

PROMOTION/ **INFORMATION**

CYCLING INFORMATION CENTRES/MOBILITY CENTRES

Overview

It's not always obvious to people who are becoming interested in cycling where they should go to find out more. A cycling information centre is a physical office or centre (as opposed to an online resource) which serves as a "face" for cycling and whose purpose is to provide information on all aspects of cycling in a town or city. A mobility centre serves a similar purpose but has a wider mandate to provide information on all sustainable mobility options.

Background and Objectives

Definition

A cycling information centre is a physical location (likely with an online component as well) with public access where cyclists or potential cyclists can go to ask questions and get information about cycling. A centre provides maps, information on cycling courses (bike safety, bike repair, etc.), connections to local cycling organisations, information on bike tours around the local area, etc.

A mobility centre serves the same purpose, but includes information on all forms of sustainable transportation: public transport, cycling, walking, car-sharing, etc. together in one place.

Function/Objective

A cycling information centre provides information to citizens who might otherwise not have easy access to information about cycling options in their city. It raises awareness among non-cyclists about cycling, and serves as an information source and as a public face for transportation cycling.

While the main focus should be on providing information to encourage and support transportation cycling in the local area, the information provided will also be useful to cycle tourists, and that group should not be ignored.

Scope/Field of application

A cycling information centre would be most appropriate in a champion city. A mobility centre would be appropriate in a starter or climber city.

Target group(s)

- Potential cyclists who live in your city or who commute into it
- Current local cyclists
- Cycle tourists

Implementation

Potential partnerships

The partners you work with will depend on which kind of centre is most appropriate for your city. Possibilities include:

- Local public transport provider
- Car-sharing organisation (if it has a public office)
- Tourist office
- Local authority
- Local cycling organisations



- Bike shops
- Cycle tourism operators
- The media

A cycling information centre or a mobility centre?

A centre devoted solely to cycling would probably be most appropriate in a champion city where cycling is already established as a part of the local culture. In Germany, the national cycling organisation has a public face at some bicycle stations, such as the information centre in Bremen (see good practice case #2 below).

In some champion cities, local citizens are generally already aware of their mobility options and those who most require information are tourists. In such cases, providing cycling information through the local tourist office may be logical, as is done in Amsterdam (see <http://www.iamsterdam.com/en/living/transportation/bikes>)

For starter cities, where there aren't (yet) a great deal of resources to offer cyclists, being a partner in a mobility centre – or even having the opportunity to display cycling information in a public transport information centre – would be valuable.

Apart from reducing costs, another benefit in working together with other sustainable modes is that, in addition to those who have an interest in cycling, you may also reach an audience who had no intention of looking for cycling information when they came in.

For climber cities, partnering with other sustainable modes in a mobility centre would likely also be the most feasible option. See good practice case #1 below for information on the Stuttgart Mobility Centre.

Location

A visible, central location with lots of pedestrian and cyclist traffic can help to raise awareness of cycling.

Services provided

Depending on you city and its needs, a variety of information and services can be provided, such as:

- Cycle maps and brochures
- Bicycle coding (in case of theft)
- A marketplace for people to buy and sell bikes and cycling-related items
- Information on:
 - upcoming events
 - bike parking
 - taking bikes on public transport
 - bike rentals
 - cycle tourism in the area (cycle-friendly accommodation, tourist route maps, etc.)
- Advice on:
 - cycling safety
 - buying a bike
 - cycle maintenance
 - route planning
 - clothing and equipment
 - theft prevention

Ideally, the office should keep regular hours and be easily accessible.

Considerations

Strengths

- One strength of a combined mobility centre is its ability to reach those who weren't necessarily looking for information specifically on cycling.
- A cycling information centres serves as a visible commitment of a city to bicycle-friendliness.

Weaknesses

- Probably the biggest challenge of a cycling information centre or a mobility centre is stable ongoing funding.

Success factors and barriers

If there is somewhere in your city where people would logically go for transportation-related information, this would be a good place to look for a potential partner.

A cycling information centre or a mobility centre is not a stand-alone measure. You need to have a reasonable range of information, activities, and services available in your city to inform customers about.

The success of such a centre would depend to a large extent on promotion. In places where the concept is entirely new, you may also need to educate people about the kind of information they can find there.

Evaluation of impact

A count of the number of people who visit the centre, ideally with a record of the types of questions asked, would give you an idea of the impact.

Good Practice Cases

Case 1

Mobilitätspunkt (Mobility Centre) – Stuttgart (DE)

The Stuttgart Mobility Centre was originally established in 1998 but, beginning in 2006, it expanded its services to become a professional competence centre in all fields of individual route planning for all transport modes. Personalised information on all modes of public transport as well as route planning for car drivers, cyclists and pedestrians are the main services provided.

Services requested include:

- Individual mobility information with regard to public transport
- Car-sharing programmes
- Route planning for car drivers, cyclists and pedestrians
- Training courses for fuel-saving car driving
- Organisation of carpooling
- Information about car parking facilities
- Mobility information for disabled and blind persons

Their target is to increase the demand for environmentally-compatible mobility services and to provide new services, such as bicycle boxes to rent (introduced in 2007).

The Stuttgart mobility centre is located in the tourist office near Stuttgart's main train station. Many of the activities related to the mobility centre were made possible through European Union project funding. For more information, go to www.civitas.eu/measure_sheet.phtml?lan=fr&id=281 or contact Ulrich Steimer at ulrich.steimer@stuttgart.de.

Stuttgart is a climber city with a cycling modal split of 8% (in 2009). In 2005, the city of Stuttgart established a goal to move from a 7% modal split to 12% in the mid-term and 20% in the long term.

Case 2

radort-Bremen (bike spot Bremen) – Bremen (DE)

radort is the information service centre of the Bremen branch of the German national cycling organisation. Their services include:

- Bike coding (in case of theft)
- A second-hand bike market (connecting individuals who want to buy or sell a bike)
- Advice on a range of cycling topics
- Information brochures

They also offer a range of literature and information about all things bike-related, such as:

- Detailed regional maps for day trips or longer tours
- ADFC bike tour maps for all of Germany
- Cycle touring books for neighbouring countries
- Cycling books (tourist guides, technical books)
- Cycle-friendly accommodation recommendations
- *Radwelt* and *pedal*, the cycling journals of the ADFC



In Bremen, the cost of running *radort* is subsidised by the local authority. For more information (in German) go to: www.radort-bremen.de or contact Klaus-Peter Land at klaus-peter.land@adfc-bremen.de.

Bremen is a champion city with a cycling modal split of 25%.