

Walking and cycling: decisive for a more sustainable Palma

Palma de Mallorca, Spain



In brief

In Palma, improving walking and cycling options is considered a priority. Therefore Palma's SUMP includes measures that give more prominence to pedestrians and cyclists: interconnection of different neighbourhoods by bike lanes, easier access with the expansion of Bicipalma, and promotion of walking as the main means of transport especially in the historic centre. As a result, the City of Palma became more pedestrian friendly with new routes for walking as well as a promoter of cycling with additional cycling lanes being built in the city.

Context

At the beginning of the CIVITAS DYN@MO project in 2012 the bike line offer was concentrated on the Frente Marítimo-Arenal (seafront bicycle lane from the port to Playa de Palma and Arenal), two transverse axes: the perimeter ring of the old town (Avenidas) and the ring of the Eixample (streets Manuel Azaña, Capitán Vila, Balmes, Argentina), as well as some radial axes such as street Jacint Verdaguer, Carretera de Valldemossa – Universitat, Blanquerna or Parc de Sa Riera. From 2007 until 2011 the bicycle lane network had a length of 57 km. In addition, a new public bicycle service ("BiciPalma") was implemented in April 2011, with 336 bicycles, 28 stations and 485 anchors. A mobility survey of 2009 indicates that cycling accounted only for 1.1% of trips within the city of Palma. Walking and cycling together are the 38% of total trips.

In action

It is clear that the demand for safe and comfortable walking and cycling areas is growing, and that is why Palma's Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) aims at a modal share of 40% for walking and 5% for cycling among residents' daily journeys. Thanks to the project, measures to calm traffic in the city centre have been taken up in the SUMP, facilitating access to bicycles, making the centre more pedestrian-friendly, and restricting car access.

Cycling has been promoted by considerably expanding the bike lane network. This has led to a total of 81 kilometres of bike lanes in Palma, partly in a cross-cutting design, and not only directed to the city centre but also interconnecting the different neighbourhoods. The public bicycle scheme, BiciPalma, has also been expanded. The objective of the cycling-related activities was to make it easier for citizens to switch to cycling as an alternative transport mode. Walking has been promoted by the introductions of two new concepts: healthy walking routes with points of departure and arrival from public health care facilities, and safes routes to school, providing security to children walking to school and promoting the walking-habit from early ages. Car access has been restricted mainly in the city centre; speed limits of 20 and 30km/h are now a general rule, and almost the entire city centre has car restrictions for non-residents.

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Results

- Implementation of six concrete measures for pedestrians and seven for cycling of the in total 72 measures mentioned in the SUMP
- Implementation of two “healthy walking routes” and six “safe routes to school”
- Giving more priority to pedestrians on the centre’s ring road has not led to extra congestion on this main road, the opposite has actually taken place: car traffic on this road has decreased
- As a result of the extended and improved car-restricted traffic zones there was a decrease from 5,000 to 1,000 cars per month at one of the main entrances to the old town
- Implementation of 18 km of new bike lanes
- Extension of BiCiPalma with nine new stations, 175 anchor points and 225 new bikes
- Considerable increase in cycling in modal split: 6% in 2014 and 11.5% in 2015.

Challenges, opportunities and transferability

“We are all pedestrians and many of us could be cyclists. These are the modes that Palma’s SUMP proposes as priorities for a city designed for people. Let’s do it!” –

Josa Arola, Director of Mobility in Palma

The challenges included planning constraints for the new cycling lanes due to requirements of removing as few on-street parking spaces as possible and trying not to reduce the street width as well as the rejection from neighbours of a section of new cycling lanes due to lack of on-street parking areas. Budgetary restrictions additionally caused delays for new and approved cycling lanes to be built. A challenge was to also disseminate the activities in order to make the new infrastructures known among the cyclists and the population in general. Opportunities were seen in synergies with the SUMP process – the development of the SUMP process in parallel of implementing new cycling actions was seen as one of the main drivers of the process. Good involvement of other city administration departments in the process made the measure implementation easier. Since cycling culture has evolved and become more popular in Palma, the success on the use of the cycling lanes is also a result of the improvement of the image of cycling in Palma.

In depth

Find more information about this good practice behind these links:

- <http://civitas.eu/content/planning-cycling-and-walking>
- <http://www.civitas.eu/content/dynmo-final-brochure>

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