to address the data issue. Decision makers must provide leadership in relation to collecting data and gathering evidence in their communities.
2. Shape the impact assessment framework by working with your staff to specify the assessment criteria for transport schemes at the start of projects. Ask for a balanced multimodal assessment including all criteria important to the community (economic, social, environmental, and transport) and the impact of transport schemes on all modes.
3. Support your staff's ongoing training so they understand the multimodal perspective and the need to assess all modes equally.

National actors:

1. Ensure the content and language of your urban traffic management policies and guidelines reflect a multimodal perspective on urban road network performance. Integrate the concepts of multimodality and mode equity into local implementation standards and guidelines and offer cities incentives to adopt these standards.
2. Issue policy recommendations to local authorities that recognise the role of walking and cycling in reducing congestion/improving road network performance.
3. In collaboration with local authorities, adopt guidelines to improve data collection and analysis for walking and cycling.
4. Establish consistent mechanisms for evaluating project proposals prioritising sustainable transport modes that take into account the movement of people (not vehicles). Include in policy frameworks a requirement for the multimodal evaluation of mobility benefits for all transport schemes as part of any project appraisal.
5. Provide financial support to local authorities which apply a multimodal approach to transport system decision-making, and in turn place transport into the larger context of urban life, the environment, health, and the economy.

Recommendations for European actors:

1. Ensure that the content and language of your guidelines on urban traffic management reflect a multimodal perspective on urban road network performance. Establish consistent mechanisms for evaluating project proposals that require the

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- prioritisation of sustainable modes of transport, taking into account the movement of people (not vehicles).
2. Create a European Walking Strategy as a framework in which cities can plan walkable communities and incorporate the principles of multimodality and transport mode equity into the EU Cycling Strategy and all EU transport strategies.
 3. Establish guidelines for standardised data collection methods for walking and cycling as modes of urban transport. Make funding available to develop the guidelines for pilot schemes and for consultation with the local and national level.
 4. Require cities to use multimodal assessments of transport system quality in their SUMP measure appraisals.
 5. Provide financial support to local authorities that apply an approach to transport system decision-making that integrates transport into the larger context of urban life, the environment, (public) health, and the economy.

Getting in touch with CIVITAS

The CIVITAS Thematic Group Car-independent Lifestyles focuses on the basics of sustainable urban mobility: creating safe and attractive places to walk and cycle.

Visit the group page [here](#) and subscribe to join the community.

For more information on clean fuels and vehicles, contact Bonnie Fenton - b.fenton@rupprecht-consult.eu