

Policy brief: Car-independent lifestyles

“Urban congestion has major economic and social costs. Car-based cities often provide poor living environment for their citizens, including dangerously high noise and air pollution rates. Walking and cycling are important congestion busters in cities.”¹



Photo credit: BKK

To support transport planners in assessing the effectiveness of walking and cycling measures, the CIVITAS project FLOW² developed a user-friendly methodology, involving a comprehensive impact assessment tool and improved transport modelling software, for transport planners to assess the effectiveness of walking and cycling measures. In the process, they will be helped to develop the right measures to crack congestion.

FLOW also produced a support package for key decision-makers, which helps them argue that walking and cycling can help to manage congestion effectively.

The support package consists of a targeted set of educational materials to present results of the FLOW project in light of the barriers and drivers identified through a survey involving 160 key decision makers from across Europe. When the project concluded, it developed a series of [policy recommendations](#), which are outlined below:

Policy recommendations:

Consider walking and cycling

Fully consider walking and cycling when developing plans and policies to improve transport system performance, as well as through the impact analysis and implementation processes

Many transport policies do not recognise the potential walking and cycling have to improving transport system performance: both modes are often considered as recreational activities without transport relevance.

Governments at all levels must introduce and support the implementation of policies that recognise walking and cycling as means to improve liveability and the

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/inea/files/urban_mobility_brochure_2016.pdf

² <http://h2020-flow.eu/>

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performance of urban transport systems. Transport impact analysis plays an essential role in decision making on new transport improvements and development schemes.

However, these analyses are often performed using techniques and models that do not fully consider all modes (e.g. walking and cycling). Decision makers should stipulate that multimodal analysis techniques and models be used for all transport impact analyses.

Local authority staff should **include the requirement for multimodal analysis** in their calls for tender and other stakeholders should **petition elected representatives** to call for multimodal analysis. Transport planning consultants should inform their clients about the importance of multimodal analysis and use it in all analyses.

Analytics

[Improve existing transport analysis techniques and models to include all modes and account for the interaction between modes](#)

Transport analysis techniques and models must be significantly improved to place walking and cycling on an equal footing with motorised modes. What will be particularly important is **developing methods for assessing new types of transport infrastructure** – such as shared space(s), pedestrian districts and cycle highways – that take into account recent transport research on topics such as induced demand and disappearing traffic. All stakeholders should support research aimed at developing new approaches and improving existing transport analysis techniques and models.

[Improve communication about multimodal transport analysis and increase transparency in the transport planning process](#)

New transport infrastructure or land development projects can have significant impacts on an area's liveability, but the transport analysis techniques and modelling used in the decision-making process are very complex, and the planning approval process is often unclear.

Local authorities, transport consultants and researchers need to **improve communication strategies** to explain analysis techniques and the planning process better so that they are easily understood by the general public.

Data collection and processing

[Improve data collection for walking and cycling to understand the movements of these modes better](#)

Data is necessary to better understand transport behaviour, to give input for assessment tools, and to develop better transport models. Unfortunately, few authorities – at any level of government – collect sufficient data on walking and cycling, making it difficult to fully consider these modes in the transport planning process.

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There are excellent standards and guidelines for collecting walking and cycling data, and new technologies (e.g. activity trackers) are making data collection more accessible. **All government authorities must collect the necessary data to adequately assess the effect of walking and cycling** on congestion and the urban environment as a whole.

Place transport system performance (including congestion) within the context of urban livability, economic viability, safety, and health

The quality of transport services on offer is one of many factors that combine to make a place livable, economically successful and competitive, sustainable, and healthy. Yet decision making often focuses exclusively on transport considerations (and mainly congestion).

Taking a multidisciplinary approach to transport-related decision-making is critical to supporting an equitable and sustainable future for all. Assuming such a broader view also helps cities recognise how to shift current strategies, such as “eliminating” congestion, into more balanced (and feasible) strategies such as “managing” congestion or increasing overall capacity. This shift in perspective provides decision-makers with a much broader set of options to work with when planning their cities.

Tools and publications

In the document

- Walking and Cycling: A Multimodal Approach to Congestion Management, FLOW project summary and recommendations, [link](#)

Further resources

- FLOW congestion impact assessment tool for walking and cycling, FLOW project, [tool](#) and [user guidance](#)
- The Role of Walking and Cycling in Reducing Congestion – A Portfolio of Measures, FLOW project, [link](#)
- Quick Facts for Cities, FLOW project, [link](#)
- Handbook of Good Practice Case Studies for Promotion of Walking and Cycling, PASTA project, [link](#)
- Health Economic Assessment Tool (HEAT) for Walking and Cycling, World Health Organisation and PASTA project, [link](#)
- Bikeshare Planning Guide, Institute for Transportation and Policy Development, [link](#)
- UCL Street Mobility toolkit, University College London, [link](#)