

# Plenary 3a: Strategies to Secure Mobility in Metropolis by Promoting Cycling

## Strategies in Copenhagen, Denmark

### **Bondam, Klaus (DK)**

Mayor of the City of Copenhagen  
Rådhuset, 1599 København V  
Borgmesteren@tmf.kk.dk

*Note: The following script is complimentary to the presentation slides. The spoken word could deviate from the written. Only the spoken word counts.*

Thanks a lot for this opportunity to take part in the Velocity conference and to talk to you about strategies to secure mobility and promote cycling.

- 50 percent of people going to work are using their bikes
- The number of serious bicycle casualties has decreased by 50 %
- The feeling of safety on bikes has increased by 50 %

This situation will occur in Copenhagen in 2015 - 8 years from now.

Does this sound ambitious to you ? Is this Mayor of Copenhagen living in a fantasy world ? Is it a picture that we can only dream about ?

Or - is it a city setting specific goals that will move urban mobility towards sustainability for real ?

Ladies and gentlemen: Expect these goals to be fulfilled. They are real life political goals and they are definitely attainable.

A few days ago we decided to launch a public vision on 2015 for the EcoMetropolis of Copenhagen (*showing "Vision 2015 EcoMetropolis"*). Our ambition is to become the capital city in the world with the best urban environment. Nothing less.

Our vision 2015 carries 4 themes:

- To become the worlds best city for cyclist.
- To become the centre for the worlds climate policy
- To become a green and blue capital city
- To become a clean and healthy major city.

Each of the 4 themes are carried by specific goals like the ones on bicycles that was introduced to you in the beginning of this speech. We will have the highest rate of people commuting on bikes, we will have the lowest figures on the number of casualties and we will have the best figures on safe-feeling on bikes.

And the role of the bicycles are also crucial to the goals on climate change Before 2015 we will decrease the carbondioxide emissions by 20% compared to today. No copenhagenener will emit more than 3,7 tons of carbon dioxide on average. Significant contributions to reaching this goal will come from shifting transport modes from cars to public transport and cycling.

Is it ambitious or is it unrealistic ?

We have done it before in Copenhagen. During the last 10 years we have achieved similar goals. The risks from being a cyclist has decreased by 50 percent, the amount of kilometers cycled everyday has increased by 40 percent and the citizens' perception of Copenhagen as a city of cyclist has increased by 33 percent. Today more than 36 % are choosing to use their bike to work or education in Copenhagen. These high figures are the point of departure for our vision for 2015. And there is no reason to believe, that we have reached any limit yet. There is still a lot to achieve in promoting cycling.

Last year the city council decided to spend 5 mill. euros on improvements for cyclists. During the next 3 years we have decided to add extra 10 mill. euros on more cycle tracks, better cycle parking facilities and improvements in cyclist safety. My ambition this year is to double these 10 mill. and to ask the citizens to bring the best possible ideas to the table. I believe it will be more and more important to listen directly to the dreams and ideas of the everyday cyclist. Only this way we can change the behaviour from lazy car use to active cycling. Together with new investments in bicycle infrastructure we are planning to restrict car use for commuting. Our new parking policy is starting to have this effect and within a few years we will probably introduce congestion charging. Maybe also the price on oil will limit the car use and move commuters to public transport and bikes.

My recommendations for strategies to promote cycling is to set ambitious specific and realistic goals. To communicate your policy, loud and clear and to be persistent in decision making. Bicycle policy is much more than just improving a certain kind of mobility. It is a central part of sustainable urbanity - and it can be developed hand in hand with urban developments. In our new urban developments cycle routes and cycle lanes has become integrated parts of the solutions. In my view there is no contradiction between economic growth and promoting cycling. You can have both!

To reach ambitious goals on cycling issues - actions has to be linked to other policy areas:

Bicycle policy is also about climate change. The new cycling goals of our 2015 vision 2015 will contribute to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by 80.000 tons every year. This is indeed a substantial local contribution to our global climate challenge. And I am sure that we can all agree, that this perspective has become one of the most important policy areas these years.

Bicycle policy is also about improving public health. Cycling improves public health and the quality of life. And we have calculated some figures. If we have 10 % more kilometres on bicycles a year - we would ...

- Reduce the cost of the health sector by 9 mill Euroes
- Save 22 mill on losses of production capacity in the labour force
- Reduce the number of sick days on work by 3,3 %
- Have ekstra 61.000 living years in our city population
- Reduce the number of living years with severe sickness by 46.000
- Reduce the number of early retirements by 25 every year.

Bicycle policy also has a positive social effect. Cycling is not only a healthy easy and reliable way of transport. It is also the cheapest way of urban mobility. Accessible to everyone, even children and the lowest income groups. We also use cycling courses for emigrants to support the integration of citizens that have no cycling experience.

Bicycle policy is improving urban liveability and a modern sustainable culture. A cyclist on a street is taking part on the urban scenery. An old man, a teenager or a child on a bike is also a living story about modern urban life. They become actors in an environment friendly choreography. They are playing the role of the sympathetic citizen with a clear conscious who are taking the easy and obvious choice. A large number of bikes become the story of a healthy city that are taking care of the environment and are contributing to the global challenge of climate change. And the power of the good example is so strong. These stories are

taking place in front of other citizens every day. It is probably the best possible campaign you can run to change the attitude and behaviour towards a more sustainable future.

Promoting cycling is a political choice that has much more to offer than just plain mobility.

It seems to me that once your city has reached a high level of bicycle traffic - the possible achievements within your reach will grow even further. With an ambitious cycling policy you will be talking to a great number of citizens. And in my experience - no one can deny that improving conditions for bikes is a great idea.

In this (*showing the bicycle account*) the latest and brand new cycle account for Copenhagen you will find more concrete information about the figures and our new goals. If you need additional information about the Copenhagen approach - don't hesitate to ask members of my staff amongst the audience.

A few weeks ago I was taking part in the G40 meeting on climate change in New York. It is clear to me that the largest and most ambitious cities of the world are seriously working on introducing cycling as an obvious choice of transport. Look at London, Paris and New York. The world's most urbanized cultures are seriously introducing cycling. Probably the most significant mobility change in the world's most famous cities in decades.

Besides being the Mayor of Copenhagen, I also have the privilege of being elected chair of Eurocities Mobility Forum. In this position I have addressed Vice-president and Transport Commissioner Jaques Barrot with some of these views. The European Commission is right now working on a green paper on urban transport. The result will be launched in the autumn - probably followed by a European Actionplan on Urban Transport. I'll be looking forward to the political possibilities from this process. Eurocities have presented our position paper to Jaques Barrot - and we will take part in the process of the coming action plan as well. The potential of cycling has been emphasized and I expect that we will include this issue in our future dialogue with the Commission and members of the European Parliament.

To conclude: Those of us who have been elected or assigned with a political responsibility of developing urban mobility - have a great chance of success. I believe the key is setting ambitious and realistic goals. To link those goals to other political topics, to keep communication running, and to keep on monitoring and reporting on our achievements.

We will reach our goals on cycling. 50 % will use a bike getting to work or education in 2015. This is not a dream.

This is just Copenhagen - a medium sized European city that has reached a high level of bicycle use. Today 36 % is going to work or education on bikes. And from this position it is still a very popular and obvious political choice to improve conditions further for the most sustainable way of urban mobility.

For your inspiration - and for a better future for our cities.

Thank you for your attention.