

CYCLING TO GREENER CITIES

The promotion of cycling as a mode of transport has been on the transport agenda of governments and cities around the world for many years. Many cities have implemented large scale cycling infrastructure projects notably in Europe, South America, Asia and North America, supplemented by comprehensive awareness and educational programmes for drivers and cyclists alike. Cycling is an ideal way of travelling in cities over short to medium distances for a variety of trip purposes such as commuting, serving as feeder system to public transport, to shops and schools, for leisure trips and tourism. Custom built bicycles and tricycles are also being used in many parts of the world to transport goods, passengers (so called pedicabs) and patients to clinics.

In South Africa, many large scale cycling events are organised regularly to popularise the concept of using the bicycle as a transport mode. Examples include the Cape Argus Cycle Tour, Jo'Burg Momentum 94.7 Cycle Challenge, Cycle Tour in Soweto and many more. Cycling also supports the *greening of transport* by reducing the carbon footprint of overburdened road networks. Apart from the above, cycling is also adding to a healthy lifestyle.

All the obvious benefits of cycling listed above, however, are very often nullified by the lack of appropriate cycling infrastructure. This is one of the areas still lacking in most South African cities as a result of which cyclists have to compete with other vehicles for limited road space, often with dire consequences. For many years, the Southern Africa Road Federation has been instrumental in promoting the concept of cycling by providing practical hands-on courses for the planning and design of bicycle and pedestrian networks and facilities.

The *National Department of Transport* (NDoT) has been a champion in promoting the use of bicycles through the Shova Kalula (Ride Easy) programme, especially among school children. In the early 1980's, the NDoT launched bicycle demonstration projects in Cape Town, Randburg and Pretoria. In 2003, it published the Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Guidelines document, providing detailed information on the planning and design of bicycle lanes. Furthermore, in 2008, it also published a Draft National Non-Motorised Transport Policy, with one of its strategic objectives to develop infrastructure standards that recognise NMT as an essential transport mode.

The *Department of Environmental Affairs*, through its Greening Policy, is also promoting the use of bicycles in our cities to reduce the carbon footprint. With the aid of German funding, they are currently providing cycling infrastructure in Johannesburg, eThikwini and Polokwane. This was part of a programme launched as part of the 2010 Soccer World Cup to promote the greening of transport.

Provinces such as the Western Cape, and more recently, Gauteng Province, have initiated NMT policies that are paving the way to more cycling infrastructure. In 2005, Gauteng Province also published standards to provide for cycle lanes on the cross-sections of the different roads and streets in the province. Currently, Gauteng Province is developing a 25 year Transport Master Plan, which also seeks to promote the cycling and walking modes.

At the *municipal level*, *Cape Town's Bicycle Master Plan*, was instrumental in providing a comprehensive network of cycle lanes all over the city. A major feature of the Cape Town *MyCiti* integrated rapid bus transit system is a network of cycling paths and upgraded pedestrian walkways

connecting to the bus routes. Already many cyclists and pedestrians are using the special NMT lane from Table View to Cape Town city centre. There is a planned link to this route from the cycle network in other parts of the city. The intention is also to provide secure bicycle storage facilities at major bus stations.



Photos: Cycle lane alongside Cape Town IRT route from Table View to Cape Town

In 2009, *Johannesburg* released its Framework for Non-Motorised Transport. Some of the primary objectives were to establish a dedicated network of high quality pedestrian and cycling routes across the City; to establish pedestrian and cycling modes of transport as preferred modes for short distance and convenience related trips within the City; to facilitate access to the City for marginalised and low income communities; to integrate NMT modes with other strategic public transportation initiatives within the City including the Gautrain, Metrorail and BRT stations in order to enhance local feeder services and support the successful functioning and take up of public transport; to promote increased access to educational institutions by NMT modes; and more. In November 2012, the Transportation Department of the City of Johannesburg organised a two-day workshop at which various issues relevant to the promoting of cycling in the City were discussed. This included aspects such as bicycle renting systems, cycle lanes through open spaces and green corridors, empowering of disadvantage communities to construct and maintain the cycle lanes, and so on.

In 2010, the *City of Tshwane* published its Non-Motorised Transport Master Plan as part of the Shova Kalula Bicycle Project. The plan was aimed at implementing a network of more than 160 kilometres of bicycle routes in areas such as Hammanskraal, Babelegi, Mabopane, Soshanguve, Atteridgeville, Mamelodi and many other parts of the city.



Above: Cycleway under construction running parallel to the IRT route
 Below: Cycle lane painted alongside the raised pedestrian pathway



Pedestrian and cycle surfaces continue over Bellmouth to reduce the speed of turning vehicles and thereby give right of way to pedestrians and cyclists



Somerset Road links the CBD to the new Greenpoint stadium. The cycle lane is in beige and the pedestrian walkway in red.