

# **OFFICIAL COMMENT ON THE DRAFT CYCLING STRATEGY FOR THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN**

## **FUTURE CAPE TOWN / OUR FUTURE CITIES**

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### **OPENING STATEMENT**

This commentary is a response from Future Cape Town, and responds to a call for public comment on the Draft Cycling Strategy for the City of Cape Town. We recognise and appreciate the efforts made by the City of Cape Town to improve the situation for cyclists, including an NMT Policy, a Bicycle Masterplan and various infrastructure projects.

The Draft Cycling Strategy, hereafter referred to as the Strategy, addresses the situation of Cape Town's transport situation and is an attempt to create a more bike-friendly city. In general, we welcome the addition of the Strategy which we think, once all comments have been taken into account and the Strategy revised, will be beneficial towards not only improving the cycling situation in the City of Cape Town, but also towards making the city more enjoyable and livable for residents and tourists alike.

This comment includes four parts:

- I) Comments on the Strategy in general
  - II) Detailed commentary related to specific sections of the Strategy
  - III) Recommendations
  - IV) Conclusion
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### **PART I: COMMENTS | OVERALL STRATEGY**

There are several aspects of the Strategy which we would like to commend, including;

- The focus on inclusivity, affordability and accessibility as some of the key principles of the Strategy, all of which indicates the recognition and importance of the local community, and are imperative in South Africa if cycling is to become a viable mode of transport for all.
- The emphasis on monitoring and evaluation, which is key to keeping the cycling strategy flexible enough to adapt to changing conditions within the City and is key to realising infrastructural and other constraints.

There are a number of sections within the Strategy that we find are weak.

### **Lack of Specific Data/ Information:**

In general, the Strategy could be more robust; at present it lacks substantiation behind the proposed outcomes and is unspecific about the actions needed to achieve these outcomes. Furthermore, it lacks information about the overall support for, and viability of, the strategy itself; it has no mention of how many people would actually be willing to cycle to work (social attitudes towards cycling) and also lacks information on how many businesses would be willing to accommodate the extra facilities needed in order to make cycling a popular mode of transport. The Strategy addresses the question of 'what' rather than 'how'; as a consequence, its credibility in terms its ability to achieve the proposed outcomes is reduced.

The City needs to conduct more research on how much of a hindrance the landscape (e.g. roads, environment, social aspects) is in terms of making the city bike-friendly. Given the mountainous region in the suburbs of the CBD and other central areas of the city, as well as the weather conditions, such as excessive wind, may affect to what extent and how the Strategy could be realised. In light of this, we think more research needs to be done on how important the topography of the area is when people make their transport decisions.

### **Clarification on Desired Outcomes**

The outcomes and associated strategies need to be made more explicit - at present, the outcomes are radically ambitious, whereas principles are vague and overly-optimistic.

### **Lack of Case Study Analysis**

In addition, there seems to be a lack of analysis of similar strategies in other countries. It would be beneficial to identifying the strengths and limitations of other projects. However the Strategy lacks information on how it compares to other cycling strategies; none of the outcomes/ proposed implementation plans seem to be linked to evidence from comparable cities/projects of this nature.

### **Lack of Integration into Wider Transport System**

The Strategy at present is not integrated into the wider transport system in Cape Town; bicycle infrastructure provision needs to be merged into budgeting processes, land-use planning and road design which looks to Non-Motorised Transport (NMT) broadly and bicycle usage specifically. This is a key hindrance to realising the goal. Urban and transportation planning should be coordinated so that new developments are directed toward parts of the city where existing and planned cycling, walking, and public transit infrastructure can accommodate nearly all trips from that development without spurring additional motor vehicle use. New transport investments should be planned to achieve the maximum reduction in motor vehicle use.

In relation to this, the Strategy also seems isolated from wider transport goals of The City. Specific focus should be placed on:

- How much of a priority is the Strategy in relation to other transport needs/ issues?

- Is there another transport area which could benefit more from the investment?
  - Perhaps it would be better to focus on improving the public transport system that is in place at the moment, or focus on improving transport means for those in need?

**Poor Document Structure:**

The structure of the Strategy should be simplified so that a clear hierarchy and links between sections are established. More clarification should be provided with regards to the hypothesis - In addition, we found the draft to be rather repetitive and noticed that it reused many of its aims throughout the document.

**No Analysis of Risk:**

The Strategy has no section dedicated to the actual and perceived risks involved in making cycling a viable mode of transport, nor any mention of how they would overcome these risks.

**Uninspirational:**

Current communications around, and the Strategy itself, do not inspire confidence (in terms of both text and visuals). The City should consider improving this in order to make the idea more attractive and also reach out to a wider audience. The City should also adopt a more positive and celebratory approach, and also clearly outline the indirect benefits related to increased bicycle usage, including the health, well-being, aesthetic, economic and environmental benefits of cycling.

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**PART II: COMMENTS | SECTIONS**

This part provides a commentary on the various sections contained in the report.

**2. Problem Statement:**

Lessons Learnt - could include comparisons to other case studies here?

**3. Status Quo of Cycling In Cape Town**

*Section 3.1. Cycling in Cape Town:* “Available cycling data indicates that approximately 1% of all trips in Cape Town are made by bicycle” and “in sharp contrast to the high levels of recreational cycling, rates of utility cycling are generally very low. Various interactions and studies have indicated that a high level of latent demand does exist” - Neither of these statements have any information related to why this is the status quo causing this section of the Strategy to be very vague.

*Section 3.2. Cycling Incidents*

This section could be more extensive - consider more research into the following:

It would be beneficial to have data on 'cycling incidents' in relation to other large African (or non-African) cities. This analysis would highlight whether or not there is a problem/ danger for cycling in Cape Town.

How many deaths are there in comparison to the number of cyclists and how has this changed or developed over time?

*Section 3.3. Planning, Design and Implementation of NMT Facilities.*

#### **4. Regulatory Context**

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#### **5. Strategic Intent**

"The Strategic Intent is that cycling will become recognised and accepted as a safe, viable and attractive means of travel for all" - this statement lacks inspiration.

#### **6. Cycling Development Programme**

"A Cycling Development Programme is based on behavioural change with a range of actions required in order to encourage more people to cycle and for this shift to be permanent" -

The strategy lacks specifics on:

- How they will incentivise people to use cycling over other modes of transport that may be more convenient for them.
- How they are planning to overcome any stigma around cycling as a poor-man's mode of transport
- How it plans to actively build incentive for the public to shift to cycling as a primary mode of transport
- Issue of long commutes is still unaddressed.
- There appears to be limited explanation of why the tens of thousands of current bicycle owners do not ride a bicycle, and a lack of an understanding of the ultimate barriers such as trip chaining, limited multi-modality, wind conditions, status, and identity, etc).
- How are they planning to modify other road users' behaviour?

Case:

- "There is no one single explanation for the popularity of cycling in the Netherlands. Cycling simply seems to fit the relatively **flat Dutch landscape**, the distances people need to cover are **relatively short** and the Netherlands have for a long time been an **egalitarian society with a strongly social-democratic culture**"<sup>1</sup> - these are two

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<sup>1</sup> Amsterdam Cycling Policy:

<http://urbantransform.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2014/09/PlanAmsterdam-Cycling-policy-and-design-PDF-2MB.pdf>.

very important considerations in Cape Town which would need to be researched and addressed.

We think more emphasis should be placed on developing a strategic behaviour component within the Strategy which plans a micro-scale “norming” of cyclist culture into the broader community.

“Ensure that traffic management plans and traffic calming measures are designed and implemented to accommodate cycling safely and road users to accept and respect cyclists’ safe right of way and cyclists respect the rights of other road users. This must be undertaken through a combination of education and enforcement”

The City struggles with enforcing and monitoring compliance with road rules, How will we guarantee safe roads for cyclists in this regard?

“The funding programmes should be continuous and sustainable and support the ongoing activities required to ensure cycle facilities and programmes are maintained”

Where is this funding going to come from? The report lacks specifics in this regard.

### **7. Transversal Responsibility of Role Players:**

Good recognition of stakeholders at the national, local and organisational (NGOs) level, however the Strategy does not recognise/ mention businesses and civil society or general public as key role players.

The strategy does not make clear the links to the TOD Strategy, a major new transport and planning policy for the City of Cape Town.

### **8. Vision and Principles**

8.1. Good vision.

8.2. Principles are overly optimistic, too broad and are not linked to the desired outcomes through any specific action plans.

### **9. Desired Outcomes**

- The desired outcomes lack baselines/ targets - how will the city know what specific goals to aim for?
- As mentioned above, the desired outcomes lack ‘strategic implementation’; need more consideration as to ‘how’ the outcomes would be realised.
- Only one target is given, rather than stepped and individual targets - adopting an incremental approach towards achieving specific goals might make implementation easier and also may increase chances of success.

### **10. Key Focus Areas:**

1. *Accessibility:*

- a. Investments in bicycle manufacturing and distribution are suggested, but information about where or when this would happen and how the City would integrate the lower income brackets remains elusive - this serves to undermine the inclusivity of the initiative.
- b. How does the Strategy propose to support "lower-income households", specifically those who live too far away from the CBD for cycling to be a viable transport option?
- c. Only a specific and limited group has access to the platform on which to comment on the Strategy (as it is online). In addition, it is written in language that is very formal and advanced - this limits access to and recognition of the Strategy and will most likely serve to decrease its success.
- d. Lacks information on direct measures that can improve accessibility; for example making use of subsidies on bicycles which could contribute directly to making bicycles more affordable for all.

2. *Safety and Security:*

- a. The Strategy has a narrow conceptualisation of safety and security. It is thought of mainly in terms of road safety; we think it is important to consider finer aspects of safety as well, for example panic buttons along cycling routes to reduce the risk of being mugged along the way or having a safe place to stop along a bike route if you are cycling at night.
- b. Furthermore, safety and security may need to be expanded to encompass more complex urban design challenges and social dynamic behaviours. For example, this report fails to mention how it will manage/reduce pedestrian-cyclist conflicts - this is key consideration given the complex urban nature of the CBD.
- c. The main means through which the Strategy aims to ensure safety is "facilitating improvement of compliance of "rules of the road" through programs which raises awareness, highlight respect of the rights of other users and safe user behaviour" - while these are all important aspects, given the lack of respect for road rules and the inability of the City to manage this problem sufficiently at present, how is this goal going to be achieved and how can the City guarantee they are going to manage this?

3. *Provide and Maintain Cycling Infrastructure:*

- a. Good recognition of the central role that good cycling infrastructure plays when it comes to cycling. It is vital that roads be designed for multiple users, not only cars.
- b. It is important to start with a network of low-stress bike routes. These efforts should begin on arterial streets where speed differentials between bicycles and cars are highest.
- c. The Strategy should provide a map of where these planned routes are going to be and make sure that these routes are coherent and functional.

- i. Resources would be more efficiently and effectively utilised if key routes and nodes of activity were identified for development, rather than dispersing capital across an over extended, partially functional infrastructure network.
- d. Retrofitting infrastructure & creating a legible network
- e. It is important that laws are strengthened in tandem with improved cycling infrastructure; the City needs to improve laws to protect both cyclists and pedestrians alike and should clarify aspects such as right-of-way regulations, (with greater priority toward cycling and walking) and ensure greater enforcement mechanisms be developed.
- f. Other supportive policies need to complement the improved infrastructure goal; for example fuel subsidies, parking subsidies, and other policies which support driving should be eliminated and directed towards incentives to encourage cycling/ walking.

#### 4. *Undertake Monitoring and Evaluation:*

- a. The Strategy is too vague on the issue of monitoring and evaluation; they need to critically analyse current road infrastructure design and maintenance, tender processes and enforcement mechanisms. In addition, it would be beneficial if more clear and specific problem statements, baseline data and outcome indicators were included.
- b. The Strategy lacks any mention on how it is going to finance its monitoring and evaluation scheme, and furthermore has no mention of a research and Innovation budget (this is important if we want to find ways to improve and upgrade cycling means in the city).
- c. It recognises the need for continuous monitoring, however fails to mention any baselines/ indicators against which the Strategy would be evaluated - it would be better to have measurable and time-bound objectives that are to be achieved across the lifetime of this project - perhaps it would be better to implement short-term pilot studies within certain parts of the city, which are easily monitorable and then extend this to the wider city region.

#### 5. *Facilitate Stakeholder Collaboration*

- a. How extensive was stakeholder engagement prior to the Strategy?
- b. How well did the City engage with marginalised communities/ members with regards to the strategy?
- c. "Establish the Sustainable Mobility Sub-committee which reports to the IPC" - this is the main point included in the Strategy under this focus area, however the Strategy needs to be more descriptive on what that stakeholder group would look like.
  - i. The Strategy needs clarity on whether there are any parties that would be willing to invest in this proposal. For example in the paper there were broad statements made about partnerships and collaborative

bodies that would spear head sections of the strategy but any possible candidates or interested public bodies were not mentioned.

- d. While creating a stakeholder group is key, can the City guarantee that it will be responsive?
- e. The City should consider setting up a permanent body/ platform to improve policy coordination between local governments and with the national government to ensure cycling legislation is improved and upgraded.
- f. More transparency regarding budget and funding of the Strategy would improve public attitudes/ perceptions towards the Strategy.
- g. The Strategy should also provide specifics on how its public participation initiatives are going to address current and future public concerns

## 6. *School Cycling Programme*

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### **CASE STUDIES**

Seville, Spain, grew its cycling mode share from 0.5 percent to nearly 7 percent of trips in six years (2006–2012), with the number of cycling trips increasing from five thousand to seventy-two thousand per day. They achieved this by installing a network of nearly 130 km of protected cycle tracks and implementing a bike share program with 2,500 bicycles and 258 stations.

Seoul: <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:689876/FULLTEXT01.pdf>. Has good information on how to address behavioural limitations; “to implement cycling policies as a way of achieving the sustainable city, cultural and social shifts should be entailed. The implementation of pro-cycling can contribute to this cultural shift which is fundamental to the sustainable city. This is a cycle that has to be turned into a virtuous cycle leading to the city and urban community towards sustainability”

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### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Various recommendations can be put forward after our thorough analysis of the Strategy.

- The initial step toward actualising the Strategy in the City of Cape Town would be to research the applicability and functionality of the plan, as well as to do specific inquiries on whether it is a realistic approach and what the input would look like practically. The question of ‘what tools do we need to ensure a successful input?’ should be considered.
- The Strategy should include an abstract, summarising the successive plan, a more concrete vision and set of objectives, which could be illustrated through a detailed



plan of action as to how this will be attained including both the long-term and short-term outcomes post-implementation. It is also relevant to consider what effect it may have on the people and also the urban environment of the City of Cape Town.

- In order to clarify the Strategy's hypothesis, the City should collect statistics, census data and general sociocultural research data for analysis for the hypothesis and strategy plan. Thereafter, they should create and implement a timeline or step-by-step procedure plan. This suggestion was based on MAS comments on the Draft Scope of work for the East Harlem Rezoning Proposal, Environmental Impact Statement.
- Stakeholder collaboration needs to be deeply understood as an environment to encourage the creation of multiple business opportunities supporting a shift to 8%. Regular stakeholder engagement sessions required.
- Future Cape Town would suggest the implementation of an incentive system for example Health insurance providers Discovery would award you points for going to gym - similar reward system and penalties could be given to cars that park on the bicycle paths.
- There is a need to establish knowledge-sharing mechanisms between public and CoCT to foster meaningful engagement.
- Promotional policies/ programmes need to be established:
  - Free cycling education at parks around and a designated 'Bike Bus' day once a month when groups of cyclists bike to work together.
  - Implementing 'Kids Safe Roads' program, where kids can cultivate a sense of road and learn how to cycle safely
  - Need to make primary and secondary schools more active participants of the cycling community in Cape Town and social norming with regards to cycling needs to happen from a young age.
  - A bicycle diploma based on a theoretical and practical exam could be introduced, in order for these students to become more educated on traffic control and ways of using the environment to its full effect. This idea was taken from The Netherlands.
- Need to improve cooperation with the private sector: an effort should be made to encourage innovative business ideas resulting in an increase of job opportunities. In addition, innovative business ideas could include making bicycles from recycled materials, selling and managing underground bicycle parking or storage areas. This would result in social, environmental and economic benefits for the city of Cape Town.
- Bike-sharing programs should be considered through relevant funding. This concept allows bicycles to be used without being purchased, therefore reaching a higher scale of the population and introducing new users to cycling and allowing cycling trips to be combined with public transport trips. Cities can implement a large-scale rollout of bike-sharing programs with densely spaced stations and a high ratio of bicycles to residents; bicycle sharing schemes can move from concept to implementation in just a year's time.

- The City needs to make the Strategy more inspiring through more elaborate and more aesthetically pleasing campaigns including visuals.
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## **CONCLUSION:**

**Future Cape Town** is a strong advocate for the implementation of a Cycling Strategy in Cape Town, and recognises the benefits this would have on the urban environment in the city in the long term and on individuals alike. Increasing the number of people using cycling as a primary mode of transport is an important step towards re-enhancing the urban environment of Cape Town, making it more livable and enjoyable for all.

We commend the City's efforts regarding a Cycling Strategy and found the Strategy to be a good broad outline of how cycling could be implemented as a mode of transport, however there is a tremendous amount of work to be done on the strategy.

The scope of this work is provided in our broad and detailed commentary, which includes a list recommendations which we consider to be vital to improve the strategy's likelihood of success considerably.

We hope that our comments are useful to the City, and look forward to ensuring that the Strategy reaches success in the City of Cape Town in the future.