

## **CATALUNYA DRAWS UP A STRATEGIC PLAN TO ENCOURAGE CYCLING**



In the second half of 2005, through its Department of Territorial Policy and Public Works, the Catalan autonomous community government (Generalitat de Catalunya) developed a Strategic Plan for Cycling in Catalunya for 2006-2010.

The plan is intended to be a useful tool to encourage bicycle use and develop a coherent urban and interurban cycling network, by acting in key areas linked to planning, design, road safety, the parking and safekeeping of bicycles, combining means of transport, regulations, education, culture, promotion, management and participation.

The introduction of Mobility Law 9/2003 which establishes a global vision of mobility as a system that gives priority to more sustainable means of transport, such as public transport, walking or cycling, on the one hand, and the public and social advantages of a more widespread use of bicycles, on the other, has resulted in various public initiatives and action plans in recent years to encourage cycling. These initiatives and action plans, which until now have been very local and on a modest scale, have given rise to good practices at an urban level, in the city of Barcelona and on an interurban level, in the form of the Green Routes in Girona.

A major public demand for cycling infrastructure and Catalunya's climate and mountains make it very suitable for all types of cycling, ranging from using bicycles to get around on a daily basis to cycling for leisure, tourism and sports purposes.

Within this context, the need arose to compile a Strategic Plan for Cycling in Catalunya to provide the appropriate tools for planning and developing specific initiatives to encourage the use of the bicycle in the next few years.

This study is Catalunya's bid for planned and consistent integration of the bicycle into its mobility system and, on a more general note, to set up a series of planned initiatives to promote cycling as a means of transport to be used to get around on a daily basis for leisure, sports or tourism purposes.

A new project has also become a reality with the participation of all of the players involved, in order to provide the population with a better quality of life, and to invest in a more sustainable means of transport.

The plan involves key issues relating to bicycle mobility and the promotion of cycling such as: town planning, the design of a standardized, continuous and uniform cycling network throughout Catalunya, road safety, bicycle parking and anti-theft issues, combining cycling with public transport and its coexistence with other means of transport, regulations, road-safety education and training, the promotion, management and monitoring of action plans to promote cycling and cooperation between the organizations involved in furthering use of this means of transport.

The plan was compiled with the support of the consulting firm Deloitte which provided a working methodology. This involved development of the following issues:

A diagnosis of the current situation of the network, assessing the territory's real needs and potential for the development of a mobility system based on public transport and alternatives to motorized transport, as well as the demand for cycling and cycling needs.

An external analysis of good practices being implemented in other national and international territories which could be adopted in Catalunya.

A strategic reflection on the cycling situation in Catalunya and the plan's objectives and strategic lines, with the active participation of all of the players related to the cycling world in Catalunya.

Identification and prioritization of the action measures contained in the Strategic Plan for Cycling in Catalunya for 2006-2010.

And lastly, definition of an action program and a set of indicators enabling optimal monitoring of the plan's implementation.

As a result of the strategic analysis and reflection studies on cycling and Catalunya, the Strategic Plan for Cycling in Catalunya establishes 10 strategic lines of action which encompass the main actions to be carried out in the next five years to encourage cycling in Catalunya:

**1. Identify, plan, design and build a territorial cycling network.**

Design the basic cycling network for Catalunya and the technical standards for cycle routes and define other tools to use as a basis for creating policies and strategies to develop town planning and promote the construction of the territorial network.

**2. Improve road and safety infrastructures.**

Define measures to improve safety for cyclists in the areas of legislation, traffic calming and the maintenance and cleaning of cycling infrastructures.

**3. Develop anti-theft measures.**

Define and develop activities and systems to promote the development of specific secure spaces for parking and keeping bicycles and for dissuading theft among public organizations, services companies and transport operators, using studies of proposals, special individualized advisory services, the creation of a territorial bicycle register and a general communication and information campaign.

**4. Promote the development of specific legislation.**

Make a proposal to adapt the existing legislation to the requirements of cycling and cycle routes, considering the bicycle as another means of transport which has to coexist with other vehicles on the roads. The main issues to be tackled, either for safety reasons or due to a gap in current legislation are: traffic and coexistence with other vehicles, traffic on cycle lanes, signs and insurance for cyclists.

5. **Develop activities to promote combining cycling with other means of transport.**  
Develop proposals to encourage transport operators to take steps to improve combining cycling with public transport as well as access of bicycles to other means of transport, using measures such as: the standardization of the timetables and rules of admission of the various operators, adapting specific access points and areas for bicycles and developing a proposal to create regulations to adapt vehicles for carrying bicycles.
6. **Develop education, training and information programs.**  
Define and develop programs which promote cycling among those groups considered to have the most influence due to their involvement in a basic learning process affecting road mobility in general: schools and driving schools. These activities, together with an information and public awareness program, aimed at all types of vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians, will improve road safety and the coexistence of the various means of transport.
7. **Initiate the creation of policies and campaigns for promotion.**  
Develop mechanisms to encourage cycling, informing the public of its possibilities and advantages for society in general and for cyclists themselves. The following main lines of action are proposed for this purpose: a general cycling promotion campaign, the creation of the Bicycle Website, encouraging bicycle rental and cycling as a means of public transport and the creation of a special badge of approval for good practices at a local level to encourage bicycle use.
8. **Promote coordination and participation methods.**  
Define and create activities to enable the participation of all of the organizations involved in the promotion of cycling both at a national and international level, on the basis of the creation of a group of experts, a virtual work space, a conference to be held every two years and partnership and coordination strategies.
9. **Develop monitoring and control systems.**  
Define and implement systems which ensure implementation of the Plan, its monitoring and assessment, creating for that purpose the Catalan Cycling Service and a balanced scorecard.
10. **Promote R&D and the manufacture of bicycles and accessories.**  
Develop mechanisms which promote cycling among the public, based on research and development and innovation activities relating to bicycles and accessories that make use of this means of transport easier and more widespread.

In order to achieve the Plan's objectives and strategic lines, a total of 31 lines of action have been defined, which have been prioritized in terms of time and developed in detail in the form of working records which include the following: the name of the line of action, a description of the action, the person in charge, the entities and user organizations involved, the estimated cost, the monitoring indicators, the specific action programs and the timeframe for the activities.

The Cycling Management Plan for Catalunya 2006-2010 is intended to be a useful tool to encourage cycling in Catalunya with action plans and measures relating to the basic criteria of safety, coherence, continuity, attractiveness and convenience, the main success factors for this means of transport among regular users.

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