



## DELIVERABLE 2.5

# POLICY AND POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT FACT SHEET

WP 2: Communication &  
Organisation Knowledge Centres

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# BIKE SHARING AT A WIDER SCOPE

## *Policy and Planning*

Bike sharing schemes have become a part of today's urban mobility landscape all over the world. To unfold their full potential and to be more than a mere flash in the pan of cycling policy, the schemes must be designed with a set of targets in mind and as one part of an integrated mobility and urban development strategy.

In the coming years the first major scheme contracts run out (e.g. Vélib' and London Cycle Hire in 2017). At this time bike sharing will be at a crossroads. Only if bike sharing contributes to improving urban mobility at efforts that are competitive with those of other measures, the schemes will be continued and other cities remain motivated to put up new schemes.

This report is meant for policy makers, cycling specialists and urban planners at municipalities. It describes the benefits of bike sharing, bike sharing at a strategic level (including several recommendations), bike sharing from an urban planning point of view (including recommendations), bike political interdependencies and political recommendations.

## **Benefits of Bike Sharing**

Bike sharing bring along a list of positive effects. While parts of the effect result directly from the use of the scheme itself, others are indirect or rather long-term results.

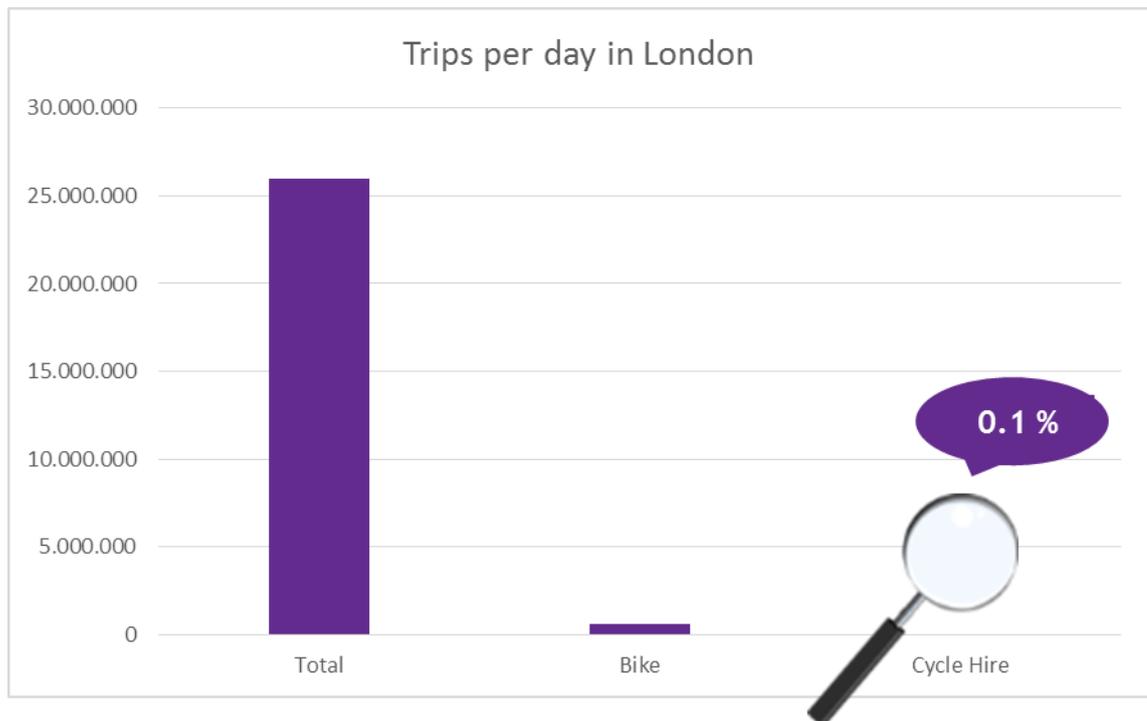
- # **Modal share:** bike sharing influences the current modal share. A small proportion of this effect comes directly from the actual use. A larger effect in the long run can be expected by the overall improvement of cycling visibility, safety, infrastructure etc.<sup>1</sup>

**Example:** On an average day in 2014<sup>2</sup>, 26 million trips were made from, to or within London. Thereof, an average of 27,000 were made with the London Cycle Hire, a share of 0.01 %.

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<sup>1</sup> Castro Fernández, A. (2011) The contribution of bike-sharing to sustainable mobility in Europe. Doctoral Thesis, Vienna Technical University

<sup>2</sup> Transport for London (2015) Travel in London, Report 8



This is the direct modal share effect of the scheme. In terms of cycle trips per day, the Cycle Hire accounted for 4.5 % of the cycling modal share. At the same time, 14 % of surveyed users claimed to use the private bike more often thanks to the cycle hire. A share of 80% of the surveyed users say, that the hire cycles contribute positively to the city, one third state that the bikes contribute to overall cycling safety.<sup>3</sup> Studies suggest that users on hire cycles contribute to a normalisation of the overall cycling imaging making the bike a more attractive means of transport for everyday use.<sup>4</sup>

- # **Congestion:** as the modal share, congestions are reduced by trips made with the scheme to a rather small extent. The indirect effect regarding the reduction of congestions is presumably far higher through an overall more favourable modal share.
- # **Mobility landscape:** bike sharing adds an attractive mobility option that complements walking and public transport. Having the possibility to use the bicycle for the “first/last mile” of the trip has a positive impact on the attractiveness of public transport.
- # **City image:** the local bike sharing scheme is an excellent opportunity to market the city brand and to create a positive image of a liveable, sustainable city among residents and visitors. The overall contribution of bike sharing turning cities into cycling-cities boosts this effect.
- # **Health and well-being:** cycling improves the health and well-being of the respective cyclists directly. Additionally bike sharing schemes boost cycling and with that

<sup>3</sup> Santander Cycles Customer Satisfaction and Usage Survey: Members Only: Wave 11 (Quarter 3 2015/16)

<sup>4</sup> Goodman, A; Green, J; Woodcock, J; (2014) The role of bicycle sharing systems in normalising the image of cycling: An observational study of London cyclists. J Transp Health



contribute to more cycling safety. In the bigger context bike sharing contributes indirectly to a healthier, safer and more liveable surrounding by fostering sustainable mobility.

- # **Economic effects:** staff needed for the operation of the scheme is a direct economic effect. Retailers who are located close to bike sharing stations gain access to new customers. The scheme itself and the opportunity for cooperation with local employers can become a locational advantage and make the city more attractive for companies. Employees who cycle regularly are more productive and less absent. And finally, the overall improvement of the local cycling culture supports the city's retail industry.

For the VeloCittà politicians specifically, bike sharing is important for the following main reasons (as revealed in questionnaires sent to them): i) it is consensually considered as an essential element of any modern urban transport system; ii) it naturally complements other modes of transport, especially public transport; iii) tourists regard BSS as a “nearly mandatory” service; iv) it significantly contributes to less congestion, cleaner air and a healthier population; v) it builds a more welcoming image for visitors.

## Bike Sharing at a Strategic Level

Bike sharing schemes cannot become successful as an isolated measure and without setting targets. The key-stakeholder should agree on the level(s) of success, e.g. economic success, high performance, visibility, image, that they wish to focus on. These priorities and the concrete targets connected with them should be in line with to overall strategic direction of the respective city. Three strategic levels can be distinguished.

The superior strategic level for the future of any city is the general principle for urban development and overarching mobility plans. Ideally these overall strategies are developed in a dialogue process with all stakeholders including the civil society. The European Commission (EC) supports the development of **Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMPs)** with a set of guidelines, projects and events. The EC also provides a common online-tool and knowledge exchange platform - **Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities (RFSC)** - for measure assessment in strategic urban planning.

A designated **cycling strategy** comprises the city's long-term vision for cycling as well as detailed plans for the measures that are needed to achieve the stipulated goals. The plan of measures needs frequent updates (2-5 years) to adapt to the state of development. **Cycling audits** help to analyse the current situation to identify strengths and weaknesses. The bike sharing scheme as a **hard-measure** is adjusted to other infrastructure measures such as bike lanes, parking spaces, signage, bridges or tunnels. Planned **soft-measures** such as information campaigns, web-portals, support of local cycling groups etc. should consider the requirements and the contributions of the bike sharing scheme as well.

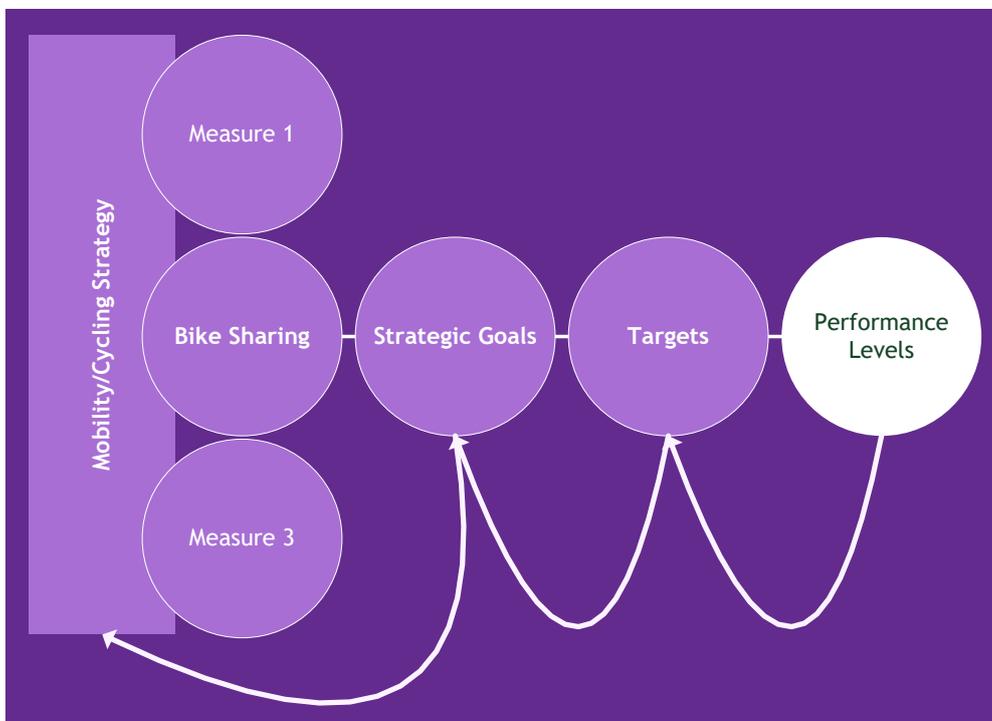
The lowest strategic level, the **strategy for the bike sharing scheme** itself, comprises the vision for the scheme, the targets in terms of effects, an implementation and operation plan and performance key figures. Just as the cycling strategy it needs frequent updates to update the measures planned during implementation and operation and to adjust the



performance indicators. To ensure proper target achievement measurement, a **monitoring plan** needs to come with the bike sharing strategy.

## Strategic Recommendations

- # **Bike sharing as strategic measure:** In case bike sharing is not yet part of the urban development and/or cycling strategy in your city, it should be considered during the next revision phase. A good bike sharing scheme is fully integrated with the urban transport system as a whole. A close look on feasibility and a comparison with other cycling measures should be carried out to determine whether bike sharing is an option for the city. In case the result is in favour for bike sharing, further measures should be fixed in the cycling strategy. This will add political relevance to the topic and decision making processes might improve.
- # **Setting targets:** bike sharing schemes perform very differently under different framework conditions. Demographic, geographic, economic, climatic and cultural factors have an enormous impact on whether the scheme can perform well or not. Experts and existing best-practice literature should be consulted to set the targets.
- # **Incentive scheme:** the operator should become an ally of the city. Without a cooperative operator, the city will not be successful. Economic incentives are the strongest argument and thus a detailed incentive scheme should reward the operator for performance levels that contribute to the city's strategic goals.



- # **Open data:** to monitor the performance of the bike sharing scheme, full data access is needed. Operator contracts should therefore include data access agreements. A full integration into existing or planned municipal open data platforms increases



transparency and gives independent researchers and developers the opportunity to contribute with performance analyses, apps, tools for operation etc.

## Bike Sharing from an Urban Planning Point of View

At first glance, common bike sharing schemes are just another space consuming urban infrastructure element like bus stops, street lights or bins. Even though there are scheme concepts that work without installed station infrastructure, most cities decide to adopt conventional station-based concepts. Depending on the complexity of the planned station infrastructure more or less tasks connected with building permits, groundwork, electricity, data cables etc. have to be carried out. Vendors have developed less invasive station infrastructure in the last years. Nevertheless, the process of implementing several hundred bike sharing stations can easily last years, depending on the local administrative structure and the political will.

An elaborated **implementation plan** for the scheme should therefore consider local conditions. An early involvement of affected authorities and the development of a common **guideline for building permits** help to shorten the process. Especially in cities with old-towns and UNESCO World Heritages it might be difficult to implement bike sharing stations at all. In such cases it might be an option to implement a scheme without station infrastructure or almost invisible WiFi solutions.

**Billboards** on station equipment or close to planned stations might require additional planning and permitting efforts. Depending on whether the city has a contract with another outdoor marketing company it might be challenging or even impossible to erect the planned billboards.

Civil society and business should be involved during station network planning in a **participatory process** to assess the demand perspective and to boost the acceptance of the scheme among residents.

The station network design will also have impacts on the **operation** of the scheme. Narrow alleys or pedestrian zones will for example limit the opportunities for picking up or bringing bikes with lorries.

Finally, in case of a scheme close-down or an evolution in station technology, a **removal** of baseplates, cables and safety barriers might be needed. It is important to estimate the efforts for these tasks well in advance.

## Urban Planning Recommendations

- # **Regulations:** as any other public infrastructure, bike sharing stations need permits from different authorities. Early involvement of these authorities and agreements about needed documents and minimum planning standards help to shorten the permission process.



- # **Design:** the bike sharing infrastructure as well as the bikes themselves should have an individual design; preferably one that is in line with the city's corporate design and existing street furniture to establish a local brand.
- # **Technology:** to avoid extensive groundwork, stations should either work without underground cables or deep concrete foundations or use existing ones e.g. from removed telephone booths.
- # **The crowd:** use the crowd with online participation tools. Interactive maps enable citizens to articulate demand and to become designers of "their" scheme.

## Bike Political Interdependencies

When Vélib' started in 2007, Paris got the world's attention, the London Cycle Hire scheme is inseparably connected with Boris Johnson, the former major of London while New York's Citi Bike is known to be former major Bloomberg's initiative. Large schemes had the potential to become a prestigious project for any major at relatively low costs. Hardly any other public measure pops up in every resident's daily life from one day to the other.

However, seven years after the introduction of the world's first large bike sharing scheme the potential popularity gain is not big enough anymore to convince a major. On the other hand political support is still essential for a successful implementation an operation of any bike sharing scheme.

In VeloCittà, political support was first of all evaluated through a questionnaire on barriers and success factors for the bike share schemes. A detailed questionnaire went out to all project cities and several other European cities. Questions were asked of them relating to practical aspects as well as their impressions, ideas and recommendations for other cities. In summary, all interviewed politicians agreed that BSS to be truly successful must be integral part of a city's sustainable mobility plan. BSS in particular shall be regarded as an additional form of public transport and should be effectively integrated with the overall public transport offer. Politicians have become aware through the BSSs that although changing attitudes to mobility can take time, the success of bike sharing shows that there is now a very significant demand for cycling. More than this, the politicians are also aware that BSS is both a useful way to promote cycling and a useful lever in helping to reduce the dependence on private cars in cities.

For a separate report on the results, drivers and barriers, please see [WWW.VELO-CITTA.EU](http://WWW.VELO-CITTA.EU) ("Political perceptions on barriers and drivers with regard to Bike Sharing" D3.8).

Secondly, in order to garner political support for bike sharing on an EU level, politicians were asked to sign a "Commitment to Bike Sharing" at the final project conference in Rotterdam on 30.11.2016. Seven politicians signed the Political Statement on stage. The collection of signatures had already started before the Final Conference and continued afterwards. Upon sending the signed Statement to the European Commission and Parliament in February 2017, it contained 20 signatures from 14 cities from 8 countries. For more details on the Political Statement, please see the separate report on [www.velo-citta.eu](http://www.velo-citta.eu) (Deliverable 3.9).



## Political Recommendations

- # **Administrative levels:** all administrative levels are important. Majors and other high officials have the power to push the decision for a bike sharing scheme. They also have the opportunity to boost the scheme with their own visibility. Lower administrative levels are responsible for the physical permits and their good spirit is therefore essential during the implementation.
- # **Political sustainability:** As bike sharing schemes are supposed to run several years, it is important to involve the opposition as well to avoid the schemes discontinuation after an election.
- # **Exchange knowledge:** learn from other cities! While there are many different systems, it is worth to see and try them before deciding on a BSS in your city. With more and more cities having such a system, it is much easier to compare or draw conclusions from.
- # **Be courageous to lead the change.** Citizens are sometimes scared by change and often are against it. Politicians must have courage and the political will to take unpopular decisions, such as congestion charge, parking and traffic limits. BSS cannot be successful if it is disconnected from other measures and a wider political plan for urban mobility.
- # **Do feasibility studies:** The need for a pre-implementation study was recommended and also exploring the financial options and costs, maybe involving sponsors. In addition, the city needs to see how any BSS plans fit within the overall city mobility and cycling plans.

## Read on

Further literature	Link
<b>Guide:</b> Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans	<a href="http://www.mobilityplans.eu/">http://www.mobilityplans.eu/</a>
<b>Project:</b> CHAMP, cycling policy in European cities	<a href="http://www.champ-cycling.eu/">http://www.champ-cycling.eu/</a>
<b>Tool:</b> Reference Framework for European Sustainable Cities	<a href="http://www.rfsc.eu/">http://www.rfsc.eu/</a>
<b>Tool:</b> BYPAD, cycling policy audit	<a href="http://www.bypad.org/">http://www.bypad.org/</a>
<b>Paper:</b> Political Factors in Bicycle Sharing Systems	<a href="https://www.academia.edu/8234337/Political_Factors_in_Bicycle_Sharing_Systems">https://www.academia.edu/8234337/Political_Factors_in_Bicycle_Sharing_Systems</a>



**About VeloCittà:**

The European VeloCittà project brought together five cities that seek to improve their existing bike sharing schemes. In London (UK), Krakow (PL), Burgos (SP), Padua (IT) and Szeged (HU) the performance of the bike sharing system was enhanced through two complementary approaches. On the one hand marketing campaigns tailored to certain target groups, like students or commuters. And on the other hand adoption of the most effective available operational solutions with regard to organisational and financial aspects as well as political involvement. The ultimate benefit of VeloCittà is that it provides inspiration and builds capacity and knowledge in local authorities and bike sharing stakeholders to boost the uptake of bike sharing.

VeloCittà is a demonstration project co-funded by the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme of the European Commission. It had 11 project partners. It ran from March 2014 – February 2017.

For more information, questions, project outputs and reports, please visit [www.velo-citta.eu](http://www.velo-citta.eu) or send an email to [info@dtvconsultants.nl](mailto:info@dtvconsultants.nl)

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