

Position Paper

Vertical and horizontal integration in bicycle planning

A contribution from the USA

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In the last fifty years, transportation policies in the USA have provided for travel by private motor vehicles. This has extremely affected the use of bicycles as a regular mode of transportation. This dependency on private automobiles has resulted in unbalanced land use development patterns that increasingly favor urban sprawl and consequently deteriorate air quality. In certain urban areas, there are so many air pollution problems that to develop bicycle facilities and to attract people to use them is regarded as a very politically correct measure. As a consequence, bicycle planning in the USA has never gained so much political and financial support as in the last decade. Although huge sums of money have increasingly been made available through innovative schemes and a multitude of funding sources, technical staffs at the local level face several processual planning dilemmas that can delay, or even ruin, the implementation of bicycle facilities. Despite the existence of comprehensive state, regional and local bicycle plans and proposals, major bottlenecks arise with the vertical and horizontal integration needed to implement specific bicycle projects. Vertical integration refers to the top-down or bottom-up flows of policies, know-how and money between different levels of government. Horizontal integration refers to the coordination across jurisdictional boundaries at a certain level of government, and to the cooperation between public, private and community entities. I argue that if these integrations are not properly taken into account, the long-term success of bicycle planning initiatives can be questionable. These problems can be minimized by clearly defining and coordinating each participant's responsibilities in the project and by pro-actively involving the community in the planning process.