

PROMOTION/ **INFORMATION**

BICYCLE MAPS

Overview

Bicycle maps are a “must have” component for promoting cycling. A bicycle map is more than simply a depiction of the local bicycle lane network. It gives recommendations for routes, informs about the quality of paths, the volume of traffic, bicycle parking or bike access. A high-quality bicycle map also provides information about various cycling-related topics such as cycling in the urban context or bicycle signage. It also serves as a concrete indication of a city’s support for cycling.

Background and Objectives

Definition

A bicycle map depicts the local bicycle lane network. It also gives recommendations for routes, informs about the quality of paths, the volume of traffic, bicycle parking or bike access. A high-quality bicycle map also provides information about various cycling-related topics such as safe cycling in the urban context or relevant bicycle signage.

Function/Objective

A bicycle map is the best way to promote cycling, to provide the best knowledge of the local cycling situation, and to express a city’s commitment to cycling. All cyclist groups, whether recreational cyclists, regular cyclists, inexperienced or non-cyclists (potential cyclists) benefit from a well prepared bicycle map. Maps inform about the best route to reach a destination safely, quickly and in the most comfortable way, and may also address other cycling-related issues.

A side benefit of creating a bike route map is that announcements in local newspapers and involvement of the public through participation in workshops help to create interest in the task and awareness for cycling.

Scope/Field of application

A bicycle map is useful for starter, climber, and champion cities.

Target audience

The target audience should be cyclists and potential cyclists from the local area. While a city’s bike map will certainly be useful to tourists and visitors as well, its aim should be to help those who live in an area find the best routes by bike to destinations that they may otherwise travel to by car.

Implementation

Partnerships

If financing is a problem, partners may be useful. Corporate sponsorship from bike retailers or bike manufacturers can be sought in return for advertising space on the map.

The local public transport authority is a valuable partner. Cycling and public transport are natural partners. Co-promotion can include information about taking bikes on public transport and about bike parking at stations and bike+ride options.

Local cycling organisations will be invaluable in the creation of your map, both with regard to route identification (see “identifying bike routes” below) as well as providing general cycling tips and information.



Publishers of existing city maps should also be approached and encouraged to integrate cycling information on “standard” city maps.

Identifying bike routes

You don't need to have a fully developed network of bike lanes before you create your first map. The routes marked on your bike map do not necessarily need to be official bike routes; they may also be traffic-calmed streets or other routes that are safe and pleasant to travel by bike.

Gathering the data for your first map can be a large task but those who already cycle in your city are experts on the safest and most convenient way to get around by bike and you can take advantage of their knowledge (Cyclists are generally more than happy to share the details of their favourite routes!)

For example, in 2007, the city of Boston (USA) created its first bike route map. As the city didn't have any official bike lanes at the time, the map was based on subjective recommendations of current cyclists. As well as meeting with neighbourhood groups, the Director of Bicycle Program set up an open-access online map and invited local cyclists to mark their favourite routes on it and to describe and explain them. Although Boston had a cycling modal split of approximately 1%, they had 500 online responses and the data served as the basis for the city's first bicycle map. For more details, contact Nicole Freedman at Nicole.Freedman.bra@CityofBoston.gov.

Map content

A bicycle map should include at least the following information:

- Car-free bike paths and cycle lanes (if your city has any) and bicycle-friendly roads, ideally with an indication of the quality of surface, volume of traffic, and places that are best avoided
- One-way streets (and whether contraflow cycling is allowed)
- Bike parking facilities
- Common signs
- Common local destinations (shopping, schools, libraries, etc.).
- Useful contacts (e.g. of local cycling clubs, local cycling agent)

The scope of a bicycle map does not, however, need to be confined to describing the local lane network, but should also serve as an information and guidance tool. Additional information may include:

- Benefits of cycling
- Road safety tips (e.g. black spots, tips for crossing tram tracks)
- Bicycle equipment information (e.g. helmet, lights, rainwear)
- Bicycle repair and maintenance tips (e.g. checklist)
- Bicycle theft protection tips
- Bicycle training courses
- Cycling and public transport interchanges
- Taking bikes on public transport
- Bike share stations (if your city has a bike share programme) or bicycle rental services
- Bicycle shops
- Announcements of bicycle events (depending partly on how often you expect to update and reprint your map)
- Excursion suggestions
- Information on pedelecs (electric-assist bikes)



Design considerations

The higher the share of cyclists in a city and the more value placed on cycling in the city, the higher the expectations will likely be about the content, preparation, layout, format, printing quality, and distribution.

Scale: Readability is a key factor and can be reached through an appropriate scale (depending on the size of the city and network, usually between 1:15,000 and 25,000; regional maps have a scale between 1:25,000 and 150,000), contrast, and colours. A bicycle map should always include a legend.

Comparability and Usability: Your base map should be the official map of the city as provided by the local land survey office (or comparable institution). The format of the map (foldable, leaf through, or other) should be as easy as possible to use during the trip. The material should be durable and even able to withstand wind and possibly, to some extent, even rain.

Printing: Four-colour printing is recommended.

Updating: The bicycle map should be updated regularly (ideally every year).

Pocket version: A smaller sized, foldable pocket version containing the main cycling information can supplement a comprehensive publication or, in case of low budget, serve as temporary substitute.

Cost: This will depend on the material, printing quality, size, folding, scope, and number of copies. Sponsorship is one means of covering some or all of the costs.

Distribution

In places where awareness of cycling is low, getting maps into as many hands as possible should be a central goal and every effort should be made to eliminate barriers to distribution.

A distribution plan for the maps should be considered carefully at the outset, including whether to charge for them or give them away for free. While selling the maps may seem like a good way to recover the cost of production, it also reduces the number of distribution points and creates additional administration costs. Starter and climber cities should give away their maps free of charge.

The bicycle maps should be available at:

- all local book shops and libraries
- community, recreation, and fitness centres
- train, bus, tram and metro stations
- the entrance area of all relevant local authority departments
- tourist information offices
- schools, universities and other educational institutions
- local bicycle retailers and rental agencies
- all local events (whether dedicated to cycling or not)

A reference should also be made on the local administration's website.

Bicycle maps can also be handed out by the registration offices to all new residents of a city or to citizens who move. This can be expanded to a complete "cycling starter kit" including various giveaways (e.g. cycle clips, reflectors, bells, seat covers, etc.), sending the message that bicycles are welcome.

The maps can also be posted at strategic locations around the city (with a note about where they people can get their own copies), for example in front of train stations, on bike routes, and at bike share stations (for cities with a bike share programme).

Public relations work stressing the publication of a new bicycle map is strongly recommended.

Considerations

Strengths

- A bicycle map is an ideal way to promote cycling since such maps are generally very popular and well-received by cyclists and those with an interest in cycling (especially if they're free) and they provide you with the opportunity to disseminate a wide range of relevant cycling information.
- Maps make cycling easier and more convenient and thus act as a crucial component in increasing the use of bicycles as a daily transport mode.
- The data collection for your first (and subsequent) bike route map provides an opportunity to capture, analyse, and monitor the local cycling situation (both through your own research as well as through input from current cyclists).
- It's a good way to connect with the local cycling community and make them aware of your other cycling-related initiatives.
- A bike route map is a concrete representation of a city's commitment to cycling.
- Bike maps (especially free ones) are almost universally well-received.

Weaknesses

- Collecting the data for a city's first bike route map can be a large task.

Success factors and barriers

Dissemination is crucial to success. This needs to be considered when deciding whether to charge for the map or to give it away for free. It's much easier to disseminate a free map – both in that people will be more apt to pick one up and in that you don't need to worry about administering sales and can therefore make them available at more locations.

A champion city has more flexibility to experiment (with water resistant paper, for example) than a starter city. A champion city would also have more luck selling maps as the value of cycling is more obvious.

Evaluation of impact

Counting the number of maps disseminated will tell you how many hands they are in.

Good Practice Cases

Case 1

Freiburger Fahrrad-Stadtplan "Rad tut gut" (Cycling does you good) – Bicycle map of the City of Freiburg (DE)

The foldable bicycle map of the German city of Freiburg (publisher), prepared on the basis of the city map, was first published in 2007 with 5,000 copies printed. It covers all 500 km of the local bicycle network and includes additional information on common signs and recommended destinations.

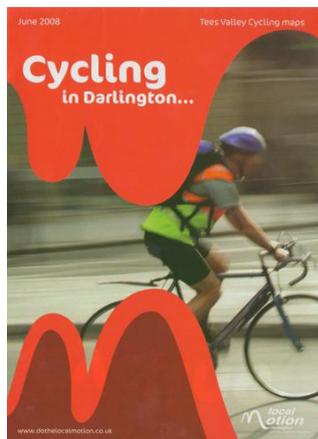
The map is 70x100 cm open and 10x15 cm folded and costs €2.50. See: www.freiburg.de/servlet/PB/menu/1146345_I2_pcontent/index.html

Freiburg is a champion city with a modal split of 27% (up from 15% in 1982).



Case 2

Cycling in Darlington – Bicycle map of the City of Darlington (UK)



Within its Local Motion initiative, the Darlington city council published the bicycle map "Cycling in Darlington" in June 2008. Apart from information on the local cycling network (including pedestrian crossings, 20 mph zones, BMX tracks etc.), the foldable map offers an introduction to the most common signs and markings that a cyclist may come across, cycling safety tips (e.g. use of lights), tips for buying or borrowing a bicycle and a maintenance checklist. It provides information on the national cycle network, on cycling through the town centre, on targeted cycling training and events as well as a "coming soon" section announcing new bicycle relevant publications.

The bicycle map is free of charge. It is complemented by an online journey planner and a walking map. More information can be found at: www.dothelocalmotion.co.uk

Darlington is a starter city with a modal split of approximately 2-3%. In 2005, it was selected by Cycling England as one of six cycling demonstration towns in England. The award brought funding, spread over three years, of £1.5 million (approx. 1.7 million Euro) which has been used to improve cycling facilities and infrastructure. Cycling Town funding continues until March 2011.