Cycling policy in Ghent

Brno 17-06-2010
Wim Schuddinck

Mobility Department, City of Ghent
City of Ghent - some data
236,000 inhabitants
15.643 ha surface
56 squares
74 parcs
29,000 parking spaces - 10 car parks
35 ha pedestrian zones
32 hotels and 450 restaurants
650 bars
300 schools – 65,000 students – 60,000 pupils
1000 km roads
150,000 public transport passengers per day
6 train stations
45,000 passengers per day
110,000 bicycle movements per day
One city ...
Introducing a cycling policy in Ghent

Why...?
Because ...

(early 90’s)
Find the difference ... (2009)
Gras – en Korenlei

Bron: foto-archief Stad Gent, dienst stedenbouw & ruimtelijke planning
Gras – en Korenlei

Bron: foto-archief Stad Gent, dienst stedenbouw & ruimtelijke planning
Graslei in summer
Sint-Baafsplein

Bron: foto-archief Stad Gent, dienst stedenbouw & ruimtelijke planning
Sint-Baafsplein

Bron: foto-archief Stad Gent, dienst stedenbouw & ruimtelijke planning
More than 15 years of sustainable mobility planning

Milestones:

• **1993**: first bicycle plan
• **1997**: mobility plan for the city center (35 ha pedestrian zone)
• **2003**: mobility plan for the city
• **2009-2010**: second mobility plan

• The bicycle plan of ’93 was the start of a complete different approach on mobility and traffic issues in Ghent
Result after 15 years?

• 10% more bicycle use on average
• More than 2/3 of the 65,000 students uses the bicycle every day
• A growing number of train commuters cycle between their home and the railway station (+10% every year)
• Number of (first-year) students using the car to drive to school decreases from 25 to 11%
Introducing a cycling policy in Ghent

How...?
In general

- By giving cycling a major role in a global sustainable vision on urban mobility
- Cycling policy in favour of the daily cyclist
- Different approach for recreational cycling
- Working with a set of integrated mobility measures
Cycling policy integrated in a general mobility policy

- Less cars, more bikes and more public transport!
- Clear choices
- No half hearted solutions
- Good communication!
- Special actions (free busses, free bicycle parking)
- **Incorporate cycling in every possible project**
- Disencouraging car use, where sustainable alternatives are preferable
- Show that economic life in a city can also benefit from the absence of cars
Cycling in Ghent – every day
Bicycle lanes – cycling network
Main bicycle routes (’93)
Functional bicycle network
Network of cycling lanes

1. Construction of bicycle tunnels and bridges (in co-operation with the Flemisch Waterways and Sea Channel Administration)
2. Further completion of the main bicycle routes (meanwhile increased from 4 to 8)
3. Bicycle tracks: with the help of the Municipal Roads Department, the situation was significantly improved on other places.
4. Smaller improvements on bicycle routes (plateaus, interventions in the traffic circulation, etc...)
Cycling along rivers and canals
Completion of the main bicycle routes
Tackling traffic safety priorities
Cycling along the main roads
Restricted one-way traffic in 700 streets
How do bicycles and cars merge?

- Ghent has a large zone with a 30 km/h speed limit, where cars and bikes share the same road.
- In the city center car drivers have to adapt their speed to the cyclist’s speed.
How do bicycles and public transport merge?

• Tram rails and cycling are a tricky combination
• Priority for PT
• Careful but confident cycling is advisable
• Tram tracks can be hazardous!
• Cycling on bus lanes is allowed
Cycling in the pedestrian zone?

- Allowed, but with common sense
- When it’s too crowdy, the cyclist should get off his bike or use an alternative route
- Campaign in 2010
The bike
Bikes for everyone

- Wide range of bike types in our streets
- Trend: more and more people invest in high quality bikes
- Biking becomes a major transport mode (for the whole family)
Bikes for everyone

- Not everyone owns a bike or is able to use his own bicycle

- Several initiatives in Ghent to facilitate bike use:
  1. ‘StudentENmobiliteit’
  2. ‘Max Mobiel’
  3. Bikes for city personnel
  4. Future plans for public bike system
StudentEnmobiliteit

= non-profit association with rental bikes for students

Founded in 2001 with 200 bikes

• **Aim:** providing qualitative bikes at a fair price for students (€50/year)
  – To increase safety: students use bicycles with decent lights and brakes in stead of bike wrecks.
  – To stop bicycle theft by students.
• **How?:** financial support of the city council, university and colleges in Ghent.
• **Big succes:** + 5,000 bicycles rented every year.
Different types of bikes, including fold bikes
Unique frame

- Symbol engraved in the frame
- Large number engraved in the frame
- Specific design of the bicycle

=> Will always be recognizable even when repainted
Microchip

• Not yet realised
• Anti theft measure
• Bikes with a computerchip can easily be traced
• Bike guards will patrol the city with a handheld computer
• To verify if a bike is in normal use, stolen or disappeared
Max mobiel

- Bike rental (short term and long term) for commuters
- “Bike points” near the two main railway stations
- Bike point = small repairs + maintenance and surveillance of the bike racks
Bikes for city personnel

Every employee can choose between:

1. Bike maintained by the city => 3000 black&white bikes in use
2. Use of own bike and paid 0.15€/km
3. Public transport pass
The bicycle shelter

- central shelter for:
  - abandoned bicycles
  - impeding bikes
  - concerted collection actions
  - confiscated bicycles
- victims of theft can search for their stolen bikes
The bicycle guards

- 6 team members
  - track down abandoned bicycles
  - keep open the bicycle shelter
  - assist in the bicycle rental service for students

- cooperation between city guards – technical services – police department
The bicycle guards

Maintenance of bicycle sheds:

- A team of bicycle guards maintains the sheds in the city centre and the outskirts: removing dirt and weed, abandoned bicycles, dangerously parked bicycles,…
- Max Mobiel (non-profit organisation): maintains the sheds at the main railway stations.
- StudentEnMobiliteit (non-profit) tracks down stolen student bicycles.
Bicycle registration

• national register number engraved in the frame
• bicycle pass with features of the bicycle
• works (or should work) preventive
• faster and accurate reporting in case of theft
• easily traceable
Bicycle registration: growing success

- Number of registered bikes: 1257 in 2008 => 3009 in 2009
- Regular actions on location: schools, companies, traffic safety actions,...
- Main difference: with 83.28% of registered bikes the owner is contacted <-> only 6.83% of non-registered bikes are found by their owner
Bicycle parking
Bicycle parking policy

Situation

The risk for theft is one of the main reasons for not using a bike

- Ghent = bike minded but in a medieval city => narrow streets and small houses
- Increasing number of cyclists => growing need for bicycle sheds
- High bicycle theft rate
  - +/- 2,000 reported stolen bikes/year
  - 4/5 victims do not report the theft
=> increasing demand for guarded sheds
Bicycle parking policy => unguarded free bike sheds
Bicycle parking policy => unguarded free bike sheds

- Investing in bicycle sheds
- Neighbourhood bicycle count to check necessity
- Attempt to select locations that don’t cause a reduction of the car parking space, but sometimes inevitable
- Favourite type of shed: “type Gent”: solid, easy use, very functional
Type “Gent”
Bicycle sheds

- type ‘pedalo’ and type ‘Gent’
- new sheds partly on demand, partly on city initiative.
- surveillance during the Ghent Festivities and at the ‘Blaarmeersen’ recreation area
- challenge of dealing with huge need for bicycle sheds at the main railway stations
- so far, more than 9,500 bicycle stands have been placed
Type ‘Pedalo’ => ‘Staple’
Main railway stations

• **NOW:**
  - At this moment over 8,000 bicycles are parked every day at the two main railway stations of Ghent.
  - With the large amount of thefts there is a huge demand for guarded sheds.
• 700 places in the guarded bicycle sheds, provided by the railway company and the non-profit association Max Mobiel.
• 5,000 places in unguarded bicycle sheds.
Main railway stations

Future:

- Station Gent-Sint-Pieters:
  - 10,000 places in semi-guarded sheds under the railway station.

- Station Dampoort:
  - 1,130 places in unguarded sheds (including doubledecks)
  - Guarded shed for 100 places.

- Realisation: 2016 (work in progress)
Main railway stations
‘Bicycle lockers’

- To facilitate combination car/public transport with a bicycle:
  - Commuters can approach the city, change transport mode and use a bike in the center
  - Individual dedicated lockers
  - Paying
  - Bicycle protected against vandalism and theft
‘Bike bins’

- CIVITAS trial with “bicycle boxes” as a possible solution:
  - A box for 5 bicycles
  - Dedicated
  - Paying
  - Bicycle protected against vandalism and theft
  - Only 5 users with a key (or code)
- Kick-off: september 2010
The cyclist
• Promotional campaigns
• Encouraging people to participate in a new mobility culture for which the basis and preconditions are being developed
• Second hand bicycle market, twice every year
Our quarter is in motion
Gent, wild van fietsen
De snelste op korte afstand

Gent, wild van fietsen
Traffic safety campaign for good cycle lights

- ‘Be fancy when you cycle’: for good cycle visibility:
  - Collaboration with the police
  - Mainly for students
  - Police control and free cycle lights

- Safety jackets, helmets and bike flags for pupils of primary and secondary schools
Be fancy when you cycle
Future plans
Work in progress

- 2 semi-guarded public bicycle sheds underneath 2 of the biggest squares:
  - Emiel Braunplein
  - Korenmarkt
- Providing about 400 bicycle parking spots
- Free access
- Semi-guarded: guarded with cameras and frequent security checks.

**Realisation: July 2010.**
Witte fietsen – public bikes (rental system)

• Idea like Lyon, Paris, Barcelona,…
• Difficulties:
  – scheme on the scale of Ghent ?
  – Already 8000 rental bikes (not public)
  – Already rather high use of bike
  – Public domain – pavements
• Negotiations have started
House of the bike

- A future house for all bike related services the city has to offer
  - Bicycle shed
  - Max mobiel and studentENmobiliteit
  - Public bikes
- One single service point for cyclists
And last but not least

“There is no such thing as bad weather – only bad clothing”
Contact

Wim Schuddinck
Mobility Department City of Ghent
Woodrow Wilsonplein 1
9000 Ghent
Tel 00 32 9 266 77 61
Fax 00 32 9 266 77 79
e-mail: mobiliteit@gent.be
www.gent.be/mobiliteit
gent: slim op weg